

THE VOICE MAGAZINE

*Volume 15 Issue 38
October 12, 2007*



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Name, Rank, and Serial Number

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THE VOICE MAGAZINE

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Blue Skies

When Sir Francis Bacon wrote that “Knowledge is power,” odds are good he wasn’t thinking of George W. Bush.

The president who would be king, however, seems to have taken Sir Francis’s words to heart.

In the latest move to monitor (and potentially control) the movements of anyone even tangentially connected to the United States, Bush has added another demand to his list: Canadian planes flying through U.S. airspace may be required to provide personal data about everyone aboard—even if the plane never touches down in U.S. territory.

Known as the Secure Flight program, this proposal means that, at least 72 hours before takeoff, a Canadian airplane scheduled to depart from Toronto and land in Mexico would be required to hand over to the U.S. government the names, birthdates, and gender of every passenger, simply because the plane will pass over the States.

The program would also encourage Canadian airlines to provide passengers’ itineraries, departure and arrival times, and airport codes for their destinations. One of the most frightening possibilities is that, once a plane is in their airspace, U.S. authorities would be empowered to use that information as cause to intercept a flight and ground it.

The idea isn’t new. It’s been around since 2004, but Homeland Security’s Transportation Security Agency (TSA) shelved it in 2006 after privacy advocates roundly criticized the plan.

As reported by the Globe and Mail, the TSA’s logic behind the Secure Flight program is this: to “prevent certain known or suspected terrorists from boarding aircraft where they may jeopardize the lives of passengers and others.” Understandable, especially after the events of September 11, 2001.

But here’s where the logic falls apart and the scheme begins to look suspiciously like an information grab: domestic Canadian flights (say, Halifax to Montreal) will be excluded, even though they routinely fly over U.S. territory.

Now, let’s suppose a terrorist wants to commandeer a plane, either to fly it into a building or to land somewhere within the U.S. Security measures are much tighter on international flights. Since this hypothetical terrorist would already be in Canada, it would be much simpler to book a domestic flight. Apparently, the highly paid minds behind the Secure Flight proposal haven’t considered that.

So if the real reason for gathering this information is to prevent someone from taking control of a plane in U.S. airspace and wreaking havoc, why not include domestic Canadian flights? Not only do they routinely fly over the States, they also pass close to major U.S. centres, including New York and Washington.

Privacy concerns aside for the moment (and there are many), this sounds like yet another attempt by Washington to gather information about private citizens that it has no right to.

The Air Transport Association of Canada has until October 22 to voice objections to this plan. Let’s hope they do so—loud and clear.



NATURE NOTES:

from the backyard to the biosphere

By Zoe Dalton

Succession: Evolving Understandings of Change in Natural Systems

If there is one certain thing in a world characterized by uncertainty, it is that change is inevitable. Understandings of why and how change happens in the natural world (succession, as it is called in ecological circles) have themselves morphed over time.

Once emphasizing predictability and stability, theories of succession have shifted dramatically in recent decades to the recognition of dynamism and uncertainty in processes of change in natural systems.

Succession was initially understood to be an orderly process of change following a predictable pattern:

1. a “pioneer” ecosystem stage characterized by fast-growing, light-loving species capable of growing on poor-quality sites;
2. a predictable set of “seral” stages, for example the transition from the pioneer stage to an “old field” ecosystem characterized by increasingly dense shrub cover, shading out of herbaceous (non-woody) species, and eventual establishment of shade-tolerant species; and
3. the final equilibrium climax ecosystem (e.g., a mature mixed maple-beech forest with thick, rich soils and shade-tolerant climax tree species).

Such a rigid view of ecosystem change had a profound impact on environmental management understandings and strategies. The climax stage was considered the ultimate end point to which each ecosystem was progressing; as such, management was directed toward maintaining existing climax communities in a stable state, and directing ecosystems considered to be in earlier seral stages toward their final climax stage.

This idea of stability, of the static nature of natural systems, and the perceived need for ecosystem managers to maintain climax conditions led to management actions such as near continent-wide fire suppression.

These management actions were seen as a means of protecting ecosystems from disturbance; disturbances were viewed as reversing the process of succession and setting back ecosystems otherwise on their way toward the ideal stable climax state. The doctrine of managing for stability dominated protected-areas management throughout much of the 20th century and has led,

in the eyes of many ecologists, to the severe decline in ecological integrity seen in many parks and other managed areas.

Recognition among ecologists of the failure of past stability-oriented management regimes resulted in a shift in environmental management understandings. Scientists, theorists, and practitioners began moving from a focus on stability to a recognition of the dynamic, unpredictable nature of systems as complex as interconnected ecological webs, and of the need for incorporating disturbance and change into management regimes.

This new perspective on ecosystem change has begun to alter the face of ecosystem management in significant ways. Disturbance factors such as fire and flooding, which used to be seen as having only negative impacts on ecosystems, are now seen to be critical to maintaining ecosystem integrity and productivity.

Fire, for example, is now known to replenish soil nutrients, release the seeds of certain species from dormancy and enhance germination rates, control disease and pest outbreaks, and provide the landscape-level heterogeneity now considered so essential to broad-scale environmental integrity. Incorporating disturbances into management plans is becoming increasingly commonplace.

So change really does seem to be the only constant—even in the way we perceive dynamism in natural systems and the actions we take based on our perceptions of how and why change happens. Good thing is, the evolution of theories of succession seems to be leading us down a smarter environmental management path for the future.

AU Profiles:

Patricia Presti

by Christina M. Frey



This week we focus on Patricia Presti, a recent graduate of Athabasca University's Master of Distance Education (MDE) program. She explains how online resources can help distance students have a better educational experience than at a traditional university, what topics MDE students study, and how the face of distance education is changing.

Patricia, who graduated from the MDE program in June 2007, currently works as an academic librarian at Seneca College's Markham, Ontario campus. There, she instructs students on research issues and techniques.

"Students initially balk, then get really excited when they figure out how useful it is to learn to use these tools well," she says.

Content is key. Because of the wide variety of online databases—including some containing articles dating back 20 years—"doing research at 4 a.m. in your PJs is possible," Patricia says.

She encourages AU students to make use of the many electronic databases available through AU's library: "[they] provide research-level, peer-reviewed information not available through other means," she notes. She also recommends using databases instead of the Internet to conduct research. For example, students can access decades' worth of articles through these databases, while the Internet might only contain articles from the past week. And, Patricia says, it's quick, easy, and "free for as long as you're a student!"

Databases are not the only online resource vital to a distance student's success. Patricia feels that to ensure the best educational experience, students need to become involved as much as possible—both in the coursework and in the greater AU community.

Online forums can be of great help. Patricia is a big fan of class discussion boards, having found that they were essential not just for motivation but also for more in-depth learning.

"Once you post your ideas, you have to stand behind them and defend them . . . you can't just put up something . . . to get the assignment done," Patricia says. "You learn so much more."

In fact, she believes that the educational benefits of this type of class discussion surpass those found in traditional learning. "You can't be hiding in the back of the class hoping the prof doesn't ask you a question," she says. "You have to be prepared . . . and you benefit a great deal in the long run." Plus, the accountability was a great motivator: "You couldn't shirk your responsibilities, otherwise everyone knew you were being a slacker," Patricia says.

She also recommends the use of Facebook and other online social networking opportunities to help combat the isolation felt by many distance students. "For distance ed students as a whole, I would say the biggest challenge is . . . isolation," she says. In particular, what is missing from a distance-learning setting is the opportunity to obtain "informal information"—the small talk in the hallways about what classes to avoid or which professors are the best. Online socializing, Patricia says, can help fulfill this need.

The importance of social networking doesn't end with classes. "You may have good rapport with people in your class, but then they leave, and do you really keep in touch with them?" she asks. Patricia has kept in touch with several of her classmates through Facebook, which she has found to be personally and professionally useful.

Patricia, who worked part-time on the MDE degree over a period of seven years, already had a Master's in Information Studies from the University of Toronto when she enrolled at AU. "A lot of the academic librarian positions [in Florida, where she was living at the time] require a second masters," she says. She turned to Athabasca's program so that, if she decided to move back to Canada partway through the degree, she could continue without losing credits during the transfer. Because the MDE program focused on educational technology and administration—part of her job as a librarian—it seemed an ideal option. "It [also] fit perfectly with my previous Master's," Patricia said.

The MDE is an educational administration degree, with a special focus on educating by distance. Courses touch on the many different factors that are required to create an effective distance program. While some topics covered are typical administrative and distance issues, like adult education, instructional design, and designing curriculum for effective learning, there are broader concerns to consider as well.

One example is international issues, such as the colonialization of education. "You don't want to impose your culture on another just because they may be taking your program in another country," Patricia says. The increasing reliance of distance learning on electronic and online resources is another focus. For example, says Patricia, students might study "how . . . you moderate [chat in classes] properly so that it is effective."

Patricia is particularly interested in how to offer student support services in a distance context: counselling services, learning centre help, and even social events like pub night are much more difficult, if not impossible, for a distance program to administer. She believes many of these services can be offered, although the question of cost comes into play. For example, one U.S. school flies out its librarians to teach research skills to its students. It's "costly," Patricia says, "but great for the students!" Overall, however, schools are beginning to focus more on the human interactive part of distance education.

There are also new developments at AU's Centre for Distance Education (CDE), which administers the MDE program. For the past few years, the CDE has been putting together an annual conference on distance education. The conference coincides with convocation, allowing students, graduates, faculty, and others to meet, present papers, and discuss the latest developments in distance education. Also noteworthy, next fall AU will open its doctoral program in distance education (Ed.D.), the first such program in North America.

Patricia is excited about these new developments. "Some really neat things are happening in the program right now," she says. "I'm kind of sad that I'm finished!"



Books, Music, and Film to Wake Up Your Muse and Help You Change the World

DVD: *Mile Zero*

Release date: 2007

Director: Andrew Currie. Written by Andrew Currie and Michael Melski

Starring Michael Riley, Connor Widdows, and Sabrina Grdevich

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!

Isaiah 14:12 (NIV)

You start with two good parents. Eventually these parents fall afoul of each other and you end up not with two good parents separated, but rather with one good parent (the one who got to keep you) and one bad parent (the one who only gets to visit, if that).

This bad parent is the one you're not supposed to end up like, but biology dictates that being like this bad parent is inescapable. The good parent, with the support of the social order, calls the shots. The bad parent slowly goes mad with helpless rage.

This situation creates, for the child of divorced parents, a moral universe presided over by a God who represents safety and a fallen angel so crazily in love with God's children that he is willing to lie to them, tempt them with goodies, cheat them out of any chance at heaven, and put their lives at risk just for a chance to be as God to them, begging for their love and dragging them toward some parody of a utopia in which he is their ubiquitous benefactor. This Satan doesn't really believe that he has a better deal to offer, but he so *wants* to believe it that he resorts to deceit, covert manipulation, and emotional blackmail in the process of wresting the child from the arms of God.

We see this fallen-angel element in Michael Riley's penetrating portrayal of Derek; this preciousness, this sense of being too beautiful for this world. Derek, of all people, cannot accept being ousted from heaven, harbouring a love that is at bottom a cavernous emptiness. Like many neurotics, his boyish charm and lack of restraint are disarming; it is his adventurous spirit that makes him attractive enough to lure his young son from a safely ordered world into a nightmare.

The tragedy lies in Derek's failed trajectory toward love. Derek talks down to the nine-year-old Will, just as he did in the early videos, and this is one early clue that things are not quite right here. (In an authentic spiritual journey one is never patronized, and being talked down to is often a sign that you've stepped off course.)

In the scenes where Derek is holding the camcorder and talking to his wife or son it is clear that the man is addicted to scenes and demonstrations of love while remaining completely stunned about what constitutes a healthy relationship.

One thing I've noticed about deeply gifted directors is that they strategically plant doubt in a way that flushes out deeper insights about the human condition. Derek is supposedly being paranoid when he suspects his ex-wife's boyfriend of being a pedophile, but are his suspicions really unfounded? (Watching the way this boyfriend hovers over and caresses the sleeping boy is pretty creepy.)

Is Derek messed up or just responding normally to a situation (i.e., divorce) which, common as it is, is nearly unendurable to the sensitive soul?

Is Derek really too needy, or is he the uninhibited spokesperson for the universally human desire for unconditional love? And if he's the spokesperson, doesn't this make him a hero?

The Bard could use some help scouting out new material. If you discover any books, compact disks, or movies which came out in the last twelve months and which you think fit the Bard's criteria, please drop a line to bard@voicemagazine.org. If I agree with your recommendation, I'll thank you online.

CLICK ON THIS - Flicks

Lonita Fraser

I love movies of all kinds; old, new, Bond, horror, historical fiction, genre films, art house films—all of it. It can be an extremely enjoyable experience to see a story come to life before you.

Posters

One of the more interesting things surrounding the making of films can sometimes be the advertising; specifically, movie posters. What will someone choose for that small space in order to catch the eye of the passerby?

The Top 50 Movie Endings of All Time

Warning: Not a page to go to if you haven't seen some of these films, since it could all get spoiled for you. Tread with caution.

Scarface Pop Art

Not a film I personally enjoyed, but this is an interesting project regardless. The script of the film was used to create these images from the film. It would be an interesting little thing to try out with other text-oriented pieces.

Movie Quote Generator

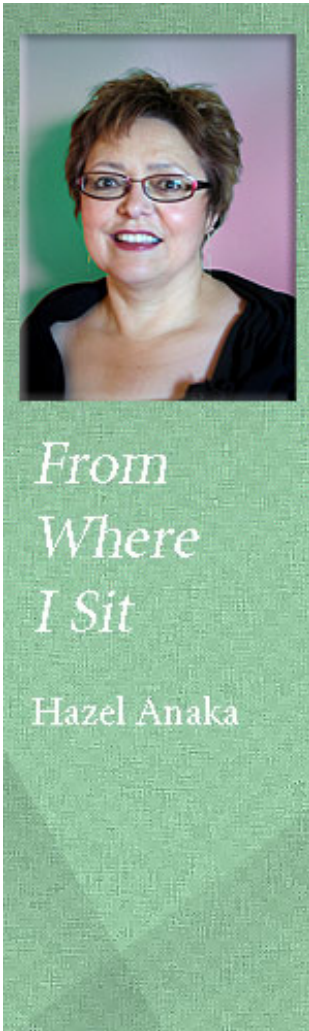
Enter your name, or any other word, and a quotation from a film will be generated with that word replacing a key word from the quotation. Also, you can get that altered line printed on a T-shirt of your very own.

Listen to a Movie

If you can't see a film, you can still listen to one! (And episodes of *The Simpsons* too!)

Eccentric Cinema

For the cult-movie enthusiast in all of us—reviews, downloads, and more!



It Takes an Army

Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes at a big event? I mean a big event in places like the Shaw Conference Centre in downtown Edmonton or the Telus Centre in Calgary or a big hotel ballroom. I mean a convention or annual general meeting. I mean hundreds of delegates or guests.

I now have a very good idea. My daughter and her friend just organized their first event under the auspices of their own company. Luckily, they've been doing this as their day job as fundraisers for the past few years. They have the credibility, connections, time management skills, experience, and chutzpah this job requires. Oh, and nerves of steel.

This first event was for roughly 900 people at the Shaw Conference Centre. After pitching the idea from concept to timeline to budget, their new firm was selected to pull it off. A series of meetings with the organizing committee for this staff appreciation function followed. A delicate balance of staying true to the vision and watching the nickels and dimes is key. Accommodating the client's wishes and objectives drives the process.

These young women are off to a great start, with incorporation papers drawn up by a lawyer spelling out roles, responsibilities, contingency plans for dissolution, and countless other things that don't matter until they matter.

Of course, as mom, I've been encouraging, offering advice, brainstorming, and praying since this was merely a dream. It was only natural that I would be there on the big day to help in any way possible.

I worked for hours on the mind-numbing job of arranging nearly 900 place cards on roughly 90 tables. At one point I offered to pull cables if only the lighting guys would switch with me. They were too smart to take the bait and were finished with their part long before I was.

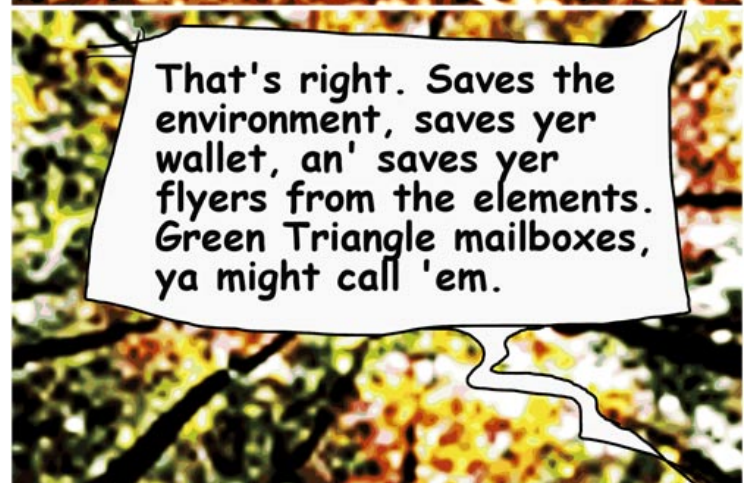
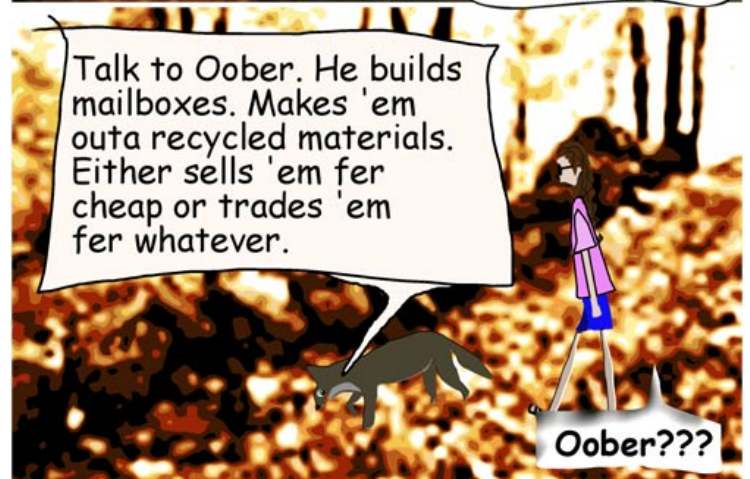
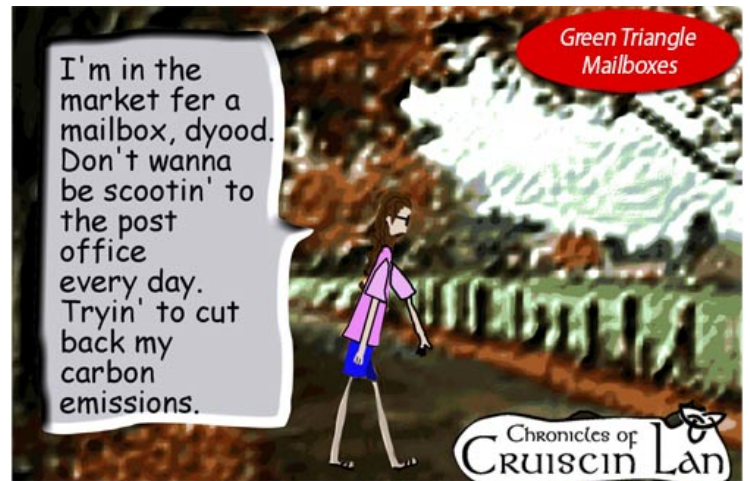
I know that a well orchestrated, beautifully organized, memorable event does not happen by accident. It takes an army. The Shaw people who set up the tables and chairs, set the place settings with precision, prepare and serve the three-course meal. (How do those young people carry ten main courses on a tray on their shoulders across the conference room without incident?) Or the audiovisual company with sound technicians, camera men, and editing guy responsible for cueing the music and images down to the second. Or the lighting people who create the magic ambience and make sure the spotlight is on the right person at the right time.

Bartenders and the people driving the motorized vacuum cleaner or cleaning the washrooms are often invisible unless you look for them. Throw in a couple of mimes, two actors, some paparazzi and you've got an event. And, of course, Hilary and Cecilia to oversee it all.

As for mom, I was nervously watching everything unfold, hoping against hope that this first big thing would be a success, that both client and guests would be happy, that no tragedy would befall. Getting the feeling back in my legs and feet was just a bonus, from where I sit.

The Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan

by
Wanda
Waterman
St. Louis



Alexisonfire - *Watch Out!*

Release date: 2004

Label: Distort Entertainment

Tracks: 11

Rating: 8

I realize this is not a new album; the reason I've brought *Watch Out!* into the spotlight this week is I think Alexisonfire is a band that has been overlooked and underrated for too long now. Maybe part of the problem is that audiences and critics alike aren't sure how to label the band. Are they a metal band? Hardcore? Punk? Melodic post-hardcore?

Some people are of the opinion that labelling a band takes away from any real appreciation of the music itself, but I disagree. I think that knowing the underlying influences of a band and its music can give you a better perspective of what they are trying to accomplish and what the record is supposed to mean.

So what would I call Alexisonfire? I'm going to go for post-punk hardcore. The reason for this is the clear connection between their music and some of the older hardcore punk bands: Alexisonfire claims the Misfits and the Dead Kennedys among its influences, along with Screeching Weasel. In fact, I don't think anyone could describe the music any better than the band itself does on its MySpace page:

Sounds like a guy with a pretty voice getting into an argument with a guy who is kind of upset about things, while a guy who really likes punk is laughing with a guy who likes to rhyme while there is a guy who looks like a rat keeping time. Get it?

The band toured with Anti-Flag earlier this year and drummed up some interest in their new record, *Crisis*. I notice, however, that although the band has reached the platinum level of sales in Canada there is still an entire musical audience that is not as familiar with the band as they ought to be. This is why I refer back to *Watch Out!* as a precursor, and a reason to go out and pick up *Crisis*.

So what does this album offer? It's one of those complete packages that is so satisfying to unwrap from the Cellophane: colourful artwork, a complete set of lyrics, and a thank-you list to influential bands. The record is one of those that take a few listens to get into, and I don't think I'm the only person who feels that this initial uncertainty makes for a stronger reaction later on. On the first one or two listens, this is a very hardcore record, with its closest relation being metal. This is only an initial and, as it turns out with subsequent plays, superficial sample of what the band and the record has to offer.

The five-piece band has combined a melodic vocalist very much suited to the new-metal style; another vocalist suited well to old-school punk rock; and musicians on guitar, bass, and drums who can pull together to create an experience that not only pulls the two elements together but creates a sound exclusive to Alexisonfire. It's not one of those records that you are likely to play over and over each and every day; it is a record, however, that will fit perfectly into one aspect of your life or your character and find a permanent home. For example, this is the record I fall asleep to every night and listen to when I am alone, upset, and it's getting dark outside. Nothing else will do.

For me, this band is the logical progression of almost 40 years of punk and the last ten years of metal. If you give Alexisonfire a chance, nothing will make more sense to you than the music these five guys create.

AUSU THIS MONTH



An open letter to Joy Romero, Chair of AU Governing Council.

Dear Ms. Romero;

On behalf of the students of Athabasca University, we are excited and encouraged by what Dr. Frits Pannekoek has called the “second greatest milestone” in the history of Athabasca University. The approval of \$30 million toward AU’s new administrative and research center, as announced today by Minister of Advanced Education and Technology Doug Horner, is a tremendous step toward ensuring that

AU will remain one of Canada’s finest educational institutions.

This funding demonstrates Alberta’s strong commitment to Alberta’s students, and the students of Athabasca University. Athabasca University also demonstrates this commitment through its focus on increasing affordability, accessibility, and quality of education for our members. Recent limits imposed on annual tuition increases are an important first step toward ensuring affordability. Today’s funding announcement will further address accessibility issues for AU students.

In early 2007, AUSU presented the government and AUGC with a document detailing our *Vision for a Skilled Alberta*. It is clear that our concerns have been heard and that steps are being taken to ensure that students’ views are incorporated into revisions to our education system and university services. We are encouraged that we have reached this milestone to improve the main campus of our university and ensure that AU has sufficient staff to address growing student needs.

We now look forward to learning how AUGC and Athabasca University will use these funds to enhance the quality of AU’s offerings and we request a communication from AUGC to our members explaining how this new funding will enhance student services.

We continue to look forward to reaching future milestones that will ensure that AU can address the urgent need for enhanced learning and virtual communication technologies, more courses and programs, and research opportunities for students.

AUSU



At Home: Call for boycott on 2008 Beijing Olympics

Washington correspondent Bob Woodruff told CTV Newsnet's Kate Wheeler last week that in order to support the protests of the monks in Burma, Canada and other countries need to ban arms sales to the country and start boycotting the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Monks in the South Asian country have been protesting for several weeks now over the military government; the protests and subsequent arrests and violent clashes between police and the passive monks and their supporters are said to mirror events in 1988, when pro-democracy rallies failed to remove the military junta that had been established since 1962.¹

The movement has supporters throughout the world and has gained the efforts of a Facebook support group more than 400,000 members strong.

According to Woodruff, the protesters who have been arrested so far have all been tortured; he explained that the only way to truly help the Burmese people install a democratic government and put an end to this military violence is to put pressure on the Chinese government to withdraw its support for the current military junta.

China has invested a great deal into the Burmese economy and has resisted calls for sanctions to rid the country of its current government. The Chinese government has expressed its opinion that the pro-democracy rallies in Burma are actually the cause of unrest, and because of this support should be given to the military government instead of the protesters.²

Growing economic ties between the United States and China also mean that putting sanctions on China itself is virtually out of the question.

For the moment, the ban on arms sales to Burma is the talking point of world governments concerned with the welfare of the nation, since clearly China has become too powerful to stand up to.

¹ *The Washington Post*, 2007. "Backed by Cheering Crowds, Defiant Monks Protest Burma's Junta." Retrieved October 12, 2007 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/18/AR2007091802082.html>

² *Telegraph*, 2007. "China's dilemma over Burma protests." Retrieved October 12, 2007, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/09/26/wburma1226.xml>

In Foreign News: Recall of cough and cold medicines in the U.S.

Several American drug companies are recalling their products following a report by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration showing that an unprecedented number of children's deaths have resulted from the use of decongestants and antihistamines.¹

Several children's medicines have been recalled, including variations of Dimetapp, Tylenol, PediaCare, Little Colds, Triaminic, and Robitussin.

CTV Newsnet made an inquiry to the Ontario Pharmacists' Association to see whether Canadians should be concerned about the health risks to their own children with these and other medications, and spoke with the organization's spokesperson Margaret Wong.

Wong pointed out that with any type of drug use come associated risks; however, since the current recalls are based on misuse of the drugs in question she stressed that the best course of action in any case is to consult a doctor or pharmacist before giving your children any medication.

In particular, she insisted that children under the age of two years must not be given any type of medication, over-the-counter children's medication or not, until a health care professional has been consulted.

Despite the fact that these cases are matters of simply following the directions on the medicine packages, Health Canada has now issued its own warning to consumers, asking that they first speak with a doctor before giving children under two years old any of these kinds of medications.

The Canadian recall centres on Infants' Tylenol cold dye-free drops, Benylin for infants cough and cold oral drops, and Benylin for infants stuffy nose oral drops.²

The drug companies all maintain that only in rare cases will death occur because of the misuse of their products.

¹ *Los Angeles Times*, 2007. "Cold medicines for infants pulled amid safety concerns." Retrieved October 12, 2007, from <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-drugs12oct12.0,6791553.story?coll=la-home-business>

² CBC News, 2007. "Health Canada issues advisory on cough meds in kids under 2." Retrieved October 12, 2007, from <http://www.cbc.ca/consumer/story/2007/10/11/medicine-recall.html?ref=rss>



Dollar parity: deterrent or draw for university recruitment

American students say Canadian education is worth increasing cost

Heidi Ebert

SACKVILLE (CUP) -- The relationship between Canadian and American currency has become a concern for Canadian universities that recruit students, and funding, from the U.S.

While many American students studying in Canada are likely getting a better deal than if they were to attend similar institutions in the U.S., that very fact could be driving away some markets.

Matthew Sheridan-Jonah, manager of admissions at Mount Allison University, said that it isn't safe to assume the strength of the Canadian dollar will harm U.S. enrolment.

In fact, he thinks that high international student fees might make Canada more attractive to prospective American students.

While American students pay at least twice as much as their Canadian counterparts, many U.S. students, particularly those in private high schools, "don't consider Canadian schools because of how relatively inexpensive they are. [The students are] associating cost with quality."

Instead, said Sheridan-Jonah, the comparatively lower cost of a Canadian education "hurts us within a certain market."

In 2006, there were 156,955 students from abroad studying in Canada. Nearly half of them were from Asia and approximately one in ten was American.

International tuition ranges from \$6,207.44 for 30 credit hours in the Faculty of Arts at Brandon University, Manitoba, to \$18,698 for Arts in the University of British Columbia.

While this may seem like an unfair penalty for choosing a university a few miles up the road, some American students see a better education with a lower price tag as the main draw.

Jenn Guare, a fourth-year student from Bangor, Maine, said that while she pays about \$20,000 in tuition and related fees each year, "a comparable experience and education in the U.S. would cost at least \$40,000 per year."

Michelle Mitchell, also from Maine, chose a Canadian education primarily for financial reasons.

"The cost was definitely number one," she said.

Fifth-year student Joe Simms chose to move north because, he said, it was the "best school that accepted [him]." But money was also a key factor in his decision. "When I was a senior in high school," he said, "the U.S. dollar was 1.56 Canadian dollars, so I figured I'd get the same or better education as my older sister for about half the cost."

Like Guare, Simms noted that while American students are paying more than domestic students per year, "In the grand scheme of things, Mt. A is cheap . . . every other school I was looking at attending started at \$35,000 and only went up from there."

Sheridan-Jonah, though, worries that recruiting American students "will be more difficult" now that the loonie has surpassed the greenback in value.

He used to cite the stronger U.S. dollar as a selling point; a strategy that is no longer an option while recruitment in the U.S.

Sheridan-Jonah admits that he cannot predict whether Canada's economic situation will affect enrolment, but remains optimistic.

"So far, the response [in the U.S.] has been really positive," he said.

American students are not the only ones to be affected by parity. Since so many countries base their currency on the American dollar, nearly all international students are affected by the tumbling currency.

The strong dollar could force international students to seek a less expensive education elsewhere.

Parity will also have a considerable impact on university finances, aside from enrolment issues.

Endowments from American sources and investments in U.S. equity markets will both decrease as the value of the Canadian dollar increases.

It is still too early to tell whether the effects of the still-increasing value of the loonie will be positive or negative. The overall consequences of parity are crucial—but they're impossible to predict.

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THE VOICE

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