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# THE McGill Daily

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We struggled with InDesign this week, sorry since 1911

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THE  
**McGill Daily**

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**Mardis  
Rétro**



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À BAS PRIX

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## The End of OSVRSE?

content warning: sexual violence

McGill's Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support, and Education (OSVRSE) has long been underfunded and overburdened, indicative of the McGill administration's failure to prioritize support for survivors of sexual and gendered violence. The office was formed in 2016 by the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOs) under the McGill Policy Against Sexual Violence, and many have since voiced concerns of inaccessibility and mismanagement.

Early in the Fall 2022 semester, OSVRSE closed its operations due to a staff departure over the summer that left one employee working in the office, according to documents recently obtained by the Daily. This information was not made public; there was no email sent or other communication made to the student body that OSVRSE had closed, the website did not indicate that the office had halted operations, and the office's booking system was kept open. Yara Coussa, collective member of the Union for Gender Empowerment (UGE), founder of McGill Neurodivergent Self-Advocacy Collective, and Queer McGill coordinator, wrote to the Daily to say that stakeholders in organizations catering to gender minorities and women who are more likely to experience sexual violence were not made aware that OSVRSE had closed. "This means that we wrongfully directed numerous survivors seeking mental health support to OSVRSE," she writes, "I found out the service was not functional by directing a student who needed support to it, which is devastating and unacceptable." Others, like Arts Senator Sam Baron, as told in a statement to the McGill Tribune, were only made aware of the office's closure after seeing that bookings were unavailable for the entire month of October.

It was not until December 4, 2022, the day before Fall semester classes ended, that the McGill community was informed that OSVRSE was inoperational. In an email sent to the student body, Dean of Students Robin Beech vaguely spoke of a "long-term plan" that had been delayed by "staffing shortages," explaining that "an unexpected departure at the start of this semester highlighted the need to implement the office's planned revamping." The email further explained that the office would be "revamped" during its closure, a process that would include an expansion from two to five permanent positions, and that "support will be transferred back to OSVRSE from January." No other details concerning the timeline of the office's reopening were disclosed. Beech's email concluded that "you will likely hear more about these developments soon," but as the Winter semester begins, no further developments have been shared with the McGill community, and there is no indication that OSVRSE will be resuming its operations anytime soon.

Given that OSVRSE was McGill's primary support

service for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence – providing confidential, non-judgemental, and non-directional support, per the office's mandate – it is deplorable that the university did not give any indication of the office's closure or provide alternative resources for survivors until months after the fact. Seeking and receiving support from OSVRSE was already a difficult process for many to access and navigate. Attempting to understand this halt in operations without any explanation as to why bookings are unavailable or why the office is not staffed poses yet another obstacle to receiving institutional support from the university. For those seeking urgent care in the wake of sexual violence, this closure is likely to delay progress in an already difficult healing process.

While the ODoS Case Management Team has now temporarily taken on the caseload of OSVRSE, some survivors may feel reluctant to share their experiences directly with the McGill administration. Furthermore, OSVRSE offers psychological support to survivors in the form of counselling, support activities, and workshops. While Beech's email indicates that those working in the Case Management office can assist with accommodations and priority referral to the Wellness Hub, the Hub cannot offer the same targeted support as OSVRSE. Although the Hub provides mental health services, students face barriers to accessing such care due to staff shortages and notoriously long wait times for counselling. While there are other support organizations for survivors on campus, the fact that survivors were not pointed to these alternatives until months after OSVRSE's closure demonstrates that the university does not prioritize supporting and protecting the well-being of survivors as it claims. Furthermore, the fact that the office's closure – which was never explicitly stated but instead branded as a "revamping" – was only shared with students over the finals period, when students are generally less tuned into campus events and when student newspapers are in recess and when student newspapers are in recess, seems conveniently timed to prevent backlash and organized response from the community.

As the semester progresses, demand transparency and accountability from the university concerning the closure and restructuring of OSVRSE. Call on the McGill administration to allocate more resources to supporting survivors by creating effective, well-funded, and well-staffed support infrastructure and services. If you are a survivor of sexual violence, you can access support services independent from the McGill administration through the Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Student's Society or through SSMU's Anti-Violence Coordinators, who can be reached at [avc@ssmu.ca](mailto:avc@ssmu.ca). Other community resources include the Montreal Sexual Assault Support Center, which is open 24/7. Should you wish to contact a Case Manager from the ODoS, you can contact them by phone at 514-398-1881 or 514-398-4990 or via email at [casemanager@mcgill.ca](mailto:casemanager@mcgill.ca).

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# From the Archives: McGill Women Left Unsupported

A collection of *Daily* articles from 1983–1991

content warning: sexual violence

The following series of articles come from the *Daily's* archives, originally published between 1983 and 1991. This week's editorial seeks to highlight McGill's failure to provide adequate services to victims of sexual assault and gender-based violence. This collection of works recounts a series of failed and ineffective attempts at combatting such violence. Above all, these articles showcase how McGill's current negligence towards the presence of sexual violence on its campus is not only pervasive but deep-rooted in a long and asymmetric battle between students and an administration that refuses to listen to the voices of survivors. And while this collection primarily focuses on the vulnerabilities of women, it is important to note that sexual violence effects all students.

## We Want Solutions Not Paranoia

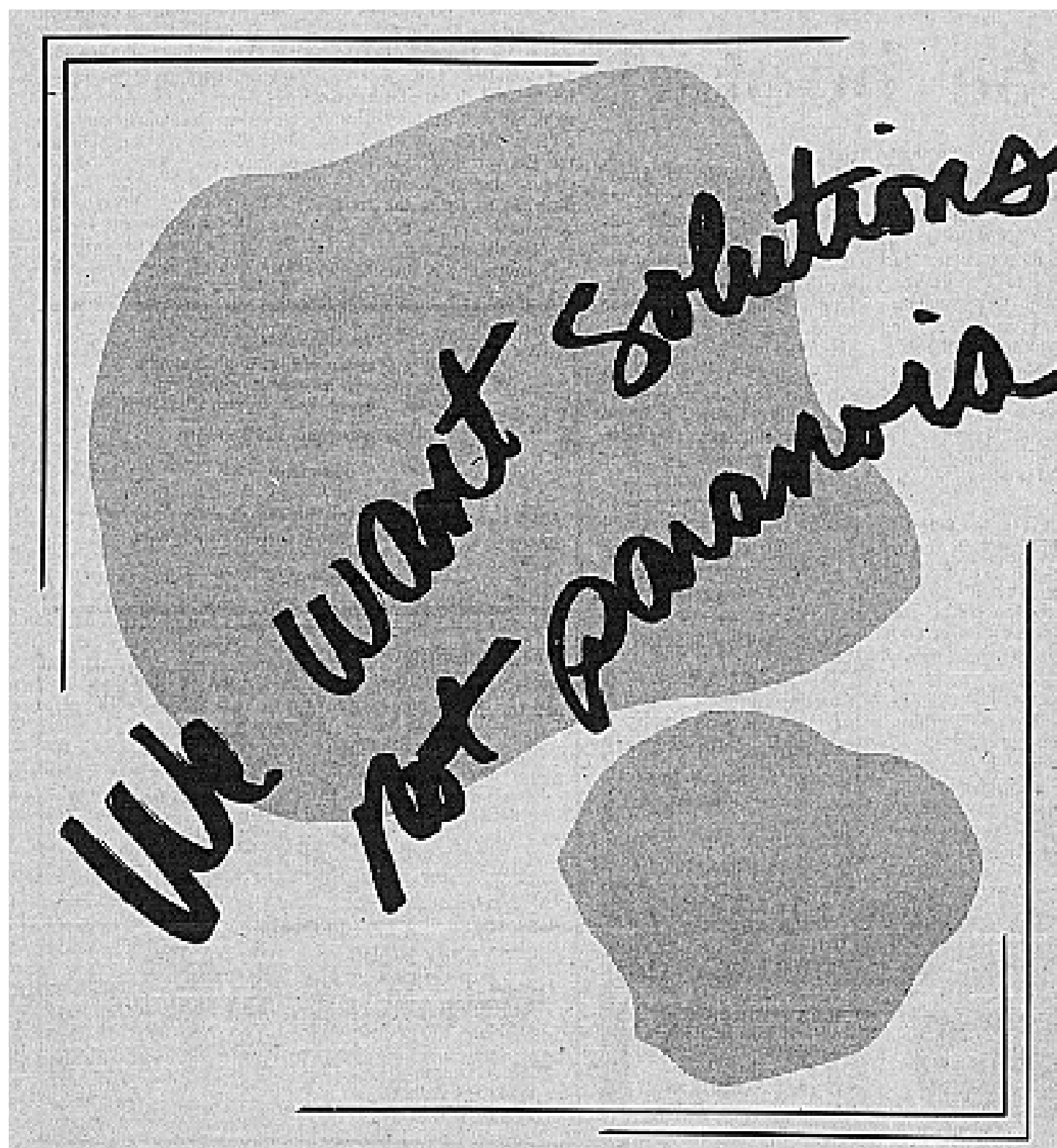
Sybil Plank and Cristina Trowbridge  
From the *Daily* Archives

Sexual assault, whether it is aggression in the verbal, visual, or physical sense, is an act of aggression which cuts across the barriers of class and education. This aggression towards women is part of the process of socialisation that every man is subject to within all systems of patriarchy. It is a myth to believe that the men at McGill are incapable of sexual assault. All men are capable of rape.

At McGill, a special committee was set up this year in order to deal with the problems of harassment, assault and rape of women on campus.

Although the Senate Subcommittee for the Safety of Women has attempted to deal with the increasing incidence of harassment and assault, it has recently come under criticism for issuing a "warning poster" for distribution in all the women's washrooms.

The poster is a cartoon drawing of a man standing behind a door. From the field of perspective, the viewer is inside the bathroom looking out at this man. The drawing depicts a rather seedy looking character - a clownish figure.



This depiction is in keeping with the patriarchal opinion about rapists; looking slightly deranged and not being taken seriously. The drawing is a cartoon - it is no way an actual representation of a rapist.

The problem with the poster is that it doesn't approach sexual assault in a realistic manner.

Making a poster and putting it in women's bathrooms, where there are no telephones with which to call the sexual assault number, is an ineffectual method of approaching any kind of solution to this serious problem.

Once again, women are the ones responsible for their own safety. By

directing the poster at women, the fact that men do the raping is denied. The only message derived from the poster is that it is the woman's responsibility to seek help.

The sexual assault doubles as the physical plant number. A male voice answers the phone with the words "physical plant." Unless a woman knows that this is also the assault line; she will be extremely confused and think that the 3000 number is a lie.

If she can contact security, it usually takes the guard a minimum of half an hour to report to the scene. Recently at the Women's Union, a woman reported a sexual assault. It took the security guard forty-five minutes to walk across campus

and up four flights of stairs. When the security guard arrived, the woman was faced with an additional problem. Not only does a woman have to talk to a male security guard after she has been assaulted by a man, but the man she has to report the incident to has little understanding of sexual assault, like all men, and thus does not understand the needs of the woman at the time.

The Senate Sub-Committee has a responsibility to employ more effective measures to deal with sexual assault on campus. This issue is important enough to warrant the creation of a specialised trained group of people to aid the women

who have been aggressed.

The fact that most women at McGill dislike the poster is evident by the graffiti that can be read in the women's washrooms of the university.

Graffiti in the Leacock Bathroom:  
*I don't see no God damn phone here. Do you think he will lend me the quarter for free?*

*Use the phone conveniently located under the handle. With what, my shoe phone? Learn self-defence.*

Graffiti in the Redpath washroom:  
*We need help before not after.*

*Great way to make women paranoid. Obviously we'll do something to get help if it happens, but personally I'm not into making us paranoid about it.*

*Can't find a phone in here Hang this man by the balls.*

The reply to this was:  
*Basically because this really is a man's world and this university is run by men. What do they care if women are molested? Excuse me Mr. Rapist while I find a phone.*

The formation of the Senate Sub-Committee is only the first step in solving the problem. This article is not a personal attack on the credibility of the people involved on the committee. Rather, we feel the Senate Sub-Committee should be aware of women's reactpm to the poster and should readily receive any constructive ideas from all women at McGill.

## Crisis Line Helps Women

**Leela MadhavaRau**  
From the *Daily Archives*  
January 11, 1984

Women at McGill are facing increased harassment on campus but now they have somewhere to turn.

Until recently, women calling McGill Security often talked to male security guards inexperienced in dealing with assault victims. Now there is a 24-hour counselling service for victims of sexual assault.

Until the Sexual Assault Centre under its new co-ordinator, Deby Trent, began its emotional support programme with a 24-hour crisis line, Montreal had no such service.

In an early press release, the Centre stated it "extends its free, accessible and comprehensive services, offered in a non-threatening and non-judgmental setting to the island and its surrounding populations."

The assault centre also offers private counselling, workshops for female victims, medical services, a complete referral service, and access to resources on all social issues.

The volunteers, all women, answer the phones. They undergo a rigorous screening and training programme before they begin counselling.

Paulette Biays, a U2 Anthropology student at McGill, is

one of approximately 20 volunteers. She said the screenings were thorough

and ensured that only suitable individuals were selected.

"Some people like to steer others around. There are women (pro-lifers) who get a vicarious thrill from listening to stories and then begin to moralise. People must be willing to listen patiently," said Biays.

"The training is excellent, although emotionally draining," she added.

Through scenarios, in which the volunteers act the part of both counsellor and victim, they learn how to communicate over the telephone.

"The tone of the voice is important, it must not be probing. You must reinforce, not contradict what the victim says. They are speaking from anger and fear, not rationality," explained Biays.

The volunteers work four days a month, two days on the 'front line and two on back up. On the front line, the calls are transferred directly to the volunteer's phone line. This may be for a 24 hour period. Back up is support for the front line people in case of numerous calls or for further reassurance for the front line.

Biays, although very positive about the programme, does have some mixed emotions.

"It really depends on the call," she said. "50 per cent of the time you feel good; the person is upset and by the end of the phone call their spirits are up or their depression is lifted. At other times it is frustrating — it seems that nothing gives comfort or else they just hang up.

"The best calls are when they feel good or if you've referred them to a counsellor or another social service and they're going to go," she said.

Not all callers are victims of assault, some are lonely, depressed, or suicidal.

"Some victims call to tell of incidents that happened days, months or years ago," said Trent.

"We get a few male callers and they seem to appreciate our help," she added.

Although complete statistics are not as yet available, Trent sees no pattern, except an increase in the number of calls.

"Some days there are more, but we have not noticed a particular relationship with specific events."

The telephone number of the Sexual Assault Centre is 287-9656.

## University needs active sexual assault policy

**Kate Stewart**  
From the *Daily Archives*  
November 22, 1991

McGill does not have a policy for dealing with cases of sexual assault. And the administration doesn't think McGill needs one.

Dean of Students Irwin Gopnik believes cases of sexual assault can be handled under McGill's existing policy on assault.

"We consider sexual assault to be a part of assault in general," he said. "This has worked in cases we've already dealt with

of a sexual nature."

But women on campus disagree. "It is insulting to equate being raped with being punched in the face," says Sylvia Di Iorio, of the McGill Sexual Assault Centre. "McGill's assault policy does not address the trauma and impact of rape."

The Centre is trying to convince McGill to adopt a policy specifically for sexual assault. Di Iorio would also like to see an improvement in the policy for sexual harassment.

When a student files a complaint that she has been sexually harassed at McGill, an assessor is assigned to her case. Four assessors are available to investigate the complaints. They are chosen by the Principal and are approved by a committee of faculty and student representatives.

The assessor acts as a go-between for the complainant and the accused. According to Di Iorio, this can cause problems for the complainant. "A woman must feel she is believed in a case of sexual harassment. But the assessors have to listen to both sides of the story," she said.

When the assessor has heard both sides of the case, he or she makes recommendations to the Principal. If he decides the case warrants disciplinary action it is turned over to a disciplinary committee.

If he does not, the file is closed. Di Iorio would like to see a comprehensive policy which would address sexual assault together with sexual harassment.

McGill is simply not equipped to handle cases of sexual assault, she said. "I've heard of problems in the assessment in cases of assault. The assessors are not prepared to deal

with this, nor do they have a guideline to follow."

As it stands now, the assessors do not take cases of sexual assault. They are supposed to advise the complainant to lodge a criminal complaint with the police.

The Sexual Assault Centre plans to suggest a new system for dealing with sexual assault to the Dean of Student. Said Di Iorio, "There should be two systems set up with a separate representative for the complainant and the harasser."

But Di Iorio was not optimistic. "This system would mean hiring trained people to handle the cases, and I don't know if McGill is willing to do that."

Dean Gopnik claimed that the university will examine the Centre's proposals. "If someone comes up with an argument in favour of having a separate assault policy the administration will listen. We're not

closed-minded about it."

If McGill set up a policy specifically for cases of sexual assault women would have a choice between pursuing a case within the university and a criminal case.

"It is never easy to go the criminal route. If we had an effective system, a woman might choose it over the criminal proceeding," Di Iorio said.

Given the choice between going through the process of filing a complaint within the university and going to the police, Di Iorio said she would go to the police.

"The procedure at McGill being what it is, I don't think it is the best way to go. The decisions are left in the hands of one

person in the end," she said.

Kelly Dobbins, of the Coalition Against Sexual Assault, agreed. If McGill had a sexual assault policy, she said, "then at least we would have choices."

But even if McGill created a policy, Dobbins had doubts about its potential effectiveness. "It would still come down to his word against her. And the final decision would probably be left to one man."

CAASHE is holding a conference on sexual harassment at the Grand Hotel from November 20 to 23. There will be an afternoon for students. Tickets are \$10 each.

## The Best Kept Secret

**Susana Bejar, Heather MacKay, Stephanie Conway, Kathleen Hickey, and Rob Macfarlane**  
From the *Daily Archives*  
March 20, 1991

McGill, like the military, operates its own justice system.

We all know about the committees set up for students who plagiarize or students who appeal grades they feel they don't deserve. There are no channels in the real world to handle these kinds of conflicts.

But when a person files a sexual assault complaint at McGill they exit the legal system where violent crimes are normally handled.

While we can find out what happens in the courts, we haven't a clue

what goes on when a student goes through university channels. Files, reports, precedents and recommendations are kept confidential as are

'verdicts' and punishments, if there are any.

That's why we don't know what happened to McGill's investigation of defendants in the alleged Zeta Psi gang rape. And it's part of the reason we didn't hear about the alleged rape at Phi Delta Theta for over a year.

Confidentiality is important to McGill's disciplinary procedures. It is an important right, and maybe it works in the sexual harassment cases the policy is designed for. But how does McGill deal with its home-turf rapists?

Not that we can claim McGill's approach to sexual assault cases is unjust. We simply do not know.

But we know enough to be suspicious. If McGill cared as much for women's rights as it did for its own reputation, there would be the reassurance of checks on university decisions. Now, McGill's sexual harassment procedure gives the Principal final say in decisions that cannot be appealed. A woman who takes a sexual assault case to McGill must remember that her "options" include legal action in the courts.

On campus these issues are tried in an ivory closet.

# Le Petit Marche Etudiant is Open for Business

## New student-run business is providing students with affordable and nutritious food



**Emma Bainbridge**  
News Editor

Whether it's rising costs of groceries, a packed schedule, or simply a lack of knowledge about cooking, eating well as a student can be fraught with challenges. Many students find the food options on campus to be unaffordable, and there's a high demand for free lunch services such as Midnight Kitchen. This issue hasn't escaped the notice of SSMU, whose External Affairs Commissioners will work on compiling a list of food sovereignty initiatives in the upcoming semester. After noticing the lack of affordable food options around campus, Geography student Maude Laroche started a business to provide an alternate way for students get groceries. On January 2, Laroche launched The Little Student Supermarket, or *Le Petit Marché Étudiant*, aiming to provide students with healthy, affordable meals.

At *Le Petit Marché Étudiant*, students can purchase a "grocery box" of non-perishable ingredients starting at \$100 with an estimated 22-40 portions of food when cooked. This includes eight portions of oatmeal for breakfast, a pasta and sauce option that provides about six meals, and two meals ranging between

four and thirteen portions each from *Tout en Pot*, a local business selling ready-to-cook meals in a jar. This means that in theory, each individual meal should amount to \$5 or less. Laroche told the *Daily* that there will also be an option to add extras, such as coffee or snacks, in the future.

At *Le Petit Marché Étudiant*, students can purchase a "grocery box" of non-perishable ingredients starting at \$100 with an estimated 22-40 portions of food when cooked.

"Basically, we realized that there was really a lack of options for food on campus," said Laroche. This inspired her to think

about how to make food "more sustainable, more accessible, more nutritious, [and] more local." As a result, she created her first business, *Les Fermes Du Marché*, a platform that aims to reduce the cost of transporting fresh produce between farmers and customers. However, she wanted to create a service that was tailored to students after realizing the challenges of grocery shopping and eating as a student.

"Most [students] don't know how to do groceries, that's the truth," she told the *Daily*. "After that, most of them don't want to cook, they want something cheap, but again, they want to eat good."

The meals in the grocery box are intended to be both nutritious and easy to prepare, so that students can make healthy meals with little effort. All the ingredients are either sourced locally or imported from within Quebec. Drawing from her own experiences and those of other students she talked to, Laroche realized that grocery shopping can get expensive very quickly.

"I was living with my boyfriend, and our parents fed us a lot of food because we don't live that far from Montreal. But just having bread and basic stuff per week was easily \$50-60 at IGA," said Laroche. She added that groceries

especially start to add up when people try to eat a variety of food.

"Something we try to do as much as possible is really to offer something that's healthy to people but cheap," she continued.

The team at *Le Petit Marché Étudiant* strives to make their business as sustainable as possible. Laroche, who is doing an Honours thesis on corporate sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals, is very interested in the possibility for businesses to create change in that regard. All materials in the box are recyclable and they do carbon compensation by planting a tree for every order, although Laroche admits that this is "not optimal." However, she argues that there

"Basically, we realized that there was a lack of options for food on campus [...] just having bread and basic stuff per week was easily \$50-60 at IGA [...] something we try to do as much as possible is really to offer something that's healthy to people but cheap."

- Maude Laroche

is an inevitable carbon cost that comes with producing food that can't be avoided as everyone needs to eat. In the future, she hopes to create a program to redistribute food to low-income families that goes unsold. This would further advance the project's goal of "helping people in insecure food environments become food secure."

Furthermore, she said that there's a huge sense of community within *Les Fermes Du Marché* and *Le Petit Marché Étudiant*, and that they're open to working with anyone who approaches them. She hopes to further foster community by offering discounts to students as well as to people working in non-profit organizations and social businesses. They also already partner with universities to offer educational opportunities through internships with the company.

*Le Petit Marché Étudiant* is connected to Laroche's other business, *Les Fermes Du Marché*, both reflecting her desire to show "the true face of farming." Coming from a family background in farming, she believes that it is often misunderstood despite playing an essential role in society.

"The truth is that if you're not organic certified or something like that, it's not because you hate the environment," she explained. "It's because you need to feed your family first and you may not have the money to do these things."

Laroche advises anybody interested in *Le Petit Marché Étudiant's* services to find them on their Instagram page @lepetitmarcheetudiants or check out their website lepetitmarcheetudiant.com.

They will also have a table at Activities Night on January 12 offering student discounts to those who stop by.

# McGill's Library Project Underway in 2023

## Library Collections to be moved to an off-campus Collection Centre

Zoe Lister  
News Editor

Beginning in 2023, collections currently held in the McLennan & Redpath Library buildings will be relocated to McGill's new off-campus Collection Centre. The process is estimated to take six to eight months, during which time materials will become temporarily inaccessible. This move of the library's holdings is part of McGill's Fiat Lux Project: a plan to renovate the library into a larger and light-filled workspace.

The McLennan Library Building was first opened in 1969, and since then, the student population has grown to over 40,000 students. Currently, McGill offers seating to roughly only nine to 12 per cent of the student population, while public research university libraries with similar population sizes to that of McGill's offer seating to 20 per cent of their student body. McGill held a "Census Day" in 2019 to gauge the number of visits to its library branches on campus. During the 24-hour period, the library branches collectively received 15,117 visits, with McGill students making up 14,175 of the visits. This means that 35 per cent of the Fall 2018 student enrollment number visited the library in a single day.

To accommodate the present-day needs of more work space and seating for library visitors, the University decided on a plan to relocate its physical collection to an automated storage facility, following the example of many other universities, such as the University of Toronto, Queen's University, and the University of Ottawa. According to McGill Media Relations Officer Frédérique Mazerolle, McGill has undertaken the Fiat Lux project and the establishment of a new Collection Centre (formerly called Collection Management Facility) to "address these constraints and transform the quality of services and spaces that the Library offers."

According to Mazerolle, these projects will almost double the number of workspaces and transform them into technologically advanced spaces that are "accessible, comfortable, safe, and sustainable." The Collection Centre is estimated to hold 2.5 million volumes. The Centre - which measures 40,000 square feet - has been under construction this past year. As the system becomes operational, the transfer of materials from the McLennan & Redpath Library Buildings will occur, with library users then being able to request the collections online. Requested



Zoe Lister | News Editor

materials will be delivered within 24 hours to either the downtown or Macdonald campus.

Movements of items from the McLennan & Redpath Library Buildings will tentatively begin in late Fall 2023 and will conclude in Winter 2024, according to Mazerolle.

Movements of items from the McLennan & Redpath Library Buildings will tentatively begin in late Fall 2023 and will conclude in Winter 2024, according to Mazerolle. "During the move period, library staff will be responsive and do everything they can to find and provide users with the resources they need." The university does not foresee any changes to opening hours of the Library Building, and study spaces will remain open.

However, library visitors will face reduced access to the McLennan-Redpath circulating collection and stacks in the McLennan-Redpath Library Complex. Though, according to Mazerolle, users retain the ability to access materials in other ways, such as e-book options, network and interlibrary loans, paging service, and access to stacks by appointment for McGill faculty. Access to stacks and the paging service will depend on the status of the transferring of materials at the time of the request. Inter-library loan requests from the McGill Community will be prioritized during the relocation of collections while materials are unavailable.

Once the transfer of collections from the McLennan & Redpath Library buildings to the Collection Centre is completed, construction in the Library Buildings will begin. Construction will take approximately three years, during which the McLennan-Redpath complex will be closed.

After renovations of the library are completed, there will remain space for 500,000 items. However, items held physically will be required to have been published within the last ten years and borrowed within the last five years. Additionally, just 450,000 items will be kept, as the University aims to allow for space for new publications. In 2021, the University asked that library

users fill out a request form of what materials they wished to remain in the library downtown. An itemized list of which books will be held in the library after the renovation is completed and which will be sent to the Collection Centre can be found on the McGill Library website.

This relocation of collections is not the first that the McLennan-Redpath Complex has seen. Since Spring 2019, McGill has been relocating several collections across its many libraries, with the last move of materials taking place in Fall 2021. During the 2019 Spring-Summer Recollection project, the two-year closure and renovation of the MacDonald-Stewart Library resulted in the temporary relocation of materials from the Schulich Library. As a result, collections were moved to various spaces within the McLennan-Redpath Complex.

Once the transfer of collections from the McLennan & Redpath Library buildings to the Collection Centre is completed, construction in the Library Buildings will begin. Construction will take approximately three years, during which the McLennan-Redpath complex will be closed.

During the temporary closure and with limited access to materials within the McLennan-Redpath Complex, students and faculty can expect that librarians and staff will "provide a high level of service to the community from other downtown McGill Library branches," according to Mazerolle. In 2023, the newly-renovated Schulich Library of Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, and Engineering, will tentatively reopen, and the university is striving towards the creation of temporary satellite student study spaces and service points in other buildings downtown.

"As with any large project, the dates outlined are tentative and dependent on the timely completion of related activities (for example, equipment delivery or installation). We will continue to keep the McGill community updated as the projects evolve," said Mazerolle.

# Overrepresentation of the Ultra-Wealthy

## Entertainment's fascination with rich tears and pop-anti-capitalism



Olivia Shan | Managing Editor

Saylor Catlin  
News Editor

This past month, in my post-finals pre-winter semester languor, I greedily consumed TV show after TV show and film after film, finally having time to catch up on the media that I'd heard about from my friends and through social media. At a certain point, I became aware that I was particularly captivated by a certain trope: watching the hyper-wealthy struggling with some sort of violent, satisfying form of karmic retribution as a result of their being their shitty selves. When watching the movies *Triangle of Sadness* (2022) and *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery* (2022) and the newest season of the TV show *The White Lotus*, I found myself disgusted by the expensive, high-end lives of the hyper-wealthy characters while simultaneously ogling the spectacle of it all. I was both desiring their lifestyle and knowing deep down that it's wrong, in some sort of confusing, voyeuristic, and sadistically gratifying reaction. I realized that producers have figured out a certain formula that seems to

resonate with audiences like myself – a self-gratifying, entertaining take on anti-capitalism designed to captivate audiences.

And indeed, it seems that content about the hyper-wealthy truly has dominated entertainment in recent years. In the number of weeks since its release on December 23, *Glass Onion* has become the third most-watched movie Netflix has ever released. HBO's recently aired second season of *The White Lotus* has become a massive hit met with widespread critical praise. *Triangle of Sadness*, from Swedish director Ruben Östlund, was also commercially successful as well as well-received by critics, winning the Palme d'Or at this year's Cannes festival. Other popular films and TV series in recent years are similarly concerned with the lives of the ultra-wealthy: *Succession*, the *Gossip Girl* reboot, *Selling Sunset*, *Elite*, *Inventing Anna*, and *The Dropout* are all examples. Many of these have become viral sensations, and several were even nominated for Emmys in 2022.

These stories often contain valuable underlying political

messages about power dynamics and wealth. The actions of the characters are defined by who works for who, their relationships by those who have and those who have not. The uber-wealthy guests in *The White Lotus* are generally selfish and flawed, exemplified by how they treat the hotel employees as disposable. Tanya in particular crosses all boundaries of respect with her assistant Portia, abusing her conference of wealth and privilege. Similarly, in *Glass Onion*, all the characters are subservient to the ultra-wealthy Miles Bron, treating him with deference and respect because of the power he wields over them due to his great wealth. And in *Triangle of Sadness*, scenes depicting the extent to which the ultra-wealthy demand subservience from the employees and staff that surround them are excruciating and uncomfortable to watch, demonstrating the dehumanizing power wielded by the ultra-rich.

Yet I wonder if this anti-capitalist political message becomes lost amidst the spectacle of wealth in such

content. The lives of the rich sure are entertaining – beautiful and fantastic, even. When watching *The White Lotus*, I couldn't help but gape at the magnificence and beauty of the show's setting, marveling at how much I would like to stay in a palazzo in Sicily. I found myself coveting Harper's chic and quietly luxurious wardrobe, composed of luxury brands like Loewe, Sandro, and Bottega Veneta. The dark, luxurious-looking wood interiors and the bright, clear pools on the sundeck of the cruise in *Triangle of Sadness* were equally enticing. And Miles Bron's elaborate, exclusive private island in Greece situated right in the middle of the Aegean Sea is certainly seductive. It's clear that the producers of these works have invested in the image and spectacle of wealth, and it sure looks sexy.

And yet it is also true that by the end of these stories, the seduction and spectacle of wealth has often shattered. In *The White Lotus*, it is the hotel employees that wind up on top, as the audience watches the interpersonal relationships of the guests implode. In *Glass*

*Onion*, Miles Bron is exposed as a fraud and gets the retribution he deserves. And in *Triangle of Sadness*, the rich guests all drown after violently losing their dinner in a *literally* stomach-turning scene, while those remaining are subject to the authoritarian rule of Abigail, who formerly worked as a crewmember on the ship.

These instances of retribution are certainly satisfying. After watching these ultra-wealthy characters be aloof and entitled assholes to everyone around them, one can't help but cheer while watching them get what they deserve. Yet this begs the question, is this satisfying because of a cognizant political condemnation of the hyper-wealthy? Or is it simply pleasurable to watch shitty people – particularly those who seem to have everything you yourself could ever want – get what they deserve?

I'm certainly not one to talk, as I'm just as hooked on these shows and movies as everyone else. I wonder, however, if the massive success of this burgeoning genre depicting the ultra-wealthy really needs to continue. I can imagine that television and film producers across their respective industries are trying to come up with the next hit like *Succession* or *The White Lotus*. But do rich people really need more representation? I argue that the sheer amount of content currently being produced about "rich tears" – about a group of people who only make up a small percentage of the world's population – is concerning and unsustainable. And while it certainly is satisfying to watch the ultra-wealthy fall down from their spot atop the social hierarchy, the inundation of content pointing out the flaws of ultra-wealthy fictitious individuals in ways that are voyeuristically pleasing and entertaining to the audience is not truly a meaningful way to deconstruct privilege and wealth. While this trend itself is not inherently problematic, I worry that the future of television and film will stray further from telling the experiences and stories of low- and middle-class people, skewing representation towards this alluring spectacle of wealth.

# New Year, Same You?

## How realistic are New Year's resolutions?

Priya Maiti

Commentary Contributor

The holiday season brings a period of celebration, indulgence, and relaxation. Many, however, view the new year as a clean slate to set goals to improve themselves and their lives. Enter the New Year's resolutions.

They have long been contested, and opinions on them are divided. Some shudder at the mention and see New Year's resolutions as a waste of time and destined to fail. Others revel at the chance, using the time to kick the "bad habits" they've succumbed to over the past year.

The idea that New Year's resolutions are virtually made to be broken isn't just rhetoric pushed by those resistant to them. Studies show that only 8 per cent of people who make resolutions keep them. Think about your own life: how many people do you know who have really been able to revolutionize their life long-term through a New Year's resolution? New Year's resolutions almost feel like a challenge you set yourself up to fail.

Despite practical evidence to the contrary, there is an argument for the pursuit of New Year's resolutions. Researchers at the Wharton School of Business have found that the notion of a "clean slate" motivates people to "pursue their aspirations" – what they call the "fresh-start effect." However, when New Year's resolutions are made, they can often take the form of dramatic and unrealistic goals that lack a road map to follow, and they often rely on a "cold-turkey" methodology – giving up something completely without factoring in the psychological effects of withdrawal. The Monday Campaigns were created to change health behaviour in a sustainable way by harnessing the power of the fresh start but with a frequency that avoids the outlandish goals usually set in the New Year.

The failure of New Year's resolutions can also stem from a lack of necessity. You may believe that if a change in your life is so necessary, it would have been implemented already. And if it's so necessary and hasn't been implemented, why would the new year bring a change in behaviour long-term? For example, if a bad habit, such as overspending, is truly affecting

your life in a way that you are aware of, the effects of this habit, in this case running out of money, will inevitably force you to make changes in your behaviour.

So many New Year's resolutions aren't born out of true personal desire for change but are rather based on societal standards for what people ought to care about. Research published in the *Canadian Psychology Journal* in 2008 has demonstrated that "autonomous goal motivation" – that is, goals motivated not by societal standards but by individual ones – allows individuals to pursue their goals with greater dedication and resolve.

Eating junk food, drinking alcohol, and consuming too much social media are among the many vices that the media shames people for, with countless articles popping up about the harms and consequences of this kind of consumption. According to McKinsey & Company, the wellness industry is estimated to be worth \$1.5 trillion, and much of the rhetoric around self-improvement stems from age-old marketing tactics designed to make people feel like they have defects or deficits that can be solved by purchasing products. These

ads, and wellness discourse generally, are designed to make people feel like their inability to "fix" themselves is due to a lack of trying or an inability to find the right class, diet, or other wellness fad. A poll conducted by YouGovAmerica showed that 20 per cent of Americans proposed that their goal was to improve their physical health, with 19 per cent wanting to exercise more, 18 per cent wanting to eat healthier, and 17 per cent resolving to lose weight.

The effects of the pandemic on New Year's resolutions have also been proven, with the amount of Americans planning to make resolutions going from 43 per cent in December 2020 to 29 per cent in 2021. The pandemic prevented people from constantly being "on a grind," in part because it closed gyms, schools and workplaces, and stores. It put life into perspective and allowed people to reconsider what was important to them. The pandemic's effects on mental and physical health also meant that priorities shifted toward being mentally sound and grateful for the functioning of our bodies rather than trying to optimize productivity or fit into a certain dress size.

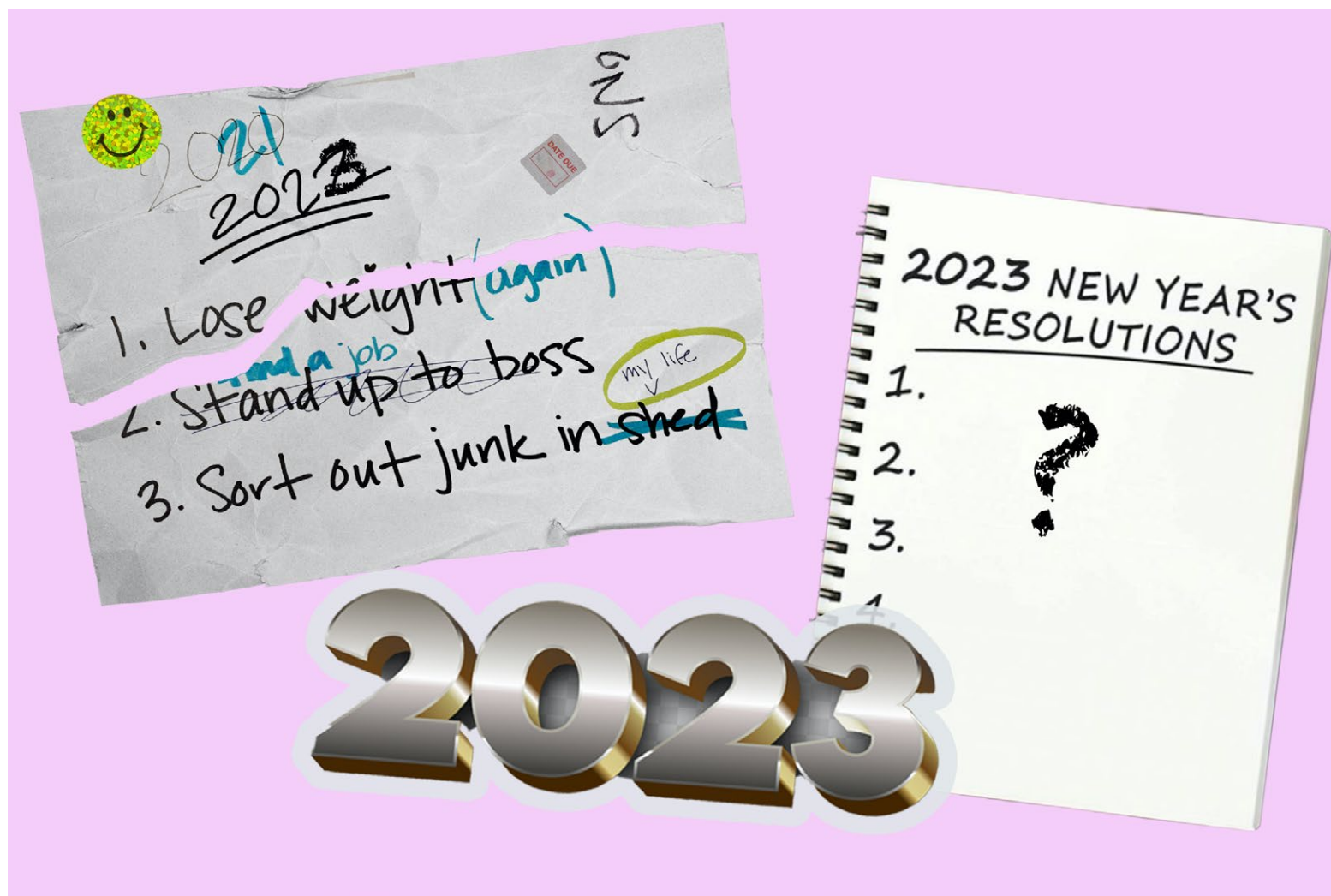
So as the world has reopened and the trend toward making resolutions has drastically decreased, has self-improvement fatigue finally kicked in?

Constant talk of self-improvement and increasing productivity is exhausting. Since the pandemic ended, there has been an increase in conversations condemning the notion of toxic productivity, with an expert reporting to the *Huffington Post* on how it "can make us feel like a failure if we're not constantly 'doing.'" We rarely consider how life would feel if we weren't trapped in a cycle of constant aims and goal-setting, suggesting that we always feel deficient in some aspect and unable to accept ourselves the

way that we are. Millennials and succeeding generations have been touted as the "burnout" generation, with books such as *Can't Even* by Anne Helen Petersen discussing how we are expected to succeed and devote time to "not just work, but life."

None of this is to say that people are unable to change their behaviours or curb their vices. Self-improvement is thoroughly possible and sometimes necessary. However, to be done effectively, it needs to come through real personal desire to change and improve one's life on one's own terms. To be attained, goals should be manageable, not created to impress. New Year's resolutions should come from a place of self-love, not self-punishment.

We rarely consider how life would feel if we weren't trapped in a cycle of constant aims and goal-setting, suggesting that we always feel deficient in some aspect and unable to accept ourselves the way that we are.



Genevieve Quinn | Photos Editor

# Diabetes in East Asia

## Unique risk factors affect East Asian individuals

**K. Coco Zhang**  
Sci-Tech Contributor

As of 2021, around 537 million adults between the ages of 20 and 79 are living with diabetes worldwide. This number is expected to reach 643 million by 2030 and 783 million by 2045. According to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), around 60 per cent of diabetics are from Asia, with nearly one-half of them living in China and India. Approximately half of Asian diabetics are undiagnosed.

Diabetes is a disease that develops due to a lack of insulin production or inefficient insulin utilization. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas in response to food ingestion. Once ingested foods are broken down into blood sugars, insulin helps these sugars enter the body's cells so that they can be used for energy. Diabetes causes insulin deficiency or insulin resistance, which can in turn lead to persistently high blood sugar levels as the sugar in the bloodstream cannot enter cells. Over time, high blood sugar can result in health problems, including heart disease, vision loss, and kidney conditions.

Genetically, evidence has shown that East Asian people are more likely to develop diabetes than their Caucasian counterparts. A 2020 study published in *Nature* investigated genetic information from 433,540 East Asian individuals. While type 2 diabetes is generally believed to develop due to obesity, the study's results showed that East Asians developed the condition despite not being obese. Researchers identified numerous new genetic variants associated with type 2 diabetes that were unique to people of East Asian descent, which could explain their higher likelihood of developing diabetes.

Additionally, a well-established physiological characteristic of East Asian women contributing to their increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes is their tendency to store fat viscerally instead of subcutaneously. Visceral fat is belly fat that surrounds internal organs, including the stomach, liver, and intestines. It is more dangerous to health than subcutaneous fat, which is fat stored just below the skin. When in excess, visceral fat can lead to type 2 diabetes. Therefore, the

tendency to gain visceral fat puts individuals of East Asian descent at a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Another physiological feature among East Asian individuals pertains to their increased likelihood of having impaired insulin function. Insulin is a hormone that plays a crucial role in developing type 2 diabetes. It lowers blood sugar levels after food consumption by allowing blood sugars to be absorbed by cells. When insulin functions poorly, blood sugar levels stay high after food consumption, increasing the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Considering that people of East Asian descent account for a significant proportion of total cases of diabetes worldwide, it is essential to prioritize interventions that target East Asian populations to combat the diabetes epidemic. Primary prevention of diabetes could be achieved by modifying risk factors, including a diet high in sugar and refined grains, lack of physical activity, and impaired insulin function. Public health policies promoting

a healthy diet among the population, such as the consumption of whole grains and plant-based proteins, should be reinforced. Public health agencies should also allocate funds to improve treatment modalities that preserve or boost pancreatic islet functioning, as such modalities could help prevent diabetes in East Asian individuals.

Early-life influences also play an essential part in diabetes prevention because maternal lifestyle and health conditions such as gestational diabetes and obesity affect the risk of diabetes in newborns. Interventions that promote a healthy body composition, diet, and lifestyle need to be implemented before and during pregnancy to significantly reduce the incidence of diabetes in the future child. Multisectoral agencies should collaborate to promote health literacy in parents-to-be.

Further research is required to more comprehensively understand the drivers of the diabetes epidemic before evidence-based prevention strategies can be proposed to address the rising global public health "tsunami." Policies

for diabetes management and prevention targeting the access and affordability of health services, diabetes medications, and appropriate glucose monitoring systems may be necessary. For example, prediabetes screening could be made more affordable to encourage regular screenings. Prediabetes is when blood sugar levels are higher than the normal range but not high enough for the person to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. It does, of course, indicate an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Prediabetes screening is important in diabetes prevention as prediabetes is reversible, meaning that healthy dietary and lifestyle habits can prevent or delay it from turning into type 2 diabetes.

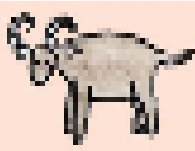
Lastly, it is notable that the prevention of diabetes is hindered by a lack of reliable epidemiological data in numerous East Asian countries. For instance, the prevalence of diabetes in countries without available local data is estimated based on modelling using pooled estimates from countries that share similar geographic, ethnic, and economic features; this results

**Olivia Shan** | Managing Editor

in less accurate interpretations of data. Another flaw in data collection pertains to the parameters being used. Many East Asian countries lack epidemiological data on impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) despite having a high IGT prevalence. IGT is a high-risk condition for diabetes and is diagnosed by the oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT). Instead, these countries use only fasting plasma glucose (FPG) tests, which mainly screen for diabetes by measuring blood sugar levels after fasting for eight to ten hours. The use of FPG alone in epidemiological studies is concerning because it is less sensitive in detecting diabetes and prediabetes than the oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT). According to a study conducted in 2015, using FPG only may significantly underestimate prediabetes and diabetes cases compared to using OGTT and FPG together. Therefore, there is a need to improve the collection and interpretation of epidemiological data regarding diabetes for use in future public health prevention activities, particularly in lower- and middle-income East Asian countries.



# HOROSCOPES



**ARIES**  
(MAR 21 - APR 19)

IN: '80s MUSIC & ROAD TRIPS  
OUT: THE AVATAR FRANCHISE



**TAURUS**  
(APR 20 - MAY)

IN: GREEN & DINNER PARTIES  
OUT: SMOKING



**GEMINI**  
(MAY 21 - JUN 20)

IN: MAKING THE FIRST MOVE  
OUT: FADS & BLACK COFFEE



**CANCER**  
(JUN 21 - JUL 22)

IN: CROCHETING & WINKING  
OUT: EARMUFFS



**LEO**  
(JUL 23 - AUG 22)

IN: WHOLE MILK & STRIPED SHIRTS  
OUT: HIGH WAISTED PANTS



**VIRGO**  
(AUG 23 - SEPT 22)

IN: SAVOURY BREAKFASTS  
OUT: CONTACTS & RETAIL



**LIBRA**  
(SEPT 23 - OCT 22)

IN: CROSTINIS & SOCCER  
OUT: INDECISION



**SCORPIO**  
(OCT 23 - NOV 21)

IN: BUZZCUTS & TRAINS  
OUT: TICKETMASTER



**SAGITTARIUS**  
(NOV 22 - DEC 21)

IN: BARBIECORE & LANGUAGES  
OUT: THE AVATAR FRANCHISE



**CAPRICORN**  
(DEC 22 - JAN 19)

IN: JENNIFER COOLIDGE  
OUT: BEREAL & BLIND OPTIMISM



**AQUARIUS**  
(JAN 20 - FEB 18)

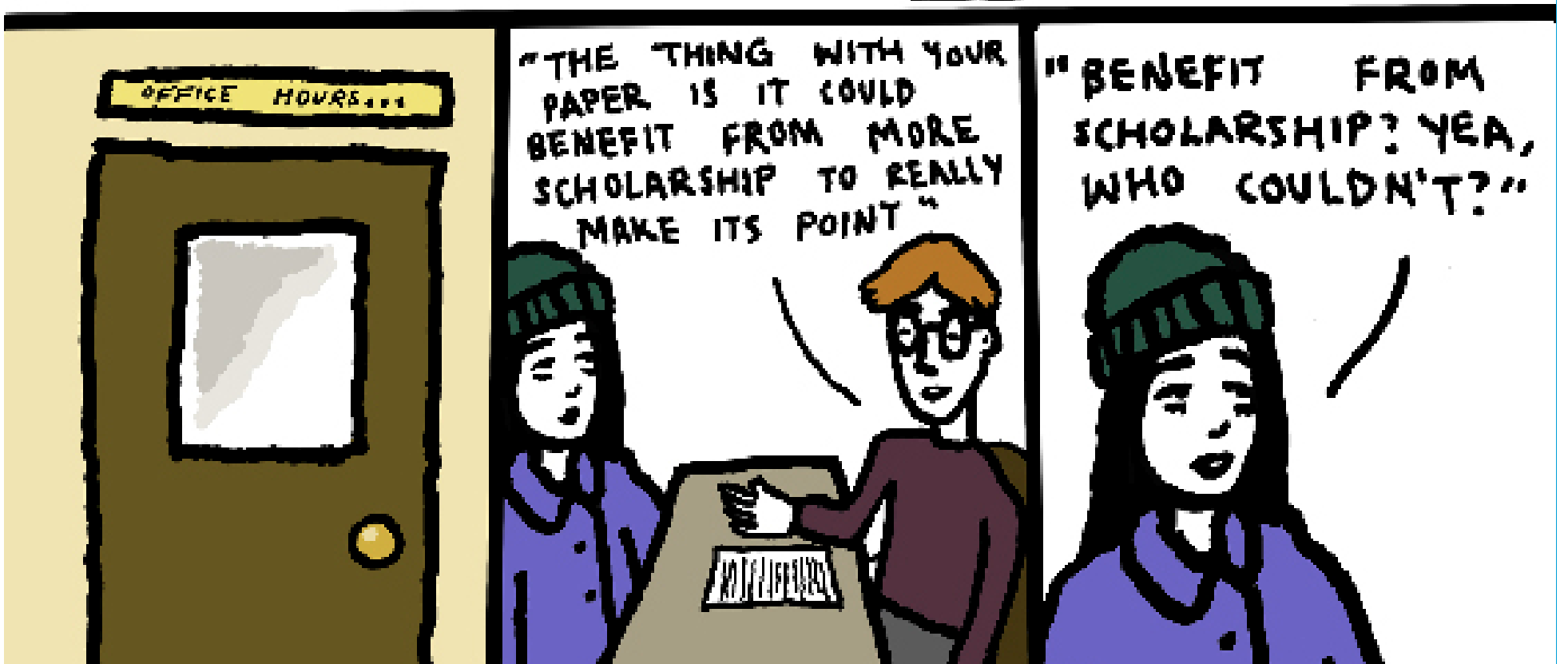
IN: DANCING & PODCASTS  
OUT: THE AVATAR FRANCHISE



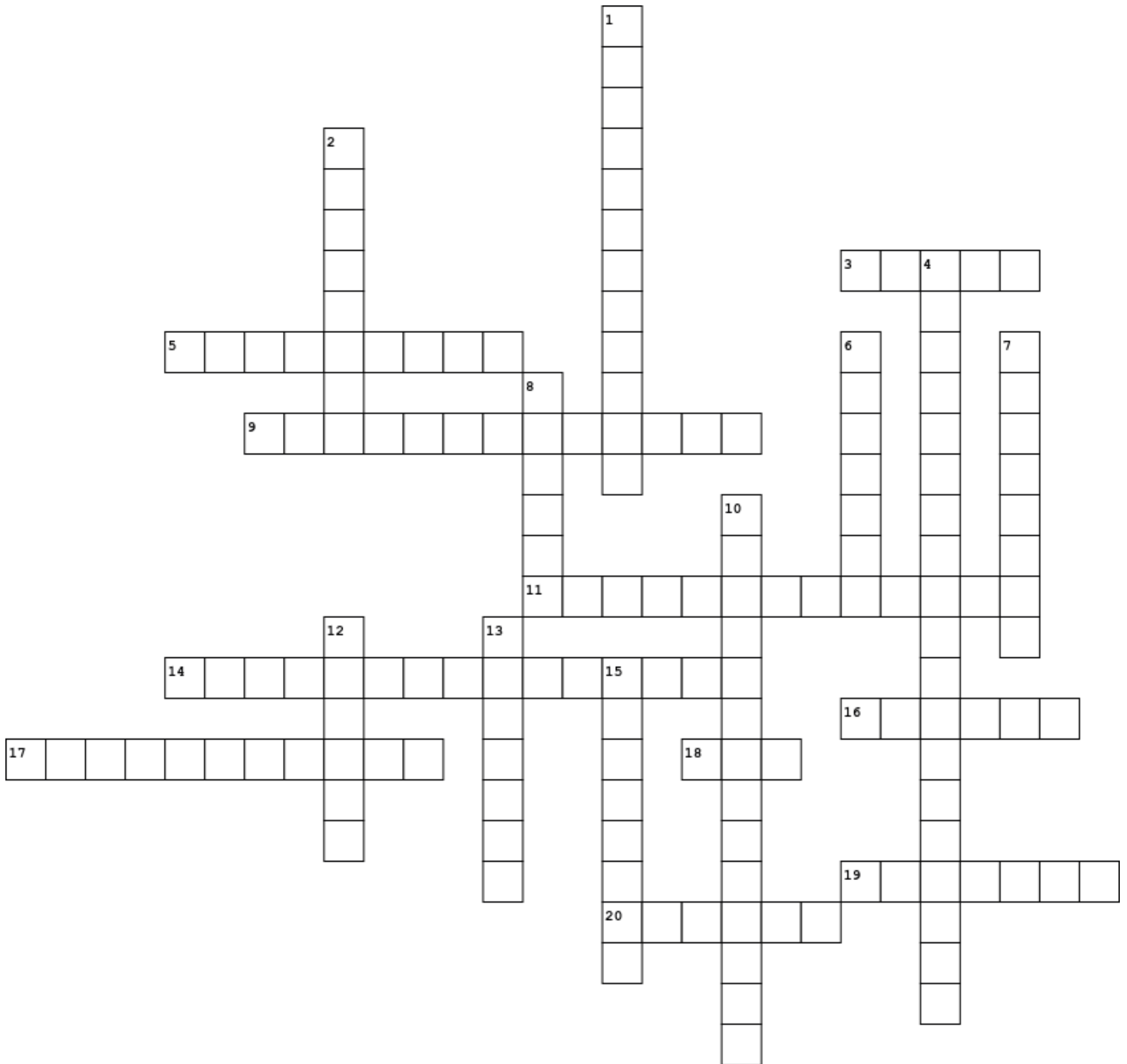
**PISCES**  
(FEB 19 - MAR 20)

IN: VOICEMEMOS & BIG THIEF  
OUT: BLEACHED BLONDS

**"BUT YOU DONT SEE ME WHINING!"**



# 2022 IN REVIEW CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**

- 3. The 2022 UN Convention on Biological Diversity.
- 5. Montreal neighbourhood given heritage status.
- 9. Occupation on Parliament Hill in Ottawa in January
- 11. Plaintiffs of the Royal Vic lawsuit.
- 14. Reopening affordable food kitchen for the McGill community.
- 16. Ford's anti-worker legislation.
- 17. Employees of AMUSE who struck in March.
- 18. McGill's first faculty union.
- 19. Former president and vice-chancellor of McGill, resigned in 2022.
- 20. Student activist organization that occupied the Arts building.

**DOWN**

- 1. Canadian lawyer and former judge who received an honorary degree from McGill in 2014.
- 2. Overturning of significant US Supreme Court case.
- 4. Pro-Palestine policy passed by SSMU.
- 6. Premier re-elect.
- 7. "should I step down as head of Twitter? I will abide by the results of this poll."
- 8. Divest McGill organizes one minute \_\_\_\_.
- 10. Black Panther 2.
- 12. An Act Respecting French, the Official and Common Language of Quebec.
- 13. "Queer in \_\_\_\_," published on March 11.
- 15. Winners of 2022 Stanley Cup.