In what a group of UN experts call a violation of human rights, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department has shut off thousands of people’s water after they failed to pay their bills. Image credit: Huffington Post

In September, a Detroit judge ruled that the city can continue to turn off the taps of residents who cannot afford to pay their water bills. Judge Steven Rhodes, who is responsible for overseeing Detroit’s bankruptcy, opined that although “water is a necessary ingredient to sustaining life” there is no “enforceable right” to free water.

Judge Rhodes’s ruling was in response to a lawsuit, Lyda v City of Detroit, filed on behalf of low-income residents who cannot keep up with their bills amid Detroit’s economic downturn. It is estimated that at least 27,000 residents have had their taps turned off by the city this year.

The situation in Detroit raises important questions concerning the right to clean drinking water. As water becomes an increasingly coveted global commodity, it is necessary to consider whether access to clean water is solely the responsibility of municipal service providers, which provide water in exchange for a fee, or whether access should be considered a basic human right under international law.

In June, United Nations Special Rapporteurs Catarina de Albuquerque and Leilani Farha wrote to the city of Detroit advising that the “disconnection of water services because of failure to pay due to lack of means constitutes a violation of the human right to water and other international human rights.”

De Albuquerque and Farha visited Detroit in late October to conduct an informal fact-finding mission in the city. They found that the water shut-offs were happening on an “unprecedented scale” and that they were having a severe disparate impact on “the
One Point Five Billion Inches
The circumference of the Earth. Let’s talk about a few of them.

Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. See how they’ll stack up to the real thing. Undoubtedly be much more cursory, I’m interested to budget airline Peach), and while my predictions will be beaten path,” Italy’s northern towns are often the first to be eliminated from itineraries in favour Cinque Terre and the Amalfi Coast. Despite the fact that Milan has long been known as the fashion and financial capital of the country, and Turin has been steadily developing a reputation for playing host to some of the best student nightlife in Italy, they’ve often stood in the shadow of Florence and Rome. Thus, the Milano Expo 2015, held between May and October, presents an excellent opportunity to draw more tourists to the less visited, yet equally charming cities of Italy’s north.

Laos
The evolution of tourism in Southeast Asia is a subject which I find endlessly fascinating. Seeing how each country opened itself to tourists, and how this interacted with political and social developments within its own borders (the end of the Khmer Rouge, the Doi Moi reforms, and the recent Burmese democratic reforms) sheds light on this culturally and politically diverse region. Thailand emerged as a haven for backpackers in the 1970s and 80s, and soon after, Vietnam followed. The last decade or so has seen an explosion of tourism to Cambodia, which leaves Laos as the last one standing, so to speak. The culturally and architecturally stunning Luang Prabang boasts unreal French cuisine and Buddhist temples that rival the best wats in the region. The Shangri-La of Si Phan Don, on the other hand, offers palm trees and beaches without the crowds of southern Thailand.

Northern Italy
I’m not talking about Venice or Tuscany, I mean places like Padua, Bologna, and Verona. Although I’m not talking about Venice or Tuscany, I mean places like Padua, Bologna, and Verona. Although

backs and an embarrassing number of Anthony Bourdain episodes. But I noticed, at one point, that missing from my resources was the New York Times “Places To Go in 2015” list. It has become something of a touchstone for travel trends and hotspots (at least for amateur travel enthusiasts, such as myself), which is impressive, given its meagre ten year existence. As I anxiously await the release of this year’s list (almost as anxiously as I await the release of fall grades), I’ve assembled my own predictions regarding up and coming destinations. The NYT list is meticulous and impressively thorough (last year, for example, they highlighted the island of Ishigaki, Japan, in light of recently added services by budget airline Peach), and while my predictions will undoubtedly be much more cursory, I’m interested to see how they’ll stack up to the real thing.

Northern Italy
I’m not talking about Venice or Tuscany, I mean places like Padua, Bologna, and Verona. Although
One Last Semester
This Student Caucus Chair’s Swan Song

JEFFREY HERNÆEZ
STUDENT CAUCUS CHAIR

It has yet to sink in that this is my last term at Osgoode – both as a student and Student Caucus representative. I wanted to take the opportunity to update you all on some of the issues that Student Caucus has been working on throughout my three terms that I hope will develop or resolve before the end of my tenure as Chair this year.

The Bell Curve
For the past few years, the Academic Policy and Planning Committee (APPC) has been contemplating changes to the application of the bell curve to classes under the size of thirty. I previously wrote about this issue in the Obiter and provide more details in that article. The proposed change that may make its way to Faculty Council for approval this term is abolishing the curve for classes of thirty students or fewer, and for all intensives, seminars, and prospective options. In short, the rationale for the change is that there is little statistical basis for applying the curve to small classes. I am grateful to Abigail Cheung, Hannah DeJong, Caroline Garrod, and Jonathan Silver, who I have passed the APPC torch onto after my two years on the committee. It was also a pleasure working with committee chair Professor Brian Slattery.

Library Access
Access to the law library has been a hot button topic among students this year. There are those who feel that existing policies that restrict the top floor to only law students year-round and restrict the whole library during exams should be more rigorously enforced. On the other hand, there are students who feel that access to the library should not be restricted to those who can only obtain and afford admission to the law school. To be clear, this debate is solely about study space as access to the library’s collection is open to all community members.

This term I hope Student Caucus will work with students and staff to create a policy that preserves the protection of study spaces for Osgoode students. However, it must be practical and appropriately enforced. Ideas such as turnstiles admitting entry to students have also been proposed as they would also rely less on library staff. I am appreciative of the Library Committee and JD rep Ryan Robski for their work on such a sensitive issue.

A 1L Reading Week?
Since before I was a first year student, Student Caucus in one way or another has advocated for the creation of a 1L fall reading week. Most recently this summer, a report from Student Caucus, outlining the rationale for a fall 1L reading week and different ways it could be implemented, was sent to the Associate Dean First Year and shared with the 1L professors for feedback. This term, I hope to work with our 1L reps to see if more advocacy on the issue can further the goal. In my own view, the implementation of a fall reading break for our first year students would have positive mental health benefits and allow students to synthesize their knowledge before the stress of the exam period. I owe much thanks to Henry Limheng (2L rep and former 1L rep) for doing a lot of the heavy lifting on this issue. As always, feel free to contact any of your Student Caucus representatives with any concerns you may have.

Lastly, I wanted to thank my fellow executive members, Ryan Robski and Caroline Garrod, for being there 24/7 and for being the calm to my storm. Further, I am really grateful for all the committed students I’ve had a chance to work with. Each and every one of them has strived to deliver the student voice on a host of different issues affecting Osgoode students. Finally, it has also been a pleasure working with Osgoode’s faculty and staff, who also share the desire to make this law school the best it can be.

Where great work and great people come together
Access to Justice Advocate Series
Features Osgoode Hall’s Professor Janet Mosher

NABILA KHAN & SABREENA DELHON • CANADIAN FORUM ON CIVIL JUSTICE

In November 2014, the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice launched a new series on the A2J blog titled Access to Justice Advocates. The series is a response to recent reports that have underscored the importance of innovation and imagination in the pursuit of access to justice. At CFCJ, we understand that such efforts come down to people—to the diverse advocates working in different and important ways across the access to justice landscape.

To learn more about these diverse perspectives, the CFCJ has been visiting the offices of various A2J advocates across Toronto including Osgoode Hall Law School’s Professor Janet Mosher. Professor Mosher’s research and teaching at the law school has focused on access to justice issues in a variety of ways. Her work on the civil justice system and civil justice reforms has dealt with issues facing socially marginalized Canadians in accessing the system. Her research has also dealt with violence against women, school discipline, and pandemic planning and homelessness—all of which underscore how issues of access affect different populations and involve vast areas of substantive law. Professor Janet Mosher joined the Osgoode Hall faculty in 2001 after teaching the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto, where she was also the Director of the Combined LLB/MSW program. From 2001 to 2004, she was the Academic Director of the Intensive Program in Poverty Law at Parkdale Community Legal Services.

During her interview with CFCJ, Professor Mosher shared key insights on her approach to access to justice as a legal academic, highlighting in particular the importance of forging relationships with advocates on the frontlines—those who are directly involved with people experiencing gaps in access to justice. This is integral in both learning about access to justice and conceptualizing the related issues.

Professor Mosher discussed how working from the intersection of research and frontline advocacy offers a unique position in the access to justice landscape. Her conceptualization of access to justice redirects and diversifies advocacy. Instead of focusing exclusively on, for example, access to courts, she promotes a broader consideration of the interconnections between justice, power and inequality.

To watch the full interview with Professor Mosher, check out the A2J Blog in January at www.cfcj-fcjc.org/a2jblog. Would you like to make a submission to the A2J Blog? Do you know an Access to Justice Advocate? Let us know at communications@fcfcj-fcjc.org.

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A Year in Preview
2015 in the “Tenth Best City to Visit”

MARIE PARK › ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

In the lead up to the New Year’s Eve festivities, you’ve likely come across scores of “Year in Review” articles and “Best of 2014” lists; but let’s bid a final farewell to the last year already and talk about what 2015 has in store for us. After all, 2014 is long gone now, and it’s nigh time to plan out the year ahead of us.

It’s worth mentioning that Toronto was recently named by the big time publisher of travel guides, Lonely Planet, as the tenth best city to visit in 2015 in its “Top 10 Cities” list. Here are some of Toronto’s “unmissable” highlights, so make sure to remember these as you make your list of goals for the new year!

January brings the usual winter weather woes, but thankfully, it is also when Toronto is blessed with the city-wide gastronomic fantasy that is called Winterlicious. This year, Winterlicious begins Jan. 30 and runs until Feb. 12 at more than 200 of Toronto’s best restaurants. For those of you who are annual regulars, this year should be no less mouth-watering. For the first-timers, this is a great opportunity to get to know some of the best local eats at a fair prix fixe deal.

Participating restaurants and menus are now available to browse online at the City of Toronto event webpage for Winterlicious. Reservations can be made starting Jan. 15. And of course, if you like Winterlicious, its summertime counterpart is going to be equally delicious; Summerlicious is on from July 3 to July 19, 2015.

It’s highly likely that you’ve made a physical fitness goal as part of your New Year’s resolutions, yes? Knowing that the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games are coming to Toronto this year may give you the inspiration you need to keep up with your goals.

This year, Toronto is host to the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. The Pan Am Games are attended by 42 countries from North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean, and held every four years. Toronto will be hosting the 17th Pan American Games from July 10 to 26, 2015. Approximately 6,000 athletes from 41 nations are expected to participate in 36 sports. The Parapan Am Games will be held from August 7 to 15, 2015.

Approximately 1,600 athletes from 28 countries are set to attend, competing in 15 sports, all of which will be qualifiers for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

This year in film, we’ll see a number of reboots of long-time classics - get ready for new takes on “Star Wars: the Force Awakens”, “Terminator: Genisys” and “Jurassic World”. Will these new additions to the arcs do justice to the franchises? Whatever side of the fence you’re on, we know you’ll be in line in the queue to watch and judge for yourself.

Other movie highlights include the next installments of the “Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2”, “The Avengers: the Age of Ultron”, and some doubtfully book-to-screen productions (read: “Fifty Shades of Gray”). Plus, some exciting new sci-fi fantasy films are on the way: “Jupiter Ascending”, “Chappie”, “Mad Max: Fury Road” and “Tomorrowland”. For those of you growing up with Pixar and a quadratic yellow sea sponge, we can’t forget to mention that “Inside Out” and “Spongebob Movie: Sponge Out of Water” will be coming to a screen near you this year.

Some other highlights to come for this year? Expect to finally see Union Station’s facelift completed, as well as a rejuvenated Queen’s Quay. Say goodbye to the noisy, inconvenient construction, and hello to the return of the Spadina-Union streetcar link. (Finally!)

Other than these, there are of course the familiar annual events to look out for - the Scotiabank Caribbean Carnival and Canadian National Exhibition late in the summer, the Toronto International Film Festival in September, and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, just to name a few.

Maybe lesser known, but definitely worth your study breaks, is the Toronto arts scene. Check out the work of local artists at the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition and Luminato Festival in June, the grassroots theatre performances of the Toronto Fringe Festival in July, and the sleepless exhibits of Scotiabank’s Nuit Blanche in October.

The coming year is sure to be filled with exciting things to break the school life monotony. Make sure to remember to take time for self-care, and treat yo’self once in a while (like with the final season of “Parks and Recreation” this year!).

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A Trio of Film Reviews, Currently in Theatres
Adventurous Moviegoing – Athletic, Historical, or Drug-Induced

KENDALL GRANT › STAFF WRITER

Inherent Vice (2014) 3.5/4

Sexy, seedy, and swirling, Inherent Vice is a hilariously louche and ramshackle psychedelic beach noir, a jubilant spin painting in which the characters have been scattered and splattered to the edges of the frame. Like spying in a stranger’s sketchbook, it’s radically befuddling, sometimes incoherent, frequently inspired, always offbeat: a film about a stoner which itself seems stoned.

When private eye Doc Sportello’s ex-old lady shows up out of nowhere with a story about her current billionaire land developer boyfriend whom she just happens to be in love with, and a plot by his wife and her boyfriend to kidnap that billionaire and throw him in a looney bin, Doc learns that “love” is one word that usually leads to trouble. Sporting a ridiculously stacked ensemble (Josh Brolin, Owen Wilson, Benicio del Toro, Jena Malone, Reese Witherspoon, Martin Short), Inherent Vice’s highlights include a superb Joaquin Phoenix (The Master) as the perennially bewildered Doc and a career-making performance from the unforgettably striking Katherine Waterston.

Based on legendary author Thomas Pynchon’s exquisite stoner mystery set at the dawn of the ’70s, Inherent Vice has a whirling, blurring trajectory. Trying to pare back Pynchon without killing the joke wasn’t a challenge – it was an impossible task. Noble “failure” or otherwise, writer-director Paul Thomas Anderson’s [There Will Be Blood] has done a remarkable job of replicating the crazy kaleidoscope of crime, dope, and raunch the novelist conjured. Indeed, the spiralling, wordplay-happy script never quite resolves the difficulty of adapting the philosophical whodunit, but the film’s groovy sprawl is a fine place to hang out for 2.5 hours.

With a cast of characters that includes surfers, hustlers, rockers, dopers, LAPD detectives, a murderous loan shark, a tenor sax player working undercover, and a mysterious entity known as the Golden Fang, Inherent Vice is unadulterated Pynchon-Anderson madness. Daffier, looser, freer, and friendlier than anything touched by PTA since Boogie Nights, Inherent Vice is so funny, so strange, so charmingly deranged that it bakes your brain, in a good way.

While its surface cousins are none other than The Big Sleep and The Big Lebowski, Inherent Vice is a slapstick noir homage that doesn’t just reward, but demands multiple viewings, calling to mind LA Confidential, Inland Empire, and Anderson’s own Magnolia. It’s a head trip that plays like impure jazz, with a reverb that can leave you dazed, confused, and even annoyed. Packed with shitfaced hilarity and soulful reveries, it supplies good dosages of stoner giggles and mixes absurdity with an air of looming cataclysm.

An affectionate riff on the gumshoe genre and an audacious stylistic leap for Anderson, Inherent Vice is a wondrously fragrant movie, emanating sweat, the stink of pot clouds, and the press of hairy bodies. Robert Elswit’s speckled, sun-dappled photography and Jonny Greenwood’s score – ranging from jazzy freakbeat to anxious pulsations of electronic analog – are expectantly delectable. Big, wistful, confounding, and wonderfully oddball, it’s a film you sink into, like a haze on the road, even as it jerks you along with spikes of humour.

Inherent Vice is not only the first Pynchon movie; it could also be the last, best, and most exasperating one that we’ll ever receive, capturing the heady vibe of the novel while stumbling into the great cinematic lineage of fatalistic California “sunshine noir” (The Long Goodbye, Chinatown), where the question of “whodunit?” inevitably leads to an existential vanishing point.

Certainly, Inherent Vice may be criticized as only intermittently compelling, a little insular, too cool for school. It’s drugged camp, all showing and no telling, and may leave some viewers feeling unmoored. Yet it’s gnarled and goofy, but in a studied way. Anderson brings us tangibly close to the colours and moods and dream horizons of America in the days of Hawks and Doves. Pynchon, Phoenix, Anderson – these are towering talents, proven time and again.

Inherent Vice should come with a prescription that instructs the viewer to let the movie wash over them like a cloud of smoke blown into one’s face. It’s a film that’s meant to be experienced, more than...
Jurisfoodence: In Search of Toronto’s Best Brunch 
Food Adventure #7: School

KATE HENLEY & KAROLINA WISNIEWSKI › STAFF WRITER & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

School
70 Fraser Avenue

KATE: After a short break, Karolina and I thought we would begin 2015 by heading back to school a few days early... Why is it called "School" though?! Are they supposed to be teaching us how to brunch well? We’ll never know.

KAROLINA: I was so excited to go to School, having heard such good things. Your relentless thirst to discover its namesake, Kate, inspired me to embark on a thorough Googling session. Alas, I didn’t discover the inspiration behind the quirky name, but I did learn that there have been (many) weddings held at School. I don’t know about you, but it’s always been my dream to walk past a butcher beef cuts print on my way down the isle (yes, this really happened; I saw photographic proof).

KATE: Yikes. School is located in Liberty Village, an area of the city that I had never been to before – and where I will probably never return. I don’t know what my expectations were, but at ten o’clock on a Saturday morning it was bleak. The few people that were around were all going the same place we were, and nothing else appeared open.

KAROLINA: I mean, Liberty Village is supposed to be a thing, right? Maybe School’s problem is that it’s located at the outskirts of Liberty Village, nearly on the border between it and Parkdale. The neighbourhood seemed pleasant enough, but as Kate said, slightly post-apocalyptic in its emptiness. At any rate, this week we decided to share the brunch love and invited two companions along.

Brunch Hours
School serves its Weekend Brunch menu from 9 am-3 pm on Saturdays and Sundays, and an all-day breakfast from 9 am-3 pm on weekdays, which has some of the same items on the menu.

Wait Time/Service
KATE: I arrived about five minutes earlier than Karolina, but, despite the fact that there were a number of tables open and no line, I was “unable to be seated until my whole party had arrived.”

KAROLINA: I was fairly relieved that we weren’t put on a waiting list, I guess brunch at the ungodly hour of 10 am is enough to put most people off.

KATE: Very true. Once we were seated, we had pretty good service. Our server brought us coffee almost immediately, was very friendly, and gave us a number of recommendations.

KAROLINA: She was indeed helpful and attentive. When asked for recommendations, she named nearly everything on the menu and made it all sounds mouth-watering, which I suppose means she did her job well.

Atmosphere
KATE: I loved the building that School was in – I am a sucker for exposed brick and garage-style windows. However, the décor was a bit strange: we were in the second of two rooms, and one entire wall was covered in a shelving unit holding a variety of objects; while some could be associated with school (a few books, some large letters of the alphabet), others were totally unrelated (like plates on little display stands). It also had one of those huge outlines of a cow indicating the different cuts of beef, which felt totally out of place in a restaurant like this. Oh, and there was an apple on every table...because school.

KAROLINA: The tongue-in-cheek references to the restaurant’s namesake would have been cute if they were less obvious. My gripe with School is that it seemed to take itself pretty seriously, which I think worked against it. It was trying so hard to be chic and of-the-moment, but it was just a touch late to the party. I mean, a butcher beef cuts print, really? Are you also going to tell me about your vinyl collection and how you make your own soap? There’s something so sad about painfully stilted and strategically placed identifiers of coolness that just miss the mark. Such a carefully crafted image should either be executed perfectly, or abandoned altogether.

Coffee
KATE: Good coffee – I had three and a half cups in one and a half hours.

While the décor may not have earned it top ratings, School’s culinary creativity amply distracts from its shortfalls.
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Sports

From Pessimism to Optimism
The Past, Present, and Future of the Toronto Raptors on its 20th Anniversary

Part Two: Missing That Third Element

Kenneth Cheak Kwan Lam | Staff Writer

I can still recall the date in which Vince Carter put the Toronto Raptors on the NBA Map: February 12, 2000. On this date in NBA history, Carter, known as “Air Canada,” “Half-Man, Half-Amazing,” and “Vinsanity,” put on a show when he electrified the crowd at the 2000 NBA Slam Dunk Contest, an event broadcast live and seen by many in North America and around the world.

Led by Carter, the team was competitive as the franchise made the postseason for 3 consecutive years between 2000 and 2002 (a feat that has not been matched since). The roster had both talent depth. The 1999 to 2000 edition featured Carter, Shooting Guard Doug Christie, Three-Point specialist Dell Curry, Antonio Davis, Tracy McGrady, Charles Oakley, Alvin Williams, and Kevin Willis. The 2000 to 2001 team lose Christie and McGrady to unrestricted free agency (who signed with the Sacramento Kings and the Orlando Magic respectively) but had new blood in Power Forward Kevon Clark, Small Forward Tracy Murray, and Shooting Guard Morris Peterson. The 2001 to 2002 Raptors saw the departure of Oakley and Willis but the team was able to replace them with Future Hall-of-Fame Center Hakeem Olajuwon and Jerome “Junkyard Dog” Williams. By all account, these players are all solid performers on the court so how come the Raptors never made it past the 2nd round of the NBA playoffs, let alone win an NBA Championship?

The answer lies in Carter’s supporting cast. While he was arguably the best offensive NBA weapon in the entire league during those 3 seasons, averaging 25.7, 27.6, and 24.7 points per game in 1999 to 2000, 2000 to 2001, and 2001 to 2002, Carter never had the sidekicks that he needed to take the team to the next level. True championship teams that are considered dynasties have 3 All-Star calibre players (Big 3), out of which there may be one or more Future Hall-of-Famers. The Toronto Raptors, to put it bluntly, never had a Big 3 throughout its history; instead, what the franchise had during its glory dates was a lone ranger in Carter with an above average supporting cast.

Even though the term Big 3 is mostly associated with LeBron James, Dwyane Wade, and Chris Bosh as they joined forces to win back-to-back NBA Championships in 2012 and again in 2013 as well as reaching the finals in 2011 and again in 2014 within a 4-year span, NBA history suggest that the concept is not new. Case in point: Michael Jordan, arguably the greatest NBA player ever, won 3 consecutive NBA Titles (first three-peat) with the Chicago Bulls from 1991 to 1993 because he had Scottie Pippen and Horace Grant as his wingmen to execute Phil Jackson’s triangle offense. Jordan then came out of retirement to lead the Bulls to another 3 consecutive NBA Championships from 1996 to 1998 (second three-peat) because not only was Pippen able to play the role of Robin to support Jordan as Batman, but rebounding king Dennis Rodman was able to slide into the role that Grant played in the first three-peat by becoming that 3rd element that championship teams need if they were to achieve and maintain dynasty status.

Moving the 1990s into the 2000s, we continue to see that 3rd element in championship teams that are considered dynasties. The San Antonio Spurs, which won the NBA Title in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2014, were predominately anchored by Future Hall-of-Famer Tim Duncan. Yet, he had Superstar David “The Admiral” Robinson playing alongside him during the championship runs in both 1999 and 2003 not to mention that All-Star Shooting Guard Manu Ginobili and All-Star Point Guard Tony Parker were both on the 2002 to 2003 roster to serve as that 3rd element (technically, this means that the Spurs had an unprecedented 4th element on its 2003 championship team which no other teams could come close to matching). Even though Robinson eventually retired, Duncan, Ginobili, and Parker continue to dominate as a Big 3, bringing NBA Titles to San Antonio in 2005, 2007, and 2014.

This brings me back to the Toronto Raptors. As dominating and popular as Carter was from 2000 to 2002, he never had the same elite support that Jordan and Duncan received. McGrady would have filled the shoes of Pippen quite well; in fact, he may well be over-qualified for the position as he put together 7 consecutive All-Star seasons, including leading the NBA in scoring twice (2002 to 2003 and 2003 to 2004). Unfortunately, McGrady left the Raptors just before he matured into a bona fide superstar the next season for Orlando because he wanted to lead his own team and not live in the shadow of Carter. Thus, he may not have been a very good 2nd element for Carter even if he had remained in Toronto.

Assuming for the moment that McGrady was willing to stay in Toronto and play the role of Robin, and assuming that he was just as productive and put up the same numbers as he did for the Magic between 2000 and 2007, which is unlikely in reality since Carter would be the first scoring option and McGrady would not have the basketball in his hand nearly as often, the Raptors would still be missing that 3rd element that championship teams possess. The closest thing the team had to the missing 3rd element is Antonio Davis. That said, with only one All Star appearance (during the 2000 to 2001 season) in his career, I would not put him in the Rodman category (although he would match well in the McGrady category). The closest thing the team had during its glory days was a lone ranger in Carter with an above average supporting cast.

The short-lived emerging dynamic duo of Vince Carter and Tracy McGrady.

Image source: http://a.espncdn.com/photo/2013/0826/nba_tmac_02.jpg
The Competing Incentives of Sports
Why some teams do whatever they can to lose

MICHAEL SILVER > STAFF WRITER

The four north American professional sports have an entrenched system of conflicting incentives. The ultimate goal of sport is to win, and in professional sports this goal corresponds with enhanced revenues. However there is a secondary incentive in place which awards teams for losing, namely the draft. The lower a team finishes in the standings the better pick they will receive in the draft, distributing the players who enter the league.

The draft is either in directly reverse order of the final league standings, or partially based on a weighted lottery, where weightings correspond to the reverse order of league standings. The stated purpose of either of these systems is to facilitate improvement for the poorer teams, and to enhance competitive balance of leagues.

Hockey provides two clear examples of the dynamics of this system at play. The Pittsburgh penguins were a monumentally poor team in the early years of the millennium, and were therefore able to draft Sidney Crosby, Evgenie Malkin, Mark Andre Fluery, and Jordan Stall at or near the beginning of the draft. Pittsburgh has since consistently been one of the best teams in the league. This is one of many clear examples of the draft being the simplest path to building a successful team. However in order to do so a team must be bad for an extended period of time, and be managed intelligently. A team such as the Edmonton Oilers has been extremely poor on the ice for the last seven years, but have been unwise in drafting, and so have been unable to improve through the draft.

These two examples show that the general system of drafts may be problematic in that it awards failure, but is likely acceptable because it still requires intelligent team building. The truly problematic corollary of the system is that teams interpret the poorest possible outcome is finishing in the middle of the standings, not winning, but also not losing sufficiently to improve. Teams recognize that there is little prospect for improvement for a middling team (such as the Toronto Maple Leafs for the majority of the last 45 years), and instead make concerted efforts to lose in order to secure the best draft pick possible. A team actively seeking to lose in this way is termed tanking.

Recently, there have been several controversial examples of teams blatantly tanking. In the last game of this past NFL season the Tampa Bay Buccaneers were aware that if they lost they would receive the first pick in the upcoming draft. At half time of their game against New Orleans, Tampa was in control, winning 20–7. At half time, they removed all of their best players from the game, and collapsed, losing 20–23. This was widely recognized to be an example of tanking, but many argue it was justified. The result of the loss is that Tampa will be able to select the best Quarterback entering the league first in the upcoming draft, and this will give them the best possible chance to succeed in the future.

An even more troubling example of tanking has been taking place in the NBA over the last several seasons. The Philadelphia 76ers recognized that they were never going to succeed with the team that they had assembled, and made a clear decision that they would lose as many games as possible for several years, accumulate as many high draft picks as possible, and eventually assemble a better team than they started with. The traded away the majority of their NBA caliber players in exchange for additional draft picks, and drafted players who were unlikely to help them in the short term, but would eventually develop into better players. This approach may be no different from ones taken by teams such as the Seattle Supersonics (now the Oklahoma City Thunder), but is more blatant. It could not be confused for simple failure, it is a concerted effort to lose.

Intentional losing is an affront to the core ideas of sports: that the team should do everything that they can to win every game that they play. It alienates fans, and ruins the competitive balance of the league. However, from a team building, and long term success standpoint it is absolutely justified. The incentives in place in these leagues dictate that the best way to build a successful team is to lose for several years, and to draft well. Therefore, it is natural that the teams that lose the most games will not be teams that try but fail to win, but instead will be the teams that plan to lose. So long as losing is awarded in the way that it currently is, teams will continue to intentionally lose.

The NBA has responded to Philadelphia’s prolonged intentional losing with several proposals to remove some or all of the incentive in place for losing. However none of these proposals have yet been adopted. I believe that they should overhaul the system. Not because of tanking itself, but because of the perverse incentive currently in place. Reverse standigs drafts have always awarded failure. If the purpose of professional sports it to win, teams should not be awarded for the failure to attain this goal.

One promising alternative proposal suggests that draft picks should be awarded based on the number of games that each team wins after they were eliminated from playoff contention. This would increase interest in these teams even after they were eliminated, and provide them with an incentive to continue winning. It would also preserve the competitive balance purpose of the draft, the poorest teams would be eliminated the earliest, and have the most chance to accumulate wins, while the best teams that just missed the playoffs might also have a chance since they may win a larger portion of their games after being eliminated. Teams that make the playoffs would continue to draft in order of finish.
Detroit water

continued from COVER

Weakest, the poorest and the most vulnerable.”

At the conclusion of their visit, the Special Rapporteurs made a series of recommendations to the city on how to best resolve the crisis. The chief recommendation was that the city “restore water connections to residents unable to pay and to vulnerable groups of people,” and to “stop further disconnections of water when residents are unable to pay.” They also called on the city of Detroit and the state of Michigan to implement a mandatory affordability threshold.

The UN experts acknowledged that they had little power to force Detroit to implement their recommended changes, but that they do have leverage insofar as they can advocate on behalf of people facing possible human rights violations. Detroit, in its bankrupt state, has done little to respond to their recommendations, with Mayor Mike Duggan’s chief of staff, Alexis Wiley, saying without a hint of irony that “At the end of the day, everybody’s gotta pay their water bills.”

In July 2010, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution on the human right to water and sanitation as part of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals. Meera Karunananthan, an international water campaigner for the Blue Planet Project, writes that this resolution “was celebrated as a victory” and added that “social movements saw the human right to water and sanitation as a tool in the fight against a global water crisis produced by inequality, social exclusion and the abuse of the water commons.”

While water may be recognised as a human right, Detroit is not alone in its fight to access safe and affordable drinking water. Earlier in October, more than 50,000 people marched in Dublin to voice opposition to the country’s plan to begin charging residents for water usage. Prior to the new monetized scheme, which is planned to take effect in January 2015, Ireland was the only country in the OECD that did not charge residents for water services.

The mounting pressure on countries to privatize their water services has also led to many citizens being unable to afford this basic human right. In 1998, the International Monetary Fund approved a $138 million loan for Bolivia with a condition of the loan being that the country had to privatize the national water agency. Two years later, residents were stuck with water bills that were double or triple what they had been paying under the national scheme. In response, protestors in Cochabamba shut down the city for four days.

In Sao Paolo, privatization coupled with the worst drought that Brazil has seen in eight decades has resulted in more than 60 percent of the city’s 40 million people being cut off from water. The disparate impact of the water shortages is clear, with rural and poor communities being hit the hardest as a result of the unofficial rationing system.

While the Detroit water shortages may be the latest headline to expose the danger that widening global inequality plays, it is also a stark reminder of the elements that our survival on this planet depend upon. Without water, we would simply cease to exist, so ensuring that it is kept clean and available should be an obvious priority to global leaders. Despite the fact that Detroit is nestled inside the world’s leading economic superpower, the UN Rapporteurs cautioned that this “does not exempt them from human rights obligations. Human rights have precedence over financial and credit concerns. Human rights are primary. There is a whole group and class of people whose human rights are at stake.”

THUMBS DOWN

Merely suspending members of the “Class of DDS 2015 Gentleman.”

> Reports indicate that nearly half of all Detroit residents are behind on their water bills and more than 17,000 households have already been disconnected.
Editorial

Iceland

I have been (inexplicably, I’ll admit) obsessed with Iceland for years. I’ve made countless attempts to recruit friends, family, and my boyfriend as unenthusiastic travel companions, each time to no avail. I was always met with the same question: “What’s there to see in Iceland?” Often I answered that I had no idea, which was precisely why I had to go. But of course Iceland plays host to a dizzying array of natural wonders and an impressive nightlife and foodie scene in Reykjavik. Thus, you can imagine the simultaneous frustration and vindication I experienced upon learning about Jay Z and Beyonce’s well-publicized vacation to Iceland this past December; all of a sudden, it’s cool. Unsurprisingly, it has since popped up on every “Places to See in 2015” list I’ve encountered thus far. Insipid though it is to travel somewhere because it has emerged as a celebrity vacation spot, I’m happy to see Iceland finally getting the attention it deserves.

Patagonia

While Peru’s Inca Trail is a well-known Holy Grail for hikers, many overlook the W Trek further south. Though tour companies continue to launch new trips, and national parks continue to open throughout the region, it remains under the radar for all but the most adventurous of travellers. Historically a must-see for adventure trekkers, the Patagonia region is bound to pop up on more and more itineraries as travellers of all kinds grasp for increasingly exotic destinations.

Houston, Texas

This entry departs from the rest of my list in its specificity, but is merited nonetheless, I think. It’s fair to say that Houston has generally been considered the less cool cousin of Austin, yet not classically Texan enough, like San Antonio, to merit much attention. But that is quickly changing, as Houston develops a distinctly young and hip vibe. Its food scene seems to be experiencing an especially rapid transformation, with an influx of both the food truck culture that swept L.A. and Seattle, as well as more high-brow establishments in its downtown core, each of which seem to be winning a new award every month.

fully understood; it’s layered, complex tempers are legion. Call it an acquired taste with a kinky savour. You can almost get a contact high from watching. Team PTA, always and forever.

**Mr. Turner (2014) 3/4**

Abrasive and refreshingly unstructured, *Mr. Turner* is a vivid grumble; a mighty work of critical imagination; and a loving, unsentimental portrait of a rare creative soul. As fresh and lively as one of its subject’s oil seascapes, it’s a rich, ruthless, and profoundly compassionate study of art and love and life. Rather than nostalgia, it feels like time traveling.

*Mr. Turner* explores the last quarter century of JMW Turner (1775-1851), the great, eccentric British “painter of light.” Profoundly affected by the death of his father, loved by a housekeeper he takes for granted, Turner forms a close relationship with a seaside landlady with whom he eventually lives incognito in Chelsea, where he dies. Throughout, he travels, paints, visits brothels, stays with the country aristocracy, is an anarchic member of the Royal Academy of Arts, has himself strapped to the mast of a ship so that he can paint a snowstorm, and is both celebrated and reviled.

Reminiscent of Charles Laughton, longtime Leigh collaborator Timothy Spall (*Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*) delivers a titanic, Oscar-caliber performance that’s symphonic in the sweep of its eccentricities and telling in the spectrum of its passions, playing the determined bohemian like a bronchial, randy old toad with backache. Porcine and self-involved, Spall’s Turner growls, gurgles, and wheezes, but the performance could not be more eloquent, revealing the painter in all his talents and contradictions. Snarling, he struts down London’s alleyways like a Dickensian villain, chewing the scenery and spitting it back out with contempt.

Through industrious application, writer-director and keen observer Mike Leigh (*Vera Drake, Another Year*) brings his hawk’s eye to a rendering of the artist. Leigh makes full use of his canvas, and *Mr. Turner*’s best moments – marinated in detail – are ravishingly good. Creating the cinematic equivalent of Turner’s panoramic washes, Leigh and DP Dick Pope have carefully incorporated actual Turner paintings into the film’s immaculate visuals, making the experience a lot like living inside a masterpiece.

Like *Andrei Rublev* and *Amadeus* before it, *Mr. Turner* is a stunning encapsulation of a life – strange, thoughtful, and exciting – effortlessly hitting upon universal themes of creativity and mortality. Less an explication of the man’s genius than an immersion into its essence, *Mr. Turner* has a mysterious quality that perfumes every scene. Any expectations of reverential biography are quickly dispelled by Leigh’s scintillating script and Spall’s daring aptitude. Turner is a grunting vulgarian and complex visionary, and Spall is as majestic as one of Turner’s swirling sunsets.

*Mr. Turner* addresses big questions with small moments. Arm in arm, Leigh and Spall sketch an intricate drawing of a wonderfully messy
Film reviews

Wild (2014) 2.5/4

Arduous, clear-eyed, ruggedly beautiful, and literal-minded, Wild is a sturdy feminist character study that’s a bit pedestrian, a soul-searching adventure picture of self-discovery about the profound power of nature to provide space to reset yourself.

Reeling from the dissolution of her marriage and the death of her mother, Cheryl Strayed (Reese Witherspoon, Election) has lost all hope. After years of reckless, self-destructive behaviour, she makes a rash decision. With no experience – driven only by sheer determination – Cheryl hikes more than 1,100 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, alone.

Both the material and the setting seem to have shaken something loose in Witherspoon, who scuffs callouses from her heart with each slow, plodding, blistered step. Not since June Carter Cash in Walk the Line has she been so present to a character, moving away from those recent uptight romantic-comedy cuties and toward the breezy, self-determined trendsetters of her early career. There’s not a shred of her America’s Sweetheart persona; she’s unvarnished. Still, it’s difficult to buy her as a junkie, with her downward spiral of a life yanked out of orbit by the gravity of pernicious influences. She remains at arm’s length, and her character arc is a slender as a sapling.

The gifted Laura Dern (Inland Empire, The Master) should net a Best Supporting Actress nod for her outstanding, more deserving work as Cheryl’s spunky, nurturing mother. Unfortunately for us, Dern isn’t the main character, and is relegated to passing glimpses of kitchen embraces and hospital bedside visits. While Cheryl’s journey is interesting, it’s not on the same level as the one embarked upon by Christopher McCandless in Sean Penn’s 2007 hitchhiking wilderness drama Into the Wild.

Translating personal enlightenment, solitary musings, and raw despondency into a scrappy, lively script is screenwriter/novelist Nick Hornby (An Education), who does an admirable job even if it tangles with rote insights at least half of the time. It’s partly not his fault, burdened as it is, out of fidelity to the memoir, with expendable life lessons and gratuitous explanations that it dispenses, like CliffsNotes, at every opportunity.

Québécois writer-director Jean-Marc Vallée pulls the narrative apart and relies upon the considerable contributions of Witherspoon and Hornby, yet assembles something that doesn’t feel entirely organic. His Dallas Buyers Club was a braver film. His Wild never matches the blunt audacity of its title; it would perhaps be better described as “Tame.” Although the scenery could stop the heart of a mountain goat, swelling orchestral cues and convenient epiphanies do not make an exceptional redemption movie.

Like mountain climber survival story 127 Hours, Wild is very nervous about boring its audience with its protagonist’s solitude. The flashbacks are too brief to provide context, and the didactic, show-and-tell approach is disappointing. It meanders, and the fragmented piecemeal editing is quite distracting, especially jarring towards the halfway point in which the routine switchbacks occur more and more swiftly. By keeping everything moving forward so cautiously and so neatly, it implores us to feel, but not to feel anything dangerous.

I’m not wild about Wild – above all, the personal reinvention doesn’t feel earned – but there’s enough to merit a recommendation. Arriving at peace is less provocative, and less satisfying, than embracing the struggle, in cinema and in life.

For more reviews, visit Absurdity & Serenity at absurdities.wordpress.com.
Jurisfoodence

continued from PAGE 7

KAROLINA: My latte was fine, though I’ve had better. I only tried a sip of the coffee, so I suppose I’m not in much of a position to comment, but it didn’t wow me.

LLBO licensed

KATE: School serves alcohol, but none of us ordered any. I believe their cocktails were all in the $10-12 range.

KAROLINA: Drinks weren’t even on my radar! This is the second time now. I’ll take one for the team and order a beverage at our next stop.

The Food

KATE: School has a fairly comprehensive menu, including unique takes on both sweet and savoury choices, as well as freshly baked scones and donuts; however, I was a little disappointed (and surprised) to see that School didn’t have a standard eggs, meat, toast, and hash browns on the weekend brunch menu (though it is on its weekday menu).

I decided to get the Headmaster Omelette, which contained Gorgonzola cheese, squash, and leeks, and was topped with a red pepper relish; it was served with lightly dressed greens. The omelette was pretty good, though the squash was very sweet and after eating about a third of my meal, it began overpowering all of the other flavours. I have made my opinion on breakfast greens known before, and I am still not a fan.

My brunch companion got the Krispy Krunchy French Toast – challah rolled in Rice Krispies and orange marmalade, and dusted with sugar – with a side of sugar cured bacon. Though the French toast was good (I also had a bite), he felt that $15 was a bit pricey for only two slices, and the bacon was cold.

KAROLINA: After mercilessly critiquing their décor, I have to say their food game was on point. I had heard such great things about their cheddar and chive scones, so I ordered one to go along with my Huevos Rancheros. The biscuit was served with honey butter and was delicious. The cheese and chive flavours were very well balanced, and the texture of the scone was fluffy and crumbly at the same time – just what a good scone should be. My only complaint is that only the outside was warm – it was cold towards the middle; clearly it had been warmed up before being served, rather than emerging straight out of the oven. Of course I know they can’t bake all their goodies onsite, but I wish I hadn’t been reminded.

The Huevos Rancheros were solidly executed. They arrived encased in a crispy tortilla shell, which formed a sort of cup around the fillings. Inside, there were scrambled eggs, guacamole, and jack cheese. It was finished off with a dollop of pico de gallo. The whole thing rested on a bed of well-flavoured Mexi beans. There was also a sprinkling of fresh cilantro which added a great zing. Overall, it was good. The flavours (apart from the seasoned Mexi beans and cilantro) sort of melded together, as they were all fairly mild, but that is likely a characteristic of the dish itself, rather than a shortcoming on the part of School in preparing it. I’d be curious to order Huevos Rancheros at another restaurant to see if it can be prepared in a way that keeps the different elements of the dish distinct in terms of flavour.

I was joined at brunch by a pancake connoisseur, so naturally, he ordered the chocolate chip and mint pancakes. They were served with vanilla honey butter and maple syrup in a shot glass, which I thought was cute and original. I was told (and this was later confirmed when I tasted them myself) that the pancakes were excellent. They managed to balance the sweetness and saltiness that pancakes so rarely do, and their consistency was perfectly fluffy. The chocolate chips, unfortunately, were not mixed into the batter. This could have proven a bigger problem than it was, what with the risk of the chocolate forming a hard crust over the pancake itself. While this disaster was avoided, it would have been nicer if the chocolate was mixed in, oozing out once you cut into the pancake. The mint crème fraîche it was served with was excellent – not too strong, but added an interesting element to an otherwise standard dish.

Cost:

KATE’S MEAL: $22 plus tip.

KAROLINA’S MEAL: $26 plus tip. On the pricier side, but if you’re a brunch enthusiast, it’s probably one worth going to in Toronto.

Final thoughts

KATE: I would put School in the middling category of brunches I’ve had so far – my omelette was good, but not as good as the one at Aunties and Uncles, and not nearly as good as my experience at Big Crow. I like that School put a twist on traditional meals, and there were a few other items on the menu that I would be interested in trying; however, I am unlikely to go back because of the location and the high prices.

KAROLINA: Though I obviously believe School has its shortcomings, I think it does brunch quite well. Though not quite the knockout that Big Crow was, School executed all the dishes we ordered solidly, and I appreciated the risks they took in trying to add an unexpected dimension which complemented, rather than overshadowed, old breakfast favourites. If you’re willing to splurge and tolerate the studied “coolness” of the place, it’s worth a visit.

The enjoyment of the Headmaster Omlette is only somewhat soured by its surrounding breakfast greens.

FINAL SCORE

SERVICE: 4/5

ATMOSPHERE: 4/5

FOOD: 4/5

OVERALL:
The Davies summer experience?
Ask our Osgoode students.

Jonathan Bilyk
Class of 2015

David Kim
Class of 2014

Alexandra Monkhouse
Class of 2015

Marc Pontone
Class of 2015

Shubham Sindhwani
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Emily Uza
Class of 2014

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