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Error: Invalid server

by Roman Holz

It's the end of September and campus is yet again bursting with life. Returning students are finishing courses to get their degrees and first year students are getting used to a new and exciting life in university. First year students are especially busy meeting new friends, but are also trying to stay in touch with friends and family that they left behind. For some students, this is more difficult than it should be.

Not having the internet for the first three weeks of university has been a great concern for first year students Kimberley Johnson and Bethany Knox. Both are residents in Harrington Hall at St. Thomas University and were left without connection to the world wide web. Johnson, a Journalism major, is from Ottawa, Ontario and her roommate, an arts major, is from Charlottetown, PEI. Both students moved into Harrington on September 4, hoping to start a successful career at St. Thomas, but found themselves in chaos.

There was no hub or modem installed, no Aliant installation disk, but many of the same wires. Both attempted to install the internet, but because of missing parts, were unsuccessful.

"We spent two days running around house looking for equipment," says Johnson. After talking to Residence Life staff, the two students were informed that Aliant was planning to set everyone up during Welcome Week.

"We waited all of Welcome Week, but Aliant never showed

up," says Knox. "But after we called, they promised to show up on Tuesday, September 13, at the latest. They never came."

On September 17, Johnson's patience was running short and she called Aliant hoping to find some sort of settlement. After spending one and a half hours on hold and talking to three different people who didn't know how to help her, she finally reached a manager for equipment issues.

"They said to me that I had the wrong wires for my internet, and sent new wires to me," says Johnson. "Once I got the wires, I realized they had sent me the same ones I had all along."

Clearly, frustration made its way into the first month of university for the first year students. Not being able to talk to relatives and friends is a big thing when you're in totally new surroundings.

"It's annoying going to school without internet, because everything is done online," says Johnson. "It puts us in a disadvantage compared to the students who have access to the internet." Aliant has agreed to not charge the students for the time without internet, but such a deal has little merit, since internet is covered in residence fees, which have already been paid.

"It's such a hassle trying to balance first year, and on top of that the internet problem," says Knox. "Prof's are sending out emails regarding school, but we can't check it."

Johnson and Knox were informed that some residents had

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Michèle Legendre /The Brunswickan

The Lord Beaverbrook Hotel is currently undergoing \$6 million in well-needed renovations. Following renovations, the hotel will be branded The Crowne Plaza Fredericton Lord Beaverbrook Hotel.

A \$6,000,000 facelift

by Amanda Brown

"We hope the Beaverbrook will become one of the best hotels in the city." This is what Michael Hall, sales manager of the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel, predicts for this historic landmark. The source of his optimism is based, in part, upon a six million dollar renovation plan.

The hotel, owned by the Vancouver-based Aquilini Investment Group, has been in need of renovations for some time now. Though the Fredericton E-Plex is soon to be located across from the Beaverbrook, it was not what spearheaded this project. Built in 1946, the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel has not had a major renovation

since the 1970s.

An agreement between Inter-Continental Hotels Group (IHG) and the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel, facilitated by Pacrim Hospitality, will transform the building into a Crowne Plaza Hotel. The Fredericton launch coincides with the construction of a Crowne Plaza in Moncton. Plaza hotels tend to be located in large urban centers such as Montreal and Vancouver - that New Brunswick would attract such a high profile business is a compliment.

Fredericton prides itself with maintaining the historical appearance of the downtown quarter. This endeavor, states Hall, should not affect the historical ambiance of the area. That the name Beaver-

brook remain in the hotel's name was an important stipulation in the agreement between IHG and the Beaverbrook.

Renovations began in the spring of this year; 168 guest rooms are now completed. At the re-branding of the hotel to "Crowne Plaza Fredericton Lord Beaverbrook Hotel," sleep advantage packages will be implemented in each room. Patrons will be able to enjoy the perks of white duvet covers, guaranteed wake up calls, scented room spray and more. The new general manager, Pascal Piseigna, hopes to be able to offer patrons the best stay possible.

The Beaverbrook, located on prime waterfront property, will now facilitate the number one ho-

tel loyalty program in the world. Called Priority Club, it will work on a point-based system. Patrons will be able to redeem points for overnight stays at the Plaza, and for complimentary dinners. The points can also count toward gift certificates at certain retail outlets or be converted to Air Miles.

Phase one of the renovation project is predicted to be complete by the first quarter of 2006. Phase two is tentatively planned for 2007. The exterior of the building will undergo a 'facelift' if this phase is executed. Should the Beaverbrook's facelift create the desire for some personal pampering, a day spa will be opened in 2006 in the Plaza's pool area. Sea-weed wraps, anyone?

Student Opinion Surveys still in development

UNB Senates pass online default motion

by Greg LeBlanc

Giving opinions is getting easier all the time, especially when it comes to the Student Opinion Survey (SOS).

Last Tuesday, UNBF's Senate approved changes to the SOS. A motion was passed that allows the online version to be the default format, requiring professors who prefer to hand out paper surveys to apply to do so.

The UNBSJ Senate, which rejected the online format in the winter semester of last year, has also passed the online-default motion, showing that the whole university is behind the development of the online SOS project.

"It seemed that it was very accepted by Senators," noted Jill O'Reilly, UNB Student Union VP Academic and one of UNBF's six student Senators.

The motion passed with little opposition, which shows that Senate is now on board for further improving the SOS.

Judy Roy, Chair for the Teaching Excellence and Policy Committee (TEP), which is mandated to develop the SOS, was also ecstatic

about Senate's support, especially now that the UNBSJ Senate is on board.

"The benefits are true, [regarding] the speed with which we give back the feedback, plus faculty have been very happy with the... qualitative questions at the end," remarked Roy.

One of the many points of discussion and uncertainty about the new, online format of the surveys is the qualitative open-ended questions in which students write in their own words what they think about the teaching at UNB.

At the Senate meeting, TEP released the participation rates for the online and paper surveys over the past two years. The paper version has been consistent at roughly 52 percent. The online format, which started at 26 percent last fall, vastly improved for the winter term with a 45 percent turnout.

With its participation rate approaching that of the paper format, the online survey is showing that it can compete with its concrete equivalent.

The increase in online participation was attributed to a few changes from the fall semester: firstly, that both professors and students were becoming more comfortable with the online version. Secondly, since professors had to apply to have their survey done online,

those who chose that option promoted it more heavily in the classroom. Finally, most of the technical glitches had been worked out, allowing those who used the online SOS to be more confident in using it.

Just as last year, the SOS will take place in the later weeks of the semester, with the format remaining largely the same.

Now that much of the confusion has been overcome and many of the problems with the online SOS have been fixed, support from all members of the university community has been growing.

The final, and perhaps most important issue to be dealt with now is to increase the participation rate for the online format. The hope is to make it even more successful than the paper survey.

"We do still have a major hurdle," remarked Roy, "and that's to get the response rate up."

The online format is still in its infancy, however, so progress is slow. It took many years to get the paper format fully integrated into UNB when it was created over 30 years ago. Roy has patience and isn't discouraged by the lengthy process of the survey's development.

"Change takes time," said Roy, "we're taking baby steps."

Refugees welcomed by church

by Chiaki Sadanaga

The Fredericton airport was unusually crowded on a nice autumn day. Members of the Brunswick Street Baptist Church committee were waiting, saying that they couldn't believe that this day has finally come. Some children from the church flattened themselves against the window so they could get to see the airplane arriving; others prepared the welcome signs that they had made.

At 5:15 p.m. on September 22, two young brothers, Winston and Ohgyen Robert, finally breathed the fresh air of Fredericton. Their long journey from the Budumburam Refugee Camp in Ghana to Fredericton ended.

The 23-year-old men are now ready to build a 'real' home - ready to feel safe. The committee has provided the two refugees with a host family who will take care of them for a year, and will continue to give them \$100 as monthly support until they find proper jobs. The church committee is also helping by providing the two with job resources.

"The young brothers had a real rough time," said Gerry Estabrooks, a member of the Robert's family. "No one could imagine what their life was like," said Estabrooks, looking through the huge window at the airport, "but from now on, they can smile again, hopefully."

On April 19 2003, the two young boys were supposed to go

back home from a youth camp. They were excited about returning home, thinking about having dinner with their family as usual.

"On the way home, Winston and Ohgyen's neighbor told them that their family had been killed by the rebels," said Sheila Ross, another committee member. "The neighbor said 'don't go back home, the rebels are still in the area, you're next.'" They knew then that they would never be able to go back home.

With no water, no food, no education and no shelters, Winston and Ohgyen's Budumburam Refugee Camp life started. The only hope they had was an internet café at the refugee camp - free 20-minute use of the internet was what the Robert brothers earned by cleaning the café every night. A few internet connections were the only way for the 4,800 Liberian refugees at the camp to keep in touch with either government or private sponsors who would eventually welcome the refugees into their countries. Since they applied for the sponsorship, the Robert brothers and Ross began building their relationship through e-mail.

Dear Madam Ross;

We, the Robert family, will continue to show you our gratitude and how much we felt appreciation. We bless god for you. We've received the money from the Western Union and we had a great meal today. In over two years we have not had such a meal like that. Thank you for sending

monthly support. And with the money we've received, my only brother Ohgyen finally can get some medication for his sickness. Thank you for showing us your love even though you have never met us. Hoping to meet all of you from Baptist Church in New Brunswick.

(an e-mail from the Robert brothers from the refugee camp to Sheila Ross)

Although they've finally found a place they can call 'home,' some difficulties still remain. Ross said that she thinks some employers might say, "we don't need more see refugees page 3

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