



The Brunswickan

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Bowling for books



Bowlers came out to support the Canadian National Institute for the Blind at the annual Bowling for Books Tournament held last Saturday at Kingswood recreation centre.

Michèle Legendre/The Brunswickan

Sounds like Japan

by Roman Holz

The 8th Atlantic Canada Japanese Language Speech Contest was held on March 18 at UNB. The contest featured participants from Mount Allison University, Saint Mary's University, St. Thomas University, and the University of New Brunswick.

The contest has been conducted annually since 1999 and gives students the opportunity to present their achievements and recognizes academic excellence. The intent of the Japanese Language Speech Contest was to promote the importance of Japanese language and culture studies, good will and international understanding. The event was supported by the Consulate General of Japan at Montreal and the Japan Foundation.

"This year's contest has been the largest in Atlantic Canada and it was the first time it has been hosted by UNB," says Mishiko Nishijima, professor of Culture and Language Studies at UNB.

With 32 contestants from all over Atlantic Canada showcasing their Japanese language abilities in three categories, beginner, intermediate, and advanced, the Tilley Hall auditorium was filled with interesting stories and fantastic life experiences.

"All participants have done a tremendous job," says Nishijima. "All participants of the contest have challenged themselves, especially the first-years."

"I am obsessed with Japan," says fourth year student Elizabeth Murphy.

"I love the culture and the people and someday I want to go and teach English in Japan." She participated in the contest's beginners category and took first place for her speech "Memories of Speed Skating."

Learning Japanese is a difficult undertaking; some say that it takes about 10 years to be fully fluent in the language.

"Once you learn the rules and the grammar it gets easier. The structure and word arrangement is different than in English, so that will take some getting used to," says Nishijima. "I started taking Japanese when I first got to university, so I've been speaking it for about three years," says Danny Villeneuve, a fourth year student at St. Thomas University and third

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A better PSE NB Power out of the loop?

by Alex Pope

As the winter term draws to a close, the provincial government appears to be stepping up efforts to identify and address the fears of students and university officials across New Brunswick who are appalled by the rising costs of post-secondary education. However, some student advocates are concerned that the priorities of the government and the student population don't coincide.

On March 28, the House will convene to approve the budget for the 2006-2007 fiscal year, and although Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Training Jody Carr was unable to release any details of the new budget and what it means for New Brunswick's universities at press time, he is optimistic about its implications for post-secondary training institutions.

"We certainly have made some commitments to universities," said Carr in an interview on Monday. His department plans to launch a commission on post-secondary education this year, the purpose of which will be to assess the government's ten-year quality learning agenda from the perspective of universities, community colleges, and other institutions for post-secondary education and training

now that responsibility for higher education has been consolidated into a single department. The mandate for the commission has not been officially set, but making structural upgrades to university buildings in order to improve the efficiency of their energy consumption has been identified as a priority for the department.

"Just as the government is encouraging residential homeowners to upgrade their homes so they're more energy efficient, perhaps that same theory could be used with universities as well," he said. "If they're upgraded and more energy-efficient, well, there's a potential for savings."

Because of the unique status of Atlantic Canadian universities as some of the oldest in the country, what Carr calls "universal accessibility" is earmarked as another priority for improvement "in terms of wired-in sound systems for the hard of hearing, access for parents that are using strollers perhaps."

"There's a whole wide range of accessibility issues that we want to continue to work on as well," said Carr, "because it ties into our goal of having more access to post-secondary [education] so more of our workers will have the education that's so vital in today's economy."

On February 23, Carr, his department staff, and the premier, along with representatives from the

by Josh O'Kane

The good news: NB Power is hoping to cut costs by one million dollars per year. The bad news? It's at the expense of regularly-scheduled meter-reading.

Reading power meters allows power companies to charge cus-

tomers for how much electricity they've actually consumed during a billing period. Through the power of math, though, it's possible to estimate future use, based on trends like past use and weather patterns.

But you can't always predict the future.

An article posted on the CBC website last month highlighted

some angry NB Power customers who had been overbilled for the month of January due to estimations. Customers were not pleased, as some had been overcharged by as much as \$100.

NB Power doesn't seem phased.

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New Brunswick Student Alliance (NBSA), university presidents and other stakeholders from across the country gathered in Ottawa for the Council of the Federation's Summit on Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, an experience that helped Carr clarify his goals for the new ministry, which was announced during a Valentine's Day cabinet shuffle.

Carr said, "the summit was a good chance for Canadian stakeholders to come together and provide their support to the premiers as they approach the federal government to provide more funding for post-secondary education and skills training."

Ellen Creighton, VP Executive of the NBSA, agreed, saying, "the summit was good; we got to meet a lot of people, the New Brunswick delegation was really strong, and the students who went got to meet all of the new staff in that new department of post-secondary education and training, and

so that's really important because now we know who to call if we have issues, and they actually have a face to put to our name."

However, she is concerned that tuition costs, loans and grants - issues she lists as higher priorities for the NBSA and other student groups than accessibility and infrastructure - were not adequately acknowledged by the premiers at the summit, and is less than optimistic that the information gathered in the discussions will be consulted when it comes time to generating strategies for future progress on these issues.

"There's a lot of talk," she said, "there's a lot of words, like 'consultation,' 'stakeholders,' 'strategy,' 'initiative,' 'core' everything - core funding, core programming. I think what came out of it was exposure to the issues that are faced within the university system [but] I've got to say that when the premiers went to the Prime Minister's house and came away without any

sort of promise for post-secondary education, I was pretty disheartened."

According to Carr, once the premiers make their report to the Prime Minister based on the findings of the summit, the onus will be on the federal government to advance the funding to lighten the debt load for students in the province.

"We've increased funding for universities by 24 per cent since 1999," he said. "We're doing our part as a province, the students are obviously doing their part through increased tuition, now it's time the federal government [did] their part."

Although records show that the government has made significant investments into loans and bursaries that help students manage their debt, with a total of \$145,132,973 approved in 2004 and 2005, Creighton still doubts the commitment of the provincial government to alleviate student

debt, simply because the bulk of that investment - \$45,008,900 of it - was directed into loans rather than bursaries; these were allocated only \$16,447,100.

Carr points to the province's proposed Tuition Tax-Back Credit, which is expected to create 63 million dollars in potential compen-

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For The ladies (9-12)



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