

CONVERGENCE

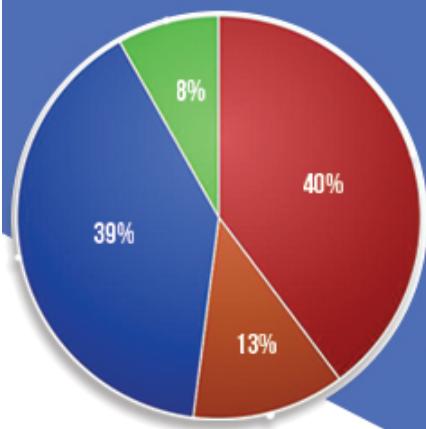
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FIRST FLOOR

AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. THURINGER PROVIDES
AN INSIDE LOOK INTO THE NEW LOOK

THE POLLS ARE IN!
2015 ADVANCE POLLS
- COURTESY OF THE POLITICS CLUB -



- 1- LIBERAL
- 2- CONSERVATIVE
- 3- NDP
- 4- GREEN

| THE US UNIVERSITY UTOPIA | SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS | WAITING FOR GODOT PREVIEW |



THE NEW FIRST FLOOR

EMERSON BRAITHWAITE - STAFF RREPORTER

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to interview Mr. Steve Thuringer, UCC's head of facilities, about the thought and inspiration behind the new first floor.

"Well I would say there were four main principles," says Mr. Thuringer. "The first was to sort of create a different look and feel to the place that would feel less institutional and more warm and welcoming. [The previous first floor] was pretty intimidating, especially if you'd never been to the school before." The second principle was to open up access to the main office and put the administration a bit more front and center. The third was to "bring students back down", and the fourth was to give the floor a "facelift". Some of the features of the first floor that tie back to these principles are the wooden panels, the increase in number and updatedness of the classrooms, and the soon to be completed foyer.

"Maple and wood has been a major part of the renovations," says Mr. Thuringer. "If you walk around the school, you'll see that maple is a feature we use in the details of the school. You can see it on the second floor, [where] it surrounds the lockers. If you go to the David Chu Theatre or...

the Creativity Center, you can see it there too. That white maple look is everywhere." Mr. Thuringer explains that white maple was chosen "to soften the area" and give the hallways "a...cleaner and warmer look". The wooden features of the new first floor are functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. "We also figured [that] if we were going to bring students down it would get a little noisier, so [the walls] actually have an acoustic quality to them," Mr. Thuringer tells me. "I don't know if you've noticed how dead it sounds when you're in the hall, but the first floor sounds different than any other floor in the building." This is a very useful feature, because hallway noise is a large detractor from test performance and learning.

THE FIRST FLOOR SOUNDS DIFFER- ENT THAN ANY OTHER FLOOR IN THE BUILDING"

[and] it just seemed we were moving towards more offices and less students," explained Mr. Thuringer. The technology in the rooms also had to be updated, but in ways most people wouldn't think. "You know there were still classrooms that didn't have light switches. There

still are in the building. They use breaker panels. We're going to get to those next," says Mr. Thuringer. The new classrooms also have better temperature control than their predecessors. All in all, the facilities department was trying to combat "tired and worn" look of the old classrooms.

The front foyer is currently under construction, but the facilities department has big plans for the final product. "That whole wall is going down; we're going to bump out a glass enclosure, move some doors in, create a sitting area through steps right across the front of it, take the balustrade (the brick wall) off the balcony and install a glass wall so that when you're standing there you can look out," explained Mr. Thuringer. "That's the piece that will change the feel dramatically. That space." The very glass large area that Mr. Thuringer described to me heavily contrasts the two steps and abrupt wall that preceded the renovations. "You can look right outside. It'll bring the quad closer to the inside and bring a sense of airiness to the space."

The facilities department had a difficult task ahead of them when they started renovating the first floor. They seem to have taken full advantage of the opportunity by making the first floor more conducive to student use.

THE US UNIVERSITY UTOPIA

When you ask an IB2 student when his university applications are due, many will probably ask whether you're talking about the Canadian or American deadline. Recently at UCC, many students are thinking of attending a university outside of Canada, particularly in the US. But why? Are US universities 'better' than Canadian ones? Is attending these schools worth the rigorous application process? Could social pressures and prestige be impacting students decisions? Here are some reasons why some UCC students will choose to go to the US.

One generalization of US universities is that they can offer certain opportunities that are not available at Canadian universities. These opportunities are assumed to be smaller class sizes, greater financial aid/recruitment options, and certain programs that are less available in Canada. Some students search for smaller class sizes because they believe that they can be better for learning. Although this may be true for certain subjects, where discussion and interaction with a professor may be helpful. This can perhaps explain why some students look to the US to pursue the Liberal Arts. Something else that attracts students to the US, particularly student-athletes, is the viewership and prestige of US college athletics. Canadian schools generally do not put as much emphasis

on recruitment and sports, whereas in the US these are both extremely prevalent. This is illustrated in the enormous sporting event March Madness, which averages 11.3 million television viewers each game. The emphasis on recruitment and college sports can also be attributed to the tendency for larger endowments in the US: such as the \$37 billion Harvard endowment which is contrasted with Canadian endowments which are only a small fraction of that. Some students who apply to the US may be influenced by this factor, as they believe that the greater financial power will improve their university experience.

Another more superficial reason why UCC students look to the US for university is the prestige of applying to (and possibly attending) the name US schools. Many are attracted by the thought of attending a school under the Ivy League banner, some even believing that they'll enjoy university more if they go to a name school. However, students can glamorize these colleges, which may lead to a rude awakening later on. On top of that, the social status acquired when a UCC boy gets into one of these schools is also a factor; as some students believe that they will gain respect and social status if they get into one of the exclusive US schools.



ROBERT WALKER
STAFF REPORTER

To understand why some UCC boys apply to the US, I visited the University Counselling Office and spoke with Ms Ridout. When I asked Ms Ridout why she thought some UCC boys apply to the US instead of Canada, she responded by discussing why Canadian and US universities should not be generalized. She said that "there's a different school for everyone, and Ivy League schools aren't all the same. If you are a good fit for Brown, you might be a terrible fit for Dartmouth, or vice versa." When I asked her about the role of prestige in university applications, she replied, "Often students who look at the US will start by quoting rankings." Ms Ridout added, "we try to move beyond that, because rankings don't necessarily translate to a good undergraduate degree for each individual student." I came away from listening to Ms Ridout thinking that she seemed to focus on substance and reality, rather than the "name value" of some of the US schools. Perhaps UCC students should focus on finding a school that best suits their own interests, regardless of which country the school is in or what its name happens to be. Chances are this will result in a much more personalized and enjoyable university experience.

IS COMPASSION EXCLUSIVE?

JANAN ILLANGO - SECRETARY

Governments have invested a lot of money and effort into aiding Syrian refugees. However, there is a limit to government resources and, as a result, only a few placements remain. Many governments, including the Canada's, have mandated that religious minorities should be given preferential treatment because historically they have endured religious persecution. Christians in particular are "one of the most persecuted groups in the Middle East," says Australian Senate Leader Eric Abetz. Opposition Leader Bill Shorten argues:

"[b]eing a victim of war doesn't know a particular religion. Unfortunately, extremists would use this preferential treatment as an argument to push the view that the west cares about Christians and does not care about Muslims and other religious

minorities" ("Christians to Get Priority as PM Faces Pressure to Take in Refugees." ABC News).

I find Canada's approach to the Syrian refugee problem questionable because it rests on a logic of compassion for the few. I describe the Canadian immigration position as compassionate because it addresses oppressed minority groups. Compassion as an argument is unreasonable because it overlooks the human rights of those refugees who are not part of a Christian minority. Preference given to the Christian minority group over similarly oppressed minority groups such as the Yazidis is racist.

Historically, Western countries have tried to instill their own diplomacy to fight racism in the Middle-East and to control conflict. It is ironic that

they use racially biased policies such as preference to the Syrian Christian minority to privilege that group with aid and freedom. Using a hierarchy to determine who is worthy of aid is a racist practice because one group is made superior over others. It is unfair. From a human rights standpoint, the right to safety is universal. Canada's position on the Syrian Refugee Crisis was initially restrictive, limiting the number to 10,000 refugees. By the end of 2015, Canada increased that number to 11,300. While the Canadian immigration policy position seems generous, it is nevertheless exclusive. Instead of privileging certain victims over others, the Canadian government should allocate its resources to increasing placements for all refugee victims. Canada could fund the visa process for Syrians so that they may attain permanent settlement more quickly.

NEW SCHEDULE - AGAINST



Having had one of the worst assembly attendance records in school history, UCC decided a change was in order. Change comes in many forms: progressive, regressive and stagnant change. While the third idea sounds oxymoronic, it aptly describes the revised position of 'community time': beneficial to nobody. Here, stagnant change is born from misunderstanding: a misunderstanding of the problem at hand, of the student body, and of what constitutes rational action. Until this misunderstanding is rectified, we will continue to see ineffectual policies undermine their own aims.

Firstly, context. Previously, assembly was before Period 1. This schedule coincided with a low attendance rate to 'community time,' assembly in particular. The schedule changed this year, moving assembly after Period 1. This mandates 8:30 arrival, forcing assembly into the day. However, this change fails on two fronts: accounting

for students with long commutes, and recognizing the issue with assemblies. Here is why.

Many day boys live within a range rendering boarding illogical, but outside the boundary that necessitates a commute of an hour or longer. This commute results in early mornings, long spells on public transit, and an inadequate amount of sleep. Previously, a TTC delay would make a student late for assembly: not an ideal situation, but forgivable. However, the same delay, with an 8:30 start to a Period 1 test, takes time away from an assessment. This impedes a student's ability to perform at his best. Additionally, the buffer period of assembly was mentally important. It allowed a student to remove his mind from the commute and place it into his work. The benefits of this gap are eliminated, making many mornings a jarring transition from the streetcar to a difficult task. This is not a climate that fosters academic excellence.

KIMATHI MUIRURI
STAFF REPORTER

Moreover, this policy displays a lack of awareness to the problems surrounding assembly. The decision rests on the assumption that poor attendance reflects student laziness. A general collection of students would reveal that the deterrent is not the hour, but that it is tediousness. Assemblies do not resonate with students anymore. When Prayer Hall turned into Laidlaw, and scripture reading stopped by rule of Principal Richard H. Sadlier circa 1980, assembly ceased to be sacred, and began to lose meaning. Assembly is loathed because it no longer holds pertinence to student life. This, not the 8:30 start, is its fatal flaw. I urge decision makers to recognize this. Many will look skeptically upon my cynicism, but a conversation with students would see these ideas echoed. That may very well be the solution: conversation. Discourse. Candid debate. While it may be problematic to present issues with no concrete solution, I stand firm that it is one better than failing to recognize the issue at all.

NEW SCHEDULE - FOR



I am not a morning person. Anyone who was on the music trip to New York last April can attest to this – I woke up late every day, and consequently had the distinct pleasure of receiving multiple wake-up calls from Mr. Gomes.

"HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD HAVE MISSED BOB DUFF'S BARTON LECTURE IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE NEW SCHEDULE?"

So, you are probably wondering why someone like me supports anything about the new schedule. (I could use one hand count the days I woke up before 8:30 this past summer.) However, to be honest, I don't have a problem with it. Maybe it's because I live fairly close to the college, and am lucky enough to get a ride to school in the morning. Regardless, I believe the new schedule has a lot of positives to offer, especially regarding assemblies and house meetings.

As someone who regularly attended assemblies in past years, I can personally vouch for the fact that they are infinitely better with everyone in attendance. Laidlaw hall looks right when the pews are completely filled; it's more enjoyable to sing when you have however many extra voices; and in general, they are more meaningful. This is because assemblies are meant to be attended by all – they function as an opportunity for the entire staff and student body to sing together, laugh together, listen

PAUL WEISER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

to incredible speakers together, and so on. How many people would have missed Bob Duff's Barton Lecture if it weren't for the new schedule? That moment when Bob said, "I'm that John," is definitely just as, if not more memorable than any other experience you've had at school so far this year.

Furthermore, the students and teachers who dedicate a significant amount of time to making assemblies and house meetings happen deserve to have you there. As someone who is involved in planning and running a weekly house meeting, I can honestly say that I truly appreciate it when the whole house is in attendance, because it makes all the hard work the previous night worthwhile.

Going to assemblies and house meetings symbolizes what being part of a community is about: getting together as one big group, and being attached to something bigger than yourself. That's why the new schedule is a worthy addition to UCC.

DO WE ROMANTICIZE FOOTBALL?



In society, we often romanticize football, and idolize the players that play it. There are countless hours spent on previewing the games, watching the games, and then discussing the games. There is countless money spent on jerseys, tickets, and Sunday night wings. There is an incredible amount of effort spent on picking fantasy teams, travelling to games, and screaming at the television. So, what is the point of doing all of this for a sport where life-threatening injuries like concussions are prevalent, and the league is primarily focussed on profit?

Concussions are a unique injury, in that you never

fully recover from it. Once you get your first concussion, you are more prone to a second, which can lead to a lifetime of brain damage. The NFL specifically has an incredibly high rate of concussions. According to the New York Times, brain trauma affects one in three players in the league. It is statistics like this that cause many people to view football as one of the most dangerous sports in the world. When the Bleacher Report ranked ten of the most widely known sports in North America, they placed football as the third most dangerous, only behind the obvious first two, MMA and boxing. Furthermore, the NFL also does not take care of their athletes after retirement. Pro

ARJUN PASRICHA
STAFF REPORTER

football players are eight times more likely to develop Alzheimer's or dementia than anybody else. This affects them after their careers, preventing some from working again, which is one of the main reasons why one in six of retired players go bankrupt.

Furthermore, the NFL is primarily concerned with their own profit. Linking this back to concussions, the league minimizes the significance of concussions, as their concussion protocol is much less strict than other major sports. This is due to the fact that when a player is injured and not playing, he is not generating as much revenue for the league. Therefore, the NFL needs their players, especially the stars, to play through injury. This is evident in Will Smith's new movie titled, "Concussion," where he plays a doctor who discovers Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), a progressive degenerative disease found in the brain due to repeated brain trauma. The NFL tried to shut his research down, because it would cause more players to sit out, and thereby decrease their profit. This is a perfect example of how the league is not concerned about the ethics or fairness of their actions. Whatever makes them the most money, is what they will do.

A CASE FOR VOLLEYBALL

LOGAN YE
NEWS EDITOR

It's A-Day, and after dropping two straight sets to St. Andrew's, UCC's Varsity Volleyball team is facing a must-win situation. The Lett Gym bleachers are sparsely filled, an even mix of parents and students. Right as the third set is about the begin, a bunch of IB2s rush in, bringing with them a new energy that would help the team rally back, winning two straight sets of their own. Ultimately, the newfound inspiration wasn't enough, as the Blues could not clinch the last set. All said and done, it was an interesting, lively game the whole way through. The question is, why don't more people come out to watch?

Even among larger society, volleyball is vastly underrated. You can't find volleyball on any major TV channels in Canada, except during the Olympics. This is certainly due to the fact that there doesn't

exist sufficient consumer demand for professional volleyball. There's no commercial league for it. Similar to rugby, the sport enjoys far greater popularity across the pond. You can find it on T.V regularly, and rivalries between countries and teams are well-developed. This disparity in popularity may be explained by the overwhelming sentiment that volleyball is not intense enough, or that it's too stop-and-go. Perhaps

it's just that not enough people personally give the sport a try, as it's not nearly as accessible to new-comers as most other sports. To play, one would have to set up a net, gather around twelve people, and learn the precise skills required to play. That's probably the most important fac-

tor. Volleyball isn't fun until you put many many hours into playing it. Most people can enjoy shooting a basketball, or tossing around a football, but volleyball just isn't fun initially. Of course, if you play a sport, you are more likely to watch it.

"YOU CAN'T FIND VOLLEYBALL ON ANY MAJOR T.V CHANNELS IN CANADA..."

However, even if not many people play it, volleyball is equally exciting to watch as many of the other popular sports. Unless one team is overmatched, the game is filled with exciting spikes, blocks and dives for balls that look impossible to sal-

vage. The rules are also pretty simple to follow: try to get the ball to hit their side of the court, and don't let it fall on your own side. A lot more people would enjoy watching volleyball if they gave it a try. So the next time you are free, try to drop by the Lett to watch a set or two.

WAITING FOR WHO?

GRAEME JOEL -
STAFF REPORTER

Waiting for Godot, a world famous tragicomedy production by Samuel Beckett, is being performed in the Lecture Theatre from November 25th to the 28th. Under the direction of Ms. MacDonell, this play will explore deep, psychological discussions, as well as its world-famous interactions between the two lead characters, Vladimir and Estragon, who are praised for how well they display a truly human reaction.

Ms. MacDonell has stated that they will try to focus on the comedy and levity of the play, and allow the audience to see the psychological side for themselves. The relationship between Vladimir and Estragon is one of the few in theatre that has captured a true friendship, one where they depend on one another, no matter what, after decades of being together. This friendship leads to many touching and comedic moments, which will be the focal point of the show. Two additional characters, Pozzo and Lucky, also demonstrate a relationship that is quite co-dependent. Their interactions are not ones of friends; but they are necessary for each other's survival, particularly in the second act.

Beckett is renowned for his choice of words, particularly in Waiting for Godot. There isn't a single word that wasn't chosen for a specific purpose. The light sides will make the audience laugh out loud, and the show itself



will make the audience question their own psyche. As well, it will allow the audience to explore the meaning of time, death, and friendship.

Waiting for Godot is an exceptional show that will require a lot of hard work by the actors and directors. I highly recommend seeing it.

BLAZER

UCC'S HUMOUR
PUBLICATION WRITTEN BY
PEOPLE WHO THINK
THEY'RE WAY FUNNIER
THAN THEY ACTUALLY ARE.

Another year, another Blazer. We're always re-inventing the wheel when it comes to comedic execution and humorous prose. That's our reputation, and it's something we're proud of. However, this year, we had a revelation: *what if we changed absolutely nothing?* We'd be changing ourselves by *not* changing ourselves. If you really think about it (which we didn't) you would truly be able to realize the extent of our *geniusity*, a word we just made up to prove how smart we are because we made up a word to prove how smart we are. So prepare yourself to laugh at everything you've already laughed at, because Blazer is back, and the same as ever.

ELECTION DAY

We here at Blazer are not known for our political activism; if anything, we're known for our un-political activism. However, with upcoming presidential election happening in Canada, we thought that it was our duty in the *classical sense* (get it) to ensure that all of you non-voters are well-informed about who you won't be voting for. While we understand that the Politics club is attempting to do the same in assemblies, we were too busy sleeping through it to validate the information they were giving. Trust us, this stuff is way better.



Conervatives

Led by Blazer's main man Steven Harper, the Conservative Party is a *conservative* choice (man, we're funny). Not much is known about their platform, because whenever Stevey opens up his mouth to speak, people fall asleep instantly from the sheer boringness of his character. Don't worry about oil sands or the Senate scandal; Big Steve ignores them, so you can too! He's also written a book on hockey called "A Great Game", so you know he's the right guy for the job.



Liberals

The head presidential candidate for the Liberal Party is Pierre Trudeau, a guy who we "studied" in Y2 History back in the day. If he was the president 50 years ago, why can't he be now? If anything, it's a testament to his longevity as a politician to have stayed in the game this long. Yeah, we don't know anything about his policies or whatnot, but that's why he's a Liberal! Higher taxes and "budgets will balance themselves".



Fight the power and stuff, right? We're just surprised he's still alive. He was 49 years old back in 1968. He should've been dead by now!

New Democratic Party (NDP)

Some old guy on the street told us that NDP voters are all right-wing socialist commies who are back on the times. We can scientifically prove him wrong, though, as "New Democratic" is the opposite of "Communist", so the oldie was probably spouting nonsense. Anyways, Tom Mulcair has a pretty sick beard and looks like he could be an OHL coach who screams at his players the whole time, so extra brownie points for that. He also speaks 2 languages, which is 1.5 more than we do. He seems like a pretty chill dude overall. The NDP have never won before, so if you like a good underdog story, give them a chance.

Green Party

Honestly, we don't know that much about the Green Party, but it sounds like some filthy Crescent environmentalist group. We're sure it's political but we were too lazy to care, so here's some nice pictures of green scenery. Go Blues!



Blazer is still on TBAW.ca for anyone that cares

If we've offended you with this issue of Blazer, we're "sorry". Send all hatermail to blazer@ucc.on.ca. Also email us if you want to join our team. xoxo, - BS

How to Deal With Year Ones

We haven't ~~made fun of~~ featured Y1's in any of our articles for a while now, so to catch up on tradition we've compiled some information on different types of Y1's and how to avoid them. Happy hazing!



The Gamer:

The most commonly-found species of Y1's, *Gamers* are docile whilst alone yet dangerous when travelling in packs. Usually found in the student centre due to its abundance of pizza, groups of *Gamers* can range in size from 3 to 30 and can be

identified by their greasy fingers and dislike of natural light. Avoid any area with copious amounts of cardboard pizza holders as *Gamers* are extremely territorial.

The Lurker:

While the *Gamer* is social with their fellow *Gamers*, the *Lurker* is social with none. They hide within the depths of the LD during the day, watching *Pewdiepie* videos constantly. If one ever encounters a *Lurker*, be sure to start a conversation, as *Lurkers* are incapable of verbal communication when put under pressure.

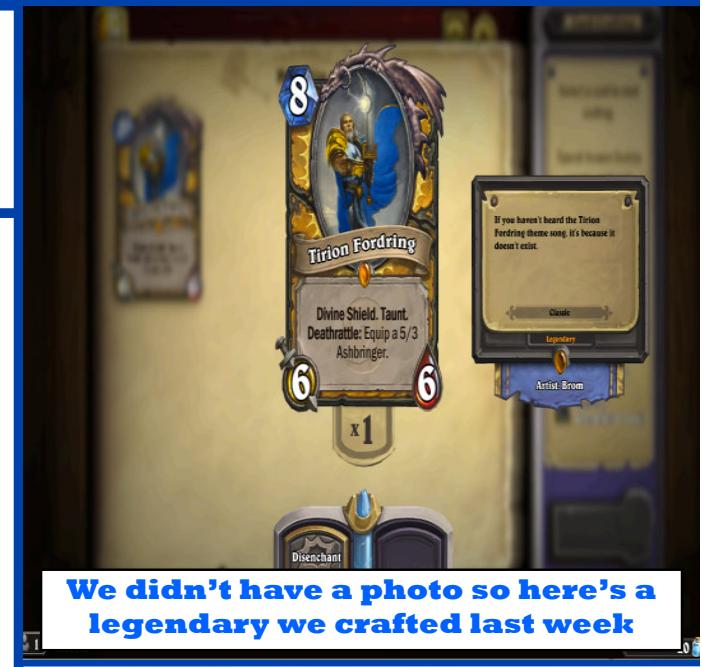


The Yeller:

You know when you're just chilling in the library, playing Hearthstone, sipping some overpriced vanilla protein shake, and then suddenly you hear a high-pitched, ear-piercing shriek? Those are *Yellers*, who are characterized by their deaf-inducing screams and refusal to ever stop talking ever. Avoid *Yellers* at all costs, lest you suffer the fate of hearing about their Pokémon emulators and fantasy football leagues.

The Tiny One:

Why are they so small? Why do they look like they're 7 years old? Can they ride the TTC for free? These are the questions you ask yourself when you see a *Tiny One*. The fact that teenagers can be so small makes you question yourself. Was I that small? Have I passed my prime? Am I slowly becoming a bitter old man? Questions, questions.



We didn't have a photo so here's a legendary we crafted last week

HEADLINES

- Steven Leu bobble heads being sold in the Student Centre at lunch
- Think Ahead campaign goal changes from \$100 million to \$130 million after Hawaii celebration party
- Recent polls show that 95% of FNL attendees left early because they "had lots of homework"
- Gregory Cuppallari to begin new "So Chill with SO Chal" podcast, updates every Tuesday
- Cross Country to merge with boarding houses for convenience purposes
- Prize Day renamed to "Gab Birman and Jacob Beckerman Appreciation Day"
- JV Soccer roster expands to 28 players, 13 goalies
- Elliott Birman found to still be brushing his hair
- Varsity Football to decrease practice schedule in order to increase win percentage
- Mr. Denstedt attends 150th Geo trip in 4 weeks
- TBAW.ca experiences massive traffic increase after switching focus to "adult films"
- Mr. McDonald shocked that no one handed in their ToK essays early
- Commons Field renamed to "Passchendaele" after recent rainstorm

COMMUNITY HEADLINE:

- Ms. Turner projected to run every club by 2018

Jon Snow is stabbed and killed by Olly