York University has been caught in a firestorm over its decision to side with a male student over his wish to be excused from a group project because of his claim that his religious beliefs prevented him from working with women. This case has again reignited the age-old debate between secularism and religious values and between inclusiveness and diversity, debates that university administrations have historically been plagued with. Many have found the student’s request and York’s decision to be completely at odds with the progressive ideals of feminism.

Of course, religious freedom is one of the hallmarks of liberal democracy and a celebrated Canadian value. However, many commentators have denounced this incident as an affront to women’s rights. The faculty member involved, Professor J. Paul Grayson, a Sociology professor, defended his refusal to accommodate the student by citing his fear of being an “accessory to sexism.” This charge of sexism has gained ammunition and has dominated the national narrative. But, is this really such a clear-cut case of gender discrimination as headlines and social media platforms have been quick to assert?

Structural sexism is encountered every day in our universities, offices and homes, and we should fight it everywhere. However, separating men and women cannot be necessarily assumed to be an assertion of male supremacy or in the reverse, female inferiority. Certainly, there are entire states and cultures that segregate sexes based on such bigoted views and while tempting, it is premature, unfair and myopic to come to that conclusion in this case.

In some religious communities, gender separation is viewed as a way of encouraging modest conduct between the sexes, and accordingly, it is practiced by both men and women alike. The idea is then not that the men or women think association with the opposite sex leads to defilement, but that limiting the mixing of unmarried men and women helps prevent sexual distraction and temptation. Furthermore, physical separation may reflect a personal preference, as in women-only spaces like gyms where women feel more comfortable and safe. Similarly, single-sex schools are not establishments that deem women inferior to men or vice-versa, but rather as some educationalists argue, boys and girls often perform better when separated as such, free from distraction in co-ed.
Home mail delivery: feeding the flame

THE HOUSE of Commons has returned from its winter break, its inhabitants once again seeking to feed the fires of democracy with all manner of fuel. There are the logs: the big, meaty issues that represent the long-term interests of all Canadians. These are slow-burners: natural resource exploitation, income inequality, sovereign debt. Naturally, these have been absent from the front page since long before your Editors in Chief became eligible to vote, and we don’t expect they shall return. The best we can hope for these days is kindling: the small chunks of spongy wood that crackle and spew tiny embers all over your campsite, representing bite-sized issues like abortion and foreign civil wars.

Unfortunately, NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair has opted for, if you follow our metaphor, kerosene: a splash that catches easily, burns brightly and warmly regardless of the weather, but sputters out just as quickly. Unless used to speed the dying of damp logs, the use of accelerants is wasteful and gratuitous: a cheap thrill.

On January 27, Mulcair announced that he intends to force the Commons to vote on the termination of Canada Post’s urban home mail delivery service. The Crown corporation’s five year plan is to slowly phase out urban home delivery, shrink its workforce by up to 8 000 people, and immediately increase the price of postage to $1 for individual stamps and 85¢ when stamps are purchased in packs. The changes came about as Canada Post projected a $104 million loss in 2014’s second quarter.

The opposition to the changes is typically Canadian. In the basic sense, Canadians are cartoonishly conservative, throwing fits when faced with change. When MP Peter Stoffer first started repeatedly introducing a Private Member’s Bill calling for the abolition of the penny years before the Mint finally did away with it, a friend of one of us who worked for a government MP communicated that the official government position on the Bill was that the penny was part of our history and should stay. This in the face of evidence showing that the cost of penny production outpaced the coin’s value, and that people routinely lost them, hoarded them, and even threw them away rather than using them.

When Parliament passed a law last year that finally ended the prohibition on interprovincial sales of wine, Premier Wynne’s principled position on the matter is that she doesn’t want to change the law, and that’s that. No reason, just “no”.

So no one was surprised when Mr. Mulcair raised a stink about home mail delivery: because regardless of political stripe, Canadians freak out about change. Nonetheless, for what it’s worth, the Obiter Dicta encourages Canadians everywhere to ignore the hysterics and find some clarity about the mail. Ask yourself: why do we need home mail delivery? Keep in mind that Canada Post does not propose eliminating postal service altogether, it just wants to consolidate mail delivery into community mailboxes in urban areas (rural home delivery will continue). In other words, the difference between the status quo and the future is a couple hundred metres’ walk. We’re not going to pretend that every single Canadian is as mobile as the next, but the idea that placing someone’s mail (most of which is junk mail) in a box at the end of the street is somehow going to render it unreachable is simply preposterous. We can all spare the inconvenience for the sake of saving hundreds of millions of dollars per year.

The other concern, which is less cartoonish and more typical of New Democrats, is the 6 000 lost jobs. No one is unsympathetic. Unfortunately, the fact of the matter is that Canada Post is already extending the transition over five years at great expense to the public, and expects to lose 15 000 employees through attrition over that period anyway. In other words, the job losses are a wash. There is no business or policy justification for shoring up thousands of positions that could be phased out through attrition so that we can continue to pay people to do things that no one wants them to do at a loss of $100 million per quarter.

To top it all off, you can still send a letter from one end of the second-largest country in the world to the other in three days flat...for a dollar. It boggles the mind that anyone would think that this is not good enough when you can send the same information the same distance in less than a second for free. Canadians, it’s time to put on your big boy boots, hike down to your community mailbox, and pick up your mail. As for Mr. Mulcair: if he’s looking for something to burn, no one reads our print edition any more. ◆
Nobody puts Audrey in a corner

CITLALLY MACIEL
News Editor

LAST OCTOBER, an 89-year-old lady named Audrey Tobias was acquitted for not filing out her census form. As some of you may know, Ms. Tobias did not forget, but in fact, purposely decided not to complete the form.

According to section 31 of the Statistics Act, it is an offence to “refuse or neglect” to fill out a census form or to return it by the date and in the form required, or to knowingly give false or misleading information. Such offence carries a penalty, on summary conviction, to a fine of no more than $500 or to imprisonment for up to three months or to both.

It is unknown whether Ms. Tobias knew about the penalty when she made her decision or whether she learned about it after. Ms. Tobias said she would not pay the fine because doing so would amount to an admission of guilt. However, she said she was willing to go to jail before making any kind of concession. She even said she was curious about what it would be like to spend some time locked up. Now that is a tough granny. Or perhaps, she has been watching Orange is the New Black way too much.

But, in all seriousness, why would a sweet 89-year-old lady prefer to go to jail rather than filing out her census form? Well, Ms. Tobias is a peace activist. When she learned that the software used to process the census is from Lockheed Martin, a company self-described as “the prime contractor for the modernization of the combat systems on-board the Halifax Class frigates,” she was not very happy.

Ms. Tobias’ lawyer argued that enforcing the provision would violate her freedom of expression and freedom of conscience. Although Judge Khawly (the presiding judge) did not accept this argument, he acquitted Ms. Tobias on the basis that she lacked intent. He also sent a message to the people at the Justice Department saying that whoever decided to prosecute Ms. Tobias needed to take a course in marketing.

While I was happy to hear that Ms. Tobias was acquitted, I take issue with the basis upon which this case was decided. Apparently, Ms. Tobias struggled to remember the exact circumstances surrounding her failure to fill out the form. Thus, her testimony was inconclusive to determine that there had been actual intent.

Now, does the section not say that an offence is committed when a person refuses or neglects to carry out the duties set out by the Act? So, even if Ms. Tobias had not consciously refused to fill out the form (which she did, she said so herself!), she neglected to do it. Therefore, she is guilty! But that is not the point. The point is that it is disrespectful to brush aside her convictions and her desire to make a political point just because she is elderly. It is disrespectful, condescending and paternalistic.

To be clear, I am not advocating for the incarceration of Ms. Audrey Tobias. I also understand the position of Judge Khawly. If I had been in his shoes, I would have done the same. I mean, unless Ms. Tobias had done something heinous, how can a person have the heart to do otherwise? So I see why he interpreted the law and assessed the evidence the way he did.

My point though is that the heroic acts (yes people, heroic, because she was willing to go to jail) of Ms. Tobias were disregarded on the basis that she is elderly and on the assumption that her memory is failing. Granted, she did get media attention and got her point across. But, when you look at this case and compare it with the case of Janet Churnin, who was taken to court for the same reasons, you will see what I am talking about.

At first, when I learned about Ms. Churnin, I was irritated that some woman had tried to imitate Ms. Tobias. I have no patience for copycats. There is only one Audrey Tobias! But then, I found out that in fact 54 people had been originally charged with the same offence. I guess Ms. Churnin had been one of them. However, Ms. Churnin’s case was decided differently. She has been ordered to complete 50 hours of community service and given one year to do so.

» continued on page 14
Capitalism, inequality, and imminent collapse

MICHAEL CAPITANO
Staff Writer

KEVIN O’LEARY’S recent comments on about The Obiter Dicta matters. Dean Sossin to...

THUMBS UP

The latest Rob Ford video

the latest Rob Ford video

» continued on page 15

The Obiter Dicta
How much does justice cost?

CANADIAN FORUM ON CIVIL JUSTICE

WHAT ARE the costs of providing civil justice to Canadians? What are the costs of not providing access to civil justice for Canadians? These two questions are at the heart of one of the exciting projects underway at the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice (CFCJ). “The Cost of Justice: Weighing the Cost of Fair and Effective Resolution to Legal Problems” is a 5-year, SSHRC funded, interdisciplinary research project. The project seeks to fill the current void of evidence-based information on legal, economic, and social costs and benefits of pursuing, or not pursuing, justice through various dispute resolution and prevention pathways.

The Cost of Justice Project is guided by the following key questions:

• What does the civil justice system cost (institutionally and to individual litigants)?
• Who does it serve?
• How well is it meeting the needs of users?
• What is the price of failing to meet the legal needs of Canadians?

Recognizing that a lack of access to justice has costs beyond economic costs is one of the guiding principles of the Cost of Justice Project. The "cost" of justice (or lack thereof) includes more than pricey legal and court fees; it includes things like missed days of work and opportunity costs. Additionally, there are numerous social costs that accrue when unresolved legal problems multiply and cluster.

To assess these costs, The Cost of Justice project brings together academic scholars, representatives of the public, and all sectors in the justice community to develop methods that measure and analyze – in legal, economic and social terms – the costs of providing or, alternatively, not providing access to justice. The outcomes of this project will have direct implications for access to justice policy and practices in the courts by the legal profession, the broader justice community, and socio-legal scholarship throughout Canada.

The important need for this research has been recently recognized by the Chief Justice of Canada, who – when referring to the Cost of Justice project – stated, “This research ... by the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice will be essential in helping us understand the true extent of the problem of cost and how it impacts on the justice system. I believe that it will prove to be of great assistance to ... identify concrete solutions to the problem of access to justice” (Rt. Hon. Beverley McLachlin, P.C., 2011).

The objectives and research of the Cost of Justice project are key to discovering the extent of the access to justice problem in terms of costs, and finding new, creative solutions to improve access to justice in Canada.

To find out more about the exciting and innovative research happening at the CFCJ, visit www.cfcj-fcjc.org.

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No Smoke, No Fire: Why Those Opposed to e-Cigarettes Have No Argument and No Fun

ROBERT WATKINS
Contributor

IT IS a widely held belief that addiction and pleasure make for poor bedfellows. Addicts are portrayed as wretched and joyless creatures: they are pale-faced and sunken-eyed hungry ghosts, stalking the urban landscape, wholly preoccupied with the addiction before them, deriving no pleasure from its fleeting abeyance. The architects of this paradigm are the medical authorities, who tell us that addiction is a disease and the addict a victim. Addicts are worthy of our compassion - perhaps - and medical treatment, but certainly not our admiration.

For my generation, the face of addiction is the sallow faced heroin addict — a half human and a half existence lived somewhere between oblivion and agonizing sobriety. This portrayal of the junkie has been so successful from the standpoint of the medical establishment that few of us who contemplate the lot of the heroin addict will ever try to imagine the pleasures enjoyed by the recreational user. It is no accident that most of us imagine complete physical dependency manifests after a single inexorable taste. How else could we rationalize the decision to continue using if indeed it is not a decision at all? For users, we imagine, the half life of the addict must seem preferable, albeit for just a moment, to whatever awful reality they are escaping.

Heroin is bad and it will ruin your life. But this is codswallop!

In fact, heroin is an unspeakably good drug. Heroin itself is completely safe. When its purity can be guaranteed (which, incidentally, is made impossible only by its criminalization) risk of death is virtually eliminated. Heroin is not easily addictive: one can mainline heroin several times a week for many months before developing the crushing physical dependency. If used responsibly, and intelligently, heroin will provide the recreational user with the most pleasurable experience they are ever likely to enjoy.

Irvine Welsh, the house music loving author of Trainspotting, advises us to “take the best orgasm you’ve ever had...multiply it by a thousand, and you’re still nowhere near it.” Others have described the initial rush as a twenty minute free fall into an endless plume of feathers.

Sounds rather good if you ask me.

And yet, the spectre of addiction has completely obscured heroin’s remarkable sensual qualities. More so than any other narcotic, heroin’s undeserved reputation has been instrumental in shaping our attitudes towards pleasure and addiction, ensuring the two words never appear in the same sentence: the addict has no fun.

The campaign against cigarettes has drawn on this misconception. The medical authority’s voice has been so prevalent in the dialogue on smoking that the pleasures accompanying a healthy nicotine addiction - indeed, necessary - are never acknowledged. And yet, the pleasures are very real.

They are also very wonderful.

The first smoke of the day. Lighting up after a sumptuous meal. The unrivalled enjoyment which is added by a glass of beer or wine. Non-smokers hear of none of these joys. Perhaps they are incapable of imagining them, the poor, misguided devils.

This we see most clearly in the response to the heaven-sent e-cigarette. Invented by a Chinese pharmacist as he watched his father slowly die from lung cancer, the e-cig delivers nicotine to the lungs without combusting tobacco leaves. As such, it does not produce cigarette tar - the thick carcinogenic resin that adheres to smoker’s lungs, slowly bleeding mutagenic compounds into the surrounding tissues, creating potentially malignant mutations at a rate of one to every fifteen cigarettes smoked.

Smokers, then, can rejoice. I can attest to the fact that a good delivery system offers all the enjoyment and the sensation of a good smoke. What’s more, the e-liquid (the nicotine contain-
Paranormal Activity: The Boring One

DANIEL STYLER
Staff Writer

ABOUT FIFTEEN minutes into Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones, a presumably troubled man three rows behind me angrily exited the near-empty theatre at Carlton Cinema. I think he muttered “bullshit” before he left. He wasn’t done, though, returning shortly thereafter, only to leave again ten minutes later. This time he was even angrier, saying something like “Fucking home movies” before leaving for good. My mind drifted from the less-than-stellar movie I was watching for a minute or two. I wanted to know more about this guy and his expectations for the movie. Did he think that this version of Paranormal Activity was going to be filmed differently than the rest because of the colon in its title? God, I hope this didn’t ruin his day. That would be sad.

The Marked Ones marks the fifth installment of the Paranormal Activity series. I have not seen the previous four, and have no explanation for why I chose to watch this one, except to say that sometimes I enjoy watching bad movies, and I assumed this one would be bad. It was.

The movie “stars” (and I use this term loosely) Andrew Jacobs as Jesse, a recent high school graduate who begins to experience powers and exhibit strange behaviour following the death of his mysterious next-door neighbour, Anna, the victim of an apparent attack by Oscar, the valedictorian at Jesse’s high school graduation.

The first sign that something is amiss is the fact that Jesse has marks all over his arms. His powers present themselves rather innocuously at first, though, as he can lean back really far without falling down, and blow up an air mattress really quickly. Jesse’s newfound party tricks are pretty high quality YouTube material. As the movie unfolds, however, we learn that Jesse is a Marked One, the victim of a coven using demons to create an army of young and possessed males. Oscar was also a Marked One; he explains to Jesse – looking very possessed while doing so – that he killed Anna because she put “it” inside of him and “changed him.” Following this riveting exchange, Oscar kills himself.

From this point on, Jesse becomes more possessed, more withdrawn, and less able to control his actions. His friends try to save him by following him to the spot where Ali, an apparent Caucasian (this reference to race will make more sense as you read on) relic from previous installments of the series, advises them that the “final ritual” will take place. After this ritual, it will be over but Jesse “won’t be Jesse anymore.” Whatever that means.

I was too distracted by the fact that the final scene included characters from previous Paranormal Activity movies to fully understand what happened at the “final ritual” location. I just know that these characters made little to no sense to me because I hadn’t seen the previous movies. I’m pretty sure that Jesse was fully possessed and all of his friends died, though. A happy ending.

Sometimes I notice myself checking my watch a lot in movies. That isn’t a good sign for me because it is an indication that I am counting down the minutes until a movie is over. This movie was only 84 minutes, and I checked my watch about 84 times. It wasn’t scary (sorry, someone pulling hair out of their eyes isn’t scary anymore), the acting wasn’t good (possessed Jesse had about as much personality as unpossessed Jesse), the storyline was simplistic (guys gets possessed, friends are concerned, friends try to help), and I was bored. Just like “fucking home movies” guy. The guy next to me seemed to like it a lot, though, he kept excitedly saying “Oh shit!” during the movie. He also tapped his feet a lot. That was irritating.

Anyway, as I was watching The Marked Ones, I thought to myself, “Damn, there are a lot of Latinos in this movie.” I always thought these types of movies took place in the comfort of white, upper middle class suburbia. This development was a clear marketing strategy: The Marked Ones is a Latino spinoff of a previously white teen-dominated series (really).

What is funny – or troubling, depending on how you look at it – is how the Latino-heavy cast is portrayed. A lot of the characters say “homes” a lot (like “homie”, but a bit different). Jesse does shots of tequila with his grandmother a few times. Oxnard, California is the setting for the movie, and its Latino citizens have lots of tattoos and will try to steal your backpack if you’re out late at night playing basketball, even if you’re just trying to buy a snack from a vending machine. Oh, and of course, there is a terrifying Latino gang member who has big and dangerous weapons. In other words, this Latino spinoff of a popular movie franchise attempts to appeal to the Latino population by portraying them as… you know… caricatures of themselves. So, probably more troubling than funny.◆

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The Obiter Dicta

HAPPY 2014 OSGOODE! Having abandoned our New Year’s diet resolutions in favour of something more realistic (flossing?), we’re ready to re-engage with the city’s best (student budget-priced) lunch spots for the benefit of Canada’s legal community! This week features Luke facing down the terrifying dual-headed hydra of travelling to Toronto’s West End and (gasp!) shared food. Meanwhile, Dan struggles to contain his displeasure with a bland tuna steak.

Venue: Brock Sandwich - 1260 Bloor St West (just east of Lansdowne station)
Cuisine: Sandwiches

Luke & Dan: We went ‘sharesies’ on a seared tuna sandwich with avocado and bean sprouts ($13), a buttermilk fried chicken sandwich with sautéed onions and house piri piri sauce ($9), an order of truffled poutine ($6.5), and a beet salad ($8)

LLBO Licensed? No. Brutal!

The Pick:
Dan: So I wanted Luke to really push the boundaries of his Toronto comfort zone today. This involved a foray into the West end, which for Luke is like a semester abroad. Toronto really is a city of neighbourhoods, and the Bloordale/Brockton Village area is a great mix of cultures. The area is in the midst of a revitalisation, with established businesses (such as the Toronto landmark “House of Lancaster” across the street) intermixed with a burgeoning art and food scene.

Luke: Nice work bringing an aspiring yuppe to this ‘hood.’ Readers should know that I was aggressively accosted on my way from Lansdowne Station to the sandwich shop. This pre-gentrified strip has an edgy charm, though. No doubt about it!

At the restaurant:
Dan: Okay, so Brock has 3 or 4 standard menu offerings and a few rotating daily specials. There is always a fish sandwich on the menu, but every day they invent a new one. I know that I’m always pushing you to try new things, Luke, but their flagship buttermilk fried chicken sandwich is a must.

Luke: I really appreciate the lean menu (in terms of selection, not calories!). It’s clear that the chefs have a stake in the business and take pride in preparing a few things really well.

The Food:
Dan: Getting the sandwiches cut in half to share was a good call, because the tower that is the chicken sandwich (2 breaded thighs fried and stacked with sautéed onions, lettuce, and house made sauce, all on a Kaiser roll) would not be easily cut at the table with plastic cutlery.

Luke: Dan-hand-contaminated or not, the first bite of the piri piri chicken was worth it! Clearly it was made with hand-rolled fried chicken. The crunch of the batter played-off well against the tender dark meat beneath. I also loved the piri piri sauce. Most fried chicken sandwiches are paired with greasy sauces; here, the cleaner, more savoury Portuguese topping provided the perfect complement. On the downside, while I enjoyed the sautéed onions, the lettuce was mushy and -- for me at least -- an unnecessary addition. I also felt that the bun was stuck in the unpleasant zone between fully-toasted and freshly-baked.

Dan: Lettuce on a hot sandwich. Why? It makes no sense, and it’s gross. Luckily the chicken was so good though the sandwich recovered easily. Unlike you, I didn’t feel like the piri piri stood out so much, and if it hadn’t been listed on the menu I might not have picked up on it at all. Moving from the chicken to the fish sandwich was a bit of a disappointment. The tuna steak was overcooked and dry. I liked the green veggies on the fishwich and thought they gave it a nice boost of freshness, which the fish only took away from. With better execution this would have been a gem of a dish. The saving grace for me is that
Gravy I was really digging into the salad. It was a great balance of sweet and savoury with apples, endive, walnuts, goat cheese, greens, and of course roasted beets. There was barely any dressing because it didn’t need it. This was my favourite of the whole meal.

**Amenities and service:**

Dan: I like this place. The staff is friendly and clearly cares that you have a good experience. I just want to say, being asked to allow a person to photograph you while you eat is (a) weird, and (b) not really that flattering. The restaurant was doing website development and looking for some “action shots.” So if any of our readers look into this place and see a close up of someone gorging on a beet and arugula salad, you’ll find me. The only way the scenario could have been more awkward would have been for us to refuse the request. The offer of free coffee buried the hatchet somewhat, and a healthy sense of humor on our part was instrumental.

Luke: Dan, I don’t think any amount of food photography will be enough to push “Drunk Cases” of your first page of Google results. Sorry, bud. The free coffee was a nice touch though. That they care enough about the food to take art photos and post them on their website speaks volumes about Brock’s dedication and approach. The deep and narrow “hallway-style” layout, however, could be better organized to create more seating.


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<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Luke</td>
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<td>Food: 3/5</td>
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<td>Overall: 3.5 sosbosses out of 5</td>
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#notenoughsossonmysandwich

**THUMBS DOWN to...**

Justin Bieber being (maybe?) deported back to Canada
A little sheep told me: dress up your home

ANGIE SHEEP
Arts & Culture Editor

EVER SINCE I moved into my new space, I have been thinking of ways to make it more comfortable and “homey.” I browsed through many décor magazines, websites, DIY’s and blogs and have discovered some incredibly simple ideas to dress up my little quarter. All it takes is a few statement pieces. And, just like jewelry, they do wonders for pulling the whole home together. The statement pieces don’t have to be crazy or extravagant. Most of them are actually everyday items that add unique accents to your space. A lot of us put off or refuse to decorate our places because of the effort we think takes, especially if we will be out of there by the end of the semester. But, the ideas that I have listed below really take no more than a day or even just a few hours. Everything you buy now for your home can also be transferred to your new pad. So if you think of it this way, you are really getting a high reward for saving a bit of time for home decorating!

Accent Wall
I love this idea. So much so that I am currently in the process of selecting a shade of red to splash all over one of my bedroom walls. Accent walls are so flexible as you can choose any wall in any room. And since you are only putting colour in one area, the entire project hardly takes any time at all. Just one bucket of paint is also quite inexpensive. People have also been making chalkboard walls in their kitchen or above their desks, which create a perfect platform for brainstorming ideas, to-do lists, calendars and more.

Disclaimer: just make sure you check with your landlord first about painting!

Statement Mirror
Again, like the accent wall, there is a high level of flexibility with this piece. It can be big, small, round, square, or whatever size and shape you want it to be. But, if you have a gorgeously framed mirror for your space, the effect is amazing. Mirrors do wonders for expanding the room, making the once tiny quarter seem spacious and inviting. This idea is also practical because you can actually use the décor piece in your everyday life. Also, don’t be confined by traditional ideas of where and how to place your statement mirror. It doesn’t always have to be hung up or free of obstruction. Just look at the picture; even though it’s blocked a bit behind the desk, it still pops out and makes the space more interesting. We should try to get away from the notion that everything has to be put neatly in their own place because the effect of not doing so may be a million times better. I guess it’s kind of similar to taking “the road not taken”.

Lighting
A lamp or overhead light can do so much more than just let you see in the dark. So don’t limit their functions. Give them the chance to instantly transform the look and feel of your room. The lighting section at Ikea is a great place to start for those of us who don’t have much money to drop on this stuff. Canadian Tire also offers a great selection. You can also try vintage stores or DIY Mason jar lights (Google!). This option is also flexible as you can choose to place a few small lights around the room or opt for a very large lamp instead. And, what about a string of lights or lanterns? The possibilities are endless!

Stencils
Have inspirational quotations that you want plopped on your wall? Try making your own stencils! This may take a bit more time and perhaps talent because of the drawing aspects but the results are incredible. If you are like me and have very little fine art abilities, head over to Canadian Tire or any kind of home store to buy a package of letters which you can then put together to make the quote stencil. Feel free to

THUMBS UP to...
cabs

» continued on page 14
Be kind, unwind

TAMAR FRIEDMAN
Contributor

GROWING UP, I was always told to treat others the way I wished to be treated. What no one every really mentioned, though, is that I should also treat myself the way I wish to be treated. I’m always quick to offer friends and even strangers compliments, but I rarely offer one to myself. The sad truth is that I easily believe negative comments from others, probably because I actively engage in generating them about myself.

Osgoode, I have a feeling I’m not alone here. I’ve noticed that things can get a wee bit tense around these parts, especially if I accidentally venture into the library. Listen, I think it’s important that we all be good to each other (civility and professional conduct, etc. – I totally paid attention in Ethical Lawyering, you guys) but I think it is even more important that we start to be good to ourselves. Stress is natural in a competitive environment like law school (although let’s get rid of that bell curve already, yeesh), but treating ourselves a little better will go a long way to managing that stress. I am especially looking at you, “Jessica White”. As they say, the kinder you are to yourself, the kinder the world will feel. I actually did not know they said that before now, but Google tells me it is an expression (see picture). So, it must be true.

Because I firmly believe that we are all deserving of a little self-TLC here are four tips on how to be good to yourself:

1. Check your thoughts.
It is constructive. “I can do better by…” is far more encouraging than, “I don’t belong here.” You do belong here! Google told me that, too!

2. Keep calm and sleep.
I’m pretty sure that sleep deprivation is a torture tactic. So, if you’ve been keeping long hours in order to get everything done, it may be time to reconsider. Not only are you more productive when you’re well rested, you’re also happier. Science will back me up on this if you want to do some research. More importantly, I think if the police aren’t allowed to do it to people, you should stop doing it to yourself. All-nighters are just the worst. Even during exam period. It may mean some fancy time management, but I think you can do it. Also, please be sure to read yourself your Charter rights when placing yourself under arrest.

3. Clean energy.
I’m no nutritionist, but I think sometimes being kind to yourself means making smart food choices. Not all foods are going to give you the same quality of energy. I personally recommend avoiding the processed, sugary stuff and trying to stick to natural foods and whole grains. Try to avoid eating carbohydrates alone (even fruit). Pairing it with a source of protein will give you a more consistent release of energy over time, and will prevent spikes in insulin and the resulting energy crash. Planning ahead and packing your own meals can set you up to make good choices and is probably more kind to your bank account. Osgoode has enough of your money as it is.

4. Be a little bad.
Ok, I know that most of the above was me waxing rhapsodic about making good and smart choices, but we all need to let loose and have some fun. Thankfully, your Osgoode pals are always here for you when the mood strikes. JCR on Wednesdays, Pub Nights on Thursdays, and no end of shenanigans going on in the city when you’re ready to partake in them. Have a cookie, grab a drink, and hang out. I challenge you to talk about something not law-school related (it’s harder than you think), and forget about your to-do-list for a little while. And believe me when I tell you as a completely impartial third party with “no affiliation” to the production, you definitely need to go see Mock Trial!

In closing: Sippin’ on Coke and Rum/’m like so what I’m drunk/’t the freakin’ weekend baby/I’m about to have me some fun/Bounce bounce bounce bounce bounce.

Monday, February 3, 2014
The Black Law Students’ Association: LSAT Bursary Award

THE BLACK LAW Students’ Association would like to thank the Osgoode community for all their support in helping us achieve last semester’s goal for the LSAT Bursary Program. We are proud to announce that we are officially launching the LSAT Bursary Program this year and will be awarding three bursaries for our inaugural year. We’ve partnered with HarvardReady to support students in their endeavour to pursue a legal education. The bursary will go towards a live HarvardReady LSAT prep course, a highly regarded LSAT prep course program. This program will operate on an annual basis, and we are grateful that the Osgoode community was so helpful in our cause.

Thanks to the Osgoode community, we were able to surpass our goal of $500 last semester and we hope that you will once again aid us this month. As some may recall, the BLSA was in Gowlings Hall selling candy grams to students for Halloween. We were overwhelmed by your support since you were willing to come by, have a chat, and support our cause. We also had a great time delivering your candy grams and special messages. The cheer you were able to bring to both friends as they indulged in their pre-class sugar rushes and to hopeful law students through your financial support is truly wonderful.

This February we will be repeating this fundraising campaign with Valentine’s Day Candy Grams between February 5-13. Once again you can visit our table in Gowlings Hall to purchase delicious candies to give to that special someone. The BLSA is proud to help you in your romantic (or friendly) quests, and we’ll be as clandestine as you’d like. Give a few candy grams to someone as a secret admirer, pour your heart onto the small card, or send a friendly note to your BFF, and we’ll deliver the message. Once again all the proceeds will go towards the LSAT Bursary Program. For more information on the program and the applicant selection process, please visit our website at www.blsaosgoode.com.

Along with a fully funded Harvard Ready LSAT prep course, the bursary winners will be given an opportunity to speak at the Black History Month Celebration on February 25th. The theme of the celebration this year is “The Dream is Now: Building the Future on Yesterday’s Foundation.” The BLSA is planning several events for students during Black History Month beginning with the kickoff event on February 3rd. During the month we will also be hosting some students from the York and high school community to come to Osgoode to experience law school life. They’ll sit in on classes and be given an opportunity to mingle with the Osgoode crowd. We look forward to your support once again in helping these students feel welcome as they sit in on your classes.

As mentioned earlier, Black History month will wind-down with the Black History Month Celebration on February 25th. On this day, we will be awarding a distinguished member of our community who has made outstanding contributions to the black community with the 2014 Lincoln Alexander Award. This award was established by the Black Law Students’ Association in 2013 in honour of the late Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, P.C., CC, OOnt, CD, QC, LSM. The inaugural Lincoln Alexander Award was presented to Justice Michael Tulloch, the first black judge to be appointed to the Ontario Court of Appeal, as part of Osgoode’s Black History Month celebration.

We would like to once again thank the Osgoode community for all your dedicated support in helping the BLSA pursue its objectives and we look forward to seeing you in the upcoming weeks in Gowlings Hall. Your continued efforts have allowed the BLSA to engage with the community in a positive way and we hope to continue to do so with your help for many years to come.

Have a Thumbs Up or Down? Email the Obiter (obiterdicta@osgoode.yorku.ca) with "THUMBS" in the subject line. The identity of authors will remain confidential. Editors reserve discretion over which submissions are published.
A closed case of sexism?
» continued from cover

classrooms. These kinds of spatial distinctions are not synonymous with gender politics, but rather attest to a deeply personal preference.

To support his stance, Professor Grayson has entertained a provocative hypothetical: what if it had been Blacks that the student did not want to work with? Again, I caution that a refusal to work with female peers in person by a student enrolled in an online course cannot, without further interrogation or explanation by the student himself, be unequivocally taken as a sexist impulse. This is not necessarily a case of snubbing women or as one article sensationalised as “soiling himself with the company of women.” However, the kind of racial segregation Grayson imagines is clearly premised on racial supremacy and represents clear, indiscutable bigotry. The case at hand is far more nuanced and cannot be dispensed with so easily.

This incident is particularly interesting in a Euro-Canadian context because it is usually women that are the seekers of this kind of religious accommodation, not men. To complicate the charge of sexism that has been laid on both the student and the university by national media, I will pose another hypothetical inquiry: what if it was a woman who did not feel comfortable working with a group of men, and requested this kind of accommodation? Is this also a case of gender discrimination against the men? In theory, it should be. However, I speculate that if the dynamic had been such, the case would not have been so inflammatory, nor would accusations of sexism be as pervasive.

This prompts the question: what is the resulting harm of accommodating the male student’s wish to not work with his female peers, and is it so significant as to override his right to religious expression? Here, I defer to one of the most basic principles of libertarian politics: the harm principle. That is, if an individual does not cause harm to others, then a social body has no right to coerce or restrict the individual. In this case, the Dean had advised that in order to deter harm, the concerned female classmates ought not to be told of such personal accommodation, but in true sociological fashion, Mr. Grayson conducted a hypothetical survey in his class, asking the female students how they would react if such a situation occurred. The findings confirmed Professor Grayson’s suspicions: the women were outraged and felt ostracized.

Moreover, many observers have argued that religious leaders in orthodox religious communities do not endorse the student’s beliefs. Professor Grayson went one step further and took it upon himself to investigate Islam and Judaism’s stance on this matter. He consulted with religious scholars and found that there was no religious basis to the student’s request. However, Grayson failed to consider that naturally, different people adhere to different levels of religiosity. It is important to allow for different interpretations of what constitutes religious requirement — something so personal and subjective. The Supreme Court of Canada has taken heed of this concern and recently devised a test of religious belief where an individual’s sincere beliefs, regardless of how rare, take precedence over a community’s beliefs. While this case does not involve government action, these principles are still useful. Only the person’s sincerity of belief matters, not what their imam or rabbi thinks.

This controversy about gender segregation in the classroom is not the first of its kind in recent times. Across the pond, a similar debate has been raging for months. Last December, the U.K.’s University College London became embroiled in scandal when on several occasions, there was the voluntary separation of men and women in lectures sponsored by Muslim groups, often with men on one side of the room and women on the other. Like York University, the leading universities organization, Universities UK, accommodated the practice and insisted that institutions would not enforce segregation, but if participants were happy to sit in separate groups, that would be permitted as long as there was no disadvantage. This ruling provoked public outcry and condemnation as politicians and commentators alike issued dik-tats warning of Britain’s backwards descent.

In the final analysis, this is a unique, complicated and sensitive story that has polarized Canadians in recent weeks. However, even in the most intuitively unfamiliar or strange circumstances, we not only have a moral duty as human beings, but also a duty as legal students trained in the discipline of critical thinking and careful reasoning, to challenge or at least question such blanket coverage and dangerous charges, especially where disclosure has been partial and the full picture is still very much unclear. After all, while Professor Grayson has detailed his thoughts, actions and motivations in a variety of media, the student’s identity, reasoning, along with his representation of the story, have been completely shrouded in anonymity. Doesn’t everyone deserve a fair trial? ◆
Dress up your home

» continued from page 10

combine this idea with the accent wall to make that surface pop out even more.

The perfect [your choice]

Pick one piece of furniture that is really for your pleasure, that you can be proud of. It can be the perfect study chair or the softest bed you can find. Let yourself be selfish just one time when putting together your home. A good desk is always a nice option since we law students tend to spend most of our time there. So instead of having one that is too small, uncomfortable, almost falling apart, etc., indulge in a desk that will motivate you to spend time with it and inspire your next essay. If you're going to end up having a relationship with it anyway (e.g. exam time), why not make sure it's the best companion you can find?

Area Rug

I recently just bought an area rug and adore it. It’s a painting on my floor! Something about these pieces just screams comfort and style. It doesn’t matter what kind of rug it is, though I prefer ones that are furry and soft so I can bury my toes in them during the winter. Floor decors are so easily overlooked but actually do wonders for any space.

There you have it Ozzies — extremely simple ways to dress up your home. Most of them take no time or effort at all but the effects can be amazing. Your home is probably the place where you spend most of your time in (ok, the library is definitely a competitor), so take time to ensure it’s as comfortable and inviting as it can be. A nicely decorated room can provide the relaxation, motivation and rejuvenation that you need to face the crazy world for another day.

Audrey

» continued from page 3

The biggest difference, however, was that this time, the concerns of this individual were taken a little more seriously. Ms. Churnin, just like Ms. Tobias, opposed Lockheed Martin’s involvement. She was also concerned that Lockheed Martin or the US government would have access to our information. Finally, Ms. Churnin’s actions were a form of protest to the decision of replacing the long-form census with a voluntary national household survey (can anyone see the irony there?). Thus, the head of census operations at Statistics Canada was present at trial and testified that it was not possible for Lockheed Martin to access census information. Accordingly, a modest attempt to address her concerns was made. Whether this was done at the initiative of the court, the prosecution, or the defence, it is however unknown.

Again, I am not advocating for the retrial of Audrey Tobias so that she also is asked to do community service or is sent to jail or made to pay the corresponding fine. The point is that we ought not to disregard what people like Audrey Tobias have to say. Like she said, “People are people until they’re dead, old or young.”

Although Judge Mocha, in deciding Ms. Churnin’s case, acknowledged the significance of Ms. Churnin’s views, she stated that Ms. Churnin could have accomplished her “peace initiatives without violating the law.” A comment which is totally fair. Indeed, we do not tolerate tax evaders who fail to pay taxes just because they do not agree with the rationale behind the levy. Then again, sometimes civil disobedience is necessary in order to get one’s point across. I mean, what would have happened if Rosa Parks had not refused to give up her seat?
Capitalism

» continued from page 4

more far-reaching and detrimental to our livelihoods: we’re still feeling the aftereffects of an event that happened over five years ago.

A proper functioning economic system should not have to rely on bailouts in order to avoid total collapse. But resistance to reform, either by breaking up the banks, increasing taxes on the rich, etc., is the direct result of the recognition that those with financial power have elevated themselves into a position where they can take risks without real consequences. This holds true for both financial institutions and wealthy individuals.

What O’Leary fails to recognize is that not everyone can engage in the economic game. All those people who must serve as pawns in the economy, the workers, receive a measly share of the profits that they are integral in generating and are the parties most adversely impacted by declines in the financial markets. In other words, the 99 per cent is punished by the actions of the 1 per cent.

As a consequence, when O’Leary says, “I celebrate capitalism,” he is celebrating an illegitimate system that exacerbates social and economic inequality, a system that is on its way to inevitable collapse.

A capitalism that can be celebrated, in my opinion, is a sustainable and robust capitalist system that is resilient enough to resist downturns in the economy, functions to reduce inequality and strives to realize human potential. What is clear is that a postmodernist system, left alone to work itself out, cannot provide that.

What is clear is that a postmodernist system, one that avoids regulating the financial markets, functions to reduce inequality and strives to realize human potential. What is clear is that a postmodernist system, left alone to work itself out, cannot provide that.

Instead, it results in the problems we’re faced with now.

The question is: “Do we wait until we’re at the event horizon, with no possible way of escaping the black hole of our creation, or do we try to change our trajectory before it’s too late?”

I suppose the “fantastic news” is that it’s just a matter of time until that question is answered for us.

No Smoke

» continued from page 6

ing solution in the e-cig) comes in a variety of delicious flavours such as raspberry, chocolate and apple pie. Already, a market for gourmet e-liquid has materialized, promising 100% natural and organic ingredients to the nascent aficionado. This sounds like a cause for celebration. Unlike today’s heroin addicts, smokers can now enjoy the pleasures of a well-seasoned habit without that pesky risk of death!

And yet, some joyless gadflies in the medical and political communities seem determined to spoil our fun. Their reasons for doing so are difficult to comprehend, largely because they don’t have any.

Despite their claims to the contrary, a growing number of studies indicate that e-cigarettes are harmless, that they do not contain hazardous levels of contaminants, and pose no danger to second hand smokers (or ‘vapours’, as they should be rightly known). None of this has stopped the spoilsports from claiming the effects of e-cigarettes are unknown, as if this were an argument in of itself for restricting their sale. Absurdly, they point towards flavours like orange creamsicle, Coca-Cola, and Juicy Fruit as evidence that the industry is catering to children. Moreover, if e-cigarettes are harmless, what does it matter if young people become addicts? Do we object in the same way to caffeinated products? Do we protest when Tim Hortons hires young adolescents who, as a perquisite of their employment, enjoy endless cups of coffee completely free of charge? It is not surprising that caffeine, an addictive stimulant, has slipped under Canada’s radar: we are, after all, one of the world’s largest consumers of the coffee bean and have perhaps a vested interest in regarding this addiction differently to the rest.

And yet, attitudes towards addiction are at the heart of the anti e-cigarette movement. By divorcing addiction from pleasure in the popular conscience - though not of course in reality - addiction has become a repulsive and joyless prospect. For the stick in the muds, the spectre of addiction is so terrifying that they would sooner deprive the world a healthy alternative to cigarettes than concede that the habit might actually be fun, and harmless fun at that.

Until their arguments become coherent, and until they find some semblance of evidence that e-cigarettes are bad for your health, Canadians should issue a curt dismissal to the naysayers. Indeed, I encourage all of you to start work developing a new and thoroughly delicious habit, one which you can happily place beside the morning’s first well-earned cup of joe.

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This issue’s Sudoku

Last issue’s solution

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