

CONCORDIA'S THURSDAY REPORT

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Concordia toughs it out during the ice storm

BY BARBARA BLACK

Starting on the night of January 5, a slow-moving weather system rained ice on eastern Ontario, Quebec, New England and the Maritimes, and seemed to last forever.

Then the lights went out. At Concordia's west-end Loyola Campus, the power failed early on Tuesday, January 6. Many of the campus's stately trees were shattered, and the crash of ice and icy branches filled the air.

The heat went off. Classes were cancelled, first for the day, then indefinitely. Activities at the Athletic Complex, usually alive at this time of year with hockey, basketball and other sports, were cancelled or hastily moved to other venues in the city.

Downtown on the Sir George Williams Campus, the lights went out on the afternoon of Friday, January 9, forcing the evacuation of the

buildings and the rest of the downtown core. Montrealers went into a state of shock at the depth of the crisis. Over the next two weeks, they struggled with downed power lines, cold homes, contaminated water, scarce supplies, sketchy information and cabin fever.

Some people were dealing not only with their own problems, but with those of the crippled University. The plumbers, electricians and maintenance officials of Physical Resources wrestled with a potentially dangerous situation. The Security Officers patrolled buildings, checking over and over for people and damaged property. Staff in the Registrar's Office, Financial Aid, the deans' offices and others answered incoming telephone calls, some of them angry and fearful.

The good news: There was no permanent damage anywhere, thanks to rotating shifts of maintenance

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PHOTO: M.-C. PELOUIN & CHRISTIAN FLEURY

Our heroes of the storm: Maintenance and Security staff celebrate the return of power to the Loyola Campus.

Spring break off, Sundays on

Class time lost will be made up by using spring break to replace one week of classes, and Sundays to make up the other.

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How some University staff members responded to the crisis:

Barbara Woodside, Psychology, research scientist: "The staff did a good job. The emergency circuits ensured that the research animals had heat, but there wasn't enough power to provide light or ventilation. The students who provide animal care watered and fed the animals by candlelight. I went in every other day

at first, and then every day. And then a water main broke in the Drummond Sciences Building (independent of the storm). It happens every year. When the power went on again at 1:15 p.m. on Friday, I couldn't believe it. I went over to flick the light switch to be sure."

Sue Magor, Director of Environmental Health and Safety: "I lined up students to help at the Loyola High School shelter, about 40 of them, and for another shelter in Little Burgundy. Most of them went around with the police, checking on residents. Some staff helped, too. Robert Lortie, the operations manager at Loyola, was just wonderful, and things went extraordinarily well. Nabil Bissada (Hazardous Materials Coordinator) went around to all the labs. I didn't do much, just kick-started a few things. Now I'm trying to get information together for an emergency preparedness/disaster response policy."

Mimi Littman, Director of Residence Administration: "In a sense, Concordia ended up having a shelter of its own. When the power went down and stayed down at the residence on the Loyola campus, the University made sure the students were warm, fed, and busy."

"At first, the Dean of Students



PHOTO: M.-C. PÉLOUJIN & CHRISTIAN FLEURY

Tackling the ice on Bishop Street.

provided buffet lunches, and, on one occasion, took all 144 students out to a Chinese restaurant for dinner.

"Thanks to a generator, there was heat everywhere, but half the building was always without power.

"When the Loyola shelter opened up nearby, many used it for meals, and some went door-to-door to check on neighbours and the elderly. Most students, however, went home

to their families. I was stuck downtown, which was quite stressful. Jeff Peters, Assistant Director of Residence, became captain of the ship, staying at the residence and being on call 24 hours a day. He was really put to the test. I am also grateful to all the Resident Assistants who stayed at Hingston Hall and made sure everyone was well taken care of."



Trees litter the Loyola grounds on January 7.

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staff and portable generators which were acquired to supplement the permanent ones.

Director of Security Michel Bujold and Assistant Director Victor Francisco were everywhere at once.

"Things went really well," said an exhausted Bujold early this week. "Nearly all of the 70 security staff showed up for work, despite their storm-related problems at home." If they had to, they brought home along with them. "At one point," he laughed, "we had a girlfriend, a wife, an infant, two dogs and a bird spending the nights with us."

Power was out at Loyola for 11 days, from 1:15 a.m. on January 6 to the afternoon of January 16. The blackout meant that the Athletics Department had to reschedule eight basketball and hockey games. Several were played at McGill University.

"Our first concern was the well-being of the students, not the games schedule," said Communications Officer Catherine Grace. "Every member of the staff had students staying with them."

Power went out downtown early in the afternoon of Friday, January 9, and the University shut down completely. By Wednesday, January 14, power had been back on for a while, and despite warnings by Hydro-Québec to avoid the city core for fear of collapsing the fragile network, staff were quietly returning to their offices. Central among these were the senior administrators, deans and heads of departments who made up a hastily convened Emergency Council. The Council met every day to

consider what should be done.

Registrar Lynne Prendergast and her staff were faced with the horrendous task of rescheduling classes, finding classrooms for them, and explaining it all to anxious students and faculty, a job that is still going on. It was Public Relations' task to get the word out to the Concordia community and the media.

Explaining is all in a day's work for Lise Tavares, Director of Information Services. "It's been hell," she said in exasperation, as she juggled the phones in the Henry F. Hall Building's main-floor booth early in the crisis. "People have been pretty patient."

Acting Dean of Students Roger Côté and Sup Mei Graub, Director of Counselling and Development, issued advice to their own front-line troops to be particularly sensitive.

"Returning students may be wor-

ried, frustrated, confused and impatient," they cautioned. "These are normal reactions. Acknowledge students' difficulties and reassure them. Expect to hear and answer the same questions over and over again, even from the same student. Don't minimize their concerns. Don't top their stories or cut them short, and don't give false hopes."

Jackie Chegrinac, Secretary to the Vice-Rector Services, said staff did a great job. "The switchboard has been swamped," she said in the midst of the crisis. "Electricians, plumbers and groundsmen have been going non-stop, trying to make sure the pipes don't burst."

They didn't. And in spite of lack of sleep, cold weather and difficult work, the troops, whether out in the cold or at the end of a phone line, remained cheerful and optimistic.

- With help from Alison McArthur

Professors reflect on the ice storm and its aftermath:

David Frost, climatologist, Department of Geography: "(In this type of storm), there is warm air on top, and cooler air underneath. The cool air pushes up into the warm air to cause the freezing rain." The weather system that brought the ice storm was only moving at about 5 km an hour, while the average weather system moves at about 50 to 60 km an hour. "This thing pretty much stalled on top of us."

Praveen Jain, Electrical Engineering: "(Hydro-Québec) obviously didn't think this could happen. Underground cables are more reliable (than overhead ones), but they would cost a fortune — several tens of billions of dollars. Because most of the infrastructure is in place, it would be (difficult) to put in underground cables, but any new developments should go underground."

Sabah Alkass, construction engineering and management, School for Building: "I believe in Hydro-Québec, and I am sure they will study this phenomenon and compare costs. We will approach them to see if we can do a study. In engineering, we teach economics, and (the storm's effects) will be a good example to explain benefit and cost, which I will use throughout the semester."

David Greene, Geography, in an article in last Saturday's *Gazette*, titled "Green disaster": The main region for ice storms is the humid west-to-east belt running from Wisconsin through southern Quebec to the Maritimes. Farther north, fronts bring snow; farther south, they invariably produce rain. Previous recent major ice storms

in the Montreal area were in 1942, 1961, 1983; only in 1961 was damage comparable. However, this storm killed 35 per cent of the forested area in the region from Montreal to Drummondville, or the equivalent of 7,000 square km of forest, an unprecedented disaster.

Raye Kass, small-groups expert in Applied Human Sciences: "Collaboration and high generosity won out over competition. Resources were shared. What brought people together and held them was need. (But this only lasts for a while, and only if there's no danger to life). Then there was territory—the reluctance to leave, and the fear of loss. But people were willing to share their territory. My brother in Pointe Claire had a generator, and 40 people in his home. I think of World War II, of adversity pulling people together. The storm came right after Christmas, an intense period of family connectedness, and while some found it difficult to be in close quarters, families that were open with one another fared better. Also, after a while, in both homes and shelters, a certain amount of structure and routine were needed."

Daniel Salée, Principal, School of Community and Public Affairs: "It was very well handled by both levels of government — no one-upmanship, no partisanship. On the policy side, obviously the preparedness wasn't there. The ice storm was not a freak thing; last year, Lanaudière was out for a week. On a social note, we saw people in local communities getting together to find solutions. As a political scientist, I considered it an implicit critique of the state's all-embracing power. It represents a shift in attitude."



PHOTO: OWEN EGAN

Cynthia Raso, second-year Sociology student, looks up information for a client at the busy information booth in the Henry F. Hall Building.

Snapshots of a storm from Concordians:

Michael Di Grappa, Executive Director, Physical Resources: "My wife went into labour in the wee hours of Friday morning. Our baby was due on January 20; I guess she figured that life would be more interesting if mom and dad had to struggle to get to the hospital during an ice storm when most of the city was blacked out! At least it will give her a point of reference years from now, when she tells people that she was born during the Storm of the Century."

"The Jewish General Hospital was without power and was functioning on a generator. Everything went well, and our new daughter, Arianna Emily Di Grappa, was born on Friday, January 9, at 12:29 p.m. Mother and daughter are doing well, although dad is still a wreck."

Howard Bokser, editor, *Concordia Magazine*: "On Tuesday morning, the entire Loyola Campus had no power, but the Wee Professors daycare remained with electricity, as they're not on the same line. Sure enough, at 9:30 a.m., the power went out there, too, and stayed out for a week. For the next three days, at about 6 a.m., co-directors Sandra Chang and Brenda MacDonald contacted Mike Bujold, the Director of Security and the parent of a child at the daycare. He told them of the status of the building. Sandra and Brenda then called their eight educators, who then called the 44 parents to inform them of the centre's closing, all before 7 a.m. Their wee-hours efforts were much appreciated."

Mary O'Malley, learning and study skills specialist: "On Friday, at the height of the storm period, we at Counselling and Development were told that we could leave at noon. Four of us who stayed to finish a few last-minute things found ourselves in total blackness when the power went off at SGW at about 12:10 p.m. There was no emergency lighting to help us find our way down from the fourth floor. With no light from outside, it was incredibly black! Our efficient receptionist, Norma Barnes, called Security to inquire about help and was informed that staff would come with flashlights, but that they were starting at the top floors, so it would be a while. Whereupon Norma whipped a fat red candle and matches out of her desk, as if they were the most usual types of things to have on hand in the office, and we guided ourselves out. Some thoughtful people think of everything!"

Suzanne Belson, University Ombudsperson: "I volunteered at a shelter at Bialik High School in Côte St. Luc, where many elderly people were transferred from area seniors' residences. Early on, beds, or any-



Maureen Pennell, Mary O'Malley, Norma Barnes and Andrea MacDonald with the precious candle that got them out of the Henry F. Hall Building when the emergency lights went on the blink.

thing that could serve as a bed, were in short supply. I called Harry Zarins, (Director of Recreation/Athletics) and asked if I could borrow Loyola's supply of gym mats. Harry gave the OK. Victor Francisco (Security Operations Officer) arranged for access to the Athletic Complex; Neil Sowden (Security Officer) lit the way through a pitch-black gym and helped hoist almost 100 mats into vans. Two mats on top of each other made a reasonably comfortable mattress. And 45 people got to sleep better for the next few nights. Thanks, all!"

Zoja Smutny, Stacy Hannah and Lauren De Gileo, Contemporary Dance students: Determined to do their part, they offered to give aerobics sessions at several shelters (the Palais de Congrès and the Old Brewery Mission), but were turned down. Then they went to the Loyola High School, and found 20 people out of 200 with the energy to join them.

Susan Hirshorn, student: "We lost power for only 16 hours but I became a little crazed after about 5 hours of being alone with no lights. Somebody, somewhere, must have done research on the effects of heat and/or light deprivation on mental functioning. Or maybe it's the combination of no heat, no lights, running helter-skelter and then have one's hopes raised and dashed by flickering lights and cheap transformers."

Eugenia Xenos, copy editor, CTR, was trying to get back from Chicago: "It was a good thing I was urged to call the airline, because my flight had been cancelled. After three days, I took off at last. On the crowded plane, we watched the in-flight newscast with horror, as branches crashed down all around the reporter. It was surreal to be plunged into the frozen city. But I count myself lucky to have made it back and to have shared in the experience of sheltering and being sheltered, icing and deciding. In the future, I'll always call

ahead to the airline."

Ann Franklin-Böttjer, Student Affairs Office, Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science: "Seven and a half days with no power, tempers were short, I was sick as a dog, Paprika (my cat) was sick as a dog (\$1,200 later, he doesn't have cancer, he's on steroids, he's on thyroid medication, he's feeling much better), Jeff (my husband) was getting over being sick as a dog. My walls and ceiling in the living room are black with candle smoke/soot. I no longer wish to light candles to help me relax (used to like them, probably will again, but not for a while). Spent six days living in a cold, dark tomb, two days at my brother's place. Other than that, it was nice to have the extra time off."

Patricia Chau, student and staff member: "On Day Five, I went skiing with a group of 80 students to Mont Tremblant. (Organizers had tried to cancel the trip, but the agency refused.) The traffic lights went off on the way there, and when we stopped at McDonald's, they didn't have enough food for us. Although Mont Tremblant was picturesque and peaceful, we experienced a series of blackouts. It was pitch dark as I looked outside our condo; all I could see were the contours of the mountains against the sky."

"Nik," on concordia.general (electronic bulletin board): "I miss the darkness. I miss the primitive madness of the people who lived in the dark. Now we return to normal, trusting science and each other, believing in the goodness of people. But in the shadowy murk of memory, we all now know that something as seemingly insignificant as electric light keeps the demons, ghosts, and pagan gods away. Take away the lights, and watch people revert to primitive tribes, roaming the city streets in bands, hunting down beer and birth control, howling at the moon."

NOTICE: REVISED DATES

The University has adjusted the 1997-98 Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Calendars for the Winter Term. The Mid-Term Break, originally scheduled from Monday, February 23 to Saturday, February 28 inclusive, has been cancelled (including Rector's Holiday).

Effectively, all undergraduate and graduate Winter 98 credit courses have lost two weeks of class due to the closure of the University from January 6 to 18 inclusive.

The January 12 to 17 week of class cancellations will be made up during February 23 to 28 inclusive. Classes will be held according to the regular weekly class schedule.

Earlier class cancellations must also be rescheduled. As Sundays are the only day of the week on which classes are not normally scheduled, make-up classes will normally be held on Sundays according to the following schedule:

Classes normally held on Monday will be held on	February 8
Classes normally held on Tuesday will be held on	February 15
Classes normally held on Wednesday will be held on	February 22
Classes normally held on Thursday will be held on	March 1
Classes normally held on Friday will be held on	March 8
Classes normally held on Saturday will be held on	March 15

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Undergraduate Programs
Office of the Registrar
848-2668

School of
Graduate Studies
848-3800

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

The following deadlines have been adjusted:

Last day to add winter-term courses or make section changes **January 27**

Last day to apply for DEF/MED notation for Fall courses **January 29**

Last day to apply for degrees, diplomas and certificates for Spring 1998 graduation **January 30**

Deadline for withdrawal with full tuition refund for winter-term courses **February 2**

Deadline for fee payment **February 2**

Last day to apply for replacement and supplemental examinations for courses ending in December 1997 (graduating students only) **February 9**

Last day to apply for re-evaluation of courses ending in December 1997 **February 15**

Replacement and supplemental examinations for courses ending in December 1997 (graduating students only) **February 21**

University Writing Test, originally scheduled for January 16, has been rescheduled to **January 30**. All appointment cards issued for January 16 will be honoured. (Same time - same place).

All other deadlines remain as published in the 1997-98 Undergraduate Academic Calendar, Section 11.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

The following deadlines have been adjusted:

Course change period ends **January 27**

Last day for students to apply for Spring Convocation **January 30**

DNE deadline for withdrawal from Winter 1998 courses, with tuition refund **February 2**

Final payment deadline for course and other fees - Winter (1/4 courses) **February 2**

Last day to apply for Concordia University Graduate Fellowships **February 16**

Academic withdrawal deadline from Winter one-term courses (with partial tuition refund) **February 16**

Last day for doctoral thesis submission to the Thesis Office for Spring Convocation **March 5**

Last day for master's thesis submission to the Thesis Office for Spring Convocation **March 20**

All other deadlines remain as published on page viii, in the 1997-98 Graduate Academic Calendar.

Special Thanks

To Our Ice Storm Heroes!

We would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of our Physical Resources Employees during the recent Ice Storm. The following individuals, and many others throughout the university worked tirelessly around the clock, above and beyond the call of duty, to ensure the safety of the University Community and its buildings. Their hard work, in the face of such adversity, is inspiring, reassuring and greatly appreciated. Thanks for a job well done!

MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

Guy Lortie • Robert Lortie

Electrical Division

Gilles Pilon • Denis Dumont • Arthur Ayotte
Eric Boulanger • Sean Bradshaw • Daniel Drouin
Serge Lalonde • Khammo Oudomvilay • Nelson Lalonde
Donald Richard • Luigi Sgrosso • Giuseppe Ruscitto
Gerald Vardon

Architectural Maintenance Division

Albert Bossi • Eddy Ginocchi • Yves Lanneville
Jean Marc Martineau • Terry Rogers • Claude Rivard
Rejean Meilleur

Mechanical Division

Serge Bonin • Normand Dubeau • Alessandro Berardelli
Daniel Cuillierrier • Denis Gauthier • Claude Potvin
Manuel Da Silva • Daniel Leduc • Nunzio Guerrera

UTILITIES AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

Yves Gilbert • Stephane Drolet • Pierre Marchand

CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Grounds and Roads Division

Agostino Borsellino • Jean-René Campeau
James Da Costa Gil • Antonio Escaleira

Cleaning Services

Salvatore Balliro • Jose Andrade • Carlos De Sousa
Antonio Jose Lopes • Manuel Valente • Franklin Jiminez
David McCluskey • Alfredo Moutinho • Eddy Murphy
Micheal O'Hanley • Antonio Souto

Michael Di Grappa
Executive Director, Physical Resources