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# THE McGill Daily

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## Rethinking patriotism

Half-truths obscure Canada's violent past

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# Director of Counselling and Mental Health Services suspended

Sources point to issues in the stepped care model's execution

**ELLEN COOLS**  
The McGill Daily

In December 2016, Nancy Low, Director of McGill's Counselling and Mental Health Service (CMHS), was suspended from her job and escorted out of the Brown Building.

Former Director of McGill Mental Health Services Norman Hoffman told The Daily in an e-mail that he has "been told directly by various McGill Mental Health staff that Dr. Nancy Low has been suspended, apparently for insubordination," in relation to the newly implemented stepped care model.

## Stepped Care

At the beginning of the 2016/2017 academic year, McGill's Mental Health Services and Counselling Services consolidated to become CMHS.

In a panel discussion regarding the state of mental health services at McGill, hosted by the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) Mental Health Commissioners last October, Associate Director of CMHS Giuseppe Alfonsi explained to students that the McGill Health Clinic has seen "a thirty per cent increase in users over the last five years."

In response to this increasing demand for CMHS' services, a new approach was taken: the 'stepped-care model.'

This model uses a "two doors, one service," system, wherein students can enter CMHS through counselling or mental health, but are processed by a single, combined system. Students are given a variety

of treatment options which act as 'steps' to one-on-one psychotherapy, the treatment students previously received.

CMHS now also offers different types of treatment, such as online therapy, group therapy, and referrals to other organizations such as the Peer Support Centre, in order to reduce the strain on CMHS.

"It is my opinion that the McGill Mental Health Service has fundamentally been abolished."

—Norman Hoffman  
Former Director of McGill  
Mental Health

## Growing concerns

However, many students have voiced concerns despite a reorganization of McGill's counselling and mental health services. For example, trans students continue to face barriers in mental health treatment, with many such students reporting being uncomfortable discussing queerness, transness, and racialization.

Students' concerns only grew when the process through which students obtain medical notes suddenly changed in October 2016.

Students now only receive same-day notes if they are in imminent danger of harming themselves or others, or they have already been assigned a Client Care Clinician (CCC).

On October 28, 2016, in a statement emailed to campus media, VP University Affairs Erin Sobat said that this new medical notes policy "disregards the need to provide services and accommodation for incidental cases of mental health issues that may not qualify as an immediate safety concern, in a system where there is not currently sufficient access to care to ensure that students are already being seen by a McGill or external clinician."

He further noted that as the current wait time for seeing a CCC is two weeks, students who do not meet the above mentioned criteria must wait two weeks before receiving a medical note if they are sick and thereby have to miss class. This poses many difficulties for students as McGill professors cannot accept medical notes that justify past absences.

Interim Senior Director of Services for Students, Cara Piperni, told The Daily at the time that the change in medical notes was a "residual impact" of the move to a stepped care model.

In an email to The Daily late December, Sobat noted that "until now, there has been little room for serious input from students or Student Services staff [with regards to the stepped care model], and we're concerned that if people do not feel included in the decision-making process then ultimately the changes will be less successful (this is particularly true for the clinicians who are responsible for actually providing this care to students)."

"We're actively trying to improve the situation from our side (particularly in pushing for actual commu-

nication and consultation plans going forward)," Sobat continued, "but unfortunately, I think that negative internal management styles or HR [Human Resources] struggles will only hurt students in the end."

"Unfortunately, I think that negative internal management styles or HR [Human Resources] struggles will only hurt students in the end."

—Erin Sobat  
VP University Affairs

## Low's Suspension

Hoffman told The Daily that he has "been told directly from Mental Health and Counselling staff that the stepped care system is not working well."

"I've been told directly from staff that they were told that they are not allowed to object to the stepped care system," he added.

With regards to the stepped care model, Hoffman said: "It is my opinion that a stepped care system for a Mental Health Service makes no clinical sense."

"Firstly, it is not possible to make an accurate assessment of a student's needs in a one time triage session, especially if the student has little reason to trust that their concerns will be properly heard," he elaborated. "Secondly, the type of modalities, apart from one-to-one therapy, that are being offered to students, may have some value as adjuncts to proper treatment, but are unlikely to be highly valuable on their own."

Sobat also voiced displeasure with regards to the stepped care model's implementation, writing that the SSMU executive team is "disappointed that the transition to a stepped care model, which we support for many reasons, has been so rushed and poorly managed in its implementation."

"It is my opinion that the McGill Mental Health Service has fundamentally been abolished," Hoffman went on to say.

"In merging Mental Health with Counselling, and in relegating psychiatrists to primarily being prescribing medication, the University is fundamentally removing the role of Mental Health in being a leader in developing and implementing advanced, student oriented, psychotherapy models, and is promoting primarily symptom suppression modalities of treatment," he concluded.

When asked for a comment regarding Low's apparent suspension, Doug Sweet, McGill's Director of Internal Communication, told The Daily via email that "the University cannot comment on the personnel dossiers or employment records of any of its staff members."

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# Know your rights

## Campaign launched to raise awareness

XAVIER RICHER VIS  
The McGill Daily

The Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) has initiated a campus-wide "Know Your Student Rights" campaign to make more undergraduate students aware of their academic rights.

Coordinated by the SSMU University Affairs office, the campaign includes a Facebook page and a campaign website, where students can select issues they wish to address and access the relevant university regulations. Topics include syllabi, grade breakdowns, midterm conflicts, final exam deferrals, academic accommodations, and available resources for addressing violations.

Described as "a work-in-progress," the website quotes documents such as the University Student Assessment Policy and the Charter of Student Rights to illustrate exactly which resources McGill professors must make available in the first few weeks of class before the Add/Drop period ends.

The website also dispels certain myths; for example: "Contrary to popular belief, there are no regulations regarding changes to course syllabi at McGill. In fact,

the University retains the power to change evaluation schemes in the event of any 'extraordinary circumstances' outside of their control."

When asked if McGill's administration does enough to make students aware of their academic rights, SSMU VP University Affairs Erin Sobat told The Daily in an email: "Definitely not. Unfortunately, the administration has made clear that the onus is on students to find, interpret, and even enforce their own rights."

"There are basic steps that other institutions take to ensure compliance with their own policies," continued Sobat, "such as educating instructors and TAs, including links for students on course syllabi, and reviewing syllabi and course structures each term. SSMU has created this campaign and resources to fill this gap."

Additionally, the "Know Your Student Rights" website extensively details how and with whom students can address violations, whether it be an instructor, a Department Chair, the Dean of Students, or others. The VP University Affairs office recognizes that "while the rights outlined on [the] website are guaranteed by the University, there are

significant power dynamics in the student-instructor relationship that may act as a barrier to addressing them one-on-one."

The "Know Your Student Rights" website extensively details how and with whom students can address violations.

"The administration needs to enforce standardized guidelines on accommodations and clearly articulate the expectations and responsibilities of everyone involved in the accommodations process," Sobat also wrote.

"Individual faculty members should definitely not have the discretion to make decisions on whether or not accommodations should be granted, nor should they need to know a student's personal information or diagnosis," he concluded.

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# SSMU Midterm Reviews

WRITTEN BY ELLEN COOLS, MARINA CUPIDO, AND XAVIER RICHER VIS  
PHOTOS BY SONIA IONESCU

With the creation of a seventh executive position at the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) executive team has been able to focus more on their portfolios than their counterparts of the previous year. However, many executives have also had to adjust to brand new components to their portfolios, as responsibilities were redistributed. They have also had to cope with the perennial challenge of effecting meaningful change despite a recalcitrant administration, while negotiating new obstacles such as omnipresent construction and its attendant accessibility challenges, and a series of upheavals and reforms within McGill's Mental Health Services.

After checking in with the executives periodically throughout the Fall semester, The Daily has compiled mid-year reviews of their performances.



## President Ben Ger

As SSMU President, Ger is required to supervise the other executives' portfolios to a certain degree, as well as represent the undergraduate community on McGill's Board of Governors (BoG). So far, Ger has made the most of his position on the BoG, releasing a report entitled "A Seat at the Table," which analysed problems of representation, consultation, and communication that have left McGill students feeling frustrated and alienated from the Board. The report also made a series of recommendations regarding how to address these issues.

Moreover, at the last Board meeting of the Fall semester, Ger attempted to initiate an official review of the BoG's best practices by the Nominating, Governance, and Ethics (NGE) Committee. His resolution was tabled, but given the administration's general reluctance to implement significant student-led reform, it is to Ger's credit that the proposal was raised at all.

By contrast, the Fall 2016 General Assembly (GA), for which Ger was largely responsible, was incredibly underwhelming. Falling well below quorum, the GA clearly failed to represent the collective will of the undergraduate student body, and to engage people in the democratic process. Part of the reason seems to have been a distinct lack of publicity.

In an interview following the GA, Ger partly attributed this to restrictions on printing, yet a problem with print advertising would not have precluded a social media campaign. This aspect of organizing the GA is explicitly the President's responsibility; The Daily expects better for the Winter GA.



## VP Operations Sacha Magder

When Magder ran for the position, his campaign focused heavily on consultation, but included few concrete proposals. In the new position of VP Operations, Magder is responsible for operations in the SSMU building, such as Gerts and the Student Run Cafe (SRC), as well as sustainability initiatives.

In the Fall semester, both Gerts and SRC have seen increased sales, which is a valuable first step in addressing SSMU's deficits as the SRC has been the single largest contributor. In late November, the SRC was posting half the deficit it posted last year around the same time. Magder pointed to attempts to reduce food waste and increased catering as reasons for this improvement.

This is particularly noteworthy, given that SSMU's Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) forbids the SRC from advertising anywhere outside the Shatner building. Magder further told The Daily that he is in early talks with Deputy Provost Ollivier Dyens (Student Life and Learning) and other administrators to make the MoA more favorable to SSMU operations.

Construction around McGill's downtown campus has caused major accessibility problems. Magder's efforts to improve the situation seem largely to have been stymied by the City's lack of accountability and failure to respond proactively to student needs.

With regard to sustainability initiatives, Magder told The Daily that he has spoken with Associate VP (University Services) Robert Couvrette about McGill's waste management provider, which deals with both regular garbage and recycling. This is a serious potential conflict of interests, considering that landfills get paid by the square meter, meaning McGill could be getting fewer rebates for recycling initiatives. Magder has also spoken with McGill administrators about putting more composting bins in the Shatner building. Both initiatives have yet to be seen on campus, but both were conceived in the Fall semester.

However, the VP Operations office did secure a \$10,000 grant to build a garden behind the Shatner building, which could contribute towards the SRC's operations, but as of yet, little has been seen of concrete sustainability initiatives.

Magder's campaign promise to institute a "Crash Pad" in the Shatner Building has for the most part not seen great progress outside of Frosh, with sustainability and operations taking up a majority of his time.



## VP Student Life Elaine Patterson

As VP Student Life, Patterson has a mandate to carry out mental health initiatives, as well as oversee clubs and services. In the Fall semester, she extended Activities Night to three nights rather than two, allowing for a more pleasant atmosphere, with more clubs and students allowed to participate, despite some accessibility issues due to the construction on McTavish. That being said, some might criticize her choice (in coordination with SSMU's Sponsorship Coordinator, Security Manager, and Communications and Publications Coordinator) not to subject the company Tangerine, which brought an excessively large tent to the event, to repercussions for their breach of contract, which contributed to crowding at the event.

With the current club moratorium in place, which prevents the creation of new clubs under SSMU, Patterson has been limited in her Clubs and Services mandate. Nonetheless, Patterson has contributed towards giving certain SSMU services, like the Peer Support Centre, more permanent spaces in the Shatner building.

As one of the movers behind the newly adopted free Menstrual Hygiene Products Policy, a commendable effort on Patterson's part, students will have to see how she executes the policy and assure that funding is used effectively toward the policy's objectives.

Back in August, Patterson told The Daily that she was working with SSMU President Ben Ger to implement a gender discrimination policy in the Fall semester that will go beyond current provisions. Part of the policy included what is now the free Menstrual Hygiene Products Policy, but little has been heard of this overarching initiative in the months since.

With regards to mental health initiatives, Patterson has worked towards implementing "Mental Health 101" training sessions for new faculty and staff, and hosted "mental health roundtable" discussions amongst the University's Mental Health Services. But despite her wishes to harmonize said services, restructuring of McGill's Counselling and Mental Health Services (CMHS) and changes to the medical notes policy (done without consulting SSMU) has left many on campus disappointed.



## VP Finance Niall Carolan

Carolan came into his position exceptionally qualified with regard to financial experience. His electoral platform called for reorganizing club funding and better balancing of SSMU's budget; so far, he seems to have been largely successful in both areas.

With regards to club funding, he has removed mandatory second installment reports, to make the funding process "as easy as possible for student clubs," in his words. Previously when clubs applied for funding, half would be given up front, and the rest would be given after a report was submitted; this process was inconvenient for both clubs and SSMU administrators, he said.

Moreover, Carolan has worked with the Student Run Café (SRC) to cut its deficit in half in comparison to last year. Specifically, "whereas last year the deficit was around \$44,000 by August 31, this year it was only \$20 [thousand]." He further told The Daily that SSMU's expenditures as a whole have been reduced as well.

Carolan has also been working towards the implementation of a Socially Responsible Investment Fund (SRIF), working with Vadim di Pietro, Chief Investment Officer at Desautels Capital Management and a team of Desautels students in the Honours Investment Program. This is a commendable initiative as, in his words, "if we can invest our money in a place that both provides financial returns and a positive social impact, that's an amazing opportunity."

However, Carolan has faced criticism for what many have perceived as being an increased corporatization of SSMU. In response to the criticism, he said he would like to arrange student consultation through the Financial Ethics Review Committee, and that he would like to see active participation from students in decision-making. He further noted that the decision to seek sponsorships was made by the previous VP Finance and Operations, although during his campaign he did in fact speak of a desire to seek corporate sponsorship.



## VP Internal Daniel Lawrie

When Lawrie ran unopposed last year, his platform focused on three main tenets: communication, organization, and trust. With regard to the first objective, Lawrie worked on improving communication between his office and the student body this past semester. More specifically, he focused on redesigning the listserv, an initiative that seems to have been largely successful. He told The Daily that as a result, 44 per cent of students now read the listserv.

During his campaign, he also proposed using the official McGill and MyMartlet apps to further disseminate the listserv and sell tickets to SSMU events. Unfortunately, this proposal has so far not come to fruition, as Lawrie claims the company that runs the apps, Ooh La La, has been largely unresponsive. Lawrie said he will continue to reach out to the company in the next semester.

More concretely, Lawrie took the initiative to begin planning for 4Floors earlier than previous VP Internals, and saw this work pay off with the sale of close to 900 tickets, which generated a small profit. In comparison, last year's 4Floors ran a deficit.

While this is commendable, Lawrie acknowledged that "one of the things I've been most frustrated with is my time management," as he prioritized 4Floors and thereby neglected other aspects of his portfolio. Now that 4Floors is over, he says he will focus on other initiatives, such as the rebranding of McGill Red and White, now known as Life After Your Degree (LifeAYD).

Additionally, Lawrie has restructured the First-year Undergraduate Network (FUN), unifying it with First Year Council (FYC). Most recently, he has helped FYC create their first draft of a new constitution.

While Lawrie told The Daily at the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year that he planned to diversify the events portfolio and focus more on non-drinking events, The Daily has not yet seen much progress in this regard.



## VP External David Aird

The position of VP External requires Aird to support student-led campaigns on campus, to observe meetings of the Association pour la Voix Étudiante au Québec (AVEQ), and to oversee francophone affairs at McGill.

During his campaign Aird placed significant emphasis on this last point, promising to strengthen relations between McGill students and the Milton-Parc community. Aird told The Daily of plans to reinstate French conversation circles between students and the neighbourhood's permanent residents, and even to organize student lectures for the community. These ideas have not materialized. Aird said that he will focus more on these objectives in the Winter semester.

A supporter of last year's unsuccessful campaign to have SSMU join AVEQ, Aird has been attending AVEQ meetings in an observational capacity. He has also participated in a number of AVEQ subcommittees, and says he has been working to ensure that the federation aligns with SSMU's values and priorities. Aird has reported on his work with AVEQ to SSMU's Legislative Council, but disavows any intention of mounting another campaign to affiliate SSMU with AVEQ. While his involvement with AVEQ is important, he needs to more actively promote AVEQ's activities on campus, and keep the McGill community abreast of his work.

The VP External portfolio is also mandated to student initiatives and campaigns. In this respect, Aird's performance has been uneven. Throughout the Fall semester he remained involved in McGill Against Austerity, consulted with Divest McGill, and collaborated with VP University Affairs Erin Sobat in hiring a researcher to support Demilitarize McGill. He helped organize a small demonstration against tuition hikes on November 2, as well as McGill contingents to one or two other anti-austerity actions. However, Aird did not organize a contingent to the massive demonstration against rape culture which occurred in Montreal a few days earlier, nor did his office promote the event. This is emblematic of a broader problem with Aird's performance: his work with McGill Against Austerity is commendable, but he must engage McGill students in a wider variety of movements in the community.



## VP University Affairs Erin Sobat

The VP University Affairs must act as a liaison between McGill's administration and its undergraduate student body, advocating for student priorities whenever possible. As such, the position can be a frustrating one; indeed, Sobat's attempts to improve accommodations procedures – particularly where mental health issues are concerned – have to some extent been stymied by lack of consultation and general disorganization on the part of McGill Counselling and Mental Health Services (CMHS). Despite this, he and VP Student Life Elaine Patterson seem to have been working with the heads of these services to the best of their ability to ensure that no student is left behind by the new 'stepped care' model.

Sobat also organized a campaign early in the year to collect testimony from students regarding their experiences seeking accommodations from McGill. He also spearheaded a "Know Your Student Rights" campaign which ran at the start of both the Fall and Winter semesters, and included a website and robust social media presence.

During the Fall semester, in consultation with the McGill community, Sobat devoted much of his time to improving the Sexual Violence Policy (SVP). While far from perfect, the policy is a crucial first step toward combating sexual violence at McGill, and supporting those who have experienced it. Thanks in part to Sobat's valuable work, the policy was fully approved by the administration toward the end of the Fall semester, and implementation is now underway.

# 150 years of half-truths

## Festivities for Canada's anniversary neglect its violent past

**INORI ROY**  
The McGill Daily

*Content warning: colonialism, genocide, violence, slavery, xenophobia, war*

It's been little more than a week since 2017 began, and I am already fed up with Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations.

Advertisements for the country's anniversary are appearing everywhere: there are new posters at major monuments across the provinces, radio advertisements, television commercials dramatizing Canada's history, and maple leaf logos as far as the eye can see. The most troubling, and clearly problematic, aspect of the stifling patriotism on display through the year is that all of it is in celebration of a violent, settler-colonial state. Canada not only has its roots in the killing and exploitation of Black and Indigenous peoples, but is also currently enacting violence upon marginalised bodies – all while maintaining a frighteningly pristine reputation in the eyes of the rest of the world.

### 150 years of what?

As of 2017, it's been 150 years since Canada became a confederation under the British North America act: a moment considered seminal in the creation of the state of Canada. Largely ignored within this narrative is the history of all that came before the confederation – mass genocide and oppression of Indigenous peoples, the theft of Indigenous lands and resources, and the violation of treaties set up between the original inhabitants of the land and the invading settlers.

The first Europeans arrived in North America as early as the 15th century, and once the British and French colonial empires heard about the resources present on the continent, their focus was singular – taking the land for themselves. The Indigenous peoples who inhabited the continent were so loathed by the colonists that colonial authorities sought only to eliminate them – either through outright genocide, or through violent assimilation with the intention of 'breeding out' Indigenous identities and cultures.

Both pre- and post-confederation, Indigenous peoples had their land systematically taken away from them: when treaties were agreed upon, they were later violated by the Crown, leading to smaller and smaller reserves of land being designated for Indigenous nations. This theft of land goes hand in hand with the systematic elimination of identity and culture. The enactment of this

racism, this settler-colonial white supremacy (which is distinct from other forms of white supremacy because of the entitlement non-Indigenous settlers feel for the land they have colonised), is not a thing of the past. It has been present in Canadian legislation and political action through the past few centuries and until today.

Canada's origins are ugly and shameful. A brief overview of Canadian settler-colonialism is not nearly enough to reveal the brutalities of Canadian colonial history; it does not reveal all that the first Canadians did, often at the command of the crown, to become the 'true' inhabitants of the land. For instance, before the establishment of the state of Canada, British soldiers are known to have given Indigenous opponents blankets infected with smallpox, in order to eradicate large portions of the population at a time. Or, for example, from the 18th to 20th century, provincial laws provided monetary rewards (bounties) to white Canadians who scalped Indigenous people – that has yet to be eradicated from provincial law in Nova Scotia. In addition, the Canadian government made a concerted attempt to eliminate what Duncan Campbell Scott, former minister of Indian Affairs (from 1913-1932), referred to as the "Indian problem," by forcing Indigenous children away from their families and into residential schools, where they were made to rid themselves of their Indigenous identities and cultures, and were subject to psychological, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at the hands of the government and church officials. This ended only in 1996.

This is the history of Canada as it celebrates 150 years. And yet, these realities have been erased, and have been replaced with the image of Canadian benevolence. To non-Indigenous Canadians, and to the outside world, Canada is a country full of people who say sorry a lot, play hockey, are kind by default, and are pristine by reputation. Canadians boast that their history of slavery was short-lived and a largely benevolent one – this is untrue, and neglects the two hundred years during which slavery was a common practice among the white Canadian settlers. Canada claims that its history is an inclusive and multicultural one – another lie, given that Canada actively banned immigrants from south and east Asia from entering the country during the early 20th century. Admittedly, these phenomena deserve more than a sentence each in the argument against the idealisation of Canada. In fact, the entire perspec-



**INORI ROY** | The McGill Daily

tive through which Canada is viewed as a utopian society which "has itself figured out," as I heard someone describe it the other day, needs to be dismantled and reassessed. Where did the myth of benevolence come from? Why has being "not as bad as America," something we've all heard many times, become the standard by which Canadians satisfy themselves? And why, to this day, are these standards being used to shroud the truth?

Canada's origins are ugly and shameful. A brief overview of Canadian settler-colonialism is not nearly enough to reveal the brutalities of Canadian colonial history.

### A celebration of hypocrisy

Canada's wrongs are not frozen in the past. Looking to the future, all is not well. The Liberal government presented the core tenets of the anniversary as "diversity and inclusiveness, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the environment, and youth." But even within these parameters, Canada is failing to live up to its own ideas.

If Canada really intends to be inclusive, the government might want to reassess the country's role as the second largest arms dealer to the Middle East, and sixth highest arms dealer in the world. Canada likes to be thought of as a peaceful nation, but under the approval of the Trudeau government, \$15 billion worth of military vehicles have been sold to Saudi Arabia – a nation declared by many non-governmental humanitarian groups to be in violation of several human rights. Saudi Arabia, with the aid of U.S. funding is leading the ongoing bombing campaigns in Yemen. The largest dealer of arms to the Middle East is the U.S., which cements Canada's usual position as not the absolute worst, but in this case certainly second in line.

In addition to this, if Canada's attempts to 'reconcile' with Indigenous peoples are sincere, then why is it that as of this year, several Indigenous reserves across the country are still denied access to clean drinking water? As of early 2016, 114 Indigenous communities in various provinces have been issued a total of 158 active drinking water advisories. For many, this has gone on for years, and has not been addressed by the Canadian government.

As for Canada's environmental policy, which is directly tied to Indigenous rights to land and water, the Liberal government has disappointed many with its most recent decision to approve the development of oil pipelines by Kinder Morgan and Enbridge. In the aftermath of the decision, Greenpeace campaigner Mike Hudema stated that, "With this announcement, Prime Minister

Trudeau has broken his climate commitments, [and] broken his commitments to Indigenous rights."

Through all of this, there have been some bright spots in Canada's history – it has served as a home to thousands of refugees, and to discount that role does a disservice to the lives of those who have found solace in Canada. It is also important to note that, for many non-Indigenous Canadians, it can often be a privilege to live here – but to refuse to acknowledge these privileges is wrong in itself.

However, there needs to be a shift in the way we perceive this country. Canada is far from perfect, but somehow, has gotten away with maintaining its shiny, spotless illusion. It seems to me that loving something should mean understanding the ways in which it needs to be improved, and working towards those improvements – is it not possible for Canada to recognise its past in a way that reflects the hidden side of its history? Is there not space in the conversation for improvement that first acknowledges the wrongdoing that has come before it? As of right now, Canada is choosing to look back at only what it wants to see, and look forward without acknowledging the effects of the past – but the country has a long way to go before the exalted image it has created for itself becomes a reality.

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# Reflections on 2016

## Wrapping up odds and ends

**ANNE-CÉCILE FAVORY**  
The McGill Daily

In 2016, many of us have felt a growing distance from things that we have always assumed and held as truths. For those of us who have either grown up or found ourselves in liberal bubbles – far from certain realities that we either chose to ignore or which were hidden from us by smokescreens – we simply could not fathom our current social, economic, and political climate. We were well aware of economic inequalities, rampant racism, cis-sexism, misogyny, and the very foundations on which our Western society was based; yet somehow, 2016 still felt like an ambush. There were prescient warnings by those most marginalized, but those were supposedly ‘tainted’ by lived experiences, seen as inherent biases; the situation was dire and we refused to listen. Despite our participation in protests, marches, heated political discussions, community actions, and engagement with the liberal, and even liberal-left media, we were floored.

We then spent the rest of 2016 playing the blame game: who was responsible for this mess? Everything and everyone, apparently – identity politics, increasing economic disparity, growing distance between the rural and the urban, corruption, greed, neoliberalism, fake news, social media, racist legacies, white supremacy, colonialism, liberal backlash, the electoral college, the incompatibility of democracy and hyper-capitalism, and most of all, the Universe. The end of the year saw think-pieces, tweets, blog posts, articles, listicles, memes with the same fraught personalization of 2016 as simply “the worst.” After all, 2016 was supposedly the year of realizing things, and that’s never an easy task. Here are some things that we ‘realized’: having a Black man as president of the United States did not, in fact, mean that racism was over; the western world is experiencing a crisis, and the liberal democratic principles it supposedly espouses – those same seeds of democracy that it so generously sowed across the globe, without being asked to do so – are failing; and the fall of neoliberal capitalism seems inevitable at this point, maybe it was never really sustainable after all. It felt like 2016 was just one truly shocking truth after another.

Most of us know it’s too easy, as well as absurd, to think we’re leaving all of 2016 behind; none of us expect that the social construction of time and arbitrary measure of the Gregorian calendar is enough to shield us from the inevitable continuity of last year’s events and, ultimately, that of history. However, maybe compartmentalization is

what some of us need right now to survive. Adhering to this conception of a new year as a fresh start is not a delusion, or even just a form of self-care – a term that essentially lost its meaning when it was co-opted by capitalists to justify ‘wellness’ programs and products used to improve worker satisfaction and productivity. Rather, saying goodbye to yet another year is a mechanism that allows us to continue our work and our lives in an increasingly unfamiliar setting, and that we must.

None of us expect that the social construction of time and arbitrary measure of the Gregorian calendar is enough to shield us from the inevitable continuity of last year’s events.

The next few years will require radical actions. It will require awareness and a critical look at our capacities and our socio-economic positions. Although we find ourselves in seemingly catastrophic times, the consequences will not affect some of us, namely the relatively wealthy and privileged, and their children and grandchildren – at least not in the ways that it will impact the world’s most vulnerable. While we’re all allowed to grieve and process our emotions accordingly, it is worth questioning our increasingly public expressions of outrage and reactionary behaviour in times like these. The personification of 2016 as nearly apocalyptic, at least according to Twitter and Facebook feeds, often came from those least likely to be affected by the urgent climate crisis, xenophobia, Islamophobia, racist migration policies, threats to reproductive rights, police brutality, mass incarceration, a rise in far-right political parties and white supremacy. Sure, all of these issues warrant outrage, but the reactionary loop within which we found ourselves at the end of 2016 seemed counterproductive at best. Generalizing all knee-jerk reactions as feigned indignation would be inaccurate, although not entirely false. Some of us, in some way, felt guilty or wanted to distance ourselves from ‘the ones’



**HAYLEY MORTIN** | Illustrator

that caused this mess, while others were justifiably upset by the injustice and the fear of imminent danger. Plastering our anger and grief on social media in times of crisis is a valid form of expression; however, how do we stop this reactionary loop from lulling us into a false sense of engagement, or even inhibiting concrete actions by over-

Sure, all of these issues warrant outrage, but the reactionary loop within which we found ourselves at the end of 2016 seemed counterproductive.

whelming us with reactionary and inflammatory affirmations turned facts meant to outdo one another?

We could disengage with the news, our Facebook and Twitter feeds, and take a look within our own communities. As citizens we’re made to feel guilty and irresponsible for not keeping up with breaking news, which seems to occur at dizzying rates lately, but this year disproved that too. We consumed an incredible amount of political content on all platforms, but echo chambers, fake news, and a cycle that feeds on reaction over action has left us deflated, emotionally burnt out, and frankly, exhausted. Unfortunately, we can’t afford to make half-hearted efforts to find bandaid solutions. In some way, the years to come will require all of us to become activists within our capacities and circumstances. We will have to step outside our ivory towers, behind our liberal smokescreens, away from our comfort zones, and listen to those who have

been warning us for years. This will be hard. It will require introspection, doing away with previously-held beliefs on identities, redirecting our energies from semantics to laborious emotional work, and re-evaluating the efficacy of our political actions within the confines of neoliberalism. Most of all, it will require us to face uncomfortable truths and surrender to the discomfort. It feels disingenuous to keep an optimistic outlook, and nihilistic to admit defeat; maybe remembering that the world and all that it holds is in constant motion, and that collective actions will continue to direct its course, can provide us with some comfort.

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# A GEOGRAPHY OF LOVE AND CHAOS

## Cultivating a love ethic in the spaces between Montreal and Vancouver Island

Written by Sevrenne Sheppard

It's no secret that the world we have inherited is both beautiful and harrowing. So too, it appears, is our relationship with love. Caught in a confusing climate of endless Instagram photos captioned #relationshipgoals, and a deeply rooted cynicism about the role of love in our lives, it comes as no surprise that so many young people have had unsatisfying or unsettling experiences with love. In "Towards a Worldwide Culture of Love," bell hooks writes about love as the opposite to forces of fear and domination. In her work, hooks calls for the renewal of a love ethic: a state of being grounded in a dedication to the genuine well-being of others. In trying times, cultivating a love ethic that replaces fear and inspires joy is incredibly important in healing and sustaining ourselves and our communities. A love ethic can be guiding in all the work there is to be done to create a more compassionate and fertile world; as a catalyst to lasting, transformative change.

In *All About Love: New Visions*, hooks suggests that "our confusion about what we mean when we use the word 'love' is the source of our difficulty in loving." We need a common understanding of love that doesn't over-emphasize or prioritize romantic love. We need a practice that delineates between the selflessness of love and the self-interested process of cathexis (where a loved one becomes important to you because of what they contribute to your life). We need a definition that acknowledges love, as hooks defines it, as a choice to nurture the spiritual growth of another.

Cultivating a love ethic means developing an understanding of love that captures the full range of human relationships and experiences – from motherhood to friendship to sex. A love ethic is not purely theoretical or abstract; it is the development of a language and a set of practices to express the way we feel for ourselves and each other. It is a concrete, day-to-day commitment to care, affection, recognition, respect, and trust of others. Ultimately, we are in need of an understanding of love that is as diverse, dynamic, and chaotic as our lives and our world. Even the acts of writing or speaking seriously about love – a topic often framed as self-indulgent, essentially feminine, or oversentimental – are reclamations of love as a topic of deep thought and constant interrogation.

In my own life, I have recently realized the need to be able to think about love as broader than simply the feelings I have for the person I choose to have sex with and make crafts for. For the past two years, I have, somewhat accidentally, taken on the long, arduous, introspective task of unravelling what, where, and why love is, and how to live lovingly in a time fraught with political, environmental, and personal turbulence.

This task has involved what seems like a million wonderful and inspiring humans, and a handful of wonderful and inspiring places. The chaos of moving around, meeting new people, of being young in a time of climate crisis, of falling in and out of love, have all shaped my experiences of love throughout my short adult life. In the past two years, I have trav-

elled through Nunavut and lived in Montreal, Toronto, Haida Gwaii, and Vancouver Island. In each of these places, amid a swirl of new people, new plants, new surroundings, I have begun to understand the significance of a love ethic in an ever-changing world. Everywhere I've been, I have found love in the spaces where spirituality, science, environment, and human experience overlap.

I have found love in the spaces where spirituality, science, environment, and human experience overlap.

In the plane from Ottawa to Iqaluit, at the beginning of a summer spent working with children across the territory, I was at once excited and inspired and overwhelmed. I wrote furiously about all of it in that in-between space: "Everything is love. The peace of empty spaces, of seeing clouds from above, turbulence, the lulling sound of Inuktitut, getting lost walking in a new place, sharing hugs, long talks, cups of tea. It's all open heartedness, balance, and letting go." Far from treeline, I was surrounded by kilometer after kilometer of tundra, ancient mosses, antlers and teeth and vertebrae, and giant pieces of pink granite, looking out over an ocean of ice floes and countless shades of white, blue, and grey. Like loving someone,

being in the Arctic made the entire universe seem just a little bigger than it had been before; it felt full of infinite and storied space, though I had yet to hear all the stories.

When I was in the Arctic, I was in that particular kind of mood that follows heartbreak. I wanted to redefine myself after feeling shattered by a breakup with the first person I had romantically loved. Far from the threads that bound me to my friends and family in British Columbia and Montreal, the last thing I wanted at that time was to form a lasting emotional connection to another person. Like many who have made the mistake of loving someone who is uninterested in loving back, I was disenchanted with love.

While the many bright and generous people I met up North taught me about the lived realities of climate change and the ongoing legacy of colonialism in Indigenous communities, being somewhere so different in every way from coastal Vancouver Island, where I grew up, also taught me a lot about finding and feeling love. About peacefulness and hope in the midst of so much space. About joy in dusty summer sunshine and joy in literal dark, cold times. About acceptance of quiet perils; the threat of a polar bear or emotional vulnerability, alike. I met the North much like you meet someone who gives you butterflies in your stomach: full of curiosity, nervousness, self-consciousness, and a desire to share the experience with others.

And, as it would happen, I did meet someone who gave me butterflies in my stomach. We kissed near the beach and talked about how the

ocean tasted. I was overjoyed. I wrote a letter to a friend in which I mentioned this person in particular, saying, “you’d love them. I wish you two could meet. I wish everyone could meet them.” A couple months later, I copied out a similar verse from a love poem in Adrienne Rich’s *The Dream of a Common Language* (one of those life-changing collections of poetry about love and relationships): “I dreamed you were a poem / I say, a poem I wanted to show someone... / and I laugh and fall dreaming again / of the desire to show you to everyone I love.” Retrospectively, this is all quite sweet and romantic. I love poetry, and ocean kisses, and after two years of knowing this person, I love them too. But at the time, I was conflicted and upset by my butterfly-tummy, poetry-quoting feelings. I was upset that I wasn’t redefining myself as someone ‘stronger,’ less vulnerable, less desiring of care and affection. I was confused at how much of my feelings of independence had evaporated the moment I made extended eye contact with someone I was attracted to. I’ve heard similar experiences from my friends, particularly women and femmes, who curl themselves up small when faced with feelings of love. They are afraid, as I am afraid, that our vulnerability and desire for love will come across as desperate or needy.

An important first step towards being loving is to overcome the cynicism and disenchantment a lot of us feel about love, to embrace the beautiful mess of vulnerability, risk, and excitement. Practicing love requires, as bell hooks writes, acceptance – acceptance that now is the time, and that this, in all its blue-grey, mossy spaciousness, is the place.

## On the islands of Haida Gwaii I heard many affirmations of love for the abundance and unconditional giving of the land and sea.

Haida Gwaii, much like the Arctic, seems like it could be the edge of the universe. It is a place overflowing with contagious expressions of love. Love for community, for the earth, for life. For a semester in 2016, I lived in the village of Skidegate on Haida Gwaii, for a field semester with seventeen other students. I was past the phase of being unaccepting of love. I came to Haida Gwaii determined to surround myself with reciprocal kindness and generosity and presence in the moment. And it wasn’t hard to do. I found myself surrounded by people who, like me and my close friends, would share small gifts, write notes, cook and bake for one another, give hugs and compliments generously. Expressing love caught on in our group, inspired by the generous land and people around us, and by a few fellow students expert in the daily practice of love. On the islands of Haida Gwaii I heard many affirmations of love for the abundance and unconditional giving of the land and sea, stories about the care owed to the Earth by the people who live here. For many reasons, Haida Gwaii is a microcosm of how I wish the world were everywhere; rich in respect for land, community, culture, and calmness. It is rare to be in a place where practicing love – actively nurturing the spiritual growth of others – is the norm. Beyond accepting our vulnerabilities

and feelings of love, I have come to discover that cultivating a love ethic also requires such generous expressions of love to others.

There are certain things, writes Kate Weiner in “The Sensuous Environmentalist,” such as the ability to express and accept love, that are “climate change proof.” In the midst of a year of political anxiety, crumbling glacial shelves, and rising sea levels, I’ve focused on weaving expressions and acceptance of love into my own life in order to keep afloat. I remind myself to tell my friends I love them, send cards and letters and drawings and pressed leaves to loved-ones who are far away. Though, despite the abundance of love I try to plant in my life, there are times when I find it difficult to express or accept love. I am quick to specify the difference between ‘love’ and ‘Love’, to avoid all the vague code and expectation wrapped up in declarations of romantic love. I have heard from so many friends, especially from men, that it is difficult to express Love, with a capital L, to another person. Though in an imaginary, ideal world I am someone who doesn’t over-ascribe importance to romantic “I love you’s,” in reality, I am. I’m curious about the difference between the types of love we feel for certain people. When I asked a close friend about why this difference, and the primacy of romantic love, might exist, they said: “I think it’s because we have too narrow a definition of love and have yet to categorize the nuances. Or rather, we mis-categorize the different types of love. Maybe love shouldn’t be categorized at all. I don’t know. I think the depth of love you feel for a friend and a romantic partner can be the same. Does that still make it a different kind of love? I’m still trying to figure it out.” I suppose I’m still trying to figure it out too.

Learning about concepts of wilderness in the temperate rainforests of Haida Gwaii, I read about a term that stuck with me. In “Between the Local and Global,” Catriona Sandilands writes about the conservation of Clayoquot Sound in coastal British Columbia as a *simulacrum* of nature, a simulation of an imagined reality. Sandilands writes that in Clayoquot Sound, and in other places classified as ‘wilderness,’ conservation efforts focus on maintaining an imagined pristine and untouched natural space, whereas in reality the site has been inhabited, altered, and managed by humans for time immemorial. I feel that often, romantic relationships take on the form of simulacrum when it comes to love. We worry about when is the right time to say “I love you,” about when to post photos of each other on social media, about how aloof we should act at each stage of the relationship. We have a linear understanding of romantic love as a series of escalating acts and feelings, which is far less accommodating than definitions of friendship. Love is subject to the chaotic non-linearity and messiness of nature or human emotions. Often, the emotional labour of women in relationships is erased from narratives of love, or the labour of Indigenous peoples in caring for the earth is likewise erased in narratives of wilderness. Though the picture we have in our heads of romantic love is of a constant state of bliss, or of wilderness as pristine naturalness, the reality is that both these things require intensive care and intervention. Expressing our love organically, and rejoicing in diversity and imperfection, acknowledges the messy, involved, disorganized process that is loving someone else.

Creating a community rooted in these genuine, diverse expressions of love requires a great deal of effort, honesty, and open communication. Toronto, where I lived this past

summer, is certainly a much bigger community than Haida Gwaii, and expressions of love are, perhaps, easier in a small community than in a city. However, small loving actions and expressions of love can still lead to contagious, joyful love in an urban environment. I moved to Toronto for a summer internship in community engagement, a space where I witnessed firsthand the ability of a handful of bright, hard-working people to spark big love in a city of nearly three million. People who a friend recently described as “bright lights” in this year of uncertainty, who do the incredible and often invisible work of nurturing the spiritual growth of those around them. In Toronto, I felt happy and at peace surrounded by a coalition of friends and colleagues grounded in good. Our friendships and collaborations are rooted in big conversations about love and communication and hope and dreams and plans for making the world a kinder and safer place.

There are certain things, [...] such as the ability to express and accept love, that are “climate change proof.”

The work of building a love ethic is necessarily located in a community or in the space between friends. In *All About Love*, bell hooks reminds us that “loving friendships provide us with a space to experience the joy of community in a relationship where we learn to process all our issues, to cope with differences and conflict while staying connected.” A lot of us learn to practice the essential skills of love through emotionally intimate and close friendships. Living under the confines of heteropatriarchy, many of us, particularly men or masculine people, are not socialized to have close, intimate friendships where love is talked about frequently and seriously. People who lack close or loving friendship may also lack an arena in which to practice the skills of love and to make sense of the chaos that is human relationships and feelings. Creating communities where love is both commonplace and celebrated can help to overcome the anxiety and divisions of a world that is increasingly tense with fear and domination. Practicing love in community has the potential to be transformative not only for our individual selves, but also as a wider resistance to patriarchy, capitalism, and structures which depend on fear and lovelessness.

In Montreal, I live with four friends in a collective home, grounded in an ethic of love, care, and co-operation. We share cooking, and dreaming/scheming, and plant both the courage to face our fears as well as vegetables and flowers. Attempting (successfully) to resist neoliberal individualism, capitalism, and patriarchy, we are building a loving community and a positive, nurturing environment for our friends and for each other. Though not everyone involved in this DIY family necessarily identifies themselves as queer, we are all participating in the queering of home-making, family-making, and of a collective understanding of love and commitment. It was Maggie Nelson who first illuminated my life with the idea of queering home and family. In her book *The Argonauts*, Nelson writes that there is “a long history of queers constructing their own families – be they composed of peers or mentors or lovers or ex-lovers or children or non-human

animals. [...] It reminds us that any bodily experience can be made new and strange, that nothing we do in this life need have a lid crammed on it, that no one set of practices or relations has the monopoly on the so-called radical, or the so-called normative.” In the space between the world we live in, entangled in divisions and uncertainty, and the world we hope to create, which acknowledges the infinite connection that sustains us, we are participating in pre-figuring a more loving future.

Every time I come home to Vancouver Island, I fly over or sail through the gulf islands. From far above, the islands and ocean look like blots of moss in a small pond. The experience always reminds me of how human life, which seems so big, so whole from the ground, is a tiny part of something that is almost unknowably large and complex. I think love is like this too. Loving someone can seem so big that it could eat us right up if we’re not careful, but in relation to eight billion hearts on the earth, one act of love is almost insignificant. And still, genuinely loving someone can be the butterfly’s wing-beat that causes a string of sunny days thousands of kilometers away. It’s tiny, but it’s everything.

This time that I’m home, I’m thinking especially about love as a means of cultivating hope in times of crisis. Why is love so important to know and to practice at this moment in time? Perhaps because love is the opposite of fear, a fear that is easy to feel every time we read the news or think about the many heartbreaking, horrible things that have happened in recent months. Perhaps because love has the power to heal; us and the planet, soul and soil. Love is not only a survival strategy, but a reason for survival itself. Love is a method of resistance and re-imagination. In the harrowing but beautiful world, as Rebecca Solnit writes, “love is what you have, and generosity, and imagination. These are centres of resistance, and the resistance is that you go out into the world with the strength and vision you gather inside.”

## Love is not only a survival strategy, but a reason for survival itself.

Go out into the world, get crushed and butterflies, say “I love you” (say it often), hold close the people you love, inspire and encourage and care for one another, and work hard to create spaces where a love ethic prevails. When we practice love, whether by planting a row of herbs along a windowsill, or pressing flowers for friends, we prune the hedges of our hearts so they can grow ever taller and stronger. It’s the beginning of a new year, and it’s an important year to be loving.

### Quoted:

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# Cancer cells play Jekyll and Hyde

How changing tumours complicate the search for a cure

**SAISHREE  
BADRINARAYANAN**  
Sci+Tech Writer

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2012 saw 8.1 million people have cancer-related deaths. The CDC further estimates that by 2025, 19.3 million people will be diagnosed with cancer each year. This debilitating disease occurs as a result of uncontrolled cell growth which leads to the formation of tumours. These tumours then spread away from their site of development (a process known as metastasis) causing dysfunction in various parts of the body. In 1930, Zellförsch Winge showed that cancer cells within a tumour showed variations in their genetic profile, thus shattering the earlier view that cells within a tumour are homogenous in nature. Along with this, he also reported that some cancer cells – but not all – had the ability to form new tumours when transplanted from one mouse into another. This variability seen in genetic, morphological, and physiological features within a tumour is referred to as intra-tumour heterogeneity (ITH). Clinicians and researchers believe that this will be a hurdle to cross when diagnosing patients and considering personalized medicine treatment options.

Tumour samples are obtained from patients when a part of the tumour is excised (typically a non-invasive surgery known as a biopsy) and then preserved in a fixative for future testing. These samples can be taken from patients at any point in time, which gives physicians the possibility of sampling the same tumour at different time points of its development. With the presence of ITH, this leaves us with a tissue sample that no longer shares the same genetic profile of the initial tumour, excised at a different time; because of this, a treatment that initially showed consistent improvements could fail to target this new mutation.

Why can't samples be taken from patients at regular intervals? First, it remains unknown when specific cells within a tumour begin to diverge and form new tumours. Second, it remains a mystery if all cells within a tumour have the capacity to do so. Studies in animal models continue to indicate the presence of highly metastatic variants in the parent population of tumour cells. To further investigate ITH, researchers began to examine tumours in patients. A seminal study led by Charles Swanton showed that in samples obtained from patients diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma, there were significant differences in the molecular profiles of biopsies obtained from different sites of the primary



LUCIE COUDERC | The McGill Daily

tumour and its associated metastatic site. The samples were subjected to an array of molecular diagnostic procedures such as immuno-histochemical assays, mutation analysis and RNA sequence profiling. Their results suggested that some molecular abnormalities were seen to be present in most of the analyzed cells while another set of mutations were present in only primary or metastatic sites.

Prior to the Swanton findings, researchers began to think that one of the efficient ways to stop cancer growth was to identify the key molecular pathways critical for cancer cell survival, a sort of Achilles heel of cancer. The most prominent question put forth was if the gene responsible for developing a normal cell into a tumour cell (oncogene) is required for it to maintain its invasive or malignant form. While searching for answers to these questions, researchers realized that it was possible that some cell variants no longer depend on an oncogene and that administration of a single anti-cancer drug could lead to drug resistance in cancer.

If you combine this with the findings from the Swanton study, we now have a few more pressing questions: If a single anti-cancer drug can't target the required mutations, could a combination of drugs do it? And more importantly how do some cells within a tumour gain the capacity to form new tumours or express new mutations? Sadly, the answer to the first question is already evident: with the presence

of diverse range of mutations in different areas of a tumour, it makes it impossible to develop a combination of drugs that can target each abnormality effectively without compromising the wellbeing of the patient.

Many theories were postulated to understand the development of this ITH, one prominent question was: could this heterogeneity arise from cancer cells behaving like stem cells? In principle, yes. A cancer stem cell, as defined by the American Association of Cancer Research, is a cell within a tumour that has the capacity to self-renew and cause the various lineages of cancer cells that comprise a tumour. To assess if cells from a tumour have properties of a cancer stem cell, researchers biopsy a tumour and transplant it into a mouse whose immune system is compromised (to prevent removal via their immune system). To qualify as a cancer stem cell, the cell must fulfil two important criteria: first, they must possess self-renewal properties and second, they must possess potential to form tumours. Once the excised tissue begins to grow in the immunocompromised mouse, it is periodically checked to see if they form tumours (i.e. tumorigenic capacity). While this test helps distinguish between cancer stem cells and non-cancer stem cells, the results are interpreted with caution and scientists are looking for a more robust and precise way of identifying cancer stem cells.

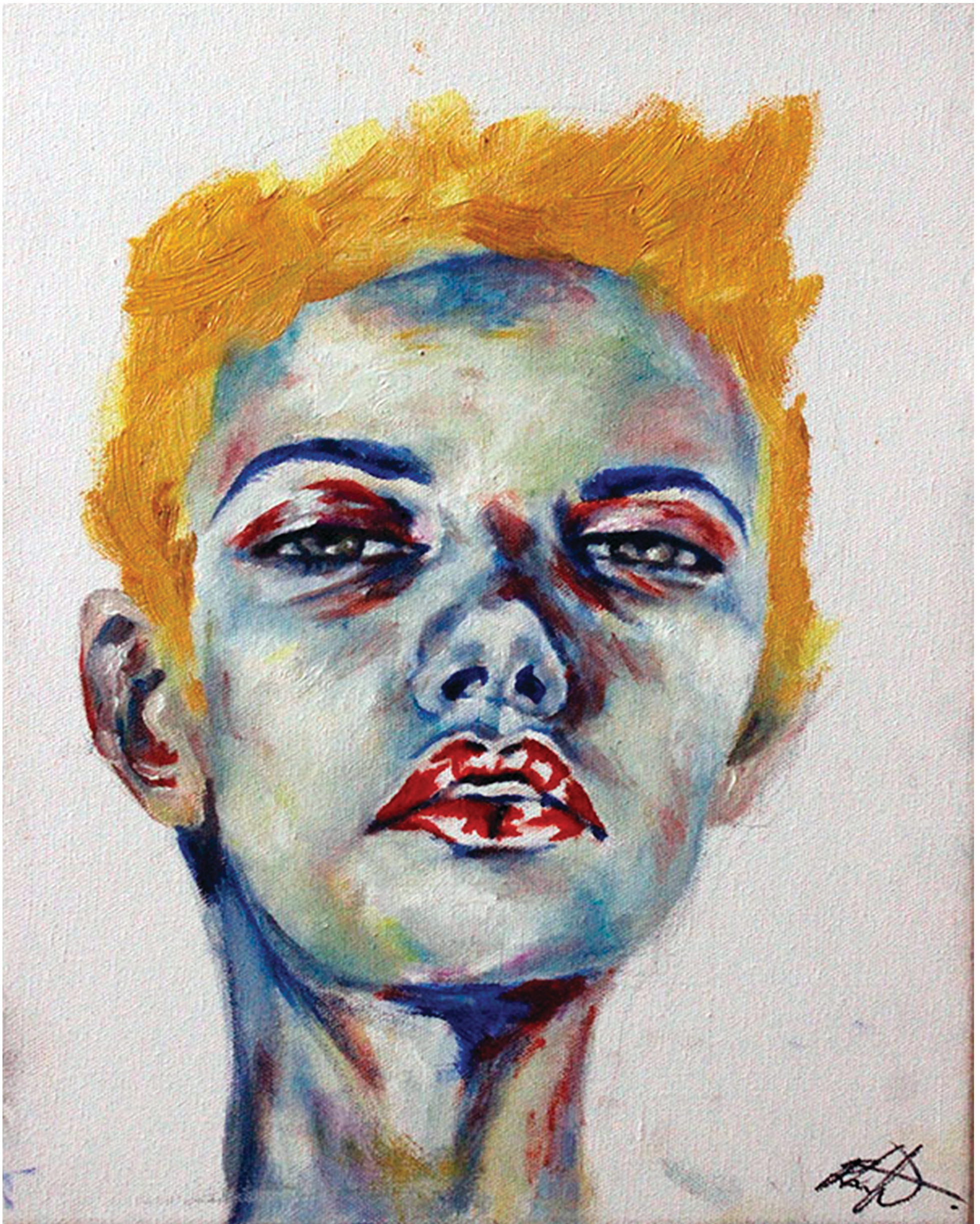
How does the identification of cancer stem cells help in diagnosis or

treatment of cancers? Finding the root cause of a specific cancer or deciding a course of treatment for cancer patients has never been easy for clinicians and researchers alike. When it was assumed that each type of cancer had specific groups of mutation to blame for its occurrence, the diagnosis and treatment was aimed at identifying those mutations. Now, with the likelihood of each tumour possessing cancer cells that are capable of forming different tumours, it becomes harder to identify the main mutation and the subsequent treatments for it. At the same time, it is possible that in some cancers the tumours can only contain a small population of cancer stem cells while the other cells have lost their self-renewal or tumorigenic properties. This would make it profoundly difficult in not only testing the cancer stem cell model, but also identifying treatments for both the cancer stem cells and the non-tumorigenic cells. This then raises the concern of knowing the extent to which tumorigenic cells populate a tumour. While many researchers do believe that the percentage of cancer stem cells in a tumour may be less, it still remains a crucial hypothesis that helps researchers and clinicians understand the variability seen in patients.

As most treatment courses are determined from the results obtained from a single biopsy, current cancer treatments are inadequate in treating the ITH observed in tumours. As Charles Swanton and his

colleagues demonstrated, variations in genetic mutations are observed when different samples are obtained from a single tumour, leaving most tumours with the ability to develop resistance to anti-cancer treatments. For example, if an anticancer drug targets a subpopulation of cancerous cells in a tumour expressing a specific genetic mutation, the remaining cells that do not express the same mutation remain unaffected and continue to grow. Hence, it is important to determine if a tumour is housing cancer stem cells that can continue the growth of the tumour after treatment. Along with drug resistance, there are many other ways ITH affects cancer treatments.

So what can be done to ensure more effective treatments? First, multiple biopsies would need to be conducted from the same tumour to ascertain the presence of ITH. But the underlying problem still remains: until the etiology of ITH is understood, it will remain difficult to develop effective cancer treatments. Many challenges lay ahead to achieve this, such as geographical and timely intervention, accurate, and precise methods to analyse treatment response and most importantly, active patient participation and effective research and clinical collaboration. But in time, it will be possible to deliver comprehensive personalized treatment to cancer patients to combat the ITH seen in cancer.



RAHMA WIRYOMARTONO  
'OF A WOMAN.' OIL ON CANVAS

# Spring into festival season

Your culture editors preview the anticipated events of spring '17



COCO ZHOU | The McGill Daily

## Veganuary

The Herbivore Society for Peace and Justice kicks off the year with Veganuary, an event series exploring the ethical and cultural aspects of veganism. Self-described as an “anti-colonial, inclusive, and intersectional” political activist group, The Herbivore Society for Peace and Justice recently celebrated their first year of being an official club and is currently the only vegan club on campus. The group aims to educate students about the political and personal benefits of abstaining from or reducing one’s consumption of animals products.

Running from January 13 to 27, Veganuary boasts an impressive line up of events, including potlucks, panels, and hands-on workshops addressing both practical and theoretical concerns. Highlights include “Veganism on a Budget,” a workshop that aims to challenge the Gwyneth Paltrow brand of veganism with specific advice on making the lifestyle sustainable and affordable; “Veganism and Privilege,” a panel discussion exploring the ways in which veganism intersects with specific identities and axes of power; and “Veganism x Feminism,” hosted in collaboration with the F Word, a biannual feminist publication, which addresses the opportunities and problematics of joining the animal rights and reproductive justice movements.

Veganuary combines theory-heavy discussions with practical lessons, from budget-planning to kombucha-brewing, making the festival an ideal primer for anyone who is curious about the vegan lifestyle. With a mandate that acknowledges veganism’s colonial, racial, and class-related implications, The Herbivore Society for Peace and Justice promises to make the move away from animal products accessible to a marginalized audience and essential to one’s activism.

## We Can’t Make The Same Mistake Twice For McGill University: Film and Panel Discussion

We Can’t Make the Same Mistake Twice seeks to uncover the ongoing legacy of colonial discrimination towards Indigenous peoples: violence that McGill’s administration not only fails to acknowledge, but continues to perpetuate. In 2007, The Child and Family Caring Society of Canada – led by Cindy Blackstock – and the Assembly of First Nations filed a human rights complaint against the federal government. They argued that the child and family welfare services they were being provided – inadequate, underfunded, and deployed of basic human rights – discriminated against Indigenous children. The trial, however, was dragged on for six years by the government, though the court eventually ruled in favour of the Indigenous activist groups. Director Alanis Obomsawin’s documentary is set within the court hearings: detailing the various testimonies and revealing the Canadian government’s “mind-numbingly bureaucratic approach to a human crisis.” However, the court battle is not an isolated instance, but is embedded within a legacy of discriminatory government practices whereby Indigenous peoples were forced to leave their land and families in order to access basic services. On January 19, We Can’t Make the Same Mistake Twice will be screened at Cinema du Parc, with opening remarks by the director herself and a panel discussion moderated by Allan Downey, assistant professor in the department of history and classical studies at McGill. In a city founded through the colonization of Indigenous land, it is important to recognize, understand, and resist these histories and their present-day implications.

## The Rap Battles for Social Justice

In response to racial discrimination, the hip-hop movement gained momentum during the 1970s in New York City’s South Bronx. African-American, Caribbean-American, and Latin American youth used music as a vehicle for self-expression, empowerment, and resistance. Since then, hip-hop has evolved considerably – but The Rap Battles for Social Justice, a Montreal-based collective, shows how music remains a powerful form of activism. On their Facebook page, the group emphasizes the importance of including People of Colour (POC) on stage “especially in hip-hop” – a racialized art form created by those who were, and continue to be, systemically marginalized. The collective strives to challenge these systems of inequality. Bringing together “hip-hop heads and activists,” they aim to “showcase the wide range of talent in the MTL scene while educating the masses.” The Rap Battles for Social Justice is funded by various grassroots, community and student groups from McGill and Concordia universities. They also collect donations door-to-door in order to support the performers and raise money for valuable collectives such as Aamjiwnaang & Sarnia Against Pipelines.

Since March 2015, the collective has produced numerous rap battles centred on themes such as climate justice, gender freedom, and austerity. Over 800 people have attended so far – and the organization is still in its early stages of development. Spring 2017 includes two highly-anticipated rap battles: one against Police Brutality on February 15th, the other against consumerism on March 29th. The use of hip-hop provides not only a means of resistance but a platform for dialogue, self reflexivity, and teaching.

## Festival Nuits d’Afrique

Celebrating their 30th anniversary last year, Nuits d’Afrique will be continuing the party into the new year. Nuits d’Afrique is primarily recognized for their summer world music festival – which boasted over 700 artists in July 2016 – but the collective produces events throughout the rest of the year as well, including the 24th edition of Festival de musique du Maghreb. From March 31 to April 2, the festival will melodically transform the Théâtre Fairmont and Club Balattou into spaces reminiscent of Tunis, and Marrakech through North African beats such as chaabi music and gnawa rhythms. Until then, Club Balattou on Saint Laurent will be hosting two to three events per week; the exciting lineup features music that ranges from gospel to funkadelic to Cuban. In 1985, Lamie Touré – the president and founder of Nuits d’Afrique – opened Club Balattou, after his previously owned club, Café Creole, closed down. Touré launched Café Creole after immigrating to Canada from Guinea in 1974 with the desire to “create a space for Africans.” In an interview with the Montreal Gazette, he recounts a day where there were “twenty immigrants waiting at the [club’s] front door with their suitcases.” Through Nuits d’Afrique, Touré continues to provide an indispensable space for voices of the African diaspora: a platform that fosters self-expression while showcasing the creative, diverse, and complex history of African music.

–Coco Zhou and Taylor Mitchell

# What would you say to 2017?

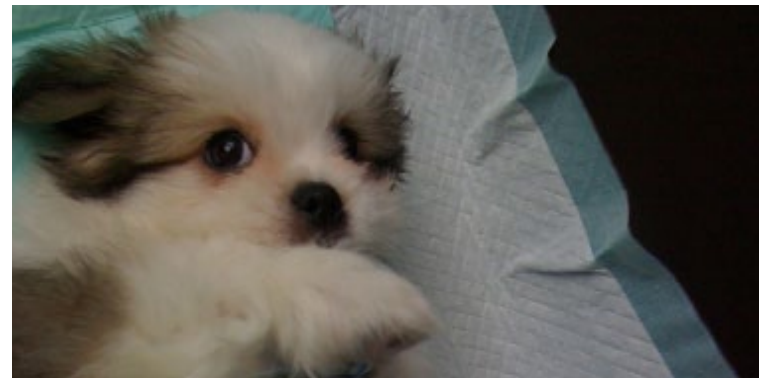
“Woof woof woof”



“My new years’ resolution is to actually achieve last year’s resolution. But to do that I’ll have to remember it first.” –Catharina O’Donnell



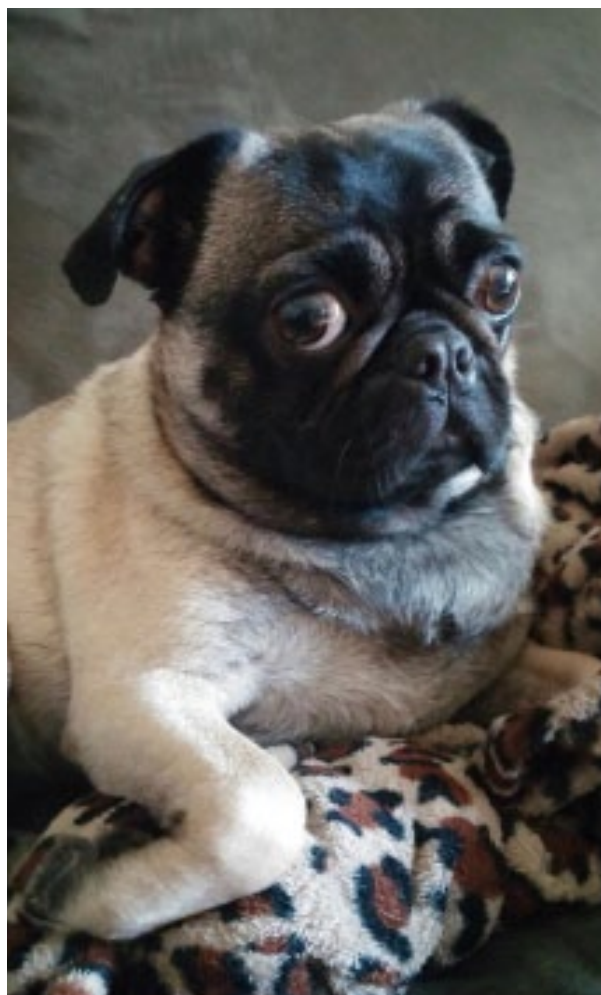
“In 2017, I want to be less timid. I’m going to go to the gym, make the first move, and stream porn in class.” –Anonymous



“when i think of 2017, i think of fire. of a mass awakening. my body will burn to the ground and i will be reborn, and so will you and so will we. we will continue to fight. i’ll carry you and we will live in this world, dazzling, spinning, fiery, and we will support each other as best we can. we will make art and love and we will nurture each other. protect each other. i will be kinder, to you and to myself. i will hold myself when i cry, i will welcome bad feelings when they come, and i will love my art as expressions of myself.” –Anonymous



“This year, I’m going to try staying calm around my mom even though she’s very good when it comes to making me mad.” –Anonymous



“in 2017 i would like to kill more fascists and get into grad school” –Coco Zhou



“I don’t believe in resolutions I think they’re stupid” – Emily



“1. Not falling into our square-shaped toilet. 2. To properly acknowledge and care for my depression without letting it define me.” –Anonymous



“I would say that I’m going to be more organized and more self-controlled in 2017. But, really, I don’t want to fail myself.” –Anonymous



“In 2017 I want to work on a practice of giving - so being generous on a daily basis and also thinking about how I can give back and meaningfully apply the things I’ve learned at McGill in the broader community.” – Keah Hansen



“In 2017, I want to live a life that’s not defined by self-deprecation. That, and eat more bagels.” –Taylor Mitchell



“This year, I am going to love and be loved, more deeply and gratefully than before. I’m going to remind myself of how much there is to be grateful for in my life. I am, optimistically, going to kiss and be kissed. I am going to make the most of all the moments 2017 provides.” – Anonymous

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## McGill's half hearted email is an insufficient response to neo-nazism

*Content warning: neo-nazism, white supremacy, Islamophobia, homophobia*

In late November, flyers were posted near McGill's downtown campus, with the words "tired of anti-white propaganda? It's time to make Canada great again!" emblazoned over a maple leaf. The posters included links to white supremacist websites and crossed-out symbols that represent Islam, communism, and homosexuality. In response, Christopher Manfredi, McGill's VP Academic, sent out an email on December 12 ("Flyers posted near downtown campus") which denied any association between the posters and the University. The email stated: "To the best of our knowledge none of the flyers appeared on campus; nor do we have any information to indicate that the flyers are associated with any member of the McGill community. Nevertheless, I want to state unequivocally that the message communicated by the flyers, both in their text and the pictograms appearing on them, is contrary to McGill University's values and firm commitment to inclusion and respectful discourse." While the administration rightfully denounced the content of the posters, their priority was ultimately to absolve the University of any responsibility, rather than to protect affected students and staff, and take concrete steps to oppose discrimination at McGill. The vague and defensive tone of Manfredi's email was an insufficient and unacceptable response to the current resurgence of neo-nazism in the public sphere, and in the U.S. following Donald Trump's election campaign.

The slogan on the posters echoed Trump's campaign slogan: "Make America Great Again." Trump's overt Islamophobia, xenophobia, and homophobia have emboldened bigots across the U.S., with a sharp uptick in hate crimes since he was elected. While many in Canada have

taken Trump's election as opportunity to boast about this country's supposed comparative 'tolerance' and 'inclusivity,' Canada, too, has seen an increase in hate crimes and racist violence.

The administration was right to denounce the posters. However, it should be noted that the administration's first priority was to exonerate McGill and its students, and only second to disavow the poster's messages. The email was vague, failing even to name the groups targeted by the poster: Muslims and gay people. Rather than firmly state that Islamophobia and homophobia would not be tolerated at McGill, the administration opted to gesture obliquely towards the "message communicated by the flyers" and its "text and pictograms."

By failing to name the forms of discrimination that the poster advocates, McGill obscures the fact that such posters are manifestations of pervasive structures of white supremacy and violent nationalism. By failing to acknowledge that certain groups of students are being targeted by the posters, McGill is also shrugging off the responsibility of creating safe spaces for those students. By distancing McGill from the posters in order to protect the 'McGill brand,' the University fails to take seriously the reality of Islamophobia and homophobia in the McGill community – whether or not the posters were put up by McGill students. The administration should not wait until racist sentiments and acts of violence appear before vaguely denouncing them. In a time of political upheaval and an increase in hate crimes, McGill must ensure that it is being proactive, vocal, and specific about protecting marginalized students, and actively combating discrimination within the institution.

—The McGill Daily editorial board

## ERRATA

"Bookstore employees voice concerns," November 28, News, page 10, stated, "The two unions merged their structure and bylaws, but conserved their pre-existing collective agreements for their separate units." In fact, the two unions have agreed to this, but have not yet completed the merger: there will be a General Assembly in January to merge the by-laws. The Daily regrets the error.

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Lies, half-truths, and KERN ME TO HELL.

THE MCGILL DAILY AND THIS  
PANDA WISH YOU A HAPPY 2017!

