

UVic bunny killer gets discharge

Animal rights group outraged

by Ford Walker
The Martlet

VICTORIA (CUP) -- An animal rights group at the University of Victoria is furious Nicholas Campbell, recently convicted of unnecessary cruelty to animals for his role in the death of a rabbit on campus, has received an absolute discharge because he wants to become a lawyer.

"We find the inability of the court to effectively deal with matters regarding animal cruelty to be disturbing," said Shannon Elliot, president of the Student Animal Legal Defence Fund. "There is a clear connection between animal abuse and violence to humans. We must address all incidents of cruelty in order to encourage compassion in our society."

Campbell pleaded guilty to the charge Sept. 21. Crown counsel Ron Parsons agreed with the judge hearing the case that Campbell did not deserve a criminal record, as they were sure the court of public opinion was enough punishment. Also, Campbell's ambition to become a lawyer played toward the lack of sentencing.

Elliot called the consideration given to Campbell due to his desire to become a lawyer "outlandish."

"We would like to determine exactly how many laws Campbell, or anyone else planning to be a lawyer, has to break before they are charged and convicted," she said.

On Feb. 6, a heavily intoxicated Campbell and an anonymous friend thought it was a good idea to catch a rabbit on campus. While specifics are cloudy, what is certain is Campbell



Special to The Brunswickan

A University of Victoria student who was recently convicted of unnecessary cruelty to animals for killing a rabbit has been discharged because of his intention to pursue a legal career.

caught a rabbit by throwing a blanket over it. The rabbit proceeded to bite him on the hand, which prompted Campbell to strike the rabbit with his fists.

Severely injured, the rabbit was rushed to Elk Lake Veterinary Hospital where it died in spite of efforts to treat the animal.

"The veterinarian said the rabbit was vocalizing loudly, which is unusual for a rabbit and may be an indication of the extreme pain it was suffering," said

Hugh Coghill, senior animal protection officer for the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Under the Criminal Code of Canada, had Campbell killed the animal immediately, he would not have been charged with a crime, a fact Parsons said he found ironic. It was the fact the animal had suffered that made the act punishable.

The crime itself comes with a maximum penalty of six-months jail

time, a \$2,000 fine and a prohibition on pet ownership for two years. The usual punishment, however, is only a \$400 fine or probation. The SPCA says less than one-third of one per cent of cruelty to animals crimes lead to criminal charges.

The trial itself was moved from Victoria to Nanaimo after an appeal made during the first hearing on June 24. The judge witnessing the proceedings felt a trial in Victoria could not be fair.

Concordia says no to Barak speech

Hillel outraged; members tape their mouths in protest

by Dave Weatherall
Québec Bureau Chief

MONTREAL (CUP) -- As far as Concordia University is concerned, former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak will not be speaking on campus.

A revised request submitted by the campus branch of Jewish student group Hillel to bring the controversial speaker to Concordia was rejected by a committee composed of several administrators, with input from campus security.

The university said the decision was based on a statement prepared by Concordia security director Jean Brisebois, which said it could not guarantee the safety of all members of the Concordia community, nor the guest speaker, if the speech were held at either the downtown or Loyola campuses.

But Hillel says it's a question of the administration impeding free speech -- an act they consider unacceptable.

"If (students) aren't safe, then it's a problem that needs to be addressed, not ignored," said Concordia Hillel co-president Jason Portnoy.

The administration released a statement saying it would agree to co-sponsor the event off campus, but would not allow it to take place at Concordia.

That's not good enough for Portnoy, who described Sept. 30, the day the administration informed Hillel of its decision, as a sad day for freedom of expression on campus and in Canadian society.

"We are calling on the administration to come up with a concrete plan of action to take back their school," he said. "This is not an Israeli-Palestinian issue; this is a free speech issue."

In response to the announcement, several members of Hillel placed duct tape over their mouths and handed out flyers about the decision to Concordia students taking the escalators to class.

Contradicting earlier reports Barak's handlers had not been contacted to speak at Concordia, Portnoy said Hillel had contacted Barak's booking agency for a price quote and had confirmed his availability for an October date.

Hillel's initial request for Barak was submitted in the summer for him to speak at the downtown campus. Attempting to accommodate the university's security concerns, Hillel then revised their request, suggesting he speak at the Loyola campus, that every student club at Concordia, including Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, have an equal number of tickets made available to them, and that a question and answer period be included at the end of the speech.

That request was also denied, although it proposed conditions SPHR vice-president Eric Yingling said would have been acceptable to him.

"I want to make this clear, there would still be people who would not want him to come -- he is after all an accused war criminal -- but personally I would go to the speech and if a question and answer period was guaranteed, I would call him out on the crimes he is accused of," Yingling said. "That being said, I think the university exercised a good degree of common sense when rendering their final decision."

Hospital strike looms

by Katie Ashe

Time is running out for Premier Lord's negotiations and many fear the possibility of a strike in our own backyard.

Signs are already posted in the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital's volunteering office warning volunteers not to show up in case of a strike.

On Monday September 27, a reported 800 hospital workers from George Dumont and Moncton City hospitals did not appear at work due to a strike for higher wages. Instead they were alternating picket line positions outside Premier Bernard Lord's office. These were members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 1252.

"There's a very good offer on the table for the CUPE 1252 hospital workers, with an average wage increase of 12 per cent over four years," commented Bernard Lord's press secretary, Chisholm Pothier.

CUPE represents close to 6,500 hospital workers all over the province of New Brunswick. These hospital workers include: maintenance and laundry workers, licensed practical nurses, pharmacy assistants, food service workers, clerks and secretaries, emergency medical technicians, and cardiology technologists.

60 per cent of workers are considered essential and can not participate in the strike. The Regional and Beauséjour Regional Health Authorities cancelled elective and day surgeries, as well as elective tests and x-rays. Most medical clinics will remain open.

"As far as the practical effects... the top priority during this [strike] is the safety and security of the patients using the system, and we will ensure safety and security," added Pothier.

The week before Monday's strike, 95.8 per cent of the hospital workers had voted in favour of the strike, if necessary.

"We feel the union leadership should put [our] offer to a vote of its membership because we believe it is a fair offer and could find support among the workers," said Pothier.

Torture victims call on Canada to act

Speakers push for legal means to address human rights abuses

by Jen Tse
The Varsity

TORONTO (CUP) -- "Torture, execution and four-by-six-foot prison cells" were just a few of the words used to describe the personal experiences of speakers who are seeking to sue the countries and perpetrators that abused their human rights.

The panel was speaking at From Words to Action, a forum hosted by the University of Toronto's law faculty Oct. 1.

"I wish there was no need for a panel on torture," said Noah Novogrodsky, director of the faculty's international human rights program. "In an era of globalization, we are finally connected to the rest of the planet for better or for worse. Sadly, the bad manifests itself in the torture of our loved ones."

The four panellists are fighting for change in the Canadian justice system. They wanted to answer the question: "After illegal torture, what legal recourse is possible?"

Under Canada's state immunity laws, the government cannot intervene in the legal actions of another country. One speaker said foreign states are immune from Canadian courts to maintain diplomacy. Another said the federal government is afraid human rights cases would flood the courts.

"Justice is a right, not a privilege," said Houshang Bolzari, an immigrant who was tortured in Iran. "It should not be about citizenship but

discrimination. Canada cannot sit passively at the sidelines."

Ken Wiwa, human rights activist, author and son of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Nobel Prize-nominated writer and activist executed by the Nigerian government in 1995, decried the "homogenization and destruction of the (Nigerian) environment as a morality tale for the late 20th century, where poor people live in rich land," and genocide is allowed to rage on so that foreign companies can reap the profits.

"How can we hold multinationals responsible when the world is divided in state confederates?" asked Wiwa, who has been embroiled in a long legal battle with Shell Oil over what he says was its complicity in his father's death.

"The Nigerian government is subservient to Shell. Today, oil prices have risen to \$50 US a barrel because of a threat, stating that all multinationals must leave (Nigeria) today or fires will be set."

Non-violent protests were used before, he said, but today, "violence is the only way to settle disputes with an international agenda. Foreign powers don't care about human rights. Rights are secondary to the agenda."

William Sampson, a Canadian who was wrongly imprisoned in a Saudi Arabian jail for 3 years, said torture survivors are often medically ravaged from physical and psychological trauma at the hands of their tormentors.

"Yet the government denies us the right to seek redress and to call to account those who torture us," he said. "It is not in our place to question

government policy. Yet, they engage in hostage negotiation, behind the scenes, which is illegal by government laws. The Canadian government was complicit with that."

Hachem Kazemi, son of tortured and murdered Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, criticized the "Bush regime" in the U.S. and the state of human rights in Iran, where there are currently about 30,000 political prisoners.

"Laws against torture do not exist," he said. "There is a lie that life in Iran is not so bad to make the world believe there is a democracy in Iran, but it is a rumour that becomes a myth."

Bolzari concluded financial restitution will not only provide closure and a sense of retribution for individual torture survivors, but will also "make torture impossible by making it expensive. Lawsuits hurt by aiming at (the country's) pockets."

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Swing voters abound at Boston U

by Julien Pfyffer
The Daily Free Press

BOSTON (CUP) -- Boston University could have a tremendous impact on the upcoming United States presidential election if students from so-called swing states choose to vote in their home locales.

A new Northwestern University study reports Boston University has the second highest number of students who come from states where polls show President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry in a statistical dead heat.

The university is second only to Indiana University at Bloomington.

About 3,300 Boston University students come from swing states, which is enough to change the outcome of the

presidential election, said Northwestern professor Michael Peshkin, who led the study.

"There are 300,000 students in this country," Peshkin said in a phone interview. "That is a big number when you consider that several states for the November 2000 election were won by less than a thousand votes. In some cases we have on a single campus like BU a thousand votes for one of those states."

Many students choose to register at home, said Juan Martinez, executive director of MassVote, a voting rights group.

"A lot of students who go to school in a non-swing state register back home because they realize how important it is -- how their vote can make a difference," Martinez said.

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in the Harriet Irving Library, Room 112
Details and registration: <http://www.unb.ca/ctd/>

SU film nights return

by Bruns Staff

After a several year long absence, UNB Student Union movie nights have returned.

The weekly film nights kicked off yesterday with a double bill of the two recent Spider-Man movies.

Although it is unclear why the film nights stopped happening in the first place, VP Finance Adam Baker explains that a new screening licence should allow the film nights to go ahead unhindered for the remainder of the school year.

Funds raised through the screenings will go towards filling the gap left by recent Student Union budget restructuring that resulted in an overall drop of \$53,000 in clubs and societies spending.

Clubs and societies are also encouraged to present their own fundraising ideas to the Student Union to supplement funds raised by the movie nights.

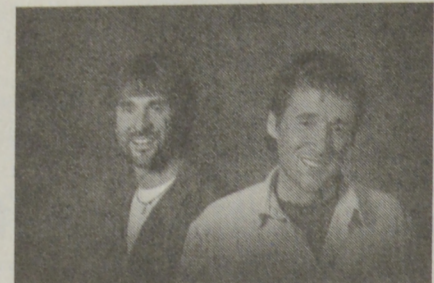
Next week's screenings are *The Alamo* and Steven Spielberg's *The Terminal*. The films are shown in the MacLaggan Hall theatre, room N105.

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