

On the street

Jessica Campbell asked people at Loyalist College the following question:

What are your plans for spring break?



Jessica Westbrook, second-year esthetics, "I'll be drinking with my friends from home and probably going on adventures. I'm very adventurous."



Rashida Richards, first-year advertising and marketing, "I will be heading back to my home in Toronto to spend time with my friends and family."



Chris Dalbianco, second-year customs and borders, "I will be going snowboarding in Montreal and I'm pretty pumped about it!"



Aaron Vilaca, first-year sales and marketing, "I will be going back home to Sault Ste Marie to visit family and friends."



Paige Morgan, second-year esthetics, "I will be spending time with my family and my dog. I miss my dog Lilly."



Charlsie Morrow, first-year art and design foundation, "I will be working, trucking and maybe partying. It'll be a fun week though."

Editorial

Canada falling behind on environment issues

Canada is falling behind the rest of the developed world in environmental stewardship. Consistently we win the Fossil of the Day, a prestigious award given by the Climate Action Network, a group of 850 non-governmental organizations, to, in their own words, "the countries that perform the worst at the UN Climate Talks." Canada has in fact won a lifetime "unachievement award."

The country's environmental woes are generally associated with the tar sands, an incredibly environmentally unsound, and likely unsustainable form of oil extraction. Alberta, the driving provincial force behind the tar sands, is a Conservative party bastion, the same Conservative party that rules the nation. Because Canada is a parliamentary democracy, based on the British Westminster model, if the governing party holds more seats than any other party they can do basically anything they want. The Conservatives, under Stephen Harper, have been pushing the tar sands as a major employer, and as a tool to assert Canada's global geopolitical status as a major energy producer.

But it is not just the tar sands themselves that are the problem. The more insidious issue is that publicly funded environmental and climatological scientists' funding and resources are being gutted, and what research is left is being obfuscated by draconian governmental censorship rarely seen recently in the industrialized world. It has got to the point where in 2012, thousands of scientists from across the nation marched in Ottawa, chanting, "What do we want? Evidence. When do we want it? After peer-review." Harper's measures to silence evidence have been so drastic that he has managed to politicize the impartial.

The politicization of the academics started in earnest at the end of March 2012, when the Conservative government passed their omnibus budget bill, Bill C-38. The bill did not just outline the year's fiscal budget, but also contained a plethora of new policies, and extensive amendments to existing legislation. The Conservatives were very clever in doing this, as MPs cannot vote down single attributes of the bill. Since a Conservative majority controls the house, C-38 was passed with minimal hassle.

However, once the bill's 420 pages were examined thoroughly, scientists, the political opposition, and members of the public were outraged at the deep cuts the government had inflicted on environmental research. The outrage was after the fact. The bill had been passed, and no one had any power to do much about it. That's been the model for all of the Conservative government's attacks on science: a quiet passing of a seemingly innocuous piece of legislation. Less than a third of Canadians voted for the Conservatives, yet we are under their thumbs. Thank god Harper has pushed scientists to politics, because the public wasn't standing up for them, and the official opposition in parliament is impotent. Despite this collective outrage, nothing much is being done. The politicization of scientists was enough to make them march, but it is still to be seen if they will have the political will to make any lasting change to Harper's iron will to silence them.

Duncan Cairns-Brenner

Value of motherhood being dismissed by young adults

If someone chooses to place motherhood over a career in her life's list, there's nothing wrong with that.

Conversations about motherhood are inevitable, especially at places like Loyalist where young adults often discuss their own future plans with peers.

Many opinions circulate around the topic of young motherhood, some of which point towards the thought that women are either incapable or foolish for choosing such a path while still considered young by society.

Statements such as, "They're throwing their lives away," or "All you're going to be is a baby-maker?" are commonly heard on the bus, in the cafeteria, or even in Wal-Mart.

While everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion, there is a problem in the way these thoughts are formed. There is an ignorance about the importance of motherhood.

If someone chooses to pursue the parenting path in their early twenties, why should they be scorned?

We seem to have this ideal that major success comes in the form of career goals or wealth.

There are various things that we might prioritize over our career: travelling, hobbies, religion. These may change and shift in priority as our own life circumstances do, just as they do for young mothers.

That's not to say that parenting isn't a big deal or that it's easy to do. It's a new realm of responsibility and arguably the most time-consuming role one could have.

It is an unfortunate reality that there are children being born into living situations that are unsafe and it's important to realize that this is an issue. At the same time, we can't mentally place all young mothers into the "unfit" category. It is incredibly wise to prepare mentally, emotionally, and financially before having children. If a young person is able to have the time and resources to prepare to the best of their abilities, then great.

However, not all cases are granted the luxury of perfect planning. Unforeseen events can result in unplanned parenthood which call for even more support from our communities. This ushers another reason to carefully consider the phrases we choose when we talk about those who choose to be young parents.

Before we talk about others parenting choices or our own plans, let's not forget that motherhood is a great mission as well. Young mothers are not "throwing their lives away" or "taking the easy way out."

They have dreams and priorities that change as life changes—just like we all do.

Mandy Larade



Opinion

Celebrating the true meaning of Valentine's Day

Meant to celebrate true love and not to spend huge amounts of money

By Michelle Heshka

Valentine's Day: a day filled with chocolate, roses and oftentimes disappointment. It is the one day of the year when people shower their significant others in gifts in an attempt to prove their love. And why do they do this? Because the commercial industry encourages them to.

People have become so wrapped up in roses, chocolates and extravagant gifts that they have lost sight of the true meaning of Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day is a religious date known as the feast of Saint Valentine. Saint Valentine secretly — and illegally — wedded soldiers to their brides before battle. Saint Valentine died on Feb. 14 and it became a marked date to celebrate love and passion.

Valentine's Day is meant to celebrate true love, not to spend obscene amounts of cash on meaningless gifts.

Couples shouldn't feel the need to prove their love to one another one day of the year. It's not necessary to shower each other with gifts and spend absurd amounts of money for a holiday that many people don't even understand.

According to studies at MarketLine Advantage, the average Canadian spends \$116 on Valentine's Day gifts. People are so busy overcompensating, trying to prove

their love through money and objects, that they often ignore the flaws in their relationship. After Valentine's Day is said and done, the truth comes out.

Avvo.com, a site that offers profiles and information for lawyers, completed a study in 2010 that found divorce rates skyrocket by 40 per cent at this time of year. On top of that, the study reports that unmarried couples are two times more likely to break up around Valentine's Day. And why? Because of pressures and expectations that nobody ever meets.

Couples put so much pressure on one day of the year that it becomes unbearable. We do not need one day to mark when we celebrate our love for our significant other. We should be celebrating this love every day of the year.

Russian human rights issues have huge impact on Olympics

By Dawn Barger

I am personally not watching the Olympics this year — although I still support our Canadian athletes and wish them the best of luck.

I feel that attention should be on the human rights issues that Russia faces and not the Olympics.

This is an opportunity to help people who are being abused because of their sexual orientation and help them fight for their rights.

Then there is the huge topic of gay rights in Russia and the terrible abuses that happen to the LGBT community.

After watching videos posted up on YouTube by the HumanRightsWatch, the abuses and humiliation that the LGBT people have to endure are appalling.

These people have their heads shaved,

painted, beaten and in one instance, made a young man assault himself with a bottle.

The vigilantes record the abuses, and then post them on YouTube to further humiliate their victims.

The primary excuse these vigilantes called "Occupy Pedophilia" use for this abuse is because the victims are gay, they are pedophiles.

This is an unacceptable stereotypical excuse to harm the LGBT community because of their sexual orientation.

I feel that people need to educate themselves and learn the facts before harming an individual with such a terrible label.

The LGBT community is in constant terror and worry about their safety in the community.

The new law in Russia, which prohibits "propaganda of homosexuals", is banned among minors. Under the statute, it is illegal to have gay pride events, speak in de-

fence of gay rights, or say gay relationships are equal to heterosexual relationships.

So with this new law, certain groups have used this as means to abuse and discriminate against the gay community.

Russia is not the only country where the LGBT community is harassed. There is an ongoing problem in other parts of the world. But the attention has been on Russia and with everyone looking on, why not stop and help when it's in our faces.

Russia is not a bad place, but its human rights issues are in a bad place. We live in a world now where we know so much is going on because of social media and its in our faces but we still choose to ignore the facts.

We as a human race need to pay attention to the issues that our fellow human beings face, and the awful discrimination they endure, rather than cheering for sports.

The Pioneer

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