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MDMA:

A tool for psychotherapy?

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Havoc at anti-Trump protests

Police release pepper spray into the crowd

XAVIER RICHER VIS
The McGill Daily

On Friday January 20, approximately 150 people gathered at the corner of Union and St. Catherine, in Square Phillips, to attend an anti-fascist demonstration. The demonstration was one of many that day to protest the inauguration of U.S. President Donald Trump.

The demonstration began with speeches from several speakers.

"I speak today as a Montrealer of North-African origins, as an immigrant who grew up here, but above all as a person who support the Indigenous people of this land, on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka lands," said Anas Bouslikhane, one of the event's speakers, to the crowd in French.

"If [the far-right] wants to build a wall which would block Mexican immigrants, as well as instate immigration policies that target North African Arabs and Muslims, we come here to question the legitimacy of closing those borders," continued Bouslikhane. "Borders of a country that is closing in on itself and its bigoted ideologies."

"We must today more than ever act in solidarity across borders, and categorically refuse, [Trump's] racist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, and nationalistic agenda," he concluded.

Present in the square were a number of anarchist, marxist, and other anti-capitalist groups. Large signs were displayed, many with "Make Racists Afraid Again," written on them.

"[Trump] and his cabinet have come to power on an explicitly racist, sexist, transphobic, homophobic, Islamophobic, and anti-immigrant platform," stated Eamon Toohey, another event speaker, "and [...] their victory has rung out far beyond the U.S.-Canada and the U.S.-Mexico border."

"As we speak, allies in Washington are disrupting the inauguration of Trump to fight for a world free from oppression, free from fascism," Toohey continued. "Standing together here, as an expression of solidarity with our American allies, and against the far-right in Quebec and Canada, against Kellie Leitch, against Kevin O'Leary, against PE-GIDA [Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West], against all those that threaten the well-being of the oppressed."

"We can't allow Canada's extractionary industrial policy or the congratulatory tone Trudeau has taken with the American far-right to stand," Toohey concluded. "If we



Protesters at the march in Phillips Square.

do, we put ourselves down the same path of fascism on which America is already embarking.

Marching down Ste. Catherine

After speeches by demonstration leaders, protesters walked west down Ste. Catherine, chanting: "1,2,3,4, this is fucking class war! 5,6,7,8, organize and smash the state!"

"We must today more than ever act in solidarity across borders, and categorically refuse [Trump's] racist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, and nationalistic agenda."

—Anas Bouslikhane
Speaker

"As a trans, non-binary, queer person, if I didn't join into the revolution, if I didn't join into the history being made around me, in the place that I live, the place that I call home, and the place that I wouldn't

be able to call home if it wasn't for the awful colonial past that is on this land, then I would just be contributing to more and more oppression by my silence," said Asher, one of the marchers, to The Daily.

"Our responsibility [by marching in Montreal] is showing solidarity with those who are directly affected," Asher continued. "I feel like it's not just showing [those in the U.S.] one march. It's not just one march, one movement in [Washington D.C.]. It's movements all around the world, and we support what they're doing. We support their opposition, we support their strength and their courage."

Some protesters shouted at Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) officers, with many bystanders on Ste. Catherine staring in either disbelief or shock. Some bystanders gathered inside businesses, either out of fear of marchers, or because private security guards had advised or forced people to stay inside.

At the corner of de la Montagne and Ste. Catherine, one protester tagged "Fuck capitalism" on a department store window.

A few protesters banged or threw objects at the windows of large department and retail store chain locations, attempting to break them. At least one protester succeeded, putting a large hole in and shattering an American Apparel window.

Encounters with the SPVM

Near the corner of St. Bishop and Ste. Catherine, officers had gathered outside their SPVM station, Poste de quartier 20.

"As a trans, non-binary, queer person, if I didn't join into the revolution, if I didn't join into the history being made around me, [...] then I would just be contributing to more and more oppression by my silence."

—Asher
Protester

Police stood with their bikes to ostensibly prevent protesters from damaging the station, some standing in riot gear. The majority of protesters walked by the station without incident.

However, after a number of projectiles thrown by protesters partly

shattered the SPVM station's window, officers charged the protesters, releasing pepper spray into the crowd.

In the street, St. Matthieu Street

While initially a portion of the march's route had been clear, eventually protesters began to walk down Ste. Catherine alongside cars and buses, eliciting some annoyed honks from drivers.

Around 7:00 p.m., protesters reached St. Matthieu. One SPVM van was hit by a protester, the driver subsequently driving down Ste. Catherine to get out of the way.

At that exact moment, riot police walking behind the march began to bang on their shields, chasing protesters and forcing them up St. Matthieu. Demonstrators running up the street quickly dispersed, with other officers following in pursuit on foot.

That same riot line then came down St. Matthieu, preventing press or bystanders to walk up the street. Many, out of fear of arrest, whether they were demonstrators or not, hid in businesses at the intersection.

Soon after, two large vans pulled up to the intersection, vans intended to transport 'kettled' protesters, i.e. protesters who had been rounded up and arrested. Over the loudspeaker, police informed those standing on the sidewalks that "this protest is over," ordering them to leave. It is unclear how many people were arrested and how many were hurt in clashes with the SPVM.

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Self defense classes not enough

More needs to be done to address sexual assault

NORA MCCREADY
The McGill Daily

Content warning: rape, sexual assault

What is the program?

Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) is a self-defense class offered through McGill Security Services. The class is “for women,” and consists of two sessions, held on two different days.

“The first part is [...] a two hour theory portion, which covers all the risky situations... [...] We talk about risk reduction, risk awareness, risk avoidance, risk recognition [...] and then we go to technical, which is, of course, punches, kicks, finger rolls, all of that,” Alexandra Gregorian, Investigations and Community Relations Supervisor at McGill and RAD instructor, said in an interview with The Daily.

The RAD self defense class costs twenty dollars and comes with a manual which provides suggestions on how to prevent risk and enhance personal safety.

What are the criticisms?

The program, which has been running at McGill since at least 2013, but is also offered at other North American universities, has faced criticism in the past. A *Jezebel* article from 2015 took a look into the manual that accompanies the classes.

According to the article, the manual is full of overly specific instructions for women, and “encapsulates the stone-age approach to sexual assault prevention that too many institutions in the U.S. still consider the gold standard: fear-based, authoritarian, and preoccupied with minutiae.”

The manual suggests: “Try ‘casing’ your own home, at night and/or during the day. Attempt to gain access when locked and ‘secure.’ If possible, invite a security survey from your local Police Department.”

“None of this is exactly bad advice,” the *Jezebel* article reads. “Doing these things won’t make you any less safe, although doing all of them (there are six full pages of Risk Reduction Strategies) might make you kind of paranoid.”

When asked about the manual and its role in the RAD classes at McGill, Gregorian responded, “[In the manual] what they do is they talk about risk awareness [...]. Some of it is dated, [however] it really is about securing the home so there are no dark areas or things like that.”

Paniz Khosroshahy,* founder of the McGill chapter of Silence is Violence, responded to criticisms of RAD by relating it to a more universal problem.

“If we want to critique RAD, we need to critique all education strategies on campus that address sexual

assault because at the end of the day they are all used by the University to avoid responsibility for actual occurrences of sexual assault on campus and supporting survivors,” she wrote in an email to The Daily.

“It’s in the interest of the University to keep its students happy by saying ‘look we have these education initiatives for you,’ to detract attention from the fact that consent education may not work and that the University’s sexual assault policy doesn’t really focus on placing sanctions on perpetrators,” Khosroshahy concluded.

In a phone interview with The Daily, Bianca Tétrault, McGill’s Liaison Officer (Harm Reduction), who has worked on developing consent education, voiced her concerns and emphasized that RAD is not a total solution to the problem of sexual assault on campus.

“I do have my concerns when it comes to self-defense focused courses. I think that it’s a very, very fine line that instructors walk, because we know the realities around the misconceptions of sexual violence, the stigmas and the internalization of the shame and blame,” she said. “It can’t be a stand alone solution or offering.”

“It’s in the interest of the University to keep its students happy by saying ‘look we have these education initiatives for you,’ to detract attention from the fact that consent education may not work.”

—Paniz Khosroshahy
Founder of McGill chapter of Silence is Violence

“It is unfortunate that we have to put the onus on women for them to change their behavior because they’re not the problem,” Gregorian also noted. “But I feel that it’s our responsibility to make sure that we do provide a self defense class in the meantime, until there is a culture change.”

Where has the program succeeded?

Tétrault took the class a few years ago and spoke of the positive impact it had on her and her fellow participants: “What was [...] impressive was actually watching the participants in the workshop [...]. When we provide education, there needs to be components for everybody. We may not all agree on approaches, but we can’t say ‘just because I don’t believe in self-defense classes you shouldn’t either.’”

“It is unfortunate that we have to put the onus on women for them to change their behavior because they’re not the problem.”

—Alexandra Gregorian
RAD Instructor

Gregorian agreed, emphasizing that she believes women come out of these classes feeling empowered.

Both women emphasized the need for diversity in the solution to sexual violence, as well as recognition of the fact that everybody has a different way of feeling safe.

Gregorian spoke of a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, involving nine hundred women over a four year period across Canadian campuses, including the University of Calgary, Guelph, and Windsor.

“Half of those women were provided with the self defense course and half of them weren’t. What they’ve noticed in the study is that rape dropped by nearly fifty per cent. So these programs do work,” Gregorian said.

Moving Forward

When asked if RAD talks about recognizing dangerous and unhealthy relationships that could lead to sexual assault, Gregorian responded, “We don’t cover that specifically, but [...] the theory [part of the class] is a safe space and we let [the participants] know it is a safe space.”

“I think the bigger conversation we need to have is who is responsible for preventing violence? Where does the responsibility lie?” Tétrault also said. “Oftentimes the reality is that people freeze, and that’s okay, and that’s a survival mechanism [...] We have to keep talking about that.”

*Paniz Khosroshahy is a staff writer for The Daily.

We can't make the same mistake

Documentary screening and panel highlights Indigenous empowerment

MARINA CUPIDO
The McGill Daily

In 2007, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCSC) and the Assembly of First Nations began a historic legal battle against the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, arguing that the welfare services available to Indigenous children on reserves were vastly – indeed, dangerously – inferior to those offered to other Canadian children.

After nine grueling years, during which the federal government attempted to delay and obstruct the complainants, the latter won their case. In her film “We Can’t Make the Same Mistake Twice,” Alanis Obomsawin documents the case in detail, bearing witness to the tireless work of the children’s rights advocates involved.

A Montreal screening

On Thursday January 18, the documentary was screened at Cinema du Parc for the McGill community. Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the FNCFCSC and a professor in McGill’s School of Social Work, was in attendance, along with Obomsawin.

Blackstock is a central figure in “We Can’t Make the Same Mistake Twice.” In her role at FNCFCSC, she was heavily involved in bringing the initial discrimination complaint, and gave extensive testimony throughout the case.

Blackstock opened Thursday’s screening with an indictment of the apathy and systemic racism that has devastated the lives of many Indigenous children on Canadian reserves. In particular, she mentioned the case of two twelve-year-old girls from the Wapekeka First Nation in Ontario, who committed suicide earlier this month.

“Throughout history, Canada has always known about the inequalities, known about the harms, and relied on the public to stop watching and not demand change,” said Blackstock. “My one request of you is that you don’t look away.”

Obomsawin also spoke, thanking the attendees for their presence.

“You’re about to see a very important story,” she said, “one that is, of course, very dear to me and to thousands of people.”

Obomsawin told the audience that in the course of her career as a documentary filmmaker on Indigenous issues, she had been present in many courtrooms, watching many Indigenous people receiving discriminatory treatment at the



RAHMA WIRYOMARTONO | The McGill Daily

hands of the Canadian justice system. After a lifetime spent witnessing and being subjected to racial and colonial oppression, this case had brought her hope.

“The feeling in the courtrooms was so horrifying,” she said, “mainly because of the disrespect. And when I say disrespect, I mean everybody, including the judges and the lawyers. [...] The feeling was, ‘we know all about you, you’re guilty, shut up, go to jail.’ And what I want to say, when I sat in the courtroom this time, at the tribunal of human rights, I watched the 72 witnesses that came to speak, and I saw our people be respected.”

The documentary itself follows the nine-year legal battle in great detail, showing extensive courtroom footage, supplemented by interviews with those participating in the case. The audience at Cinema du Parc seemed engrossed, with many gasping audibly during particularly harrowing portions of the film.

Panel discussion

After the screening, a panel discussion was held. The panel featured four McGill students and was moderated by Allan Downey, a McGill professor specializing in Indigenous history.

One of the panelists, Amal El-sana Alh’jooj, a PhD candidate in McGill’s School of Social Work, noted the parallels between the systemic discrimination documented in Obomsawin’s film and the discrimination faced by Palestinians like herself, living in territory controlled by Israel.

“Canada has a reputation as a place where human rights are protected,” said Alh’jooj, “and we look at Canada as really an idol for these kinds of things.”

“So all of a sudden to come here,” she continued, “and discover that in the backyard of Canada, there is this catastrophe of many, many years, it’s kind of really shocking. And I think the role of social workers, community organizing, and all of us here is how to bring this case to the forefront – in the front yard of Canada, and to [...] be brave enough to put these things on the table.”

“As someone who came from an Indigenous community in the south part of Israel, living many years in situations of discrimination, house demolition, evacuating in the name of the law, and advocating for my own people’s human rights, what this [film] is telling us is that all systems are very similar.”

Israeli officials, said Alh’jooj, routinely make the same arguments which the Canadian government used to attack and delegitimize Blackstock and her fellow activists. For this reason, the documentary resonated deeply with her.

“The feeling in the courtrooms was so horrifying, mainly because of the disrespect.”

—Alanis Obomsawin
Documentary filmmaker

Another panelist, Carlee Loft, a Kanien’keha:ka student majoring in psychology at McGill, spoke “not as someone who has gone through child welfare myself, but who has cared very deeply about someone who has, and who has seen them struggle, trying to connect back to their community, trying to find ties to their family.”

“What’s even harder is watching them struggle against this label that’s given to them, of a ‘problem child’ [...] and this troubled Indigenous youth,” continued Loft. “This isn’t the

same generation that went through residential schools, but they’re going through something very similar”

Christian Quequish, a political science major at McGill and the Students’ Society of McGill University (SSMU) Indigenous Affairs Commissioner, spoke about the challenges of effective allyship and the pitfalls of reconciliation.

“I guess what really struck me [about the film] was non-Indigenous children [...] supporting Indigenous children,” he began. “It’s incredibly symbolic – it’s not something that I grew up with, but it’s good to see that that’s a trend that’s happening. [...] I think for us older folks there needs to be a recognition that the relationships between Indigenous peoples has been historically imbalanced, and that discriminatory policies sustain this imbalance.”

“The way allies approach Indigenous peoples’ issues sometimes reinforces that balance to the point where it’s more about feeling good about themselves than actual empowerment of Indigenous people,” he continued. “So in approaching better relations between the two groups, it seems as if it’s time to start privileging Indigenous voices. [...] Empowerment should come first, and symbolic acts should follow.”

PGSS Council talks transparency

Councillors send Legal Information Clinic question to referendum

ELLEN COOLS
The McGill Daily

On Wednesday January 18, the Post-Graduates Students Society (PGSS) Council met for its monthly meeting.

Councillors heard an announcement regarding the Anthropology Graduate Student Association (AGSA)'s resolution to support the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, concerns regarding transparency, a motion to bring a question regarding a fee increase for the Legal Information Clinic at McGill (LICM) to referendum, and a motion regarding a fee waiver which was tabled.

Transparency issues

Alex Magdzinski, president of the Nursing Graduate Student Association (NGSA), questioned the fees charged for room bookings in the Thompson House, and the lack of transparency surrounding said fees.

According to Magdzinski, it is not clear how fees for room bookings in the Thompson House are calculated. Magdzinski looked into previous documents of contracts to calculate the cost of room bookings in previous years, and alleged that the NGSA is being overcharged for certain room bookings.

"I know there was one thing taken out in the budget last year," Magdzinski explained. "[When] we used to book rooms in the

Thompson House, if you bought drinks or food or what not, your booking fee was reduced."

"Maybe it's \$100 more, \$60 more for an event, but for PGSA's [Post-Graduate Student Associations] that don't have a huge budget, it's money that we're taking away from [...] student initiatives," he elaborated. "Generally just [...] the quality of our services that we provide is impacted, and I'm just trying to see bigger term how much the PGSS is actually spending to keep Thompson House in the black."

PGSS Internal Affairs Officer Mina Anadolu offered some context regarding the increased fees for room bookings. She noted that when groups book certain rooms, they pay for staffing the space and the cleanup.

But Anadolu added that she "understand[s] the argument that it's kind of counterproductive to charge PGSA's or ourselves room booking fees."

She suggested that Magdzinski contact the Board of Directors regarding this issue, as the Board made decisions regarding fees last year based on the results of a survey on Thompson House sent to PGSS members. This included the removal of the cost recovery program, where if groups bought drinks and foods, the room booking fee was reduced.

"All of those executive decisions were made by the Board and based on the survey, so they may be able to give you more clear rationale as to why those changes occurred and about the

minimum charges that we need to upkeep the place," she said.

PGSS Health Commissioner Andrew Dixon brought up the issue of transparency: "I think what's really required here is that we sit down with the business [Thompson House] and we just hash out the details of how much it's going to cost and why. Once we have that list we can start to negotiate whether it's an appropriate fee."

LICM referendum question

Councillors also voted on a motion regarding sending a question to referendum that dealt with the Legal Information Clinic at McGill.

The referendum question asks to increase the non-opt-outable fee for the LICM from \$2.00 to \$4.50 per student per semester, excluding summer terms, starting in Fall 2017.

Sunny Yang, Director of Communications at LICM, and Sean Pierce, LICM's Director of Student Advocacy and University Affairs, spoke to Council about the motion.

The LICM, Yang explained, "started in 1973 and since then we've always been here for students; it's always been a student-run service that offers free and bilingual legal information as well as advice." More specifically, the LICM serves both McGill students and members of the community.

Mathew, a student in the Neuroscience Graduate program noted, "There's 40,000 students at McGill, you guys get fees from undergraduate and graduate stu-



PGSS Council.

ELLEN COOLS | The McGill Daily

dents. [...] That means about 40,000 people are giving you \$180,000 in fees. Could you explain where that money's going and why you think you need that much?"

Yang explained that the LICM incurs costs from renting offices in the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) building, and pays directors to work at the LICM in the summer.

"We have more volunteers that want to volunteer at the Legal Information Clinic than we have the space for, and that means [...] we have resources at our disposal that could help us reduce wait times that we're not able to leverage," Pierce added.

These wait times are substantial. "We try to provide about a one week turnaround time between then they call in and when they receive their answer," Yang explained. "The problem is questions grow stale. So at some point, if we have too many

questions and not enough students ready to answer those questions, we have to do what's called 'closing the lines.'"

"We tell students that at this point, by the time we get to their question, resolve their issue, it might actually be too late for them. [...] That's not ideal," he added.

The increased fee would allow the LICM to rent more office space, and thus have more volunteers and reduce their wait time, they argued.

The motion was passed, with two opposed.

Councillors also heard a motion regarding the Legal Information Clinic at McGill's request to waive the \$200 fee applied to all external groups who want to conduct their referendum through PGSS. This motion was tabled, however, because it had not yet gone to a second reading, as required by PGSS bylaws.

Minister Jean Yves Duclos comes to McGill

Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development takes questions

XAVIER RICHER VIS
The McGill Daily

On Monday, January 16, Liberal McGill hosted a question and answer session with Jean Yves Duclos, Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Duclos answered questions on topics ranging from the federal government's National Housing Strategy, homelessness, First Peoples issues, mortgages, and urban housing, all of which fall under his portfolio.

Urban housing

One attendee, Jesse, reminded Duclos that in a country like Canada, the cost of living varies a great deal between urban areas like Vancouver and Toronto, and certain regions like rural Alberta and Ontario.

"What is the government doing to [...] compensate for that difference?" he asked. "In Vancouver, the living wage [...] is \$25. There are massive discrepancies, so I think there is a middle class that now can have a \$100,000 dollar income, and still not be able to afford a home in Vancouver."

"The housing needs and the housing circumstances of Canadians vary

quite a lot," responded Duclos. "This being said, not all Canadian regions display this wide range of housing conditions, and it's true that in Toronto and Vancouver in particular [...], the regions where both the cost of housing is high and rising, those communities present specific challenges."

"Unfortunately, despite the tools that the Canadian government can use, through the CMHC, Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation, in particular, through regulations, through housing insurance, and mortgages [...] it's very difficult to address the localized tensions [that] these communities face."

As a result, municipalities are best equipped to address these issues, Duclos said, stressing municipal planning, development of public transportation, and economic and demographic growth as key issues to address in supporting middle-class Canadians.

Youth homelessness

Another attendee, Meghan, asked, "What is the government doing to invest in the prevention of youth homelessness?"

Duclos stressed the importance of fighting homelessness at the local

level, using the example of Montreal as a city where a number of organizations have an ability at the local level "to understand how to protect the youth against homelessness, and to look at the problem in a broad manner."

Duclos also highlighted that addressing youth homelessness doesn't solely revolve around housing concerns.

"You need to provide [homeless youth] with physical safety, mental health, physical health, and then you can start to develop a relationship, build emotional capital that we need to interact with the homeless youth, provide them with hope," he said.

"Hope is critical in assisting homeless youth," he continued, "and then slowly, with confidence and appropriate support, to develop the other dimensions of their life, such as training [...] the ability to participate in [...] the labour force, and slowly to develop their social and other forms of capital."

Duclos clarified that the best way the federal government can assist localized homelessness initiatives was through adequate resource support.

"Last March, the federal government announced for the first time in seventeen years an increase in funding

to fight homelessness across Canada," he told attendees. "A fifteen per cent increase, which is making a big difference across Canada [...], but what is even more important is the ability of organizations and communities to make the best use of these additional resources in pushing ahead their assistance to homeless populations."

Northern housing crises

Another attendee asked what the federal government was doing to address Northern housing crises in "Nunavut and northern Quebec."

"There are two elements to that," answered Duclos. "The first is the obvious greater needs and greater costs associated to housing in the North, which has to be acknowledged: again, in last March's budget, transfers to the Territories and northern communities were adjusted to [reflect] greater need and greater costs."

"The second thing is the fact that in Northern communities, we find in greater numbers, Indigenous families and communities, and there is an opportunity in re-engaging the federal government in assisting the housing need of Indigenous families," continued Duclos. "The nation-to-nation

agenda is 'Can we in part implement it through strong active and respectful relationships with Indigenous organizations and governments?'"

Indigenous homelessness

"Are there any plans to specifically address the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples within homeless communities?" asked an attendee.

"It is such a dire state of affairs," responded Duclos, "including here in Montreal, but even more so in Western Canada to recognize this failure [...] of building a proper relationship between the federal government, and other governments, and Indigenous communities, [which] has led to all sorts of evils, including that of many homeless Indigenous peoples in cities across Canada."

"Building that relationship is, among other things, through supporting housing ambitions of our Indigenous families through resources, but also equally importantly through appropriate relationships," he went on. "It's not just money that matters, it's also the ability of Indigenous governments and communities to feel and be empowered when it comes to aiding them."

An independent Indigenous court

Panel discusses successes and challenges of Akwesasne court

MARINA CUPIDO
The McGill Daily

On Monday January 16, several dozen people gathered at New Chancellor Day Hall to hear a presentation by three administrators of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Canada's first independent Indigenous court, about the structure and nature of the court.

Panelists included Kyrie Ransom, justice coordinator at the court, Bonnie Cole, prosecutor and legal council, and Gilbert Terrence, a court administrator. The presentation was followed by a discussion period moderated by Kirsten Anker, a professor at McGill's Faculty of Law who specializes in property and Aboriginal peoples and the law.

The Mohawk community of Akwesasne straddles the St. Lawrence River at the intersection of the Quebec-Ontario and Canada-United States borders. As such, its residents have had to contend with even greater challenges to their sovereignty than many other Indigenous nations in North America. Until the mid-1990s, judges at the Akwesasne Court were external officials appointed by the federal government under the Indian Act of 1876.

When this process was abandoned, it was expected that Indigenous communities would transfer to the jurisdiction of the provinces in which they were located. For Akwesasne, this would have meant adjusting to two different provincial systems. Instead, the community appointed its own justices, and set about the process of codifying their legal and cultural traditions into a body of law that would be faithful to the values

of Akwesasne's people, and make sense to external authorities.

This process was made all the more complicated by the difficulty of translating key concepts from the Mohawk language into English: Ransom explained to the audience that the original Mohawk term for "justice" literally meant the fall of a gavel.

"The connotation was very negative," she said, so the lawmakers of Akwesasne consulted linguistic experts in order to develop a new, more positive term. In the end, they came up with a word better suited to the legislators' project. Roughly translated, it means 'those who uphold the law.'

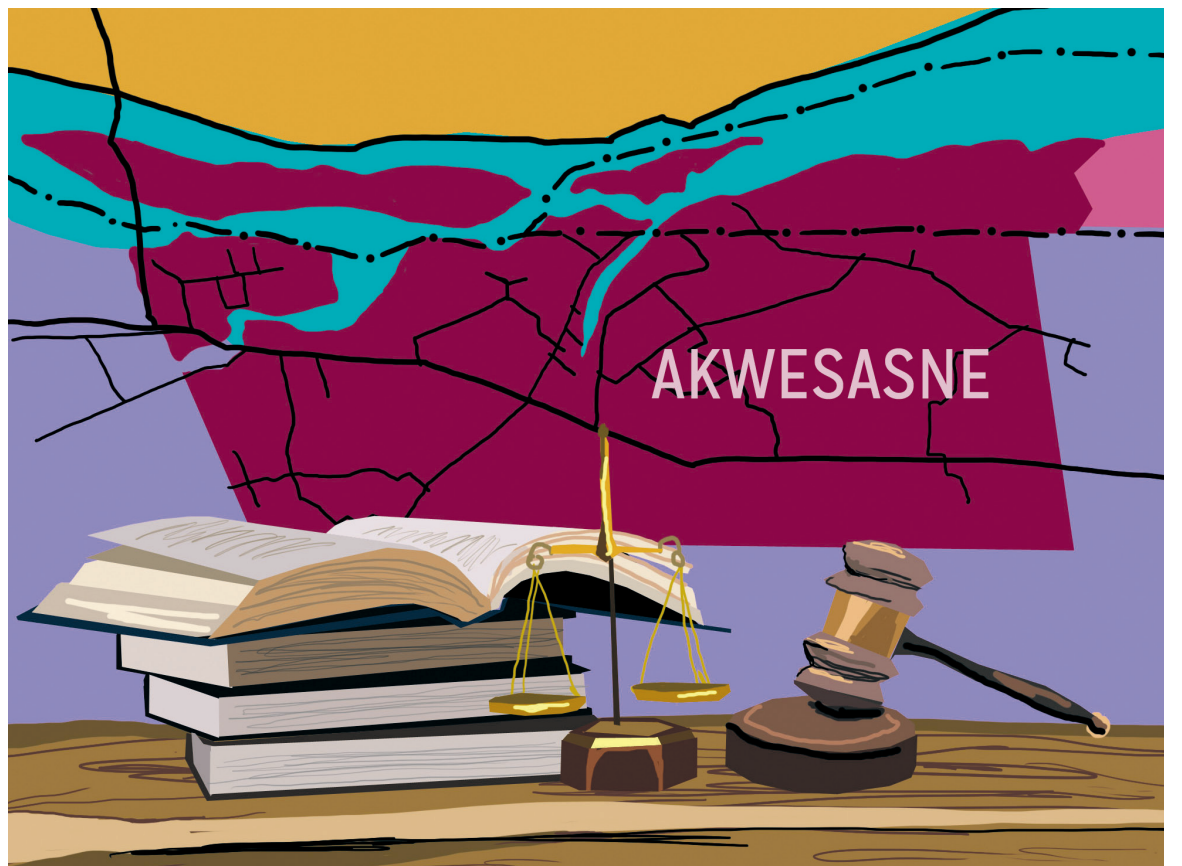
While some carefully considered updates to traditional terminology were made, the overriding imperative of Akwesasne's legislators was respecting the community's cultural and legal practices, and grounding their work in collective history.

Finally, after roughly two decades of work, the project was complete: Akwesasne's groundbreaking legal system was officially voted into law by local authorities last summer.

While many other Indigenous communities have their own courts, Akwesasne is the first in Canada to have constructed its own system without, as it were, permission from the government.

"Basically, our court has jurisdiction over all matters on Akwesasne lands," explained Cole. While the court does not yet handle more serious infractions, such as murder and assault, the legislators hope to expand their jurisdiction in this regard.

"We structured the court to meet the needs of the community," Cole said. "It's a restorative justice approach, looking at restoration, rehabilitation, restitution – all of



RAHMA WIRYOMARTONO | The McGill Daily

those concepts. [...] We look at the person, and not necessarily just the offense. So when we're dealing with people, we'll be looking at who he or she is, what are their skills, what are their gifts, and how will that be used and incorporated into restoring balance, not only to that person, but to the community."

This ethos, said Cole, has fostered an environment that is more flexible and less adversarial than the mainstream Canadian legal system.

Notably, she explained, "We don't do jail, we don't intend to do that. It's not for us. We know that the system is failing, right?"

According to the Office of the Correctional Investigator, nearly a

quarter of Canada's imprisoned population is composed of Indigenous people, while this demographic only represents four per cent of the general population.

Disproportionate incarceration and police brutality is simply one facet of the systemic oppression faced by Indigenous Canadians. Rather than send more marginalized citizens to prison for relatively minor offenses, the Akwesasne court resorts to more constructive penalties.

In accordance with the principle of restorative justice, those convicted are often required to perform community service – painting walls or coaching soccer, while perhaps attending therapy sessions,

or undergoing treatment for substance abuse.

According to Terrence, the system is working: out of 63 cases in the restorative justice program so far, sixty have been successful.

However, in Cole's words, the court is still very much "a work in progress." It is in serious need of more legislators to continue refining the legal system and enable the understaffed establishment to work more efficiently.

The panelists at Monday's event extended an invitation to the McGill law students at the panel to come work at Akwesasne, and judging by the enthusiasm of the audience, they may very well be in luck.

Floor Fellows "frustrated" with University

On January 12, the Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE) released a video on their Facebook page, showing AMUSE President Claire Michela interrupting the breakfast meeting of the Human Resources subcommittee of the McGill Board of Governors.

She denounced the University's decision to renege on an agreement with AMUSE's bargaining team regarding Floor Fellow negotiations: the agreement had been reached through the use of an independent arbiter last December. Among other features, it stipulated salaries for Floor Fellows in McGill residences.

In an email to The Daily, Mi-

chela confirmed that the University rescinded the agreement, adding that "the University's decision to renege on a previous agreement is something that's never happened before. It is considered extremely serious in labour law to go back on a previous agreement, big or small."

"The fact that the University backed out was delivered to us as information that the article on salaries had been rejected, unfortunately without justification," she elaborated.

Robert Comeau, McGill's Director of Labour and Employee Relations, told The Daily in an email that an agreement was reached in the last meeting with

the arbitrator, "conditional on McGill's ratification."

"The arbitrator asked that McGill review the tentative agreement and come back with their decision before she would render her own decision," he continued.

As the University vetoed the agreement, Comeau said both the University and AMUSE will begin new negotiations through the arbitrator.

According to Michela, AMUSE's parent union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) has hired legal counsel since the subcommittee's decision to veto the agreement.

Despite the setback, communication between AMUSE and the University is taking place through

"several lines of communication," in Michela's words.

"Some have been through [PSAC] to the University directly," she elaborated. "We are also working on getting arbitration dates as soon as possible with the arbitrator."

According to Comeau, the arbitrator has scheduled hearings for February 6; however, "it is too early to say when [a collective agreement] will occur."

When asked whether AMUSE will bring any charges against the University, Michela responded that "we are evaluating all options in addition to arbitration."

Floor Fellows' reactions

Many Floor Fellows are disap-

pointed with the University's decision to veto the agreement.

Michela said that she has heard from both past and current Floor Fellows, who "feel frustrated about what has happened, but [feel] supported by what AMUSE is doing in response."

In a statement to The Daily, Isabelle Oke, Floor Fellows Vice President and representative for AMUSE, added that "the reactions I've gotten have been a lot of disappointment but not overwhelming surprise; this latest move by McGill is inconsiderate of the time and work we put into this job, but it also isn't uncharacteristic behavior."

—By Ellen Cools

On unchecked celebrity activism

Celebrity activism should be scrutinized, rather than blindly praised

MOIZZA UL HAQ
Commentary Writer

Political activism has never shied away from the spotlight; from the time of World War II, to the Civil Rights Movement, to the Vietnam War, to the Black Lives Matter movement, it has always thrived among celebrities. A life in the spotlight comes with a great deal of responsibility, as audiences are constantly influenced by celebrity lifestyles and endorsements. Whether they want to or not, and whether they know what to do with it or not, celebrities hold a great deal of influence. Especially in today's digital age, both directly and indirectly, celebrities are able to use social media to take social and political stances. Social media has contributed immensely to the prominence of celebrity activism, acting as a megaphone for social commentary, allowing celebrities to motivate and mobilize social consciousness.

In light of the 2016 U.S. Election, which culminated in Trump's victory, and the preceding coverage that gave him the platform to be a rather loud spokesperson for bigoted people, many celebrities have spoken out about their aversion to Trump and his agenda. Earlier this month, Meryl Streep took the opportunity at the Golden Globes to criticize Donald Trump's bigotry and intolerant practices. She claimed Hollywood is an industry established and preserved by what she deemed 'foreigners,' denounced Trump for mocking a reporter with a disability, Serge Kovalski, and called for the protection of journalists to "safeguard the truth." Her speech quickly gained attention, garnering criticism from Trump himself and receiving support from other celebrities. However, while Streep's speech is earnest and appreciated by many, it is only somewhat effective at addressing the issues that all Americans and other peoples are facing.

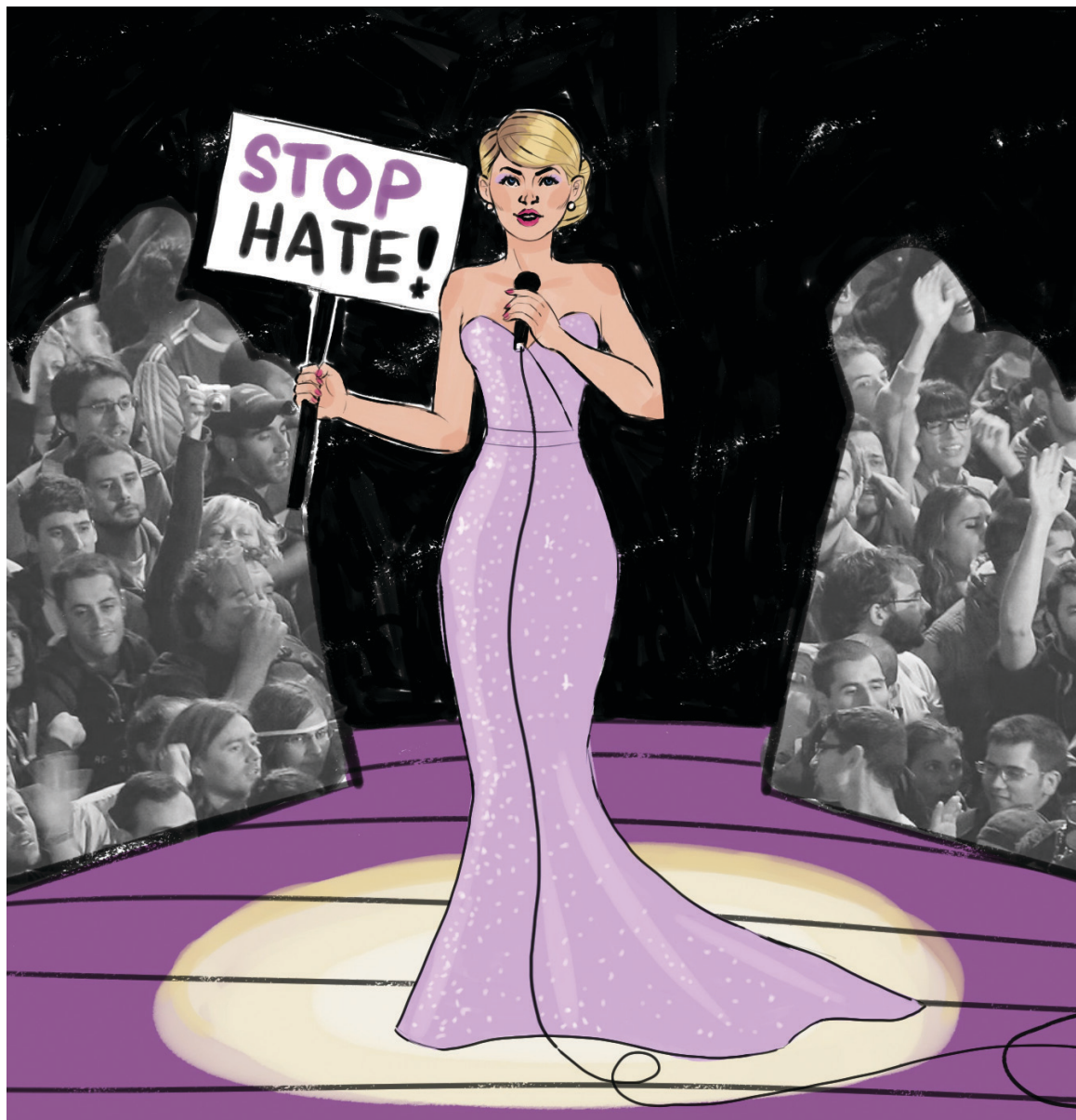
Streep's statement was not innovative or revolutionary. What she said in her speech was a shallow reiteration of what has been continuously said by people with disabilities and other marginalized peoples, who will be disproportionately affected by Trump's presidency. The kind of 'activism' some privileged celebrities engage in is often a watered down repetition of what marginalized people have already been saying. The tendency to prioritize celebrity voices often acts to silence marginalised folks from speaking about their own issues.

For instance, over the past few years, Native Americans have been resisting the establishment of the Dakota Access Pipeline that will threaten the water supply for the Standing Rock Sioux. Many famous

people came out in support of the movement, such as Shailene Woodley, who was even arrested for trespassing while protesting. While what she did can be considered commendable, she continuously talked about Indigenous issues without bringing to attention the many Indigenous activists that constantly surrounded her in this fight. This was especially highlighted in a video where she 'debunks' Thanksgiving, while Indigenous people can be seen assembling behind her. Instead of giving them a chance to voice their own opinions, she took it upon herself to act as their spokesperson. Woodley has also, in the past, asserted that "we are all Indigenous," an appropriative statement that not only centres non-Indigenous people in a movement that is not theirs, but also erases how Indigenous peoples have had uniquely painful experiences with settler-colonialism. Woodley demonstrates the fact that even when not ignoring them, celebrity activists tend to speak over the marginalized people they may claim to fight for.

[Shailene] Woodley demonstrates the fact that even when not ignoring them, celebrity activists tend to speak over the marginalized people they may claim to fight for.

Privileged white celebrities are limited in their ability to thoroughly comprehend and address the weight of sociopolitical issues. Streep's privilege is evident in her notion that firstly, the press and Hollywood are as vilified as 'foreigners' in America, and secondly, that the experiences of foreigners of colour, such as Dev Patel and Ruth Negga, were comparable to white 'foreigners' like Italian-born Amy Adams and Canadian Ryan Gosling. The lack of understanding with respect to the unequal and unfair treatment of Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC) in America and homogenization of the immigrant experience rendered the speech underwhelming from the beginning. She failed to amend this by the end of her speech, where she asserts that it is a privilege to be an actor, not



MARINA DJURDJEVIC | The McGill Daily

because of the wealth and power they hold, but because they have the ability to empathize. What could have been an acknowledgment of her own privileges that afford her security in a time of political turbulence, was actually a recognition of the craft itself that allows her to have these privileges. Most of the time, when celebrities are speaking on political issues, their privilege prevents them from seeing the social, political, and economic consequences faced by marginalized communities. When someone is bullying an innocent person, the problem is not simply solved by denouncing the bully. The victim must also be comforted and made to feel safe, and the systems that caused the bully to become powerful must be addressed and dismantled. Because of the privilege afforded to certain celebrities, they are able to denounce bullies like Trump, but fail to acknowledge, care for and support his victims: people of colour, LGBTQ+ folks, people with disabilities, and people at the intersections of these identities. As a result, people in these communities do not feel so invigorated by these calls to action, because they aren't often made to feel welcome and recognized.

The kind of 'activism' some privileged celebrities engage with is often a watered down repetition of what marginalized people have already been saying.

We should remember that engaging in politics and activism is not meant to be self-aggrandizing, but rather focused on societal change. For those who choose to use their platform to effect positive change, a critical examination of their privilege is necessary to understand the nuances of oppression, and marginalized

voices should be listened to and supported. Marginalized peoples have continuously fought for their own rights to life and livelihood and are able to do so with much more nuance and sensitivity than privileged celebrities who have not been through the same experiences. BIPOC, LGBTQ, and disabled celebrities, especially those at the intersections of these identities, often bring light to social issues in ways that white, cisgender, heterosexual, and/or able-bodied celebrities cannot, by highlighting their own experiences with oppressive systems. While I do believe that many privileged celebrities have good intentions and want to do what's right, I also believe that activism should be led by the oppressed. Celebrities should be using their platform and privilege to uplift and support victims of oppression, and help them gain access to the tools and resources to mobilize. This a much more effective, and more noble way to make a difference.

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Is socialism dead?

On whether or not socialism would work in the twenty-first century

ANGELO MANALOTO
Commentary Writer

A few weeks ago at McGill's bi-annual Activities Night, I overheard a spiel by a member of the Socialist Fightback as he explained — with admirable passion — why the capitalist system is inefficient. He criticized the fact that there exists a myriad of corporations with the exact same objectives. To make the best car, for instance, or the most accessible or advanced computer. Rather than compete and undermine each other's efforts, he asked, wouldn't it be more efficient if there was just no competition at all?

Intuitively, the case really does seem sound. Economically speaking, what we refer to as a "command economy," a system in which the government decides everything about commerce, is the most ideal system. Being able to decide precisely how much to produce is the dream of any economy, and the case for one supervisory power naturally does make sense. But that the State in this role, with human nature so inclined to greed and selfishness, should know exactly how to do this — when firms concerned only with maximizing profits nevertheless still struggle—is questionable. And that it should be responsible for all production makes the skepticism all the more profound.

Is socialism dead? This question occurs to me as I look at my calendar and see that this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, the historical realization of Karl Marx's indelible project. For reasons I cannot quite explain, the question is ominous. But it seems to me that its centennial year is as good a time as any to, at last, try and answer the question.

In the college setting, a debate on this question would not be hard to find. The average McGill student, even if not a determined, aspiring politico, more often than not has something to say, oftentimes, against capitalism. I should perhaps mention that this article is not meant as a defense of capitalism, but only to articulate that socialism does not work. Socialism is founded on a paradox, which when realized, makes clear not only why it does not work, but why it cannot work.

The socialist argues that in our current state of affairs — that is, a capitalist one — we as human beings are unable to actualize our true selves because the system does not work in our favor. Indeed it does not even work against it; it doesn't care for us at all. In

our current system, that migrants who work modest jobs in factories have no true control over their own lives is of no consequence, because the system does not even recognize them as human beings. Rather, they are treated merely as a means for profit, and their desires, interests, and pursuit of happiness are simply not relevant to the discussion. To this, socialism proposes the following solution: instead of allowing corporations to run themselves, the government should be given total control of society's means of production.

But suppose that we follow that course of action — and, in fact, many parts of the world already have. To name but a few: the Leninist and Stalinist phases of the Soviet Union, Chavez's Venezuela, and the late Fidel Castro's Cuba. These examples make it clear that power is inherently corruptible. And this is a reality that the socialist cannot quite accept. What they have merely done is confer what was in the first place so detestable about the corporations onto a government that is only able to avoid abusing power for profit because it has no need to.

The socialist argues that in our current state of affairs — that is, a capitalist one — we as human beings are unable to actualize our true selves because the system does not work in our favor.

The danger here is that economic power invariably translates to political power. In our capitalist society, it is not unfamiliar to us to hear about the influence of the wealthy on politics. In their favor, the government allows for deductions on mortgage interest, tax-cuts, and even tax-exemptions. But suppose the government should have total economic power. These particular injustices will likely cease to exist, but at what cost? If we look to the twentieth-century for answers, it becomes clear that the cost is liberty. If the government controls all



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facets of the economy, it gains leverage over every person or group that would wish it ill. Consider Cuba, perhaps the only remaining truly socialist country today. To quote an article from the Havana Times, the government's effort to have the country conform to one will is such that even the media does not "question decisions taken."

In the socialist state, then, the government, having a monopoly on both political and economic power, can organize society as it sees fit, and with virtually no opposition. This cannot be the portrait of equality envisioned by the socialist. Inherently socialist society's defining feature is not equality, but the government's unrivaled capacity for coercion. And it is for this reason that societies which have descended down this path have by and large fallen into disarray, and have emerged from it bare.

The objectives of socialism—equality, efficiency, and true freedom for the working people are

ones we all want to effectuate. But they are by no means exclusively socialist concepts. Although I have given only a vignette of its belying problems we see that, so from working towards their realization, socialism actually works counter to them. Its main problem is that, in its vision, it underestimates the capacity of power to corrupt even the noblest of ideals and individuals (we must remember that even the State comprises of human beings), and our limits. That is, that it does not follow from the fact that all people are altruistic some of the time, and that some people are altruistic all of the time, that all people are altruistic all of the time. But this is exactly what Socialism not only expects but requires. In these regards it turns a blind eye, and it is for this reason that not only does it not work, but also why it cannot work.

What is left, I believe, is to turn to the present, and reflect on how we can better our political and so-

cial condition, not from a socialist or capitalist, liberal or conservative perspective but from a rational, humanist one. Perhaps along the vein of a Rawlsian conception of justice as fairness, whereby some inequalities may be permissible if, and only if, they benefit the worst-off in a society. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, we must realize that there is a plurality of values and unavoidable trade-offs among them. Liberty is not equality, equality is not liberty, and the choice of either liberty or equality does not automatically make for a clear conscience. But I think we can all agree that any system founded on a paradox, that is too conducive to their negation because it is too ready to surrender too much to any government, should be — at long last — discarded.

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ELINA GENTILHOMME
'OVER PLAINS AND TERRAINS'



A culture of neglect

Campus remains physically, financially and socially inaccessible for many, despite McGill's supposed commitment to accessibility for all.

By Ada Marie McVean
Photo by Conor Nickerson

Accessibility: a word that conjures up images of wheelchair ramps and automatic doors, but aims to encompass so much more than just physical mobility barriers. While spaces like McGill's campuses can be – and indeed are – physically inaccessible for people with mobility impairments, they are also inaccessible for a variety of other reasons. There are numerous physical barriers that aren't accounted for by wheelchair ramps – not that McGill has many of those either.

Social and financial accessibility are physical accessibility's lesser-known cousins, and I'm still waiting for them to receive their acceptance letter and come to McGill. Once you start looking, it's hard to ignore their absence: from the nine-to-five (or worse, ten-to-four) business hours of university services that exclude those who work from accessing them, to the ever expensive university meal plans and dining halls, McGill becomes nearly impossible to navigate if you're poor, working, a parent, or really anything but a well-off student 24 hours a day.

McGill's website boasts that "we know the importance of attracting the best and brightest," but somewhere along the line "the brightest" came to mean only the able-bodied, able-minded, full-time, financially stable students. McGill claims to be accessible, and in theory offers services to help students, but in practice, support for students is inadequate. As Matteo, a third year science stu-

dent, puts it, "Giving all students equal and fair chances is imperative to success. A modern institution should be doing more, and not less, to address the varying issues around accessibility."

Somewhere along the line "the brightest" came to mean only the able-bodied, able-minded, full-time, financially stable students.

This article was inspired by what should have been a ten minute walk from Otto Mass to the Education Building that turned into a twenty minute jungle gym adventure over icy metal stairs and past grumpy cops, ending with a \$4 piece-of-shit latte-like object that I never would have ordered had the price been posted. Really though, my frustrations – and it seems other's too – run much deeper than the recent construction surrounding McGill. Certainly the constant jackhammering, traffic delays, and occasional giant open flames have worn on us, but

these disruptions to accessibility, and McGill's response to them, are merely the loudest and most recent of the systemic problems saturating this university.

This article isn't meant to be a bitch fest, though at times it will read that way. It's meant as a wake-up call. A plea to a university that claims to care about students, while doing stunningly little to make their lives easier.

Physical accessibility

Let's begin with the traditional sense of the word accessible – that is, accessible to wheelchair or other mobility assistive device users. Most buildings at McGill are physically accessible, or at least parts of them are. But several buildings (such as McTavish 3438 and the Hosmer Annex) have no elevators, and are therefore not accessible past the first floor. Even more buildings lack even one accessible washroom (these include Dawson Hall and Bishop Mountain Hall), forcing students with mobility impairments to travel to nearby buildings every time they need to pee.

Even buildings with elevators and accessible washrooms face issues; currently, the only accessible entrance to Redpath library is through service point, which closes by 5 p.m. on weekdays, is not open on weekends, and requires students to have both a key and a key card, which they must acquire from the Office for Students with

Disabilities (OSD). Similarly, access to the Currie Gymnasium (where students often write exams) is accessible only through the back entrance, and requires students to "make prior arrangements or call" to use it. Clearly McGill sees no problem in wasting the time and energy of students with disabilities.

The University has at least realized that it was built on the side of a mountain, and offers an adapted mobility bus to shuttle students around the downtown campus (not including Solin Hall, of course, so hope you don't live there!). However, its use requires medical documentation outlining your impaired mobility, something which costs money and time, and might not be readily available to international students, or students with a short term disability, like a broken limb. Many of the STM and AMT transit stations fail to be accessible (only 11 of the 68 metro stations are equipped with elevators), leaving students the choice of expensive options like cars, unreliable options like the STM paratransport system, or living close to campus in apartments with higher-than-average rent.

Of course, these students could always live in residence! Unless they have a service animal, because many of those aren't allowed in residence, and unless they need an accessible room, because of all twelve of McGill's residences only three offer universally accessible rooms, and of those three, none are

apartment style or shared living. It's also worth noting that none of those three are even close to being the cheapest options, or offer the option to opt out of the expensive meal plans. Furthermore, none of those three are on the MacDonald campus. None of the accessible rooms are even within a five-minute walk of campus.

This is a plea to a university that claims to care about students, while doing stunningly little to make their lives easier.

Discussions of accessibility at McGill often center on students, but faculty and staff are similarly affected by inaccessibility. Junie, a third year anthropology student, told me about how a faculty member had to be carried into a building to attend a conference. This same faculty member was then unable to attend the launch event for her own journal, due to physical inaccessibility. Not only is this sort of incident demeaning, it's also dangerous for the faculty member. Nonetheless, it



CONOR NICKERSON | Photographer

remains the everyday reality for many at McGill.

Let's return to the construction, the thing that inspired this whole article. This year has featured some of the most extreme projects, with the complete dismantling of Sherbrooke, McTavish and Dr. Penfield, but no year has been without its share of building, breaking down, or re-doing something at McGill. The tearing up of McTavish seems to have been monumentally poorly dealt with, as the management's solution to blocked and missing stairs was, as fourth year science student Jane describes it, "horribly icy and crowded scaffolding." In October, The Daily wrote an editorial about the construction, reminding students that while we all complain about the construction death traps, they have more serious repercussions for some: "For most people, having to take extra stairs, a longer route, or navigate an uneven sidewalk is an annoyance, but little more. For others, it can mean pain or discomfort, missing classes or appointments, and being barred from campus life and activities." Beyond the scaffolding, constantly moving construction has meant constantly changing paths to various buildings. This changing landscape may be inevitable, sure, but McGill's poor handling of it is not. Daily updates on how to get to buildings, signs on the fences, maps on their websites, or any other number of solutions would have been appropriate. Instead McGill has only provided students a web form to lodge complaints about construction, which I'm sure will be handled about three days after it's all finished. The true damage isn't even in the twisted ankles or lates to labs that the construction causes – it's students' and staff's autonomy, stress levels, and sense of belonging at McGill that are ir-

reparably hurt by this treatment.

It's important to consider barriers that campus-users may face that are not related to mobility as well. To begin with, almost the entirety of campus is lit with fluorescent lights, often aging or broken ones, that flicker and cause extreme pain to students with photophobia or migraine conditions (I'm looking at you Otto Maass 10, and your light that has flickered for three years now). Similarly, health conditions can be aggravated by faulty equipment like projectors that flicker and distort images. If you think there's a running theme here of everything at McGill being broken, you're right. Libraries at McGill use audio announcements to signal closing times, events, and other announcements – a medium that is completely inaccessible to the hard of hearing or deaf. For those with chemical or scent sensitivities, almost the entire campus is a nightmare, one easily avoided by declaring spaces "scent free," or at least using unscented soaps and cleaning products.

If you've ever needed to change a diaper in public, or empty a menstrual cup, then you've likely realized the usefulness of single user bathrooms. McGill campus is rather devoid of them, despite the many benefits they serve for those with disabilities that may want privacy, for mothers and fathers, and for those performing religious ablutions. Not to mention, they can also dually function as gender-neutral bathrooms (which, you guessed it, are also scarce).

In the face of all of this, McGill argues that accessibility renovations are expensive. They are, and the Quebec Liberal government's austerity measures aren't making it easier on the institution, but the dismissive tone with which McGill treats concerns of acces-

sibility shows that it's low on the University's priority list. McGill's students, who pay thousands of dollars to attend this university, deserve a safe and comfortable learning environment

Even more buildings lack even one accessible washrooms, forcing students with mobility impairments to travel to nearby buildings every time they need to pee.

Financial accessibility

We all know university is expensive – like incredibly, unbelievably expensive. So I am constantly left to wonder why the McGill powers-that-be seem hell-bent on making it even more unaffordable. Let's talk about cell phones, something every student has, right? Naw. When phone plans can cost more per month than I spend on food, it's a big assumption to think that all students have them, but that hasn't stopped McGill. Accessible doors in several buildings require students to call to have them opened, and even the OSD requires students to phone to gain "after hours" entrance to the building (though why it's considered "after hours" when exams are scheduled for these times is beyond me).

McGill recently switched from the "clicker" student response system to the web-based "Polling @ McGill." While clickers needed to be purchased by individual students, they were often available used for around \$20 on McGill student buy and sell pages. Even new from the bookstore, the approximately \$60 price tag on clickers is far less than the cost of the web access devices (cellphones, tablets, laptops) required by Polling @ McGill. When a class has marks tied to this participatory system, these devices become mandatory, and therefore represent another unseen cost thrown at McGill students. While we're on the topic of technology, I'll never understand how a course gets off requiring students to purchase a program that will be used for all of twenty minutes in a non-graded exercise. (I might never use "Finches and Evolution" again, but I paid \$5 for it in BIOL 111 and damn if I'm not keeping it forever).

Another large financial burden to students comes with health care. Having a doctor is a privilege, especially when 25.5 per cent of students at McGill are international, and therefore separated from their primary care physicians. Many students are left in flux, unable to be seen by their home doctors, but unable to find a Quebec doctor due to the province-wide shortage of family physicians. Even for students with doctors, medical care is often an expensive and lengthy process. This leaves many in situations where acquiring medical documentation is far from easy. In some cases clinics (like McGill Mental Health) may even charge simply for giving you the documentation, even if no interaction with a doctor takes place. If you think getting medical notes isn't that common a practice, then you've never tried to get accommodations from McGill, where these notes are required at every step. Most professors require medical notes to account for even one missed seminar due to a cold. With access to same-day medical notes limited to students in imminent danger of harming themselves or others, or who already have a Client Care Clinician at Mental Health or Counselling, and two-week wait times to see someone at Counselling and Mental Health Services, many students are left with nowhere to turn.

All this activism is beginning to make me hungry; shall we get a bite to eat? It's regrettable, but knowing the cost of your food before reaching the checkout is rather hard at many McGill institutions. A lack of posted prices in pretty much any cafeteria or campus cafe that's not student-run leaves students to guess, or forces them to ask about prices, a process which can be difficult in busy cafes, and time consuming. Similarly, the by-weight meth-

od used by restaurants at McGill, like the McMed cafeteria and Premier Moisson, results in students guessing at the price, and often leaves them unable to return food, with or without embarrassment, once scooped out. It's like buying bananas at the grocery store – except grocery stores know enough to provide customers scales.

This leaves students working nine-to-five with no way to access Service Point, Advising, McGill Health or McGill Counselling and Mental Health.

Even when prices are posted, they're not liable to be good ones. Ask any savvy student saver where to get a cheap lunch, and they'll list off a few places: Snax, Vinh's, Vua, samosa sales – but almost none of the answers will be McGill-run dining areas. Dining halls on campus offer some of the most overpriced meals you can find. They rarely offer deals or sales, preferring to paint themselves as gourmet eateries, at the cost of students' bank accounts. Now, to be fair, I've had some pretty good food in rez, but I've rarely, if ever, been able to get a meal for less than \$5. From Premier Moisson to Second Cup to La Prep, the \$8 sandwiches and \$3 coffees are beginning to wear on my soul.

In McGill's never-ending attempt to get even more than eight thousand dollars out of me a year, they also find ways to charge for almost every minor service. Lost your student card? \$25 for a scrap of plastic that literally takes them seconds to print. Need a transcript? \$15 for a piece of paper. I mean, is no one else so bothered by the fifty dollar fee to add a course after the add/drop period? What is the possible justification for a process that is done completely by computer? Despite having a rather excellent financial aid office (at least if you're Canadian) McGill seems to do all it can to drive out poor students. I guess it's just that the working class don't highlight the McGill brand well.

Social accessibility

For the other cousin, social accessibility, I'll be brief, as it has so much in common with its financial kin. Given that money is a prerequisite to attending university, I'd expect McGill to understand that many students have to work, and

accommodate them. But almost every service you could wish to access at McGill is closed during weekends and evenings. This leaves students working nine-to-five with no way to access Service Point, Advising, McGill Health or McGill Counselling and Mental Health (just to name a few). All of these offices are open either nine-to-five, or worse, ten-to-four. Possibly the worst example of this is the crisis care at counselling, which operates only from 11 a.m. to one p.m.. I hardly think it's asking a lot for these offices to offer one evening or weekend time slot a week, allowing those with typical work schedules to actually get the help that they need.

I guess, though, that working students can count themselves slightly lucky to have found a job at all, especially on campus. The Work Study program is something of a joke, and if you think that's an overstatement, let me take you out for coffee and explain how I've applied to over a hundred jobs through it, and received only one interview. The listings are either outdated, filled, or 'tokens' in a sense – though the Association for McGill University Support Employees has just ratified a new collective agreement with the University, to mandate twice-yearly meetings to discuss improving these issues within the Work Study program. Professors have been known to interview work study candidates just to say they did, and then hire a volunteer in their place, thus saving their precious funding. With so many on-campus jobs, I'm constantly baffled that so many non-students work on campus, when countless students apply to work study and receive nothing. I have two on campus jobs, and you can bet I didn't get either through the Work Study program. Matteo described it to me as "a figurehead program, which does little

to actually help students find on-campus positions." McGill needs to focus on creating jobs for students, or putting students into existing ones. Either way, they must acknowledge that simply having a broken program isn't enough, and that though it might work to tuck a few more feathers in McGill's cap, it's not working to tuck any bills into students' wallets.

Empty solutions

There is an overwhelming sentiment of neglect by McGill present in these examples, and in students' minds. Jane said that she feels "the administration's claims that McGill is an accessible school are more for show than anything else," a sentiment mirrored by Shlomo, A second year arts student, in his assertion that "McGill doesn't care about our success, we exist to give them money as students and bump their numbers."

"McGill
doesn't care
about our
success; we
exist to give
them money as
students and
bump their
numbers."

–Shlomo
Second year Arts student

Even when the administration tries to create solutions to accessibility issues, too often those solutions are implemented without adequate student consultation, or in an effort to save money, not truly improve things, and end up creating more problems than they

resolve. Certainly, in my experience and across the interviews I conducted, there was a recurring theme of the poor design and poor implementation of the services designed to help mediate inaccessibility. Shlomo said that McGill "provides these services in theory but they're nearly impossible to access in practice" and that these services (like Mental Health, Counselling, the OSD and others) "clearly are not made for people who actually need to access them." I, and many interviewees, were quick to point to the thirty day wait times at Counselling, or one year wait times at Mental Health Services that were common until their recent merge. A merge that introduced the new stepped-care model, which was trumpeted as an improvement to cut down wait times has only served to shove students who were receiving one-on-one therapy into group therapy or online self-help modules. Former Director of McGill Mental Health Services Norman Hoffman told The Daily that the stepped-care model "makes no clinical sense," and trans students still face barriers to receiving adequate care.

This is most obvious during finals season, as Matteo told me, when "rather than take actual steps to address the mental health crises at McGill, such as better scheduling exams or reducing workloads, the University takes almost mocking steps like reminding us that sleep and snacks are important." All in all, it seems that checking the box for 'offers students services' is what matters to McGill, rather than listening to students and making sustainable, positive changes. McGill's lack of respect or empathy for students is embodied in Jane's comment: "McGill seems more preoccupied with getting a good ranking on the *Forbes* college list than with the

mental health of its students."

But we should talk about the one McGill department that seems to be doing great things in this field: the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). I've been registered with the OSD for three years now, and have had a generally positive experience, an attitude mirrored by several interviewees. It does, however, speak to the culture at McGill that almost every accessibility issue is relegated to this small, understaffed department (ten employees to serve over 2,000 students), even if the concerns are not explicitly related to a student's disability. The general feeling among those I interviewed was that the OSD was doing its best, especially when put up against, as Junie said, "McGill's culture, which is not one of acceptance or accommodation. They have limited resources and support from the wider community."

"Other schools
see that
students with
disabilities
need these
exceptions
to even the
playing field,
not to get a
leg up over
others."

–Junie
Third year Anthropology
student

While most experiences with the OSD seem positive, there are exceptions. Matteo expressed to the OSD that his chronic migraines are exacerbated by fluorescent lights and flickering projectors. He was told "to wear a hoodie, which does little to help" and leaves him writing exams in a sweater, in "an exam room that consistently reaches over 28 degrees Celsius." Matteo told me that "it feels like a constant struggle to get accommodations" and worries that "they could be taken away at any second." I have repeatedly been made to feel unwelcome or unsupported by staff at the OSD, an issue I believe occurred because their non-counselor staff received no formal training in dealing with students facing barriers. Notes provided for students are often illegible, or just missing. Exams written with the OSD are often held in unfamiliar classrooms with construction hammering outside the window. A further issue arises when students never make it there at all – Shlomo repeatedly asked McGill professional employees where he could receive services that the OSD provided, but was

never once referred to them.

McGill leaves students to suffer and drop out if they can't cut it, as opposed to helping when possible and creating a comfortable learning environment. As Matteo explains, "The culture of hardship and attrition at McGill seems a barrier to providing the accommodations that students desperately need." Junie likewise echoed this sentiment, calling the McGill culture "Darwinian."

The inaccessibility of McGill is far more pervasive than icy stairs or flickering lightbulbs; it's embedded in the culture of McGill. This is a culture in which disabled students are an afterthought, creating solutions to inaccessibility is seen as an opportunity to cut costs rather than improve conditions, and where deviations from the 'perfect' student are not supported. This culture of uncaring caused every person I interviewed to point out how "McGill trails other institutions in terms of accessibility." Junie explained to me that at other institutions like the Dawson College CEGEP and Western University "they were able to see that some rules [were] created for the general, average person. They were able to see where exceptions are warranted. At McGill they'll say that it infringes upon the rights of the other students. [...] McGill feels they're giving you some sort of advantage that you're not entitled to" where "other schools see that students with disabilities need these exceptions to even the playing field, not to get a leg up over others."

The homepage of the OSD features a quote from Henry Holden: "attitudes are the real disability." Clearly, if I just will myself to have a better outlook on my anxiety disorder, I'll be able to stop throwing up in fear. If I were just happier, I wouldn't need the store-bought neurotransmitters that my body fails to produce! If we all just stopped seeing ourselves as victims and pulled ourselves up by our bootstraps, we could function according to society's idea of how we should. McGill might be the all-time champion at the blame game, as they consistently find a way to, as Shlomo says, "Make us feel like failures, and that it's our fault."

So, this is me calling McGill out, getting angry and refusing to accept sub-par conditions as the norm. This is bigger than a quote that rubbed me the wrong way or some slippery stairs on McTavish. This is about McGill committing to the health, safety, and enjoyment of all of their students. If McGill wants to be 'the best of the best,' they need to stop seeing students with disability as inconveniences that drain resources and produce bad publicity, and provide them instead with the tools they need to succeed.



KEVIN TAM | The McGill Daily

On

Wednesday, January 25

the staff of

The McGill Daily

will elect the rest of

the 2016-17 editorial board.

We hope you'll consider running for one of our open positions. If you are interested in joining our non-hierarchical team, here's a quick guide on the election process for becoming a Daily editor.

the basics:

Unlike many student newspapers, our editors are elected by Daily staffers rather than hired by a committee. To run for an editorial position or to vote in the election, you must be Daily staff.

becoming staff:

To be staff, you must have six staff points - contributing articles, photos, graphics, and illustrations count as one point each. Writing a feature or coming in for a production night count as two points. If you're not staff yet, there's time before the election, so email an editor to get involved!

the editorial board:

Editors share equal voting rights on issues, and work together to produce the newspaper every week. Each editor receives a monthly stipend.

For more information on individual positions, contact specific section editors (emails can be found on page 19 of this issue). You can also stop by The Daily's office in Shatner B-24.

the positions:

Photos
Sports
Social Media/Web

Candidate statement

January

23

11:59 p.m.

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

Candidate rundown

January

25

6:00 p.m.

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

Elections

January

25

7:00 p.m.

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

deadlines:

The Daily requires all candidates to submit a one-page application that includes your qualifications and interest in running, as well as two samples of writing, photos, illustrations, or design.

Email your letter of intent to coordinating@mcgilldaily.com by January 20 at midnight.

MDMA: a tool for psychotherapy?

The 'love drug' may be FDA-approved for psychotherapy by 2021

MICHAEL CRESSATY
Sci+Tech Writer

Content warning: PTSD, mental illnesses, drug mention, suicide

Mental illness is highly prevalent among veterans, often triggered by their deployment. According to the American Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA), between ten to thirty per cent of veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – a reactionary anxiety disorder that develops in some people following traumatic events. Symptoms can include flashbacks, insomnia, rage, or distress, especially when exposed to reminders of the trauma. This disorder disproportionately affects veterans, with the lifetime prevalence of PTSD in the general population being estimated at only 6.8 per cent. The DVA website notes that the situation is only worsened by the intense guilt many veterans feel over actions taken during times of war. Recent studies have pointed to an unlikely new treatment: 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA).

Unfortunately, some who suffer from PTSD are unable to find relief in available treatments, and turn to ending their life. Between 2010 and 2014, 68 Canadian veterans died from suicide according to a report by the Canadian Armed Forces. In the United States, the situation is far more dire – statistics from the DVA indicate that twenty veterans commit suicide each day, or roughly one every hour. Veterans, representing a total 8.5 per cent of the American population, account for 18 per cent of all deaths from suicide. Despite PTSD's toll, mental health professionals have yet to find a reliable treatment. The current first-line treatment involves pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two. Pharmacotherapy involves the use of psychiatric medications like selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), which are commonly used to treat depression. However, SSRIs are known to have limited efficacy for PTSD, with only thirty per cent of subjects achieving complete remission after 12 weeks of medication.

On the other hand, psychotherapy is more effective in the long-term, with response rates between 60 to 95 per cent for patients who complete the treatment course. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), an approach to therapy focussed on changing maladaptive patterns of thinking and behaviour, and in particular prolonged exposure therapy (PE). Patients are made to confront their fears and their trauma head on instead of avoiding them, are among the most common and effective interventions.

However, dropout rates are between twenty to thirty per cent for psychotherapy, which may be due to the high cost and long time course the therapy entails. All said, existing treatments are ineffective for between 25 to 50 per cent of patients, suggesting a need for new methods.

MDMA, also known as "Molly" or simply "M," is the active ingredient in ecstasy. Its acute effects including feelings of love and euphoria, increased trust and openness, and decreased fear and anxiety. This is correlated with an increase in the levels of the neurotransmitters serotonin and oxytocin. But, MDMA is widely recognized as a neurotoxin – though this is not free of controversy – and is known to cause short-term depression, anxiety, insomnia, or reduction in appetite in the day(s) following its use. In the clinical setting, where doses are low, purity is high, and use is supervised by medical professionals, some of its risks can be mitigated.

MDMA has a brief but interesting history. First synthesized by the international pharmaceutical company Merck in 1912, it was patented as an intermediate precursor to another pharmaceutical drug. Its use in humans was popularized by the organic chemist Alexander Shulgin, who first introduced the drug to psychologists and psychiatrists in the late 1970's. It was widely used as part of an experimental therapy with some degree of success until 1985, when the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) classified MDMA as a Schedule I drug, which is characterized by a "high potential for abuse" and "no currently accepted medical use." This category includes drugs such as heroin, LSD, and cannabis. The decision was largely based on the increasing recreational use of MDMA, and was taken despite recommendations from medical professionals that it had a legitimate use in therapy. This put an end to all clinical research on the drug, until very recently.

Even today, there are several barriers to conducting research into the positive clinical effects of Schedule I drugs like MDMA. The approval process for studies is often years long and can cost thousands of dollars, with only a few organizations and institutions willing to fund such research. Production, importation, and storage of the drug of interest is then subject to high costs and stringent regulation, even in sub-milligram doses, which have no psychoactive effects. In addition, since Merck's patent on MDMA has expired, pharmaceutical companies have shown no interest in sponsoring any studies despite the preliminary success of the intervention.

Currently, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), an American non-profit organization that funds clinical psychedelic research, is raising \$400,000 to purchase a kilogram of pure MDMA, with about half the cost going to manufacturing and the other half to licensing. It will be used in the upcoming Phase III clinical trials of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy (MDMA-AP), which may see the drug approved by Health Canada, the FDA, and the European Medicine's Agency (EMA) as an adjunct for psychotherapy by 2021. But how well does it work?

One 2010 study on MDMA-AP, led by Michael Mithoefer, a clinician from the Medical University of South Carolina, examined the safety and efficacy of the intervention in 24 veterans with chronic, treatment-resistant PTSD. This means that participants were only selected if they had been experiencing symptoms for at least three months. They also had to have previously undergone at least three months of pharmacotherapy and at least six months of psychotherapy, with no clinically significant reduction in symptoms. After three MDMA-assisted therapy sessions, over 80 per cent of participants no longer met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD. Compared to placebo, which had less than twenty per cent success, this result is very positive. These changes persisted for an average of 3.8 years in about seventy per cent of cases with initial success, according to a follow-up study on the same group.

A preliminary meta-analysis comparing MDMA-AP to PE, one of the most prevalent existing treatments, found that MDMA-AP had a larger effect size in both clinician-administered assessments and subjective patient reports than PE, and a lower dropout rate. However, only a handful of other studies testing the efficacy of MDMA-AP for PTSD have been completed, with one yielding a significant positive effect and the other yielding none, so more research is needed before strong conclusions can be drawn. However, the drug has been found to be sufficiently safe to use a limited number of times in low dosages under clinical supervision to warrant further investigation. Among the 780 patients who have been administered MDMA during all trials of its safety or efficacy, there has only been one serious adverse effect.

In MAPS' standard research protocol, between 75 and 140 milligrams of MDMA are administered to patients by therapists for use during two eight-hour talk therapy sessions, spaced three to five weeks apart. After each session, patients stay at the treatment facility overnight, and



HAYLEY MORTIN | The McGill Daily

some are given anti-anxiety medication to reduce the symptoms of post-MDMA recovery in the day or two following use. An optional third drug-assisted session is also available on a per-patient basis, if the patient and therapists think it would be beneficial. In addition, all participants placed in the placebo group are given the opportunity to follow the MDMA-assisted treatment course following their initial program. Before, after, and between the drug-assisted sessions are weekly non-drug psychotherapy sessions where patients reflect on their experiences and integrate them into their lives. Patients are then assessed at a two-month follow-up using the Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS), a standardized test based on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) criteria for PTSD.

It is important to note that patients do not receive any MDMA to take home and use freely. The use of the drug is restricted to clinical settings only, and is administered a maximum of three times. These measures eliminate the possibility of recreational use of the medication, reduce the potential for dependence, and increase the safety of the treatment overall.

During the MDMA-assisted sessions, patients sit and listen to music with eyeshades, free to discuss any memories, emotions, or images that arise. They often report that MDMA allows them to access parts of their psyche that were previously inaccessible to them, walled off or buried as

a means of coping with their trauma. This unprecedented access allows them to work through their most difficult memories and emotions without being triggered. They often describe the healing process in a metaphorical and symbolic way, using stories and imagery to guide them. Most patients feel that the ability to heal comes from within, but that the MDMA acts as a catalyst: the key which opens the door to overcoming their pain. All patients studied said they received some lasting benefit from the treatment, and many have said it helped give them a new start in life.

Approval will require significant legal changes. On the part of the DEA in the U.S. this will require a re-scheduling of MDMA from a Schedule I substance, to a Schedule III substance, described as "with some potential for dependence and abuse, but some accepted medical use." While this would allow clinicians to prescribe the drug and researchers to study it more easily, it would keep the drug illegal for recreational use.

Before it can be approved, the safety and efficacy of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy must be demonstrated in Phase III clinical trials, the final phase of research for any new intervention. MAPS is now hoping to sponsor a chapter of its MDMA-PTSD research here at McGill. Clearly, more research into the mechanisms and efficacy of PTSD-mediated therapy are needed, but hopefully this starts a new area of research into the clinical applications of psychedelics like MDMA.

Speech balloons

Celebrating comics as an



TAYLOR MITCHELL | The McGill Daily

XAVIER MARTINEZ
Culture Writer

If someone told you nowadays that comics are harmful literature – not because they’re “childish” or “stupid,” but because they gravely contribute to juvenile delinquency – you would probably think they were ‘making a big deal out of it.’ However, if you were told this sixty years ago, your response may have been different. You may have accepted it as the normalized understanding of comics. You may have taken it very seriously, especially if you were a conservative parent. You may have met their response with agitation – recognizing the highly problematic book that sparked their opinion.

Psychiatrist Fredric Wertham’s book *Seduction of the Innocent*, published in 1954, aimed to mobilize parents in a revolt against comics. Wertham suggested that comics turned children into “criminals,” and justified his claims through homophobic, racist, and sexist rhetoric. Wonder Woman, for example, was for Wertham a dangerous icon for her deviance from patriarchal norms. His misguided critiques prompted the creation of the Comics Code Authority, a group

established by the Comics Magazine Association of America which sought to regulate and censor the comic book industry based on his principles, which let place to a jaded understanding of the medium as an instrument of “low culture.”

Though Wertham’s arguments contain discriminatory values and practices that are sadly still active today, comics has evolved significantly since then. Now seen as a respectable artistic medium, comics has reached a new level of popular and critical recognition around the world over the past decades. With the upcoming 44th edition of the Angoulême International Comics Festival, we can recognize how “high culture” has previously attempted to police comics in order to silence its popular appeal. But we also see how the medium is providing a space for these same voices to resist conventions and challenge artistic norms.

The festival’s 44th edition takes place from January 26 to 29 in many locations throughout Angoulême, in southwestern France. It is the third largest comics festival in the world after Italy’s Lucca Comics & Games and Japan’s Comiket. Quite different in nature from North American comics con-

vention, in the sense that it’s focused on the industry as much as the public, and doesn’t venture into other commercial mediums like films or video games, the Festival seeks to further promote the value of comics upon the general population by organizing numerous exhibitions on the artistic merits of past and current works. It also aims to draw comics writers and artists into a circle where the reality of their profession can be displayed before a large public, and to maintain the industry active by organizing venues related to publishing and networking among publishers, editors and new talents as well.

Wertham suggested that comics turned children into “criminals,” and justified his claims through homophobic, racist, and sexist rhetoric.

Comic book culture is also an integral part of Montreal’s artistic scene. Library Drawn & Quarterly, a world-renown Montreal comics publishing company, features international and North American works from emerging and well-established artists alike. Since the company’s humble beginnings in a Mile-End apartment, the storefront has remained intimate – despite housing adored authors such as Roxane Gay – with an aesthetic that seeks to reinvent a distinctive Montreal comics scene. From indie to international, Montreal also hosts many comic book conventions including the star-studded comicon, the interactive pop-culture expo Kultura, to Otakuthon, the Anime mecca of Quebec. Festival BD de Montréal draws the closest parallel to the Angoulême festival, which features bandes dessinées created by Quebecois artists.

The crossover between Franco-Belgian and Quebec comics is evident in style, theme, and, obviously, language. Quebecois bandes dessinées have remained distinct from English comic styles in the rest of Canada throughout their history – emerging most vividly at the turn of the 20th century in the era known as “The Golden Age of BDQ”



in the spotlight

artistic medium in Angoulême

However, in 1904, the celebration ended, as Quebecois artists struggled to compete against the mecca publishing companies in the United States. Moreover, artists were also impacted by historical developments in the American comic book industry: Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* spurred the rise of "Catholic comics" in Quebec to challenge the themes in American comics they deemed as 'immoral.'

Stan Lee and Jack Kirby [...] addressed minorities' struggles against a society centered on the white, conservative, heterosexual male in *X-Men*.

The American graphic novel

In the 1960s, the American comic book underwent significant thematic developments, deviating from the "true blue" archetypes that had permeated the medium since the 1930s. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby metaphorically addressed minorities' struggles against a society centered on the white, conservative, heterosexual male in *X-Men*, marking the desire for comic book writers and artists to craft more nuanced, socially relevant stories. This further materialized in the seventies, where superhero comics began to deal seriously with subjects like drug abuse or alcoholism, which Wertham would have considered "taboo," as seen in story arcs like *Snowbirds Don't Fly* or *Demon in a Bottle*. These comics began to show the importance of discussing and representing real-world social issues in artistic formats – an important step in addressing the stigmas surrounding these topics.

Following the rise of the graphic novel with Will Eisner's *A Contract with God*, comics studies also began to flourish as a legitimate field through the efforts of pioneer car-

toonists Eisner and Scott McCloud to promote the aesthetic value of the medium. The release of groundbreaking literary works, which were concerned more on introspective sensibilities than dynamic action, such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, signified the Modern Age of Comic Books, an informal era that began in the mid-1980s and remains the current trend. A new type of mainstream comics also embraced daring, creative visions which freely reinterpreted the superhero figure under a variety of new themes and visual motifs that reflected the socio-political climate of the time – as seen in original works like Alan Moore and David Lloyd's *V for Vendetta*, Chris Claremont and Brent Anderson's *God Loves, Man Kills*, or Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns*.

With the rise of alternative publishers in the nineties, writers and artists were given even greater opportunities to take creative liberties, explore different forms of artistic expression, and challenge dominant narratives. As a result, graphic novels like Joe Sacco's *Palestine*, published by the alternative company Fantagraphics Books, revived aspects of the "New Journalism" genre: a style that used unconventional literary techniques to portray a subjective political perspective, which had declined in the 1980s. Sacco's graphic novel narrates the daily struggles of Palestinians within the occupied territories from 1991 to 1992, interpreting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands from an individual and group perspective, explored through drawing and dialogue.

The medium is providing a space for these same voices to resist conventions and challenge artistic norms.

The Franco-Belgian bande dessinée

Nuance, diversity, and complexity haven't developed only through explicitly political works. The Franco-Belgian bande dessi-

née has also greatly evolved from the early comics geared towards children such as Tintin and Asterix. These comics now encompass a broad range of new works that shine through the incredibly rich, diverse narrative tones and visual styles that these stories affirm towards one another, through the individual voices of their authors. These works may address themes that are directly embedded into Franco-Belgian history and society – such as Jacques Tardi's *C'était la guerre des tranchées* or Enki Bilal's *Nikopol Trilogy* – or deal with outsiders' perspectives as they arrive in new, unknown societies – such as Guy Delisle's *Pyongyang* or Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*. In any case, they infuse their format with a decidedly more European sentiment, emphasizing the intellectual, reflective nature of characters' actions and impressions as they progress through their narratives without a great deal of action.

Graphic novels like Joe Sacco's *Palestine*, published by the alternative company Fantagraphics Books, revived aspects of the "New Journalism" genre.

Franco-Belgian comics have branched out into new genres since the seventies, creating original series that embrace concepts of high fantasy, western or science-fiction, while retaining an Old World-type approach; original themes are kept intact while a rich world-building shines through the panels, as seen in works such as Jean Van Hamme and Grzegorz Rosinski's *Thorgal* or Alejandro Jodorowsky and Moebius' *The In-*

cal. Furthermore, aside from the narrative and aesthetic developments that took place for new stories, some of the older series, like *The Smurfs* or *Lucky Luke*, found a way to win over new generations by renewing their types of stories and visual gags, thus keeping these series, and bande dessinée as a whole, fresh and alive for the time to come.

While advocating the return of Japan's bargaining power, it still keeps a critical eye on the use of the military to resolve this kind of crisis.

The Japanese manga

Finally, the Japanese manga has trodden the same path as well, drawing a proud heritage from its first original, children-oriented works such as Osamu Tezuka's *Astro Boy* while reinventing its formula around the 1980s, producing stories that have since then become famous worldwide for their highly dynamic style, memorable character design, and strikingly original narrative approach.

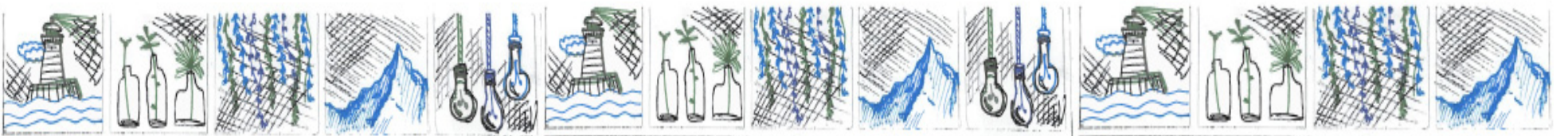
A unique Japanese genre, manga can be examined in dialogue with its American and European counterparts. While Akira Toriyama's *Dragon Ball* and Takehiko Inoue's *Slam Dunk* show the protagonist's growth and triumph through hard work and sacrifice – a thematic structure commonly found in comic books and bande dessinée – works like Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira* and Kazuo Umezu's *The Drifting Classroom* adopt a darker, more cynical, and even nihilistic vibe that is characteristic of many literary works of post-World War II Japan.

While manga are generally marketed to particular demographics – shonen for boys, shojo for girls, seinen for men, etc. – manga artists enjoy different levels of success depending on

whether their work achieves mainstream recognition, as did Eiichiro Oda's *One Piece*, or cult status, which was the case for Tsugumi Ohba and Takeshi Obata's *Death Note*. Despite tackling vastly different themes, these two categories of works nevertheless manage to converge into a huge market. Complementing the emergence of anime as another seminal part of Japanese cultural exports, with many series being adapted into anime at some point in their publication history, manga has thus evolved into a comics format that is increasingly made to be consumed in a transnational context despite its cultural specifications.

Comics have developed considerably since Wertham tried to censor their existence, traveling from America to Japan with a long layover in Europe, and gaining more and more credibility as an artistic medium. In its symbiotic juxtaposition of text and images, comics provide a unique storytelling power. Since anything in comics can be written and then drawn into panels, this is a visual medium that, unlike film or theatre, is not at all limited in its creative vision by material restrictions, aside from editorial concerns; it has the power to visually portray anything it can imagine, and to spread its influence upon any sphere of society, from working-class readers who find genuine interest in its popular texture to higher-standing academics who can find value in it from a more literary standpoint.

The Angoulême International Comics Festival then serves as a prime showcase of the cultural recognition that comics has earned since the seventies and eighties. Its inception in 1974 precisely mirrors the time where Franco-Belgian comics was growing in influence upon European society through media discussions, public exhibitions, and increased approval among the adult public. To those who might not read a lot of comics, but are certainly curious: keep an eye out on the festival's news, and try to read some of the great comics that have been mentioned in this text, or other good recommendations that you might come across in one way or another. You could be genuinely surprised to find out what really goes on behind the seemingly superficial panels and speech balloons.



Asian food and diasporic blues

re:asian fosters intra-community discussion and self-expression

COCO ZHOU
The McGill Daily

It's a well known fact that Montreal has a considerable lack of decent Asian restaurants, and the few that do exist are populated by white people in search of 'authentic ethnic cuisine.' It is even rarer to come across a media outlet that not only centres Asian voices as a whole but is also interested in tackling the hierarchies within this identity formation. Such a platform would be attuned to the cultural and political histories that continue to inform the continent's movement – its changing borders, migrating populations, fluctuating economies – and highlight conflicts and inequalities instead of smoothing over them. It would acknowledge that the political geography of the homeland has a real influence over the diaspora, both materially and affectively.

Such is the aim of *re:asian*, a new online platform that seeks to publish the art and stories of the Asian diaspora in North America. Tailored specifically to youths, *re:asian* hopes to establish a community where personal and political concerns are voiced and channeled into direct action. The Daily spoke to two of its editors, Elysse Cloma and Michael Stewart, about the importance of creating media, generational gaps among immigrant families, and solidarity with other people of colour.

The McGill Daily (MD): Could you describe *re:asian*, its vision, and team of editors?

Michael Stewart (MS): *Re:asian* is a Canadian and U.S. based online platform, though we plan on doing different kinds of platforms in the future. Our focus is to allow Asian-identifying

people living in the U.S. and Canada to create content for other diasporic Asian people, by providing them with their own space and filling it with critical and political writings. We want to look at our history, culture, and community in both celebratory and critical ways.

MD: Do you see *re:asian* having a role in negotiating the position of Asian folks in relation to other people of colour, in particular Black and Indigenous folks?

Elysse Cloma (EC): This conversation is about Asian-identifying people in the diaspora defining our role as settlers on Indigenous territory, showing solidarity with Black folks, and connecting to other people of colour, which goes to show how the ways by which Asian people relate to the concept of race – through the model minority trope in particular – are intersectional. For *re:asian*, our goal is to create dialogue on these issues from the perspective of youths in the diaspora.

MD: What are the obstacles for Asian people working in media? Why is creating content important?

EC: For Asian writers and figures in the media, the main obstacle they're facing, aside from getting a foot in the door, is that they have a sense of responsibility that they have to tell stories accurately if they're going to tell stories about being Asian. That's a huge responsibility, to have to develop a generally satisfying representation in mainstream media without trying to play into stereotypes or dulling it down for white audiences. I notice that Generation X, and anyone older, struggled achieving visibility. I'm really critical the roles they played because they were trying to be considered acceptable for white media. I'm not saying it's better now, but it's



Of Our Eyes: photoshoot for re:asian. Featuring Anchi Lin and Sammy Chien, styling by Sam Lu, makeup by Carol Yuu Chen.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCHEL EANG

something people are more aware of. We even have representations like *Fresh off the Boat* that might resonate with a lot of people. It's not that these shows shouldn't be received without criticism, but we're moving in a direction where we're starting to see the responsibility of having authentic portrayals being more important.

MS: It's not only representation on screen, but also the writers or videographers behind the scenes – if they identify as Asian, they have that lens to look at things. I have seen a lot more Asian youths really starting to make their own spaces, on Instagram, or websites, or blogs, which is a really great thing to see. It gives ourselves a means of

expressing ourselves within a power dynamic that really doesn't want us to say what we want to say. It's like our food: a lot of the times the kind of Asian food that's accepted is the kind where the taste is changed so that it fits a white palette.

MD: You emphasized getting Asian youths involved in publishing. Do you envision *re:asian* having a role in facilitating dialogue between youths and older generations?

EC: Definitely. [Within immigrant communities] there's this epidemic where you don't relate to your parents, or your grandparents, or your relatives, to a satisfying level. I think focusing youths on the platform is [so they] have an outlet of expression. A lot of people also

don't necessarily feel safe sharing these kinds of [political] thoughts with their parents at this point. But being able to express themselves is really important, and so fostering safeness and inclusivity on an online platform is huge for us.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Catch an audio recording of this interview on *Unfit to Print*, through CKUT radio or The Daily's website.

Find *re:asian* on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, @reasianmag.

The Daily would like to acknowledge that Saima Desai, current Features Editor, and Chantelle Schultz, past Multimedia Editor, are part of the *re:asian* editorial team.

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Review shows, books, exhibitions, films, albums, and more.
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Deli Sokolow workers deserve their wages

On January 13, a collective of former employees at Deli Sokolow published a statement on Facebook detailing the restaurant owners' ongoing neglect of their legal responsibilities and gross mistreatment of their workers. The deli was located in St. Henri, a neighbourhood marked by intense gentrification and a history of workers' rights struggles. During its operation from April 2015 to November 2016, Deli Sokolow primarily hired queer, trans, and/or racialized people after actively seeking them out through online community spaces, and subsequently denied them basic rights such as wages, records of employment, and vacation pay. The Committee for the Reclamation of Stolen Wages was established after the owners failed to respond to individual complaints. The Committee represents 19 former employees, accounting for eighty per cent of the deli's staff. Within a capitalist system, those of us who are women, queer, trans, and racialized already face systemic barriers to employment and bear the brunt of economic exploitation. Given that Deli Sokolow marketed itself as a progressive organization that cared about the livelihood of marginalized peoples, it is particularly notable and outrageous that the owners would take advantage of the workers' lack of resources and precarious living conditions. We must stand in solidarity with the affected communities and call on the owners to accept their demands while continuing the work of organizing against capitalism as an exploitative system.

According to the Committee's statement, the deli's owners consistently took advantage of employees' vulnerable circumstances. They failed to pay them on time or at all, to provide them with proper paperwork, or to inform them of the deli's closure – employees were given no prior notice and showed up to work only to find the restaurant's doors locked. The group tried to contact the owners

through mail on two occasions and were met with an inadequate response. Since the publishing of the statement, the deli's owners have left Facebook comments, reiterating the same excuses, such as having insufficient funds to pay them. Meanwhile the crux of the collective's demands remain unaddressed, and the workers continue to suffer the consequences, including the inability to fill out their Employment Insurance applications.

This instance of stolen wages must be grounded in the particular context of St. Henri. For more than a decade now, the historically low income neighbourhood has seen drastic change through increasing gentrification from skyrocketing rent and the influx of students, as seen through McGill's acquisition of Solin Hall, which contributes to the rising demand for luxury businesses such as cafes and boutiques, which locals cannot afford. With these changes came precarious jobs that not only have nothing to do with economic development and stability but are also inevitably exploitative.

In the case of Deli Sokolow, although employees were routinely mistreated, many of them couldn't leave because they had no other alternative. As queer, trans, and racialized people, they were already facing employment discrimination, had little to no savings, and lacked access to stable employment and other resources, as The Daily was told in an interview with members of the collective. As such, we must support the former workers of Deli Sokolow and their bargaining effort by sharing their statement widely on social media and within our own communities. The collective is also currently looking for translators, and you can follow them on their Facebook page (@WageReclamationCommittee) for any updates.

—The McGill Daily editorial board

Why we're closing our comments section

The Daily's editorial board has decided to close the comments section on our website. While valuable comments certainly do exist, comments are often abusive, particularly comments left on pieces regarding issues including, but not limited to, sexual assault, race, settler colonialism, trans issues, or other critiques of systems of oppressions. Moreover, the most hateful comments left on our website are on pieces written by women, trans people, and people of colour. Hence, it is in accordance with our Statement of Principles to close this platform, which regularly subjects our contributors to online abuse.

However, we have chosen to keep the comment section on our editorials open. Editorials are the only platform where we as an editorial board can voice a unified

opinion on a topic. As such, we welcome constructive feedback on our collective position.

With our comments section closed, we now encourage letters to the editor by emailing letters@mcgilldaily.com more than ever – these, if written by McGill students, will be printed under the Commentary section. Furthermore, we will be including the email of respective section editors at the bottom of every piece published online in order to facilitate communication and interaction between readers and the Daily. Should a contributor choose to have comments sections open on their piece, however, we will respect their wishes.

—The McGill Daily editorial board

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Lies, half-truths, and bourgeois nihilists.

Harvard is the Harvard of Canada

McGall looking for new tagline/McGall needs to look for new tagline



YLLOM MUSK
Overly
Opinionated Ed

We live in a time of great political turbulence and societal discontent, a time of roommate against roommate, drunk dude outside Café Campus against drunk dude outside Café Campus. One issue, however, divides McGill University students more than any other, and it is one that is sadly

Underreported, even by this very paper—is McGill the Harvard

of Canada? Our in-house experts on intellectual circle-jerking say it is. One Harvard Important Prize winning philosopher, however, recently came under fire for his recent statements on the issue – by people he couldn't give two Schrödinger's cats about – when he wrote, “metaphysically speaking, it seems clear to me that Harvard does, indeed, exist as an objective reality even within the confines of the Canadian nation-state. Thus, I am inclined to conclude, with almost complete certainty, that Harvard is the Harvard of Canada.” I, a McGill university

student, am inclined to agree.

Upon investigation, the truth seems clear to me that Harvard is, in fact, the Harvard of Canada. Having been born 137 years before James McGill, and being in possession of little to no reported psychic ability, John Harvard never heard of James McGill, (Do not be deceived by the crumbling state of McGill architecture—we're just younger and poorer, not older and more distinguished. (Harvard, on the other hand, probably has pastures for horses, and better washrooms – also for horses). Harvard

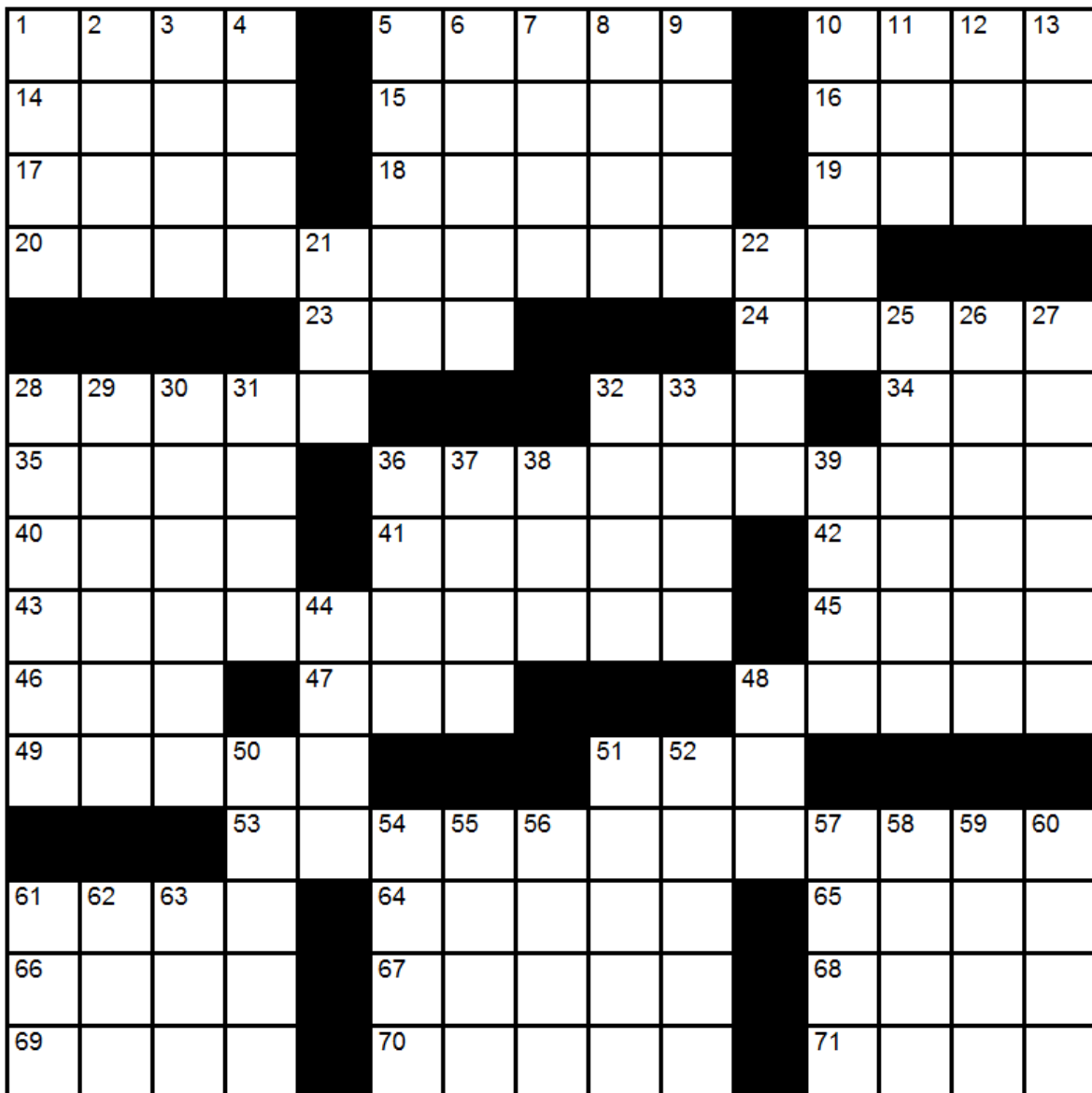
has a fencing team, a champagne and caviar tasting committee, and they 'summer' in the Hamptons. Most damning of all, there are a reported 36% fewer “u's” in Harvard published theses than in those from McGill.

Those who have expressed this view have become political targets of both the Administration and the student body, with many being labelled Concordia students in the process. Whether Concordia or McGill, though, the point remains: neither universities are Harvard. The difference between students of the

two Montreal universities, however, becomes clear: one remains in denial that because they didn't go to Concordia, somehow, they would've been accepted to Harvard; the other is significantly less burdened by a collective superiority complex. It is, however, no shame to be a McGill student: Harvard students speak even less French than we do. It takes longer to scroll through McGill's Wikipedia page. McGill students pay fewer inheritance taxes. And if Harvard is the Harvard of Canada, you can be certain that McGill is the McGill of the U.S.

Crossword

JAY VANPUT
Official Crossword Wizard



ACROSS

1. Dupes
5. Sends a package
10. Ali with a secret password
14. French friend
15. Big dipper
16. “American ___”
17. Belonging to me
18. Support bar
19. Following
23. Nickname for a New York Opera
24. Small amounts
28. War vehicles
32. Princess from “Adventure Time,” abbr.
34. Medical pen
35. ___ Lewis and the News
36. Common New Year’s Resolution
40. Type of History
41. ___ Mia!
42. Copycat
43. Common New Year’s Resolution
45. Lion sound
46. “___ we there yet?”
47. Beings not from earth
48. Type of hedron
49. Kind of wrap
51. Had a bite
53. Common New Year’s Resolution
61. Unofficially left the military
64. Freed from a pen
66. Part of a part of the heart
67. Flaw
68. Bull in Spain
69. “South Park” boy
70. Actor Penn and others
71. Montreal precipitation

DOWN

1. Rotating pieces
2. Leave out
3. One of Columbus’s ships
4. Palm reader, e.g.
5. Playground equipment
6. Type of force?
7. ___ fixe
8. ___ du jour
9. Big rig
10. “Exactly!”
11. Citrus drink
12. Fight with gloves
13. ___ -J
21. Trademark symbols
22. Bite or pinch lightly
25. Something with a handle and spout
26. Look
27. NATO code for S
28. Famous tank engine
29. Light show
30. Closer
31. Toronto Raptor Player Lowry
32. Draw
33. Grab
36. Test for Grad school
37. Dines
38. “I’ve heard enough!”
39. Loser to a tortoise
44. Two-Face’s surname
48. Perfect score
50. Lion from Narnia
51. Misplay of matches result
52. Levels
54. Bullfight cheers
55. Holes on the skin
56. Mexican explorer
57. Packs
58. Computer symbol
59. Corrupt Roman emperor
60. Increase
61. Coolers for shorts
62. Angkor ___
63. Egg cells