

CLUB FUNDING CONTENTIOUS AT BUSU AGM

Contention about surplus funds and by-laws

Brady Knight

Assistant
Editor-in-Chief

THE BRANDON UNIVERSITY Students' Union (BUSU) held its Annual General Meeting this past week. Members heard reports from the executive and various committees, before addressing the main item on the agenda – the budget, especially club funding.

Carissa Taylor, BUSU President, stated that when the current executive and council took office, the organization was not in solid financial shape. During the budget process, they were forced to make some difficult decisions in regards to clubs and collective funding.

“When we had gone through the original budget, and were forced to make cuts, we tried to make cuts that were going to impact students in the least amount possible, and club funding is one of the ways we reach a lot of students.”

BUSU's by-laws lay out the foundation for finances, clubs and club funding. These bylaws state that the Women's Collective is to receive

\$5,000 per annum and the LGBTTQ* (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Transsexual, Queer *) Collective is to receive \$2,000 per year. There is no set dollar amount committed to club funding.

Taylor explains there is a difference between the two collectives and regular clubs. “A collective represents a constituency group that has special interests, so they're groups that are traditionally marginalized in society [...] they represent a group of people that need to have representation, whereas clubs are for groups of students who have similar interests or are in the same faculty.” This distinction is the primary reason for the dedicated funding. Taylor notes guaranteed funds ensure the collectives are “able to function, and to make students feel more comfortable.”

BUSU's original budget for the current academic year gave \$1,000 to both the Women's Collective and the LGBTTQ* Collective, which is in violation of their by-laws. Additionally, \$4,000 was

set aside for club funding, staying comparable to last year.

“We [also] kept five thousand dollars in surplus,” notes Taylor, “and [we] said to the students, ‘you guys can decide where to put this’”. The amount represents the \$4,000 and \$1,000 that the Women's Collective and the LGBTTQ* Collective should have received respectively.

During the approximately hour-long discussion at the AGM, many arguments were brought forward and several motions were put before the students in attendance. The motion that eventually won the approval of members saw an additional \$1000 given to each collective, and the remaining \$3000 put towards the clubs. This decision is now binding on council.

“People seemed to be quite unanimously in agreement that the women's collective probably shouldn't receive five thousand dollars and it shouldn't probably receive more than the LGBT collective,” says Taylor. — *continued on page 3*

DON AMERO IN CONVERSATION

The Winnipeg singer/songwriter puts his heart on his sleeve

Tye Dandridge-
Evancio

DON AMERO IS a Winnipeg native, and has spent the last five years seriously honing his craft, storytelling and portraying his raw emotions through music. This year, he hopes to go a step further with his recent string of tours around Manitoba to promote his new album Heart On My Sleeve, which sees a more intimate and folksy element added to his country-pop style music. The Quill got the chance to interview Mr. Amero before his concert last Friday at the Lorne Watson Recital Hall at the School of Music.

The Quill: How long have you been interested in and making music?

Don Amero: I've been doing this now [full-time] for five years. I've been playing for over fifteen, but really serious for the last five. About six years ago, I released my first CD and then it became a reality for me to sort of jump into music full time, and I've been at it ever since.

TQ: What got you into making music?

DA: When I first started playing, for the first ten years I didn't really think much of it apart from that it was a hobby, something that I enjoy doing. And because of my family situation and the things that I was going through, playing music was kind of like creating my journal through music. It was

venting and therapy for me, so that was the beginning. It still is today, but it's nicer to share your journal and go through a therapy session, but get paid to do it.

TQ: You said you've been getting into it “seriously” for the past five years. What changed?

DA: I was kind of half at my job, half doing music stuff. So there'd be an interview or a gig, or traveling somewhere to play a show. It was a bit of a calculated risk; jumping into music full time. I was talking to somebody this morning, and there's a difference between a bad choice and a calculated risk. Because there's no guarantees, especially in this business, I just decided that life is just too short to not do what you love, and music's what I found I love and that's why I'm doing it.

TQ: Where are you originally from?

DA: Born and raised out of Winnipeg. I grew up in the North End: I [...] live in St. Boniface. Winnipeg



Photo credit Don Amero.

will always be my home; I love it there. I think being a prairie boy, you're always a prairie boy no matter where your feet take you, and I love it here. It's a fabulous place to live and have my child grow up.

TQ: So are you on the road a lot as an artist?

DA: I'm on the road a lot, but for short stints.

— *continued on page 3*



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The Quill

EVENTS ON CAMPUS

The Academic Skills Centre is offering workshops all through the fall semester for any students interested. These workshops cover both learning skills and math skills.

The next workshop scheduled is:

Memory Strategies

Tuesday, November 6th
12:40 pm–1:30 pm and 1:40 pm–2:30 pm
McKenzie 005

BUSU and Student Services are also offering information sessions on sexual assault. The next information session scheduled is:

Tuesday, October 30th, 12:40 pm–2:00 pm, Mingling Area
“Sexual Assault Hurts One and Affects All” —
Dealing with the subsequent trauma

The Brandon Pride Committee is hosting a Halloween social next Saturday, October 27th at Valleyview Community Centre!

Tickets are \$10 each and are available for purchase at SERC and Smitten Adult Boutique.

CLUB FEATURE: DESS

The Disaster and Emergency Studies Society

Taylor Coppicus

CALLING ALL Applied Emergency and Disaster Studies students!

Did you know there is an ADES group here at Brandon University?

The Disaster and Emergency Studies Society is designed to represent any and all students who major or minor in the ADES program, aiding in any necessary liaisons with professors, and helping with studying. The group also provides students with opportunities to gain further knowledge and skills outside of the classroom.

The group also holds fundraising events, such as barbecues, to allow students in the department a chance to get to know each other and faculty, and donate to disasters such as the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

General group meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month during the free slot (12:30 pm – 1:30 pm) in the EOL, located near Charlie Biggs’.

This semester, Vice President Samantha Durnin, Secretary Jessica Hutton, Treasurer Chris Hurley, and Marketing Director Tyson Dixon have held a Welcome Back Barbecue in September, and they have a Halloween social planned to be held in SUDS for all students. They also have their annual TurkeyFest, a Thanksgiving celebration, planned for November 22nd, which will be held in the Elephant Room. Any interested students can find more information on the group’s Facebook page, or they can contact Samantha Durnin at desspresident@gmail.com. §

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I was so happy to see the article about landlord problems. I’ve lived out of res for less than a year, with two different landlords, who have both had their fair share of problems. The first property was the basement of the landlords’ own house, and yet it took four months and a threat to take the case to the Manitoba Residential Tenancies board for my washing machine to be fixed. I’m quite positive this suite was not up to code by any means.

More recently, I have finally resolved a five-and-a-half month battle with my current landlord over fixing the water pressure in my house (any other tenants using water would render our shower and taps useless). Finally, after more threats, it was fixed.

I think students, as a whole, need to be incredibly proactive about holding their landlords accountable. Yes, we are students, but we are still paying rent. We deserve for our living accommodations to be a safe place to call home. The more we insist our landlords do their job, the sooner they will realize we refuse to be taken advantage of.

Maria Cherwick

P.S. – Thanks again for the photo last week!

SERC: RESOURCES

Where to find them and who to ask

Kaitlyn White

Sexuality
Education
Resource
Centre

WE OFTEN GET a lot of questions from first-year students who are new to Brandon about where they can access sexual health resources, such as free birth control and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing. Rest assured that there are great organizations in Brandon that are ready to help!

One excellent option for accessing these services is the Sexual Health Program through BRHA Public Health Services. Public Health is located in the Town Centre, in downtown Brandon – conveniently close to Brandon University. The free and confidential services provided through the Sexual Health Program include birth control, condoms, pregnancy tests, emergency contraception, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment, and pregnancy options counselling.

You can call the Public Health nurses at 204-578-2513 to arrange an appointment, or stop by their weekly Sexual Health Clinics, held Monday evenings from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm. The Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) always offers free condoms and lubricant as well, so feel free to stop by the office at 161-8th Street and stock up! §

Information provided by the Sexuality Education Resource Centre. Do you have questions about sexuality? Send them to thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca. The information provided in this article is not intended as medical advice. Should you have any concerns, please contact your health care provider.

**DO YOU HAVE
QUESTIONS OR
CONCERNS ABOUT
ANYTHING YOU SEE
IN THE QUILL?**

**EMAIL US:
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DON AMERO IN CONVERSATION

Continued from front page

DA: There's so much great talent, and there's so many great musicians out there that you really have to make your mark to get people to sort of pay attention to what you're doing. So there's obviously there's no shortage of talent to go see on a weekly basis. But for me, it's been about getting out to play. I'm not sitting around waiting for the phone calls, I get out and work hard, that's what makes opportunities happen.

TQ: What are the best and worst things about what you are doing right now?

DA: Probably the [worst is the] fact that I do have to leave home; leave my wife and son. It's tough because he [my son] is only ten months [old]. But at the same time, it's a small price to pay. I was thinking about it and I realize that a guy that would work nine to five is probably gone more if not just as much as I am. I get to wake up and play with my son until noon and just hang out at time, and I don't have to put in a nine-to-five.

The best thing is that I'm living my dream. The fact that I can pay my bills, and we're not in any terrible debt or anything, [and] the fact that I get to share my stories and music. I scratch my head sometimes thinking, "Is this really what I do?" It's a beautiful thing for me.

TQ: As a Manitoban artist, what do you think you bring to the industry? What is your viewpoint?

DA: As far as musical styles go, I'm influenced by a lot of people like John Mayer, Keith Urban, Martin Sexton, Blue Rodeo, and Jann Arden. So my musical loves are all over the map. But what I realized over the years, that [which] makes me [...] unique is my own story. And I've been compared to other players, like a local guy named Steve Bell; I've been compared to Jim Cuddy from Blue Rodeo. I realized that that's always gonna happen, no matter who you are, and at the end of the day, what makes one artist different from the other is just sharing your own story. No matter what kind of art you're doing, it's a matter of sharing your own vision, sharing your own story, and sharing your own life through your art, and that's what I do.

TQ: Is there any specific cause that you believe in or try to get across in your music?

DA: The biggest thing for me is love. I think there's so much animosity, turmoil, and frustration in the world and in everyone's personal lives. We all have to deal with a lot of crap everyday. What I want to do is share my story and let them feel my love and my life, and hopefully that encourages them to just feel inspired to take on today and tomorrow through a song of mine. And I'm also very keen [on ...] social justice. So I partnered up with Canadian Feed the Children for this tour, and part of the proceeds are going to go back to that cause which meets the basic needs for taking care of nutritional needs of children in Canada. Basically, just getting a good meal can set you up for a good day.

TQ: What's your upcoming schedule?

DA: I have a few shows coming up. My big one is [...] what this whole tour has been about: it's on October 24th in Winnipeg. It's a small, intimate, house concert, but I partnered up with APTN [Aboriginal Peoples Television Network] and they are going to be bring their cameras and filming it, airing it live on their website, APTN.ca. People can go there or DonAmero.com to find information on that. People all over the world can tune in, next Wednesday at eight o'clock.

TQ: What can you tell me about your new CD?

DA: [It's] not officially released until the 24th, but people can buy it off the stage from me. It is my fourth album. I [...] recorded it myself, did my own engineering and producing for it. The last couple albums that I've done, I've had other producers and engineers work on. I think that's a fabulous thing, and I think artists need to do that and sort of get a different perspective; get out of your own head for a little while. But because I've done that for my last two albums, I kind of wanted to get back in my own head. You know, when you put other elements in, it starts to become their story, and it's a mix of stories that comes through in those albums. For this one, I wanted to be fully Don Amero. It's called *Heart On My Sleeve*, it's kind of who I am. It is basically a story of my life from

front to back and hopefully it will inspire people to sort of embrace their story. It really is a more intimate album, which is why I been trying to play these more intimate venues, like, here at the Lorne Watson Hall. I wanted to just play a room, that I knew people would feel close. I've tried to stay away from playing in places like pubs and bars – I love them and it's great, there's community and camaraderie, but at the same time, people aren't really tuned in to what you're doing. When you play a theatre, people are right there with you all the way through. [...] it's got sort of a folksy-rootsy kind of vibe and a little bit of a country-pop tinge in it: I didn't want to stray to far from that. I wanted people to hear it and feel like I'm in the room with them.

TQ: Tell me about your favorite song on the CD.

CLUB FUNDING AT BUSU'S AGM

Continued from front page

At one point during the debate, there was discussion and a motion towards the amending or even removal of the BUSU by-laws regarding club funding.

"Our by-laws do need a lot of work and there are some definite issues within them, and one of them is probably the club and collective funding," admits Taylor. "Based on the attitudes presented at the AGM, we have, as a council, a better idea of the kinds of things students would like to see. By the next AGM we will have talked through the club funding and collective funding by-laws, and we'll make a recommendation to the AGM."

Taylor notes she would prefer to see these kinds of amendments as motions served with notice – which are sent out with the AGM notification. She explains this is "so that students have a chance to read through it, to think about the consequences that will come because of it, and that all people who will be effected by it [...] will be able to come to the AGM, and be present at the time and have a say in what happens."

"I was pleasantly surprised by how willing people were to compromise and to work together," says Taylor, "I can very much appreciate, specifically how much the Women's Collective was willing to compromise, understanding our financial situation and understanding that they were having to cut their budget by more than half."

The next AGM is set to occur in February. §

DA: It's called "Young Forever". I was on a flight from Montreal to Moncton. I was bored, so I picked up the Air Canada magazine and there was a short story that I'd missed in previous readings. It was about a woman whose husband was basically at the end of his days, suffering from dementia, and they say he's only got days or weeks left. And on this particular day that she was writing this story, she said that he was feeling kind of frisky and he kissed her. And she said, "When he kissed me, he kissed me like a young man". A lightning bolt struck and I realized that when you're aging, you age on the outside but you also age on the inside. I was really struck by that because I want to believe that I can stay young forever. Maybe not on the exterior, but on the interior, I always want to be that twenty-five-year-old guy. So it inspired me interacting in a song with my grandfather, who'd passed away. We met up in a dream, and he's passing some morals onto my about staying young forever, so that's what that song is about.

TQ: What is next for you?

DA: After the show on the 24th, there's the "Aboriginal People's Choice Music Awards". [I've been] nominated for three awards there [Songwriter of the Year, Aboriginal Male Entertainer of the Year, and Best Pop CD] which are my eighteenth, ninetieth, and twentieth nominations for the awards. And then I have my Christmas tour coming up, which is called "Amero Little Christmas". I'm touring with Red Moon Road, which are a fabulous Winnipeg band. You can go to my website for all my upcoming shows, but I also have an app, so you can go there: it's called the "Don Amero App", so just search "Don Amero" on iTunes and you can take me along with you wherever you go.

So if you're an Amero fan, are interested in checking out the singer's music, or just have some free time to spend, check out Amero's concert online at eight o'clock in the evening tomorrow night. And if you like what you see, you can get his album on iTunes on the same date. §

Welcome Back Special

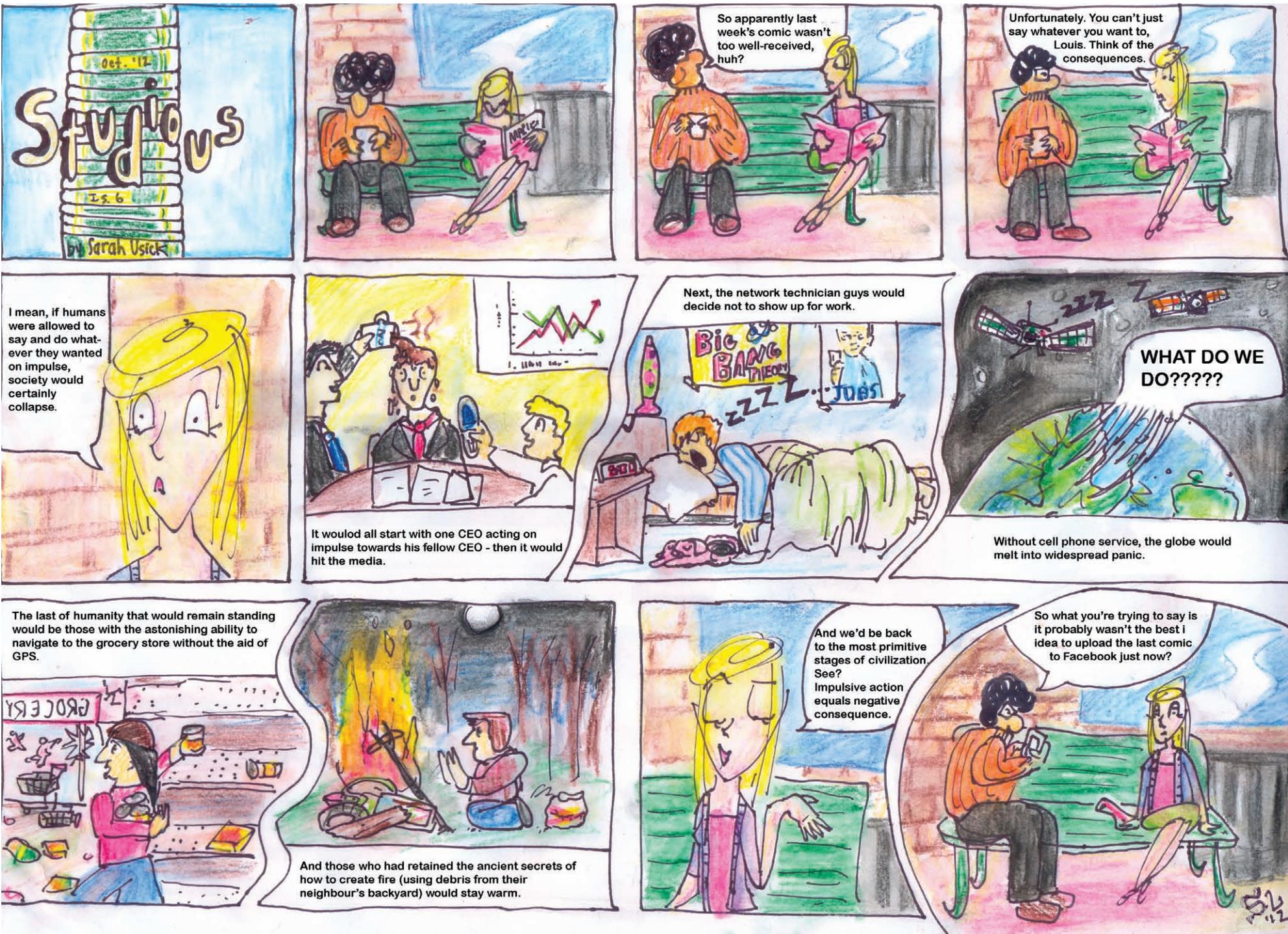
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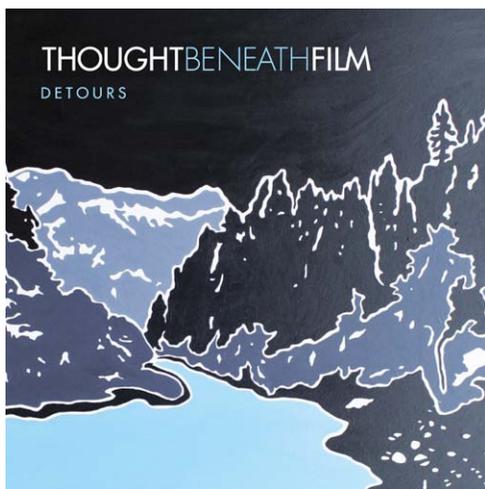


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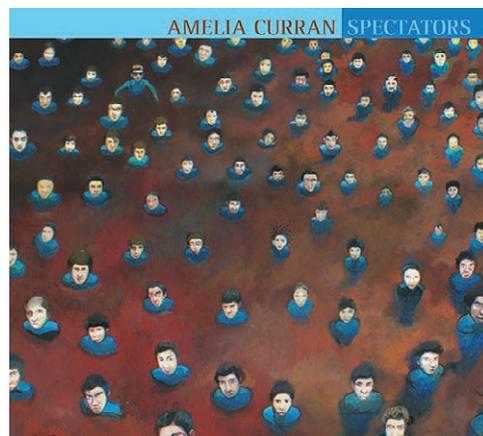
Two new Canadian EPs compared

Graham Janz

HERE I SHALL pit two unwitting artists against one another in a battle for my appreciation, the high price they must pay for sending their CDs to The Quill. The first is a band called Thought Beneath Film, a powerpop five-piece from Hamilton, Ontario. The second is Amelia Curran, a Juno-award-winning folk musician from St. John's, Newfoundland.



Thought Beneath Film's *Detours* is bubbly, candy-coated, upbeat, and feel-good – engineered for mass consumption. I found myself accurately guessing the lyrics in the closing track “Sixty Six”, and I believe I have decoded the Thought Beneath Film formula for success: a chorus must contain a tambourine – all songs except the synth-heavy “Hearts on Overdrive” maintain this rule. I am given the sense that I have listened to these songs before. A particularly strong point of the EP is the thickly-layered textures and the perfect balance of hooks and licks without feeling overdone. If you listen to this album, you will find several sing-a-long “bah-bah-bahs”. I want to listen to the Beach Boys now.



Amelia Curran's *Spectators* is laid-back, mellow, and deep. The guitar is sometimes strummed, sometimes gently picked, and often accompanied by strings, percussion, and piano. I especially enjoy the brass sections in “What Will You Be Building”, the album's first single. Two more standout tracks are “The Modern Man” and “Soft Wooden Towers”, both fuelled with quiet intensity. The songs are smoothly crafted and flow without jagged edges or abrupt changes, and the album itself is diverse: it's rewarding to listen to from start to finish.

Perhaps it is unfair to pit a brand-new band against an award-winning veteran who has been compared to Leonard Cohen and has been said to rival Ron Hines as a songwriter, but I think that's what Rousseau was trying to prove in *Discourse on Inequality*. I encourage you to decide for yourself who who the winner is. You can find Thought Beneath Film at thoughtbeneathfilm.ca, and Amelia Curran at ameliacurran.com. §

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BRANDON ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

This week: Alex Murray, teaching English in China

Matt Berry

IN THIS SERIES, The Quill interviews BU alumni who have gone out into the big, wide world and have done things. This week, we interview Alex Murray, a 2011 grad in Arts (English). He is currently “working in a Chinese boarding school, teaching elementary school students English. Sometimes, they even learn something.”

The Quill: How did you first hear about this program?

Alex Murray: I have worked for this company before and heard of a job opportunity in April right before I graduated. It was actually lucky. They were only looking for one person when my girlfriend and I applied. Then someone dropped out and we were in.

TQ: How easy or difficult is it to get in? What kind of background or skills are they looking for?

AM: The industry itself is not competitive and you can find a job in any number of countries. The easiest ones to get a job in are Brazil and China. They are looking for a degree in almost anything, but [education] is the best and will get you a job in most countries. Universities around Manitoba offer an additional course that is invaluable. It is the TESOL course, and runs from a very intensive month long class to three weekends in a month.

TQ: So where is this boarding school located? What kind of environment is it?

AM: This boarding school is in the city of Yangzhou about four hours northwest of Shanghai. It has a population of one million people, but it’s four million if you include the outskirts and small towns it has absorbed. Yangzhou is a canal town so there are tiny waterways all over the place where you can hire boats to take you places. It is a very nice town when the smog is manageable.

TQ: What does your average day at the school consist of?

AM: My school day consists of waking up at seven if I have an early class. I will teach four or five classes between the hours of eight and five with a two hour lunch break where most of the Chinese staff will sleep.

I use the breaks between classes to plan lessons or to play Starcraft in my office. If there is a big enough lapse between classes, a group of us will go back to the apartments to play Mario Kart. Once a week we have a meeting in the morning where we discuss lessons and teaching methods.

TQ: What are your teaching methods? Is there anything you got from university that has come in handy?

AM: The methods I use in the classroom come from the book *Teach*

Like a Champion [author Doug Lemov – Ed.]. It has all sorts of good ideas for classroom management and maximizing teaching time in its pages. My English studies in university are mostly used in my tutoring jobs where I discuss story crafting, plot and character with a few of the more advanced students. These sessions go a long way in giving the students a creative outlet.

TQ: I’m assuming you’ve had to learn quite a bit of the language(s) before and during your stay there. Were there any classes you had to take for it? What has been your process in learning the language on your own, and how well has it worked?

AM: I learned Mandarin on the fly. Almost no one in this city speaks English so you either get good at it or you don’t eat. Generally I spend about 5 hours a week studying the written language and every day I try to talk to someone in their language. It has worked really well so far and I can act as an interpreter for the other foreigners now.

TQ: Do you get to work with other teachers from Canada (or other English-speaking countries)? If so, does it make the experience easier or more comfortable for you?

AM: I work with eighteen other foreign teachers - most from the U.S., three from the U.K., two from Australia, two from Indonesia, and two other Canadians. It makes the experience almost too comfortable for me. It is easy to stay in the school and



Photo credit Alex Murray.

be lazy around other foreigners instead of getting out and seeing the country.

TQ: What are some general tips you would give someone going into this program? Not just about the actual teaching job, but also travel, adapting to another culture, or general things like that?

AM: I would suggest, before taking any job, email a foreigner that currently works for the school to get the unbiased version of what the school is like. Another good idea would be to leave your cultural preconceptions at the door. China is a different place, a lot of which you won’t agree with. Judging the country and people for it will make your year abroad pretty miserable. Oh, bring your own toothpaste. You can’t get that everywhere.

TQ: Any closing comments?

AM: I would highly recommend teaching abroad. Provided you find a good placement there is no limit to the amount you can accomplish through a contract. Generally you will work less than full time. After work, you will be exploring, learning another language or finding a creative expression to keep yourself from getting bored. This adventure is an opportunity that anyone could enjoy. §

Do you know, or are you yourself, a BU alumnus or alumna? Do you have a story to tell? Contact us at eic@thequill.ca!

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THOMAS MULCAIR TALKS YOUTH, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

An interview with Dietrich Neu from The Carillon

Dietrich Neu

The Carillon
(University of
Regina)

REGINA (CUP) — *Federal New Democratic Party leader Thomas Mulcair visited the University of Regina last week to discuss youth in politics. Before his speech, The Carillon had a chance to speak with him about his thoughts on the government's role in post-secondary funding and the effect young people can have on the political landscape.*

The Carillon: The NDP have had these talks all over Canada. What are you hoping to accomplish?

Thomas Mulcair: Well it is not just me. I have made it a priority to get into campuses, but we also have a great cohort of MPs who were elected in May of 2011, so we have been sending them out across Canada as well. There is a new generation of MPs who are talking to students, and we are getting them charged up.

It is basically a two-part thing. There has never been a generation of young people who are more involved than this one. They are involved in community groups, social activism and environmental groups. But, maybe that is the fault of politicians from my generation in the sense that we are turning them off of the political process, but they are turning themselves off more and more from the political process, and those are the decisions that are going to affect them for the rest of their lives.

We really want to try and engage them and make them realize that what Harper is doing now affects the environment, affects the ecosystem long-term, and that there are economic decisions that affect them long-term.

We are trying to empower and make young people realize that they can do something themselves about these issues by becoming involved. Although they are busy, we are encouraging them to find some time to become involved in the political process itself.

60 percent of students 18 to 25 did not vote in the last election. That is a terrifying statistic. We are going to do everything we can to change that. For example, we bend over backward to put polling booths in old folks homes, why can we do the same for university campuses? Why is that such a hard thing? Why can't we make it really easy to vote? In the May election of 2011, the voting took place when students were in the middle of final exams, or moving to start a summer job.

TC: You once said that "when young people don't

vote, the right wing wins and democracy loses." What do you mean by that?

TM: Well, the right wing wins because their demographics goes to the polls; they know their demographic. And their demographic are people who have a much higher voter turnout percentage. Democracy loses in this situation because democracy is 'people rule.' So if you have this whole swath of people from a certain age population that are not involved, the voting process, democracy, loses because we have a government that doesn't reflect the entire voting population. So we have to

are not making the polluters pay, and we are not internalizing the costs.

Economically, your generation is being left with the highest debt year-after-year. The average student finishes university with over \$40,000 in debt.

In terms of the social debt that we are leaving you, well, a large number of manufacturing jobs are leaving, and they are being replaced by low-paying, precarious work in the service industry with no pension to live on. And when those people move into retirement, your generation is going



Photo credit Julia Dima/The Carillon.

try so hard to get young people involved, and not only get them involved but get them excited.

I look with a little apprehension at the fact that 60 percent [of voters 18 to 25] didn't vote in the last election, and I'm going to look for the best way to encourage, insight, and engage them so they do come out and vote in the next election, and not let Stephen Harper win by default.

TC: Do you have any specific ideas on how you would energize that 18- to 25-year-old demographic?

TM: There is a little bit of a push and pull that goes on. On one hand, we need to oppose what Harper is doing in government. At the same time, we need to propose what it is that we can do differently. It is a little bit that way with young people who will be voting for the first time, and we want them to see that [with Harper's policies] that the next generation is being left with the biggest ecological, economical, and social debt in our history.

Ecologically, we just have to look at how we are developing the oil sands at the moment. We

to have to pick up the slack for that as well.

So, it is making people conscious of what is going on, but it is also about making them realize that they can make a difference. And that is easy to say, but you have to convince people.

TC: What have you learned about what students actually want from the federal government through this process?

TM: The concerns are largely environmental; we hear a lot of that. Most young people are a little bit less concerned about the economics, except for the fact that they realize that consistent failure to invest in post-secondary education is playing tricks on them, because they are being left with a massive debt. The only way to increase wealth is to increase knowledge.

The federal government should play a role in working with the provinces and territories to enhance what we are investing in post-secondary education and research, because I think right now we are starting to backslide in comparison with some other countries.

— continued on opposite page

THE PLACE OF UNIVERSITIES

Education for its own sake, or skills for your career?

Carissa Taylor

BUSU President

THE WORD “UNIVERSITY” is almost always defined using language that describes it as a place where there is a high level of learning. Sometimes dictionaries describe it as a place where one obtains a degree, but, as far as I can tell, universities are not defined as job-training facilities.

I am not sure where mainstream society got the idea that the sole and definitive purpose of a post-secondary education should be job preparation. Sure: if we want a skilled workforce we need an educated workforce. But with the flocks of students now rushing to universities to get a degree, a university education on its own does not mean much. It is considered a minimum requirement in so many fields that, in order to get ahead, one needs much more than a couple letters on a piece of paper to have a leg up above the competition.

Universities once served as a place where only the wealthiest could study. It was seen as a symbol of social status to be able to study in a university, learning things that many now consider frivolous: philosophy, classical languages, history, and poetry to name a few. Large portions of society were not granted the option to learn about the ideas expressed by people before them.

As societies moved toward industrialization, more people were able to become involved in ac-

ademia. Then during wartime, young men attended universities to escape war and the threat of death. Universities became something that was possible, not only for the upper-class, but also for the middle and lower-middle classes.

As more people began to pay to attend universities and the market grew, the cost of a post-secondary education also increased. People who were not upper class began making financial calculations, trying to figure out whether or not their education would be financially rewarding. Perhaps, and this is only speculation, this served as the beginning of the idea of education serving the strict purpose of job preparation.

It is easy to see society's distaste for people who seek knowledge as an end in itself. Disciplines that do not lead to direct careers are often snubbed in favour of disciplines that lead directly to careers. Philosophy and literature are seen as useless, whereas business and nursing are seen as more worthwhile to society.

Society has the idea that people should train for professional careers while in university and learn the “fluff” on their own time. They don't seem to take into account that being trained in skills is not the same as learning how to think critically. Society has an idea that graduates of disciplines like business and engineering build up the economy, while graduates of other disciplines like history and English drain the economy,

unable to get jobs and sustaining themselves on social handouts.

It is not wrong for people to use university as a form of job preparation. It is also acceptable to treat university education as an end in itself. There is no shame in attending university because one loves to learn. Even if not directly working toward a job, knowledge and education shape a person, teaching them how to become a better citizen of society.

In the same way that the definition of success is personal, the purpose of a university will differ from person to person. As long as people are able to take from their university experience something that will make them better than before, education has served its purpose; to bring about a higher level of learning and create a better society.

Accessible post-secondary education ensures that all who want to are able to embrace education as a way to help them on the road to becoming the best people that they can be. Informed, intelligent, and ethical people are good for their families, their communities, and are can help improve the world in the global context. Education, especially in the broad sense, where ideally people would embrace a liberal education, is what creates the basis for a socially-conscious, progressive, and egalitarian society. §

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THOMAS MULCAIR TALKS YOUTH, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

continued from page 6

TC: What are you doing to reach young people who are not in university?

TM: We try to engage them through the labour movement, because if they are not in university, then they are probably working. In our travels across Canada, we often get the chance to move onto the ‘shop floor’ and have those conversations as well. But, we have noticed that it is not just young people in universities that are not voting. It is across the board, so we have to engage both.

TC: You once said “the federal government’s historic role in post-secondary education and research is something that we have to get back to.” What do you mean by that?

TM: Well, there was a time before the Paul Martin and Jean Chretien Liberals that we were involved in post-secondary education. Now these are provincially-run institutions. The federal government doesn’t directly run universities, but that doesn’t mean that we cannot be involved in post-secondary. This disengagement that we are seeing now is only increasing the debt load for students, and it is becoming more and more difficult for universities to find funding at the provincial level.

We think that we should get back to the level of funding that we saw before the 1990s, before the Liberals started downloading that responsibility onto the provinc-

es. We should never see a situation in a country as rich as Canada, where people who are capable of studying in university have to renounce their studies because they cannot afford it. That will hurt society in the long run. We are starting to see young people who are saying ‘I can’t afford to do that,’ and that is a tragic loss for the whole society.

TC: Are there any ways, specifically, that you guys were hoping to work with the provinces to fix the situation?

TM: Well, I think you have to sit down with the provinces and find out what everyone’s priorities are and then work on them. You can’t make these decisions unilaterally, precisely because it is provincial and territorial jurisdiction. You have to sit down and listen. One of the biggest problems that we have is unilateralism.

TC: Would you guys look into forgiving a certain amount of the federal government’s portion of the student loans?

TM: I think that young people right now, especially young people who come from families who are financially challenged, are the ones who are being asked to leave university with the greatest debt. And I’m wondering: when do they become a part of our society and start taking advantage of that? So everything must be on the table when we are discussing these things with the provinces.

TC: What do you think about Saskatchewan’s tuition rates? We are among the highest in the country.

TM: Well, I think that if it ever becomes a barrier for a young person who is capable of doing those studies from doing those studies, then they have been failed by their society. So, I want the first federal NDP government to be sitting at the table with the provinces and territories to make sure the post-secondary education is affordable and accessible. I think we lose too much as a society if people who can go to university can’t because they cannot afford it. We have to be able to give young people that chance. §

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ASK MISS Q

Q:

Dear Miss Q,

I'm really unhappy with what I'm doing. How can I know if I'm doing what I should be doing for the rest of my life? This doesn't feel like it, but I'm good at it, and isn't that important too?

Sincerely,
Confused on the Career Path

A:

Dear Confused,

Some people choose a career in which they are proficient, and pursue hobbies that become passions. Some people have careers about which they are passionate. Either path is fine. If you are unhappy now, though, I would suggest taking the time to analyse what makes you satisfied in life, and then decide how best you can pursue that, whether it be as a career or as a pastime.

Best wishes,
Miss Q

Do you have a question for Miss Q? Email it to us at missq@thequill.ca.

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