

News of what's happening around MIMM
February 2019

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MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM CHAIR

Dear Colleagues,

As 2019 gets underway, I thought you all may be interested in a recent article published in the Economist from Professor Steve Pinker who is a graduate from McGill and a Distinguished Professor at Harvard.

Professor Pinker makes 2 important points:

- 1) Things are better than we know;
- 2) To get an accurate picture of the world, you have to count.

Hope the article makes you more optimistic about 2019 !

Dr. Greg Matlashewski

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF CHANGES

- We wish Elisa Torres, secretary in the MIMM administrative office, well as she is on her maternity leave and would like to take a moment to thank her for all her support in the department. We are currently in the process of hiring her replacement. Updates on the new hire will be communicated in the near future.
- Ana Reinoza took on the role of Academic Affairs Administrator in AEC2.
- Nancy Brault joined the AEC2 team in the role of HR administrator.

The World in 2019 International 77

Follow the trendlines



Deep trends suggest more progress will come in the years ahead, predicts Steven Pinker, Johnstone family professor, Harvard University

THE WORLD in 2019, as seen through the news, will be a depressing place. The headlines will tell us about terrorism, war, inequality, pollution. But journalism, even at its most accurate, is bound to paint a distorted picture of reality. News is about things that happen, such as wars and epidemics, not things that don't happen, such as peace and health. Adding to the gloom is the ethos of journalism, in which reporting failure is considered a professional duty, whereas reporting success is considered public relations. All this creates a market for entrepreneurs of mayhem, such as terrorists, rampage shooters, trolls and politicians, who leverage fear and outrage into saturation coverage.

The bugs in journalism ferociously engage the bugs in our psychology. The human mind estimates risk by the anecdotes and images turned up by its internal search engine, which favours vividness and recency. People thus think tornadoes kill more victims than asthma attacks, which are in fact 80 times as lethal.

To get an accurate picture of the world, you have to count. The data confirm an observation by Franklin Pierce Adams: nothing is more responsible for the good old days than a bad memory. The world in earlier decades had more deaths from war, homicide, infectious disease and terrorism; more poverty, autocracies and nuclear weapons; more air and water pollution in rich countries and more cooking smoke and contaminated water in poor ones.

Beyond the headlines
Lest this seem incredible, recall that the 1970s and 1980s saw double-digit inflation and unemployment, gasoline lines, a nuclear stand-off between America and the Soviet Union, communist dictatorships in eastern Europe, fascist ones in Spain and Portugal, military ones across Latin America and East Asia. Marxist and secessionist terrorist brigades in Europe, civil wars throughout Africa and an Iran-Iraq war that killed more than half a million people.

The stealthy improvements in recent decades fall into a longer trend of progress. Since the 18th-century Enlightenment, life expectancy across the world has increased from 30 to 71 years, extreme poverty has fallen from 90% to 10%, literacy has risen from 12% to 85%, and the share of people living in democracies has leapt from 1% to two-thirds. Since 1945, wars between states have become rare, battle deaths have declined more than tenfold and billions of lives have been enhanced by revolutions in the rights of racial minorities, women and gay people.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. But neither is history cyclical, with gains predictably cancelled by losses. Unlikely to make a comeback are human sacrifice, slave auctions, emaciated, heretic-burnings and male-only suffrage, and the same may be true of great-power war, unregulated emissions and male-only schooling. The forces that have propelled progress—knowledge, prosperity, connectivity—will probably not go into reverse, and they build on one another. A richer world can better afford to protect the environment, police its gangs, strengthen its social safety-nets, and teach and heal its citizens. A better-educated world cares more about the environment and human rights.

To be sure, not everything gets better for everyone everywhere all the time. Progress is the fruit of human ingenuity deployed to solve problems. Problems are inevitable, and solutions create new problems, which must be solved in their turn. Nor are solutions to the biggest problems, particularly climate change, guaranteed.

A major worry today is that the rise of authoritarian populism threatens progress. Yet here too the headlines made by tweeting populists may not be a weather vane for the prevailing winds. Today's ardent populists tend to be rural, less educated, religious, white and members of the early baby-boom generation. But demography will make tomorrow's electorate more urban, educated, secular, ethnically diverse and millennial. Also, isolationism and militant nationalism may be engulfed by the unstoppable tide of globalisation. The problems facing individual countries—migration, pandemics, terrorism, cybercrime, nuclear proliferation, rogue states, the environment—will increasingly require international solutions.

No one can predict whether the progress of recent decades and centuries will play out in the coming year. But to understand the world we should follow the trendlines, not the headlines.

To get an accurate picture of the world, you have to count



THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE IS MOVING

The office will be moving back to room 511 in the Duff building on February 11th. Services on that day will be interrupted. If there is a delay in the move, we will keep you informed.

[Click here to read the article.](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Alonso da Silva Lira Filho and Martin Olivier.

Culprit within a culprit : *Leishmania* exosomes as an ancient viral disguise technique.

Nature Microbiology Community
<https://naturemicrobiologycommunity.nature.com/users/205472-alonso-lira/posts/43366>, (2019)

[Atayde, V. D., Filho, A. D., Chaparro, V., Zimmermann, A., Martel, C., Jaramillo, M., & Olivier, M. \(2019, January 28\). Exploitation of the Leishmania exosomal pathway by Leishmania RNA virus 1. Retrieved from https://www.nature.com/articles/s41564-018-0352-y](#)

Recruitment Seminar

Genetic Technologies to Engineer and Study the Microbiome

Amphitheater, Duff Building
3776 University Street
H3A 2B4

Dr. Mark Mimeo
Postdoctoral Associate
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Thursday, February 21 2019
11:30 - 12:30pm
Amphitheater, Duff Medical Building
3775 University Street, H3A 2B4

For information:
office.micromim@mcmill.ca
514-398-3912

McGill University of Montreal

RECRUITMENT SEMINAR

Dr. Mark Mimeo will be visiting from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and will be giving a seminar on "Genetic Technologies to Engineer and Study the Microbiome"

Seminar Date: February 21 2019 at 11:30am

Location: Duff Amphitheatre.

For more information, follow this [link](#)



4th CONFERENCE OF THE CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR CHRONOBIOLOGY

An exciting and diversified program about various aspects of biological rhythms!

Conference Date: May 26-28, 2019

Location: McGill University (New Residence Hall)

Abstract submission deadline:
February 28, 2019

For information about the program, registration and abstract submission:
www.chronobiocanada.com/cscevents

For questions, contact the Chair of the CSC 2019 organizing committee, Dr. [Nicolas Cermakian](#)

GRADUATE RESEARCH DAY

[Kervezee, L., Cuesta, M., Cermakian, N., Boivin, D.B. \(2018\) The phase-shifting effect of bright light exposure on circadian rhythmicity in the human transcriptome. Journal of Biological Rhythms, Jan 8:748730418821776. doi: 10.1177/0748730418821776. \[Epub ahead of print\] PMID: 30621487](#)



A MESSAGE FROM MISA

The MISA office is now open for the winter semester and we are selling NTCs for MIMM 214, 314, 413, and 466. You can purchase these for \$10 a set or \$40 per course in the MISA office, room 423. The office is open:

Monday, Tuesday, and

Fridays from 11:30-2:30pm

Wednesdays from 10:30-3:30pm

Thursdays from 12:30-3:30pm

This February, we have several events planned:

Feb. 2: We will be participating in the [Relay for Life](#), a charity event to



Microbiology and Immunology **Graduate Research Day**

Friday, May 31st 2019
Palmer Amphitheatre, McIntyre Building
McGill University

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Emma Allen-Vercoe
Professor, University of Guelph, Canada

Dr. Allen-Vercoe obtained her PhD in Molecular Microbiology through an industrial partnership with the Veterinary Laboratories Agency in the UK. She then moved to Canada to start a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Calgary where she worked with M. tuberculosis and C. jejuni. A Fellow-To-Faculty transition award allowed her to start her own laboratory at the University of Guelph in 2007 where she established a world-class anaerobic microbiology facility. Now, Dr. Allen-Vercoe is a leader in the human gut microbiome and is investigating its role in human health and disease.

Date: May 31 2019

Location: Palmer Amphitheatre,
McIntyre Building McGill University

Guest Speaker: Dr. Emma Allen-
Vercoe

[Click here for more information.](#)

Happy Valentine's Day!



raise funds for cancer research,
Feb. 5: We will be holding a charity
cookie decorating event at ECOLE
from 3:30-6:00pm.

Feb. 13: We will be hosting a bake
sale in the Duff lobby to raise funds
for this years gala.

To stay up to date and informed on
all the events we have
planned, make sure to:

- Check out the [MISA calendar](#)
- Subscribe to our [calendar](#)
- [Follow our Facebook group](#)
or [Instagram](#)
- Check out [our website](#)

SERVICES



Duff Biobar Updates

The Biobar stocks useful lab supplies
including Kleenex, bleach, gloves, and
paper towels at competitive prices.

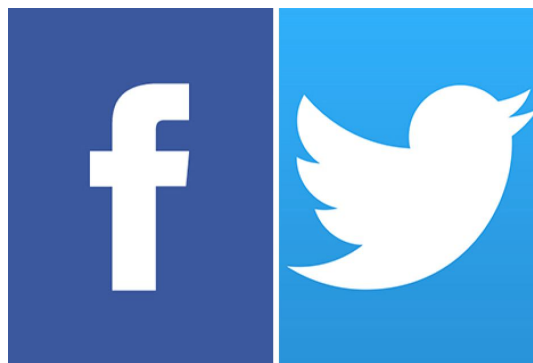
Operating hours:

Monday to Friday

8:00 -12:00 & 1:00 -3:30.

Room 514

[More information](#)



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Department of Microbiology and Immunology - McGill University · 3775 University Street · Montreal, QC H3A 2B4 · Canada

