

Jane Henderson and Max Liboiron look at suppression of satire ¶ A decade of NAFTA ¶ Hillary Lindsay on Mexican workers in Canada ¶ Amanda Jernigan watches whales watch scientists in Argentina >>>

# The Dominion

CANADA'S GRASSROOTS NATIONAL NEWSPAPER • JANUARY 2004 • DOMINIONPAPER.CA • Vol. I, #13

## Climate Change Could Wipe Out One Million Species: Study

Between 15 and 37 per cent of the earth's life forms - over one million species - could be wiped out by climate change by 2050. This, according to the most comprehensive study to date on the effects of climate change on animal and plant life.

The results of the study, headed up by researchers at the University of Leeds in England, were published in the most recent issue of *Nature*. Scientists examined the habitats of more than 1,100 species, in light of changes in global temperature as predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The range of results leaves room for the possibility that some species could migrate to follow temperature changes or adapt to new conditions. But scientists also warn that climate change can interact with human-caused habitat destruction in unpredictable ways. (*Nature*, *Independent*, *NY Times*)

## Germany Refuses to Apologize for Namibian "Genocide"; UK Compensates Families of Dead Iraqis

The Society of Threatened Peoples, a Berlin-based human rights group, has called on the German government to officially apologize for the "genocide" dating to the German coloniza-



Monarch butterflies are among thousands of species that scientists say could be endangered by climate change.

tion of Namibia. Between 1904 and 1907, an estimated 75,000 members of the 120,000-strong Herero tribe were killed during an uprising against the German colonial forces.

Berlin has repeatedly refused to officially apologize for its occupation of Namibia, which began in 1884 and ended in 1915. The Herero tribe has filed a lawsuit in the United States, in an attempt to gain reparations from the German government and from companies that allegedly benefited from the occupation.

The British Ministry of Defense (MoD) has paid thousands of pounds in compensation to the families of Iraqis allegedly killed by British troops, and is considering 13 other cases. The MoD has said that the payments are "ex gratia," meaning a favour not compelled by the legal right of the victims. "We do not accept admission of guilt. That is the

policy," said a MoD spokesperson.

Adam Price, a Member of Parliament, was quoted as saying that "it is simply not acceptable for the military to be investigating themselves and deciding on an ad hoc basis whether or not to award ex gratia payments to the families of the deceased."

"We need an independent and fully impartial investigation into all of these allegations," said Price. (*Guardian*, *Mail & Guardian South Africa*)

## British Whistleblower Faces Trial

In early 2003 the UN Security Council was debating a resolution sought by the US and UK to authorize the use of force on Iraq. On March 2nd the British Observer reported on a US-UK "dirty tricks" surveillance campaign aimed at six non-committed UN Security

Council members.

British intelligence employee Katherine Gun admits that she was the person responsible for leaking the memo on the surveillance plot. She claims to have acted according to her conscience and now faces imprisonment on charges of contravening the Official Secrets Act.

Said Gun, "I intend to plead not guilty to the charge that I face under the Official Secrets Act. I will defend the charge against me on the basis that my actions were necessary to prevent an illegal war in which thousands of Iraqi civilians and British soldiers would be killed or maimed."

The UN Security Council resolution approving the use of force on Iraq was abandoned. - *Kim Petersen*

## China Restricts TV Advertising

The Chinese government instated new rules released yesterday which prohibit more than nine minutes of commercials per hour during prime time, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Many television viewers and producers are positive about the change. Advertising industry representatives, however, are concerned that the rules may hamper market development.

"Too many restrictions could hurt society," Ye Lingyun of the Beijing Qianhuo Advertising Agency told the *Times*. "People do more than sit around watching television. They need to consume things. And without ads, they won't know what to buy." (*New Standard*)

## Revenues Up, Workforce Down: CCPA Issues NAFTA Report Card

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) has released a report entitled "Straight Talk: Big Business and the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement Fifteen Years Later" on the current 15th anniversary of the much-debated deal.

The report compares what the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE—formerly BCNI) claims as its successes over the past fifteen years under the Free Trade Agreement to how these successes have affected the Canadian workforce and general population.

The report tracked 39 of the CCCE's member companies and found that overall, the companies experienced a 105 per cent increase in revenue between 1988 and 2002, equating to \$144 billion in profits. In the same time period, however, the same 39 companies eliminated over 100,000 jobs (a decrease of 14.5 per cent).

Government social spending was also examined by the report. It points out that even though the initial proponents of the Free Trade Agreement claimed that social spending would be increased thanks to the deal, the net result was that money spent on social programs decreased from 13 per cent to 10.5 per cent of the GDP between 1998 and 2002. (*Vive Le Canada*)

## CPP Investments Violating Global Mine Ban Treaty?

A portion of every dollar that employed Canadians must by law contribute to the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) is invested in 15 of the world's top 20 weapons contractors (and about 170 military corporations in total), claims a recent report authored by the Coalition to Oppose Arms Trade (COAT).

Three companies - Lock-



North American leaders Bush, Mulroney, and Salinas initiating NAFTA in San Antonio in 1992.

heed Martin, Raytheon, and GE - that the CPP invests in are involved in making anti-personnel landmines. COAT coordinator Richard Sanders points out that Canada has been a leader in the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) coalition that has been ratified by 141 countries. Sanders says the investments should be seen as a violation of the ICBL.

John Cappelletti, a manager of the CPP Investment Board, says that CPP investment decisions are based solely on financial aspects, and that legislation prevents ethics or morals from being considered during the investment process. (*Indymedia Ottawa*)

## Plan to Convert Adams Mine to Landfill Draws Opposition

A plan to allow the draining of the Adams mine near Kirkland Lake, Ontario, so that it can be turned into a dump has resulted in thousands of opposition emails and letters sent to the Ontario Environment Ministry.

Terry Graves of Public Concern Temiskaming warns that there will be dissent and action taken if the plan goes

ahead, and that there have already been rumours of highways and railways potentially being blocked.

The Adams mine, which has since developed into a lake in its disuse, is wanted by some to be an alternative location for Toronto's garbage, and this is the third time that the mine has been targeted as a landfill option. The garbage is currently being sent to a landfill site in Michigan.

A certificate of approval has been granted for the plan, but Public Concern Temiskaming believes that the certificate was premature and scientifically unsupported. (*Canoe*, Temiskaming Speaker)

## Missile Defence System Decision Upcoming

Federal Defence Minister David Pratt says that a decision will be made soon as to whether Canada will be a participant in the US's Alaska/California/Greenland missile shield that is expected to be operational in the fall of 2004.

Canada and the US have been discussing Canada's potential involvement since May of 2003, and George Bush and Paul Martin will continue the discussion when they meet

in Mexico at the Summit of the Americas in mid-January.

NDP leader Jack Layton calls the system a "profoundly dangerous idea" and does not have any faith in Pratt's claim that the program will not cost Canada any land or money. Layton is concerned that the plan will be expensive, will not work, and will jeopardize global arms control efforts.

Martin has indicated that the plan could be beneficial to Canada, claiming that the country should have some influence on how the missile defence system is used. Pratt and Martin have each said that they expect parliamentary debate on the issue, but Martin would not say whether the proposal would be put to a vote. (*Canadian Press*)

~ ISSN 1710-0283 ~

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*The Dominion* is a not for profit free newspaper covering topics of interest to Canadians. We aim to provide a counterpoint to the mainstream papers, direct attention to independent journalism, and establish a venue where alternative forms of journalism can be practiced.

*The Dominion* is published every three weeks and in print and on the web.

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# What Makes News Important

## Newsroom decisionmaking and *the Dominion*

Every media organization has a way of deciding what stories are important enough to be news. The editor of the *Globe and Mail*, Edward Greenspon, has said that “if it happened yesterday, it isn’t news.” This, along with an event’s effect on business interests and the level of interest likely from high-income Canadians, defines what is important according to the *Globe and Mail*, and what is not.

Last February 15th, between eight and 12 million people protested Bush’s imminent war on Iraq around the world. There are very few standards by which it was not an event unprecedented in all of human history, but the *Globe’s* front page the following day featured a photo of Tiger Woods teeing off.

The *Globe* pays attention to the smallest rupture in US-Canada relations (four front page articles covered the infamous “moron” remark), while things like the civilian death toll in Iraq are hardly touched upon.

The *Globe and Mail* is not unique in this sense; newspapers that sell their audience to advertisers must actively cater to higher-income readers. It is, apparently, well-known that front page coverage of protests has a negative effect on sales. Newspapers that need to turn a profit must turn to various replacements for journalism - wire stories, superficial coverage - polls, celebrity coverage - in order to keep “healthy” profit margins. Journalists regularly file two to five stories in a day, making it quite impossible to peek, much less delve, beneath the surface of any given story.

•••

The Dominion set out to respond to this state of affairs productively by offering not

only a peek at stories not covered by for-profit papers, but a different kind of coverage altogether. Being an advertising-free, not-for-profit newspaper, The Dominion can look at stories in more depth, and from a different perspective.

We are able to decide what is important outside any particular set of interests. What, then, is important? Speaking as the editor of International News and Features sections, the most important issues facing humanity seem to be: the African AIDS crisis, massive economic inequality and the concentration of corporate power, environmental destruction and climate change, and mass movements working to gain access to basic needs like a living wage, food, water, health care and shelter... in roughly that order, though each of those issues is closely linked with all of the others listed.

Most conspicuously missing from the list is profit. Effective distribution of wealth (food, for example) that already exists is far more important than creating more wealth on both global and local scales. Because wealthy people are generally much more interested in making more money than in the redistribution of wealth (those that believe otherwise are unlikely to stay wealthy), it is understandable that newspapers which don’t pay homage to economic growth as humanity’s unquestionable top priority are few and far between.

The Dominion seeks to present a healthy challenge to these assumptions and others. Despite those who would tend to marginalize the Dominion as “left wing,” challenging ingrained assumptions can only benefit discourse in Canada as a whole.

That said, the Dominion’s

approach to journalistic priorities has problems of its own - it is a work in progress. We welcome discussion on the assumptions we make, and how our coverage can be improved.

For the past eight months, the Dominion has successfully published twelve issues on a budget of \$0. We have established that we are capable of producing a quality publication on a regular schedule. Now, we’d like to expand our efforts to include a serious distribution network, coverage of labour and native issues, public discussions of media ownership, and the promotion of participatory media across Canada. For these, we need your participation and support: please consider buying a print subscription to the Dominion, or make a small donation.

As a non-profit organization, the recently incorporated Dominion Newspaper Society will be supporting a number of exciting efforts to build and support grassroots journalism in Canada and worldwide.

We also need your input on how to keep improving the Dominion. Why do you read the paper? What do you miss when you read the paper? Let us know.

I’d like to briefly draw attention to a similar effort south of the border. The *New Standard* ([newstandardnews.net](http://newstandardnews.net)) is an ambitious and exciting effort to build a worldwide progressive news organization. We’ll be watching closely.

Thanks for reading,

**Dru Oja Jay**  
Coordinating Editor

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# *Lo Que Hemos Aprendido*

## The Right Whale Program of *Península Valdés*

**E**ach September, right whales gather off the coast of *Península Valdés* in Argentina's Chubut province. Since 1971, researchers have gathered there, as well: an unlikely group of biologists, conservationists, and whale-lovers, engaged in one of the world's longest-running studies of a marine mammal population. This past September, photographer John Haney and I spent a week on *Península Valdés*, and got a window into the history of this study, onshore and off.

» by **Amanda Jernigan**; photos by **John Haney**

Substitute camera for harpoon, and Iain Kerr is one part Ahab, one part Ishmael.

Vice-president of Ocean Alliance, a conservation organization based in Lincoln, Massachusetts, Kerr is Ishmael in that he is a brilliant raconteur. Over the course of this trip he has regaled us with tales of his courtship with his wife, of their adoption of a mongrel dog on the coast of Alaska, of his swimming with a sperm whale in the Indian Ocean, and of his coming upon a plane wreck in the Colombian Andes while adventuring with a frenchman named Jean-Paul. Now Kerr has taken us along on his evening's whale-watch, and his desire to get a good photograph is bringing out the Ahab in him. As we're motoring out into the belly of Golfo San José, he says to Diego Taboada, at the tiller, "All right. Now what I want is a whale breaching, while giving birth, backlit by the sunset." He is half-joking. "The fact remains," he says to me, "that if you want to capture people's hearts and souls about these animals, the best way to do that remains through photography." He adjusts the f-stop on his telephoto lens. "There!" he exclaims, spotting a fluke in the distance, and off we go.

All day we've been watch-

ing from land the group of right whales that congregates, May through December, in Golfo San José. Some five or six hundred creatures come to this peninsula to calve, mate, and raise their young. Far out, we'd see in silhouette a whale hurling its 40 tonnes into the air, then crashing down into the water. We'd watch the breach take place in eery silence; the sound of the impact would reach us several seconds later, like thunder, over the bay. Now, out in the zodiac, I am haunted by thoughts of what that crash-landing would do to this fifteen-foot boat. "Um, Iain," I say, as a nearby trio of whales dives, showing us their flukes one after another, "is there any way to tell when a whale is going to breach?"

"They tend to dive first," he says, digging in his camera bag for another roll of film. "Rather like that, actually." He gestures at the 'footprints' left by the submerged trio.

"Shouldn't we, um, get out of here?" I ask.

He shakes his head. "Once they go under, it's best not to move. If we stay still, they'll know where we are."

That's just what I'm afraid of.

"If they know where we are, they'll avoid us," he says.

Avoid us?



Kerr reassures me that, although there have been close calls, no scientist - or photographer - has ever, to his knowledge, been breached upon; in fact, there are stories of whales going to great lengths to keep from upsetting a boat.

Debbe Crandall, an environmentalist from Bolton, Ontario, came to *Península Valdés* to see the right whales in 1991. "I was walking along the beach one night," she told me, "sort of stumbling." (The beach is made of polished pebbles, which can make for difficult walking, though Crandall confessed she'd had a glass or two of wine.) "I got thinking about it: here are these creatures, and we've harassed them and harpooned them, propellered and polluted them. We've practically hunted them to extinction, and yet they'll swim right up to the boat and treat it as gently as if it's their baby. They're

so tolerant of us. I got a little maudlin," she admits. "I was quite teary-eyed."

'Quite pie-eyed,' adds her sister, who had been listening in.

Too old to hang out with their mothers but too young to mate, the adolescent right whales are the most avid people-watchers. They will sidle up next to the loitering zodiac and raise their heads out of the water to have a look at us. Mariano Sironi is in the final stages of a doctoral dissertation on the social development of these young whales. He's piloting the zodiac today, and he knows these creatures as if he had grown up with them - which, in some sense, he has. We are nervous observers of his careful dance with this 40-foot-long adolescent. Again and again, with slow deliberation, the whale approaches the boat.

In the instant before he touches us, Sironi moves the boat away. The whale dips under, wheels around with surprising agility, and approaches us again. "Shall we let him touch us?" Sironi asks. "Let's take a vote." There is a chorus of abstentions. Sironi holds his ground. The whale approaches. "Ramming speed?" says one of us, half joking. We brace ourselves. The great head goes under, then gives us the gentlest poke.

"Did he touch us?"

"I don't know. Did you feel it?"

Satisfied, the young whale swims away.

It is a fact widely recognized but seldom discussed that the novelty of whale-watching is not so much the experience of watching the whales as it is the experience of being watched by them. The mutual curiosity that exists between an adolescent right whale and a boatful of human observers makes whale-watching an activity of an entirely different nature than, say, bird-watching - or even people-watching. Sarah Haney of the Canadian Whale Institute has been a supporter of the Right Whale Program for over a decade. The first time she came to Península Valdés, a whale approached her zodiac. As he swam past the boat, he kept his gaze fixed on her. She still remembers the glimpse she caught of the white of his swivelled eye. "When you look at the eye of a fish or shark, it's slate-grey, dead-looking," she says. "Whales are different. When you look a whale in the eye it's like looking at a dog or another person. There's a feeling of connection."

Vicky Rowntree, director of the Right Whale Program, prefers to observe the whales from land. Almost every morning, she takes her backpack, stocked with notebook, spyglass, water and food, and makes the hike out from the research station, along the tawny cliff which lines the bay, to the 'cliff hut' - little more than a sheet-metal

wind-break, constructed by scientist Roger Payne in the 1970s. If the weather is fair, she sits outside, often with her legs dangling over the precipice, the spyglass propped between her knees. She'll focus on a group of whales, and she'll watch - for hours, sometimes. "The spyglass is great because it focuses you," she says. "It's like you've gone through this tunnel into the world of the whales. If you watch for long enough, you begin to anticipate what they will do."

Most often Rowntree fixes the spyglass on a mother-calf pair. The mothers seem to use the shallow waters of this bay to shield their calves from predators: orcas, sea lions. In five-metre water, the girth of a mother whale forms an effective blockade. In recent years, however, the mothers have proved unable to protect their calves from a new threat. An inflated population of gulls, nurtured on fish-processing waste from nearby Puerto Madryn, has discovered a new food supply: a gull will land on the back of a surfaced whale and rip at its flesh and blubber. The whale will thrash about, go under; the gull will circle around and wait for the whale to resurface, then attack again. Most of the whales that Rowntree spots from the cliffs these days bear open wounds along their backs.

The mother whales don't eat while they are in the nursery ground. They try to keep still, to conserve their resources of blubber and mother's milk. (The calves, on the other hand, love to cavort. A calf will hump up onto the back of the sleeping mother, breach onto her, cover her blowhole with his tail. All this she bears with extraordinary calm.) The real concern about the gull attacks is that, in evading the gulls, the mothers may be expending the energy they need to nurse their calves and to make the trip back to their summer feeding grounds.

By sea and by land the scientists make their observations. Then there is John Atkinson,



who observes the whales by air. Each September he makes the trek by plane from Toronto to Buenos Aires, then from Buenos Aires to Trelew, and finally, by truck, from Trelew to the town of Piramides, where he rendezvouses with a crew of apprenticing pilots from the Argentine navy. He'll spend the next three days, if the weather co-operates, hanging from a harness out of an eight-seater navy plane, taking photographs of whales from an altitude of 300 feet.

Atkinson is a veteran traveller and a closet writer. He has four unpublished novels stashed away. He's published children's books in English and in Spanish. I ask him how he wound up working as an aerial photographer.

"My main qualification is that I don't get airsick," he says. "And I seem to take pretty good pictures."

Aerial surveys have been part of the research program at Península Valdés for 32 years. Because the heads of right whales bear distinguishing patches of rough skin, called callosities, a good overhead view allows scientists to recognize an individual whale, year after year. The scientists on

Península Valdés have compiled a database of information on over 1800 individuals. In recent years, computer mapping has allowed them to quantify this visual data, and to compare it with data gathered on right whale populations in Brazil. Initial comparisons show that a few whales have moved back and forth between the two populations. In coming years, comparisons may be extended to the catalogues compiled by scientists working in South Africa and Australia.

Kerr, Rowntree, Sironi, Atkinson. I gradually come to know this population of researchers, which returns year after year to Península Valdés in an ironic mirroring of the whales. The unlikely group that's present at the research station when I visit is rounded out by Luciano Valenzuela, a soft-spoken Argentinian who is beginning a study on the factors affecting group formation of whales in the nursery ground. I also meet Roxana and Diego Taboada, the husband-wife team that has been the driving force behind the formation of the Instituto de Conservación

*continued on page 8 »*

# Of Human Import

## Migrant Farm Workers in Canada

by **Hillary Lindsay**

When family and friends sat down for their holiday meals this season, many offered thanks for the abundance of food before them. But David Mitchell says that most Canadians have no idea who they should be thanking. According to Mitchell, who spent a summer working with migrant workers in southern Ontario, “Canadians are completely disconnected from the people and practices that bring food to their tables.” Mitchell harvested tomatoes under conditions that most would associate with Third World working standards. Although Mitchell worked at one of the largest greenhouse operations in Canada, he was the only Canadian in sight.

Mitchell got a glimpse of a part of Canada that most Canadians never see through Frontier College, a nationwide, volunteer-based literacy organization. He participated in the Labourer-Teacher (LT) program, which places LTs in primarily agricultural settings to labour alongside farm workers during the day and help with literacy skills in the evenings. Many LTs find that they are the only Canadian workers on their farm.

Every year, thousands of agricultural workers leave their own country (the majority from

Mexico and the Caribbean) to work on Canadian farms for four to nine months of the year. These workers come to Canada through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers program (SAW), an agreement signed by the Canadian government and the home country of the migrant workers.

“The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program is an essential part of the Canadian economy and food production,” explained Adam Perry, who also worked as an LT. “How many Canadians, however, are aware of the problems faced by migrant workers working in our greenhouses, orchards, and fields, or even that these workers exist?”

Although many Canadians may not be aware of the existence of migrant farm workers, according to Justice for Migrant Workers (J4MW) Canadians are certainly benefiting from their existence.

“Canada has profited immensely from the plight of migrants of the south. The low wages of migrant workers has proliferated a multimillion dollar agricultural industry in Canada. Despite the importance of migrant workers to our economy and food production, they are among the most marginalized labour force in Canada,” the organization claims.

“These workers (some



**A Mexican worker picks tomatoes on a farm in Ontario. Immigrant workers do not benefit from health and safety regulations.** *David Mitchell*

17,000 of them) are not protected by Canadian health and safety regulations, overtime and statutory holiday legislation, or basic freedom of association and collective bargaining rights,” explained Mitchell. “They can be fired and sent home on the spot, without any justification necessary or recourse available. They are required to live on the property of the employer, and have no claim to immigration, even after twenty years of living in Canada for eight months of the year.”

Mitchell and Perry described conditions of unsafe exposure to pesticides and herbicides, cockroach-infested living quarters, and very long days.

“At peak season we work 11 hour days, six days a week and a half day on Sunday, for \$7.50 an hour with no overtime, vacation pay or holiday pay. Currently we’re working less: 55 hour weeks.”

Despite these conditions, migrant workers with little other choice cross the border each year. As one Mexican farmer explained, “I have a family of six children and it is for this reason that I find myself here. I know that neither my family nor my children like it that I come... on the other hand, I am one of the few Mexicans that have the opportunity to come to Canada... That is why I count myself among the most

fortunate.”

Fortunate, relative to those left behind. According to J4MW, “Most of the workers that participate in the SAW program are dispossessed or struggling small farmers from poor rural regions that are forced to migrate for a living wage.”

Mitchell says that globalization and trade agreements like NAFTA have helped to create these conditions. “Crop prices plummet in Mexico and the Caribbean because the US (as well as Canada and the EU) muscle in with cheap crops, driving small-scale farmers out of business and destroying local markets. Desperate for work, Mexicans and Caribbeans then come to Canada and the US, legally and illegally, to work on farms to produce cheap foods bathed in toxic chemicals.”

Although most would prefer to imagine their tomatoes coming from a wholesome family farm, Mitchell says, this has little to do with the reality of industrial farming today. “The wealth inequality, the prejudice, the large number of migrant workers... increasingly, this is the reality of labour-intensive agriculture in rural Canada. This is how our food is grown.”

As Edward Everston, a Jamaican farming in Ontario this summer put it, “Canadians just buy the tomatoes and cut them up nice.” ...



*David Mitchell*

# Satire Under Attack

When looking silly is worse than looking evil

by Max Liboiron and Jane Henderson

Webster's Dictionary credits literature as the traditional medium to use "trenchant wit, irony, or sarcasm to expose and discredit vice or folly." Yet in today's multimedia world, satire has entered the mainstream via theatre, television, music, newspaper cartoons, radio, and the internet. Satire is an important tool for those frustrated by the corporate, sponsorship, and political agendas mixed up in their media. The *Toronto Star* notes that "Satire is being used by a hungry young generation as a way around the converged mainstream news media — which often no longer serve as watchdogs."

In Canada and around the world, playwrights and webmasters are the leaders in providing an international audience with new sources of satire. *RealStupidNews.com*, *PaulMartinTime.ca*, and *TheSweatShopNews.com* are all recent satirical e-media sites. *A Weapons Inspector Calls*, by Justin Butcher (also playwright of *The Madness of George Dubya*), *A New War*, by Gip Hoppe and *Right as Ron* by Judd Bloch are brand-new plays hitting theaters around the world. Both media are receiving their share of flack.

In the arts and in the growing satirical news genre, lines are being drawn by those whose vice or folly are the subject of unwanted wit: *PaulMartinTime.ca* received threats of lawsuit; *Right as Ron* has been denounced by the Smart family, whose family history the play satirizes.

Roy Clarke, a Zambian resident of 40 years and *Post* newspaper employee, is, as of

January 6, awaiting the judicial review of the deportation order issued following one of his recent news columns. The piece used jungle animals to satirize a corrupt government. The *Telegraph* in Clarke's country of origin, Britain, notes that "charges of racism against him are unconvincing, not least because he has been married to a leading black Zambian women rights campaigner, Sara Longwe, for 35 years."

"I have been writing the column for around seven years now and what puzzles me is that this latest piece does not differ greatly in form, style, or content from what I have written before," Roy Clarke said.

Two weeks ago in Mumbai, India, playwright Kedar Shinde's TV satire prodding Deputy Chief Minister Chhagan Bhujbal's alleged scam role was aired. In indignant solidarity with Bhujbal, a group of workers belonging to the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) attacked Zee TV's offices and employees. Although he has previously been pressured to resign for many reasons (such as the very dealings being parodied), it was this act of violence

on his behalf which finally prompted his resignation "on moral grounds." The *Mid-Day Mumbai* is hailing the sketch as the "the TV satire that brought Bhujbal down," and its sequel has already aired.

In Texas, "Stop the Madness" is on trial for the third time, now in the Supreme Court. In this mock article, printed November 11, 1999, by the *Dallas Observer*, a six-year-old girl is arrested for the "terroristic threat" of her report on the picture book *Where The Wild Things Are*. Fake quotations were attributed to two genuine public officials, court-at-law judge Darlene Whitten and her husband, district attorney Bruce Isaacks, who have taken the paper to court.

The main problem according to Whitten and Isaacks is that the parody could be confused with reality. But when reality can become so bogus and illogical as to be mistaken for farce (with false quotations like "It's time for you to grow up, young lady, and it's time for us to stop treating kids like children"), the problem isn't copyright or liability. It's the panicked and hypocritically illogical power being parodied in the first place. •••



Promotional photo for *A New War* by Gim Hoppe.

## An open letter to the National Magazine Awards Foundation:

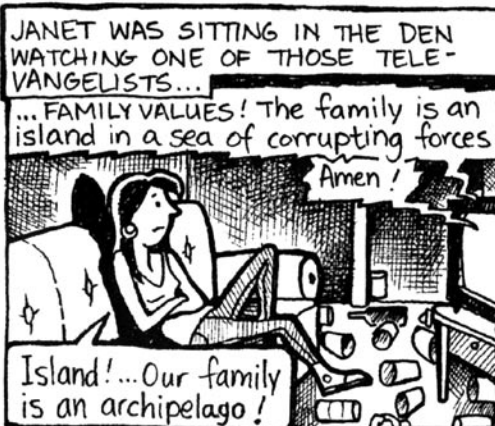
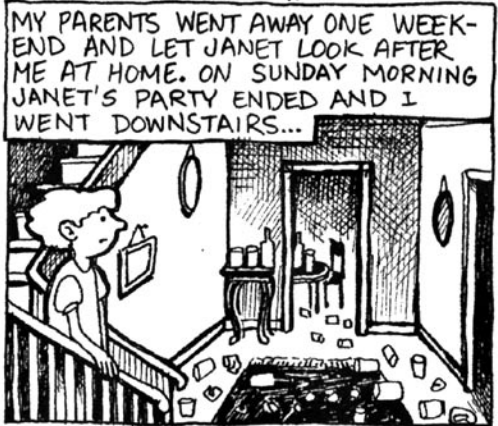
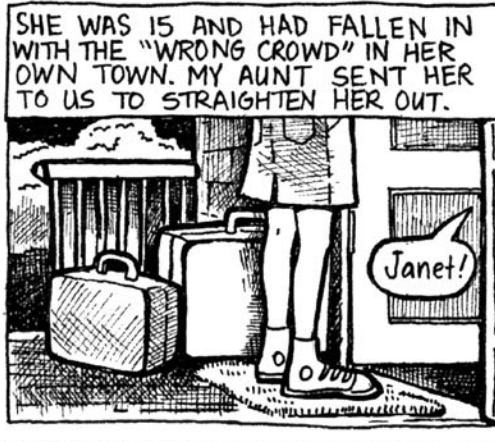
I am writing to express my disappointment at your decision to eliminate the poetry category in the National Magazine Awards. It seems to me that in doing so you are not only turning your back on the literary magazines that form an important part of your constituency, you are turning your back on journalistic tradition.

Poetry has appeared in the pages of our magazines and newspapers for as long as magazines and newspapers have appeared on our doorsteps and dining room tables. Poetry isn't just the province of the little literaries. *Harper's* and *The New Yorker* publish poems; likewise, poems appear in Canada's most intelligent general-interest magazines: *Brick*, for instance, and *Maisonneuve*. These poems are not literary sideshows, but rather they form a necessary counterpoint to the narrative approach of essays and reviews. They court the world's complexities, they mine the history of the language. The best of them find their way into our heads and hearts and become part of our vocabularies, enabling us to speak to one another in an idiom enriched by shared literary experience.

Magazine-publication of poetry is critical not just for readers, but for poets. It can take a decade to compile a book-length manuscript of poems. If individual verses are to have a public life, they need more immediate venues. Magazines provide those venues, furnishing poets with audience and response. Without that support, the poet works in a vacuum, if she works at all.

The poetry category in the National Magazine Awards does an important service to our culture by recognizing the publication of fine poetry in journals large and small. For the sake of readers and of writers, please reconsider your decision.

—Amanda Jernigan



“Lo Que Hemos Aprendido,” continued from page 5 »

de Ballenas, a Buenos-Aires-based organization which promotes whale conservation in Argentina. (Over the course of the past few years, the Taboadas have weathered their country's economic collapse, raised two small children, and still managed to turn the Right Whale Program from an American-driven, top-down research effort into a vital, grassroots organization which combines local expertise with international interest, environmental goals with economic demands, and academic research with conservation and education.) The final members of this right-whale team are Sarah Haney and Alan Calderwood of the Canadian Whale Institute (CWI).

Spend a week with these people, and you begin to realize that the behaviour patterns evident in the human population of Península Valdés are as complicated as those evident

in the whale population. There are politics upon politics. The property on which the research station is located belongs to the Argentine navy. It is leased to the Wildlife Conservation



Society (WCS), which in turn permits the Right Whale Program to do its work. The Right Whale Program is affiliated with the Whale Conservation Institute (WCI), a branch of Ocean Alliance, and also

with the Taboadas' Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas (ICB). The program is funded in large part by the CWI, and is a member of the South American Marine Mammal Working Group (SAMMWG). This stew of acronyms has been a hotbed of competing interests and conflicting approaches, all complicated by the interests and approaches of outside groups: the whale-watching industry, fishermen, the Argentine government, and other groups of scientists, studying armadillos, guanacos, gulls. But Rowntree and the Taboadas have proved masters of diplomacy; perhaps their background in animal-behaviour

research stands them in good stead. When I leave the peninsula, they are preparing for a conference which will bring together right whale researchers and conservationists from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay,

and Chile. Valenzuela is helping Rowntree translate her lecture from English into Spanish. Roxana Taboada is distributing educational posters to local whale-watching tourists and guides.

All week, I have been meaning to ask someone about the connection between research biology and conservation. At the end of the day, when all of the aerial surveys have been completed, the observations taken down, and the callosity patterns recorded and compared, are we really any closer to restoring this ocean? Any less likely to continue our oftentimes unwitting assault on the natural world? Are these whales better off for our efforts?

As a parting gift — and as if in answer to my question — Roxana Taboada gives us a copy of her poster. Printed in large script across the bottom of the poster is the motto of the ICB: *Sólo podemos amar lo que conocemos, conocer lo que entendemos y entender lo que hemos aprendido*; We can only love that which we know, know that which we understand, and understand that which we have learned. I'm guessing that love does not get mentioned in Rowntree's research papers about the whales of Golfo San José, but it is implied in the quiet intensity with which she speaks about these whales, and with which she works on their behalf. There is, perhaps, an unstated prefix to the ICB motto: It is only that which we love that we desire to preserve. ...

*Amanda Jernigan currently lives and writes in Sackville, New Brunswick. She is a contributing editor of The New Quarterly and of Canadian Notes & Queries.*

*John Haney's photographs have been exhibited in New Brunswick and Ontario. The images included here are part of a larger body of work examining human and animal life on Península Valdés.*