

THE BRUNSWICKAN OPINION & EDITORIAL

Editorial

Missiles and the census don't mix

by Sean Patrick Sullivan
Editor-in-Chief

The world's largest weapons manufacturer is set to play a major role in the upcoming 2006 census, and some Canadians are worried. They should be.

Back story: Every five years the government carries out the census; a detailed survey of Canadians that tracks everything from income to education to religion and ethnicity. The last one was conducted in 2001.

Next time, American weapons juggernaut Lockheed Martin is likely going to have a hand in compiling Canada's most sensitive statistics. They've been hired, along with IBM and Transcontinental Printing, to provide equipment for a test run in 2004. If it's successful, the trio will be the ones officiating our country's census.

It's true that Lockheed Martin has extremely sophisticated computer gadgets, which will make this Canada's most technologically advanced census ever (they boast their software can recognize handwriting with an accuracy rate of better than 99 per cent). But we should question the ethics of giving up to \$85 million of Canadian taxpayers' money to a weapons developer.

Visit their website and you'll find an easy-to-read catalog of missiles, tactical aircraft, and other creepy devices that are designed only to blow things up and kill people. They even have downloadable movies of each of the above.

The company's main priority is to destroy and kill - why should we be supporting it? It's already making tens of billions of dollars every year through contracts with the United States.

And then there's the privacy issue.

"Which wing of the Pentagon is this information going to be stored in?" asked NDP MP Bill Blaikie in Parliament earlier this month. While officials have said all work will be done on a site chosen by Stats Canada, monitored by federal security agents, and repaired on-site, there are still worries over privacy.

After all, the US government and Lockheed Martin are pretty close friends - as long as the Americans are at war, Lockheed Martin is cashing in. And, with that shady Patriot Act that was passed in 2001, it wouldn't be too hard for the US to get its hands on our info, if it is stored in the States.

www.vivecanada.ca has started a petition to stop Canada from dealing with Lockheed Martin for the census - maybe you should check it out.

Mugwump

What makes a story terrifying

by Ben Conoley
Managing Editor

There are few stories I read in the news that actually make me feel any emotion.

After reading stories on war and murder all the time, it's easy to lose touch with the reality we read about.

Blame it on video games all you want. Blame it on rap if you feel like it, but the reason I don't cry when I hear about a bus blowing up in Israel, a Canadian jeep being blown up or an American helicopter being shot down in Israel is because I hear about it all the time. This may sound insensitive, but I can't connect with these people; I have a hard time understanding the way they died. I've never seen a bomb explode - I've never seen a gun fired at another person.

Their stories are tragic, but I can only see them from an outsider's perspective. Which isn't to say that acts of violence shouldn't be reported on, because it's still important to know about these things.

But once in a while, every so often, there's a story that really gets to me. One of these stories is that of Cecilia

Zhang.

There's something genuinely terrifying about a missing child, something I'm able to connect with. There's a nine-year-old girl who was ripped from her bed, from her home, from her parents. There's a little girl still in the hands of her captor, or worse yet, dead. I've never been in the army, but I have been nine years old.

It's hard not to feel a knot in my stomach when I read about Cecilia's parents, Raymond Zhang and Sherry Xu. I can't imagine the profound sense of loss they must feel. It's hard to read their public pleas to the person who took their daughter, pleas begging for a safe return. I've never lived in Palestine or Israel, but I have parents.

There's also a fear in this type of situation that the worst has yet to pass. Far too often a missing child turns up in pieces in a lake or in the woods. Far too often they never come home. Cecilia's story isn't over yet. This creates a sense of fear to add to the already overwhelming emotions.

I really hope that this article is outdated by the time you read it, and I hope that tomorrow I don't have to read a story about a little girl who was murdered.

Stephen Harper and Peter MacKay take a cue from media sensationalism, and unite.

One right hemisphere is better than two!



David Wilson McLeish / The Peak (CUP)

The great saviour?

Does Mike Harris have what it takes to occupy 24 Sussex Drive?

by Michael White

Mike Harris. The name conjures up many emotions among people in Ontario and throughout Canada. To some he is the quintessential neo-conservative, to others he is the devil incarnate. Whatever your beliefs, the man won back-to-back majority governments in the ultimate prize in federal politics, the province of Ontario. Without any doubt, if he were to put his hat in the ring, he would be the leading contender in the race to be the leader of the Conservative party of Canada.

From the outset it looks like a race between Mike Harris, Stephen Harper, Peter MacKay, another unknown Ontario conservative and possibly Bernard Lord (highly unlikely). If this is the case, Mike Harris would win in a landslide, French or no French.

If Mike Harris goes for the leadership the chances of this merger being ratified would go through the roof. First of all, he is a true blue conservative (which should please Western Canadians). Second, he was

the leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative party (this should please PCs). Third, he won back to back majorities in Ontario, home to one-third of all federal seats (that should please all conservatives across Canada).

His credentials are excellent. He does have baggage, however. Walkerton, Ipperwash, and the deal to privatize the public hydro company provide some useful ammunition to the Liberals. Plus, I'm sure there are many angry hippies who were forced to get jobs in Ontario. Because of this, federal Liberals are chomping at the bit to have a go at him.

They shouldn't be so anxious. Unlike the smear campaign in which they completely destroyed Stockwell Day, and as a result the Canadian Alliance, Mr. Harris won't be so easily to undermine. Stockwell Day was an unknown, untested politician to the great majority of Canadians. He didn't have the experience as a federal politician, let alone a federal party leader to compete with the Liberals. Every accusation that they threw at him stuck because he didn't have the intelligence, experience, or political machinery to combat them. So within a matter of weeks, the momentum that increased the popularity of the Canadian Alliance

to 30 per cent from 15 per cent in a matter of months came to a crashing halt. For this you have to give Chretien and the Liberals a lot of respect. They are good at what they do. However, I don't think that they can paint a new conservative party led by Mike Harris with that brush.

Most Canadians know who Mike Harris is, and most know what he stands for. Every accusation that the federal Liberals are going to make is going to be brushed away by the electorate.

The Liberals are going to feel the Schwarzenegger effect. They have been entrenched in power so long that every time that they make an accusation, Canadians are just going to think that it's a desperate measure by a regime that is clinging to power, not unlike what people felt toward former California Governor Gray Davis when the accusations started flying against Schwarzenegger in the last week of the California campaign. So I say go ahead and let them try.

I believe in about two to three weeks the polls are going to show Liberal support at around 42 per cent and Conservative support at 31 per cent; this is when things will get really interesting. The Liberals will realize they're in a fight, and start lashing out. Fortunately, this time it won't work.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sorry if you didn't "get it"

by Tan-Nee Ng

I read Dan Hill's letter to the editor ("It's just so complicated," October 22) with interest. As the author of the piece in question, I have this to say to Mr. Hill: I'm sorry if I come across to you as just some punk-ass kid, and who knows, maybe you are right, but I certainly don't conceptualize myself as such. Surprising as it may seem, I don't even "dress punk" - although I might be more inclined to identify myself as "punk."

Also, I just write articles - I don't do the layout or the headlines, that's the job of the *Brunswickan* editors. So when I opened that page of the paper, I was just as surprised as you (if not more so) that there was a picture of Avril beside it (the headline, this time, was my own).

Where did you get the idea that I was mad about someone stealing my shirt? Because I am quite sure my whole article was about how punk is

not fashion, hence the long rant about where your money goes when you buy things that "make you look punk."

Sorry if you didn't "get it." As a side note, if you knew me in real life, I doubt you'd ever associate me as being a "punk rocker" because most of the time I run around in sweat pants. This is true and I love it.

As well, there is a difference between "selling out" (ie: Nirvana, Green Day, etc.) and "being manufactured." In the first case, these bands existed way before any record company even heard about them, and they got "big" in their respective scenes - to the point where major labels knew they could conveniently make money off of them. "Musical acts" such as Avril Lavigne, The Spice Girls, and Kelly Clarkson were made by companies, and then marketed. I used Avril Lavigne as an example of how "punk" is being commodified (can someone say "turned into fashion" here?) because of two things.

One take away her image, and her music is pop (except maybe for 'skater boi,' which might I add, is completely heterosexist with the lyrics: "He was a boy, she was a girl, can I make it any more obvious?" bleck!)

I have personally talked with London Spicoluk, the bassist/vocalist from Closet Monster, who got hired to "teach Avril Lavigne everything he knew about punk." (Obviously he didn't do a very good job though - she didn't even know who the Sex Pistols were!)

And while yes, I do agree that good things have often (and do) become popular via the machine, never before have things just been created (stolen?) out of thin air. Now the machine doesn't have to coerce bands into "selling out" because they can just "make them." Is that what you call "progress"?

As a final note, the article was more about questioning where your money goes and what it supports rather than Ms. Pop-Star Avril Lavigne. Sorry you missed the point.

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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:

Elliot Smith: 1969 - 2003

SU needs to better promote elections

by Jordan O'Brien

I am writing to express my concern with respect to the recent UNB Student Union by-elections. I consider myself an active member of the student body and am certainly someone who takes an interest in campus politics.

Having seen the posters around campus seeking candidates for the by-elections, I was anxiously waiting for posters telling me when to vote, or maybe an e-mail message or something of the like.

I was rather caught off-guard when I heard this week that the election had taken place a week ago, and over the long weekend at that.

I was proud to have been a candidate in the sping elections when we had some of the highest turnout numbers in recent memory. I cannot see how we will involve more people in the campus political process, something that ought to be a key goal of all those involved, if elections take place without notice and, as a result, such low turnout.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT SEAN PATRICK SULLIVAN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, BY EMAIL AT EIC@UNB.CA

THE BRUNSWICKAN

2003 ANNUAL
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