

On the street

We asked people at Loyalist College the following question:

What are your thoughts on the health aspects of energy drinks?



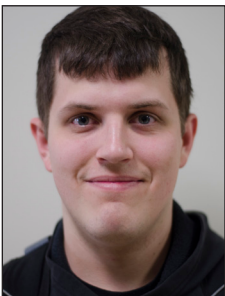
**Ocean Benn, chemical engineering,** “They’re not good for you but once in awhile it’s okay if you need the energy. They give you a huge crash after.”



**Alex Smith, public relations post grad,** “They are almost like a drug. You need to be careful while using and only in moderation.”



**Shannon Summers, child and youth worker,** “I saw a documentary on energy drinks that showed there are terrible unknown ingredients in energy drinks that are not on the label. Pretty scary.”



**Cory Merrett, civil engineering,** “I think they are good for you but they are bad if you drink too much in one period due to the large amount of caffeine in them. People have died by drinking too many.”



**Kevin Baker-Cole, child and youth worker,** “I love energy drinks. Great for when you physically assert yourself. It causes heart attacks if you have too many. Energy drinks should have an age restriction like cigarettes.”



**Olivia Hodgson, nursing,** “They are bad for you. Energy drinks have a reverse effect on your brain, good for short-term but bad on your long-term health condition.”

Editorial

Taking allegations of abuse seriously

It seems that Rob Ford is unable to stay out of the news—for all the wrong reasons. The gaffe-prone mayor of Toronto has found himself in hot water once again, this time for allegations that he groped and made suggestive comments toward former mayoral candidate Sarah Thomson.

The two were attending a party hosted by the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee in Toronto on Thursday, March 7. Thomson posted an image of herself and Ford on Facebook along with a caption alleging he had said that she should have vacationed with him in Florida as his wife had been absent. Thomson later added Ford had touched her inappropriately. In a written statement to the media Friday, Ford denied Thomson’s allegations, writing that he “can say without hesitation that [the allegations] are absolutely, completely false.”

Thomson’s initial post, penned on the eve of International Women’s Day, launched a firestorm of support and contempt. Her post was shared by over 1,300 Facebook users and had nearly 1,000 comments less than 24 hours later. Users also took to Twitter to voice their opinions. While it’s too early to place judgment — the allegations between Thomson and Ford pit one person’s word against another’s — it’s entirely reasonable to examine the backlash that has followed. It’s necessary to note the deeply divided nature of Toronto’s politics. Many commentators have framed the issue as a left-wing attack against the right wing. Thomson and Ford ran against each other in the 2010 municipal election won by Ford.

Comments ranged from criticism over the accuracy of Thomson’s story to support for her willingness to come forward. Readers took issue with Thomson’s decision to publish her claim on Facebook and not press charges. Thomson said on Global Toronto’s The Morning Show that starting a discourse on sexual assault and an apology from Ford would suffice. It’s disheartening that Thomson has so quickly been written off by both public commenters and Mayor Ford himself. While Thomson’s claims are difficult to immediately substantiate, allegations of sexual assault must be taken seriously. As a society that purports to have equality, it’s necessary to allow a discourse to occur that avoids blaming victims and promotes justice.

Ford’s defence has been unyielding — as has been typical for the oft-beleaguered mayor. On his Sunday radio show on Newstalk 1010, Ford discussed the fiasco for the first time, saying, “When people want to, you know, make up stories, that’s their prerogative.” It can often be easy to compare life in Canada with abysmal scenarios that women abroad face. Collective rage has been felt over the death of Jyoti Singh Pandey, the 23-year-old New Delhi woman who died after being gang-raped Dec. 16. The tales that continue to surface of sexual assault against women, including female journalists in Egypt’s Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring revolutions, are equally horrifying. Neither Ford nor Thomson will emerge cleanly from this debacle, though it’s safe to say that public relations images may be the furthest thing from both their minds. The jury is still out on what happened. Nonetheless, the responses to the allegedly unsavoury encounter—on International Women’s Day, no less—may very well be a sad indicator of how far we have yet to go here at home.

Justin Tang

Hitting in hockey just part of the game

The first game of organized hockey was played on March 3, 1875 in Montreal. That was the beginning of the hockey era. Since then, the game has evolved so much it is unreal. If you were to ask those players who played the first hockey game how far they thought the game would go, I guarantee you they wouldn’t think there would be a National Hockey League, or for the game to be one of the bigger events in the winter Olympics, never mind go from wooden twigs to two-piece composite sticks. In that time, the equipment has improved to help players feel safe as possible. You cannot take physical play out of the game. That’s like taking the nets, turning them around and telling the players to score. I hate to break this to you, but those will never happen. In all sports, there are injuries, all preventable to some extent. Then there are injuries that change the game. It changes the game in an instant. It affects the entire league as a whole and could lead to a league-wide debate, or a huge rule change in some cases. You can hurt yourself in all sports, from a shoulder sprain suffered in a baseball game to a broken leg in a rugby game, if you don’t pay attention to the game itself and use your knowledge of the game. Standing in the batter’s box against a 15-year-old kid who can throw a ball at 65-mph right to the face could severely hurt you or possibly kill you if it hit you in the right place. I bet that hurts more than a big hit in the corner in a minor hockey game. If you don’t want your child hurt when he is 13 because of a hit in hockey, enroll him in figure skating so he can still skate, just without the body contact and no stick. Your parents spend over a \$1,000 on equipment almost every year. The equipment is supposed to protect you. If you don’t want to get hit with over a \$1,000 of equipment on to protect you, then it’s time to change sports, not change the rules of the game. How do you expect your kid to be in the NHL when he can’t take a hit from a 90-pound kid, never mind NHLer Dustin Byfuglien at 265 pounds.

David Zammit



Opinion

Are scientists playing God with genetic engineering?

Capability to do something doesn’t mean it should be done

By Vivek McCague

Scientists are now trying to disturb the natural process of the creation of babies by screening embryos, giving the parents the opportunity to choose their child’s physical appearance and personality. Genetic engineering has seen many major advancements in the 20th and 21st centuries, specifically in the genetic screening of embryos and fetuses that can check for cystic fibrosis and Down syndrome as well as for bowel and breast cancer genes. Screening such as this has progressed so that scientists are able to screen fetuses and see what the child looks like and see its personality traits. Not only are they able to screen these results, but scientists are able to change these values and create so-called designer babies. With designer babies, parents would be able

choose their child’s physical appearance as well as personality. If parents are able to do this, it will take away the child’s identity and the child has no say in this matter. The genetic engineers are programming the babies, creating super-babies that have perfect appearance and tailored personalities. That takes away one of the key things that make us all human, which are the flaws. One of the reasons scientists said the personality change in babies would be good is that they could decrease the aggression in the babies so they would become more gentle and ultimately make the world a more peaceful place. However, there are many quiet people who murder and commit crimes. These genetic engineers are trying to control nature. The creation and birth of a baby is a natural process. While identifying genetic diseases in a child can prove useful, altering the child’s personality and appearance is taking away who they once were. Parenting can play a huge part in the personality of the child. Even if the genetic modification changes the child’s personality, the parents can re-impose a personality that was suppressed in the child through genetic engineering.

A fertility clinic in Los Angeles that let parents choose their child’s hair and eye colour, was followed by mass public disapproval. Public opinion won and the fertility clinic shut down the program. George Wald, a Nobel Prize-winning biologist and Harvard professor, warned about the ramifications of genetic engineering back in 1976 when he wrote: “Recombinant DNA technology [genetic engineering] faces our society with problems...It places in human hands the capacity to redesign living organisms....It presents probably the largest ethical problem that science has ever had to face. For going ahead in this direction may be not only unwise but dangerous. Potentially, it could breed new animal and plant diseases, new sources of cancer, novel epidemics.” The capability to do something does not mean we should. Genetic modifications can be very dangerous. During the conception of a child, over a million things can go wrong, and when scientists are tampering with a child’s personality, it may cause other things in their personality to impact the child mentally.

Saying a fond farewell to a Canadian icon

Facebook page suggests Stompin’ Tom should get state funeral – but would he want it?

By Sandra Kielback

“Oh! The good ol’ hockey game, is the best game you can name. And the best game you can name, is the good ol’ hockey game.” You can’t think of a hockey game without thinking of *The Hockey Song*, or the Mattawa River without thinking of *Big Joe Mufferaw* or P.E.I. potatoes without thinking about *Bud the Spud*. Stompin’ Tom Connors is, and forever will be, a Canadian icon and a Canadian tradition. Before Question Period in the House of Commons Thursday, March 7, two NDP MPs

Charlie Angus and Andrew Cash played guitar and sang *Bud the Spud* in honour of Connors. Many others joined in and had a great time remembering, singing, and having a great time, just as Connors would have wanted it. Seeing as how even the government wanted to remember Connors, one Ottawa radio host, Robin Harper from *Chez 106*, decided to start a petition to get the government of Canada to give Stompin’ Tom a state funeral. So far many people have ‘liked’ the page created on Facebook, and many famous Canadians have tweeted in support, but what would Connors want? Would he want a state funeral? Or would he rather have what is already planned for him, a celebration of his life in Peterborough, which is open to the public? Connors wanted Canadian music to stay Canadian. In 1979, he returned his six Juno

awards as a personal protest against the Americanization of the Canadian music industry. He felt this way until the day he died. Connors has 61 recorded albums and 10 of those have yet to be released. Canadians everywhere can look forward to new Stompin’ Tom songs for a long time to come. Perhaps the money that would pay for a state funeral could instead go towards an award for a Canadian band, in Canada, represented by Canadians. Or perhaps an other type of award to signify what Connors believed in. All I know is that I’m not sure if he would want to have a state funeral. I’m sure he is happy just knowing that Canadians everywhere are remembering him, singing his songs and having a pint in remembrance of one of the greatest Canadian singers of all time. “From the wheat fields of my heart/ Go find your way to the cool Hudson bay/ And Roll on, Roll on Saskatchewan/ Roll on, Roll on Saskatchewan.”

# The Pioneer

The Pioneer is currently produced by photojournalism students for Loyalist College and the surrounding area. In the spirit of the pioneers who settled our community and who were rooted in tradition, these pioneers always had an eye on the future. Our students strive to serve the public interest, seek the truth and uphold the highest standards of our profession.

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