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We are a founding member of the Canadian University Press, and love it so. We are also members of U-Wire, a media exchange of university media throughout North America. We publish weekly during the academic year with a circulation of 10,000.

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This issue is dedicated to:
Those Red Shirt kids who sit at the gates and
wave all day. You kids are committed.

VMAs set new low

by Aaron Ladage

(U-WIRE) AMES, Iowa - It's a bad sign when, after months of planning and thousands upon thousands of dollars in budget money spent, the best moment of the 2003 MTV Video Music Awards was a technical difficulty that made Kelly Osbourne look like an even bigger idiot than she already did.

For a network powerful enough to have an entire generation named after it, and for the amount of effort the network puts into promoting the VMAs as the "anti-awards show," almost every moment of the mind-numbing three-hour ceremony lacked originality, creativity and the standard off-centeredness that separate it from the rest of the awards show crowd.

The evening began with the promise of an unforgettable secret performance; most people are probably still waiting. The everlasting queens of harlotry, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, took the stage in the same white wedding corsets that Madonna wore in her "Like a Virgin" video. When Madonna joined the pair on stage, it looked as if the opening number would be something great. Instead, it fizzled into a cheap display of girl-on-girl lip-synching.

Unfortunately, things went from bad to painful. Seventy-one-year-old Music legend Johnny Cash was expected to take the ceremonies by storm with his cover of Trent Reznor's "Hurt." But once again, network ratings and demographics pushed decent music to the back of the stage. Instead of giving the moon man to a worthwhile performer, acts like Justin Timberlake took home the awards. Even Timberlake, who somehow thinks he understands real music better than people who were actually alive when it was still being made, admitted that Cash's exclusion was "a travesty."

The night wasn't a total bust, however. Performances by Beyonce, Coldplay and 50 Cent salvaged the embarrassing drivel that flowed from the mouths of nearly every other entertainer who made it to the mic.

Perhaps next year, MTV should give up on the big-budget lighting and video effects and focus on what has kept the network alive for 20 years.

Without the irreverent comedy and unexpected moments, the Video Music Awards are nothing more than the Grammys on Ritalin.

Amplified whispers from marginalized environments

Author investigates the lesser known happenings of this summer in NB

by Asaf Rashid

Did anyone hear about what happened at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Montreal this past July? Of course, there was a demonstration made up of people opposed to what the WTO represents and there was a relatively enormous number of arrests made, as well as a few broken windows of notorious companies such as the GAP and McDonalds. Except for the fact that the window smashing actions were committed by less than one percent of the crowd - not a riot as portrayed in major news sources - the above description probably isn't news to whole lot of people.

What many may not have heard was that there were 236 arrests made, most of which occurred in a mass arrest, where about 150 people were nabbed upon leaving a location, obtained with permission by the owner, that was identified prior as a relaxing space. Amongst the arrested were a construction worker and at least one tourist. There were more than 40 Maritimers who went to the demonstration and over half of them were arrested, including myself and a few other Frederictonians.

Fredericton's Vaughn Barnett, a legal researcher, was there too. He ended up remaining in a Montreal jail for 18 days because he didn't sign the conditions for release, which all others did sign under threat of the kind of long incarceration that Vaughn bravely endured. I signed extremely begrudgingly, and felt terrible afterwards. Vaughn didn't sign these conditions because they would have limited his rights to free expression, such as the Constitutionally recognized (but often ignored) right to public dissent. He was steadfast and eventually won his release on August 15th after challenging (for the second time) that his incarceration was unjust because the prosecutors did not even demonstrate the existence of any evidence to show how he specifically did anything that could be called illegal.

Vaughn and everyone else who was arrested must return for a court date on October 21st in Montreal to plead our cases, and reclaim our \$200 bail money. How are the prosecutors going to justify that their actions were not an attempt to simply silence dissent and intimidate people from expressing their opinions in public?

Another issue that I have been attentive to is what has been happening at Palmer Point, Grand Lake (about 45 minutes away from Fredericton). For those (likely, most of you) who have not heard in detail the story of George McCoy, Mary Polchies and family (of St. Mary's First Nation), here is a little brief.

They have been using a summer hunting and fishing camp at Palmer Point for the past several years, exercising their Aboriginal rights (established at the Supreme Court of Canada) to meet personal needs and earn a modest livelihood from Crown Lands (which in New Brunswick were never signed over

to the province by the representative First Nation communities). The land also is and has been recognized by the Maliseet community as traditional land and has served ceremonial purposes dating back before colonization. On June 27th, the province told the family to vacate the land because they were "trespassing" on land that "needs" to be cleared away in order to make way for a golf course in the next few years. If they did not leave, they would be evicted and any material they left behind would be destroyed (powers "granted" to the government by the Crown Lands and Forests Act).

They were given 30 days to vacate and were forewarned that their power would be cut within the 30-day period. The power was cut on July 3rd. Over the next month, many members of the Maliseet community assembled at the camp and indicated that they had no intention of leaving and would not allow the province to trample over Aboriginal rights. A blockade was set up and the deadline came and went. The people who are there exercising their established rights are still in danger of forced eviction, though things are currently at the discussion level.

Finally, there is the ongoing threat at Belledune, a tiny community on the northern coast of New Brunswick. A company called Bennett Environmental is proposing to build a toxic waste incinerator in the town, a proposal that somehow dodged an environmental impact assessment. People are supposed to feel content that the project passes the standards of Bennett's health risk assessment studies.

The proposed project doesn't meet the standards for safety in the United States and a proposal for a larger facility in Ontario was rejected. There are only two other toxic waste incinerators in Canada, one in Swan Hills, Alberta that is scheduled to be shut down, and another in Quebec owned and operated by Bennett Environmental. On August 21st, there was a public meeting hosted by the New Brunswick Department of Health and Wellness in Belledune and even with the almost unanimous opposition to construction of the plant, the plans are still moving forward.

According to resident Jean-Guy Comeau, the community is adamantly opposed to the project, with an extremely minute number of people who either feel unthreatened or see the project as a positive thing economically. He explained that the emotions ran high, but the hosts of the meeting, the New Brunswick Department of Health and Wellness, seemed to be deaf to people's concerns and siding with the opinion that the project is safe. Researched testimony over the dangers posed by the proposed incinerator seemed to bounce off the hosts. Final approval is pending decision by Health Minister Elvy Robichaud, and this is a project that the provincial government wants for economic development in the region.

There is great danger that this project might go through despite opposition by residents in the region. The area is already contaminated from years of lead smelting and need a serious clean-up, as a recent report by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick describes.



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