

dominion, n. 1. Control or the exercise of control. 2. A territory or sphere of influence; a realm. 3. One of the self-governing nations within the British Commonwealth.

The Dominion

NEWS FROM THE GRASSROOTS

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Arrests cause anxiety among immigrants

In a recent government sweep dubbed "Operation Return to Sender," US immigration agents walked the streets arresting undocumented workers and illegal immigrants, according to reports by the *Washington Post* reports.

Although criminals were targeted, neighbours and curious onlookers were also questioned about their immigration status and those who were found to be in the country illegally were arrested. The blitz has many immigrants afraid to leave their homes, despite having lived openly in the US for years.

According to Reuters, approximately half of the 2,179 people arrested in this operation are alleged criminals ranging from violent gang members, to "fugitive aliens" who have remained in the country after being ordered to leave.

Reports in the *Detroit Free Press* state that the families of the arrested immigrants claim agents barged into their homes, taking their family members without explanation, sometimes in the middle of the night. 829 of those arrested for immigration violations have already been deported.

The arrests, which occurred between May 26 and June 13, are part of a national crackdown on immigration violations that includes plans to build a 700 mile fence along the border between Mexico and the United States.

—Johanna Skoreyko

UN accused of participating in Congo massacre

The UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo is investigating reports that UN soldiers colluded in the massacre of civilians and the destruction of a village during a joint operation with the Congolese army, Reuters reports.



Survivors of the UN attack in the Congo say up to 30 civilians were killed.

Christophe Boulierac

The assault was intended to dislodge Walendu ethnic militias from the Front de Resistance Patriotique en Ituri (FRPI) before Congo's first democratic elections on July 30.

According to an article in the *Observer*, UN soldiers opened fire using mortars and heavy machineguns when women and children were present and gave no warning of their attack. Later, as UN troops watched, the Congolese army torched the village.

Survivors say that up to 30 civilians were killed during and after the initial UN mortar barrage, reports Alternet.

The attack occurred on April 21 and the UN was informed of the attack by a journalist on April 30. The investigation was not announced until after the *Observer* article appeared two months later.

Canadians are among the 17,000 UN troops in Congo.

—Hillary Bain Lindsay

Nigerian militants free hostages

In a nighttime attack on June 7, the Nigerian militant group "MEND" killed six soldiers and abducted five Korean workers at a Shell Natural Gas plant in the Niger Delta. The soldiers were part of a Nigerian security force that has been

exchange for the Korean hostages. It has been reported that the hostages were released by MEND at his insistence, though it is still unclear how, when or where he made contact.

This is not the first time the group has been involved in attacks against oil multinationals: MEND also kidnapped four foreign oil workers on January 11 and nine on February 18. In all instances, MEND has released its hostages unharmed and has in the past publicly stated that it has no intentions of killing those abducted. On this particular occasion, the attack occurred just after midnight, with the armed assailants arriving in speedboats. One member of the group was killed in the raid, which included the burning of a military boat used for security.

A direct provocation of the violence in the region has been Shell's refusal to adhere to a ruling by a Nigerian high court, which ordered the company to pay \$1.5 billion to communities in the region that have been negatively impacted by Shell's activities. Thus far, the company has only appealed the verdict. MEND has vowed more attacks in the weeks ahead, specifically targeting "facilities of crucial importance to the oil industry." Currently, Nigeria is Africa's leading oil exporter, exporting 2.5 million barrels daily.

—Salvatore Ciolfi

The Dominion will not appear in August 2006.
We resume publication in September.

Canadian troops knock down doors, interrogate civilians in Afghanistan: new footage

French-language Montreal newspaper *La Presse* reported on June 22 that Canadian military forces in Afghanistan are ransacking villages, knocking down doors and interrogating civilians in their search for Taliban militants. It is, wrote reporter Hugo de Grandpré, the end of innocence for Canadian troops.

The report was based on new, “unedited” footage broadcast by the television station France 2 on June 21.

According to *La Presse*, the footage shows both “tough” and “soft” versions of Canada’s warning to civilians whom they fear could become Taliban militants. Footage of the “tough” version shows a Canadian soldier telling an audience of a few “silent men” that “My soldiers are very well trained. They are excellent shots and you will die.”

In the soft version, according to *La Presse*, soldiers are shown brandishing wads of money, asking men where Taliban operatives are hiding. The response, however, is cold: “That’s nice of you, but we don’t want your money. This is our country. And with all of our strength, we will protect it.”

In another sequence of footage, *La Presse* reports that Canadian soldiers are shown knocking down doors with their feet. “Women and an old man leave. The man, who has a long white beard, is insulted.”

The soldier says to him, “Too bad for you if you don’t want to tell us where the Taliban are.”

The *Presse* report comes on the heels of criticism leveled against Canada by Afghan President and former UNOCAL advisor Hamid Karzai. According to a Canadian Press report, Karzai “called on the coalition to rethink its strategy of fighting terrorism, saying the killing



A Canadian soldier in Afghanistan enjoys a cup of coffee. New footage from Television station France 2 shows Canadian soldiers “knocking down doors” and interrogating civilians. MCpl Robert Bottrill

of hundreds of Afghans [is] not acceptable.”

“Even if they are Taliban,” Karzai was quoted as saying, “They are sons of this land.”

According to the report, Major Nancy Hansen, a Canadian Task Force spokesperson, said that “Karzai’s remarks do not change the coalition’s long-term approach toward helping rebuild Afghan society.”

—Dru Oja Jay

Terrorist proceedings “a show trial for political ends”

Defence lawyers representing the 17 men being held as terrorist suspects in Southern Ontario since June 2 are protesting the recent publication ban levied by justice of the peace Keith Currie.

Rocco Galati, the defence lawyer representing 21-year-old Ahmad Mustafa Ghany, told reporters, “I want the public to see the bail hearing, I want the public to assess for itself and have confidence in the administration of justice and the only way to do that is with a live feed.”

Galati accused “confidential police sources” of unfairly leaking selected information to the media “to ensure the denial of a fair bail hearing and the denial of a fair trial.”

Al-Jazeera quoted Galati, condemning what he described as “a show trial for political ends,” noting the intention was “to influence the vote in the House of Commons on extending the anti-terrorism provision and to influence the Supreme Court ... in its constitutional review of anti-terrorism provisions.”

According to the *Toronto Star*, defence lawyers said their clients’ cell lights are being left on 24 hours a day, they’re being forced to keep their eyes on the floor and are being woken every 30 minutes. The lawyers said that amounted to “cruel and unusual punishment” and a breach of their clients’ Charter rights.

—Van Ferrier

Saint John city official backs secret tax deal for LNG plant

Saint John city manager Terry Totten has announced that the mayor’s secret deal to grant Irving Oil and Repsol of Spain a generous break on property taxes was a good idea. The deal was made last March to help the energy companies build a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plant in New Brunswick’s largest city.

According to CBC News, the

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Listening To The New Museum

Podcasts are changing the way we see and hear museums

by Tim McSorley, Siafu.ca

With the May 26 opening of its Heteropia exhibit, the Ottawa Art Gallery (OAG) has joined the prestigious ranks of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Burlingame Museum of Pez Memorabilia in a movement that could change the way people have traditionally experienced museums. Each of these museums now offers audio tours of their hallowed halls downloadable in advance to any MP3 player.

New podcasting and audio recording/playback technology, tracks of which can be downloaded onto your personal mp3 player, is breaking new paths in what is often seen as the decidedly stodgy and last-century culture of museums and art galleries.

The OAG's version comes with a twist. While the MoMA and Pez offer officious tours laden with classical music and musings of curators and experts, the OAG's tour is directed by the artists themselves. "Compared to larger museums, it will be more relaxed. Each of the artists [on the MP3 recording] has a different style," said Veronique Couillard, public programming director at the OAG. "It lets visitors see a different side of the artist." The program will also allow a smaller independent gallery like the OAG--which cannot afford to bring in large numbers of speakers or to constantly have expert guides available--to offer a new, inexpensive dimension to its exhibits. Beyond helping smaller, cash-strapped museums, this technology has the potential to radically change the way we perceive and interact with museums and art galleries.

Although modern museums are primarily independent, not-for-profit institutions, for a long time they were the halls of official information. According



New technology is bringing fresh voices into traditionally stodgy places.

Jimmy James

to Kyla Tichkowsky, who holds an MA in Museum Studies from McGill University, it was no coincidence that museums proliferated at the same time western states began turning to democracy. She says the ruling classes established museums as a way to present the information they felt the common people needed before they went out to vote.

"It was a way for the power of the dominant class to maintain the status quo. The people who had control, kept control," explained Tichkowsky.

In more contemporary times, museums have become the refuge of tourists, students and others wishing to get a snapshot of a place or time in history or art. And while their purpose has shifted emphasis from official mouthpiece to academic endeavour, the language, lay-out and overall atmosphere of a museum remains decidedly that of a central authority handing down the "official" truth.

Just as more affordable digital video cameras have affected the film industry, low-cost, user-friendly MP3 recorder/player technology can help foster a decentralized "Do It Yourself" (DIY) ethic, presenting alternative informa-

tion created outside the sphere of institutions, big business or specialists.

While podcasts and online audio-tours had already begun popping up in the far reaches of the Internet, Art Mob brought the trend into the spotlight when it was launched last year. This class project from Marmount Manhattan College took an irreverent twist on the MoMA. Professor David Gilbert had his class record their discussions regarding various artworks from the MoMA permanent collection and upload the audio for others to download. While the content itself is not overtly political, the idea behind it had the DIY motivation that has inspired many to take the art and academic world out of the hands of experts and place it into the hands of the general public.

"I want [Marmount students] to learn that they do not have to be passive consumers of content from any medium, whether it be television, radio, the Web, or even an art museum like MoMA," Gilbert told the Marmount Manhattan Monitor last spring. "From an organizational perspective, we see something important happening today. Thanks to personal

computers and decentralized technologies of communication like the Internet, it has become harder for organizations to maintain proprietary control over their goods and services."

Like any trend, DIY audio-guides have already begun to "go corporate." Both MoMA's are obviously attempting to lure in more visitors with their downloadable tours. There are also open-air, city tours available for download across the Internet, but even they have not been able to escape a level of corporate assimilation. Soundwalk.com is perhaps the clearest example of making a buck off of the new technology. However, with non-corporate sites such as www.podguides.net coming online, the use of audio-guides for political and cultural subversion continues at the margins.

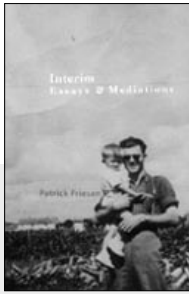
Museum podcasts have yet to hit Montreal, and according to Marie-France Lapointe, communications director at Pointe-à-Callière museum, it could be a while before that happens--at least officially.

"At Pointe-à-Callière, we focus a lot on the interpersonal expert. Instead of simply hiring guides, we employ experts in archaeology and historians who provide valuable information to our visitors," she explained, adding that human guides allow for greater interaction and allow for questions and answers.

The concern of a decreased human interaction isn't the only potential obstacle to this new museum experience. Even with the increased affordability of MP3 players and audio recorders, as well as growing access to the Internet, the question of who has access to this technology remains.

For the OAG, the benefits of the technology outweigh the costs. The gallery is making at least two MP3 players available

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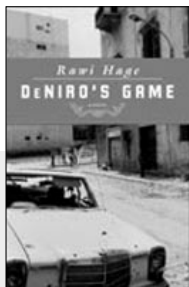
Interim: Essays & Mediations
Patrick Friesen
Hagios, 2006

“Mediations” is the more apt description of the pieces contained in this book than “essays”; here Friesen follows the meandering track of his train of thought through subjects like whistling, his Mennonite childhood, Angels in America, and poetry. Music pops up everywhere in these pieces and one of Friesen’s more penetrating questions about how our society has changed is, “What happened to whistling?”

It’s a mild, good-natured book by a poet who values art and the creative process highly, but the great lines tend to be other people’s. Friesen quotes crisp pronouncements from Henry Miller, Nijinsky, Saul Bellow and others, but his own thinking seems muzzy and the writing itself contains such inelegant constructions as: “This hasn’t been thought out carefully by me.” His choice of choppy sentence fragments

also works against a coherence of thought, keeping the reader too busy jumping punctuational roadblocks to relax into the ideas presented. Once in a while, however, Friesen comes through with a closing line that justifies the circling non-sequiturs of an article: “What can you do with the fact of a dog, no longer seen, and an aftertaste of miserable longing?”

—Linda Besner



De Niro's Game
Rawi Hage
Anansi, 2006

“Ten thousand bombs had landed on Beirut, that crowded city, and I was lying on a blue sofa covered with white sheets to protect it from dust and dirty feet.” This is our introduction to Bassam, Hage’s protagonist, and to Beirut, a city lost in civil war where every gesture is a symbolic one. *De Niro’s Game* chronicles Bassam’s decision to leave behind Beirut, the war and his past. It’s a record of what it

takes—the decisions he makes, the torture he endures, the violence to which he must submit. It’s Bassam’s burden to relate a city thick with complexity, with religion, with contradiction and he does so by piling up descriptions. At a butcher shop, he observes, “... women in black, with melodramatic oil-painted faces, in church-goer submissive positions, in Halloween horrors, in cannibal hunger

for crucifix flesh, in menstrual cramps of virgin saints, in castrated hermetic positions, on their knees and at the mercy of knives and illiterate butchers.” Hage’s loose prose style wanders, following Bassam’s whims as he slips in and out of consciousness, in and out of reality. It reads, at times, almost like a chant.

—Ben Hart



Mammals
by Pierre Mérot
translated by Frank Wynne
Anansi, 2006

“A body is a thing composed entirely of words. As science occasionally reveals, it is a poetic construct.” The same thing can be said for *Mammals*, a novel which has a very contemporary feel. This is partially due to the frequent use of the present tense, and partially to the sparingly employed post-modern techniques – the odd footnote or graphic dropped unobtrusively into the text. An

anti-hero story, it follows the heartbreaks and screw-ups of forty-year-old Uncle—educated but unemployable, perpetually drunk. The major question about this novel: Is the use of the second person really sustainable throughout? But the answer doesn’t matter. With passages like, “And he sees her auburn silhouette again, and failure whistles through his blood, sees the black Warsaw

crowds like fatal blood clots, People’s Square, the trams, the cold, the measureless snow. It is enough to make you cry, because when love goes so badly wrong the wound is an ever-open flower,” readers may choose to be annoyed by the device or to focus instead on the funny, witty, consistently wry and beautiful language.

—Matthew J. Trafford



Fathom
by Tim Bowling
Gaspereau, 2006

Bowling’s seventh collection reads like a hot damn, converting the rhythms of work in the Fraser River salmon fishery into clipped, sound-rich language: “We stood in the stern on the slack/ and peeled and picked/ the hide of scales/ off our hands. Both/ our shirts were sopping/ red and held the shape/ of each dead fish.” The power of many of these poems lies in Bowling’s tricks with

time; in “One of the Last Years I Worked with a Knife,” Bowling sets a past scene of gutting fish while his friend dozes at the wheel, then vouchsafes the reader a peek into the future: “Mike’s a big man. In twenty years/ he’ll beat his wife and sons/ with all his strength, then cry/ to be forgiven. Beat them again.” *Fathom* is arranged chronologically, beginning with poems like “Gym Class” and “In

Youth, Lonely,” then muscling its way to “Growing Older” and “Today.” The language in the earlier poems is looser, less urgent, and occasionally the repeated use of words like “youth” and “Time” verges on nostalgia. Nevertheless, this collection will draw you in, “as wasps to a sugared rim.”

—Bren Simmers

Embedded Edits

Is news coverage of Afghanistan straight from the source?

by Dru Oja Jay

Many stories and facts are left out of the media completely, making media criticism a straightforward affair. To establish that a publisher's or broadcaster's other priorities are affecting its ability to tell the truth, the critic simply has to point to stories that were ignored altogether and account for why truthful, accurate reporting would not have ignored them.

In some cases, evidence points to *outright suppression* of certain facts that are undisputed and part of the public record. The use of taxpayers' money to fund organizations responsible for murder and human rights abuses in Haiti, for example, or the violent imposition of the band council system on Indigenous nations.

The case of Afghanistan is somewhat different.

To a certain extent, the information that undermines the official story of Canada's role in Kandahar and Kabul comes from the same sources that the official account itself relies on. That said, there are many factors that distort and chip away at this information on its way to viewers and readers in Canada.

A recent, fascinating article by the *Globe and Mail's* Geoffrey York illustrates this dynamic in two surprising ways. In June 3rd's "Dispatches From an Embedded Life," York writes about problems with having reporters "embedded" with Canadian troops--a public relations innovation Canada has borrowed from the Americans' successful media relations campaign during the Iraq invasion.

"Yes," York writes matter-of-factly, "there was censorship."

"Yes, there were heavy-handed attempts to control the story, to suppress photos, to spin messages and to deny real-



There are many barriers to accurate coverage of Afghanistan. *Combat Camera*

ity."

A statement like this--along with York's explanation that "The Department of National Defence doesn't want the embedded reporters to write much about refugees, schools, health care or electricity--all the basic realities of life for Afghans"--calls into question much of the body of reporting from Canadian journalists assigned to Afghanistan.

Does York examine the implications of these incredible revelations from a journalist with first-hand experience of "censorship" by the Canadian

forces?

No.

"But," York continues, *a propos* of nothing, "there is something endearingly Canadian about it all."

Because the "hard-working military spokesmen" York met "just couldn't manage the ruthlessness of a Pentagon media campaign," he concludes that the situation is, at least, "more complicated." And *Globe* reporters, he reassures the reader, are pushing the boundaries of their embedded condition to deliver a more complete story.

While it is tempting to indict York over such a bizarre *seguë*, to do so would stop where the story starts to get interesting.

Would the *Globe's* editors, one must ask, have accepted a story about censorship by Canadian Forces if it had not itself been covered in a carapace of Canadian nationalism?

Short of falling out with their employers and writing a tell-all memoir, journalists like York will likely never reveal the tension between what they see on the ground, what they write and what actually gets printed. And there is tension.

Glimpses of the reporter-editor tension can be caught on the odd occasion.

Reporting from Afghanistan in 2001, for example, freelancer Ted Rall wrote of a veteran American war reporter who "as a test... fired off a thousand words about a 15,000-pound 'daisy cutter' bomb that had taken out an entire neighbourhood in southeastern Kunduz."

"Hundreds of civilians lay scattered in bits of protoplasm amid the rubble," Rall wrote. "His editors killed the piece, calling it 'redundant.'"

For more than the occasional glimpse of the discrepancy between the facts and the reporting, however, one must

study examples where the source material can be compared to the end result.

A June 6 report by the Senlis group, for example, was hardly mentioned in the Canadian press. Geoffrey York's major story "Taliban Rising" took notice of it, but did not mention the report's main finding: that in some southern provinces, support for the Taliban is now as high as 80 per cent. A brief report by *Globe* that appeared on the newspaper's web site but not in the print edition also omitted the figure but cited the Senlis group as one of two "competing theories" about the increase in Taliban activity. The *National Post* did publish an article that covered the report more thoroughly.

On June 29, the Senlis group released a report entitled "Canada in Kandahar: No peace to keep," which called Kandahar a "suicide mission" for Canada. The response from the Canadian media was swift. Without mentioning the title, a Canadian Press report provided a partial summary of the Senlis group's claims, followed by an extensive response by Defense Minister and former defense industry lobbyist Gordon O'Connor and top General Rick Hillier.

However, this was not enough for the *Globe*, which rewrote the Canadian Press article to include even fewer of the Senlis report's direct criticisms in time for the June 29 print edition.

The CanWest News Service, which is used by dozens of daily newspapers and television stations owned by CanWest Global went further, downplaying the substance of the report and highlighting Canada's aid efforts. The story was accompanied with a photo of Afghan children receiving Canadian-

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Business Without Boundaries

Atlantic Canada: an 'epi-centre' of international trade?

by Hillary Bain Lindsay

Sean Cooper replies without hesitation when asked if there will be negative social or environmental consequences to Atlantica: "No," he says bluntly. "There are none that I'm aware of." Executive Director of the Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce (APCC), Cooper has only good things to say about Atlantica - a region encompassing the northeastern US and Atlantic Canada that business leaders are proposing as the new 'epi-centre' of international trade.

The APCC and Saint John Board of Trade recently hosted hundreds of delegates in Saint John, New Brunswick, for "Reaching Atlantica: Business Without Boundaries," a conference intended to raise the profile of the Atlantica Initiative and assist in its development.

Proponents of Atlantica believe that Atlantic Canada--largely considered a 'have-not' region--has the potential to become an economic powerhouse; with Halifax acting as an international port, Atlantica is perfectly situated to funnel goods into huge American markets. The purpose of Atlantica, says Cooper, is to allow goods, people and services to move more easily between huge economic zones. Essentially, Atlantica will "move wealth," he says. "And it will create wealth."

Create wealth for whom? asks Matt Schlobohm, co-ordinator for the Maine Fair Trade Campaign. Schlobohm spoke at "Resisting Atlantica: Reclaiming Democracy," a counter-conference that drew a crowd of 300 people--people who do believe Atlantica will have negative social and environmental consequences. Schlobohm is one of those people. He notes that, on the surface, the Atlantica Initiative appears harmless: "Who could be opposed to trade between Atlantic Canada and



Hundreds demonstrated against the Atlantica Initiative in Saint John, New Brunswick.

Chris Erb

northern New England? - that sounds great." But in order to understand the values behind the Initiative, one must look at who is behind it, says Schlobohm.

Sponsors of 'Reaching Atlantica' included large corporations like Irving Oil, BMO Financial Group and Aliant. Speakers at the conference included representatives from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, The Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS). Registration for members of the public was \$595, a fee that demonstrators noted was more than most people could afford. It is the business elite pushing for the Atlantica Initiative, argues Schlobohm, and it will be the business elite who will benefit.

Schlobohm points to AIMS, a think tank he says is "pushing aggressively for Atlantica." AIMS details the "poor public policy holding Atlantica back" on its website. Included in the list are minimum wage legislation and union density, both considered measures of "labour market flexibility." Schlobohm is alarmed that minimum wage legislation and unions, which

he considers the "most effective anti-poverty program the world has seen," are being labelled "economic distress factors." He argues that Atlantica, like its predecessor NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), is not fundamentally about trade--which can have many benefits--but about increasing profits for corporations, often at the expense of workers' rights, social programs, and environmental protection.

Garry Leech, a member of the Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network, has seen this happen in his own province. Nova Scotia Power used to buy Nova Scotia coal. The company has since found cheaper coal in Colombia. Not only have jobs been lost in Atlantic Canada, notes Leech, but the cheap coal is linked to human rights abuses in Colombia. There are other ways of doing business, he insists.

"Nova Scotia power should not be investing in the refurbishment of coal powered plants--which are huge emitters of green house gases--but in wind energy," says Leech. "That would improve the environment and provide jobs in the wind energy sector. And it would de-

link Canada from human rights abuses in Colombia." Leech's vision of supporting local economies is far different from the Atlantica model.

"We are about to become a doorway to the industrial might of China and India," Brian Lee Crowley, president of AIMS, told the Chronicle Herald. Crowley envisions a transportation corridor moving goods from the Halifax port to markets in the US. Large numbers of trucks will be needed, notes Crowley, and large numbers of truck drivers. "The answer isn't going into high schools and [talking] about great opportunities in the trucking industry," says Crowley. "Mexico is one of the three NAFTA partners. The answer is to set up a guest worker program."

Mexican guest workers are not granted the same rights as Canadians and are often willing to work for less. Atlantica may encourage cheap labour and goods to move easily across the border, but Leech wonders if immigrants and refugees would be given the same rights. AIMS' recommendations to Ottawa include working with the US on "integrated perimeter security, harmonization of external tariffs and mutually agreeable standards of entry for persons from third countries."

The "Reaching Atlantica" conference concluded with the announcement that an 'Atlantica council' would be created to bring key government leaders on board. Leech is disappointed that, despite protests, representatives from unions, community groups and environmental organizations have not been invited to the table. This isn't just about economics, he says, but also about social, environmental, political and military policies; it's therefore critical that voices other than those of big businesses are heard.

Bottled Up Frustrations

St. John's bottlers strike revives age old debate: who benefits from new technology?

by Jacob Fergus

Machines do not need lunch breaks, collective bargaining, food, or even wages. Not surprisingly, they have replaced human workers in sectors like banking, manufacturing and transportation, to name a few. This, it is often said, is progress: it "streamlines" businesses and makes them "cost-effective."

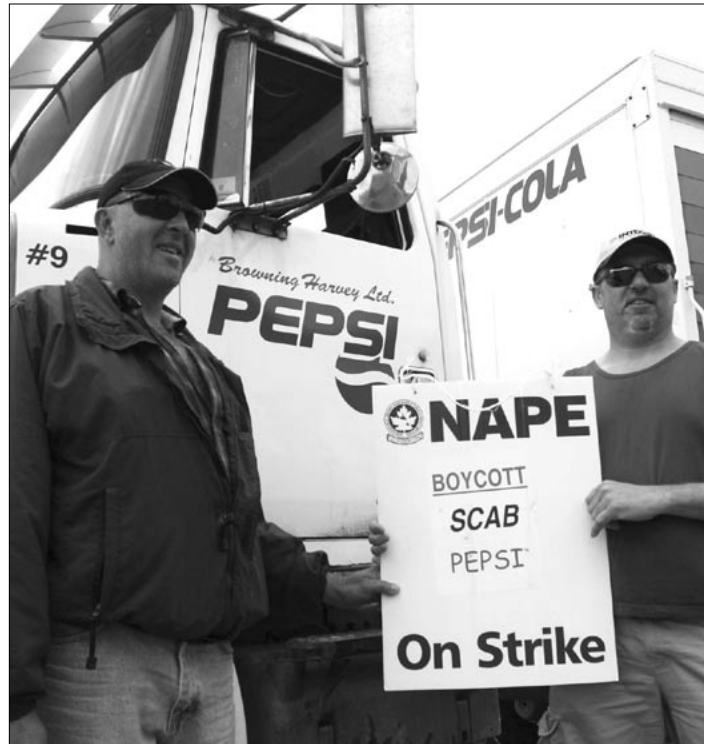
As the latest targets of mechanization, the unionized workers of Browning-Harvey in St. John's (Newfoundland's largest, and Canada's only, privately licensed bottler of Pepsi products) have a different view about what "progress" looks like and whom it benefits.

Browning-Harvey plans to introduce a new piece of equipment, manufactured by Swiss company Schweizerische Industrie Gesellschaft (SIG), designed to make a soft-drink bottling production line more efficient. The new equipment will eliminate 10 jobs at Browning-Harvey's St. John's facility.

The workers at the plant are striking to force the company to negotiate an appropriate severance package. NUPGE-Newfoundland Association of Public and General Employees Union (NAPE) Local 7003 is representing its workers at the bargaining table. During the strike, managerial and security personnel remain on the job, assuming shipping duties by loading trucks with product made prior to the strike.

Rick Kieley, an employee and member of the negotiating team, strides the picket-line and shakes his head in frustration as another truck pulls up to the plant. He is calling on Newfoundlanders to "boycott scab Pepsi products" as Pepsi tries to curb losses by importing product from other bottlers and distributors in Canada.

Kieley acknowledges that "new-technology is good for the future of the company and



New technology designed to make the bottling plant 'more efficient' will eliminate ten jobs from St. John's, Newfoundland. *Jacob Fergus*

its people and shows that they are here for the long-haul." At the same time he says he is "disturbed" that the company needs to lay-off reliable, hard-working employees to make way for new technology. But if they feel it is the best decision, then "all we want is an appropriate severance package... something we can live on," he says.

At the time of publication, members of Browning-Harvey management had not responded to calls and interview requests.

The issue has led the close-knit group of employees to "lose faith in a company that we believe in and have worked for, for so long." Even friendships between divisions are becoming strained.

Non-unionized truck drivers are paid by the case for Pepsi products they transport. To keep earning, they cross the picket line every day and are sometimes "boxed in" by picketers at retail locations across the

city. One truck driver, who preferred to remain anonymous, said that he will "pick up Pepsi from Browning-Harvey [which he gets paid for] but won't fight the picketers if they block me from delivering the product."

"After this is all over, they are my friends and we all have to work together, but I still have to feed my kids and pay the rent."

NAPE Local 7003 president Jim Kavanagh is proud of his members. "They stuck together, supported each other, dug in and are putting pressure on the company to make change." But he is also frustrated with the negotiating process saying that sometimes "the company won't even meet with us." Chris Henley, a NAPE representative, says that, at a minimum, Browning-Harvey needs to "provide those workers with a future" in the form of an appropriate severance package. Given the average workforce

age of 53 to 57 years old, says Henley, "this is no time for a career change." According to Henley, the severance and benefits package that the union has proposed is "similar to if not the same as the severance package offered to management level employees."

"The amount of money [Browning-Harvey] are losing on this strike could solve these workers' problems," said Henley. There have been no official figures as to Pepsi's losses due to the strike but dwindling store supplies could be an indicator, and with local support for the strikers, Coca-Cola could be profiting in a place where Pepsi usually holds a 75 per cent market share in the soft-drink industry. According to Kavanagh, they "are losing a massive amount of money every day our workers are not producing product."

A frustrated Kavanagh points out that "a number of years ago the Canadian government financed new technology at the Browning-Harvey facility because it would generate 16 jobs." But the development of that technology paved the way for the new machine, which will eliminate at least 10 jobs. Kavanagh muses, "I guess my tax dollars paid for them to eliminate my job."

Living on meager strike-pay income, the workers could become the latest casualties in the ongoing battle for companies to efficiently create product at the minimum cost while forcing an aging workforce out the door a few years away from retirement. Already a leader in high unemployment rates, Newfoundland and Labrador remains in the precarious situation of deciding whether to "compete" in a globalized corporate reality by "streamlining" and using technology to increase profit margins at the expense of the workers, or to plot an alternative path.

What's Yours is Mine

Ascendant Copper Corporation meets resistance in Ecuador

by Cyril Mychalejko

In spite of criticism and resistance from local residents, Canadian mining company Ascendant Copper Corporation has big plans for its two large mining operations in Ecuador. "We are confident that Ecuador will grow to be one of the world's great copper districts," said Gary E. Davis, president and CEO of Ascendant.

Analysts at eResearch, a Canadian investment research firm, released a cautiously optimistic report on the company in early May.

"Ascendant Copper is flush with cash and about to embark on an aggressive exploration program. It expects to commence drilling on one of the properties later this year, after an environmental impact study has been completed," the report stated.

The property that Ascendant is eagerly awaiting to start drilling is in Junin, located in the Intag region of Ecuador. The report also states, "provided the Company can advance its projects forward in a timely and positive manner, we believe there is considerable upside for the [Company's] shares from current levels over the longer term."

Perception is Reality?

As for the response to Ascendant's project in Junin, a lot depends on who you ask. According to Davis, the project has huge support from local residents. He concedes that there is a vocal opposition to the project, but by his count it amounts to no more than 40 residents from the immediate area and 100 people altogether.

"Every project has its naysayers," said Davis.

But Davis' rosy outlook may not reflect the reality on the ground. Just last December, approximately 70 local mining opponents burned down one of



Several hundred mining opponents marched into the town square of Garcia Moreno, Ecuador on May 20 for a region-wide assembly concerning the mining activities of Canada's Ascendant Copper Corporation

UpsideDownWorld.org

the company's buildings. There had been a community meeting hours earlier where people voted to burn the building as an act of protest-- nearly 300 people took responsibility for the burning. There is also a letter signed by all 7 local Parish government presidents asking the Ministry of Energy and Mines to invoke a five-year moratorium on all mining activities in Intag.

The company faces possible legal hurdles that include the possibility that the company's concessions are not legally binding because the State violated the constitutional rights of local residents by not consulting them prior to the transaction.

"There are a lot of irregularities with the project and we want them to stop the whole process," said Isabela Figueroa, a human rights lawyer representing people affected by the project in Intag.

The validity of Ascendant's Environmental Impact Study (EIS) has also been called into question. Figueroa is working against Ascendant with fellow lawyer Alejandro Ponce, and NGOs Defensa y Conservacion Ecologica de Intag (DECOIN), Comisi3n Ecumenica de Dere-

chos Humanos (CEDHU) and ECOLEX, which specializes in environmental litigation. Figueroa believes that the company failed to follow proper protocol with its EIS when it failed to consult the communities regarding the Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToRs essentially outline how and what the company will study regarding the project's impact on the local environment.

An April 20 letter sent to Ivan Rodriguez, Minister of Energy and Mines, by leaders of local communities, parishes and the Municipality of Cotacachi, expressed concern about Ascendant making the EIS public before consulting community members: "By attempting to publicize it in our zone, the company is not only committing illegal actions that are also legal reasons for nullification, but also generate confusion within communities in the area that could lead to tension that is the concern and duty of all public authorities...to prevent."

Legal claims have been filed to nullify the study's ToR's and Figueroa is awaiting response from the Ministry of Energy and

Mines and other government officials.

Environmental Concerns

Friends of the Earth-Canada (FOE-CA) and Mining-Watch Canada launched their "No Means No to Ascendant Copper in Ecuador" campaign on May 3 and simultaneously released a new documentary, titled "The Curse of Copper," which can be viewed at www.ascendantalert.ca. The campaign urges the Canadian junior mining company to respect the wishes of local communities and local environmental laws.

"The Intag Cloud Forest is blessed with some of the most important biodiversity on the planet," said Beatrice Olivastri, Chief Executive Officer of FOE-CA. She said the company should respect the wishes of the local community and leave immediately.

"What part of 'no' does Ascendant not understand?" asked Olivastri.

Davis dismisses most of the environmental concerns as "rhetoric" and "overstated."

"This is not a pristine area," said Davis.

But he also added that the company is committed to protecting the environment. He said that despite popular beliefs no cyanide will be used at the mine. He also said that mines today are zero discharge—that no water is ever released from mines.

Carlos Zorrilla, Executive Director of DECOIN, said that Davis is wrong on every aspect of his environmental analysis. He points to an evaluation of the local environment by the Ecuadorian Environmental Organization Jatun Sacha. In a June 2005 study called "Estudio de la Caracterizacion Ecologica de la Reserva Comunitaria Junin" (Study of the Ecological Characterization of Junin's Community Reserve) the organization

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City Lights Not So Bright

Discussing the future of slums with people in suits at the World Urban Forum

by Ben Sichel and
Jenny Peirce

Thousands of people from over 100 countries lined up around several city blocks to attend the Third World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat's biennial conference on urban issues, held in Vancouver from June 19 to 23. With a view of the upscale Coal Harbour skyline to the West, and the struggling streets of the Downtown Eastside mere blocks in the other direction, the Forum attempted to address the daunting challenges of urbanization. Bringing together a cross-section of government officials, NGOs, business people, media, and the general public, the spectrum of positions presented was so diverse that the eventual declarations were more about the urgency of building livable cities than about what urban sustainability might actually look like.

Cities will soon be home to the majority of the world's people, and as some delegates bluntly stated, most will live in slums, where finding water and toilets is a greater concern than designing city bike paths. UN-Habitat estimates that the urban population in the global south will double to four billion in the next 30 years. Already, a third of people in cities live in slum conditions. Looking back on a decade of international urban policy, South African Housing Minister Lindiwe Sisulu described the situation as "an indifference which dehumanizes."

Organizers of the forum seemed to make a concerted effort to encourage wide participation. Registration was free and open to anyone with access to the internet, and even those who showed up unregistered were rarely turned away. Grassroots civil-society organizations seemed to be well-represented, including a fair number from the global south. And, initiatives



The next Forum should be the "World Urban Poor Forum," was the suggestion of the president of the National Slum Dwellers Federation in India, to a room full of people in business attire. *Dey Alexander*

such as the World Youth Forum (held prior to the WUF in order to prepare young people to participate – and the Habitat Jam) an on-line discussion where thousands of slum dwellers from around the world exchanged ideas – succeeded in bringing some marginalized voices to the Forum.

Lack of accessibility was still a problem for many, however. Translation services were spotty, and often unavailable in smaller presentations, leaving those without a good command of English wanting. Indigenous peoples in particular spoke out against under representation and tokenism at the Forum, with a declaration calling for an end to corporate "development aggression" in cities and the degradation and theft of ancestral land.

Amid the sea of suits, jargon and business cards, the Forum did feature some sobering, down-to-earth talk of urban issues. Delegates from marginalized communities made a clear demand to be included and not to be "represented" by government or NGO officials. At a rally of housing activists outside the Convention Centre, speakers from Canada and

India reminded the Forum that government cutbacks in social housing funding and initiatives to "clean up" slum areas have pushed many vulnerable people further into poverty.

Mariama Sow of Senegal, speaking on behalf of "civil society" at the Forum's closing ceremony, caused some discomfort in the room when she blamed "rich countries," with their unfair trade practices and closed borders, as the "true culprits" for the underdevelopment of the majority world. Sow noted that, despite many inspiring stories presented at the Forum, social problems in urban areas are for the most part getting worse, not better. Even the Forum's own final report chastised governments around the world for not acting on their promises of poverty reduction.

Occasionally in smaller sessions, donors and local project staff asked questions of one another and people working on common issues in distant countries shared experiences. Some speakers challenged the Forum to redefine notions such as "unemployment" and "participatory development" to fit the realities of the urban poor,

who survive within the informal economy with no access to basic services.

With references to the idealism and unattained ambitions of the first UN-Habitat gathering in Vancouver in 1976, delegates made vague calls for "new partnerships" between sectors, while community activists spoke vividly of the miserable conditions of urban poverty. Donor agency officials and grassroots activists agreed that more political pressure is needed to make urban issues a priority, yet few discussions directly addressed the power structures that impede real progress.

Overall, there seemed to be a lack of presence of the people most affected by rampant urbanization, from both the global North and South. "The next Forum should be the World Urban Poor Forum" suggested Jockin Arputham, president of the National Slum Dwellers Federation in India, to a room full of people in business attire. "I want you all to come, but as observers. Then you will be frustrated because you can't participate."

Indeed, the idea of the next biennial gathering being held in an urban slum, perhaps in Africa, was floated around many conversations at the Forum (the 2008 World Urban Forum is actually being planned for Nanjing, China). The opulence of the setting and receptions at the Vancouver Forum contrasted uncomfortably with talk of improving the lives of slum dwellers around the world.

Anna Lucy Bengochea of Honduras called for wider inclusion and participation of marginalized peoples as the solution for urban ills.

"If they pay attention to us and include [women and indigenous peoples] as equals," she said, "we will achieve the Millennium Development Goals and more!"

Question Park

Will one of Canada's most endangered ecosystems receive National Park status?

by Heather English

Driving along Highway 3 in southern British Columbia, you'll find yourself looking out over the South Okanagan Valley, a landscape made up of a mosaic of green, yellow and brown shades, each a different ecosystem. From the bunchgrass ecosystem in the lower elevations to the alpine tundra in the mountaintops, this region contains more ecological diversity than any other in British Columbia. The valley bottoms support more than just ecological diversity; they also support a booming tourist economy, cattle ranching, agriculture and vineyards. The opposing interest groups in the region have made the proposal for a national park reserve controversial and the region's future uncertain.

In accordance with the federal government's commitment to create 10 new national parks by 2008, a national park reserve in the South Okanagan-Similkameen Valley region of BC is currently undergoing a feasibility study. This commitment is part of Parks Canada's mandate to represent all 39 of Canada's major terrestrial natural regions in the national park system. The South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Reserve would represent BC's 'interior dry plateau' natural region.

As a result of its mountainous terrain and warm, dry climate, the South Okanagan-Similkameen valleys contain a myriad of diverse and rare ecosystems. Today, it is under heavy threat from vineyards, cattle ranching and urban sprawl. The local population is expected to increase by 12,000 over the next 15 years. This immense pressure has degraded the South Okanagan-Similkameen grasslands and ultimately led to its recognition as one of Canada's four most endangered



The South Okanagan Valley contains more ecological diversity than any other in British Columbia. *Dick Canning*

ecosystems. Today, the valleys are home to more than one third of BC's species at risk.

The proposal for a national park reserve is drawing passionate debate from both sides. Some argue that due to the dramatic degradation of the environment that has already occurred, a national park reserve in the region is the best possible designation for the protection of the landscape. Others say that a national park reserve is not necessary at all.

A small local group, the Grasslands Park Review Coalition (GPRC), has been vocal about its opposition to the establishment of this national park reserve. They say that the 2001 provincial Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) is adequate environmental protection and has support from local hunting groups, such as Ducks Unlimited. "These groups and initiatives continue to protect and conserve this great area while still allowing residents and the public to enjoy it," the GPRC states in a pamphlet distributed May 30, 2006. Others, such as local wildlife ecologists Dr. John and Mary Theberge, disagree.

They point out that the region is currently spotted with

various provincial parks and protected areas that provide protection from logging and mineral extraction, but not from hunting or cattle grazing. A national park reserve would legislate against these activities. According to ecologists like the Theberges, the region has never naturally experienced heavy grazing by large mammals, like bison or elk. The cattle, they say, have grazed over much of the native bunchgrasses and thus facilitated the establishment of invasive species such as cheatgrass and enabled the domination of the ecosystem by woody shrubs, like sage.

The Western Canada Wilderness Committee's (WCWC) Ken Wu agrees, adding that the most effective protection will come in a sizeable national park reserve. Parks Canada is currently looking at the feasibility of including approximately 350 square kilometres of core land for the park, consisting largely of current provincial protected areas. "Over time on a willing buyer/willing seller basis, Parks Canada would seek to acquire lands adjacent to the protected areas," says National Park Reserve project manager Tom Hurd. The total area could be up to 600 km²; a figure still

criticised by environmentalists for not being large enough.

Wu hopes that the final park boundaries will encompass at least 1000 square kilometres, in order for the park to support larger populations of species, and include more ecologically significant areas. Conservationists are calling on Parks Canada to include the most endangered ecosystems, such as the pocket desert unique to this region and the deciduous forests/shrub wetlands along the Okanagan River. These ecosystems are mainly found on private lands and, as such, were not included in the provincial LRMP and in the 200 km² Vaseux/White Lakes area, a mix of Crown lands, provincial protected areas, and private holdings.

But even if the park encompasses a substantial amount of highly diverse lands, can a national park truly mitigate the pressures of development and allow some of this ecosystem to return to its natural state? Yes, says Wu, as long as the park upholds the standards of the National Parks Act and does not allow cattle ranching or hunting on park lands. The GPRC strongly opposes the removal of these activities from the land base.

The GPRC is concerned that if a park is established, a loss of income, recreational activities, ranching tenures and land will soon follow. A section from the group's pamphlet reads, "Commercial ranching and logging, hunting, helicopter training, motorized vehicle recreation, trapping, mining, firewood cutting, will be extinguished." Wu disagrees, saying that the concerns are unfounded as only a small portion of the Okanagan-Similkameen region will be included in the park, and there are huge tracts of land outside the proposed boundaries for

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Corporate SLAPP

Citizens of KIFN walk to Queen's Park in the face of a corporate SLAPP suit

by Kim Petersen

The Ontario-based mineral company Platinex has slapped the Ojibwa of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (Big Trout Lake) First Nation (KIFN) with a \$10-billion damage suit for refusing the company permission to drill on territory the KIFN says is its own. KIFN argues that it has never signed away ownership of the land and is pursuing a land-claim settlement. Situated in northwestern Ontario, KIFN is about 580 km north of Thunder Bay. In 1998, Platinex Inc. secured exploratory rights from the Ontario government for 3,580 hectares of land in the area. In November 2005, KIFN called for a moratorium on mining and forestry on its lands. Platinex ignored requests that it vacate KIFN's territory.

In February, Platinex workers were confronted by KIFN protesters and, later that month, blockades of access roads and landing strips temporarily halted exploration.

In a letter to the *Globe and Mail* on February 22, Platinex defended its exploration claiming it has "huge value for the world's environment" due to applications in pollution-regulating equipment.

Following the setting up of blockades, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) increased its presence in the community with seven additional officers. Platinex later raised a few eyebrows when the company hired a foreign mercenary to provide security for the company. According to Platinex lawyer Neil Smitheman, Paul Gladstone, an ex-British soldier, was hired to "assess and manage a potentially ... volatile situation." KIFN spokesperson John Cutfeet asks, "When will the lessons of Ipperwash be learned?"

Ipperwash refers to an Ontario standoff where Dudley



Platinex hired a foreign mercenary to provide security for the company after protesters and blockades disrupted their operations.

Big Trout Lake First Nation

George of the Aazhoodena First Nation was murdered by Acting OPP Sgt. Kenneth Deane.

In May, Platinex began drilling for platinum-group elements as part of its exploration of the region. According to a *Globe and Mail* article, the deposit may be the largest on Turtle Island (Turtle Island is a First Nations' term for North America).

On May 1, Platinex sought legal approval to begin drilling. KIFN filed an injunction for relief on the land in question. Platinex then filed a \$10-billion counterclaim against KIFN, Chief Donny Morris, the First Nation council, and others.

KIFN insists that it should have been consulted before drilling began. Platinex has countered with accusations that Chief Morris and the First Nation council have refused to "continue consultation in good faith" and has carried on with exploration unilaterally.

Ontario Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay supports the company and says drilling should continue while the matter is being settled. Critics say Ramsay's stance is

foreclosing on the outcome of any settlement: the "right" of the mining and exploration companies trumps the right of the Original Peoples to their traditional homeland.

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty is also being criticized for breaking his word to Original Peoples. In a letter written on March 19, 2003, McGuinty promised to ensure environmental responsibility and "full participation by native communities" concerning land-use planning "to provide [for] a sustainable future."

Chief Morris says the territory is the birthright of the KI community, and it demands to be involved in sharing in the bounty of its land.

KIFN's struggle has mobilized the 49 First Nation communities of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN). In February, NAN grand chief Stan Beardy expressed solidarity with the KIFN and disappointment with provincial authorities' disregard for Aboriginal and Treaty rights within NAN territory.

"We had high expectations after the November 2005 Miki-sew Supreme Court decision

regarding Crown duty to consult and accommodate with First Nations when activities like mining threaten our Aboriginal and Treaty rights," says Beardy. "The fact that Ontario has not implemented this decision in our province sets the tone for First Nation and government relations for resource development in NAN territory."

"Fifteen years of Supreme Court decisions have yet to be reflected in provincial and federal policies," says Cutfeet. "Our treaty partners continue to disregard direction from the Supreme Court in dealing with our people."

According to elder Allan Beardy, of the nearby Muskrat Dam First Nation, about 20 years ago slipshod mining exploration left the area blighted, ruining the hunting and fishing. The KIFN is determined to preserve the integrity of the sensitive muskeg environment from which some of its 1,200 members still draw sustenance.

"We are not rich, nor do we have many possessions. We live a simple life, but we have a good life," says elder Eleazor Anderson who still hunts, traps and lives off the land.

On May 9, four citizens from KI -- Mark T. Anderson, Darryl Sainnawap, Wallace Mosquito and Dylan Morris -- began walking from Pickle Lake to Queen's Park to raise awareness of the provincial government's disregard for Original Peoples and the environment.

Walking between 50 and 70 km per day, the group anticipates reaching Toronto by 21 June -- National Aboriginal Day -- to bring its message to the Ontario parliament.

Lead walker Anderson said, "We want our children and grandchildren to continue to use the lands and resources to pursue their usual vocations of hunting, trapping and fishing."

Weed to the Wise

One gardener's enemy is another's dinner

by Moira Peters

Summers ago, when my brothers and I lived under our parents' green thumbs, our mornings were spent crouched between garden beds of carrots, corn, strawberries and spinach. With our winter survival in mind, my parents worked Cape Breton's mountain soil until neat rows of peas, peppers and Brussels sprouts marched the length of the raised earth beds. We kids, armoured with hats and bug-dope, were instructed to clear away the enemy, to rip and pull the tough invading plants -- weeds! -- from the soil. The garden -- a fantastic quarter-acre of child labour -- sprouted so many weeds! My mother's mention that lambs-quarters were actually delicious greens was lost to her demands that they come out of the asparagus patch -- 'every Jesus one of them.'

Little by little, I began to pay attention to the wild plants in the garden -- plants like dandelion and chickweed -- that I had so ruthlessly ripped from the ground when they threatened to overtake the baby lettuce. I slowly discovered magic in the native plants; stubborn and wise, they survive trampled

pathways and cling to the edge of my workspace. It makes sense that edible weeds are among the healthiest foods, belonging to the same soil, the same ecosystem, as we do.

One of the most satisfying moments in the garden is wandering through rows of cultivated glory to pick a summer salad for supper. My favourite is a simple mixed-green salad with generous amounts of chopped fresh herbs. Early summer is ideal for throwing them damn weeds into the salad bowl, as they are still tender and at their nutritious peak.

The Handy Dandy: the dandelion has more uses than you can count

The English name of this common weed comes from the French *dent de lion*, "lion's tooth." It first appeared in 10th century medical journals of Arabian physicians and presently dandelion is one of the most widely used herbs in the world. Dandelions are the choice among herbalists for toning and restoring the liver, but in terms of its uses, that's just the beginning.



Recognized in the West as a lawn and garden pest, dandelion is herbalists' top choice for treating liver damage, and is an unparalleled source of vitamin A and natural potassium.

Leaves

For centuries, dandelion leaves have been a celebrated source of vitamin A, calcium and iron. The bitter compounds found in the greens aid digestion. High plant estrogens make dandelion leaf a valuable medicine for women; it reduces menstrual bloating, PMS and breast tenderness. For pregnant women, it is a safe and effective diuretic which does not deplete the body of potassium, unlike most synthetic diuretics.

Leaves can be eaten raw in salads, marinated, steamed, or added to soups. My friend Polly remembers sautéing dandelion greens with bacon as a treat in the spring and my boss Joe DeNicola uses them as a summer green in pastas in his Italian restaurant. In spring-time, the leaves are at their most

tender. As they mature through the summer, they grow in nutritious value and in fall they lose much of their bitterness. The leaves can also be dried and used in teas throughout the winter.

Roots

Dandelion roots are used to treat digestive disturbances and for cleansing, toning and regenerating the liver--speeding the body's recovery from drug and alcohol abuse, over-use of antibiotics, and eating disorders. For women going through menopause, it decongests a liver overburdened by excess hormones. Dandelion root is also a safe medicine for protecting the liver while under hormone replacement therapy.

Roots can be harvested in spring or fall; they are more effective as a liver tonic when unearthed in late winter and spring. They can be made into teas and tinctures. The roots can also be roasted and ground as a substitute for coffee, or an addition to hot chocolate (though most health benefits will have been cooked out of them).

Flowers

Dandelion flowers are made into wine, or minced and added to butters and spreads for colour. They can also be used for making yellow dyes, or use the whole plant to obtain magenta!

The extensive and potent properties of dandelion make it an excellent overall aid in building and restoring the body's energy reserves. As a powerful liver support, dandelion effectively treats chronic skin problems and arthritis, reduces anger, frustration, and the fatigue that many pregnant women experience. Dandelion is often considered a lawn and garden pest, but it is recommended to leave dandelions growing around the base of fruit trees.

Weed Salad

rip: arugula, spinach, lettuce, lambs-quarters (just the tender top whorl), chickweed, sorrel (the tiny leaves add a delightful lemon zing so be sure to pick lots)

mince: parsley, mint, basil, dandelion (young plants, roots and all, should be cleaned thoroughly of dirt and minced very finely as this weed has a powerful flavour)

sprinkle: sunny dandelion petals and sweet clover heads

add: a simple dressing: olive oil, lemon juice, sea salt (be generous -- it is important to replenish our salt reserves in the summer, and salt tones down the bitterness of dandelion) & fresh pepper

To be protein-wise, add crumbled hard-boiled egg, or left-over cooked beans and grains.

Plundering Pascua Lama

Chileans fight to protect their environment from Barrick Gold

by Rob Maguire

In the face of local grassroots opposition, the Chilean government has given Canadian mining giant Barrick Gold the go-ahead for its controversial Pascua Lama mine. Chile's National Environmental Commission heard only two of the nearly 50 complaints filed against Barrick before giving the project its approval.

Founded in 1983 by Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, Barrick is the foremost gold mining corporation in the world, with sales exceeding \$2.6 billion in 2005 and the largest reserves in the industry, at nearly 90 million ounces.

High in the Andes Mountains, the Pascua Lama mine straddles the border of Chile and Argentina and represents a \$1.5 billion investment for Barrick. The company plans to extract 615,000 ounces of gold, 30 million ounces of silver and 5,000 tons of copper annually over the 21-year lifetime of the open-pit mine.

Despite all the wealth that will soon be extracted, few Chileans are likely to benefit. Thanks to a combination of favourable tax legislation, legal loopholes and corporate malfeasance, no Canadian mining corporation paid any Chilean income taxes in the 1990s.

The mine is located in the Huasco Valley, a semiarid ecosystem that is entirely dependent upon the mountains for water. Residents argue that the mine will poison the land upon which they depend, endangering their health and jeopardizing their agriculture-based livelihoods.

In order to process the ore at Pascua Lama, Barrick will use 7,200 kilograms of cyanide and ten million litres of water per day. Cyanide contamination of

water resources can be devastating -- cyanide concentrations as little as one microgram (one-millionth of a gram) per litre can be fatal to fish. Barrick's site manager, Julio Claudeville, insists that cyanide is innocuous.

One report on mining in northern Chile found high levels of arsenic in the region's

their nearby Veladero mine into the adjacent wetlands. Barrick admitted to the practice, but argued that the waste was treated and posed no harm to the environment. No explanation was given for the dead fish.

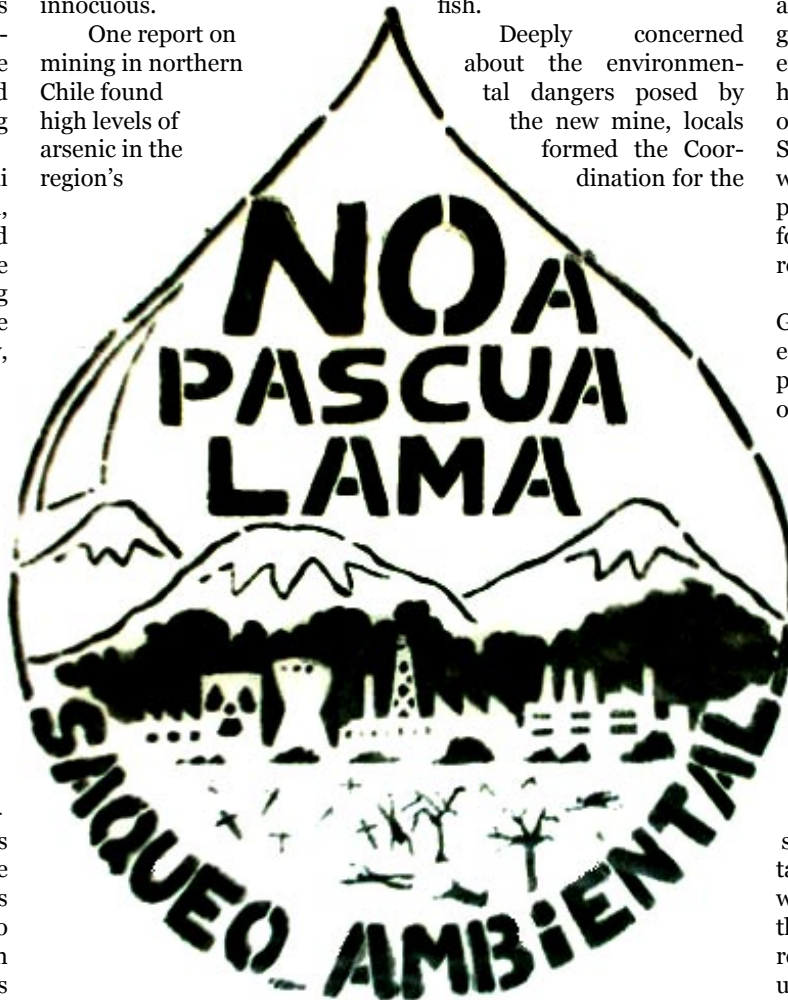
Deeply concerned about the environmental dangers posed by the new mine, locals formed the Coordination for the

complaint with the Organization of American States alleging that the mine represents a great risk to the subsistence rights of the local indigenous population and that Chile would be breaking its international commitments by allowing the Barrick project to go ahead. More recently, the environmental group Oceana held a demonstration outside of the Canadian embassy in Santiago, arguing that the mine would enrich the Canadian corporation but would "do nothing for Chile except destroy its environment."

The president of Barrick Gold South America acknowledged the local resistance, pointing out that sustained opposition to the company was by no means unique to the Pascua Lama project. "The biggest challenges we are facing by far, in both South America and Africa, are social in nature."

Although the mine is still slated to go ahead, these grassroots efforts have proven successful. Initial plans for the mine included the "relocation" of three glaciers that form the basis of the valley's water system. In its first environmental impact assessment, Barrick withheld this information from the Chilean government, who remained ignorant of the plans until residents brought the situation to their attention.

In approving the Pascua Lama mine, the Environmental Commission stipulated several conditions, including one that prevents Barrick from "intervening" in the glaciers. According to Argentinian biologist Raúl Montenegro, "it is absurd to pretend you can just move glaciers, as if it were a sustainable practice." Opponents of Pascua Lama are claiming this as a significant victory and only hope that there are more to come.



An image used by grassroots resistance to the Pascua Lama mine.

ecosystems. Health problems directly linked with arsenic exposure include cancer, deformation, miscarriage and underweight children. Other toxic contaminants found in nearby water supplies include sulphuric acid, diesel oil, urine and faecal matter.

After discovering dead fish floating in the San Juan River in 2004, locals found Barrick trucks dumping waste from

Defence of the Valley of Huasco. Several demonstrations took place in 2005, culminating in thousands gathering in the Chilean capital of Santiago for a vibrant protest. In November, a petition signed by 18,000 valley residents and people opposed to Pascua Lama was delivered to President Lagos.

Seeking an international intervention, the Chilean Consumers' Organization filed a

There's death in them thar' pits

Canada's Barrick Gold in Tanzania

by Tracy Glynn

Tanzanian environmental lawyer Tundu Lissu wants Canada's Barrick Gold held accountable for abuses perpetrated by the company in Tanzania. He is concerned by the latest rash of violent deaths occurring around the Barrick owned North Mara gold mine.

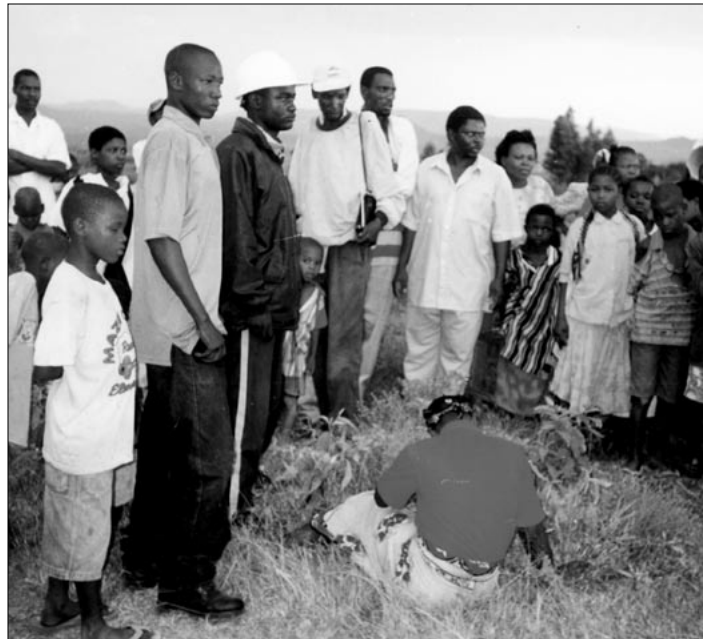
Local villager Kieva Yohanna was shot five times in the back after having allegedly entered the mine complex illegally on June 1. According to Lissu, his death marks the sixth violent death linked to Barrick's security operatives in less than a year.

In July 2005, police shot and killed Marwa Nyansinge on the grounds of the Nyabigena Primary School. As mine operatives fled the scene of the shooting they struck and killed another villager, Bhoke Maseke, who was holding a child. Marwa Nyansinge was targeted by police for allegedly stealing petroleum from the North Mara Gold mining company, then owned by the Canadian gold mining company Placer Dome and later bought by Barrick.

According to Lissu, the killings represent a shift in Barrick's strategy for dealing with locals critical of its operations.

In 2001, after being forcefully evicted from their homes to make way for the mine, hundreds of villagers, including community leaders and prominent locals, were targeted for illegal arrests, criminal prosecutions and long-term imprisonment. Lissu believes the strategy was intended to frighten community members and discourage resistance to the mine, but notes that it "never quite worked, particularly after we started to offer free legal representation to the villagers targeted."

The latest killings signal a change in tactics for Barrick to what Lissu calls 'naked vio-



Small-scale miners and farmers have lost their land and livelihoods to open pit mining in Tanzania.

Mustafa Iroga

lence,' but violence in Tanzania's mining industry and Canada's involvement is nothing new.

In the early 1990s, the Tanzanian government turned to Foreign Direct Investment to develop its mining sector. As Tanzania became the largest recipient of FDI in Africa, many Tanzanians, who had small-scale mining and farming operations, had their livelihoods destroyed through land acquisitions involving bulldozers and paramilitary forces.

"A potentially viable regional economy based on small-scale mining was physically destroyed at the behest of the World Bank and transnationals to make way for large-scale mining," says Jamie Kneen from Mining Watch Canada, "Who benefits? The companies and their shareholders. Not Tanzanians, or at least not the ones whose farms are being destroyed, or whose hand-dug pits were bulldozed, or whose shops no longer have customers."

The Bulyanhulu mine in northern Tanzania, operated by Kahama Mining Corpora-

tion, is the location of one of the world's most infamous cases of mine-related violence. In August 1996, it is alleged that over fifty artisanal (small-scale) miners were buried alive in a pit by a bulldozer used to construct the mine. The move was seen as a tactic to clear the pits of an estimated 250,000 artisanal miners in the community.

The Bulyanhulu mine was bought three years later by Toronto-based global mining giant Barrick Gold. Barrick and the Tanzanian government both denied allegations of mass murders at Bulyanhulu and accused those leading the charges of lying. Lissu and his organization, Lawyers' Environmental Action Team (LEAT), responded with videotapes, eyewitness accounts, family testimonies, and a list identifying 36 men that he says were buried alive.

One of the family testimonies came from Melania Baesi, the mother of two alleged victims, Jonathan and Ernest Lwekamwa. The last time she saw her two sons alive was when they were heading off to work in a small mine pit with

a dozen other miners. One of the miners who had left the pit earlier that day to fetch a rope visited Melania Baesi's house that evening to recount what he saw when he returned to the pit from his errand: "Policemen were everywhere and the company's Caterpillar was leveling the pits. They tried to push me back into the pit but I managed to escape and run away into the bushes with sounds of gunfire behind me." When the families went to the pit hoping to rescue their loved ones, they found leveled pits instead.

Lissu and others maintain that the cover-up allowed Barrick to secure US\$ 234 million in political risk insurance from the World Bank and Canada's Export Development Corporation. Critics also believe the cover-up may have been aided by Barrick's many influential friends—the company's international advisors have included former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and former US President George Bush Sr.

In 2001, many international organizations, including the Council of Canadians, Mining Watch Canada and Amnesty International, called for an independent international investigation into the allegations of mass murder in the Bulyanhulu pit. A number of appeals for such an investigation were made to then Foreign Affairs Ministers; John Manley, Pierre Pettigrew and Bill Graham all rejected the calls for an independent inquiry.

Barrick is now the largest gold mining company in the world, and the Bulyanhulu mine has become one of its most profitable.

Like many mining activists around the world, Lissu has been arrested, charged and jailed. He was arrested at his residence in Dar es Salaam on December 23,

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Ascendant from p. 9»

found that the area contained 60.3 percent primary, or “natural forest” and another 16.3 percent “slightly disturbed natural forest.”

Zorrilla said that Davis will never admit that the area is primary forest or “pristine” because it would cause problems for the company. Zorrilla also scoffs at the notion that there would be no water runoff at the mine. He said that because of the vast amount of rainfall in the area and the large amounts of subsurface water, there is no way that discharge can be avoided.

In addition, he points to an EIS conducted by the Japanese mining company Bishi Metals. The company’s study concluded that there would be contamination of water supplies, as well as other environmental destruction such as massive deforestation and climate change. The company owned the concession in Junin in the 1990’s before leaving after a couple of hundred local residents burned the company’s mining camp down. Ascendant recognizes this (on its website) as a “major revolt by local communities,” yet Davis insists that any current opposition, despite even larger numbers, is a minority voice.

Davis said that the operation is only in the first phase of exploration and that there will be at least two other exploration programs over the next four years before any decision is made regarding the commercialization of the project. And he said that this remains “a big if.”

Davis also contends that if the mine does become commercialized, the ensuing development would bring many benefits to the local communities. By his approximation the mine would last between 40 and 80 years.

“If the mine becomes commercialized it would bring hospitals and service organizations, as well as Wendy’s and McDonald’s,” said Davis.

www.UpsideDownWorld.org

LNG plant from p. 3»

companies will pay \$500,000 per year in property taxes for the next 25 years, about one-tenth of what the land could have brought in.

Mayor Norm McFarlane went ahead with the decision despite opposition from city councillors, including Deputy Mayor Michelle Hooton. City Councillor Ivan Court said the deal was fiscally irresponsible, highlighting the fact that “[the municipality] gave a preferential rate to a company and it cost

the taxpayers of this city \$112.5 million over 25 years.”

At the time of the deal, McFarlane told council that the companies gave him a midnight deadline to make the secret deal, or the plant would not be built. Totten said the loss in property taxes would be offset by investment and employment opportunities at the facility.

Provincial NDP Leader Elizabeth Weir says the proposed tax break for the LNG plant violates the fundamental principles of equal opportunity.

Weir told CBC News that just as Irvings was negotiating this special deal, many New Brunswickers were receiving notices in the mail that their own property taxes were going up.

Once completed in 2008, the plant will link up with a controversial pipeline that has prompted opposition by a coalition of anti-LNG protestors, environmental activists and citizens opposed to having the 30-inch diameter pipeline run through the city. –*Van Ferrier*

Museums from p. 4»

on loan, a measure that will hopefully provide a more interesting experience on a lower budget. While there is potential for change, though, it could be a long time before it seriously challenges mainstream

museum tours, particularly in the face of resistance from more traditional curators.

“There is a fear in the museum community that the curator loses their authority,” said Tichcowsky. “But the idea is to acknowledge other voices

and different kinds of authority. It takes away from the curator the role of being the only authority. That ideology has a lot of potential to change things.

www.Siafu.ca

Afghanistan from p. 6»

funded polio vaccinations.

Students of the media will often find that thorough reading can reveal a lot more information than is provided in most coverage. By reading source material and the subsequent revisions, through to what

appears in actual newspapers, one can see the political process that determines the overall picture of reality that gets to those without the time to pore over the media.

As Geoffrey York managed to note, embedding journalists with troops might not result in

the most complete coverage. What York didn’t mention is the greater and enduring problem: that journalists are embedded with editors, owners and others who are constantly shaping and filtering messages before they reach the public.

Question Park from p. 11»

these activities. The National Parks Act, Wu adds, operates on a willing buyer/willing seller basis and, as such, no one will be forced from their land.

Both those working for the park and those who oppose it

are actively seeking public support for their position. WCWC is running a petition drive and letter-writing campaign in support of the park, while the GPRC has been leafleting local residences. Without significant support from the public during

the current feasibility process, a sizeable national park reserve is unlikely to materialize in this region.

Heather English is a member of the WCWC.

Tanzania from p. 15»

2002, immediately after returning from the US where he was then a research fellow at the World Resources Institute, and was held for over 24 hours in an underground jail known as “The Hole.” Lissu and two colleagues, including the leader of the Tanzanian opposition party, were charged with violating Tanzania’s 1976 Newspaper Act No. 3 for “uttering words with seditious intention.” The sedition charge stemmed from their persistent claims that artisanal miners were buried alive

at Bulyanhulu. The criminal charges of for sedition against Lissu and his colleagues remain to this day, but the prosecutors have yet to kick-start the proceedings. Lissu and his colleagues at LEAT continue to press for justice for small-scale miners despite police intimidation including raids of their homes and offices.

Lissu says Canadians must take action “to support an end to the killings of innocent civilians. We particularly request that our Canadian partners and friends draw public attention

to these abuses and help bring Barrick Gold Corporation to account for its actions.”

Lissu’s latest call comes at a time when a Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade is holding roundtable discussions across the country on corporate social responsibility for Canadian mining companies operating overseas. It remains to be seen if these discussions will result in the attention and accountability that Lissu and so many others around the world are seeking.