

THE CORD

The tie that binds Wilfrid Laurier University since 1926

Volume 51, Issue 16

Wednesday, December 1, 2010

thecord.ca

Move to online election confirmed



\$16,425
online system

\$ 2,625
annual fee

\$7,500
cost of paper
ballots last year

MIKE LAKUSIAK
CAMPUS NEWS EDITOR

With ballots for the upcoming Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union (WLUSU) election moving online, questions have been raised as to why changes to how elections are run, which were suggested in past years, have not been adopted.

More details have emerged about the transition to online voting, which WLUSU has planned for February's election.

At the Nov. 26 board of directors meeting, a contract was approved with the

university's Information Technology Services (ITS) that will see the union pay \$16,425 for the development of the system, as well as an annual support fee of \$2,625.

One feature notably absent from the system is the inclusion of a ranked ballot system in place of the traditional first-past-the-post system.

In 2008, a motion was passed by WLUSU's board of directors to adopt a ranked ballot system when online voting would eventually be put into practice.

This motion would bind future boards to either accept the proposed system or

defeat it by a two-thirds majority vote.

"The idea was if we were going to go to online voting, something new on its own already, it would be the perfect time to introduce the new system of voting as well, in this case a ranked ballot," 2007-08 board chair Asif Bacchus explained, adding that online elections would have been a reality that year were it not for an extensive redesign of the WLUSU website which took place at the same time.

News, page 3

Living with HIV/AIDS

BREE MANTHA
STAFF WRITER

Various organizations at Wilfrid Laurier University teamed up with AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area (ACCKWA) to educate students about the taboo subject of HIV and AIDS as part of the global HIV/AIDS Awareness Week running from Nov. 24 to Dec. 1.

Justine Dogbe, president of the Association of Black Students, felt that the week was a good opportunity for Laurier students to learn more about what she feels is an underrepresented illness.

"The knowledge that people have or don't have about it is so inaccurate," she said.

Laurier's Association of Black Students was among the student organizations including BACCHUS, Future of Africa and the Rainbow Centre that were participating in HIV/AIDS Awareness Week. The events held ranged from information sessions to film screenings, literature discussions and an open mic night.

"All of the funds that we raised went towards ACCKWA," said Dogbe. On Nov. 30, a couple battling the effects of the virus shared their story at an event entitled "Talk and Unlearn."

Guy and Mary, who chose not to provide their last names, are clients of ACCKWA who wanted to spread awareness and dispel common myths about HIV/AIDS.

Emphasizing that AIDS is not simply a "gay man's disease," Guy said to the audience, "I'm here to tell you that it just ain't so," and pointedly identified himself as a "heterosexual, alpha-male."

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Inside

Festivities from around the globe

Various Cord contributors explore the differences, similarities and unique qualities of celebrations all over the world

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On the brink of conflict in the Korean peninsula

World Editor Alexandros Mitsiopoulos examines the recent resurgence of conflict between the North and South

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Changes for the Toronto District School Board?

In an effort to increase learning opportunities in the classroom, segregated schools are becoming a hot topic

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'Tis the season

The holidays are a time for giving, and In Depth Editor Rebecca Vasluianu explores the trend and gives advice on where to donate

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Editor's Choice

This Week Around Laurier photo gallery

thecord.ca

Editor-in-Chief Alanna Wallace • awallace@thecord.ca

Bag O' Crime

Arrest

Location: Concourse - Waterloo Campus
Date: Nov. 26, 2010 @ 1:30 a.m.
Male student arrested for being intoxicated in a public place. Male unable to care for himself, and subsequently transported to WRPS Division #1 where he was held until sober. PON issued, and matter sent before JAC.

Theft Under \$5000

Location: Lot 12
Date: Nov. 27, 2010 @ 5:11 a.m.
While on mobile patrol, SCS observed a group of males carrying chairs outside of Peters Academic Building. The party dropped the chairs when they saw the SCS in their marked cruiser. The party was asked for identification, and subsequently produced several false identifications. PONs were issued for this offence.

Disturbance

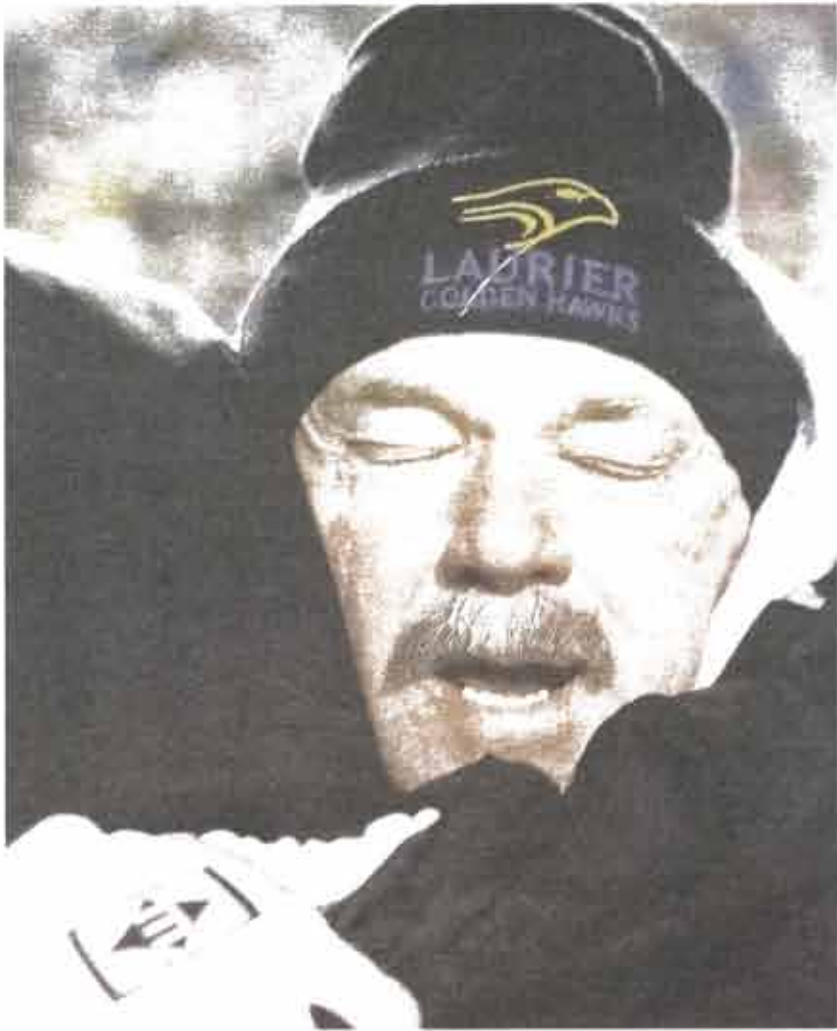
Location: Residence
Date: Nov. 28, 2010 @ 12:05 a.m.
SCS received a report of a group of intoxicated males who were throwing snowballs at a residence, and began an altercation in the Quad area. The males were warned about their actions by SCS. The involved parties separated without further incident.

Unwanted Contact

Location: Turret Night club
Date: Nov. 28, 2010 @ 1:32 a.m.
SCS received a report from a female student stating she was in the Turret VIP lounge area after she was invited in by a band member. Apparently she was making out with the male, but wanted to leave and he said not without him.
The male proceeded to place his hand on her upper chest. The female only wanted the male to be kicked out of the Turret Night club, and did not wish to make a formal complaint.

For the rest of Bag O' Crime, check out **thecord.ca**

If you have any information regarding these or any other incidents please call 519-885-3333 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS. The Bag O' Crime is submitted by WLU Special Constable Service.



From the archives

Then
Five years ago today, the Wilfrid Laurier Golden Hawks did what only nine other teams in CIS history had ever accomplished when they edged the favoured Saskatchewan Huskies 24-23 to cap an undefeated season with Canadian university sport's most sought-after crown. It all came together for one of the most thrilling finishes in Vanier Cup's 41-year history, as Laurier kicker Brian Devlin found himself faced with a 32-yard kick that would indelibly etch his name into Hawks' history books.
"We want this ride to continue forever," said head coach Gary Jeffries at the time.
—Article "Mission Accomplished" was printed in the Dec. 5, 2005 edition of The Cord.
Now
On Saturday afternoon, the Laval Rouge et Or captured the Vanier Cup in front of their home fans at a snow-covered PEPs stadium by downing the Calgary Dinos 29-2.
The win gave the Rouge et Or their sixth national championship in the last 12 years and marked the first time since 1993 that the host team has won the Vanier Cup.



Tune in to the Cord Roundtable on Wednesdays from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at radiolaurier.com to hear editors comments on stories and pieces they have written and edited in the issue published that day. This week's edition will be the last of the semester and along with discussing campus news with Campus Editor Mike Lakusiak, members of the editorial board will be lighting a menorah to celebrate the beginning of Hanukkah.

Vocal Cord

Do you donate to charities during the holidays?



"Yeah I do, The Red Cross and also The Salvation Army."
—Azeez Ogedengbe
First year business



"Yes, but it usually depends on the kind of charity."
—Curtis Williams
Second year English



"Yes. My family gives toys to local charities."
—Erica McGuire
Second year psychology



"No."
—Jennifer Gribbon
First year Archaeology

Compiled by Rebecca Vasluianu
Photos by Elli Garlin

This Week in quotes



"This is a 13.5 million dollar corporation and should work that way but sometimes it doesn't because this is student government."

—Asif Bacchus, former chair of the WLUSU board of directors re: WLUSU

"Obviously one of the elements we made all the artists aware of was that people will be hanging off this, it must be sturdy, it must be drunk-proof. Shit happens."
—Barry Ries editorial/communications officer in Laurier's research services office re: the newly announced statue of Sir Wilfrid Laurier

"We both matured in an environment that really encouraged you to be in Student Pubs, and be doing sports, and trying something in theatre, and going to the Turret."
—Conor McCreery, co-creator of Kill Shakespeare on his and Anthony Del Col's Laurier experiences

THE CORD

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ISSUE DATE
Volume 51, Issue 16
Next issue: January 6, 2011

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In 2009 the Canadian Community Newspaper Association awarded The Cord third place in the campus newspaper category.



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Colophon

The Cord is the official student newspaper of the Wilfrid Laurier University community.
Started in 1926 as the College Cord, The Cord is an editorially independent newspaper published by Wilfrid Laurier University Student Publications, Waterloo, a corporation without share capital. WLUSP is governed by its board of directors.
Opinions expressed within The Cord are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board, The Cord, WLUSP, WLU or CanWeb Printing Inc.
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The Cord is created using Macintosh computers running Mac OS X 10.5 using Adobe Creative Suite 4. Nikon cameras are used for principal photography.
The Cord has been a proud member of the Ontario Press Council since 2006. Any unsubstantiated complaints can be sent to the council at info@ontariopress.com.
The Cord's circulation for a normal Wednesday issue is 8,000 copies and enjoys a readership of over 10,000. Cord subscription rates are \$10.00 per term for addressees within Canada.
The Cord has been a proud member of the Canadian University Press (CUP) since 2004.
Campus Plus is The Cord's national advertising agency.

Preamble to The Cord constitution

The Cord will keep faith with its readers by presenting news and expressions of opinions comprehensively, accurately and fairly. The Cord believes in a balanced and impartial presentation of all relevant facts in a news report, and of all substantial opinions in a matter of controversy.
The staff of The Cord shall uphold all commonly held ethical conventions of journalism. When an error of omission or of commission has occurred, that error shall be acknowledged promptly. When statements are made that are critical of an individual, or an organization, we shall give those affected the opportunity to reply at the earliest time possible. Ethical journalism requires impartiality, and consequently conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest will be avoided by all staff.
The only limits of any newspaper are those of the world around it, and so The Cord will attempt to cover its world with a special focus on Wilfrid Laurier University, and the community of Kitchener-Waterloo, and with a special ear to the concerns of the students of Wilfrid Laurier University. Ultimately, The Cord will be bound by neither philosophy nor geography in its mandate.
The Cord has an obligation to foster freedom of the press and freedom of speech. This obligation is best fulfilled when debate and dissent are encouraged, both in the internal workings of the paper, and through The Cord's contact with the student body.
The Cord will always attempt to do what is right, with fear of neither repercussions, nor retaliation. The purpose of the student press is to act as an agent of social awareness, and so shall conduct the affairs of our newspaper.
Quote of the week:
"This is all of my hard work, and I'm not going to feel proud of myself, and I fucking hate you."
—Photography Manager Elli Garlin re: Wade taking over her game of Bubble Island.

NEWS

News Director Linda Givetash • lgivetash@thecord.ca

Questions raised over pension deficits

MIKE LAKUSIAK
CAMPUS NEWS EDITOR

University pension plans across Canada are generally in such unstable condition that they will increasingly affect the proportion of budgets available for the classroom.

Due to the 2008 market decline, many universities' plans were hurt by declining investments and nationwide, the *Globe and Mail* reported that university pension plans have reached a collective deficit of \$2.6 billion.

Jim Butler, VP of finance at Wilfrid Laurier University, explained that the university's pension situation is, while not as poor as other schools, not good. He cited the \$30 million solvency deficit — an amount required to maintain the plan if the university were to stop contributing to it — as only one issue. Some universities may be exempted from making solvency payments in the short term based on a pension relief package the government of Ontario is developing,

though details have not been finalized.

"While we have about a \$30 million solvency issue, we have a \$60 million 'going concern' issue," said Butler.

"Going concern," he clarified, "essentially says 'is there enough money in the plan to meet the pension promises on an ongoing basis?'"

The university is required to meet the going concern threshold, which means finding funds elsewhere in the budget. "60 million dollars is a lot of money," Butler continued. "It has to be put into the plan and built into our budget assumptions going forward and takes away money that would normally go into the classroom."

Plans like Laurier's, finance professor Brian Smith said, "Expose the employer to the risk of any sort of market downturn or low interest rate environment."

Laurier's pension plan is a hybrid model that is both 'defined contribution' and 'defined benefit', meaning that employees receive the

greater value of two benefit options. Benefits are either guaranteed based on a formula taking into account their income level, length of employment and other factors or they receive variable benefits based on their contributions and the investment performance of the plan.

Smith said that Laurier has a few options to remedy its pension situation. "There's two ways to settle this, you can have budget cuts from the operating budget or you can have the actual pension beneficiaries pay more into the plan," he said.

He assessed the plan, saying, "It really is a deluxe pension plan. In fact, Revenue Canada would not let such a plan be set up currently."

"It's too rich, my understanding is that it provides a double benefit," he said, explaining that retirees receive a guaranteed amount along with potentially additional funds if the plan performed well over their period of employment.

Butler said that changes may be necessary to alter the plan and make it more affordable. "This is large

enough and serious enough that you have to ask yourself the question of is there enough going into the plan." He added that in recent years, the University of Waterloo reached an agreement with its employees to increase contributions to their plan.

Smith was skeptical that much change would come in the form of contributions to Laurier's plan. "This isn't going to change because people come here and it's part of the employment agreement," he said, noting that despite reluctance, "At some point the faculty and the school have to increase contributions." The university currently matches employee contributions at seven per cent and adds an additional four per cent.

According to Butler, Laurier now needs to examine its plan through negotiations with its faculty and staff as well as in light of the government's response. "We're waiting for the details of the government package and we need to talk to our employee groups — but that's something that's collectively bargained."

317

Number of retirees currently drawing a pension

14%

Percentage of Laurier employees that will reach retirement age in the next five years

\$60 million

'Going concern' deficit that the university must make up

Why rank votes?

—cover

"The [07-08] board was very interested in moving online. The decision was made to say 'let's authorize it now' so that at any time in the future when they sort out contract issues and we have money and can do everything, it doesn't have to go back to the board," Bacchus said.

Current board chair Kyle Hocking said that the elections policy review committee this year never considered ranked balloting. "We haven't even discussed it," he said, adding that he had never heard of the motion passed by the previous board.

"I think it was greatly irresponsible for a board to pass such a broad motion which they had no intention of acting on and bound future boards to something that may not be feasible or desirable," Hocking said, noting that ranked balloting "provides unnecessary complexity to the voting process."

"Because we were unaware of that motion I don't think it necessarily needs to come back [before the board] for this election, but probably future elections," he added.

Bacchus justified his support of ranked balloting, which he said

creates a more representative system because voters are able to rank their choices and a second-choice candidate may receive enough share of the vote to win. "A second choice made by a larger proportion of the population is better than a first choice made by a population with one set of interests," he said.

Bacchus explained protocol in a situation of the board not being informed or following through on a previous motion. "Ideally it would have been followed, but it's also a situation where you have yearly turnover," he said. "Technically what should happen is the board should call this decision back in."

"A lot of students and even sitting directors don't get this, but the board can make a decision for ten years down the road, 20 years, it doesn't matter," Bacchus added. "When a decision is made isn't as important as why it was made and as long as that reasoning hasn't changed, a board should respect a decision of a board before it."

"If they have a reason to reconsider, they need to look at the reasons why the board passed it in the first place and find a flaw in that reason."

Election 2011:

This February's elections will be held over the course of two days.

Student information and votes will be stored on two separate internet databases to protect voters identities.

Since any computer can now be considered a polling station, banning campaigning on election days is being considered.

In order to help students make an informed choice, when they log in to vote, candidate profiles will be available on the voting site.

Students will have 45 minutes to vote once they log in.

Research profile: Manuel Riemer



BEN DEROGHIE STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

MIKE LAKUSIAK
CAMPUS NEWS EDITOR

Manuel Riemer, associate professor of psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University has, of late, been completing research work on the demographic most vulnerable to the effects of global climate change — the homeless. His research, completed in partnership with University of Waterloo human geography professor Johanna Wandel, examines the direct effects of climate variations on those experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region.

"My background is in community psychology and my research interest is in the environmental area," Riemer explained of his interest in the topic. The study, conducted using interviews with 48 individuals, looked at how vulnerable the local homeless population is to the elements currently, how they cope and how changes in climate could affect them and existing support systems.

The interviews, conducted during the summer of 2009, were the result of co-operation with community groups to seek out participants and included two peer researchers who had been homeless in the past and could help clarify the subjects' experiences based on their own.

Riemer called the number of people the researchers were able to interview "significant."

"The estimate for the group of absolute homeless is about 50-70 people in Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge," he said. "That's an estimate of course but having 48 is pretty close and it's not an easy population to get a hold of. I think the key to our success there was working

with these peer researchers because they knew a lot of people and the places they would gather."

The participants were asked what weather conditions they found most problematic and their coping strategies. Riemer noted that there were few surprises with the findings. "When we have presented these results to different service agencies they weren't too surprised either," he said. Riemer added that those interviewed expressed difficulties with temperature year-round. "One thing we found was how they struggle with extreme cold in the summer."

Future climate change projections included in the report not simply temperature increases, which could actually be beneficial for the homeless during the winter months in Waterloo, but more importantly increased precipitation (by up to 20 per cent in the next quarter century) and unpredictable weather patterns. "Rain in general was one of the biggest problems they reported and with global climate change you definitely have a lot more extreme weather patterns also in terms of rainfall," Riemer said. "It's going to be harder and harder for them to deal with it unless we put protective measures in place."

"The process we're now in is what to do with the findings," Riemer said. The results of the study were brought back and presented to those in the homeless community to confirm the findings and the report was presented to local decision and policy-makers in a workshop Nov. 22. "The region will take that [workshop] and put it into some long-term planning they're doing in February," he said.

Concerns over missing class

MIKE LAKUSIAK
CAMPUS NEWS EDITOR

The decision to not offer a fourth-year Greek language class has spurred a letter-writing campaign from concerned faculty members in the classical studies and archaeology department. Greek 491, an independent study course in the language, will not be offered during next year's winter semester.

"I know it's important for students who want to go to graduate school," Judith Fletcher, who encouraged colleagues in classical studies at other universities to write to Laurier's department and the faculty of arts, explained. "It's important that they are able to show that

they can read the language."

She added that the decision was especially odd since lower-level Greek language courses were at capacity this year.

John Triggs, chair of the archaeology and classical studies department pointed to few students taking the courses and a lack of resources to the decision. "We're talking about six WLU students in the last two years have enrolled in that course each year," he said. "Because of low staffing and high student enrolment, that course, and only that course, has been cancelled."

"In order to maintain the vitality of the program, and the viability of the program for students, we have to look at the courses we offer," he

added. "Low-enrolment courses unfortunately are sometimes necessary to cancel in order to offer courses that will get more students through the program." He made clear that the course was not being removed permanently.

The course is run in conjunction with the University of Waterloo (UW), which collaborates with Laurier to offer certain classical studies and language courses.

Read the rest of
this story at
thecord.ca

CAMPUS

Campus News Editor Mike Lakusiak • mlakusiak@thecord.ca



ELLI GARLIN PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

Due to improvements made over the last few years, those with disabilities have fewer barriers on campus.

Becoming accessible

With the province's Disabilities Act taking full effect in 2012, Laurier is planning to make campus more accommodating

OLIVIA NIGHTINGALE
STAFF WRITER

The Ontario provincial government introduced the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in 2005, meant to usher in a new era of equality for those with cognitive and physical disabilities.

The ultimate goal of AODA is to make Ontario completely accessible for individuals with disabilities by 2025. Wilfrid Laurier University and other institutions have until Jan. 1, 2012 to comply with what the Act requires.

Rather than simply meet AODA regulations, Laurier has attempted to maximize accessibility across campus, according to Laurier's assistant VP of human resources, Allison Rawn. She explained that the university is "concerned with getting at the spirit of the legislation."

During the Nov. 25 board of governors meeting, Laurier's 2010-2011 accessibility plan was introduced and subsequently approved. The plan contains a detailed list of improvements to accessibility that have been made, as well as recommendations for further improvements.

Dana Gillett, WLU's employment equity and AODA officer, described the annual report as "a great way of understanding how much work has been done so far and how much work we have to do."

The report focuses on all areas of university operations, including removing physical barriers to accessibility, customer service standards, employment standards and information and communication standards.

While many of the improvements are made in order to comply with AODA regulations, Gillett emphasized, "Numerous initiatives have been championed through people with disabilities."

This year's plan makes mention of several physical alterations that have either been made or are in the process of being made around Laurier's facilities including washroom accessibility upgrades in several academic buildings. Upgrades to life safety systems such as sprinklers and fire alarms in numerous academic and residence buildings are also underway.

Rawn noted, "Improved signage on campus would be an important initiative for Laurier in the future." As well, a ramp is being designed and built for the Northdale campus and automatic doors are being installed in the Fred Nichols Campus Centre and MacDonald House in the next year.

Perhaps the most significant initiative that the accessibility committee has undertaken in the last year, and will continue to address in the coming months, pertains to new customer service standards.

These regulations, passed in February, are meant to ensure that anyone working with persons who have cognitive or physical disabilities is able to meet the needs of those individuals.

Gillett, who described the training as "ongoing," has already trained all Laurier residence life staff, icebreakers and members of WLUSU; approximately 1,600 people in total.

The hour-long training sessions, Gillett explained, "Address the do's and don't's of working with

“

We asked ourselves, would that actually change the culture here at Laurier?”

—Allison Rawn, assistant VP: human resources

different individuals, using case scenarios that are unique to specific environments.”

In 2011, Gillett hopes to finish training Wilfrid Laurier University Student Publications staff as well as faculty members in order to meet AODA requirements.

Rawn has been impressed with what Gillett and Adam Lawrence, manager of Laurier's diversity and equity office, have achieved thus far. She explained that the focus on actually engaging members of the university community in order to help make campus more accessible was seen as important.

"We could have fulfilled the customer service obligation through an online tool, but we asked ourselves, would that actually change the culture here at Laurier?"

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at 7:00pm in the Turret.**

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at www.wlusp.com**

& will close Jan 17th 12 noon.

5 positions available:

1 President - 4 Student Directors



COURTESY OF WLU PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The artist's rendition of the winning design of a statue of Laurier envisions him seated in the Quad.

Take a seat with Wilf

BREE MANTHA
STAFF WRITER

Wilfrid Laurier University has finally chosen the design for a statue of its namesake, the seventh Prime Minister of Canada, that will be unveiled on campus next fall.

The design selection was officially announced on Nov. 26, with a planned installation date of Oct. 2011 to mark the university's one-hundredth anniversary.

Communications and editorial officer for Laurier research services Barry Ries originally conceived the idea for a statue. Ries, a representative on Laurier's board of governors, proposed the idea in 2007, originally slated for the St. Michael's campus site.

"I took out a little plastic figurine ... and said 'this is the biggest statue of Wilfrid Laurier we have on campus right now and we should change that,'" he said, explaining that his rationale in part had to do with being tired of graduates' photos being taken in front of the Laurier sign by the Science building.

During the month of October, students, staff, faculty and alumni narrowed down their choices based on illustrations available on the

Internet. Voters chose from five different designs from three artists.

"There were more than 2,000 page views and we got back about eighty-some e-mails," Ries noted of the online response.

Maureen Hilton Moore, a Barrie, Ontario-based sculptor designed the winning entry. Hilton Moore submitted two designs, and the final sculpture selected features a pensive Laurier sitting on a granite bench.

Hilton Moore also decided to depict a young Laurier. She chose a likeness of him in his mid-30s, right after he had been elected as a Member of Parliament.

"[University] is about your promise, it's about your future, it's about your poise for great things," she said of why she chose to depict a younger Laurier. "He did not know what his future was yet, and that idea was so enticing to me."

Ries liked the idea of a younger Sir Wilfrid because students could easily identify with him. "It sort of symbolizes the beginnings," he remarked, "Which is appropriate for a university because everyone's sort of at a beginning stage."

Hilton Moore expects to take close to a year to complete her work, with one month alone dedicated

to research, four to five months for sculpting, and four months to bronze the statue.

Though a specific location for the statue has not yet been decided, Ries said that it will be placed somewhere in the Quad close to the amphitheatre.

Though Laurier himself had no affiliation with the university, Ries said that Laurier the man and Laurier the institution have plenty in common.

"Laurier was an educated man," Ries said, "He believed in the power of dialogue. He tried to bring people together, and isn't that what universities are supposed to be about in the first place?"

Above all else, Ries hopes the statue will become a well-known fixture on campus. "Always one of the concerns was that it be accessible and people adopt it as part of the community, part of the culture."

"One of the things we don't want is for people to salute it and treat it with the utmost respect," Ries added. "We don't want it to be spray-painted, but if people want to put scarves and hats on it, fine. You want to rub his butt for luck? Fine. Let's have a little fun here too."

'Unlearning' the stigma of the virus

—cover

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is an illness that weakens the body's immune system and can be acquired through sexual contact or sharing needles. HIV can also be passed from mother to child through pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.

Guy explained that he started out as a bright and promising young man. However in his teen years, Guy began experimenting with drugs and stealing and before his 17th birthday, was sentenced to six years in prison.

"I not only survived, I flourished," he said, sharing how prison had changed him. Soon after his release however, Guy relapsed into a life of drugs and sex with prostitutes. He found out he was HIV positive in his forties and is uncertain if he acquired it through sexual contact or needle use. Regardless, Guy said that his youthful ignorance was to blame for his illness.

"I knew about AIDS," said Guy. "I'd heard about it. It was just my arrogance and my pride. I thought, 'that could never happen to me.'"

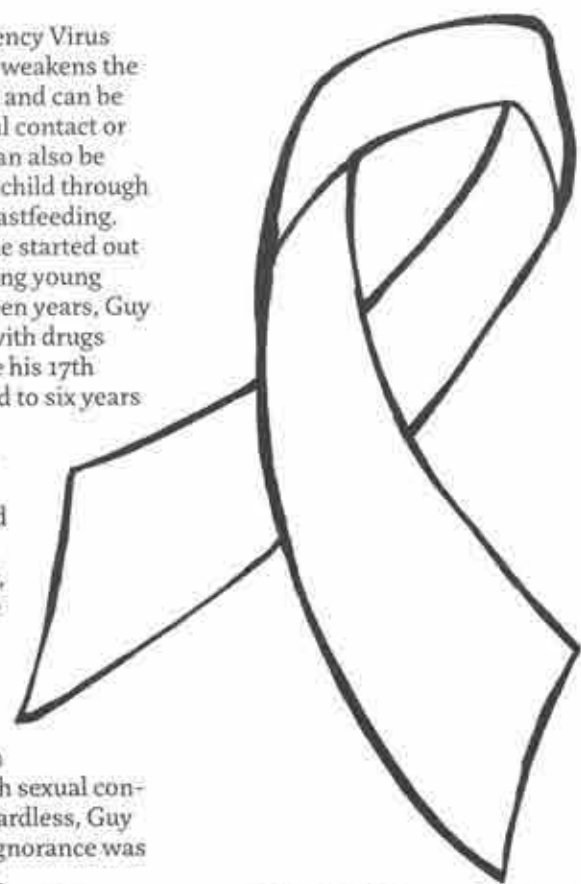
Guy passed around his bag of daily medication to show the audience how difficult it is to live with the virus. He explained that many of his medications have additional side effects and that he has to eat six meals a day to maintain a healthy weight.

He commented on people's ignorance of the disease has made him an outcast. "There's a real social death that comes along with this, long before the actual death."

However, he did find a positive side to his situation. "I've really changed," Guy said. "I've met some incredible people."

Mary, his now fiancée, was one of those people. Sharing her story, Mary said she contracted AIDS, the most advanced stage of the virus, from her unfaithful ex-husband.

"The doctor told me, 'You have two years to live. Get your affairs in order. Find new parents for your



MAYA UEMERA GRAPHICS ARTIST

kids," she said. After beginning experimental treatment 15 years ago, Mary has managed to surpass doctors' expectations — although she has to change medications often because her strain of AIDS is resistant to most treatments.

At the time of her diagnosis, Mary was not well informed about HIV or AIDS. "I was embarrassed because people like me don't get AIDS," she admitted. "Married people don't get AIDS."

Mary now uses her public speaking to urge her audience that, contrary to popular belief, AIDS does not discriminate. "It doesn't matter if you're black or white, gay or straight, thin or fat, married or single," she said.

For more on World AIDS Day, check out

thecord.ca

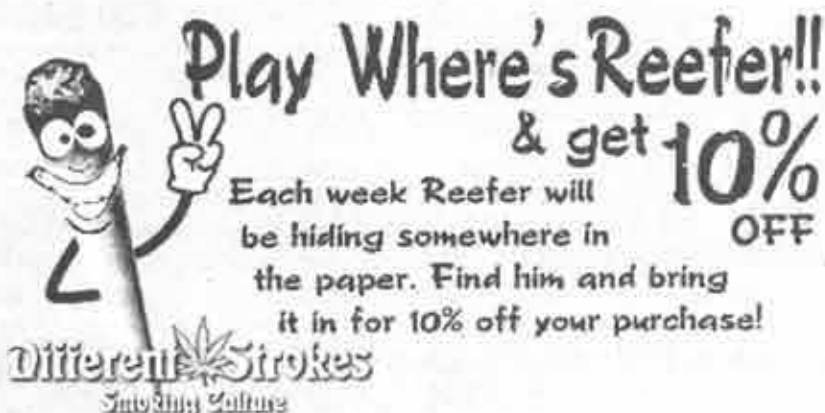
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LOCAL

Local Editor Vacant • editor@thecord.ca

Uptown open for business



ELLI GARLIN PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

Carolers perform a variety of Christmas songs in the Waterloo public square, hosted by the Business Improvement Area.

MATTHEW SAVARD
STAFF WRITER

The holiday season was officially kicked off in Uptown Waterloo with the annual open house organized by the Business Improvement Area (BIA). On Nov. 23 and 24, the event drew people in to the city's core with performances, hay rides and a chance to see many of the independent businesses in the area, some of which are normally closed in the evening.

Stephanie Longeway, executive assistant for BIA, was present at the event handing out apple cider courtesy of Aroma Café. According to Longeway the open house draws

many people to the area each year. "We had quite a few people here [on Wednesday], this whole area was completely full with the performances. All the performances are from the local schools all the way from elementary to high school," she said.

At the very least, business owners think that the open house is helpful. The owner of Machado Photography, Tiffany Machado, thought the open house created publicity for her store. "This is the first year that we've done this and we've got quite a bit [of business] and we'll be able to plan better for next year," she said.

Debra Joseph, owner of Fab Boutique and Twice Is Nice & Twice The

Man, thought it also contributed to the atmosphere of The Atrium, the marketplace housing her businesses and several others on Erb Street.

"Everything gets done at the same time. Instead of thinking about your own individual business, you think how can we make this a great event all together," she said.

"It is a novelty for the hours," expressed June Bouwman, owner of Aroma Café.

"I'm not usually open in the evening, so it is a novelty for the customers to come through in the evening that are regulars and experience and have that opportunity.

Hopefully it will bring new people in that might only be able to come

out after work," she continued.

Providing more than publicity to the Uptown businesses, the open house also contributes to the atmosphere of the area.

Longeway explained, "Having a vibrant uptown or downtown always adds to the culture. When you have places that are thriving, [such as] businesses, and you have your unique independent stores you don't really get out at the malls or the suburbs it kind of offers a really good mix. It's a little bit of something for everybody."

According to Longeway, "That's what we really hope to do. People think about [the open house] and people think Uptown Waterloo."



MEGAN CHERNIAK PHOTO MANAGER
Phil Cox, owner of Kind of Magic, shows off his talents.

Juggling passion

Local store offers magic trick supplies

REBECCA VASLUIANU
IN DEPTH EDITOR

Nestled under the Princess Twin banner in Uptown Waterloo, it is easy to simply walk past one of the city's most unique places of business.

Kind of Magic has been open since Feb. 2006 in the downtown area, catering to a variety of customers, ranging from children to adults.

The store offers supplies ranging from tools for magic tricks, juggling, levitation, making balloon animals and even puppeteering.

"After 22 years of working in factories, I decided to retire.... I loved magic as a kid and I wanted to bring magic back to the forefront of the community and get kids doing something other than playing video games," owner Phil Cox told The Cord.

While Cox loves the city of Waterloo, he noted that business is sometimes "tough" because of its location.

"I think that the Uptown core of Waterloo is definitely suffering because it has ease of access issues for people in suburbs, which is mostly our clientele," he stated.

He noted that university students – who tend to be "big into juggling" – find the location of the store quite convenient, however.

For Cox, the store offers a valuable experience to customers because it helps "remind us of our childhood."

"[Magic] asks us to suspend our belief in reality for just a few minutes," he said.

He explained that practicing magic also helps children gain valuable skills.

"For children getting into it, it teaches practice and patience. It lets them out of their shell and perform in public.... Nothing in magic comes easy. You have to practice hard and study if you really want to get good at it and excel at it," said Cox.

Kind of Magic is open seven days a week and offers extended hours from Wednesday to Friday – until 9 p.m. – up to Dec. 23.

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NATIONAL

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Celebrating a decade of research

The Canadian Research Chair program, after its launch in 2000, was announced on Nov. 24 to be receiving additional funding from the federal government

HEATHER GIES
STAFF WRITER

Canada's strength in research and academia is developing with the help of ten years of the Canadian Research Chairs (CRC) program.

At the program's two-day tenth anniversary celebration beginning Nov. 24, Tony Clement, Minister of Industry, announced \$275.6 million of federal funding for 310 new and renewed Canada Research Chairs.

The announcement formally recognized last year's successes and indicated an ongoing governmental commitment to research, innovation and continued program funding.

According to Paul Maxim, WLU associate vice-president: research, "The reason for the tenth anniversary celebration was not only to celebrate the accomplishments of those chairs in Ontario, but also to send a message to the government, both the federal government and to a lesser degree the provincial government, that this has been a successful program."

Anne Wilson, Canadian Research Chair at Laurier in social

psychology, also commented that the anniversary conference was well received.

"It was recognized as not just maintaining the program but growing it, [and] it was nice to see that... the support is continuing."

The Canadian Research Chair program, a government funded initiative founded in the year 2000, was created in order to bolster Canada's research climate.

Prior to the millennium, Canada was lagging academically behind much of the developing world, including major competitors such as the United States and Great Britain. Many of the top academics left Canada to research in other countries, and Canada needed greater incentives to retain and attract academics.

"It was really hard attracting top quality international scholars to Canada, and it was also very difficult attracting Canadians who had gone overseas...to get their PhDs," said Maxim, describing Canada's academic environment in the late 1990s.

"Canada made a conscious decision to really try to keep some of its

best minds, and in order to do that you really need to support them at a reasonable level, otherwise there are going to be other offers that are more attractive," explained Wilson, noting the financial incentives, prestige, and overall greater opportunities of studying outside of Canada prior to the CRC program.

According to Maxim and Wilson, the general consensus is that, over the past ten years, the CRC program has been highly successful and has achieved that majority of its goals.

"[The program] has been able to attract some really prestigious people from other countries to Canada, and a lot of people who otherwise would have left have stayed," said Wilson.

Maxim and Wilson also both noted that the CRC program has attracted a considerable amount of international attention.

"It is seen as a major contribution by Canada," explained Maxim. "A lot of other developed countries, and some of the developing countries, are looking at that as a model to help build their own university capacity [and] research capacity."

Another benefit of the program is that the funding alleviates some teaching responsibilities of Research Chair professors.

According to Wilson, "The CRC program...allows researchers at Canadian universities to focus more on research," enabling Canada to better compete academically with other countries, such as the United States, that typically dedicate certain professors to teaching and others strictly to research.

Canada Research Chairs are allocated somewhat proportionately to the budgets of the major federal level funding agencies in Canada, NSERC (The National Science and Engineering Research Council), CIHR (The Canadian Institutes for Health Research) and SSHRC (The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council).

The majority of chairs have been allocated to science and engineering due to NSERC's larger budget. However, according to Maxim, there has been considerable discussion regarding the need for increased research in policy, both social and scientific.

Maxim also added that many academic and research accomplishments often go unnoticed outside of academia.

"Part of what we have to do is reach out to the general public...to say 'hey, look, this is what we've done...this is our contribution to society,'" said Maxim. "That's part of the mission."

About CRCs

- The program was established in 2000 creating Research Chair positions across Canada.
- 1845 positions exist that are currently filled among 72 participating universities
- Laurier presently has six existing chairs in various research areas
- Laurier is looking to fill five new positions

2,000

chair positions available

1,880

chairs are regularly allocated

45%

of chairs are part of NSERC

35%

of chairs are part of CIHR

20%

of chairs are part of SSHRC

"[The program] has been able to attract some really prestigious people from other countries to Canada."

—Anne Wilson, Canada Research Chair at Laurier

Disputing the north

LINDA GIVETASH
NEWS DIRECTOR

"It's nice to talk about arctic sovereignty, it's kind of sexy," said Michael Byers, author and Canadian Research Chair, "but all of the stuff that we've done here — all of that policy, all of that discovery, all of this co-operation, all of this treaty-making — is worth absolutely nothing unless we stop the crisis of climate change."

Byers, accompanied with acclaimed author Shelagh Grant, discussed Canada's arctic sovereignty on Nov. 29 in part of a series of lectures for Wilfrid Laurier University's centennial celebrations.

Grant focused on the history of Canada's claim over arctic territory. "[Sir Wilfrid] Laurier was the first Canadian prime minister to take sovereignty in to the arctic islands," she explained.

As the arctic islands were transferred to the Dominion of Canada from the British government in 1880, Laurier's reign as leader of the Liberal Party from 1887 and as prime minister from 1896 to 1911 represented integral years in establishing sovereignty in those regions.

Current disputes over the ocean itself for passage and access to the continental shelves with the fossil fuels they contain are the more contentious issues that exist.

"I was in the Hudson Strait in August and at one point we had four major commercial vessels within 20 miles of us," said Byers, illustrating the traffic that is growing in the

northern regions. "With this business comes the question of who will regulate these waters."

With the decrease in sea ice in the arctic, particularly through the Northwest Passage, issues of sovereignty as well as climate change need to be addressed.

While Canada's claim on the Northwest Passage is fairly secure, as the Inuit communities in those regions identify themselves as Canadian and therefore extend the country's sovereignty, the security of those very communities is at risk.

"The Inuit used to live not just along the Northwest Passage but on the Northwest Passage," explained Byers. "For nine, ten, 11 months of the year they hunted, fished, travelled, lived in igloos on the ice." That very ice, he claimed, has depleted at rates much faster than the scientific community had predicted as a result of global warming.

Referring to his own experience in seeing climate change in the arctic, Byers commented on trips he has taken to Auyuittuq National Park.

"There is a glacier there that I've had the privilege of seeing in 2007, 2008 and 2010. Over those four summers I have watched that glacier disappear," he said.

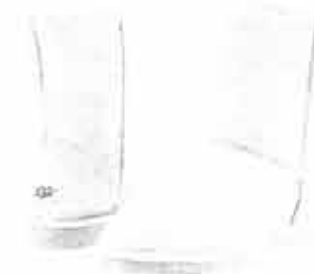
"Climate change historically happens in geological time, over thousands and thousands of years, it does not happen in a blink of an eye," he added.

"The arctic is just one window in to the greatest collective call to action that our species has ever faced," Byers concluded.

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WORLD

World Editor Alex Mitsiopoulos • amitsiopoulos@thecord.ca



COURTESY OF CREATIVE COMMONS

Battling a brand new slavery

ASHLEY KOEN
CORD WORLD

"They make it seem like a great opportunity to escape," said Helen Ramirez, Wilfrid Laurier University professor of women's studies, on the methods used to lure women into the sex trade.

According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), an estimate of 700,000 people a year are trafficked for sex and other industries. However, as there is no universally agreed estimate, that number could exceed two million.

Ramirez clarified that the difference between sex slavery and the sex trade is that the latter is considered a chosen form of employment. However, despite the sex trade being a form of employment, the labour is often forced or reflects some form of servitude in which the victims cannot withdraw.

"People who work in or run illegal sex slavery will typically go to areas that are often poverty stricken, where the people are so desperate and so in need," explained Ramirez. "They will offer them jobs in other parts of the world and claim that their food and clothes and legal

issues would all be taken care of."

Parts of Russia and Poland are often some of the easiest places to abduct (most commonly) women and sell them into sex rings in Dubai. In an article by the Coalition Against Trafficking In Women stated, "Russia makes about \$7 billion annually by trafficking women from Russia and other Soviet republics."

People often understand the implications of the sex trade, according to Ramirez, yet they still enter the industry hoping to find a better situation than the desperation they currently live in. Highlighting how people can be persuaded to join, Ramirez added, "The people running sex slavery will get girls to entice girls."

Once trapped, the victims have very little chance of escaping. "They are brutalized. They're beaten and threatened with no guarantee that they'll even be protected if they escape due to immigration laws," said Ramirez.

There is little hope even for those trafficked in to developed countries. "It is especially hard for immigrants who are sold into Canada and the United States because so what if the police come and rescue them? They might just get sent back to

where they were sold from," Ramirez stated.

Looking toward the Middle East, the issue is just as complicated, if not more so, due to the political instability in many of the countries in the region.

"In Afghanistan no one wants to even touch the sex slavery issues there. It is so complicated in that region politically that no one wants to interfere." By ignoring the situation, Ramirez said that most often "young boys are sold as sex workers in order to benefit the militia."

In Spain, police dismantled a ring of illegal male sex slavery where, according to a recent article in the *Herald Tribune*, "Men were recruited in Brazil and forced to work around the clock under the threat of death." None of the profits made from any of these instances went to the people who were sold.

Reiterating the financial situation of sex trafficking, Ramirez said, "They are told that their profits are going toward paying off their cost of food and shelter or the cost incurred from their voyage."

"The point is that these people are so desperate ... it is easy for people to ignore them. Their lives are invisible to us," Ramirez concluded.

Class action for Congo

AMANDA STEINER
STAFF WRITER

A motion filed in Quebec Superior Court in Montreal on Nov. 8 accused the Canadian company Anvil Mining Limited of providing logistical support to the Congolese military during a 2004 conflict that left more than 70 civilians dead. The families of victims and survivors of the dispute in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are now turning to the international community for justice.

The Canadian Association Against Impunity (CAAI), an organization that brought together survivors and relatives of victims, is taking Anvil Mining Ltd. to court. They allege that Anvil provided drivers, trucks and other logistical support to the Congolese military to counter an attempt by a rebel group to take over the town of Kilwa, where the dispute eventually occurred. The CAAI claims that the insurgency was an economic threat to Anvil because Kilwa was an integral port to Anvil's operations.

In a Nov. 9 press release, the company stated it had not yet reviewed the allegations in detail but intends to defend itself.

A United Nations report published in August cited the Anvil case as an example of how justice is not accomplished in the DRC. Brought to the Canadian court system, the trial aims to finally achieve justice. Montreal activist and author of *The Black Book of Canadian Foreign Policy*, Yves Engler, sees that this case has potential to be a positive advancement in Canada's international

conduct.

"The ability to actually bring [the Canadian mining companies] before Canadian courts actually reduces the scope of what they can get away with in the Congo," explained Engler. "In that sense, I think the court case is a very good development in Canada."

In an official news release about the case, the Canadian Centre for International Justice (CCIJ) noted that Canada's House of Commons recently defeated legislation that would have created a mechanism for individuals to complain about the actions of Canadian companies overseas. Although this may seem like a step backwards, the Anvil case still has potential to set a benchmark for complicity in human rights violations by multinational corporations. "In terms of setting a precedent, whereby Canadian companies are scared that by doing something like that abroad, they might end up in Canadian court," Engler expressed, "I think that is a definitely an important precedent."



PIERRE HOLTZ CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



World in brief

SAO PAULO, Brazil

Dr. Roger Abdelmassih, a leading fertility doctor, was charged for the sexual abuse of 39 of his patients. He has been subsequently sentenced to 278 years in prison. Each patient claimed the abuse occurred either while in a recovery room, during an exam, or as sedation wore off. Abdelmassih will serve a maximum of 30 years for his crimes. He denies all of the charges.

PARIS, France

A 69-year-old woman, trapped in her bathroom for three weeks after the door lock broke, was finally rescued this week. Banging on pipes proved useless, as neighbours started a petition to stop what they thought were noisy workmen. Finally, a neighbour noticed her mail had not been collected in weeks and notified the police, having survived on tap water alone.

CAIRO, Egypt

The construction of a social centre was halted after the project was suspected to be misusing the building permit to construct a church in its place. Christians outraged by the half of the construction began forming street riots, claiming discrimination. They attempted to storm the Governor's office in Giza, but were beaten back with tear gas and rubber bullets by anti-riot police.

SEMARANG, Indonesia

Muslim cleric Pujiono Cahyo Widiyanto was sentenced to four years in prison on Nov. 24 for marrying a 12-year-old girl. Due to public outcry, the 46-year-old man had been in detention following the ceremony in 2008. He has planned to appeal the decision, claiming he did not intend on consummating the marriage until the girl went through puberty.

—Compiled by Leeza Pece

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Crisis in the Korean peninsula

North Korea's escalating aggression threatens to destabilize tense relations between regional players

ALEXANDROS MITSIOPOULOS
WORLD EDITOR

Two civilians and two marines were left dead following the artillery attack of the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong on Nov. 23. The attack comes at a difficult time as regional tensions have been escalating across the Korean peninsula.

Having claimed civilian life, the artillery attack on South Korean territory represents the most aggressive form of hostility since the ceasefire armistice was signed in 1953, effectively ending the conflict.

"You have to look at it in the context of the whole conflict," explained Patrick Dennis, political science professor at Wilfrid Laurier University. While the armistice negotiations were finally concluded in 1954, the Korean War has never formally ended.

"Whenever there's a ceasefire there's always violations of that ceasefire. So for the past 60 years, these violations have occurred on both sides and increasingly, the North Koreans have become more provocative of their violations," Dennis added.

The international community thought that the culmination of these violations occurred in March of this year with the torpedoing of the South Korean corvette, the Cheonan, which left 46 sailors dead.

"I think that the South Koreans have now reached their threshold of tolerance and so I'm sure they told the Americans that the next act that will result in the loss of civilian lives, be it military or civilian, will be met with a proportional response," explained Dennis.

Anti-North Korea protests on the streets of Seoul have come to

represent the aggravated frustration of South Korean citizens with the ongoing conflict. "This is not just an emotional issue. This is a cumulative effect of 60 years of taking it on the chin and so it seems we've reached a tipping point," Dennis explained.

"That tipping point, in my view, is to a wider, more intense open conflict or a new round of diplomacy that will signal perhaps not only a transition of leadership in North Korea but a transition in the whole South Korean-North Korean relationship."

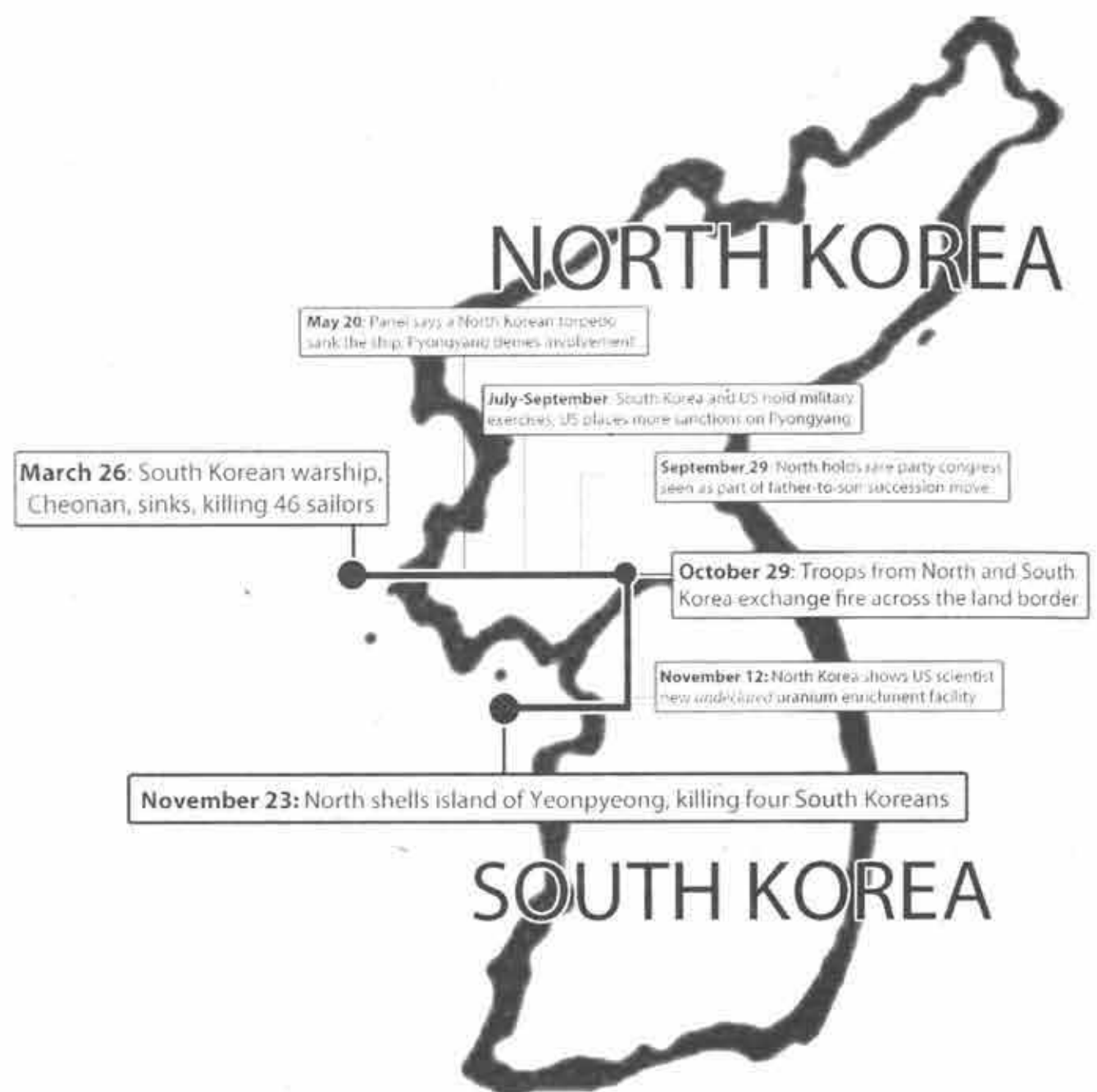
Throughout the 60 years of occupation, the Americans have played a very critical diplomatic role in keeping the South Koreans from overreacting.

However, the country is under an immense amount of pressure and as a result of the recent conflict, defense minister Kim Tae-young resigned. Amid this transitional period, South Korea has been able to revise their rules of engagement that has been long overdue for a re-evaluation.

"I don't think that there is any question now that in a North Korean attack, certainly one that results in casualties in any kind, will result in the proportional use of force," Dennis added.

Given the capacity of recent events, there has been a multilateral push to resume emergency six-party talks.

"That would be good to get them all back to the table even if they didn't resolve anything. As Churchill said, 'it's better to jaw, jaw, jaw than to war, war, war.' And that's certainly the case with the current crisis on the Korean peninsula," Dennis concluded.



MAYA UEMURA GRAPHICS ARTIST

The infographic featured above outlines events taking place in 2010. All information courtesy of the BBC.

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Charity and the holiday season

In Depth Editor **Rebecca Vasluianu** interviews a variety of campus, local and national charitable organizations, investiga

During the holidays, it is hard to walk down the street, through a mall or turn on the television without being reminded to give. Whether it's contributing time, money or blood, the holiday season is a hugely important time for charitable foundations across Canada.

"The Christmas holiday season is our biggest fundraising time of the year," said Canadian World Wildlife Fund VP: marketing and communications representative Christina Topp.

She estimated that if one only considers donations being made specifically during the holidays – excluding year-round contributors – that approximately 40 to 50 per cent of WWF's fundraising comes in around the holiday season.

"The spirit of giving"

"Most charities experience a boost in fundraising and donations at Christmas time," said Gary Brown, the Salvation Army's area director of public relations and development.

The Salvation Army is known for its "Christmas Kettle" campaign, in which volunteers collect donations in a pot hung from a tripod in malls and other busy areas to collect money for needy families.

"It's traditionally a time of giving and family and sharing with others and I think that's a positive influence that this season has on people," said Brown.

Miranda Priestman, the Student Food Bank co-ordinator at Laurier, noted that there is a rise in food donations over the holidays, though she states it can be partly attributed to the "Food for Fines" program at the library.

She explained that overall she sees the holidays as a "time when people become more aware of their resources."

Martin Hickey, the Grand Knight at the Waterloo Ontario Knights of Columbus branch, noted, "people get in the spirit of giving in November."

He stated that part of this trend is definitely "habitual" and based on a tradition of giving over the holidays. Hickey also stated that it is partly due to the fact that reminders appear everywhere, prompting us to donate.

"Wherever you go, you see 'needy-this', 'needy-that' and it does remind people," Hickey noted.

Topp told The Cord that part of the reason charitable donation is so common near the holidays is because people "naturally think about others in need or issues they're concerned about."

However, she also pointed out that "it's driven by a second reason." Because Canada operates under a tax year, donors begin thinking about their income tax



ons, investigating the connections between the holidays, spirituality and fundraising in the wake of a recession

a mall or turn on the television time, money or blood, foundations across Canada. "One of the year," said Canadian representative Christina

ade specifically during the holiday season, with an average of 40 to 50 per cent of

donations at Christmas. "It's a mix of public relations and

as Kettle" campaign, in which people are encouraged to bring from a tripod in malls to help needy families.

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ld The Cord that part of the holiday season is so close to the holidays is because people "naturally think about others in need or issues that they're concerned about."

However, she also pointed out that "it's driven by a second reason." Because Canada operates under a tax year, donors begin thinking about their income tax

returns around the holidays, which they need to file by April 30 of the following year.

Taxpayers receive credits from the federal government, depending on how much they donate. Contributors, however, need to donate before Dec. 31 to receive their receipts to submit in time for the next tax return.

"It's part of what forces people to start thinking about giving," said Topp.

For some charities this trend of increased donation does not occur, however. For instance, Canadian Blood Services Communications Specialist Veronica Magee stated that often in the weeks surrounding the winter holidays, "donations tend to drop off slightly."

She said that it's "simply because there are a lot of people who are away or get wrapped up in holiday activities."

Magee noted that since the need is constant – on average every 60 seconds someone in Canada needs blood – and blood only has a shelf life of about 42 days, it's important that donations come in on a consistent basis, even throughout the holidays.

"It's one of the most selfless things you can do for someone you don't even know," said Magee. "Around the holidays if you have some time, it's a very unique, charitable way of giving."

Spirituality and philanthropy

For the majority of charitable groups who do see a huge increase in donations over the holidays, religion can play a huge factor.

2006 statistics from Imagine Canada, a national organization with the purpose of strengthening charities, indicate that approximately 56 per cent of the country's charities are religion-based. And a staggering 94 per cent of religious organizations are charitable.

Well-known charities like World Vision, the Salvation Army and the Knights of Columbus all have bases in spirituality and faith.

"We come out of a Christian tradition," Brown said of the Salvation Army. "We have churches and so our work is supported by our congregation."

Brown stated that because of this background, the traditionally Christian-based holiday of Christmas is a huge part of the Salvation Army's fundraising.

"Christmas and the Salvation Army really go together. It's a tradition," said Brown, noting that their first kettle campaign took place 119 years ago.

In an article entitled "The Influence of Religion on Philanthropy in Canada," Ryerson professor Ida E. Berger has conducted a study of Statistics Canada's National Survey of Giving from 2000. Through her research, Berger has concluded that there is a substantial difference between giving based on "sub-group identification."

Those not affiliated with any religious group were the least likely to donate money to charitable causes, while those identifying as Protestant were the most generous.

As a result, Berger has suggested that recruiters or individuals trying to gain donors should "develop communication, training and management methods targeted at most promising segments" in order to ensure maximum fundraising.

For charities like the Salvation Army – or those that focus more fundraising efforts around the holidays – religion may play a major role in donation.

"We think that the faith-based tradition of the holidays is very important.... We encourage people to examine their religious beliefs over the holidays, as well as all-year long," said Brown.

Tight budgets

Overall, the Canadian Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating – conducted in 2007 – indicates that 84 per cent of the nation's population reported making financial donations to charitable or nonprofit organizations during that year.



The recession definitely has hit the spirit of giving. Though I guess the spirit is here but the financials aren't."

—Martin Hickey, Grand Knight at the Waterloo Knights of Columbus.

However, figures released by Statistics Canada in November 2009 suggest that the financial recession that has hit North America is having a negative impact on donations.

In 2008, Canadians donated \$8.19 billion to charities, which is a 5.3 per cent drop from 2007 – the figure was the lowest since 2005.

"The last few years have been challenging as they have been for many charitable organizations," said Topp of WWF Canada's fundraising.

Hickey explained that the Waterloo Knights of Columbus have seen major decreases already this holiday season in the amount of toys donated to their "New Toys for Needy Kids" toy drive.

"There has definitely been a decline in the amount of toys being collected and the money that we normally would see ... is down quite substantially," said Hickey.

"So the recession definitely has hit the spirit of giving. Though I guess the spirit is there but the financials aren't."

While students may not always feel the direct results of the recession, their tight budget and minimal or non-existent income can make it hard for them to donate.

The Canadian Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating shows that about 71 per cent of individuals aged 15 to 24 reported donating money, the lowest of any age group.

"It's tight for you guys. And often the spirit of giving is actually there but the dollars and cents aren't," said Hickey.

Courtney Ferreira, an executive for Laurier's Operation Christmas Child project – part of the larger initiative run through Samaritan's Purse – explained that while it can be difficult to donate: "Most people, unless you're really lacking in money, tend to scrounge up a few dollars to give back."

"There's a huge thing about how students are so poor, but I don't think it's so bad that people can't donate a few dollars."

Topp of WWF stated that often it's important for low-income individuals to consider their "discretionary income."

"So, what you spend on a coffee or a magazine or those dollars that just disappear.... Think about contributing two dollars a month or so. Those dollars do add up to make a significant contribution."

She also explained that often there is a misconception that money is the only way to contribute to charity.

"Understand issues and get involved in conversation, and live a little more lightly on this planet because that is supporting our mission, not financially, but we're not here to raise money, we're here to save our planet."

42%

of charitable donations in Canada in 2007 collected in places of worship

84%

of Canadians indicated that they provided direct help to others who live outside of their household

1.67%

of the United States' GDP goes towards charitable giving

0.73%

of the United Kingdom's GDP goes towards charitable giving

0.72%

of Canada's GDP goes towards charitable giving

Things to remember when donating

- Pay attention to over-head costs: the amount of money used internally for fundraising and salaries that does not go directly to the charity.
 - Fraudulent organizations tend to use names that bear a close resemblance to respect charities, send out e-mail requests, and give unwarranted thanks for donations you have not contributed.
 - Do not give out your financial information over the phone or at the door. Do not be afraid to refuse to provide it.
 - If you receive a phone call, ask for information to be sent to you in writing, including their charitable tax number that can be confirmed online with Revenue Canada.
 - Never make cheques payable to a person, but rather to a specific charity.
 - Decide at the beginning of the year the charities you wish to donate to, and send a cheque directly to their head office.
 - Do not feel obligated to give money right away. You can get the charity's information and check it later.
 - Pay attention to the way the charity uses its money. Some organizations calling themselves charities may be for-profit organizations.
 - Become informed before donating. A good way of doing this is to get involved by volunteering or observing the charity's work in action.
 - When in doubt, say no and get the information you need first.
- compiled based on Fraud Prevention tips from the Canadian Bankers Association and the Canadian Ministry of the Attorney General

ARTS

Arts Editor Sarah Murphy • smurphy@thecord.ca

The Turret Lights up

LAURA SEDGWICK
STAFF WRITER

Lights lives in a world of her own – a world where she is constantly discovering new lands, seeking new experiences and battling to find her way.

The quirky 23-year-old from Timmins performed at the Turret on Nov. 25 and was received by a crowd of adoring fans.

The environment she created on stage simulated the feeling of being part of one of her fantastical music videos.

With lines of red and blue lights flashing with the synthesized beats of the keytar, the scene created a visual equivalent of her compositions.

Throughout the night, Lights performed her hit singles "Savior," "February Air," "Second Go" and her new single "My Boots."

"I always picture things in a more grandiose way than they really are. I picture life like a battle field," she said in an interview with The Cord. "If it was up to me, life would be a battle and you would get swords," she added.

The singer-songwriter started writing songs as a young girl and has since gained international success.

Speaking about her beginnings, Lights reminisced about her dad's musical influence on her. "He used to play his acoustic guitar downstairs and it would help me fall

asleep and I remember thinking that I can't fall asleep unless my dad plays the guitar. If music has that much power it's something I really want to do."

Through her self-declared "intergalactic electro" music, Lights is able to share glimpses into the world she has created.

She uses the term intergalactic electro to illustrate the discovery of sounds that she had never heard before.

She considers her hit single "February Air" to be one of the most exciting songs that she has ever made because it was written when she first experimented with the electro genre. "It was fun and it was exciting," she said enthusiastically. "It was like exploring space."

Despite the crowd of supporters on campus last week, Lights hasn't always been as graciously received. She recalled, "Once I got bottled on stage. I got bottles thrown at me. As an artist you've got to go through all these things."

Nevertheless, she's proven that success is the best revenge. "I learned how to dodge bottles on stage, it was great," she joked. "Then that night I was presented with my single going gold."

Much of Lights' inspiration for her music and lyrics comes from real life experiences as well as imagery from role-playing games such as World of Warcraft.

She is also a fan of graphic novels

“

I am the exact same person on stage as I am off stage.”

—Lights

such as *The Last Man and Wonder Woman*.

"I think that Wonder Woman is an inspiring image for women to have," she said. "She's a very empowered woman, a strong warrior. I almost feel like I am that."

Even though Lights identifies with Wonder Woman and other empowered female characters, she doesn't feel that need to fake such a persona when she is on stage.

"I am the exact same person on stage as I am off stage," she said.

"But when I first started I thought you had to be a different person on stage and put on your show face and that was really uncomfortable for me to do. I thought that was the way you had to do it, but you learn about these things through experience."



NICK LACHANCE VISUAL EDITOR

Lights delivered a memorable performance to fans on Thursday.

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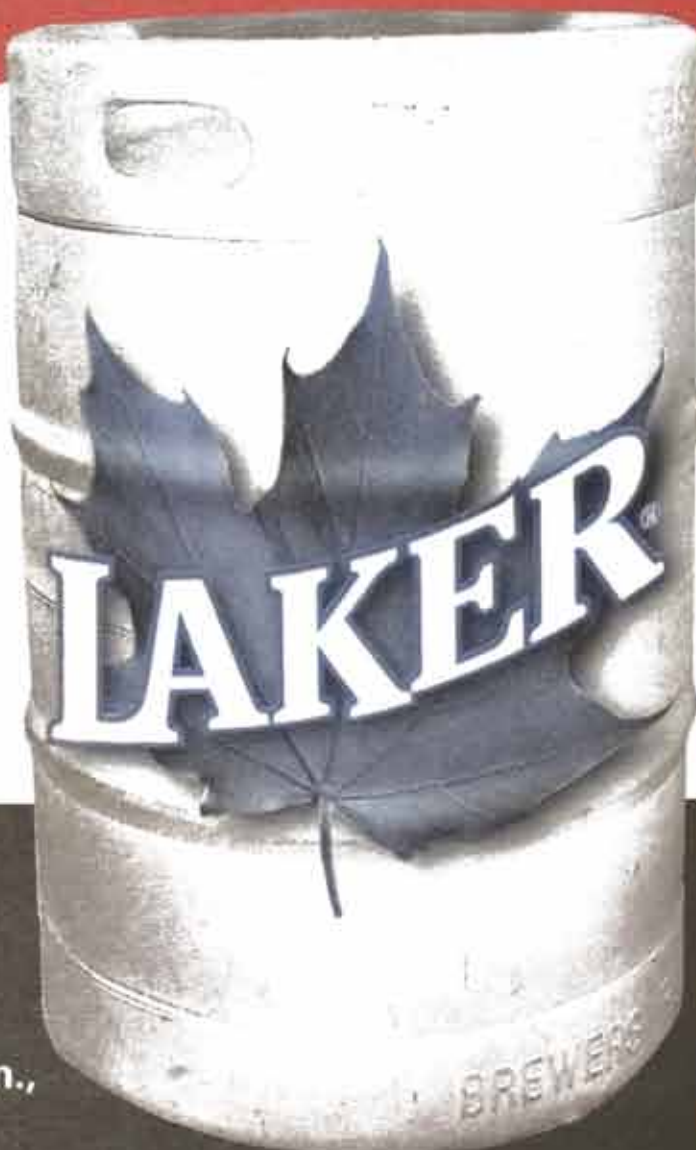
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Check out thecord.ca for coverage of *Last Band Standing* at Wilf's on Wed., Dec. 1 at 9 p.m.



JORDAN SPARKS CONTRIBUTED IMAGE

Laurier alumni kill Shakespeare

Former WLU business student's new series puts a new spin on the Bard

SARAH MURPHY
ARTS EDITOR

Conor McCreery and Anthony Del Col are not your typical Laurier Business grads.

After leaving Laurier, the duo launched successful careers in broadcast journalism and the music industry, respectively.

But when the pieces of their inventive entrepreneurial venture fell into place, this was all thrown to the wind and Kill Shakespeare was born.

Described by McCreery as a "trans-media project," Kill Shakespeare incorporates mediums such as graphic novels, films and video games to retell the story of some of the Bard's greatest heroes and villains.

The seventh issue of Kill Shakespeare's graphic novel was released last week and the co-creators held an event for the release at Carry-On Comics in Uptown Waterloo.

The project first originated with a screenplay written by McCreery and Del Col.

Del Col explained the inspiration behind the story, saying, "The title Kill Bill came up, we thought instead of trying to track down David Caradine, we'll try to track down Billy Shakespeare."

Prominent characters include some of Shakespeare's most beloved protagonists like Othello, Juliet, Hamlet and Falstaff, pitted against villains Richard III, Lady Macbeth and Iago to name a few.

McCreery elaborated on the broader concept of the series, "We've pitted them against each other on a quest where they can either save or kill a mysterious wizard named William Shakespeare."

Discussing the appeal of such a story, Del Col noted that Shakespeare still has an overwhelming place in cultures all over the world and claims that Kill Shakespeare's goal is "to get people excited about Shakespeare in a whole new way."

He continued, "This is definitely not your high school English teacher's version of Shakespeare. It's younger, it's kind of edgy and dark, it highlights the bloody violence and the action-adventure, but we also have the love, romance and comedy."

McCreery spoke to The Cord about the audiences that have been reached by the graphic novel so far,

including their youth fans.

The pair has been surprised by the response from "tweenage" girls and McCreery joked, "Anthony's very excited about casting Robert Pattinson in the feature film."

Kill Shakespeare really took off in the fall of 2008 when McCreery and Del Col made the decision to invest in the project full-time, leaving behind jobs at the Business News Network and managing artists like Nelly Furtado and K-Os.

The former BBA students drafted a business plan in what proved to be one of the most difficult economic periods in recent history, but managed to get the idea off the ground.

Both co-creators were heavily involved during their time at Laurier and recalled fondly their Laurier experiences.

"It gives you opportunities to get involved and to be in leadership positions in all sorts of different things," said McCreery of the small campus community at WLU.

He volunteered at Radio Laurier and was a proud Golden Hawk on the lacrosse team during his Laurier years.

Del Col was involved with the Fringe Festival and even produced a feature length film with help from Student Publications, the Students Union and the community, which he claims was his "first real taste of the film and media industry in Canada," as well as what made him passionate about the field.

McCreery was quick to applaud Laurier for fostering an "entrepreneurial spirit" through students' ability to easily cross disciplines and try out new activities.

"We both matured in an environment that really encouraged you to be in Student Pubs, and be doing sports, and trying something in theatre and going to the Turret," he stated.

The seventh issue of Kill Shakespeare's graphic novel is now available in Waterloo at Carry-On Comics on King St. and will soon be available through Chapters and Indigo.

For anyone interested in an introduction to the series, the first two instalments are available for free on iTunes.

"We're business grads who are writing a comic book, which for a lot of people would have been too big a jump," said McCreery, but for these two Laurier alumni it's a jump that seems to have worked out just fine.

Luke Doucet plays honest rock 'n' roll

ANTHONY DIMIAO
STAFF WRITER

The term "rock 'n' roll" has been applied thickly to Luke Doucet's newest record *Steel Town Trawler* by musician and fans alike.

His live show brings new life to the sixty year old genre.

With the dry, thin, untamed sound pioneered by The Rolling Stones and Dylan, Doucet and his band played to a packed audience at the Starlight last Thursday.

Described by Canadian folk veteran Garnett Rogers as "a terrifyingly good guitar player", Luke pulled melodies from the White Falcon (his beautiful Gretsch hollow body guitar) that tore the air apart.

Doucet described opening act The Beauties as being frontrunners in an impending Canadian rock movement.

The Beauties displayed their blues and folk influences with a swampy, whiskey-soaked sound.

It did not take long for the crowd to jump to their feet and start singing with the band.

While Luke Doucet has exhibited a comprehensive array of song styles throughout his career.

Thursday's show was a nearly unbroken ride through electric guitars and driving rhythms.

The captivating performance of a beautiful ballad entitled "Cleveland" offered a brief reprieve for stomping feet.

Other fan favourites were played including the title track from *Blood's*

Too Rich, "Long Haul Driver" and a rigorous tune by wife and bandmate Melissa McClelland.

Doucet is a renowned guitarist, working on and off with artists like Sarah McLaughlin for the past eighteen years.

It would be feasible for an artist as talented as Doucet to coast on his guitar playing alone, but he puts painstaking effort into his lyrics and melodies as well.

They are not filler. "I don't consider any part of music less significant than any other part," he stated, then proceeded to cite the likes of John Lennon, Tom Waits, Randy Newman, Paul Simon and Elvis Costello as a few of his song writing favourites.

Doucet has earned his reputation as one of the hardest working artists in Canadian music.

He currently lives in Hamilton with McClelland, which heavily influenced his latest album, though most of his time isn't spent in one place.

Spending ten months of the year touring, often with his wife Melissa McClelland, many of Luke's songs reflect a life on the road.

"I'm a big fan of geography. I started traveling around the country by myself when I was eleven years old," said Luke. "The fact that I'm in a different city all the time is huge."

"Thematically the album's a bit pissier," he said when asked about his new album *Steel Town Trawler*, pointing out the rebellious roots of the album's genre.

"Rebellion still has to be a part of what rock 'n' roll means," he continued.

The songs on the record are overall shorter, faster and louder than a lot of Luke's previous work.

"There are politics on this record," Doucet expanded. "Calling out bullshit has become a pet project of mine this year. There's just a lot of it out there, not just musically, I mean in general."

It is in important time to be outwardly political according to Doucet: "Our lives depend on it. Our existence as a culture, as a species depends on it."

After discussing everything from nuclear weapons to religious feuds that threaten the planet, Luke returned to a deep sincerity about the creation of music and politics in art.

"Politics are subtle," he said, "I mean, when John Lennon said 'All you need is love' that was political."

"A lot of what passes for music these days is just made by some guy in a basement with a computer," he stated.

Doucet further explained the phenomenon of manufactured music, saying, "You don't have to be able to sing, we'll fix it. Don't worry about it we'll get somebody else to write the song."

This clearly isn't the case with Luke Doucet, as anyone can easily detect an artful honesty both on his new record and in his live shows, demonstrating a real closeness with his craft.

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FEATURES

Features Editor Vacant • editor@thecord.ca

Nowadays, we're taught to say "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas" and although the change has disgruntled many, it doesn't take long to realize just how diverse in celebrations the holiday season is.

From celebrations that date back centuries, like Hanukkah, to cultural celebrations created for diaspora populations, like Kwanzaa, there is plenty to learn about holidays around the world.

It's important that we take the opportunity to understand what the holidays mean to everyone around the world — whether it's those living in Canada who celebrate Christmas and Kwanzaa during the seven days that follow, or how the world's second largest population celebrates in such a culturally diverse nation. So grab a cup of hot cocoa and learn about the holidays around the world.

Kwanzaa's cultural significance

This African American celebration was created in 1966 during the American civil rights movement

ALANNA WALLACE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Kwanzaa is an African American cultural celebration that, unlike many of the holidays over the next month, was created by Ron Karenga, an American university professor, political activist and author.

"The timing of it is particularly important historically," said Carol B. Duncan, associate professor and chair of the religion and culture department.

"This was the height of the civil rights movement, it was also the height of the black power movement in the United States."

The first Kwanzaa was held from Dec. 26 of 1966 to Jan. 1 of 1967 and continues to be held annually.

The seven-day celebration derives its name from a Swahili phrase that means "first fruits of the harvest."

Karenga created the celebration as an opportunity to celebrate the communitarian nature of all African societies.

However, Duncan explained that Kwanzaa's focus on the all-encompassing communal celebration means that those who are not of African descent are often invited to partake in the celebrations.

Kwanzaa celebrations include the decorating of houses with African cloth and artwork and wearing traditional clothing.

Ceremonies may include drumming and music, a candle-lighting ritual and a feast, called Karamu. Many have been known to celebrate both Christmas and Kwanzaa, as individuals and even some churches will commemorate both occasions.

What makes Kwanzaa unique is that it is not a religious holiday, but more of a celebration of culture and community.

It is also, as Duncan described it, one that was "created by someone with specific aims and purposes," all having to do with the political situation at the time in the U.S.

"What distinguishes Kwanzaa from these other festivals or celebrations at the ending time of the calendar year and in the winter months is how recent it is," said Duncan, along with the fact that it was an "intentional creation within that context of black liberationist movements of the 1960s and the fact that it was developed actually as an alternative to a religious celebration, an intentional focus on communitarian values that Karenga saw in a pan-Africanist kind of framework."

7 Principles of blackness

During Kwanzaa, the seven principles of blackness or the Nguzo Saba, developed by Karenga, "were sought to be reinforced and celebrated and also as a point of education as well," said Duncan. All of the terms are in the East African language of Swahili

- Umoja (unity)
- Kujichagulia (self-determination)
- Ujima (collective work and responsibility)
- Ujamaa (cooperative economics)
- Nia (purpose)
- Kuumba (creativity)
- Imani (faith)

Hanukkah traditions instil hope

Jewish traditions have largely avoided the commercialization of other holidays

DAVID GOLDBERG
WEB DIRECTOR

Hanukkah is the celebration of a series of miracles and Jewish identity. It serves as inspiration for the Jews to embrace their religion — and the story is interesting.

The holiday commences on the 25th day in the month of Kislev in the Jewish calendar. This means it falls somewhere between the last week of November and the last week of December.

Many non-Jews associate the images of a menorah or dreidel with the celebration, but few know the real meaning behind what is also known as "The Festival of Lights."

"Hanukkah is rather less important than Passover, Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana in a religious sense... but culturally it has tremendous importance. It's a holiday of history that celebrates the overcoming of persecution of a people," said Laurier associate professor Faydra Shapiro of the cultural significance of Hanukkah.

Rabbi Moshe Goldman, the Jewish chaplain here at Laurier, believes that Hanukkah is one of the most relevant holidays for the modern Jew.

"There is so much that [Hanukkah] speaks to about living as a Jew in another culture, another nation. There are all kinds of social pressures that Hanukkah teaches us about. It teaches us about hope, not giving up, not settling."

The miracles

The story of Hanukkah goes back approximately 2,100 years when modern day Israel was ruled by the Greek Empire, whose aim was to assimilate or, more accurately, Hellenize the Jews, through the banning of circumcision and the Sabbath.

According to Goldman, an uprising by the Jews began in the town of

Modi'in, Israel.

Tired of being oppressed, the Jews staged a rebellion against the Greeks, naming themselves the Maccabees.

Highly outnumbered and under-skilled in the ways of combat, they fought the Greek Empire until victory was theirs.

"This," Goldman says, "was the first miracle of Hanukkah."

Like the dreidel, the nine-branched candleholder known as a menorah is another symbol of Hanukkah familiar to most people.

The second miracle of Hanukkah occurred in the second century B.C.E. in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem where, upon returning to the temple after the Maccabean revolt, the high priests found that all but one container of oil to light the menorah had been opened by the Greeks, rendering them impure.

Although there was only enough oil for one day of burning, the supply lasted eight days until a new shipment arrived. This was the second miracle of Hanukkah.

Modern day celebration

According to Goldman, the customs of a Hanukkah celebration don't really vary around the world.

"Hanukkah is probably one of the most universally observed holidays; there isn't that much room for variation. There's only so many ways you can light a menorah, it doesn't have a lot of observances and ritual about it," he said.

However, concerning the lighting of the menorah, there a few ways one can go about it.

At one level, a different candle can be lit for each day of Hanukkah. Another method is to light an additional candle for each night, culminating in a beautiful blaze by the eighth day.

In regards to who does the lighting, in some families, the head of

the household is in charge. But more recently, a widespread tradition is to have each member of the family light their own menorah.

Goldman explains that, again, this speaks to the most important message of Hanukkah: celebrating uniqueness and individuality.

Commercialization

Like all religious holidays, Hanukkah has been subject to a certain level of commercialization. You can buy wrapping paper with dreidels and the Star of David printed on it to go along with a menorah attached to a pair of glasses that you can wear on your face (it looks as dangerous as it sounds).

Shapiro maintains this is because of Hanukkah's proximity to Christmas.

"People don't want their kids to feel like they've missed out on something by being Jewish, particularly when most of their friends are celebrating Christmas. But it's also a way for general culture to show their inclusivity: 'Look, we also play dreidel songs and show a menorah'... This is one of the places where they think they can make sense of Jewish-ness, as a kind of 'different Christmas'," said Shapiro.

On the topic of commercialization, Rabbi Goldman says he doesn't know if Hanukkah is "any worse off than Tuesday", but it's about an individual's faith and preference of observance.

"Hanukkah I think has a message which really transcends your belief system... no matter what you believe or don't believe it has something to say to you."

Hanukkah in Waterloo

Chabad of Waterloo Region is holding their lighting of Waterloo's "tallest menorah" at Waterloo Town Square on Sunday December 5 from 4:30-5:30 p.m.



Other Holidays

Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
Dec. 8

St. Lucia's Day (Sweden)
Dec. 13

Las Posadas (Mexico)
Dec. 16-24

Pancha Ganapati (Hindu)
Dec. 21-25

Festivus (Seinfeld)
Dec. 23

A global flavour: food and festivities

Cord writer *Natasha Tacchi* explores the importance of feasting during celebrations around the world

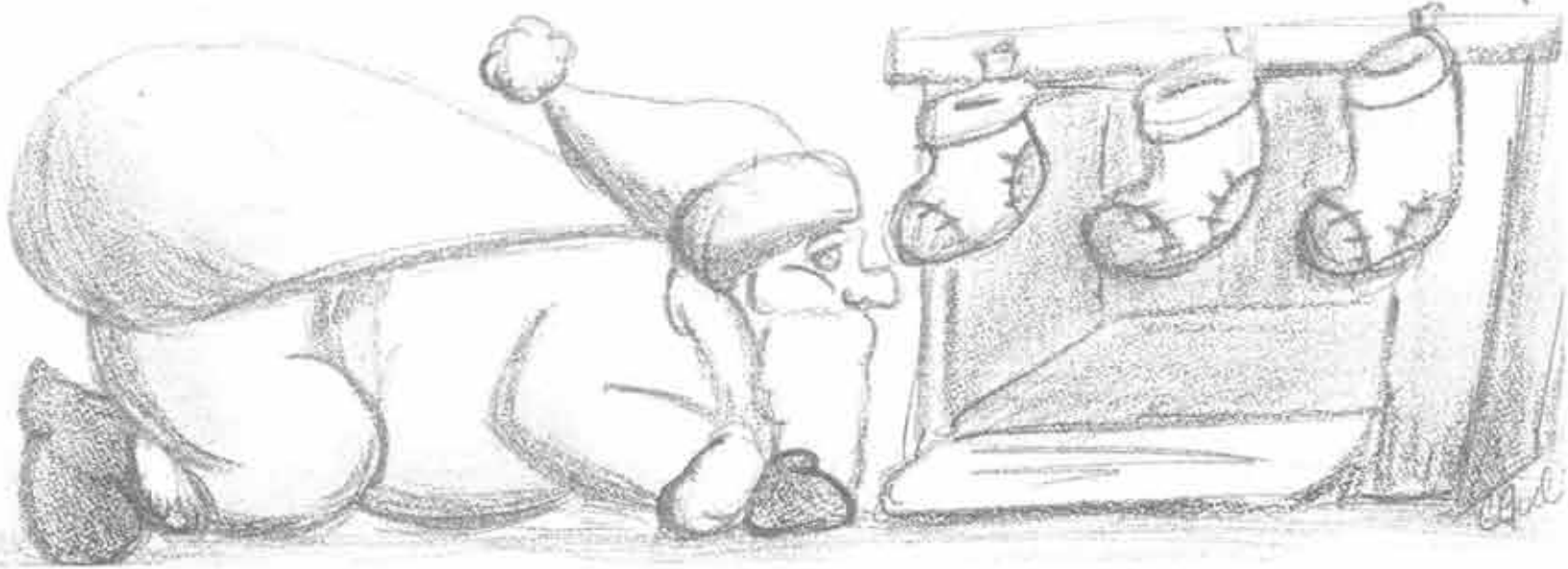
Christmas may very well be the most universally recognized holiday in the world. However, there are many other significant religions and cultures that hold sacred celebrations around the month of December. According to Statistics Canada, non-Christian beliefs have grown significantly over the past three decades as immigration has shifted from European settlers to Asian and Middle Eastern migrants. With this increase in population movement comes an increased opportunity to learn from another culture's traditions and rituals, as each group deserves to have their own holiday recognized. According to Michel Desjardins, chair of Laurier's global studies department, all holidays and celebrations are about "coming together."

In spite of opposing traditions and belief systems, good food and family is something that remains constant. "All the festivals are connected to food," said Desjardins. The ingredients may change between varying religions but there is always an appetite around the holiday season, no matter what religion you practice. Hanukkah's feast is referred to as "Feast of Dedication" or "Feast of Lights," Laurier student Keera Bronstine states. Hanukkah is an eight-day festival, which celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. "There is a miraculous amount of oil used in the meals during the holiday," said Desjardins, explaining that many of the feasts consist of doughnuts and potato pancakes which have been baked in oil. Overall, the holiday of Hanukkah is about warm comfort food and happiness.

Desjardins also mentioned an important and enlightening religion named Zoroastrianism. The root of this belief comes from Iran but shifts to India over time. Toronto is home to one of the largest Zoroastrian populations in the world, a religion that expresses the celebration and respect for animals. Animal food is used for sacred feasts, festivals or in funeral collations. Some African Americans celebrate Kwanzaa, which means, "first fruits and is established on American festivals," said Desjardins. For seven days, from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1, African-Americans acknowledge essential principles on community and family life. This sacred celebration also incorporates traditional foods into a central role. For seven days, these "individuals focus on good qualities such as how to be a good person,"

Desjardins said. Basically, it's a "feast week where they eat food and drink a lot," according to Desjardins. Finally, an interesting twist to Christianity is Coptic Christianity, mostly celebrated in Egypt, where Christmas is a very significant holiday. Traditional Egyptian Christians are referred to as Copts. While discussing a personal journey to Egypt, Desjardins expressed that "Coptic Christianity is about being joyous and to think about what is truly important to your life in a serious matter." All Copts have to endure a period of fasting before a big feast. During this fasting period, the Copts may eat a vegetarian diet that may include fish, since fish species do not have intercourse. This enables the community to reduce their overall food consumption. Meanwhile, when Christmas

day arrives, celebrations consist of a "huge amount of meat eating," stated Desjardins. Overall, each holiday provides an exuberating and culturally rich experience. Opposing religions may have vast differences themselves but overall everyone loves to eat and celebrate with their family and friends after a long year.



CHANTEL GODIN GRAPHICS ARTIST

The 'Big Day' in India

How the second largest nation in the world celebrates Dec. 25

YENNY VAN ANDEL
STAFF WRITER

Whether religious or not, Christmas is celebrated by the majority of North Americans. It is hard to ignore since immediately after Halloween, the Christmas sales seem to commence. Shopping malls become a haven of lights, trees and music, and the Christmas spirit can be felt by everyone. It is easy to get caught up in the holiday season so it is important to step back and see how other people in other countries celebrate this day around the world. The south Asian country of India has an extremely culturally diverse population of over 1.18 billion people. 80 per cent of the Indian citizens practice Hinduism, while Christians make up only 2.3 percent of the population. Since Christmas is a Christian holiday, it is important to distinguish how Christians and non-Christians celebrate in India. Jason Neelis, assistant professor for South Asian religions in the religion and culture department fondly reminisced about the year he spent in India over 20 years ago. "The Indian people have a very inclusive attitude," he recalled. While in India, Neelis had the opportunity to spend Christmas with both a Hindu family and a Christian family. Christians living in India will attend mass on Christmas Eve and again on Christmas day. Much like

in North America, they will visit with family on December 25th, eat a special meal and exchange gifts. They decorate their homes with wreaths and stars, however Christmas trees are not seen in any homes. "There was a family and community religious orientation rather than a commercial orientation," recalled Neelis. In North America we tend to go overboard with gift-giving, but in India, Neelis recalled receiving a small, simple token gift. As for Hindus and other non-Christians, Christmas is called Bara Din which means "Big Day." "The 'Big Day' is fairly minor compared with the major Hindu holidays in the Fall and Spring," says Neelis. Though it is a national holiday, many people will still work on this day. "The 'Big Day' is acknowledged by non-Christians (the overwhelming majority) as yet another non-specifically Hindu religious holiday on the crowded calendar," continued Neelis. However, Hindus are tolerant of many religions, and will include Christmas in their celebrations occasionally. Looking at the holiday from a different perspective may help us get less caught up in the flurry of the holiday. Spending time with loved ones is more important than finding the perfect tree, or receiving the perfect gift.

Religions around the world

1.1 billion

Atheism

360 million

Buddhism

2 billion

Christianity

900 million

Hinduism

1.3 billion

Islam - (Sunni: 940 million)

14 million

Judaism

23 million

Sikhism

200,000

Zoroastrianism

Who is Santa Claus?

ELIZABETH BATE
CORD FEATURES

We all know the gift-giving guy in red is based on Saint Nicholas, but how did he get from early Christian bishop to your local mall? Here are some facts about the popular holiday icon.

Still get a coin in the bottom of your stocking?

This isn't just a cheesy way to give you pocket change. According to the original myth of Saint Nicholas, the famous Bishop used to leave coins in the shoes of children.

What's in a name?

In the Netherlands Saint Nicholas is also known as Sinterklaas, a mythical man who brings treats to good children. Over the years Western tradition has changed this name to Santa Claus.

Christmas come early

Western culture combines Saint Nicholas' generosity with Christmas, but many European nations still celebrate Saint Nicholas' name day on Dec. 6, the day when sweets and gifts were left for good girls and boys.

What's that burning smell?

Saint Nicholas traditionally arrived on horseback and entered through the front door, until the 1823 publishing of 'Twas a Night Before Christmas. The popular story had Saint Nick heading down the chimney and travelling by reindeer-led sleigh.

Did he check in at Ellis Island?

Although Saint Nicholas was the Bishop of Myra (modern-day Turkey) in the second century, the Western version of Santa Claus came by way of Amsterdam to New York City. Once New Amsterdam, the iconic landing place saw the legend of Saint Nicholas arrive with immigrants from the Netherlands.

Jolly old mad men

Traditionally garbed in a bishop's cape, Santa Claus got a makeover in 1931. The modern version of the jolly, red-clad man first appeared in Coca-Cola's Christmas ad campaign.

By any other name

In China, Santa Claus is known as Shengdan Laoren. In England — Father Christmas, while in France he is Pere Noel. Some Latin countries call him El Niesus and in some he is called Papa Noel. During the communist years of Russia, he was known as Father Frost. Some countries, including Germany say that the baby Jesus delivers the gifts instead of Santa.

A wise man once said...

"Aren't we forgetting the true meaning of Christmas? You know, the birth of Santa?" —Bart Simpson

EDITORIAL

Opinion Editor Eric Merkley • emerkley@thecord.ca

Past BOD motions must be recognized

Controversy has arisen over the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union (WLUSU) board of directors handling of the move to online voting as put forward at the Nov. 26 board meeting. While WLUSU should be applauded for moving voting online in an effort to stimulate student interest and increase voter turnout, they should not do so by blatantly ignoring past motions of the board of directors.

In 2007-2008 after an extensive committee work investigating the best method for online voting, the board of directors passed a motion to mandate that any online voting system must be by preferential ballot. The board's belief was that the preferential system would provide greater fairness to student elections and would be made feasible with the nature of online ballots given its complicated nature.

The current board of directors either ignored or were unaware of the past motion and refused to discuss preferential balloting at all.

Regardless of the merits of the preferential balloting, the fact is that decisions made by the board in any given year are binding for all future boards. This is an undisputable fact of corporate governance designed to maintain a degree of continuity between boards of directors. Simply to dismiss the motion because they disagreed with it reflects an astounding degree of ignorance in board procedure that offers a truly terrible precedent for the future.

If the WLUSU board of directors disagrees with preferential balloting then they can overrule the decision of the past board with a two-thirds vote. Until this is the case they need to live with the decision and move towards establishing a preferential balloting system. To do otherwise sends a signal to future boards that the decisions of the past are irrelevant.

—The Cord Editorial Board

Take the time to give back during the holiday season

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or just consider the winter break a great time to be with your family or relax, the holidays are a time when we tend to become increasingly aware of our fortunes. The fact is, as university students, most of us have nice warm homes with food and family to spend the break in.

And what better time than when we're able to see just how lucky most of us are to contribute to a cause? We're often flooded with reminders of more traditional holiday charities, urging us to donate toys or money to the less fortunate, which can make a huge impact.

But without a consistent or substantial income — and student loans hanging over many of our shoulders — there are still valuable ways to make a contribution. Canadian Blood Services (CBS), for example, provides a completely unique way to donate, even if you're low on funds. And it only takes about an hour of your time between shopping.

Or, there's always volunteering. Organizations that collect money or toys are always in need of people to donate their time. Even if it's just an hour or two, being active in the community is something you can do that is free, helps raise your awareness and allows you to help improve and even save lives.

You can even try to reduce your carbon footprint this holiday season, keeping your Christmas lights on for less time or carpooling.

It's important to remember that while we may be on tight budgets, we can always do something to contribute, and it doesn't have to be in a traditional way. There are so many unique opportunities to make a contribution, allowing us to enjoy the holidays and help others enjoy theirs.

—The Cord Editorial Board

This unsigned editorial is based off informal discussions and then agreed upon by the majority of The Cord's editorial board, which consists of 15 senior Cord staff including the Editor-in-Chief and Opinion Editor. The arguments made may reference any facts that have been made available through interviews, documents or other sources. The views presented do not necessarily reflect those of The Cord's volunteers, staff or WLUSU.

The Cord is published by
Wilfrid Laurier University Student Publications.
Contact Bryn Ossington, WLUSU President and CEO
75 University Ave.W, Waterloo ON N2L 3C5



Pope's advice on condom use is archaic and dangerous



ALANNA WALLACE

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Just like Pope John Paul II had to finally admit Galileo Galilei had been right that the world was round and not the centre of the universe in a statement released in 1992, eventually Pope Benedict XVI will have to admit that his statements regarding condoms are misleading at best.

Don't be fooled — Pope Benedict XVI continues to undermine the fight against HIV/AIDS, just like every other Pope that came before him.

His Holiness is allowing the use of condoms. Wait — only under certain circumstances, because the Catholic Church continues to barricade the fight against the global proliferation of HIV.

His admission comes in the recently released six-hour interview-turned-book *Light of the World: The Pope, The Church, and the Sign of the Times*, by Peter Seewald, where the Pope decided to condone condom usage in "extreme cases."

For the hundreds of South Africans I've taught HIV education to who are continuously confused by the statements he makes about condoms every couple of years, I want to rip my hair out.

Because let's face it — when the Pope makes comments about birth control, he is speaking to the growing Catholic populations in developing nations, as the overwhelming majority of his adherents in the West don't abide by any sort of doctrine regarding sexual activity. For one, a 2002 U.S. survey found 96 per cent of sexually active Catholic women had used birth control.

Let us not discuss the morality behind artificial birth control and heed the fact that condoms are the cheapest, most effective means of curbing the virus's transmission. Until a microbicide

is developed that will kill the human immunodeficiency virus, it is the best resource the world has in terms of protection — besides abstinence.

However, when it comes to the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, the teaching of abstinence should only go hand-in-hand with lessons on condom usage and positive living.

His recent remarks are not the first that Pope Benedict XVI has made regarding the HIV epidemic. In 2008, while on a tour of the African continent, he was cited as saying that condoms won't stop the spread of HIV. And now the Pope has given the go-ahead for the use of condoms in exceptional cases, like for male prostitutes.

Thanks Benedict, you're about 30 years too late. The HIV epidemic has evolved far beyond the high-risk group of men who have sex with men, to an age where many estimates suggest that heterosexual intercourse is responsible for 70 to 80 per cent of all new HIV infections worldwide.

Pope Benedict's rhetoric surrounding condom usage continues to be outdated, misinformed, misleading and downright detrimental to the 33.3 million adults and children worldwide living with HIV, according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

The archaic policies and beliefs espoused by the Catholic Church concerning contraceptives would have been debatably applicable in the 1980s — but today HIV affects everyone, not just those women who live the developing world. The Canadian Women's Health Network reported that the greatest increase in new infections in 2003 were within the demographic of women aged 15 to 29. Not to mention, women are biologically more susceptible to contracting the virus.

The Pope's comments undermine any progress done by international, government and non-governmental organizations for the advancement of women and HIV education.

The Pope's statement that a "more humane attitude towards sexuality" and not condom usage will curb the spread of HIV is laughable. To rely on behavioural change alone in the context of HIV

A healthy and humane society is one that learns the ramifications of having sex and discovers all avenues to protect everyone....It is not one that sweeps condom usage under the rug.

is an agenda that undermines the use of a scientifically proven method of curbing transmissions.

A healthy and humane society is one that learns the ramifications of having sex and discovers all avenues to protect everyone — men and women — from contracting the virus. It is not one that sweeps condom usage under the rug, spreads falsities about their effectiveness and confuses populations of individuals in search of answers.

So today, on World AIDS Day, I will continue to be more vocal about condom usage not just for the women, girls and boys I used to teach HIV education to in a rural South African village. I'll be vocal in an attempt to stifle the rhetoric of those who choose to neglect science, current society and development, like Pope Benedict XVI.

And you should too, because we live in a society of luxury where we brush aside the words of a Pope, whose advice is so archaic that it sets women back decades.

And I'll hope that the words of volunteers, medical workers and HIV/AIDS advocates are stronger than Pope Benedict's. That his wavering stance on contraception and his misguided appeals against the proliferation of condoms will somehow fall on deaf ears and that someday His Holiness will realize that he's playing with millions of people's lives.

THE FORUM

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The true purpose of university



DON MORGENSON
letters@thecord.ca

One thing the university of the future will teach is that universities of today fail at teaching is the art of self-discovery.

To me, there is nothing more fundamental in education.

We churn out students graduating from our "fog factories" who are ready and willing to give answers, but who fail at knowing how to ask questions.

They leave our universities with skills applicable to employment for the government, industries and businesses, but have little or no knowledge of how to live or what living is ultimately for.

Our students are not taught how to see, how to listen or how fundamental these skills are to all personal and/or work relations. They are not taught those supremely important arts of obedience and restraint and how they always precede self-mastery. They are not taught that true art of reading. Engaged reading is a creative art; it means first seeing, then comes the act of the imagination.

All our innovations, our discoveries, our creativity come from one source: being able to see what is there and not there, to hear what is said and what is not said and to think clearly and critically.

Then there is the death of that central vestige of psychology — intuition, some think the sublime value in our lives; those intuitive leaps from physics to metaphysics; those quantum leaps of the imagination which have transformed sciences and the arts of humanity.

Discipline, effortful work and rational approaches to our lives can take us only so far; in time, such will become the norms. With these qualities we will create competent, efficient, but only mediocre human citizens.

They are tools and, as such, it is far easier to create a chemist than it is to create a sensitive citizenry.

Intuition — that mysterious spark that separates great discoverers, great philosophers and great artists from the nearly great — will one day have to be studied and used for the common good.

All of our students must come to be aware that they are the true spark of the transformation of the known world. Our students must become "practical dreamers," (Ben Okri's term used in an address to the European Conference on the Future of European Universities) those people who can enrich the life of this planet.

We are much more than what we do; we are more than the functions we pursue and jobs that we do. We and our students are co-makers of this world we live in; the moral force of our citizens is too little used in the greater enrichment of the world.

Professors take the living potential that is young minds and turn them, reduce them, into job-fillers and economy providers. We have regressed from the wonderful project of the academy of Plato's dream. Every student is a light, a creative spark, waiting to be of use in dispelling the darkness.

Every day the crisis of purpose

A society can die from a lack of understanding of why it exists or an awareness of its larger purpose in the greater scheme of things.

grows larger in the lives of people, and prosperity or poverty does not diminish the paralysis it brings if not addressed.

A society can die from a lack of understanding of why it exists or an awareness of its larger purpose in the greater scheme of things.

The universe grows more mysterious around us even as we find out more and more about it. The true reason is this: we are more than we suspect we are, but are taught to see less into ourselves and to ask no questions about our true natures. So the great mystery that we are peers out into the great mystery that is out there.

We ought to substitute the faith in evidence with the knowledge of self-discovery. Only by knowing ourselves can we begin to undo the madness we unleash on the world in our ways, our divisions, our desire to dominate others, the poverty we create and then exploit and the damage we do with all the knowledge we have. It all may be merely a higher or more sophisticated ignorance.

The true purpose of the university ought to be to unleash the bright and sublime possibilities of the human being. There we will learn to avert what evils we ourselves create and then start again the project of humanity with humility and a new light.

thecord.ca

Letters to the Editor

Deathly Hallows Pt. 1 is fast-paced

RE: Action replaced by wizard angst, Nov. 24

Film criticism is obviously more of a matter of opinion than fact, but I found the claim that *Deathly Hallows Pt. 1* is slower-paced and has less action than any other recent Harry Potter film to be flat-out inaccurate. I would argue that *Deathly Hallows Pt. 1* probably has as much action as the last three Potter films combined, if not more.

I could not tell what "battle scenes" from *Half-Blood Prince* Murphy was even referencing, because I don't recall there being anything of the sort in that film. Now *Half-Blood Prince* was a slow paced and boring movie, which focused more on teen angst than action.

Deathly Hallows Pt. 1, on the other hand, was the only Potter film so far that legitimately felt like an action/adventure movie and it definitely was not slow-paced compared to the other Potter films before it.

The Ministry of Magic escape scene, forest chase and the highway chase scene were all more elaborate action set-pieces than anything in *Half-Blood Prince* by far. The only other action scenes in previous Potter films that compare to any of these scenes are the dragon challenge from *Goblet of Fire* and the Ministry of Magic showdown in *Order of the Phoenix*. Also, *The Dark Knight* did not invent car chase

scenes and I could just as easily say that *Dark Knight* borrowed from *The Matrix Reloaded* for its car chase scene which, in turn, probably borrowed from something else.

—James Popkie

All you haters get a clue

The chant at the Blatchford protest Nov. 12 was not "racist, racist, racist" it was "no racists in KW," meaning that racists and colonialist propagandists will be confronted in KW and those who support systemic racism (while probably abhorring individual racist acts) need to question their teachings of dominance, colonialism and patriarchal supremacy.

Now, all you haters get a clue. You live in a society based in oppression (patriarchy/dominance), which is destroying itself (mass extinction, unsustainable resource use, soil/water devastation/toxification) and living without honour (no commitment to treaties — other than neo-liberal ones, ongoing colonial wars, systemic abuse of new immigrants).

You tell me to get a job or grow up. I thought growing up was taking responsibility; I thought work was supposed to strengthen a community. I guess there are some differences between your "growing-up" and actually maturing.

This system trained us for 10-20-30 years to be capitalists and

individualists. So we could live in the isolated "peace" of privilege. We don't want these inherited oppressive systems; we will live so everyone can live.

The violence and injustice of colonialism are of us, and until the physical structures and current practices of settlers are confronted, we will not have peace.

You cannot in one step remove ideas of dominance and oppression from the colonial mind, but you can live critically, live radically and live with the knowledge that you are responsible for your actions — responsible to yourself, to those who you love and love you, and to all the future faces.

—Dan Kellar

Continue the debate online at
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Letter policy

Letters must not exceed 250 words. Include your full name and telephone number. Letters must be received by 12:00 p.m. noon Monday via e-mail to letters@thecord.ca. The Cord reserves the right to edit for length and clarity or to reject any letter.

You know what yanks my Cord...

...people who yell at you for walking on the Hawk. I don't care if you're the whole "Rah Rah" school spirit type.

Go watch all the football games you want at University Stadium; wear your purple and gold and all your Hawk gear and by all means "Rawk out with your Hawk out." It makes no difference to me.

But it is a whole different story when you verbally assault me for walking on the Hawk. Do you know what hallways are for? They are there for people to walk from one place to another.

I'm not going to go out of my way

to walk on the Hawk when I'm walking through the Hall of Fame. However, when there are various club and charity booths on both sides and it is rush hour, it's just ridiculous to expect people to avoid walking on the Hawk.

I'll take common sense over a perceived social faux pas any day. And I'll avoid your mindless herd mentality just as well.

Also, wasn't it removed during renovations a few years back and then put back, despite an expensive price tag, because some students protested its removal?

What a complete waste of student

money. They should have just gotten rid of it and been done with it. Think about it. No more people heckling me for walking in a straight line. Sounds absolutely normal now doesn't it?

If you want to respect this made-up tradition you are by all means welcome to. You are free to not walk on the Hawk to your heart's content. But get it out of your head that it's some sacred rule that you can enforce by shrieking at random people. So get off my back. I don't need the school spirit police telling me what to do.

—Andrew Chai

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OPINION

Opinion Editor Eric Merkley • merkley@thecord.ca

Gender segregation in schools not the answer



JOSEPH MCNINCH-PAZZANO
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Black schools. Gay schools. Male schools. Female schools. This is how the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has responded to the province's 2008 call for increased focus on Equity and Inclusion strategies in Ontario elementary and secondary schools. It poses the question: can inclusion be achieved through separation?

Most recently, the TDSB has offered a proposal for single-gendered classrooms: readying 300 "boys-only" classrooms for the 2011/2012 school year. Pilot projects have already been offered in Brampton and gendered schools have been implemented in Calgary and Edmonton for some time.

The research on gendered schools is compelling. One of the leading scholars in the area is Leonard Sax — author of "Boys Adrift" and "Girls on the Edge." His thesis is that boys and girls learn differently and schools have to actively accommodate this.

He argues that males need more frequent breaks, learn kinaesthetically, have shorter attention spans, like to write less and need more visual cues. Girls, contrarily, like to think, write, discuss, interact and reflect. They need fewer breaks and have longer attention spans. Furthermore, girls thrive in literacy while males perform better in mathematics and science.

However, there is an inherent problem with making such a broad generalization with sweeping ramifications on the education system. What do you do with the girl who wants to move around the classroom with the boys instead of sitting down for "reflection time" with the girls? What do you do with the boy who wants to sit, write and reflect on a question the teacher has posed?

Universal generalizations always have their boundaries and this one clearly does as well. In practice, the more effective solution to increasing performance for all would be complete differentiation of education on an individual level in a coeducational classroom. The feasibility of such

an ideal plan, however, is questionable at best, impossible at worst. Teachers cannot be realistically expected to provide the differentiated education that each student needs.

As such, the better question and policy issue should be how to better allow teachers the opportunity to pursue increased differentiated instruction, not how to find a shortcut to reaching more but not all students' learning styles.

It could easily be argued that a major barrier for teachers in creating a classroom environment where differentiation is possible is the issue of behavioural students within a classroom. They eat up the attention of the teacher who could be spending valuable time better understanding what each student in their class needs on an individual basis.

While gender may play a role, and while it has become popular to suggest that single-gendered classrooms are the way of the future in education, let's first consider how we can help teachers do their jobs in existing classrooms. Figure out how to decrease the shortfall of educational assistants and provide the resource support to the behavioural students who need it.

And maybe by doing so, we will actually send the message that the Equity and Inclusion Strategy presents: inclusion rather than exclusion.

Isolate racial minorities and you think you have solved racism. Contain sexual minorities and you might think you have solved homophobia. Separate boys and girls and you might increase academic performance. But, did you really solve the underlying issue?

Teach that diversity is the solution — not the problem. Show students how to tear down the definitions of what constitutes a normal and average member of society.

Because once they're out of the public school system and functioning in post-secondary education or in the workplace, they're not going to remember what method their teacher used to teach them their alphabet.

But they are going to remember the values that that educator instilled in them — and that's where school boards have both the biggest opportunity and the biggest responsibility. These are real children with real differences and school boards need to think long and hard about how they're playing with their education.



COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA

World must step up to assist Palestinian refugees

Palestinian refugees fleeing the British Mandate of Palestine in 1948.



BRIAN SHAPOSHNIK
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The Israeli-Arab conflict is perhaps the most widely reported issue in international media.

But one party to this conflict is ignored by the rest of the world. Used and abused for decades, left homeless and abandoned, they spend their miserable lives dreaming an impossible dream.

This is the sad reality of Palestinian refugees. In 1948, between 500,000 and 750,000 Arabs left the British Mandate of Palestine. Some left under the guidance of Arab nations who promised a quick victory against the Jews. Some were expelled by Jewish military forces. And some simply fled the crossfire of war.

Had the Arab leadership accepted the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan proposing two states, one Arab and one Jewish, there would have been no war and no refugees. But they rejected the plan, objecting to any Jewish state whatsoever. When the new state of Israel was created in 1948 per the Partition Plan, seven Arab armies invaded and the rest is history.

As a result of the war, approximately 850,000 Jewish refugees were created across the Arab world. They were not allowed to take their belongings with them, nor were they compensated by Arab governments for the land or property left behind. But all these refugees were resettled, most in Israel, and today there is no Jewish refugee problem.

The dream held onto by the Palestinian refugees is a return to Palestine. After Israeli victories in the 1967 Six Day War and 1973 Yom Kippur War, this dream became but a pipedream. Israel would not be driven to the sea, contrary to the wishes of her enemies.

Today, the number of Palestinian refugees has reached 4.7 million. The reason for this continued growth is that descendants of the original refugees are granted equal refugee status. This anomaly is unprecedented and perpetuates the problem. Furthermore, Palestinian refugees cannot shed their refugee status by becoming citizens of other countries.

Palestinian refugees continue to be jailed in overcrowded and impoverished refugee camps across the Middle East. Unlike other refugee groups, which are supported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Palestinian refugees are under the care of a special group, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Rather than resettle and naturalize Palestinian refugees so that they can start a new life for themselves and their families, UNRWA keeps them trapped in refugee camps with no realistic hope of getting out.

As Palestinian journalist Khaled abu Toameh puts it, the refugees have been lied to for decades. Millions of people are deceived into believing they will be permitted to move into Israel and reclaim land that was inhabited by their ancestors.

Recently, a senior UNRWA official named Andrew Whitley called it a "cruel illusion" to maintain this lie and said that refugees should instead fight to be accepted as equal citizens of the countries in which

they currently live. Whitley was reprimanded and it was announced that he would be leaving UNRWA.

As admitted by several Arab leaders such as Egyptian FM Muhammad Salah al-Din in 1949, the Palestinian refugees are used as political pawns in a mission to destroy Israel. Meanwhile, almost nothing has been done by Arab or Palestinian governments to improve their living conditions. Of the top 20 donors to UNRWA in 2008, not one was from the Middle East. The United States was the top donor at around \$268 million. Lebanon gave a generous \$1,703. Saudi Arabia donated nothing.

As a matter of fact, Arab governments have been the worst perpetrators of injustice towards Palestinians.

The Arab League instructs nations to deny citizenship to Palestinian refugees, including those who have never set foot elsewhere.

Lebanon truly commits a crime comparable to apartheid, legally denying Palestinians entry into 73 job categories, leaving them with only the most undesired and low-paying jobs.

They are also not allowed to enter the health care and school systems or to purchase property and they require a special permit to leave their camps. Arab nations are responsible for far more Palestinian deaths than Israel. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed in events such as Black September in Jordan and the Civil War in Lebanon, including the War of the Camps and the Sabra and Shatila Massacre.

It's time the international community realizes the abuse being committed and demands that it stop. If Arab nations do not care to help their Palestinian brothers, then the rest of the world must step up.

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"The comfort of anonymity, as well as the ability to hide behind one's computer screen, has given many normally cowardly individuals a sudden ego boost." —Barbara Ciochon

Social media eroding societal norms?

Point: Anonymity of Facebook is eroding social interaction and encouraging idiotic behaviour



BARBARA CIOCHON
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Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and the like were introduced with the hope of connecting us with people we know across the world and with those we don't who may share the same interests, views and values. In other words, they have fostered greater global connectedness.

Yet with the growing popularity of these websites — especially Facebook — we have been witness to what is becoming social media's slow but gradual destruction of social interaction.

Throughout its mere six-year existence, Facebook has been the greatest contributor to this unfortunate turn of events. It makes it all too easy for its users to consistently disregard manners and common sense. What's more, communication via the interweb is, more often than not, fairly superficial.

With Facebook we can now send invitations to friends paperlessly — an unintended eco-friendly result — for a variety of events: birthdays, Bar Mitzvahs and "How I Met Your Mother" TV nights, among others.

But, because online invitations are sent with less effort than those that used to be mailed and stamped, RSVPing online is no longer deemed necessary.

Instead, many will not RSVP at all and leave their status as "Awaiting Reply" appearing as if though they do not spend much time on Facebook, even though their Farmville activity would suggest otherwise. Others may choose to spice things up and hit "Maybe Attending," making any sort of event planning impossible when having to guesstimate how many of those jer-...er people, will actually show up.

The comfort of anonymity, as well as the ability to hide behind one's computer screen, has given many normally cowardly individuals a sudden ego boost.

Social media websites are often flooded with criticisms, profanity and in some cases, libel, sexism and racism. Yet, let's bet that over half of these individuals would never think of saying or doing something similar in real life.

So, what gives? Why, with the increasing popularity of social media, has a disregard for manners and norms surfaced? And who decided that this would be the ideal outlet to voice such opinions where, in spite of a user's anonymity, comments receive greater publicity than they would if voiced elsewhere?

Social media has become the perfect place to not only make asses

out of others, but of ourselves too. Often, there seems to be a very obvious blurring of what is considered appropriate and inappropriate. Pictures of individuals urinating, vomiting, passing out after a night out and other events apparently worthy of documentation are posted to Facebook profiles over and over again and visible to countless onlookers.

I'll refrain from the usual, "future employers may come across your profile" lecture but really, where has dignity gone? Apparently wherever the ability to click "Attending"

and show up to a Facebook event is hiding.

The goal of social media creators like Mark Zuckerberg was to connect people across the world and their efforts are applauded.

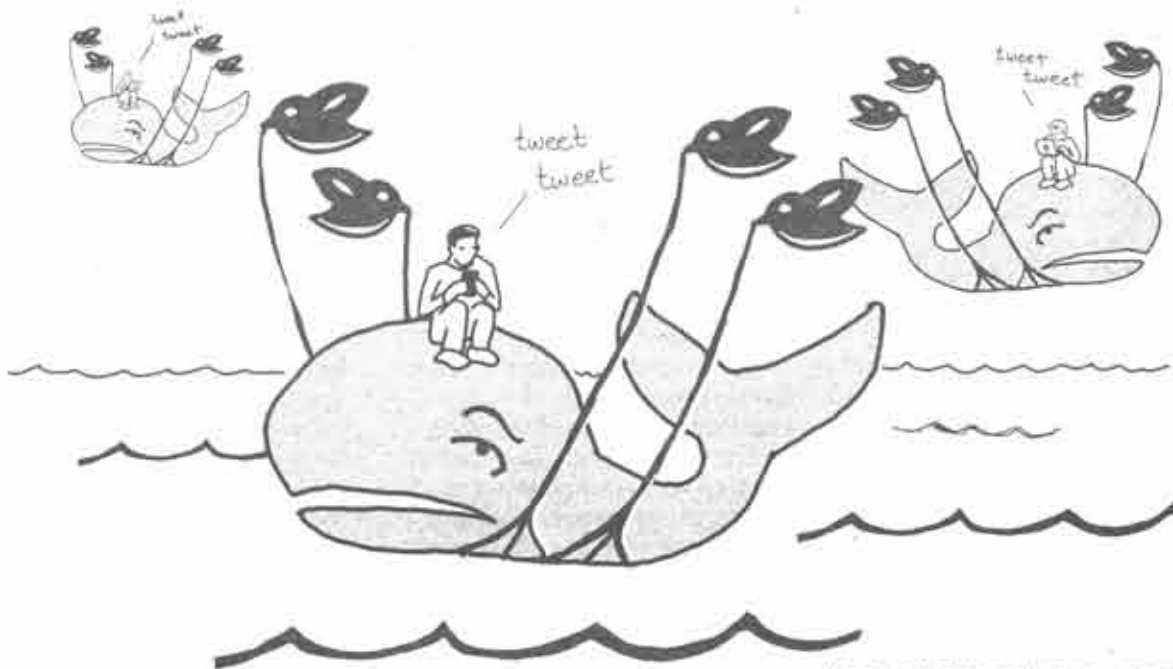
They have succeeded in doing this, allowing millions to stay connected to a greater extent than they were fifteen years ago. However, how genuine are these relationships? What value exists in a Facebook friendship?

A user with over 1,000 "friends" likely finds it difficult to stay connected with even a third of these

individuals, suggesting that a Facebook friendship doesn't mean all that much.

And individuals who do actually interact online, well, let's just say I am still waiting to see someone actually laugh their ass off.

Now, the issue is not that Facebook should be shut down, as we've all benefited from it: a lot of good has come from social media. But, perhaps we should think twice before we voice an opinion or for goodness sake, before we ignore an invitation to an ugly Christmas sweater party.



WADE THOMPSON GRAPHICS EDITOR

Counter-point: Social media is facilitating greater connectedness; criticism is overblown



NICK GIBSON
letters@thecord.ca

It appears that the advent of social media, especially Facebook and Twitter (and Myspace a few years ago) has people everywhere lamenting at what appears to be the artificial nature of friendship that these mediums have facilitated. Some will charge that Facebook et al. have somehow given individuals the opportunity to avoid direct contact with people.

Instead, people simply "write on others' walls," send others "personal messages" or "comment" on others' "statuses" (or whatever else they decide to publish).

My first reaction to this is quite simple — what is wrong with this? What is wrong with people interacting with others through social media?

There are only two major problems that I tend to witness. One is where people shield their identities in a way that is deceptive so they can spout off inappropriate or even downright despicable rubbish that they do not want to held accountable for.

I find this particularly prevalent in non-social media mediums, such as the "comments" section for online versions of mainstream media outlets where individuals are very seldom easily identified. The second concern is that of privacy, but this reality is not simply limited to social media.

The benefit of social media like

Facebook is that these two problems can be overcome.

The first is overcome through accountability mechanisms for which people can use to stop people from spouting garbage — the friend request and the friend removal. To even interact with someone, they must be "confirmed as a friend" and further, people who have Facebook profiles can remove individuals from their "friends."

The above aids the second problem of privacy concerns, but also pressure from privacy advocates and people like the Canadian Privacy Commissioner ensure that social media companies are always improving their privacy settings for their users.

Once you get past these two factors only one thing remains — people are unhappy that "true friendship" is allegedly being denigrated by social media. I for one, do not accept this allegation.

Firstly, I think it is very important not to get caught up in semantics. Facebook calls the people one chooses to interact with "friends," but I think Twitter is more accurate when it describes those one interacts with as "followers," as that better describes the relationship between individuals in both of these mediums (and others).

Thus, the problem here is that some are imposing their own definitions of "friends" and "friendship," which misses the point.

On Facebook, "friends" are simply identified as those one accepts to interact with — they may very well be your "friends" in the traditional sense of the word, but that is certainly not necessary because it is at the individual's discretion.

Furthermore, it appears that people are somehow exalting the

virtues of non-social media interaction. However, I believe that if you are truly a good friend with someone you are not going to somehow be less of a friend because you sometimes use Facebook to communicate.

If you are not really close, Facebook gives you the opportunity to contact, which is much more convenient and accessible.

And if you are merely acquaintances, Facebook not only allows you to contact someone easier, but since you do not know the person as well, you will get a chance to know more about them by what they post, et cetera.

And remember that this ability to learn about each other is mutual — permission was granted by both sides. So, with all this in mind, how is Facebook taking away from human social interaction again?

It appears that to reject social media is to reject things like email or frankly anything that is not in-person or on the phone. If that is the case you forward, then fair enough — you have a good point that anything that is not in-person or any other form of live contact (phone, even Skype) do not facilitate those meaningful personal interactions as effectively as in-person or other live contact.

However, if you are simply railing on social media, it appears that you are creating unrealistic expectations of a medium that is simply meant to facilitate communication, not actually do the communication for you.

There is no doubt that on the whole people benefit socially from the growing prevalence of social media.

And, like with all significant change in society, there will be haters.

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Cord-o-scopes

This week's Cord-o-scopes predict your holiday season.

Scorpio Oct. 22 to Nov. 21

M You decided to be proactive this semester and get all of your final papers done early so you wouldn't have to pull any all nighters. It seemed like a good idea until you discovered that the essay due tomorrow that you spent all weekend writing was actually given an extension until next week.

Sagittarius Nov. 22 to Dec. 21

♐ With finals fast approaching you are determined to stay in and avoid any parties for the next few weeks. Except for last weekend, that didn't count. Oh, and that one bar night your friends are planning for Friday, you can't miss that. And your roommate's birthday party next Wednesday, you have to go to that...

Capricorn Dec. 22 to Jan. 19

♑ Your stars have lined up to allow for romance this month, but if you're hoping that means you'll finally get a midnight kiss on New Years don't get too excited. Once the clock strikes twelve it's technically January and that's a whole other story for your love life.

Aquarius Jan. 20 to Feb. 18

♒ As you sit down to start studying for your first exam you notice that the course pack you bought has a different professor's name on it. It turns out you purchased the text for the wrong section of the class. Bet your wishing you had bothered to look at the readings a bit earlier in the year.

Pisces Feb. 19 to March 20

♓ You're thinking about getting ahead on your studying by starting a bit early this semester, but don't worry about it. By avoiding those last minute, all night cramming sessions you'd be missing out on a very valuable part of the university experience.

Aries March 21 to April 19

♈ Venus and Jupiter are closer together this month and that means you'll have excellent luck. You know what that means? Don't worry about studying for those exams, you can probably guess all the right answers. Trust me; I'm usually almost sometimes right about stuff like this.

Taurus April 20 to May 20

♉ Your family planned a surprise vacation as your Christmas present this year. Trouble is they booked in September and now it turns out the flight leaves three days before your done exams. Don't worry; they'll probably remember to send a post card.

Gemini May 21 to June 20

♊ Remember that totally awesome idea you gave your parents for your Christmas present? Too bad they didn't.

Cancer June 21 to July 22

♋ You're so excited about the upcoming holiday season you can't stop thinking about all the wonderful things to enjoy. Freezing cold snow storms, Christmas songs played on repeat, all the family members who come to visit and that itchy reindeer sweater your grandma knits for you every year.

Leo July 23 to Aug. 22

♌ Mars has positioned itself to help you get your plans organized this month but unfortunately Saturn has lined up to bring you a desire to make changes in your life. Just goes to show that even when you have the means for organization the universe will find a way to distract you.

Virgo Aug. 23 to Sept. 22

♍ Your summer employer has asked if you want to pick up a few shifts over the holidays and you couldn't be happier, now you'll have a bit of spending money come the New Year. Turns out their idea of a couple of shifts means almost every day you are home, including Christmas day.

Libra Sept. 23 to Oct. 22

♎ I could tell you what my crystal ball showed, but you probably wouldn't like it. Better luck in January.

While watching a movie last year Andrea was able to correctly guess the ending. Realizing her rare talent for predicting the future she has since taken a special interest in crystal balls and buying lottery tickets.

DearLIFE

Dear Life is your opportunity to write a letter to your life, allowing you to vent your anger with life's little frustrations in a completely public forum. All submissions to Dear Life are anonymous, should be no longer than 100 words and must be addressed to your life. Submissions can be sent to dearlife@thecord.ca no later than Monday at noon each week.

Dear Life,

Have you seen the guys at our school this month? I can not get over how many have grown their "staches" for such an amazing cause! Kudos to all of you for raising funds and awareness!! So proud of you and I think it's awesome to see the guys stand up and participate like that!! Sincerely,
Props to the boys at WLU!!

Dear Life,

I love Movember!!! Some men are blessed and others can only grow a fuzzstache. Sincerely,
Your moustache is sexy, Tom Selleck would be proud

Dear Life,

Word of the wise for Mr. Sub: If someone asks for a grilled sandwich it means that they want it warm and toasted. Not slightly grilled on the outside and still cold on the inside. Warm and toasted. Sincerely,
I don't even know why I bother, your sandwiches fucking blow

Dear Life,

Has this girl even read Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows? That movie was amazing and very true to the book and anyone who says differently obviously is not a true fan. Sincerely,
A true Harry Potter fan who actually enjoyed this movie

Student Housing

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SPORTS

Sports Editor Justin Fauteux • jfauteux@thecord.ca

GOLDEN HAWK UPDATE

Week of
November 29 -
December 5, 2010

RECENT SCORES

11.28.10

W Hockey 3 - Windsor 1

11.27.10

W Basketball 52 - Toronto 60

M Basketball 94 - Toronto 85

W Hockey 4 - Western J

M Hockey 2 - Ryerson 3

W Volleyball 1 - Toronto 3

M Volleyball 3 - Toronto 2

11.26.10

W Basketball 67 - Ryerson 54

M Basketball 89 - Ryerson 76

M Hockey 1 - Toronto 2

UPCOMING HOME GAMES

12.02.10

W Hockey vs Guelph
Sunlife Financial Arena, 7:30 p.m.

12.03.10

M Hockey vs Guelph
Sunlife Financial Arena, 7:30 p.m.

12.04.10

Autograph Day
W Hockey vs Brock
Sunlife Financial Arena, 3:00 p.m.
M Hockey vs York
Sunlife Financial Arena, 7:30 p.m.

LAURIER BOOKSTORE ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

Matthew Buckley
Men's BasketballKatherine Shirriff
Women's Hockey

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Women's volleyball falls to 1-6

Hawks lose sixth game of the season 3-1 to Toronto after scoring first win last week

ASHLEY DENUZZO
CORD SPORTS

The Wilfrid Laurier Golden Hawks women's volleyball team falls to 1-6 after losing a tough 3-1 match against the University of Toronto Varsity Blues this past Saturday.

After scoring their first win of the season last weekend against Windsor, the Hawks showed great determination and won the first set of their match with Toronto, 25-17. However, the Varsity Blues later challenged the purple and gold with three extremely close sets and unfortunately for the Hawks, the Blues proved to be too much.

"I thought we had full control of this match," commented Laurier head coach Luke Snider. "Unfortunately we weren't able to execute a high enough percentage of the time to come out on top."

Saturday's disappointing loss was the Hawks' last game before the exam break and has placed the team sixth overall in the Ontario University Athletics (OUA) west division.

However, the team feels they are better than their record indicates.

"Even though our record is 1-6, I don't think it reflects how we're actually playing," stated Hawks' team captain, Tesca Andrew-Wasylik. "Next semester we're going to come out and try and win as many as possible."

Andrew-Wasylik, the Golden

Hawks all-star of the game, had played phenomenally Saturday evening, contributing 16 kills, 15 digs and three assisted blocks. Other notable players include Sarah Rosso who had eight kills and 16 digs, Victoria Cowley with 23 digs and Lauren Carter who provided nine digs and 44 assists.

"What stood out most for me in this match was our ability to defend their left side attack as a unit," added Snider.

"We played very well and got a lot of digs and we really shut down their attackers."

Saturday's game saw extremely close scores in each set and provided an exciting game for players, coaches and fans. Both the Hawks and Varsity Blues challenged one another and tirelessly fought for the lead. Overall, Laurier's attack percentage was an impressive .087 and Toronto's was .050.

The Hawks and Varsity Blues matchup was undoubtedly one to remember.

"Honestly, each team is our biggest competitor," Andrew-Wasylik added. "Each game we look at equal and we try to plan accordingly."

The purple and gold won't play again until after the New Year. In January, the team will resume its season when they take on the McMaster Marauders and the Guelph Gryphons at the Laurier Athletic Complex.



MEGAN CHERNIAK PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

Laurier setter Lauren Carter (right) makes an acrobatic dig during the Hawks' four-set loss to the University of Toronto on Saturday.

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Hawks sweep final weekend

Men's basketball team heads into the exam break on a high note after beating both Toronto and Ryerson

LAURA SEDGWICK
STAFF WRITER

The Wilfrid Laurier Golden Hawks men's basketball team proved that they can compete with the best of them as they finished the first half of their season this weekend with a win over the Ryerson Rams, 89-76, and a win over the University of Toronto Varsity Blues, 94-85, leaving them with a record of 6-2.

This is notably better than last year at this time, when the Hawks were struggling with a record of 3-5.

"It's a good start to the season for us and we want to carry it over to the second half," said third-year guard, Travis Berry.

"Our team has a lot of confidence right now. We battled Carleton hard, we battled UBC in preseason hard, and we think we're right there with those teams."

When asked what the difference is between the team this year and last year at this time, Berry said that something just clicked.

He explained that the new rookies are playing strong both defensively and offensively and that many of the players worked really hard over the summer to improve their game.

"Offensively we played reasonably well. We didn't shoot the ball as well as I would've liked, but we never will shoot the ball as well as I'd like," said head coach Peter Campbell after the game against Toronto.

"Defensively I thought we broke down in a number of spots. We

knew who was going to shoot the ball for them but we didn't get to those guys every time. Some of that is just because they're such good players and such good shooters."

"[Rookie Jamar Forde] has been doing a fantastic job on defence," said Berry. "Our team has always struggled with covering wings and that."

Meanwhile, "[Rookie Nathan Thompson], all 100 pounds of him, shoots the ball and he's got a great shot on him. He comes off with confidence," he said. "He's doing a great job."

Campbell also expressed satisfaction at Forde and Thompson's performance thus far in the season.

"We thought [Forde] and [Thompson] would be a little bit further away from making a serious contribution, but they both played well," said Campbell after the game against the Varsity Blues.

In regards to their win over Ryerson, veteran Matthew Buckley led his team with a career high of 23 points.

"Since I've been here for three years it's the best start we've had, so I'm pretty excited about the way things are shaping up," he said about his feelings on his team's performance during the first half of the season.

Over the break the Hawks take on Daemen College in two non-conference games and they resume their season in January in Hamilton against McMaster.



ROSALIE EID STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Second-year Golden Hawk Max Allin attempts a lay-up during Laurier's 94-85 win over the University of Toronto on Saturday.

Sports in brief

Women's hockey moves to 14-1

Laurier's women's hockey team extended their winning streak to eight games over the weekend with road wins over the Western Mustangs and Windsor Lancers.

On Saturday, the Hawks downed the Mustangs 4-1, thanks to a two-point performance from veteran Katherine Shirriff, who now ranks third in Ontario with 17 points on the season. Shirriff would add an assist in the Hawks 3-1 win over the Lancers the following day to extend her point streak to six games.

The purple and gold will play their final games of the semester at home this weekend versus the Guelph Gryphons and Brock Badgers.

Men's hockey falters in Toronto

Over the weekend, the Golden Hawks men's hockey team suffered a pair of overtime losses as they travelled to Toronto to take on the University of Toronto Varsity Blues and the Ryerson Rams.

The pair of defeats against the two lowly ranked Ontario University Athletics (OUA) east division teams brings the Hawks record to 7-4-4, putting them in fifth-place in the OUA West. Laurier will wrap up first semester play this Friday and Saturday when the Guelph Gryphons and York Lions visit the Waterloo Recreation Complex.

Cheerleaders to compete at nationals

This Saturday, Laurier's cheerleading squad will travel to Brampton, Ont. to compete in the national championship. There the Hawks will be looking for their fourth straight title.

Laurier to host annual dance showcase

This Sunday, Laurier Athletics will put on its 12th annual dance showcase. The proceeds from the two-dollar tickets will be going to benefit the Leukemia Society.

—All compiled by Justin Fauteux

Women's basketball 6-2 at the break



ELLI GARLIN PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

Clad in the pink jerseys the Hawks wore to support breast cancer research on Saturday, Megan Grant (15) waits out a U of T defender.

Hawks conclude semester with best first-half record since 2007-08 season

RAVI BALAKRISHNAN
CORD SPORTS

Saturday afternoon Laurier's women's basketball team, sporting their pink jerseys, hosted the University of Toronto Varsity Blues, in a game that resulted in a 60-52 loss.

The game was highlighted by an impressive performance by Hawks' rookie guard Felicia Mazerolle, who finished with a career-high 19 points.

The game began with the Blues establishing a decisive lead, finishing the first quarter leading 16-8. They did not relinquish this lead throughout the tenure of the game, despite a strong effort from the Golden Hawks.

With seven minutes left in the first half, the Blues called a time-out and the team returned to the game, looking to make an impression before the buzzer.

They were getting a majority of the rebounds and managed to maintain the eight-point divergence heading into halftime with a score of 25-17.

The Hawks came out strong in the third, narrowing the score to 27-22 in the first few minutes. Sherri Pierce of the Blues put forth a solid, aggressive effort, but was also the source of many fouls and infractions that began to plague the Blues in response to the Golden Hawks' strong play at the beginning of the third quarter.

The Blues were led by Toronto native Nicki Shultz, who tallied a team-high 14 points and 18 boards, with Erin McNeely contributing with 11 points of her own.

As the third quarter was winding down, U of T was able to restore their original point differential, with a score of 36-26 with only two minutes remaining in the quarter. Mazerolle's strong playmaking ability and her tendency to convert at a timely fashion really did help in keeping U of T's momentum marginalized.

Guelph native Bree Chaput also contributed to the Hawks' effort recording a career high of her own, scoring ten points in the game.

"They played good defence on us, and our shots just wouldn't drop," said Mazerolle after the game. She identified U of T's strong transitional game as something the team found particularly difficult in managing.

Head coach Paul Falco explained that both teams were struggling offensively, but the Blues' ability to pick up their game towards the end of the third quarter is what enabled them to secure the win.

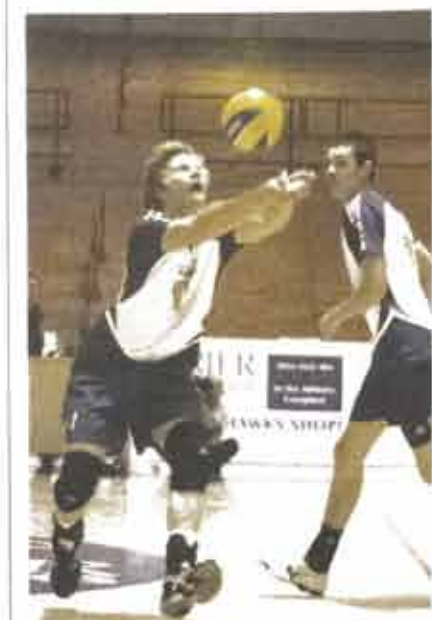
This was the Golden Hawks' "shoot for the cure" game, which is why they were wearing pink jerseys.

"Every women's basketball team in the country has a shoot for the cure game, and all the funds go to a breast cancer foundation," said Falco, wearing a pink polo himself for the cause.

The team played the Blues just after defeating Ryerson the night before where they recorded a win with a final score of 67-54.

The Golden Hawks head into their break with a record of 6-2 with their next game coming on the road on Jan. 5th, 2011 against the McMaster Marauders.

Men's volleyball downs U of T



MEGAN CHERNIAK PHOTO MANAGER

Laurier's men's volleyball team ended their semester on a high note over the weekend with a 3-2 comeback win over the University of Toronto Varsity Blues.

The win improved the Hawks' record to 6-4 heading into the break, putting them in a tie with the Windsor Lancers for fifth in the Ontario University Athletics (OUA) standings.

Read the full story online at
thecord.ca