

NEWS SHORTS

compiled by Graham Cox

Poisoned soldiers get compensation

The federal government has decided to give \$24,000 to each of the approximately 2,000 soldiers that were gassed in experiments conducted by the Canadian Defence Department during the 1940's and 1970's.

The compensation is to make up for the long term effects of the experiments on individuals who are generally acknowledged not to have full understanding of what they were volunteering for.

Protectionism in the United States

The US has passed new laws that will limit the number of call centre jobs in India, China, Mexico, and Canada. The move by the current US Administration has been seen as a strategy to garner support for the President during this election year.

The new law makes US call centres operating in these countries state where they are located and ask if they would like their call forwarded to one in the US.

Responses by the consumers in the US indicate that they are more likely to ask to be transferred.

Companies are concerned that the new law will cause job losses in these countries in the call centre trade.

Election turnout in Iran drops considerably

Iranian elections saw a drastic drop in voter turnout after reformers in the government called for a boycott of elections in the country.

Forty-three per cent of the voting public turned out for the elections down from about 67 per cent in the last elections. The calls for the boycott was in response to the social conservative run government blocked bids of over 2,000 reformers to run.

Social tensions are rising in the country because of a large gap between the socially conservative government and reformers and students who are pushing for more freedoms and relaxation of some hard-lined interpretations of Islamic law.

Red Cross visits Saddam Hussein

According to the rules under the Geneva Convention the Red Cross was given access to Saddam Hussein to examine his mental and physical health.

The Red Cross was allowed to have a confidential meeting with two members of the Committee to allow free dialogue because of his "prisoner of war" status.

The findings of the International Committee of the Red Cross will not be released to the public, in accordance with the Convention, but any issues will be directed to the US Defence Department.

ATM fee benefits SU

by Nick Moase

A new ATM has been installed in The Cellar, with the profits being donated to the Student Union (SU).

The ATM was put in by the Cellar to help cut down on line-ups and so people do not have to go back upstairs to use the Bank of Montreal (BMO) machine to get money.

Greensource, the company that owns the machine, charges \$1.50 for each transaction. That is the same cost for using the BMO machines without a BMO card. However,

with the Greensource machine, \$1.25 goes to the company and the remaining 25 cents goes to the Cellar.

Cellar manager, Mike Babineau, has decided to donate the quarter to the Student Union.

"We really don't want to make money [by the ATM] from the students," said Babineau. "I wanted to bring it in as a service."

So far, the machine has been used on average 20 times a day.

"I think its working out great," Babineau added. "Instead of giving the Bank of Montreal \$1.50, they are giving 25 cents to the SU."

UNB celebrates its 150th year of engineering on campus

by Eric Paradowski

Like playing with a video game the boy smiles as he presses the buttons on a control pad that's very similar to the keypads of debit machines at most store counters.

The controller in the boy's hands operates a heavy robotic arm complete with human-like joints. For a hand, the robotic arm uses a grabbing device similar to the pinchers of a beetle.

The robotic arm is the Scorbot-ERV and as Juan Carretero, assistant professor of UNB's faculty of mechanical engineering explains to the group watching the demonstration, it is a smaller version of the Canada Arm 2.

The Canada Arm 2 is a massive robotic arm equipped to space shuttles. Carretero calls a manipulator, much like the one that engineering students have created in their lab.

The lab, filled with the rumbling sounds of the machinery that occupy it, probably looks much different than it would have 150 years ago when the University of New Brunswick's engineering department first started.

Now in 2004, UNB engineering is celebrating its 150th year as a school to teach new engineers. Although time has brought with it new technology, some technology remains unchanged.

When asked what an engineer from 100 years ago would say about the Scorbot-ERV, Carretero said that they wouldn't be very surprised.

"I don't think they would be very amazed," said Carretero. "100 years ago there were machines that worked like robots [but] probably not so sophisticated."

According to Carretero, the word robot was coined about a 150 years ago.

But he does admit the things that are created today are much more complicated than they were, and that the work put into their creation is more difficult.

"The creation of products or devices today are very automated,"

said Carretero. "Now if you want to build things that are very new you have to work probably harder, you have better tools but you have to be more inventive."

To name but one of the better tools that Carretero talks about would be computers, a little something that has managed to find its way into many households.

Controlling the robotic arm, Raja Uppuluri, a student of the mechanical engineering department, moves the arm towards a toolbox.

The arm slides along two metal tracks and then positions near the first latch on the box. After opening the two latches the robotic arm lifts the handle and opens the box. As the arm reaches into the box, it discovers a tray of candy and bring it out for the children watching the demonstration.

This demonstration was one of the many that took place in the engineering building to celebrate its 150th year on campus.

Uppuluri, who completed his undergraduate degree in India, said his interest in robotics has led him here to seek his masters degree.

"I like [both] designing and

robotics," said Uppuluri. "So luckily I got a robotics chance in this university."

Like lifting the tray of candy out of the toolbox the Canada Arm 2 would lift payload from the cargo bay of a space shuttle in the same manner. But to do this there first needs to be a computer program to allow for commands to be given to the robot. This is something Uppuluri has been working on with the Scorbot-ERV.

Earlier while doing his undergraduate studies Uppuluri said that he was only taught the basics of robotics but now deals with more sophisticated work.

The change in technology also means a change in the classroom and in what is taught. Keeping the students working with the latest materials prepares them to work out in the field, said Carretero.

"We have to keep the material very up to date," said Carretero. "One of the courses I teach is instrumentation and one has to be very aware of what instruments and what measuring devices are out there day by day...at least keep up to date on what is available."

'Far worse than expected'

Dip continued from Page 1

House resident, Kolby Murray.

Shortly after the first crew of jumpers, participant Rachael Beasley ran for her towel screaming: "I'm freezing! [This is] far worse than expected."

"I wasn't going to do it but everyone else is [and] it's tradition," said Beasley.

According to Bridges House President, Kerrie Nicholson, the event was "[a] time to celebrate."

When asked about the preparation for the day's event, Nicholson added, "we were worried...[because] the pool was built on Wednesday and stayed frozen for three days...[today,] we had to break through the ice and shovel it away."

"The CP's watch it at night [because] it has to be guarded at all times [and] it's immediately taken down after [the event] for safety reasons," continued Nicholson.

For further precautions, organizers requested that

participants sign a waiver form and agree not to drink alcohol for 24 hours prior to the event.

"Last night we had the house awards and a talent show to keep people busy so that they would have [other options] besides drinking," said Nicholson.

However, the Polar Dip wasn't all that residents of Bridges had to look forward to: "in the house, the bathrooms are set up as saunas [and] we've planned a tropical social for after [the polar dip]," said Nicholson.

With regards to future residents of Bridges, Nicholson said that she was confident the tradition would live for many more years as long as "they continue to take as many precautions as possible [and] people continue to come out and support the event."

Bruns meetings:
Wednesdays at 12:30pm. Be there or be square.

Decriminalization bill has flaws: MP White

Marijuana continued from Page 1

Department have said the bill will prevent those caught with small amounts of the drug from ending up with a criminal record; something that can forever damage employment opportunities, among other things.

Regardless, most are confident the bill won't pass.

"There will probably be an election called, Parliament will be dissolved, and thus the cycle will begin again," said Lyle Kenny, an executive member with the Marijuana Party of Canada.

The bill also increases charges for trafficking, as those caught with four to 25 plants could be faced with fines of up to \$25,000, as well as up to five years in jail.

Another amendment prohibits the sharing of information relating to

marijuana prosecution with any foreign governments or agencies, including the United States.



Marijuana is the centre of another political debate.

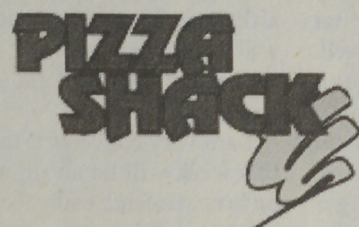
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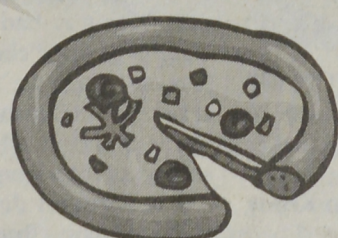


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