EXPOSED

how safe are you on Facebook?

Guerilla Gay Fare sweeps Ottawa

bed buddies vs platonic pals
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Each contributor brought his or her own zest to the pages. It might seem like a jumbled mix of stories, but together they represent you—the Ottawa student, a unique and diverse mix of individuals.

Virtual everything went smoothly, but we certainly had our share of hurdles. With so many people working together there’s bound to be some confusion. Throughout, we had to keep the ultimate goal in mind: to make this issue of Glue the best one yet.

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Erin Kristalyn

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Michela Rosano feels honoured to have been a part of this team. She thinks everyone worked so hard to make this issue the best Glue magazine has ever seen. She would like to thank Greg Wheeler, Mark Anderson and Ralph Plath for the amount of time and effort they put into the issue. “Everyone did an amazing job,” she says.

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SPRING INTO STYLE

A look at the hot new trends for the season by local fashion experts

ERICA WARK

In the middle of two of Canada’s major fashion hot spots, Toronto and Montreal, some say Ottawa lacks intrigue in fashion and instead became famous for politics and its local hockey team, the Ottawa Senators.

Little does the rest of Canada know, Ottawa is full of fashion ideas and Glouce magazine found 2008 spring must-haves by talking to the city’s own fashion experts.

Ottawa’s Richard Robinson Academy of Fashion Design sees students come from all over Ontario and Quebec to stitch their way into the fashion industry.

Throughout the year, students are challenged with various tasks in hopes of making the cut into the next year of the program.

“For one of our assignments this year, we were given three fabrics: denim, printed cotton and chiffon, and had to come up with a spring/summer outfit,” Alona Amoyette, second-year student says.

“I really like flower prints in chiffon and I think draping things will be an inspiration to a lot of designers for their spring/summer collections for 2008,” she says.

As part of their course work, students must complete a five-piece spring collection that will be showcased in Richard Robinson’s yearly fashion show in May.

Erin Jamieson, graduate of Richard Robinson and current teacher at the school, suggests that, “sequins, metallics, silk jersey and chiffon are going to be a popular choice here at the school for the students’ spring collections.”

She adds that shoppers should also focus on fit and quality and less on brands. “Save money on accessories like skinny belts and metallic clutches so you can splurge on the light weight dresses and tailored skirts,” she says.

Mary-lynn Drovin, second-year student at the academy, is planning on using neutral colours and silk fabrics. “I really think 2008 will be a throw back to 1920s style with a modern feel,” Drovin says.

“Thats where my inspiration is coming from when I design my collection for the spring fashion show.”

Tori Leach, full-time model and Ottawa native, recently worked in Italy where she modeled for Milan’s 2008 spring/summer fashion week.

“I had the opportunity to see and work with many great designers including Dsquared and they had one thing in mind when designing this year’s spring/summer collection: subtlety.” Leach says.

“Yellows, whites, blacks and hints of hot pink were all the rage on the runways during Milan’s fashion week,” she says. “The dresses had a Jackie Kennedy feel to them but with a modern twist with subtle details and tailored fits.”

Asia Dewar, manager of the local boutique Schad Blu on Sussex, says this spring is going to include lots of layering and bright, fun colours. “Black and white is on its way out as far as wardrobe is concerned,” Dewar says. “We won’t be seeing much more of the skinny jean but instead the higher waist, tailored look, with a wider leg.”

Dewar also suggests geometric patterns and floral prints will be popular for spring. “Asymmetrical lines with pastels will be popular this summer,” she says. “Hot pinks and yellows along with big, bold accessories to complement the outfit will be in as well.”

Dewar’s ultimate fashion advice is that it’s not really about what you’re wearing but how you wear it. “Confidence has a lot to do with it,” she says. “I don’t think people really argue with you if you exude that what you’re wearing is hot.”

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Second-year student at Richard Robinson, Bianca Wahab prepares for spring new fashions.

Schad & Schad Blu

Schad 621 Sussex Drive 613 860-6800
Schad Blu 927 Sussex Drive 613 562-1300
schad.ca
Imagine you are out on a Friday night, living it up at one of the ByWard Market’s many student-friendly joints. All of a sudden, dozens of people draped in white descend on the bar. Your bar has been taken over, a victim of Guerilla Gay Fare. The first bars the group targeted were Tila Tequila, Suite 34 and the Cabin, but they’re just getting started.

The idea is hardly new, with similar groups existing in cities around the world. A group of gay individuals take over a straight establishment, mixing in with heteros. Participants are encouraged to dress in white for dramatic effect and the location is kept secret until the day before, ensuring the bar will be taken by surprise.

Group founder and Carleton graduate Tim Campbell was inspired by an article in Capital Xtra! and some happenings at Pride’s Rainbow 8 party held at Capital City Music Hall.

“They said ‘go home, we’re full fags.’ Then they turned around and saw dozens of other people coming so they had to let us in.”

Algonquin museum studies student Josh Eisen has attended both takeovers and says the staff were less than welcoming. “They said, ‘go home, we’re full fags.’ Then they turned around and saw dozens of other people coming so they had to let us in.”

Carleton student and acting public relations representative for the group, Andrew Stewart, says he expects the nights to flourish as more and more people see how much fun there is to be had.

“We had a really good turnout the first night, ” he says. “We’re estimating there were about 200 people at the second night.” However, it’s not all rainbows. Some people in the queer community ask how would we feel if 200 straight people came to one of our bars?

“I would be absolutely thrilled, ” Stewart says. “It’s all about a positive energy. It’s about showing that straight and gay people can party together.”

Group founder and Carleton graduate Tim Campbell was inspired by an article in Capital Xtra! and some happenings at Pride’s Rainbow 8 party held at Capital City Music Hall.

“The staff was completely rude,” Campbell recalls. “They said, ‘this isn’t a gay bar. Put your shirts back on.’ So after that I was like, ‘this is wrong, we have to do something about this.’”

His complaint against Capital’s staff resulted in the employees being reprimanded, but that wasn’t enough to satisfy Campbell. The first covert operation was held at Tila Tequila on Sept. 14, and was considered a success by group organizers.

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The takeover of Oct. 12 found the staff at Suite 34 completely unprepared, with extra hands having to be coralled in.

Carleton student and acting public relations representative for the group, Andrew Stewart, says he expects more people will be participating in future takeovers.

“More than half of the attendees are students. Campbell opens an invitation to any GLBT student to come and join the group.”

They can make community contacts. They can appreciate the party for what it is.”

Andrew Stewart, public relations rep for the group, says he expects more people will be participating to future takeovers.

“More than half of the attendees are students. Campbell opens an invitation to any GLBT student to come and join the group.”

“They can show up and be themselves and be who they want to be.”

While prominent forms of activism have been born out of aggression, Campbell says aggression is the last thing fuelling the fire. “It’s not about a form of aggression; it’s about saying we’re here, we’re queer, we came to party. We bring our money, we bring our love and spirit to party. Straight, gay, lesbian, or transgender, we’re all just here to have a good time,” Campbell says.
My fair lady?

Examining the connotation of the word ‘lady’ and what it means in today’s society

SARAH KELFORD

It has been nearly a century since Nellie McClung fought to gain equal rights and recognition for women in society—for women to no longer be submissive to their male counterparts—but how far have we really come?

Suzanne Nourse, founder and director of the Protocol School of Ottawa, is an expert on what it takes to be a modern ‘lady.’

Nourse says that while women have a tendency to mimic their male counterparts in order to fit in—laughing at inappropriate jokes, for example—

“Women can have it all, but not at the same time,” says Nourse. “The reality is we are different,” making it difficult for men and women to work together successfully.

This is because social and business etiquette are two very different protocols, and issues between the sexes arise when the line becomes blurred.

Nourse says that when it comes to social etiquette, sex counts: it’s all about gender superiority with men being dominant. Thus, it’s the lady’s role to be gracious, to concern herself with how others around her feel, and above all to ensure men don’t feel uncomfortable in social situations.

However, not every woman is a lady, and not every woman wants to be a lady.

Emily Fardy is a 21-year-old commissioner of the Corps of Commissionaires (Ottawa division)—not a traditional female role. “My family allowed me to speak my mind, act like one of the guys and be independent. I am polite and can be sophisticated, but am not a stereotypical lady in respect to me burping, swearing, being submissive or allowing others to make decisions for me,” says Fardy.

Christabelle Sethna, a professor at University of Ottawa, is a strong-minded working woman who has researched the origins of the word “lady.”

“The word ‘lady’ has race and class connotations,” she says. “One hundred years ago ‘lady’ was a white, middle- or upper-class woman, and actions from that group were considered ‘lady-like.’”

Sethna describes the term as implying individual restraint, extreme politeness, being genteel, aristocratic and feeling superior to others.

The word ‘lady’ does not define today’s women, she says. “I don’t consider myself a lady, but I am a woman,” says Fardy. “You need to be self-confident, know what you want in life, and go for it. Don’t take shit from people, be sensitive to others and remember who you are.”

Fardy, who hopes to get married and have children one day, wants to complete her goals and realize her dreams before settling down.

She has no interest in being a lady, however—not on Nourse’s terms. “There is a time and place to be sophisticated and submissive,” says Fardy. “But I’m not going to be a lady. It’s not my style, and I don’t really think I know how to be (one).”

The majority of modern women, in fact, may not be terribly ‘lady-like,’ but Nellie McClung would likely be well pleased with today’s versions of female strength, power and femininity.

Pearls of Ottawa

Struggling to pursue their dream jobs, young artists are the capital’s hidden gems

MICHELA ROSANO

B uried deep in Ottawa’s sea of stiff white collars, navy coloured suits and shiny black shoes are the city’s cultural pearls.

They are the young independent artists of Ottawa, trying to make names for themselves in the capital, where most of the attention is focused on national art institutions.

Alex Poulolite, a 22-year-old comic artist, began drawing seriously in the tenth grade and, after high school, decided to pursue a degree in art and design with a concentration in comics at the University of Quebec. “Women can have it all, but not at the same time,” says Nourse. “We’re still the lowest of the large Canadian cities.” He says past councils have overlooked funding Ottawa’s local arts scene due to the presence of national institutions, like the National Art Gallery, catering to people who enjoy art.

Sarah Cacciotti, a 28-year-old pen and ink artist, left a well paying job to work in the National Art Gallery, catering to people who enjoy art.

Peter Honeywell, executive director of the Council for the Arts in Ottawa, says that although funding in Ottawa has improved, “we’re still the lowest of the large Canadian cities.” He says past councils have overlooked funding Ottawa’s local arts scene due to the presence of national institutions, like the National Art Gallery, catering to people who enjoy art.

Sarah Cacciotti, a 28-year-old pen and ink artist, left a well paying job to work in the National Art Gallery, catering to people who enjoy art.

In graphic design there might be (jobs), but it’s doing corporate logos, branding a company—boring shit. With advertising, that could be cool, but again creativity is often limited,” she says.

And why search for local artists when big name artists and their pieces are so easily accessible? Ottawans are just not supportive of local talent.

Honeywell agrees that funding for local artists is important and thinks that much of the creativity in a city comes from the local artists connecting with the people. “Creativity happens in a community, it doesn’t happen in the national institutions. They’re not showing local artists’ work. They’re not giving the local community that opportunity to connect with the creative people in it,” he says.

However, Ottawa officials have recently recognized the need for more money. After contributing $1.5 million last year, city council has committed about $1 million over the next three years to push Ottawa up from one of the worst funded, to an averagely funded large Canadian city.

For the independent artists—the shiny new pearls trying to crack through the hard shell of Ottawa’s arts scene—Honeywell says they need to be committed to their practice and know how to develop the business side of their work if they want to succeed.
I decided to change my life. And ice cream weighs in at 130 calories per pint. My trainer wanted me to drop down to 1,400 calories per day, which left little room for my favourite snacks.

“I never recommend that people go on a diet,” adds Madeline Edwards, a registered dietitian. “In order for people to lose weight, and more importantly keep it off, they must make changes that are sustainable in the long term. It is just as important to follow an active lifestyle in addition to making healthy eating choices. One doesn’t work without the other.”

In our fast-paced society, many people don’t take frequent snack breaks so at the end of the day they end up pigging out. According to Statistics Canada, obesity rates in this country have nearly doubled among adults and almost tripled among children over the past 25 years. This is a problem because serious health risks are associated with obesity including high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease.

People can choose from over 200 gyms and fitness centres in Ottawa, or simply choose their exercise regime through a DVD or instructional books. Whatever option they choose, nothing tastes as good as being thin feels. I still have a long way to go, but since June, that flashing LED now reads 165 lbs.
Walking into the James Patrick Sports Centre on Monday nights and past the game of poker at the canteen, you will find an arena full of women in roller skates, short shorts and fishnets screaming and pushing each other around. This is the scene of the revival roller derby, a sport that Ottawa league founder Kelly McAlear says is as graceful as it is aggressive.

Since May, Kelly “Honey Bee” McAlear has been on a mission to revive a sport that died in the ‘70s. Along with discotheques, roller rinks disappeared, leaving a savage, skillful and often bloody sport with no place to play. Derby dates back to the 1920s with a popularity that blanketed North America. The rough and tumble sport has two teams of fishnet clad women on roller skates chasing each other around a rink.

The goal is to block the opposing team and race around them to gain points. The sport itself is riddled with complex rules, but that hasn’t deterred new leagues from popping up across Canada and the United States.

“There aren’t a lot of contact sports for women,” says McAlear. “I’m surprised it hasn’t grown faster in Canada considering it’s an indoor sport and you can play it all year round.”

McAlear’s crusade to bring derby to Ottawa started at the Babylon night club last May when she posted the city and lugged skates to the bar with hopes of recruiting enough women to form a team. People showed up and tried skating around the club as McAlear handed out coupons to her roller derby 101 workshop. The workshop paved the way to form Ottawa’s only team, the Bytowne Blackhearts.

With Monday night practices at a grungy floor hockey arena, about 15 women gather in short shorts and tights, ready to race.

“It’s strong women and a strong sport,” says Patrice Brennan who has been skating with the Blackhearts since the summer.

Lauren Hart, aka Sister Disaster, says that there is a culture behind roller derby that attracts a certain type of girl.

“There’s a kitsch element to it. A subculture,” says volunteer coach Louise Jones. “It attracts women who are not afraid of contact sports.”

McAlear says that there is an element of burlesque that attracts women.

“It has made me even more feminine, because I get my aggression out at the rink.” Getting comfortable on skates is the first big step and racing around tight curves on a tile floor is bound to assure scrapes and bruises.

“It makes you powerful,” says Hart. “I think the bruises are badges of honour. It means you did something and survived.”

The Blackhearts are still building their skill set so they can make their debut with a bang. “They are a bit more afraid than they need to be,” says Jones. “Good teams are more about skills, and we are working on endurance, skills and strength.”

As the only team in Ottawa, it might be a while for a league to be redeveloped in the city. “Right now we don’t have another venue,” says McAlear.

Despite the lack of play area, the retro aspect of the sport is allowing the Blackhearts to pick up new players almost every week.

A documentary just completed by Carleton Masters journalism students, and Ottawa’s Guerilla magazine publishing Blackheart trading cards of the girls, it’s no surprise the sport had sped back into the capital and the spotlight.

Girls on wheels
Roller derby league comes to Ottawa

JENNY POTTER

W
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**How safe is your school?**

A *Glue* reporter takes a look at security and emergency procedures on Ottawa campuses

HEATHER ROSE
Everyone has a swipe card, but they didn’t really pay attention if you brought people in.
Eric Kelly, drug user since he was a teenager.

The smell of damp wood and urine fills my nostrils as I walk into the back entrance of the Shepherds of Good Hope shelter on Murray Street. I climb the wide staircase in front of me to an open doorway that, considering the smell of breakfast food now also permeating the air, I assume leads to a kitchen.

A smiling but brisk woman darts out from around the corner and sends me up another flight of stairs to the reception and office area, where I am to meet with Rob Eady, senior manager of public relations and the fundraising team for the shelter. As soon as I step into the odourless air of the upstairs office, I instinctively feel more comfortable, and mentally scold myself for being so prissy. The receptionist distractedly gestures for me to sit down as she talks on the phone, which rings again as soon as it’s hung up. I wait only a few moments before Rob appears. “Is it 10 already?” he asks, a bit out of breath. “Yup,” I answer stupidly, feeling more and more naïve for interrupting these busy people’s lives for a magazine article about crack heads written by an upper-middle class student. But he smiles, invites me into his office and offers me literature about the shelter.

The Shepherds of Good Hope is a homeless shelter whose mandate is to treat all people with equal kindness, respect and compassion. Formed in 1983 as an emergency shelter at St. Brig- id’s Church, Shepherds has developed to include several programs, one of which is the Hope Recovery shelter—a refuge for those under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

“‘It’s basically a safe, dry—well not so much dry, but out of the el- ements place—for people under the influence,” says Eady. “Instead of being intoxicated on a park bench somewhere, they have a bed where they can come down and recover.”

Hope Recovery also accepts those individuals who have been barred from other shelters for bad or uncontrollable behaviour. “Instead of going to jail, they come here,” Eady explains. “They can stay as long as they want. Some stay a couple of days and actually get into treatment, but there’s no pressure on them.”

Hope Recovery is just one of many outreach programs trying to battle the increase of hard drug use in Canada, and more specifi- cally, the problem of crack in Ottawa. Homeless people in particu- lar are abusing the drug due to its prevalence in the downtown area where there is an abundance of shelters. “It’s cheap to purchase and readily available, and homeless people are victimized as a result,” says Ottawa Police Staff Sergeant Paul Johnston. “They aggressively panhandle and use the money to purchase crack-cocaine. It’s extremely addictive.”

The problem is reflected in the tenants at Hope Recovery. A Glue reporter gets a look at the life of a homeless drug addict while examining the city’s crack problem

JOCELYN COOPER

The Shepherds of Good Hope is a homeless shelter whose mandate is to treat all people with equal kindness, respect and compassion. Formed in 1983 as an emergency shelter at St. Brig- id’s Church, Shepherds has developed to include several programs, one of which is the Hope Recovery shelter—a refuge for those under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

“‘It’s basically a safe, dry—well not so much dry, but out of the el- ements place—for people under the influence,” says Eady. “Instead of being intoxicated on a park bench somewhere, they have a bed where they can come down and recover.”

Hope Recovery also accepts those individuals who have been barred from other shelters for bad or uncontrollable behaviour. “Instead of going to jail, they come here,” Eady explains. “They can stay as long as they want. Some stay a couple of days and actually get into treatment, but there’s no pressure on them.”

Hope Recovery is just one of many outreach programs trying to battle the increase of hard drug use in Canada, and more specifi- cally, the problem of crack in Ottawa. Homeless people in particu- lar are abusing the drug due to its prevalence in the downtown area where there is an abundance of shelters. “It’s cheap to purchase and readily available, and homeless people are victimized as a result,” says Ottawa Police Staff Sergeant Paul Johnston. “They aggressively panhandle and use the money to purchase crack-cocaine. It’s extremely addictive.”

The problem is reflected in the tenants at Hope Recovery.
"Usually the people that we get are high on crack or cocaine," says Eady. "Some are totally psychotic, heroin, morphine, different opiates—we've had a wide variety of different drugs—but for the most part it's crack." According to the most recent Canadian Addiction Survey conducted in 2005 by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, cocaine or crack-cocaine is the third most widely used drug in Canada after marijuana and hallucinogens.

From 1994 to 2004, the number of Canadians who had used cocaine or had crack had nearly tripled from 3.8 per cent to 10.6 per cent. What is most alarming is that according to the latest study provided by Statistics Canada, illicit drug use is most common with those aged 15-24. Over 30 per cent of individuals in this age group reported having used drugs in 2002, the year the study was conducted.

"They'll come to the drop-in, talk to us and we'll say, 'give this guy a call, or 'I know someone here, he's awesome!'" says MacGregor. "It gives us a chance to get to know them a little more personally and also hook them up with the services that are more specific to their needs."

She estimates that about 95 per cent of the youth that visit the drop-in have drug problems, and lists crack, marijuana and ecstasy as the most commonly used substances.

"With my kids, there's definitely a significant amount of them doing crack," she says. "There's no doubt about it. I can see the burns on their lips, the slung-out look on their faces—you just get to recognize it."

And according to MacGregor, they know where and how easy it is to get it. She says the kids refer to the area around Shepherds and Centre 454, a shelter next to Shepherds, as "Crackton." Because there are so many dealers around there, they know where you go to get crack in Ottawa. "It's kind of a scary place," she says. "If we could get everyone in the city to just go over there—experience what it's really like—we wouldn't have so many problems with drugs."

I'm in Rob's office for less than a minute before he throws his jacket back on. "Alright, let's go see who's around," he says. My heart pounds in my chest as he leads me back downstairs. I try at my earlobe—painfully bare for the first time in years due to the guilt I felt at wearing jewellery to interview a homeless person.

"So it's a drug addict specifically that you wanted to talk to?" Rob asks, interrupting my thoughts as we walk out the doors.

I nod grimly, thinking it's a long shot, but as we cross the street I stop thinking altogether. A group of people—some young enough to be in high school—are gathered outside another branch of the shelter. It's a gloomy morning and curls of cigarette smoke and frozen breath drift between their rotten teeth into the air.

I passed by them on my way in earlier and had tried my best to ignore them. Now, as we approach, they greet Rob like a friend and I'm ashamed of myself. He explains why he feels the downtown area has become such a breeding ground for drugs. Because most addicts' lives are affected by poverty in the first place, and there are so many shelters in the area, it's just a natural neighbourhood for them to live.

But Joanne MacGregor, manager of the drop-in centre at Operation Go Home, an outreach centre for homeless youth in Ottawa, sees the effects of crack on the city's youth every day. Left: Ken Sinclair has been on the streets since 1988. He is addicted to crack-cocaine and marijuana and also suffers from schizophrenia. Right: Joanne MacGregor, manager of the drop-in at Operation Go Home, an outreach centre for homeless youth in Ottawa, sees the effects of crack on the city's youth every day

"It alienates people and lets them know that we don't give a crap about their addiction—that's really what it boils down to," she says. "As far as I know, no social service agencies were contacted. It was just 'we're cancelling the program, get rid of everything you have, you're not getting any more free stuff from us and we're closing all the outlets down.'"

She believes the decision was made based on how the downtown community feels.

"The argument is that it's encouraging crack use, that it's not stopping it in the downtown area," says MacGregor. "Community members are feeling uncomfortable because people are throwing their stuff everywhere, plus they've got a bunch of people who are addicted to crack walking around their neighbourhood."

But MacGregor identifies drug addiction as one of the biggest issues, and Operation Go Home acts as a filter, by streamlining the kids into different programs that can help them.
Baring it all

People expose their whole lives on facebook, but the popular social network might not be as safe as you think

ERIN KRISTALYN

After spending a year on Facebook, Justine Chapman deactivated her account. The Carleton University history student got creeped out. She thought it was weird that people could see the parties she was attending, pictures of her and who she was talking to. But the final straw came when her friend’s boyfriend’s friend found her by browsing the site, thought they looked alike and asked to borrow her ID. Chapman is now Facebook-free and says she won’t sign back on again.

She’s one of a very few, however. Facebook is the most visited website in Canada, according to Alexa Internet, Inc., a company that provides information and data on Web traffic. Not only that, from January to August, 2007, the number of Canadian users on the site grew by five times to over 3.5 million.

Like Chapman, Carlisle Adams isn’t among the rising number of users on the site, and says he won’t be any time soon. The member of the Privacy Commissioner’s Office External Committee and professor in the School of Information Technology and Engineering at the University of Ottawa says, “I find it scary, so I don’t have a Facebook account. I’m not on it. Everything that I hear about it sounds pretty scary to me.”

It’s the issue of privacy on the site that has some concerned. In fact, Adams sees four areas in particular that Facebook users should be aware of: the risk of becoming victim to identity theft, physical danger, lack of control over one’s own content, and the long-term implications of uploading to the site.

He warns that users should be aware of divulging too much personal information on their accounts. “People put enough information out there, including their name, address, phone number, birth
Justine Chapman, Carleton University history student deleted her Facebook account after a year because she did not feel her privacy was protected. Chapman said she also prefers calling her friends, rather than writing on their Facebook wall or messaging them.

Facebook's privacy policy even states that "no security measures are perfect or imper- nent" and that users post content on the site at their own risk.

And regardless of the available privacy options, this only applies to those who actually adjust them from the default settings.

"The problem is that according to Facebook—and this was a comment by a Facebook representative just last week at a conference I was at—between 70 and 80 per cent of Facebook users never change the default settings," says Geist.

When a new account is created and the user joins a network, the privacy settings are defaulted at a low setting. So initially, anyone in the user's network can see his or her entire profile.

Catherine Dwyer has been conducting research on social networking Websites, in particular Facebook and MySpace, as part of her doctoral dissertation at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. She says you can never know what level of privacy information has online. "You're just guessing in terms of setting some of this stuff," Dwyer says. Ultimately though, experts say that some safety measures are better than none.

Adams says that Facebook users also place themselves in jeopardy by putting their schedules—school, work and social—on their profiles.

Pamela Cole, human kinetics student at the University of Ottawa, doesn't post her class schedule online, but does confirm event invitations and sometimes creates her own. She says all her friends use this feature to keep in touch.

"If you're having an event, it's a fast, easy way to get the word out," she says. "It's easy access to details like when and where. People use it as an invitation, an electronic RSVP." However useful it may be, Facebook users take a physical risk when they do this, especially if their privacy settings are wide open. As soon as you put that information there, somebody reading that knows when you're going to be there," Adams warns. "Don't think anybody understands privacy policies except maybe the privacy officer," she says.

Cole can see how posting your sched- ules can go beyond just letting friends know what party you'll be at. "One time I over- heard a guy saying he found a girl with the exact same class schedule as his (by search- ing Facebook), and he was now looking for her in class," she says.

This comes back to how the site's infrastructure contributes to one level of privacy. Kaiysa Martinez, University of Illinois graduate, created the Students for Facebook Privacy group on the site after the company introduced the News Feed in 2008.

"This feature, a list of news stories about users' friends' activities on the site, is displayed when a user logs in to Facebook. For example, when users upload new photos, their friends receive an update on their News Feeds.

Martiner and his room-mate, Jeremy Pelzer, thought this feature was "ridiculous" and involving "something, to have it broadcast to all your friends, even if it's something in- nocuous, it takes away from the fun of Facebook," says Pelzer.

After many similar groups and petitions by users popped up, people are now able to opt out of the News Feed feature if they choose, reducing their risk of feeling violated.

While physical danger is a risk on Face- book, lack of control over dissemination of your information is another, and one that many are becoming more aware of.

Content from Facebook accounts is now being used by police and reporters when crimes are committed and when someone dies. Personal photos are being taken from the site and printed in newspapers, and wall postings are being used to cultivate suspects and sources.

Users can never be completely sure of where their information goes when it's up- loaded to the Internet, but Adams warns that it could be taken by other users or even Facebook itself.

"If you've really thought about the many different scenarios and go through them yourself logically before you can get a sense of what your own expectations of privacy are," Pelzer agrees. "I'm just waiting for the stigma of his postings with him. Fu- ture employers or girlfriends can just google his name and find his posts. Adams says people talk to others are not thinking long-term when they post some- thing on their profile. "Most people when they're 18 or 20 are not thinking about what their life will be like when they're 40," he says. "It just seems like forever away, so they just don't give it any consideration. But 40 comes pretty quickly."

Pelzer agrees. "I'm just waiting for the time in about 2050, when all these presiden- tial candidates have pictures of them from today doing keg stands, doing all sort of il- licit activity," he says.

While users aren't likely to deactivate their profiles and posts, awareness and education is key. "You just have to figure out a way to use it so that you're comfortable with it and will be comfortable with it as time goes on," Dwyer says.
Breaking down barriers
More and more females are overcoming gender stereotypes and pursuing careers in what used to be ‘male-dominated’ fields

With her muddy work boots, slush pants and baseball cap on, Shirley Graves looks like she is prepared to face a major downpour, but there isn’t a cloud in the sky. The mother of two is decked out in her protective gear because she is on her way to the family barn to do her morning chores and tend to 60-odd sheep.

Having grown up on a farm just outside of Smiths Falls, Graves wanted to continue the farming lifestyle she had grown to love over the years by establishing a farm near Ottawa. Over 25 years ago, Graves and her husband, Robert, purchased some land and an 1860 farmhouse near Stittsville.

There was lots of work to be done when they first purchased their home, so the couple split up the tasks. Robert was in charge of the home renovations and Shirley with the reconstruction of the barn and making the farm operational.

“The men in the area were not used to working with women, so when I phoned to order fertilizer, or I would phone to get bailing done for hay, they were very uncomfortable,” says Graves. “It didn’t really bother me because I was fairly confident in my knowledge base, but it really bothered them because they weren’t used to dealing with women.”

Equity and diversity in the workforce has changed significantly since Graves first decided to run her own farm. Over the last 25 years, statistics have shown there has been a significant increase in women who have chosen career paths in fields that were once dominated by men—notably in the police and fire services, trades and agriculture.

Tess Porter, who resigned as a police officer and is now a full-time professor in the police foundations program at Algonquin College, wanted to be a police officer since she was a young girl.

“Because it was so male-dominated at the time, people said, ‘You don’t want to do that, there are safety issues, you’re a female,’” says Porter. “So it was sort of frowned upon and my family said it wasn’t a good idea.”

Despite the discouragement, the desire to enter the policing field came to her again, so she went to school part-time for advanced police sciences at Algonquin College to enhance her knowledge in the area of policing.

“I knew that there was a huge [hiring] competition back then in the ‘90s and there weren’t that many women, so you had to be competitive,” says Porter.

Pete Thompson, coordinator of police foundations at Algonquin College, can attest to Porter’s experience. When he first joined the RCMP in 1976, the force had just started to integrate women into their training program and it was the first time they were training men and women together. Since then, the RCMP has hired more women and the force is now comprised of more than 18 per cent female police officers.

The RCMP is hiring 2,000 people each year for the next five years to fill positions in new national security sections created since Sept. 11 and many of these positions will be available to females.

Thompson says he has seen a natural evolution of women enter-
ing the police foundations program in recent years. “I think it is just a changing demographic and women are now looking more outside of traditional roles and becoming aware of different industries in Canada,” says Thompson. Aside from employment in Canadian police forces, data from the 1996 and 2001 Census of Canada show that women in the Ottawa region are slowly venturing into non-traditional jobs. In 2001, the Ottawa Fire Services implemented a new physical ability testing that would enable them to hire firefighters who are physically capable to do the job. The test, which was designed to attract more women to the service, would be free of gender bias. As a result, the number of women working for the Ottawa Fire Services has increased, with 41 women working today in various departments within the Ottawa Professional Firefighters Association and approximately 38 volunteer female firefighters, out of 628 volunteers, that currently service the rural areas.

Kayla Lefebvre, a pre-service fire education and training student at Algonquin College, is one of the increasing number of women who is looking for a career in the fire service. Before entering the program, Lefebvre got to experience first hand what it’s like to work in the service by volunteering with the Pembroke Volunteer Fire Brigade in North Bay and through a co-op placement at the North Bay Fire Department. Although the younger men at the North Bay Fire Department treated her as part of the team, it wasn’t always easy being a female amongst all the men. “The older guys didn’t want to talk to me, they asked me why I was here,” she says.

“They told me that you have to be strong to do this job and it’s hard work, but eventually they started seeing that I could do most of the stuff, so they started treating me better.”

Dianna McAleer, a professor in the Police & Public Safety Institute at Algonquin College, also sees some of the biases within the fire services. She says the 2-3 women who enter the pre-service fire education and training program each year, feel like they have to be “super women” because they have to prove themselves.

“Fire fighting is definitely a brotherhood, even more so then policing, for the older firefighters,” says McAleer. “It takes a strong woman to break in, I mean mentally strong. You just have so much more work to do than the men to get recognized and respected.”

Lefebvre agrees. “It seems like I work just as hard as the guys, but you have to just push yourself a little more. “

“My boss, Kayla Lefebvre, a pre-service fire education and training student at Algonquin College, offers a perspective from another field. According to data from the 1996 and 2001 Census, the number of women working in construction related fields in the Ottawa region rose 84 per cent between 1996 and 2001. But Wallis, who would like to work in renovation, home design and building construction, says she still felt she had to prove herself to skeptical male colleagues. When she first started working at Home Depot in the lumber and building materials department, “I had to show the guys how good I worked because when they would see a woman coming in and working on the floor, they’d be like, ‘if a girl is working, I really don’t have to work as hard,’ says Wallis. Comparison between sexes seems to be a common thread amongst women in male dominated fields.

Thompson says one of the things he notices with the women in the police foundations program is how they are always comparing themselves to the men. “For a lot of the girls, when I coach them, I say, ‘Look in the mirror, that police force is interested in you. They are interested in you because of who you are and the way you think.’”

“Not everybody is going to be warm to you,” she says. “They are going to question you and your abilities all the time. You have to be able to say to yourself ‘I’m confident, I know what I’m doing, I’m qualified, I passed all the testing,’ and that’s how you have to think of it in any sort of male-oriented field—doesn’t matter what it is.”

She adds, “don’t dwell on that gender issue as much because a lot of times, when people talk to you, they don’t really see gender, they see a police officer.”

One of the hurdles many females have to face when applying for positions is being able to compete with men on all levels, especially physical strength. In 2001, the Ottawa Fire Services modified their physical test, to what they felt would be fairer for males, females and visible minorities. Barbara Yeo, a human resources consultant for Fire Services says strength is one of the problems female applicants have when performing the physical testing. “If you’ve got a woman who is about 120 pounds and adding an extra 75 pounds of extra weight to her frame, to mimic what you are wearing in a day to day fire, such as your bunker gear and your air pack, sometimes it is a strength issue,” says Yeo.

“Having said that, we’ve got female firefighters on the force now that are not that big and they can handle it quite well.”

McAleer adds that they do not relax standards or requirements for women trying to get into the fire service, because deaths could be the result.

Applicants who are looking for a career in the RCMP must also perform a physical ability test, where they must run an obstacle course and perform a physical ability test. “It takes a strong woman to break in, I mean mentally strong. You just have so much more work to do than the men to get recognized and respected.”

Acting Cpl. Marie-Josée Tardif, who is a recruiter for the RCMP, says females typically do well on the obstacle course, but have a harder time in the strength section. Tardif trains every month, with applicants, most of them women, who are having difficulties passing the test. “They are not disqualified if they do not pass the PARE (physical ability test) the first time,” says Tardif. “What I do is train with them and send them home with a list of exercises to do and then they come back a month or two down the road and they try it again. It gives them a way to gauge their progress and what they need to improve.”

Porter says although some people have the impression they lower the physical standards for women in the police force, it’s false because that would be a liability for the service. “If you see an officer, it doesn’t matter if they are male or female, black or white; they all passed the same qualifications, because every year a police officer has to pass their qualifications in their fire arms and defensive tactics,” says Porter. “Those two components you have to pass.”

Another barrier women face when they consider careers that require physical strength, is the long-term effect daily tasks will have on their ability to perform during the later part of their careers, as they enter their forties and fifties. “If you feel that you have it, you should go for it,” says Porter. “Don’t let anybody stop you; you are just as good as the next person or even better.”

Barbara Yeo, a human resources consultant for Fire Services, says females typically do well on the obstacle course, but have a harder time in the strength section. - Why does the text suggest that women are facing barriers in certain fields? How do these barriers manifest themselves? How do women overcome these barriers to enter these fields? - What are the implications of these barriers for gender equality and workplace diversity? - How do women deal with the challenge of proving themselves in traditionally male-dominated fields? - What strategies can be employed to address these barriers and promote a more inclusive workplace environment?
Brian Eng proves that nursing isn’t just for women

CINDY ORTIT

As Brian Eng walks into class, he sits down, takes out his pen and binder, and patiently waits for the day's lecture to begin. He looks around. To his left, a group of female students discuss what they’re going to wear to next week's nursing pub. To his right, one girl is telling another about 150 other female students scattered in the lecture hall at the University of Ottawa.

Behind him, a girl wonders whether the new students who entered male-dominated professions. In fact, we are so devoted to the issues of women that enter male-dominated professions. In fact, we are so devoted to the issues of women that enter male-dominated professions. In fact, we are so devoted to the issues of women that enter male-dominated professions. In fact, we are so devoted to the issues of women that enter male-dominated professions. In fact, we are so devoted to the issues of women that enter male-dominated professions. In fact, we are so devoted to the issues of women that enter male-dominated professions. In fact, we are so devoted to the issues of women that enter male-dominated professions. In fact, we are so devoted to the issues of women that enter male-dominated professions.

He and Eng are among the few men in the third-year nursing class.

I’ve seen a lot of negativity—even just joking negativity from a lot of people our age. Our modern society has taken a keen interest into the sociologic and economic issues of women that enter male-dominated professions. In fact, we are so devoted to the subject that academic, statistical and econometric studies on women in male-dominat-ed areas are a dime a dozen.

But what happens when a walking Y chromosome finds his way into nursing, a field that is typically seen as a woman’s line of work? Brian Eng, 23, offers some insight into the world of nursing from a man’s point of view.

Like many other students who choose to go into nursing, Eng says he entered the profession because he loves health and medicare. "I’ve just always loved the idea of healthcare and to me this was the most fitting way into the system."

He says being able to provide the help and support patients need is part of who he is.

Eng thinks men don’t give nursing much consideration because of the negative stigma associated with the profession.

“I’ve seen a lot of negativity,” he says. "Even just joking negativity from a lot of people our age. Maybe it’s because they have the wrong idea of what nurses do. I don’t know. Maybe there isn’t enough public education on that, but I think correcting some of those negative ideas would probably improve the male-to-female ratio in nursing.”

Eng also mentions that it’s not necessarily that males don’t enter nursing, but rather they tend to use it as a launching pad to get into other areas of healthcare. "There’s a lot more males in certain areas of nursing—ICU, emergency — those type of places where there’s a lot of action," he says.

Still, Eng says he believes it will take some time before the profession is no longer viewed as a women’s profession.

“I think it’s become more of an option for a lot of guys. It will take some time to be viewed as a profession that isn’t associated with just females, but at least it’s starting to look a little better for males,” said Eng.

“Nursing is just for women”

I think people with mental health issues have so much experience and material to draw from. The neurotic stuff becomes your strength in comedy.

Chuckling the blues away

JENNY POTTER

Depression can be funny, suicide comical, overdoing hilarious and electroshock therapy guaranteed to make you chuckle.

Gram material for most of us, but on stage Heather Bruce has people rolling in the aisles with laughter as she jokes about depression and makes light of how the mental illness crippled her life.

Last year, Bruce jumped at an opportunity to join the Ottawa chapter of Stand-Up for Mental Health, a comedy program designed to give confidence to those with mental illness—and also to educate the public.

“If you can laugh at it, then maybe it is not meant to be hidden away,” says Bruce.

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Practical advice — what do you do? Eng suggests that it will take some time before the profession is no longer viewed as a women’s profession.

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Practical advice — what do you do? Eng suggests that it will take some time before the profession is no longer viewed as a women’s profession.
I'm still not really sure why I took the test. I'm often late, and I always use condoms. There was nothing to make me think that I might be pregnant. Nothing but a tiny, almost imperceptible twitch in the back of my mind.

The two little pink lines appeared immediately. Still, I was in denial—they tell you to wait three minutes to let the results show up. Maybe, if I waited three minutes, that terrifying second pink stripe would disappear. It didn't.

And then I fell apart.

Mind spinning. Can't get my breath. Pacing the length of the small, dark apartment. Crying. Yelling. Punching the walls until my knuckles swelled and bled.

I thought he might consider abortion an indefensible sin. Either way, I was certain his reaction would be negative.

Mitch showed up less than 10 minutes after I called. I sat him down on the couch in my cramped, dingy living room. I looked into his worried face, and was overcome with guilt and remorse. I knew I hadn't done anything wrong. But still, here was this man who had been so good to me, who I had become so attached to in such a short time, sitting across from me, anxiously waiting to hear what was wrong and how he could help. And there I was, about to drop a huge bomb.

I began to stutter. I started with "Oh God, I don't even know how to say this..." and then a couple of versions of "I wish I didn't have to tell you this..."

Finally, I just blurted it out.

"I'm pregnant!"

He didn't say anything. He looked at me for a moment, and then pulled me into his lap, wrapping his arms around me. And I cried. I cried like I have never cried in front of another human being before, the kind of crying that makes your whole body shake and leaves your face all swollen and red, covered with saltwater and snot.

Mitch waited for the outright sobbing to dwindle into a sniveling whimper before he spoke.

"Have you decided what you want to do?" he asked quietly, I hadn't.

"This is totally up to you," he told me. "Whatever you decide to do, I'll support you."

That was the last thing I expected to hear, and I have never been so pleased to be wrong.

It took me almost a week to get past the initial phase of alternating between irrational disbelief and sheer panic.

As that subsided, I began to weigh the options.

Every logical thought opposed the idea of having the baby. What the hell would I do with a baby? The idea of spending the next couple of years as a slave to the bodily functions of some tiny, crying person depressed the crap out of me.

The pregnancy itself is miserable—the puking, the dizziness, the hormone-induced rages and crying fits and the fact that you can't drink. As for the actual birthing, I can't think of anything more horrifying and disgusting. And don't bother telling me how beautiful and natural it is—I've already been told that by every sugarcoated, mealy-mouthed pregnancy-related publication I've had the misfortune of picking up.

The freewheeling, lone wolf lifestyle I had planned for myself would certainly be out of the question. I would never be able to do anything on a whim—every outing, every undertaking would require careful planning.

The freewheeling, lone wolf lifestyle I had planned for myself would certainly be out of the question. I would have to live in a decent neighbourhood, have a decent job. I would have to run a stable household with rules and discipline. I would never be able to do anything on a whim—every outing, every undertaking would require careful planning. And I would have to keep it up for at least 18 years.

But every once in a while, my mind would take a break from its spinning, and for just a moment, I would be calm. And in these quiet moments, I would feel something, some strange pang of affection for this tiny creature growing in my abdomen. It wasn't enough to make me want to have children, but it was enough to convince me not to have an abortion.

And so the decision was made—I'm having a baby.

Wish me luck.
Hold the sauce please

A night out with friends doesn’t mean you have to drink alcohol or use drugs to have fun. Some know how to just say no.

photo by Michela Rosano

How many of us start our Sunday mornings with a hangover and a conversation beginning, “Man, I was so wasted last night!”

Since their 19th birthdays—some even before then—students have given in to curiosity. However, it seems more and more teenagers are abandoning the party lifestyle as they mature into adulthood.

Samy Osman, a 24-year-old aspiring actor, is one of them. He is a socially active youth choosing to live a sober lifestyle in an intoxicated society.

“I go out a lot and I hang out with a lot of people. Most of them drink but it doesn’t stop me from hanging out with them,” says Osman.

He has never used drugs and his only experience with alcohol was when he was dared to drink a strongly mixed drink. “After two hours I felt fine, like I never drank at all,” says Osman. “It was nothing.”

For Osman, being Muslim meant his sobriety began for religious reasons, but became something more.

“I follow a religious influence and a moral choice, but I think it’s more than that. You see what alcohol does to people.”

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, an estimated 1,224 to 1,500 deaths are due to alcohol or drug related crashes in Canada each year.

“I can see how (drinking) can be fun, but I can see how it can be negative. It screws with your head. I’m the type of person who likes to know he’s in control,” says Osman.

He is still into the club scene, and when others see his refusal to drink it gives them a new view on sobriety.

“A lot of people see me as a role model. A friend of mine who has been through depression and troubles with alcohol sees me as the ideal person,” says Osman. “I did well in school, I got a good job—I’m doing well.”

Like Osman, software engineer Yohannes Tedesse, 22, has lead a life mostly of sobriety. He stayed completely sober during high school in order to concentrate on his studies, only drinking for the first time on graduation night.

“Drinking was a mix of curiosity and keeping a promise to my friends,” says Tedesse. “I never had that curiosity about drugs. I never felt the need to do them. The reason for that is I felt I could still have fun without doing drugs.”

Finally, Osman gives us an insightful perspective on this sober social revolution that may give us a new start to our Sunday morning conversations.

“Alcohol has been taken out of all aspects of our lives that require concentration ... but in our social lives we feel like we need it. Why don’t we think our social lives deserve just as much concentration?”
From riches to rags

Why a former CEO now calls the Mission home

JENNIFER MCINTOSH

Unlike most 63-year-olds who plan their retirement or play with their grandkids, Murray Victor “Vic” Blake spends his days trying to figure out where his next meal is going to come from.

Blake was president and CEO of Can Corp., a mortgage brokering company, in the ’80s. He was wealthy, living in a six-room mansion, and driving around in his Cadillac. Now he lives at 35 Waller St., better known to some as the Mission.

“It is very strange to be panhandling for nickels, dimes and quarters when I used to make $500,000 a year,” says Blake.

Blake’s company got into trouble in the early ‘90s when another employee started embezzling funds. The Financial Services Commission of Ontario shut down the company. The Commission alleged that mortgages were being written for homes at a higher value than they were worth.

After the loss of his company, Blake tried to get his mortgage brokers license renewed so that he could continue in his career, but says that because of an altercation with a police officer his reputation was impugned.

“If it is very strange to be panhandling for nickels, dimes and quarters when I used to make $500,000 a year.”

He signed false affidavits, one for a search warrant for the house that accused me of being part of a murder conspiracy and that Can Corp. had been a money laundering front for Pablo Escobar,” said Blake.

Without being able to do a job that he loved, Blake began to found. After about two years of working various sales jobs he decided to go on the Ontario Disability Support Program. “I had lost everything,” says Blake. “Now I have anxiety, depression, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart problems.”

Blake is also a recovering alcoholic and addict. He is a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. He has been clean for about 29 years and although he doesn’t go to meetings anymore, he still keeps in contact with the many people he sponsored.

“Sponsorship is sharing your success in recovery with someone who is new,” said Blake. “It’s mostly about being a good friend and listening.”

After his parents died, Blake moved into their condo and relied heavily on friends and family to help him find supplementary work because the money he got from ODSP simply wasn’t enough.

After the loss of a network company for professional poker players, Blake didn’t have enough to make his condo fee payments and ended up living with a young woman who he had met through NA.

“It was very difficult for me because it was an active crack house,” he says. “They used to call me ‘grandpa home.’”

Blake is now one of the 9,010 homeless in Canada and is on a waiting list for social housing. The waiting list is very long and the number of applicants has gone up almost 24 per cent since 2004.

Blake describes his first few days at the Mission as very scary. “The place is always exploding into violence,” he says. “They would go outside with these black leather gloves on and you knew there was going to be a fight.”

The Mission has a capacity to provide shelter for 225 men each night and provides services to reintegrate these men into society.

In the future, Blake says he wants to concentrate on getting housing, and figures that once he gets his life sorted out, he’ll try to put some of his experiences on paper, in the form of a book of memoirs.

“I’ve seen the world from the upper echelons of power to the lowest. I had a lot of experiences in my life I think people would want to read about.”

American nightmare

Forget reaching for the stars, average is the new supernova

MATT JAY

There’s an ethos that runs through the core of North American culture which holds aloft the notion anyone can be a millionaire, anyone can be the star of the show. You could call it the American Dream, but Canadians play by these rules too. Fame and fortune are held up as the pillars of success and anything less is deemed a failure.

Canadians can surely identify with this mantra. One need only look at the success of shows like Canadian Idol or The Apprentice to see how the Dream is alive and well north of the 49th parallel. We gravitate to stardom, sworn to riches.

It need not be this way. Surely those who have endured the Canadian public education system understand well the premium placed on ability and effort.

But many lives have been wasted putting untold effort into dreams which hardly have a hope of success due to a lack of ability.

Those of us who pour hours of time and countless dollars into the pit of post-secondary education should know this well.

There is no silver lining beyond graduation day. Your job will be the same as my job, the same as his job and the same as her job.

We now pay money we don’t have for jobs our parents walked into with a high school diploma.

Is this cause for despair? Is there no way out? Will we run like hamsters on the wheel of life, racing for a distant goal forever out of reach?

No, my friends, this is not the end. There is life after ONAP. Embrace your inner slack: expect less.

Those who dream of renting town homes in reasonably crime free neighbourhoods are the happy. Those who pine for a slightly used Honda Civic are truly content.

The road to happiness is paved in silver, because it looks nice and is reasonably priced. It may tarnish a little, but a little Silver goes a long way.

Let the fools spend hours and hours of time in the library, frantically memorizing facts and figures they will forget the moment the exam is over.

Let the deluded suck up to the boss, always with the hope that a moment of managerial clarity will propel them into the corporate stratosphere.

Let us be mediocre.

Let us be proud.

Let us do enough to get by.

Let us leave the moment our shift is over.

Let us live life.

A family only needs the bills paid, a man or woman only needs enough to get through to the next payday.

The doctor needs the mechanic when his car breaks, a plumber when the toilet backs up and an electrician when the lights go out.

The mechanic has OHIP.

Let the Revolution of the Average begin.

Jay job that we should expect lies in life, stop pursuing the American Dream and put in as little effort as we need to.
A stolen identity

Every year, thousands of Canadians have their identities stolen without even knowing it: until they have to deal with the consequences

KATIE McHALE

What if there was another “you”? Using hijacked personal information someone has opened accounts, racked up debts and left a trail of financial ruin—leaving you to deal with the fallout.

Almost 8,000 Canadians were victims of identity theft in 2006, according to PhoneBusters, the Canadian anti-fraud call center that collects complaints from fraud victims. Since 2004, there have been over 30,000 victims in Canada and more than $40 million lost.

Wallet theft and dumpster diving are common tactics for thieves. “When trash is on the curb and in plain sight, you don’t need a warrant for that,” said Brent MacLean, a Toronto security consultant and identity theft expert.

Shredding all papers containing sensitive information is wise. Keeping important documents like birth certificates in a safe place and not in your wallet is also important.

MacLean said changing passwords regularly is a good idea and so is checking your credit report a few times a year to make sure the cards listed are yours and the limits and balances on them are correct. Credit monitoring services like creditalert.com will notify you of changes to your credit file so you can put a stop to fraudulent activity quickly.

Be careful to whom you divulge information and never be shy about asking questions. “Be politely assertive and just ask, ‘Why do you need this information?’ and they need to tell you,” said MacLean. “Only two [parties] by law can ask for your social insurance number—internal revenue for tax purposes and your employer. Nobody else.”

You may be a victim if: creditors call you to deny or approve credit that you have no knowledge of, you have not received expected bank statements in the mail (indicating your mailing address has been changed or the documents were stolen), or agencies call to collect money on an account you didn’t open.

There is no single target group for thieves, however MacLean said people who are not computer savvy are at risk of falling for Internet scams like phishing.

“Phishing is not like other Internet attacks—the attacks are not targeted to your computer, they are targeted to you, the user of that computer,” said Mohammad Mannan, a computer security Ph.D. student at Carleton University. Phishing occurs most commonly via instant messages and e-mails. The message will look like it is from a legitimate company and urge you to log in to your account to update information. It will usually contain a link leading to a spoof website of a company or bank that looks virtually identical to their real site. Users may be fooled into logging in and entering sensitive data; meanwhile thieves have intercepted the information.

Do not rely on software to identify a fake page. “The best defense is your common sense,” Mannan said. “If someone asks you to reveal information [online] you should treat it as a hostile e-mail. Don’t act on something that someone else has asked you to act on.”

MacLean said that any time a personal transaction occurs over the Internet there should be a picture of a lock somewhere on the page or an “https” in the URL to signify it is a secured session.

“If you don’t see that lock or you don’t see a secured session then you want to think twice before giving information,” he said.

Any messages or links suspected to be scams, or from unknown sources, should be deleted and not opened, as they could contain viruses for spying. “When you really go to your bank website and do your online banking, it will capture your account number,” Mannan explained.

Phishing can occur all over the Internet so discretion is key. “It is not limited to fake e-mail,” Mannan said. “It’s everywhere.”

Once personal information is in the hands of thieves it can lead to a broad spectrum of criminal activity, according to Melanie Minos of the Canadian Bankers Association. It is not restricted to financial crimes like credit card or student loans fraud. Thieves can commit more serious crimes and use another’s identity to mask their own.

PhoneBusters advises victims to contact the two major credit bureaus (Equifax and TransUnion) and place fraud alerts on their files to prevent more credit being extended in their name. They should also file a police report and alert PhoneBusters about their case.

“No one thinks they’re going to be a victim so the best way to reduce victimization is to just stay informed and be very careful,” said MacLean. “Don’t be paranoid, but you can be neurotic in a very healthy way. To repair the identity can take years, but [steal- ing it] can only take minutes.”

HOW TO STOP IT FROM HAPPENING TO YOU:

1. Give out no more than the minimum personal information.
2. Be especially careful with your SIN.
3. Don’t give your credit card number over the phone or by e-mail unless you know the method is secure.
4. Take advantage of technologies that enhance your security.
5. Notify your creditors immediately if your credit card or identification is lost or stolen.
6. Choose difficult passwords. Memorize them and change them often.
7. Be careful what you throw out. Burn or shred documents that contain personal information.

Source: Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
Not too many students have had a telephone thrown at their head, but Ashley Hunter has. The public administration and business administration student at the University of Ottawa, who has worked in a few retail jobs, had that experience during her employment at Bell World.

“One day this gentleman came into the store and he was unhappy with his phone. He launched it from the entrance of the store, across the desk and hit me with it,” says Hunter.

And she’s not the only student that has had to deal with the stress of school and a part-time job.

Long hours, small wages, unpleasant customers and demanding bosses all affect the sanity of students today—not to mention their school work.

What does Jenny Loughran, a linguistics student at the University of Ottawa, say about working in retail?

“Don’t.” But if you have to, Loughran advises to “just make sure you lay down the law and you’re like ‘I’m a student, I can only work this many hours, during my exams I can work less,’ and before you get into it, set that precedent.”

Loughran, who worked part-time in retail for part of her post-secondary education says the only thing she liked about her jobs was the employee discount.

For hours at a time, retail workers are stuck behind counters, racks and registers. On their feet for all but 15 to 20 minutes of break time, customer service workers are often faced with impatient, annoying and sometimes downright irate clients.

“The hours are so, so long,” says Hunter. “And you’re on your feet usually for so, so long and a lot of the time there’s a lot of pressure to accomplish sales goals.”

Hunter says if she absolutely had to, she would work another retail job, but that she would prefer to work as a cashier rather than a sales associate.

“When you’re a sales associate in a clothing store, you get paid and then half your money ends up going back to the company because you have to buy clothes,” she says. “I’d try and get something that didn’t involve me having to get the product all the time.”

Caitlin Zywotko, an office administration student finishing her first year at Algonquin College, was once unlucky enough to get a particularly unforgiving, uncooperative customer.

“When I worked at Suzy Shier, there was a customer that didn’t like the return policy,” says Zywotko.

The customer began to argue with her and her manager, saying they should call the police because she was going to start a fist-fight if they didn’t return her money.

“I think she was joking,” says Zywotko, “but she was still being really aggressive.”

On the bright side, retail experience is a painful blessing that gives you the inspiration needed to stay in school and work so that after you graduate you’ll have a job you actually like to work hard at.
The majority of my friends are male and I haven't slept with any of them. Not because I'm not attracted to them or they aren't attracted to me, but because I hold their friendship in high regard. I understand drunken nights happen and 'what ifs' are explored, but when it comes down to it, men and women can have genuine friendships without the complication of sex. Not only would it be wrong to say that men and women can't be just friends, it is ignorant to imply that men are only attracted to women, and women are only attracted to men.

Frankly, I think it's silly," says Christabelle Sethna, women's studies professor at the University of Ottawa. "Not everybody is heterosexually attracted."

Rob Nettleton, a 19-year-old professional writing student at Algonquin College, agrees. As a gay man, Nettleton deals with stereotypes daily, but for him friendship is more than just the anatomy of a person.

"I believe that true friendships involve people with a genuine interest, investment and concern for the well being of others," says Nettleton. "Some men and women aren't able to accept that a guy and a girl are just friends, and gossip starts flourishing. From a gay perspective, it's just the same way—except me being friends with a straight male, or another gay male. Does it mean I'm attracted to them? Does it mean I want to have a relationship with them? No, it simply means that I have befriended them, and that we're simply just friends."

Sethna also notes that saying men and women cannot be friends is holding complete disregard for genuine friendships. I, for example, currently live with a guy I've known for eight years. My roommate, Andrew Sernoskie, is one of my best friends. We know everything about each other and the difference in gender has never been an issue.

"Hooking up never crossed my mind because we are such good friends," says Sernoskie. "Some people you become friends with for the friendship, not to sleep with them."
Amanda Saffioti gets the low-down on student debt from a credit counsellor who offers her two cents for getting out of the RED

“Get a free 67’s blanket when you sign up for a Mastercard.” That phrase still makes me cringe. It was that “free” blanket that landed me $800 in debt.

Sound familiar? Even if it doesn’t, you’ve probably had your share of deals with the devil. For some students though, debt is a little more serious than a spontaneous shopping spree every now and then.

Adam Downey, a 21-year-old psychology student at the University of Ottawa, knows how it feels to be weighed down by debt. Now in his third year, Downey already feels the pressures of paying back his student loan.

“With credit cards, it’s more of a self control thing,” says Downey. “But a student loan is a necessity for me. Without it, I couldn’t go to school.”

Downey believes the problem with student debt is also the fault of the system, not just the student. He referred to some of his friends as “living proof” of the damage of interest, and who have accumulated over $50,000 debt in just four years.

“It separates the well-off from the poor who have to spend ten years of their lives paying back—which is ridiculous,” he says.

When students find themselves thousands in the hole, Monique Parisian, manager of the Ottawa branch of Credit Counselling Services of Eastern Ontario, suggests credit counselling. “We do all sorts of management counselling,” says Parisian, “from people who don’t know how to budget to debt management programs for people who don’t want to go bankrupt.”

The counsellors will do a thorough assessment of your debt and income and try to get you on a clear path out of the red.

“As a professional credit counsellor, Parisian offers quick tips for students who are finding themselves deep in debt:

- Limit your use of credit cards. Think of it as cash, so when you pay for something with your credit card, you can pay it off right away.
- Never pay the minimum. Almost half your payment could end up being interest. If you only pay the minimum, your debt will keep accumulating.
- Be wary of offers like ‘Don’t pay until 2012’ for two reasons: It actually hurts your credit score, since the bureau looks at it as outstanding debt, and they’re often extremely high interest.
- Limit the amount of student loan you get. Don’t take more than your annual income.
- You can apply for interest relief if you haven’t found a job or can’t make payments, but don’t take more than your annual income.

The problem is, schools don’t spend a lot of time teaching students how to deal with credit,” says Parisian, adding when they get into college or university, they get offered all types of loans and credit cards but don’t know how to budget properly.