

De Minimis

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Image courtesy of Melbourne University Community Garden

A Food Co-op for MLS?

Duncan Wallace

Our Student Centre, which once stood on the mezzanine floor of the law building, last year shut down. Administration at the university has been 'rationalised' and centralised in the new Stop One.

It is due to be replaced by a 'Student Enrichment Centre'. I'm here going to propose that a part of this Enrichment Centre should be dedicated to a Food Co-operative.

Cheap, Responsibly-Sourced Food

Lunch at the law school is rubbish. We either have to bring our own food or we have to pay like \$14 for a sandwich at one of the over-priced cafes. Sushi is a cheaper option but I am now beyond sick of it.

A food co-op on the mezzanine floor could provide a cheap lunch, sourced so far as possible from local farmers. We could even use the produce of the Melbourne Uni Community Garden. The menu would be seasonal and so changing, thus guarding against uninspiring monotony. \$5-7 for a healthy meal which you can feel good about? Yes please!

Cheap Coffee

Famously, coffee is the life-blood of law students. Currently, however, we're having to fork out \$4 a cup. If we had a food co-op we

could organise our coffee far more cheaply. Bulk buy coffee beans and, voila, we'll have cheap, delicious cafetiere coffee more or less on tap two floors down from the library. The student body would collectively save well into the thousands, and that's likely an underestimate. \$1 a cup anyone?

Better Mental Health Outcomes

There is strong evidence linking competitiveness with stress. There is also strong evidence that "when we co-operate with others our Oxytocin levels increase, which enhance our feelings of love and affiliation."

The law school is a very competitive environment and so stress levels are high. This has serious mental health consequences. One way of mitigating that is to bring a dog into the law school every now and then (IMO this doesn't work – sorry Riley). Another way would be to introduce co-operation and a sense of community. By bringing a Food Co-operative into the law school, which students are able to control, participate in and take advantage of, we could create a cooperative, community environment. This would likely have very positive mental health effects.

How Would it Work?

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Level 2 Fountain: Students Hail False Prophet



Image courtesy of Janelle Oh

Scott Colvin

I've not always been one to trust in signs. But in the furious scramble for meaning in our post-BIP world, I thought I had found one. Alas, dear friends: it slipped through my fingers as easily as it escaped the machine by which it came to be.

We true unimelb acolytes always felt in our hearts that the Business Improvement Plan — the gospel that freed us from our former extravagances — would redeem itself.

But the messianic BIP improvements to our university experience never seemed to materialise. The wait continued; then became agonising. Many left the flock, turning their backs on the invisible hand's deft puppetry. Student centres closed, staff glumly shredded their contracts and those wishing to change their course structure found it easier to simply transfer to La Trobe.

Despite the many who disputed your righteousness, BIP, I maintained my faith and knew that the day of deliverance would come. And, like some of history's most infamous miracles, yours too seemed to be water-based.

The rumour of it scurried through the ravines and gullies of the law school's

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Upcoming Event | Student Forum

The first student forum for this year is on 17 March 2016 from 1-2pm in room 102. These forums are open to all JD students. The Dean, Associate Dean JD & senior staff members will be there to answer student questions or listen to student concerns and ideas. In this forum, the Dean will report back on the various steps that have been taken over summer around the culture of the law school in response to issues raised by students last year and discuss any further issues or ideas from students.

MLS Food Co-op continued

The Food Co-operative in the student union building on main campus has to move soon due to the proposed demolition of Union House. I have been in contact with them and they have voiced interest in supporting / helping run a Co-op at the law school. It would not be necessary to have a kitchen constructed on location. Food could be cooked at a community kitchen nearby, such as at the Kathleen Syme Community Centre on Faraday Street, and brought over for serving at the law school.

There would need to be a number of paid staff, but costs could be kept down by students, academic staff and administrative staff volunteering at the co-op. Students undertaking the Sustainable Business Legal Clinic subject could help with the legal issues involved in setting up the Food Co-op. The LSS Environment Portfolio could also help with the day-to-day running of the Co-op such as organising volunteers.

Other Benefits Would Include:

1) the availability of coffee – and perhaps even food – for those late-night sessions in the library

(currently we only have 7-Eleven, vending machines and KFC);

2) less waste than that produced by the individualistic business model used by Porta Via etc – instead of paper cups and plastic wrapping we could use real cups which are returned, washed and re-used;

3) the Food Co-op at Union House bulk-buys various things like nuts, seeds, rice and toilet paper and sells them at cost to students – we could do that!!

4) We would control it – and not some anonymous, absentee boss – so if we wanted any changes to how it's run / what's on offer we could make it happen!

I will be raising this at the Student Forum on Thursday (see the **Upcoming Event** above). Come and join me if you're interested in the idea, or else send me an email to register your interest in joining a working group

(dwa@student.unimelb.edu.au) .

This article was partly inspired by a meeting of the Fair Food Challenge group

Duncan Wallace is a third-year JD student

Why We Like it When Leo Wins

Timothy Sarder

"This is the first Oscar and sixth nomination for Leonardo DiCaprio."

First, the collective sigh of relief; then, the applause. Finally, the tweets and Facebook statuses. *Our Leo* had won, they screamed.

Our Leo? Who exactly was claiming him? This man was a populist people's champion; and his crowning had two defining features –

1] The realisation of the mantra, "try and you will succeed"; and 2] The heroism narrative – not only does he win Oscars, he's going to *solve* climate change!

The Oscars needed a collective, 'we-did-it' moment. Marred by claims of exclusivity and lack of recognition of black actors in the #oscarsowhite movement, the Academy successfully managed to get us on side again... by recognising the long-underappreciated successes of a white dude.

Movie stars don't exist any more. Yes, *Celebrity* is everywhere, more ubiquitous than ever, exponentially tied to screen media's proliferation. But true movie stardom? Lights in the sky, household name, beyond-real Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn-esque movie stars?

They're dead. Brad Pitt? Will Smith? They're no guarantees. You need a high-concept premise to attach an actor to, or a franchise. You can't sell a movie with only a name any more – just look at Will Smith in "*Concussion*"!.

We can't even pin our hopes on the new generation. Jennifer Lawrence? Channing Tatum? These actors still thrive best when attached to franchises and big-studio tentpoles – Tatum's "*Foxcatcher*" is one of his best performances and a great movie, but it still couldn't break even on just his name alone (even with Steve Carell!).

But Leonardo DiCaprio is a fuckin' **movie star**.

He's the only one around who can sell a movie on his own bat, and rock and roll his way to critical and commercial success. The great thing about Leo is that you can always see him acting. Think back to his over-the-top turn in "*Django Unchained*" or even the theatricality of "*The Wolf of Wall Street*". All of the buzz around "*The Revenant*" had to do with the lengths he went to for the performance. In a Leo movie, you *know* you're watching someone act. Leo's not going to get the accolades of 'chameleonlike' or 'naturalistic' like his fellow nominee, Michael Fassbender, or Best Actress winner, Brie Larson might. But those people aren't movie stars. They're not known by your parents, your neighbour, your high school maths teacher the way Leo is. Because Leo is a movie star.

And we *need* movie stars to win. They need to win if the Oscars are still to maintain viewership. But more importantly; they need to win if we're to continue believing in old-Hollywood, universal cultural touchstones. The world is getting *confusing*. The writers Negri and Hart called it the end of the "Empire", as postmodernism takes hold and the old status quo ceases to exist.

Leo's win was a triumphant moment because it gave us a feeling that we're still in-the-know, that there are still moments we can all rally behind, that there is a world that still makes *sense*. But it's all smoke and mirrors, a show-trick. Donald Trump is a serious contender for president of the United States, and the gap between what our logic dictates should happen and what actually happens continues to widen.

But at least Leo finally won an Oscar.

Timothy Sarder is a second-year JD student

False Prophet continued

gossip network, as do mice in search of the crumbs of their tender humility. It reached me in the midst of International Human Rights Law, where we were deeply engaged in viewing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through a post-BIPian lens. (Well, had you considered it?)

The waiting was over; the sign had come:

A water fountain, divining fluid of the most intense frigidity!

Yes! The BIP had taken the wheel! The genius and the mortal instruments of bureaucracy were suddenly in ecstatic council! On level two, right in the heart of the law school's main arterial flow, a brand new water fountain had been installed.

Initial reviews were positive, as the people began, warily at first, to lap at the wet stuff of life emerging from the contraption. I knew I had to experience this wonder myself, and veritably set forth. I felt intuitively that the fountain would embody all that was great about the BIP. My BIP. Our BIP.

There was a line confronting the great device, but I could be patient. When it was finally my turn to approach the altar, I was ready to drink the blood of our saviour. But I was left only with the sour taste of betrayal.

The BIP was intended to provide a more efficient provision of services. Though my heart was racing, the fountain's speed was not: seventeen seconds to fill a 600ml bottle — Stop 1 would have serviced at least one person in that time! The BIP was to reinforce our position as one of the world's top universities. How ever is that to be if we are furnished with room temperature water! The BIP was designed to reallocate resources, but here a fountain on a floor already with two fountains was replaced by a replacement fountain!

The scythe of efficiency had severed its own head.

I overheard one voice shout: "It's not the messiah! It's just a very bad fountain!" I wrapped my arm around this morose figure, and we exited the scene.

Oh, BIP: how I did compare thee to a summer's day, the heat of which is embellished lustily by our gently simmering planet! I myself composed sonnets — true lyrical symphonies! — in your honour while maintaining a patient vigil in the Sisyphean swelter of the Stop 1 queue. Now the music goes to die on my lips.

I had a dream, but now that dream is gone from me.

Scott Colvin is a third-year JD student

A Really Weird Show | A Month in Kununurra, WA Part 2



David Allinson

In the last edition of De Minimis I described my experience as a legal intern as part of the Aurora Internship Program for the Yoorroojin Miriwoong Gajirawoong Yirrgab Noong Dawang Aboriginal Corporation (MG Corporation) in Kununurra, Western Australia.

The legal experience, the support and instruction, I gained in Kununurra were all excellent. The two best parts of being in Kununurra were not, however, directly related to the legal work I did. They were related to how much of the community I was lucky enough to get involved in.

The Warringari Corporation runs a Soberup Shelter and a night patrol. This service ferries people around town to avoid drink-driving and other related issues. The shelter is equipped to sleep 24 people and is a safe place to get some food, a clean bed, and to sober up. The staff are a friendly mob of awesome people who work really hard for their community. They are typical of the powerful community leaders in Kununurra whose work goes completely unrecognized in the wider Australian community. These people do not get the attention they deserve.

Another amazing part about being in Kununurra has been what it's taught me about myself. I know that sounds like earnest drivel, but it's true. I have stayed in Aboriginal communities for a few nights before. I've never lived in the middle of one. It was incredible to see my latent prejudices fall away and suddenly re-emerge at unexpected points.

When a drunk Indigenous guy walked past me with a knife one night, stared at me and called me a 'white cunt', I didn't know whether to just run, tell him where to get off or to sympathise. It's confusing. It turns out his name was David. As part of my volunteering at the Soberup Shelter I found this out because his family history was so horrific I can't even write about it without feeling like I'm trivialising the sense of loss and grief David must have struggled with throughout his life.

It's not right to lower my expectations, and that's not what I'm doing. I am simply struggling with my notions about what it means to expect someone to pull themselves up by their boot straps, kick the grog and become a healthy, productive member of society. Some dysfunction might be too

ingrained.

Spending one Friday night at the Kununurra hotel was similarly interesting. It was so, so different to spending a night out drinking in Melbourne's fashionable inner-North, sipping a fruity drink from a jam jar while bikes hang overhead for no apparent reason. Everyone was happy, and happy to share. Most people's money went quickly. Not on their own drinks, but on those of other people. Despite this wonderful feeling of celebration with the people around me, one thing struck me as upsetting.

As a white male in that community different standards applied to me. I've lived in plenty of places overseas. I'm not from Australia. And I know what it feels like to be treated differently (read: better) because I'm a white male. A female friend compared her experiences with mine. She put it better than I could: 'it was probably the first time in my life where I understood what it was like to be judged by criteria that I formerly saw as having nothing to do with me personally. Being a white, western woman meant a whole bunch of things that I wasn't able to control, both negative and positive.' And the truth of her observation was palpable in my context: I was acutely aware that being a white man meant people either embraced me or threatened to kill me. There was no middle-ground.



The white women in the hotel, however, were perceived as being loose, rich, and if unprotected by men or family were totally available for consequence-free sexual harassment. And I didn't know what to do or how to feel about that. I didn't intervene. I might have done. Arrogance is having different standards for yourself than those you have for other people. This wasn't arrogance: at that point I wasn't thinking less of the people around me and getting off on a sense of superiority. This was a point where my values and self-understanding were at their most compromised. At that point I



Images courtesy of David Allinson

realised that I was just confused.

Don't get me wrong: being here has been incredible. The people, the places, and the stories I've heard will stay with me, always. It's just been upsetting and uplifting at the same time. At any given point I couldn't decide if I wanted to stay for 5 years or get on the next plane out. The words of Kim Mahood, a Western Desert woman, were haunting me: 'Kartiya [whitefellas who work in communities] are like Toyotas. When they break down we get another one'. I didn't get on that plane, though. And I love Kununurra. I feel like it embraced me back. That sense of confusion I still feel is both understandable, I think, and a healthy part of any learning process worth embarking upon.

That same friend I mentioned also recommended to me a quote by D.H. Lawrence. It didn't solve my conundrum, but the following quote just helped me feel like coming here, and the feelings it produced, aren't so strange:

'If you want to know what it is to feel the "correct" social world fizzle to nothing, you should come to Australia. It is a weird place. In the established sense, it is socially nil. Happy-go-lucky, don't-you-bother, we're-in-Australia. But there also seems to be no inside life of any sort: just a long lapse and drift...'

To come somewhere totally different, to learn about a new place and to learn about yourself is to live, for a time, without the comfortable hand-rail of daily routine. Being no-one, 'socially nil' and making new friends is alienating. For a while it is 'a long lapse and drift'. It is also, like the East Kimberley, a profoundly beautiful thing. Kununurra is indeed a really 'weird show', and one utterly worth the experience.

If you are interested in undertaking a similar internship, the website for the Aurora Internship Program is: <http://www.auroraproject.com.au/aboutapplyinginternship>.

Applications for the winter 2016 round will be open from 7 March through 1 April 2016 online via the website.

David Allinson is a third-year JD student

At the Movies ... with Sarah and Tom

Off the back of a stellar awards run, this week we review *The Revenant*, Alejandro González Iñárritu's epic tale of survival on the American frontier, starring everyone's favourite Oscars snub, (not anymore!!) Leonardo DiCaprio.

Sarah

I loved this film, which surprised me, as Iñárritu's previous awards-hoovering film, *Birdman*, did absolutely nothing for me (but that's a rant for another day). Of course, I have to give major kudos to our main man Leo, who really pulled out all the stops for the big one in this film, trading supermodels, private beaches and Dom Perignon for bison liver, horse carcasses and a mama bear who quite enjoys the taste of man-flesh. He perfectly conveys his character's single-minded determination through a demanding physical role.

The whole ordeal of it all is conveyed excellently on screen. The style is so naturalistic, from the use of natural lighting (except for one gorgeous shot depicting fire embers in the night sky which I later found was the only shot they used artificial lighting to enhance), to the pure, visceral displays of human endurance and brute, sheer will to survive. This was seen through both the mammoth feat Hugh Glass accomplishes to make it back to his men, but also through small elements, like the protagonist's breath fogging up the camera lens, to his jaw-clenched, gritted teeth, saliva-expelling muffled sounds as he attempts to speak post-bear assault.

I give *The Revenant* a 4.5/5. I'll explain that half star off: at a couple of points in the movie, I felt it strayed too far down the overtly-deliberate-let's-get-real-spiritual-and-introspective path. There were stretches of 'visions' Glass had involving religious iconography and Native American symbolism. Whilst the latter tended to fit

Tom

I agree, Sarah. From the opening tracking shot from cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki (he is the cameraman responsible for *Children of Men*, *Gravity* and in another Alejandro Inarritu collaboration, *Birdman*) we are thrown into a mesmerising world that is uncompromising and brutal, yet spotted with captivating scenery and natural wonder.

Having won last year's Oscar for Best Director, Alejandro Iñárritu is irrefutably a driven filmmaker to craft a work using natural light only, which extended the production time considerably. That the studio agreed to inject an additional \$45 million to realise Iñárritu's film says much about how highly regarded he is in Hollywood and how much faith they had in the final product. And he has delivered in that respect.

I bet that this year is Leonardo DiCaprio's

The Revenant



Illustration courtesy of third-year JD student Harley Ng

with the narrative, I felt the former to be somewhat contrived at times, not to mention anachronistic (the religious images depicted on the dilapidated church were from differing artistic periods).

Where I think Iñárritu does his best work is when he focuses on his craft, and his cast - here, assembling an incredible group of actors, and pushing them to their limits (special mention for my main man Tom Hardy, who pulls out the thickest Texan accent he can muster). It's in those moments, rather than his attempts at complicating what is ultimately a simple plot, where the film shines.

year at the Oscars, whose performance demands little dialogue and great physical endurance (in one particular scene, he was swimming in water below zero degrees). The supporting cast is also excellent, their interactions fuelling Hugh Glass' revenge story from the second act. Tom Hardy's character may have left Hugh Glass to die, but we can relate to his situation given his previous trauma against Indians. Domhnall Gleeson also turns in a strong performance as Captain Andrew Henry, leader of the doomed expedition.

I also give the film 4.5/5. That elusive half star is attributed to the film's length-sometimes Inarritu strays and the plot can be unnecessarily protracted. At the same time, this works to emphasise the harrowing ordeal Hugh Glass goes through to survive and stagger the many miles back through Indian territory to the American frontier, making this a magnificent western epic.

Clerkship Diaries

Mission Indispensable

On the first day of my clerkship at *Major Global Firm*, I was handed a sheet of paper revealing my team placement for the next four weeks. Collected by my junior solicitor buddy, Top-Knot-Lover, I was whisked upstairs to be introduced to the rest of my new team. "We're a small group," she told me as I shook hands with Senior-Associate-Active-Wear, Former-Clerk-Who-Got-A-Grad-Job, Former-Clerk-Without-A-Grad-Job (#awks) and Token-Male (girl power!).

Then we all looked to the corner office. Door closed, I could see a ball of bright colour with her back to me. "That's Partner-Powerdresser," whispered Top-Knot-Lover. "She's super-important, don't interrupt her," Former-Clerk-Who-Got-A-Grad-Job added.

"But *anything* she asks you to do takes top priority," called Senior-Associate-Active-Wear from her office exercise ball. Token-Male had already retreated to his office. Former-Clerk-Without-A-Grad-Job said nothing. "You'll meet her later," Top-Knot-Lover told me.

"Later?" I thought. HR had made it sound rather like I needed to meet her *now*. "Valued and indispensable," they had told us we needed to become. A successful clerk was missed by their partner when they left.

Nearly two weeks in, I was nowhere near that. I was yet to even meet Partner-Powerdresser.

"My partner and I had a coffee on my first day," one Lit & Reg clerk told me when I confided my worry. "I had a sit-down meeting," another offered. "Well, my partner took me to *lunch*," a third declared smugly, trumping us all. I needed to do something - how does one get a grad job when their partner doesn't even know their name?!

"Don't interrupt her!" Former-Clerk-Who-Got-A-Grad-Job shrieked, repeating her Day 1 advice. "Don't worry about it," smiled Top-Knot-Lover, before regaling me with the tale of how her clerkship partner had loved her so much he had personally insisted she stay on as a paralegal and later moved her admission.

"I'm busy, ask me later," Senior-Associate-Active-Wear barked, ever bouncing on her exercise ball. Token-Male shrugged and Former-Clerk-Without-A-Grad-Job said nothing. I was beginning to wonder if she talked at all. Must be hard to get a grad job if you don't talk to anyone... maybe it didn't matter if I never met Partner-Powerdresser, so long as I talked everybody else's ear off?

Pondering my dilemma, and needing my 975th cup of tea for the day, I wandered to the kitchenette. There I found, standing at the kettle and resplendent in fuschia, Partner-Powerdresser.

"Oh hello!" she beamed at me. "You must be our new clerk! We must talk - coffee?" And so, dear reader, began our fabulous working relationship. I'd like to think she misses me - but then again, we still haven't had that coffee.

Shit. I should email her.