

The

Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

Montreal Massacre

by TAKHLIQ AMIR

From 1 - 4 December, MGCI commemorated the female victims of the event now famously known as the Montreal Massacre. MGCI's Social Justice & Equity Committee (SJEC) held the White Ribbon campaign, and invited the student body to sign a pledge in the gallery to fight violence against women. They also held a march in the cafeteria on 4 December, where the photos of the fourteen female victims of the Montreal Massacre were displayed.

The Montreal Massacre occurred on 6 December, 1989, at the École Polytechnique in Montreal. It resulted in the death of fourteen women, and left thirteen others injured. The gunman, Marc Lépine, entered a classroom, forced all the men to leave, and shot the women in the class, killing six before shooting others throughout the university. During his murderous rampage and in his suicide note, he cited his reason as "fighting feminism," expressing his hatred for women, and feminists.

Aahan Rashid, a member of SJEC, said, "The Montreal Massacre acted almost like a revelation. In the 1980s to early 1990s, gender-based crimes were at their peak. However, it wasn't until fourteen women were killed at once that gender-based violence was in the mind of the public. Remembering these women should make each person reflect and keep watch on their own actions and mindsets."

This commemoration also holds significance to many students at MGCI. Arora Chen, the vice-president of the Student Activity Council and co-president of the school club MGCI Girl Effect, said, "It is difficult to believe that although we are looking at race equality, we are still not overcoming gender equality."

The school also held a white ribbon campaign, selling them to students. By buying a ribbon, students are supporting the world's largest movement of men, and boys, working to eradicate violence against women and girls, promote gender equality, healthy relationships and a new vision of masculinity.

See WOMEN on P4

Going to College or University?

For students planning for post-secondary education, here are some useful links related to financing university or college:

www.canlearn.ca
www.ontariocolleges.ca
www.electroninfo.ca
www.scholarshipscanada.ca
www.studentawards.ca
www.disabilityawards.ca
www.scolaris.ca
www.equals6.ca
www.loblawscholarship.ca
www.fundyourfuture.ca
www.osap.gov.on.ca
www.oncat.ca

Dreams

by DHIYA JAGOTA

Dreams.
Dreams.
Dreams.

I'm not talking about your aspirations and goals. I'm not talking about your outlook on the future. I'm talking about:

Freefalling thousands of miles,
Flying brooms to the moon,
Hippogriffs and basilisks,
Three fingers, eight toes.

See DREAMS on P2

Semi Formal at Ellas



Students crowded the dance floor until 11pm during MGCI's Semi Formal. Photo courtesy of Katrina Ha

by SHERRIE CHENG and BOSHEN CUI

On 4 December, over 150 students and guests gathered at Ellas Banquet Halls to attend MGCI's annual Semi Formal dance. It ran from 6 pm to approximately 11 pm. The evening was organized by Social Convener Lydia Gouveia.

The night began as students filed in through the doors. School administration checked tickets and bags. The DJs set up and started the music.

The event continued with a buffet style dinner, with tables being called up in pairs to serve themselves in a timely manner. The meal featured a selection of salads and a variety of entrées.

"The food was great! I'm glad I didn't have to wait like at last year's Semi Formal," commented Neerajen Sritharan, a Grade 12 student. Many other students expressed that this arrangement was better organized than last year's sit-down dinner and that it allowed the students to choose what they wanted to eat.

Other students had ideas for future improvements. Grade 11 student Javaria Sattar suggested that SAC should hold the Semi Formal dance at a different venue, as Ellas Banquet Halls has been used many times in the past.

On that topic, Lydia noted, "I searched hard for a new venue, but Ellas was the nicest and most affordable. I did not want to raise the price of the ticket any more than I had to."

Following the meal, the dancing portion of the night began.

During the week leading up to the dance, students could submit song requests online. In total, students made approximately 100 requests. The DJs were able to play a large percentage of them. Yet some still felt that the music played was not suited to everyone.

Though the music did not suit all students, most enjoyed themselves, and the night was a success.

However, ticket sales were rather low in comparison to the previous years. Of the 300 tickets available, approximately 200 were needed to cover the costs of the dance. Unfortunately, only 162 tickets were sold. Due to the shortfall, plans for future events have been placed on hold.

The deficit, totaling approximately \$500, will be taken out of the SAC budget. The budget itself is funded from the \$20 registration fee collected from students at the beginning of every year. From some rough calculations, this is about 28 cents per student.

Last year's Semi Formal saw 309 students attending. The low amount of ticket sales for this year's dance came as a surprise to everyone. "I'm not quite sure why there was such a lack of school enthusiasm this year," said Lydia. "My best guess would be bad timing. I know personally for me, school expenses really piled all at once this month". Some students complained about an increase in ticket prices, as they were \$3 more than the 2013 prices to account for the presence of police officers, as requested by school administration.

The fate of future dances this year is uncertain. Due to the lack of ticket sales for Semi Formal, the annual Spring Fling dance may be cancelled. Furthermore, if a future dance were to occur, only those who attend Winterfest will be allowed to participate. The decision to hold a dance lies in the hands of administration. Luckily, as Prom and Athletic Banquet are funded separately, they will still be taking place.

Eliminate a Deadly Disease, Eliminate Your Boredom

by KAI HUANG

On 28-29 November, 89 MGCI students participated in the annual "Eliminate Night" sleepover hosted by Key Club. The event required a pledge of a minimum of \$25 to attend: all proceeds will go to fund the Eliminate Project, a joint effort between Key Club, Kiwanis International, and UNICEF to eliminate a disease known as Maternal/Neonatal Tetanus.

As students entered the school, their bags were checked by the vice principals as a security precaution. After they went in, they were allowed to stay in either the gym, cafeteria, or staff room, with many activities taking place in each.

A volleyball game in the gym kicked off the evening. As play went on, the game became more and more relaxed, as the players quickly forgot their competitiveness and simply became a bunch of friends enjoying their time. A team soccer tournament occurred later on in the night, and many of the students loved the fast-paced action, laughing and joking around with their friends.

A very different, yet equally intense tournament took place in the staff room. A Wii U was brought in, and students greatly enjoyed round after round of Super Smash Bros. A vicious tournament ensued, and the entire room was focused on the game, cheering and screaming. "It was fun to see everyone get so excited over just a video game", says Khari Thomas, Grade 10 student.

Around dinnertime, food was delivered to the school and served in the cafeteria. Students all flocked to get their share, and there was plenty for everyone.

As midnight approached, students split into groups. Movies were put on the projector, some people slept, some people played games, and some socialized.

Around 3:50, a staff room window was broken. Instead of cancelling the event, Key Club made a quick decision to move everyone into the cafeteria, and the event went along as planned.

The smiles on the tired faces of the attendees when they left showed the positive impact that the event left. Grade 10 student Nelson Huang says, "Honestly, it was just great having a lot of fun with my friends and knowing that I've supported a worthwhile cause while at it." Most of the students stated that without a doubt, they'll return for this again next year.



Students were able to enjoy food, movies, and tournaments during this year's Eliminate Night. Photo: Arfana Mulla

A Need for Change – Sexual Assault and the Legal System

OP-ED
by SAEJITH NAIR

On 26 November 2014, Jian Ghomeshi, a prominent Canadian figure and former host of Q, a widely popular CBC radio show, was charged with 4 counts of sexual assault. What set this case apart from all other cases of sexual assault is not just that it involved a famous person; it's the fact that the proceedings initially began outside the domain of our judicial system. By not taking the usual path of reporting the assault to police and instead going to the media, the then anonymous victims gave the public an opportunity to deliver a verdict. And so they did. After furious online discussions where boastful individuals posted their opinions, and bashed others who disagreed with them, the majority sentiment emerged to be one that sided with the unnamed victims.

By delivering a verdict that sided with the victims, the so-called "court of public opinion" gave two victims the courage to remove their veil of anonymity. By releasing their identities, the women gave the public faces to recognize and sympathize with. It wasn't shadowed portraits of "jilted ex-girlfriends" seeking to tarnish the reputation of a powerful man, but normal, Canadian women who could no longer stay silent, and felt that they deserved justice. And so, criminal charges were filed against Ghomeshi, thereby allowing the Toronto Police to launch an investigation into all the allegations.

Ghomeshi's arrest brings an end to the responsibilities of the court of public opinion, and delivers him into the authority of our judicial system. But there lies the problem; Ghomeshi is now in the hands of the courts and our judiciary has a poor reputation in meting out justice to victims of sexual assault.

See LEGAL SYSTEM on P3

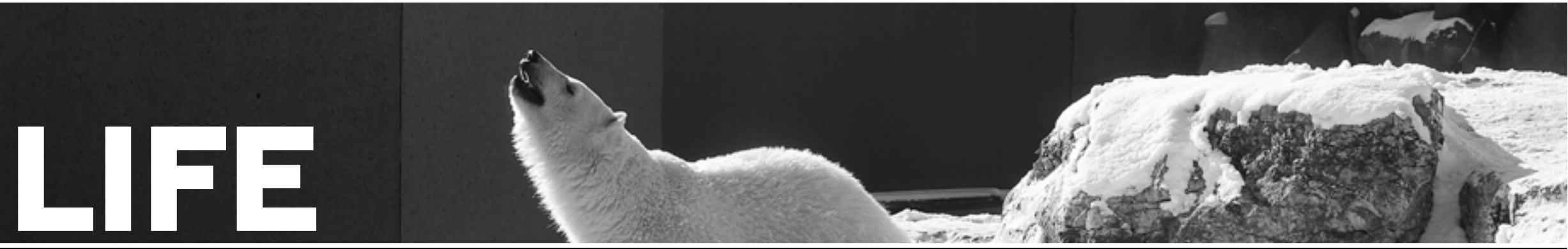
Noting the Voting

by VICTOR YU

In the past, there have been many instances where students complain that the voting age is too high, and wish that high school students were qualified to vote. Some argue that high school students are mature enough to take responsibility and make their own decisions, but students at MGCI are probably still too inept to vote in real elections.

On Friday, 24 October a mock election took place at MGCI to allow students to express their opinions on which mayor, councillor, and school trustee should be elected into office. Surprisingly, only a mere 237 votes were casted towards the top three candidates for mayor, a number dwarfed by the total population of MGCI. This brings up the concern that we think of voting as trivial, even though many MGCI students are nearing the age of 18, the age at which we will be eligible to vote in real elections. The goal of the Student Vote is to give students a chance to experience voting and help youth develop an interest toward politics. Evidently, MGCI students have not been able to take advantage of this opportunity to its greatest extent and appear apathetic towards voting.

See STUDENT VOTE on P3



LIFE

Weightless

by LILA HUANG



The words I say, from day to day, they bear no weight: no matter what I do, I can't see them through.

MY LITTLE BRITTLE UNICORN

by VICTORIA YUAN
Illustration by YILIN ZHU

I'm a perfectionist. There's really no point of trying to cover it up because over the years, it has progressed to be such a dire problem that everyone knows about it.

Wherever I go, there are always those few, chatty flibbertigibbets that secretly speculate on how much effort I must be putting into everything. I feel their furtive glances and hear their scrutinizing thoughts. "What a try hard," they'd remark snidely, as I walk past them.

And they're right. I'm chained to the smallest problems, and I spend hours upon hours fretting over trivial details. I have an intricate need to achieve perfection.

Some say that I'm admirable for trying to shoot for the moon. They tell me that it's okay if I want to do well in life and that that's natural to crave the recognition for it. But I see it as a curse. It's like a stubborn burr on a wool sweater that won't come off. And it haunts me day and night, churning in my crowded brain with other pieces of useless knowledge.

All of this bothers me without end. Maybe it's that I can't live up to the standards that are automatically expected with the mention of my name. Or maybe it's that for once, I just really want to enjoy what I'm doing and not have to worry about the incessant voice in the back of my head telling me to win. But what really irritates me the most are the parts of my life that I can't control.

Fate, luck, or whatever you want to call it: it's the cause of my perpetual burdens. How am I able to feel complete when parts of the puzzle are missing? The headache right before the biology test, the loose shoelace during the 400 meter race, the missing paint colour needed to complete a brisk autumn landscape; they star in my worst nightmares. There are just too many factors that could go askew - too many impediments that prevent me from achieving excellence.

These aspects of life that appear day after day, with neither warning nor leniency, only remind me of my flaws - of how my desperate attempts to control my beauteous unicorn are futile in the end. All along, being "perfect" was only another inadequacy.



Shrink

by XIN NIU ZHANG

My hand hurts. Throbs a little.

What? Oh. No. I'm fine. It's no big deal, really. I just ducked into the washroom, you know, and then my palm was slamming against the tiled wall. (Nice bathroom walls, by the way. Very smooth.) I guess I was just frustrated all of a sudden. Like—I don't know, really bad.

Describe? Describe it? Describe. It's like this heavy leaden feeling deep in your chest, like, like a pit jammed there in your chest, weighing you down and dulling the edges of your thoughts and cutting your laughs short. There's this relentless screaming in your head, roaring, suffocating. Then you're in the washroom and alone—and—well, God, you're in the washroom outside a waiting room again and it's not so different from the washroom at home, y'know—and all that stuff in your chest is just bubbling up and crawling up your throat and the pit in your chest drops into your stomach and—

And. Fear, I guess. Maybe I just felt trapped or something. So I slapped the wall. Six times. That's why my hand's all red now, see? Don't worry, though. It just stings a bit. The last shrink told me it's better to let it out and not keep it all trapped inside, you know? "It." I think she meant the pit. The feeling. Or something. Walls. I only slap walls. I mean, I've never hit another person in my life. Well, unless you count the fights I'd get into with my siblings and stuff when we were little kids. But they were just spats, you know? Kid spats. Some strangling was involved. A lot of tears. And yelling.

I wasn't a very diplomatic problem solver.

Am I now, though? Maybe. I feel—I don't know, I feel like I've matured marvelously, all things considered. I understand stuff now, like why people might not have time for things (and consequently why I shouldn't bother them), why pitching a fit is just about the worst thing to do in any situation, and why usually the best course of action when someone's angry is to stay quiet. And maybe hit a bathroom wall later, once everyone's gone or no longer paying attention.

One, two, three. Counting helps. Two, six, twenty-four... forty thousand three hundred and twenty. So, I used to do this thing, right? I'd just start counting right in the middle of a session with my last shrink. It was kind of funny. I mean, all she ever did was repeat everything I said back to me. Some paraphrasing and a lot

of "I see"-ing were involved. There's a name for that strategy, if you can believe it. Active listening? Right, yeah. Yeah. It's, like, part of therapy from the "humanistic" school of thought or something. God. I'd even prefer Freud's psycho couch to some human parrot, you know? No offense or anything.

So anyway, I'd just go, "One, two, three." And then she'd be like, "One, two, three, hmm, right."

"Two, four, eight, sixteen."

"Two, four, eight, sixteen, yes, yes, I see."

Yeah, what a laugh. I fired her. Well, I mean, I switched doctors. Oh. Switched to you, right. Hi. Did I mention you have a nice bathroom? Or nice walls, or something, at least?

Whatever. It doesn't matter anyway, I guess, in the end. It's not like you have to use the washroom outside the waiting room. You don't have to wait at all. You probably have a washroom inside your office. That door over there, maybe? No? All right. All right.

Oh. Hey. Look at my hand now. See? It's all gone. "It." The redness, I mean. The throbbing, too. And the hurt. Everything. So, you see? I'm fine. I counted, we talked, you did some active listening. Everything's okay. See? Touch it. Smoother than your bathroom walls, even.

But—wait. Um, could you, maybe, hold it for a bit longer? My hand, I mean. I don't know—I don't know if everything is fine. If everything is gone.

I don't know. It's hard to describe.



Illustration: Lila Huang

Lord of the Dreams

DREAMS
Continued from P1

Crash into bed and sink into your pillow. Close your eyes and wait for those three letters. R. E. M. There. You've got it. Anything you want. Almost.

Lucid dreams are when you have absolute control. You are always aware. Aware of where you are. Aware of whom you are. You are aware that you are dreaming.

You are dangerously free. The best part of having lucid dreams is living in them. It's your own fantasy world. The tricky part is accomplishing them. Everyone has stresses. University. Grades. Life in general. Everyone deserves a break. A dream life away from the so called "dream life". I can help. You only need to follow four easy and simple steps.

You must pinch yourself at random times in real life, to reassure your wakeful state. We shall call this the "reality check". If you do this enough, it will become habit, habit that will lead into your dreams. It will allow you to determine when you are dreaming and when you are not.

You must re-tell. Every time you wake from a dream, record it. This may be via dream journal or dream recorder. Just imagine that you are talking to a psychologist. Reveal all the miscellaneous details of your dreams, and wait for them to uncover some repressed childhood issue because of the heart-shaped flower pots instead of the usual oval ones. Doing this will create signs. Dream signs. They will pop out screaming "Hey you! Yes, you are dreaming! You can do whatever you want!"

Timing. It is all about the timing. This is a very hit and miss category. If you have ever had a lucid dream before, think long and hard back to that perfect day. What time did you sleep? What were the settings? How did you feel? Were you especially tired? Trying to recreate that day will help to accomplish that same dream-like state. Speaking from experience, they are most common on Sunday afternoons.

This final step requires dedication. It is called the waking sleeper. After five hours of



People think I'm very good at math but in reality I just search up Wikipedia articles and just recite them. I've just come across a topic that Wikipedia does not have, what do I do now?
— Fred

Dear Fred,

It seems your success with impressing the ladies with your bogus Mathematics skills will inevitably come to a miserable end. Unfortunately for you, this means your status as Alpha Wolf will be challenged as soon as you show the inability to recite a solution to a topic such as the Riemann Hypothesis. The only fix I can recommend to you now is to memorize as many digits of Pi as you can, which should be no sweat in comparison to Wikipedia articles. Then as the other men try to woo your women you will be able to defeat them one-on-one in Pi duels to reassert your dominance as leader of the pack.

Good luck!

I don't want to be in a relationship anymore...

...but every time i try to break up with him he threatens to tell everyone my secrets. What do i do?

...

Things are always ugly when a relationship goes sour, but if you stay strong and convicted, you can put this behind and move on. First, try to reason with him. You could try bringing a third person to moderate your discussion. Explain to him why you don't want to be in a relationship with him anymore. Ask him if he really wants to be in a relationship where the only thing holding it together are threats and blackmail. Try to be civil and reasonable with him, and encourage him to do the same. The best case scenario is that you reach a mutual agreement and leave on good terms.

If that doesn't work out, try turning the tables on him. Become the worst, girlfriend. ever. until he wants to break up with you.

Whatever happens though, try to surround yourself with people who will support you, like your friends and family. Don't be afraid to ask for advice from someone who is more experienced, such as your guidance counselor. Good luck.

If you seek counsel from The Reckoner like the individuals above, send us a question at
www.thereckoner.ca/ask-thereckoner



EDITORIAL

Court of Public Opinion

LEGAL SYSTEM
Continued from P1



Illustration: Jeffrey Liu

Our courts should be institutions of the highest values that seek to preserve and protect truth, and uphold justice. Instead, the system is a failure and has let down Canadians; especially those who have suffered sexual assault.

The failings stem from the fact that unlike other crimes, sexual assault is very hard to prove. The absence of corroborating evidence in the hands of victims make many police officers hesitate to conduct investigations. In addition to this, a victim's state of attire, or level of inebriation may prompt officers to conclude that the victim was mistaken about the event. Such false conclusions based on stereotypes and without preliminary investigations are mainly due to the lack of resources available to our police departments. Given a restricted budget, the responsibility is placed on police to invest resources in cases which they think are most likely to succeed. Although this may seem like a good strategy, it denies countless other victims access to justice.

As evidenced by the Ghomeshi scandal, when faced with unfair and unlike-

ly odds of convicting an accused, some victims of sexual assault seek to use the media and other organizations to gain justice. Why do they do this? For most victims, the act of reporting sexual assault and the processes that follow (as stated earlier) can be a grueling ordeal. From having police officers blame them for someone else's inappropriate actions to reliving the experience while being questioned under trial, the mechanism of seeking justice can be as equally traumatic as the actual event. This long and arduous process, combined with the social stigma of sexual assault makes most victims refrain from laying criminal charges. According to Statistics Canada, out of an estimated yearly 472,000 sexual assaults, [1] only 6% [2] of cases are reported to the police. In addition to this, a recent YWCA infographic stated that out of every 1000 sexual assaults, only 3 lead to conviction [3]. In other words, only 0.3% of sexual assailants face consequences for their actions.

Seeing these numbers, one may ask why more women don't take the option

of using the court of public opinion. After all, the alleged victims of Ghomeshi have a better chance of winning in court now that national interest has been roused. Unfortunately, the sad fact is that the court of public opinion only accepts stories that can drive gossip. The reason the Ghomeshi case reverberated throughout Canadian media was because Ghomeshi — a popular Canadian icon — was at the center of it. Similar circumstances in political scandals, such as the senate expenses or Rob Ford's drug use scandal, prove that the court of public opinion only displays interest if the person is famous, or if the case's outcome is of public importance.

However, with a few sexual assault cases being the exception, most do not fit the criteria required to get attention in mainstream media. This means that the victims have nearly choice but to comply with our broken legal system. So the question becomes, what can be done to mend the cracks so that justice is accessible for all victims of sexual assault? Given the complexity of this social

Sources:
[1] <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2010002/article/11340/tbl/tbl4-eng.htm>
[2] <http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/seccrimes/sas/statistics.php>
[3] <http://yipmedia.globalnews.ca/2014/10/ywca-sex-assault-infographic.jpg>

Student Vote Results

STUDENT VOTE
Continued from P1

What makes the situation worse is the lack of voter awareness, demonstrated by the results of The Reckoner's survey investigating the changes MGCI students wish to see in Toronto. Out of the 362 surveys taken, only 83 students claimed their political affiliation on the political spectrum, while only 17 students rated themselves a 10 out of 10 for political awareness. On top of that, the average rating students gave themselves for political awareness was just under 6 out of 10, suggesting that there is a lack

of informative voting in our student population. Survey results showed that students expressed the most interest in generally accepted changes that would directly benefit themselves, such as improvements to public transit, a top priority on each of the top three mayoral candidates' platforms.

However, students also expressed interests towards changes such as bike lanes (the 6th most popular option in the survey, out of 21 options), which Doug Ford, the mayoral candidate elected by

a majority of the students, did not have plans for. This suggests that MGCI students did not vote for candidates based on their policies, but rather on their apparent leadership. This makes uninformed students especially vulnerable to slander advertisements, which should not be taken very seriously as they are biased and are created to downplay a specific candidate. We should be taking more thought in casting their vote in order to obtain the best results for themselves and their city.

A potential way for MGCI students to become more engaged in politics is to ensure students have a higher level of political awareness, which could be accomplished through brief morning announcements summarizing new political events during election periods. As for the mock elections, students could even be taken down during classes to have time where they would have the choice to vote, which would ensure a high participation in the Student Vote, and which would emphasize the importance of exercising voting rights.

The bottom line is that MGCI students need to adjust their attitude towards voting for when they have the opportunity to enter the real voting booths, when it actually counts. So when the next election rolls around and you are eligible to vote, remember that it is up to you to make your voice heard.

This piece was written with assistance from Mackenzie Wong.

Student Inactivity Council

by SUSIE LIU

"...remember to enter QSA's allyship poster contest. Those are all of your announcements for this morning, Marc Garneau, and have a great day."

There was no mention of Semi Formal ticket sales on Tuesday morning, the last day of sales.

Why is this a problem? The final number of tickets sold was 162 out of the 300 available for sale, down from 309 sold last year, and SAC needed to sell 200 in order to break even. The SAC budget took a loss of approximately \$500 by hosting the dance.

Social Convenor Lydia Gouveia chalked up the decrease in sales this year to poor timing, however it is clear that not enough of an effort was made in the event's promotion. With so much money on the line, the lackluster effort from SAC to advertise the dance is unacceptable. Ticket sales were already alarmingly low last Friday — under such circumstances, every student council member should have been in the halls telling students to buy tickets on Monday and Tuesday. Instead, the last day of sales was only advertised through a Facebook post on Monday night.

This is also not the first time SAC has failed to do its due diligence. Last week, school sweater sales began, and it was revealed that this year's sweaters will feature a design produced

by Spirit Convenor Mara Gagiu. The design was originally to be decided through a school-wide design contest, but had to be cancelled twice due to the number of plagiarized designs that were submitted. Many students were not aware that the contest was being held. More importantly, students were not informed as to why the first contest had to be called off. As a result, many plagiarized designs were submitted during the second round of submissions, and even the original designs submitted could not be considered. This wasted time and effort both on the part of SAC and on the part of students submitting designs.

While many SAC members are in their Grade 12 year, and the pressures of schoolwork and making post-secondary plans are substantial, students should consider these issues before they run for student council. Student life, which SAC is responsible for, cannot be treated as if it is unimportant. Developing school spirit is as important as providing academic support — students who enjoy going to school and who feel welcome in the community are more likely to succeed.

Part of the problem is that there are few ways to keep SAC members accountable. Unlike professional politicians who need to seek re-election,

SAC members are voted in for one year, and suffer no consequences if they do not contribute their full efforts. Staff and students are kept busy year-round, with coursework, marking, and tests, and exams to administer; removing SAC members from their positions mid-year is impractical. However, campaigning regulations can be modified to ensure that SAC members who are elected are dedicated and have a specific plan to achieve their goals.

One way this could be accomplished is by asking candidates to list specific tasks they will complete in order to accomplish the items in their platforms. This could include, for example, advertising sweater design contests and dance tickets in person in the hallways at lunch, as mentioned above. In addition, this will help to distinguish candidates from one another, as many students complain that the elections often boil down to a popularity contest, and that it is difficult to stand out. Finally, enforcing a task list will cause candidates to consider the responsibility that they are attempting to take on. Student council is a big commitment, and members must be able to take it seriously.

Letter to the Editor: Anything but, actually!

by STUDENT ACTIVITY COUNCIL

We appreciate the concerns highlighted in the recent Reckoner article titled "Student Inactivity Council". Through this public forum, we as student representatives can be held accountable. That being said, we would like to address some of the fallacies cited in the editorial.

Without a doubt, every Student Council (SAC) member understands the significant commitment required, and this is reflective in the numerous hours each of us dedicates to the weekly SAC and committee meetings. We work alongside staff advisors and school administration to push through what we think is best for the students. However, circumstances may arise in which we have little control. We work with what we have and we do our best.

This year, we have seen a significant drop in participation in various annual events, such as Eliminate Night and Semi Formal. This may have been due to a shortage of advertising, as presumed, or it may have been due to the fact that several large events occurred within a short time span of each other. Since September, SAC has been working relentlessly to promote our events and to instill school spirit into the student body. We have organized numerous pilot and successful events including the Terry Fox fundraiser, which raised an unprecedented \$560; the Fall Festival, which saw an overwhelming audience of students; and a school-wide clothing drive, which resulted in several shopping carts full of winter clothing for

the underprivileged. Additionally, as of a few weeks ago, we launched a new branch of Student Council, The Outreach Committee, the first of its kind, reaches out to students, conducts surveys, promotes events, and distributes tickets. From an objective perspective, we argue that we have not been and are far from being "inactive". Anything but, actually.

We would like to point out that our decision to reintroduce the design challenge because of plagiarism concerns was in the best interest of the school and the students. We are the first Student Council to address this serious issue. SAC members unanimously voted to keep the initial imitative submissions low-key and that we would offer students another opportunity (the second design challenge) provided they submit a pledge of authenticity in writing. Ultimately, we designed a completely original cougar logo because of the apparent copyright infringements in some submissions, despite the second chance given. To our own dismay, our attempts to be fair and lawful seem to have attracted negative attention from The Reckoner.

We appreciate your feedback and we have taken into consideration all the points brought up in the article. We appreciate constructive criticism and we are always looking to improve our past activities and events. To contact us, we cordially invite any student to come down to the SAC office in the cafeteria and speak to one of our members.

Do you have a response to an article in this issue? Make your voice heard! Contact us at editor@thereckoner.ca.

www.thereckoner.ca

www.thereckoner.ca



NEWS

Triple Homicide Shakes Thorncliffe Park

by TAKHLIQ AMIR

The residents of Thorncliffe Park were emotionally shaken on 29 November, 2014, when three people were found dead in a third floor residential unit of a family oriented apartment building.

The Toronto police discovered the bodies around 4:30 pm, hours after a man had fallen off the Leaside Bridge in an apparent suicide onto the south-bound lane of the Don Valley Parkway. The man was pronounced dead at the scene after being struck by a vehicle.

Talking to the media, the Toronto Police homicide detective Tam Bui stated that there was some correlation between the triple homicide and the event at the DVP earlier that day. However, the exact connection between the two cases is still under investigation.

Since then, the police have released the victims’ identities as Zahra Mohamoud Abdille, 43, and her two sons, Faris Abdille, 13, and Zain Abdille, 8. The man on the DVP has also been confirmed as the husband and father, Yusuf Osman Abdille, 50.

“It is very shocking and unexpected. I cannot imagine how things are now for the friends, family, and relatives of these innocent people. It makes me realize how short a lifetime can be,” said Faizan Amir, a resident at the 85 Thorncliffe high-rise, the scene of the triple murder case.

According to CBC News and the Toronto Star, Zahra and her sons had spent several weeks in July 2013 at Dr. Roz’s Healing Place, a women’s shelter in Scarborough, to escape domestic abuse.

According to the Toronto Star, she had tried twice to file an ex parte motion to gain sole custody of her children, but as an ex parte motion is only granted in extreme cases to protect children, she was unable to provide enough evidence to support her case. The newspaper reported that she had also tried to get a divorce, but was unable to afford a lawyer and did not qualify for legal aid from the government.

With all the odds against her, she was forced to return to her husband’s home, where she was found dead along with her two children this November.

When asked what may have prevented Zahra from speaking out, Selina McCallum, a Grade 12 student, said, “I think that she did not want to risk losing her children. If a mother doesn’t find somewhere to live, Children’s Aid may step in and take her children away from her. Additionally, I think she also feared that

the situation [would get] out of hand. Her husband could have been furious with her for letting people intervene in their personal lives. And since she didn’t want anyone to worry, she could have also feared that her family, friends, and neighbours [would find] out the truth about her abusive relationship.”

“I believe [that] the family of three felt trapped. Having no power and control over family issues, the only thing the mother could do was to protect her children, even though she was legally married to her husband,” said Faizan.

Where does the legal system stand; why could not it protect the ill-fated mother? Questions like these are being raised by some. Rabia Mahmood, a senior student, said, “I think the legal system failed her. It’s true that she might not have enough evidence, but I believe that something could be done about it; some steps should’ve been taken. In her case, nothing was done.”

According to The Star, NDP critic Niki Ashton filed a motion for a national action plan to address domestic violence in a parliamentary committee for the Status of Women on 4 December, following the triple homicide.

“It is a heart-wrenching case of the way the system has failed Canadian women: no access to housing, no access to legal aid, nowhere to go. This is what happened to Mrs. Abdille,” she stated at the meeting.

The motion was discussed, where it was then denied. In her interview with the Toronto Star, Ashton said, “The federal government is failing to take leadership on preventing violence against women. It’s clear that we need comprehensive action, and sadly, the government is nowhere to be found on that front.”

The government’s move disturbs many. “It was wrong of the government to deny this motion. It means that more victims of domestic violence may have to suffer the same fate as her. They will continue to be abused, and may never receive help if the system does not change,” said Rabia.

A candlelight vigil was held for Zahra and her sons on 2 December in front of 85 Thorncliffe, and a funeral service was held at the Khalid Bin Al-Walid Mosque on Bethridge Road on 5 December. The police are still investigating the cause of death and the role of the father in the deaths of his wife and sons. ■



“Tell me about a time you faced a challenge.”
“When I first came to Canada (in 2009), I was really scared. But on the plane ride here, I realized that all the confidence I’d built up was for nothing. I realized that living in Canada was going to be pretty normal.”
“Was is difficult to learn English?”
“Not really, I learned English quickly, along with my brother.”



“If you could give one piece of advice to a large group of people, what would it be?”
“Don’t be afraid.”
“Are you ever afraid?”
“I’m afraid of the future. Just by thinking about the future, I get all anxious. What if I fail? What if I’m not successful? I don’t know why. I’m in grade 12, so it seems like I’m constantly stressing over it.”
Her friend pitched in, “She always gets perfect marks, though. I don’t see what she has to worry about.”

Don’t Lose to the Booze

from YOUTH AGAINST DRUGS GARNEAU

You’re at a holiday jam. Everyone is having a great time, and alas, somebody has brought some alcohol. Putting the legal implications of underage drinking aside for a moment, here are some things to consider before you start ‘turning up’.

How it works

As a depressant, alcohol slows the nervous system. It is absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach and small intestine and spreads throughout the body quickly. Your blood alcohol content (BAC) measures the amount of pure alcohol in your bloodstream. The legal level of impairment in Canada is .08%. Depending on how fast you drink, your size, and gender, your BAC can rise significantly within just twenty minutes.

Alcohol and the Brain

Drinking alcohol sets off a chain reaction in your brain. As you continue to drink, new areas of your brain are

affected, and your reactions and impairments worsen. The last area of the brain affected by alcohol is the brain stem, which controls involuntary reflexes like telling your lungs to breathe and your heart to pump. At toxic levels, (BAC of .35%–.50%) alcohol slows or stops the functions in the brain stem, often resulting in death if there is no early intervention. But long before alcohol affects the brain stem, it has already been absorbed by the major organs in your body.

Short-term effects of binge drinking

Liver disease
Alcohol poisoning
Heart disease and stroke
Neurological Damage
Sexual dysfunction

Want drugs with that?

It’s very common for people to combine drugs with alcohol. When this is done, the effects of other depressants

(like marijuana) can be increased, or the effects of stimulants (such as cocaine) can be reduced. Combining alcohol and drugs is always dangerous because you have no idea how they will react to each other. Combining depressants can result in lowered heart and breathing rates for instance. Combining alcohol with stimulants causes stress to your heart and other organs and can keep you from feeling the full effect of either substance, increasing your chance of overdose.

47,000 Canadian deaths are linked to substance abuse annually. Don’t be one of them. Party safe and never, EVER drive impaired. ■

Sources: cdc.gov, madd.ca, teenchallenge.ca

White Ribbon Campaign

WOMEN
Continued from P1



Students pledged to “never commit, excuse, or remain silent about gender-based violence”. Photo: Jackie Ho

Although modern society has come far from the 1989 massacre, it is still far from fully accepting both genders as being equal. Aahan said, “To solve any major issue means considering the long-term or underlying causes. We have to make sure people aren’t mistreated or isolated by peers. To directly alleviate the issue it is important to allow opportunities for therapy, and of course, expand the currently existing shelters.”

The proceeds from SJEC’s sales of white ribbons will go towards the December 6 Fund for survivors of domestic abuse. “Students and teachers at MGCI signed a pledge to stop violence against women. Many bought white ribbons to support this cause, and made generous donations, which will go towards the White Ribbon campaign and the December 6 Fund,” said Hamza Shahid, co-president of SJEC. ■

The Reckoner

of Marc Garneau C.I.

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