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News briefs

BY THE PROJECTOR NEWS STAFF

SA executives fight for students in Ottawa

Students' Association president Ryan Mariani and vice-president of finance Becky Turner attended the annual Canadian Alliance of Students' Associations (CASA) Lobby Conference in Ottawa.

They met with MP's and senators to discuss dedicated transfer payment for post-secondary education, expanding the low-income grant program and allowing students to apply tax credits to the principal of their student loans.

"The week was hugely successful," said Turner.

Notre Dame gets new student lounge

The Notre Dame campus is now home to a new student study lounge.

The Workshop offers seating for up to 100 people, 14 comfortable armchairs and 39 computer drops. The area is equipped with a wireless network area which allows laptops to access the Internet without plugging in.

ASSET program graduates students

On Nov. 25, Red River College officially graduated its first 10 qualified Ford technicians from the Automotive Student Service Educational Training (ASSET) program.

The two-year ASSET program is sponsored by Ford and Ford-Lincoln dealers in Manitoba. Its goal is to replenish the dwindling number of qualified automotive service technicians, as well as to offer an alternative career choice.

Ziggy Hammerling, one of two instructors with the course, says ASSET was created after Ford surveyed their technicians and discovered a senior population.

"The program is to help better satisfy customers with a 'fix it right the first time' attitude," he says.

The program is divided into two parts: with four, eight week classroom sessions along with three, 10 work sessions in a dealership.

The program is unique in that students already have jobs. Dealerships from across the province send employees to ASSET to become trained technicians.

Hammerling says majority of the 25 dealerships in Manitoba have sent students, with approximately 13 students in three separate classes.

Each ASSET graduate will receive a diploma, a $1,000 cheque, a watch and a leather jacket from Ford of Canada. Ford has also contributed $400,000 in tools, specialized equipment, and vehicles to the program.

Steve Mutter, one of the 10 recent graduates of ASSET, is back to work at Mid-Town Ford Sales Ltd. of Winnipeg.

Mutter wrote his journeyman's test on Nov .27 and is thinking of specializing in air-conditioning.

"I'd recommend the course. It goes further in-depth. The instructors are friendly, and it's people helping other people to get ahead."

SA launches petition

BY EVAN DUNCAN

Students who thought they might not be receiving a reading week this year can hold that thought, due to an argument raised by Craig Loewen, Vice President of the Princess Street campus's Students' Association.

Loewen released a memo expressing his concern about students not receiving a reading week break during the second semester. Students who are on the semester system only receive a "mini break" which gives them just two days off, February the 25th and 28th instead of a full week.

This has been the reality since some courses at Red River College went from the trimester system, to the semester system.

"From what I've seen, the students need it," Loewen says.

Loewen says the most important thing for students when it comes to reading week is the time they need to recuperate and catch up on their work. "People need to get caught up in their lives."

Loewen says the best way for the students to be heard is to show their support. "It's do or die for the break," Loewen says.

RRC is the only major post-secondary institution in Manitoba that does not follow a similar calendar when it comes to a reading week break.

Larry Partap, coordinator of the creative communications program says, "If we want to be looked at in the same way as other post-secondary institutions why don't we have a break?"

Partap says students who take a program which is on the semester system are attending class for 17 weeks without a break before the end of the first term, and 16 weeks without a break before the end of the school year.

"Reading week is essential for their well being and for their holistic education," says Partap. Partap says if students are serious about obtaining a reading week break they must, "do it with passion or it will die".

Neil Hutmacher, a first-year business administration student, says he would like to see the college have a break in the second term.

"Red River is a great school, but I don't understand why they don't have the same schedule as the universities," says Hutmacher. He says his course is becoming more difficult as the semester goes on. "I could really use a break in the second semester, with work and school it is going to be tough to keep up. I could use the time to get caught up with my assignments and spend some time with my friends and family".

A petition is being circulated which students can sign in favor of a reading week break.

For more information you can contact Craig Loewen at saprin@rrc.mb.ca

JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER

Worldwide, cervical cancer is the 5th most common cause of death from cancer in women. Cervical cancer can be/may be caused by Human Papilloma Virus, or **HPV**, which is transmitted during sexual intercourse. Infection with HPV is very common. Everyone who becomes sexually active is at risk of infection. 3 out of every 4 sexually active women get an **HPV** infection at some point in their lives-young women are more likely to be infected.

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AN HONORARIUM WILL BE PROVIDED

Drug dealer advertises in college washrooms

Hallucinogenic unknown to Winnipeg Police drug unit

BY ALANA PONA

The president of Red River College's Students' Association is appalled after hearing a hallucinogenic drug was being advertised in the men's public washroom at the Princess Street campus.

"As a student leader, I am curious to know how long they were in the washrooms and how many times people make sure the atmosphere is appropriate," says Ryan Mariani.

He's concerned that students struggling with addictions will have problems saying no to drugs advertised in washrooms on campus.

"Students should notify security if any material is suspicious, illegal or questionable in nature," says Mariani.

The Winnipeg Police Drug unit and Health Canada are monitoring salvia divinorum, a species of the sage family that is known on the street as "divine" or "diviner's sage." The advertisements were left on urinals and toilets with a name and number to call.

"The drug is not named in any scheduled drug list (on the Controlled Drug Substances Act), but we are taking it to the chemist. It is an unknown resource," says a member of the drug unit.

Rick Lawler, a 47-year-old student at the Princess Street campus says he noticed the ads in the washroom during the week of Nov. 15.

"It looked like someone had laid them out as a form of advertising. I thought it was a little strange," he says.

He says he was taken aback when he saw the ads, which state that for $50 a gram users can purchase the ready to use, potent, psychotropic hallucinogen. According to dictionary.com, psychotropic hallucinogens have an altering effect on perception, emotion or behavior.

"But what made me wonder was what is this stuff in the advertisement and why isn't it regulated? If it is, then why is someone not doing anything about it – they seem to have a grip on everything else," says Lawler.

PHOTO | JUSTEN VOGT

Students noticed ads for drugs in November.

> "It looked like someone had laid them out as a form of advertising. I thought it was a little strange."
>
> -RICK LAWLER

Chris, a dealer who listed his number on the card, claims the drug is safe and hard to find.

"The plants are fairly new in Canada. Other folks have asked about it and I've passed on some stuff," says Chris.

The leaf of the sage plant can be smoked or absorbed under the tongue (in a liquid form) for a powerful high.

"I would say it lasts for about 15 minutes. You feel altered for about an hour and then after it peaks fast," he says. "It was used by ancient Mexicans to touch God or whatever.

"From the first time I recall, you would want to put yourself down on a piece of furniture. The walls start waving at you – it reminds me of LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide)."

Health Canada spokesperson Catherine Saunders says it is aware of salvia divinorum and is monitoring the "drug of concern."

The federal department is monitoring claims that the drug causes hallucinations, out of body experiences, unconsciousness and short-term memory loss.

"It is on that list and we will continue to monitor the situation in Canada to see if there is any federal intervention is required to start regulating it," Saunders says.

Shannon Cudmore, a 21-year-old student at Red River's Princess Street campus says she heard about salvia through a friend but has never tried it. "I heard it is legal and you can get it off the Internet and stuff and I heard it really messes you up," says Cudmore.

The Internet is home to many websites that describe how to grow, use and sell the herbal drug.

Sagewisdom.org claims salvia divinorum is the "only vision-inducing species" of the sage plant that was originally "used in religious and healing ceremonies by the Mazatec Indians" who live in the Mexican province of Oaxaca.

Dean investigates technical communications

SA letter asks for answers to student concerns

BY SHANNON MARTIN

A college dean is investigating the technical communications program after one third of its first-year students complained to the Students' Association.

SA vice president Craig Loewen gave six anonymous statements from students, out of a class of 17, in a letter dated Nov.1. Complaints included concerns about a low employment rate after graduation, unsatisfactory course material, and course redundancy.

"Most issues have been brought up (in the past)," says Don MacDonald, dean of transportation, aviation and manufacturing, who received the letter. "We're trying to improve."

MacDonald, who hasn't contacted the SA with a response, says the department has reviewed the program annually since it started three years ago. He says he didn't contact students about their concerns because the statements are anonymous.

"I will go in and talk to the students in a class situation. At this point it didn't seem right to talk to students directly," says MacDonald. "The issues are being discussed and students will get feedback."

Loewen says he started receiving complaints at the end of September.

"The percentage of complaints is uncommon...They've (students) gone to class reps, but they feel nothing has been done at that level," says Loewen. "It's been very frustrating for students because complaints are heard and nothing is being done."

The students approached Loewen to act as a middle man, he says.

"These individuals have sought my help in hearing their concerns with a course that has left them disheartened and apprehensive about their education," wrote Loewen in the opening of the three-page letter.

"Almost all the students spoke about dropping out of the course, as well as noting unprofessional behavior by certain instructors."

> "These individuals have sought my help in hearing their concerns with a course that has left them disheartened and apprehensive about their education."
>
> -CRAIG LOEWEN

Since the letter was written, three first-year students have left the program. The second-year class has dwindled from 14 original students to eight students.

The technical communications program, which is a relatively new course, is a two-year co-operative where students write manuals, brochures and other documents for various industries, according to the college web site.

Technical communications lead instructor Alexa Campbell says she is surprised to learn about the students' complaints.

"I'm surprised to hear students wouldn't come to us," says Campbell, in the program office. "We do everything we can to be available to students, students even have my home phone number."

Campbell says students were anxious earlier this year about the availability of jobs after graduation.

"I don't know how it started this fall. There was a high level of anxiety of jobs," says Campbell. But as far a she knows "seven out of seven graduates (from last year) are working."

Graduate and last year's class president Jim Martin says he helped launch a formal student complaint to the department head last year. He says nothing was done.

"We asked for clarification of material or assignments on a daily basis and were routinely told that the confusion and lack of direction were a normal part of the life of a technical writer," says Martin. "We got the distinct impression that these remarks were a cover up for a lack of preparation and course planning."

The SA intends to follow up with the college, says Loewen.

"In my mind, the students aren't happy with the course... people aren't getting jobs, or the course isn't being taught properly, or the course isn't worth anything at all," says Loewen.

"My hope is to see a full review of the program, based on the amount of student complaints."

Former first-year student Dan Roberts says he agrees that a review should be done.

"I think that would be paramount," he says.

He dropped out of the program in November because of frustration in the course, relating to course content. Roberts lost part of his tuition money due to his decision.

"I don't get my money back. There's no real recourse, and I'd like to get reimbursed for textbooks and everything," says Roberts, who has an honours degree in geography from the University of Winnipeg.

"There's got to be accountability. I expected more from the college."

Red River College

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R3B 1K9
(204) 949-8466

Up & Coming Events for December

Dec 2– X-Mas Kegger @ Notre Dame 3-7 in the Cave

Dec 15—Payment due for the Ferine Ski trip

Are you interested in Snowboarding or Skiing keep your eyes and ears open or drop in @ DM20

To find more out about the SA events. Join the SA Events Email List. Email saevents@rrc.mb.ca with "add me to the list" in the subject line.

CHECK OUT THE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION WEB SITE WWW.RRCSA.COM

Attention Food Bank Recipients !!

Holiday Hampers Available

Wednesday, December 15th
Food Bank Trailer/ Notre Dame Campus
Pick– up between 1:00 and 4:00

If you need help this year please register for your
Holiday Hamper by December 10th

Registration forms available @ the Students Associations offices DM20 or P110

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Princess Street Contact Campus Security at 949-8305

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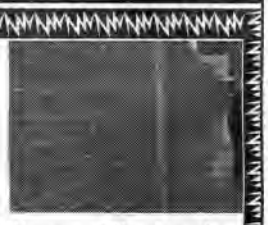
Message From Your SA



SA Executives Fight for Students in Ottawa

Ryan Mariani, SA President and Becky Turner, SA Vice-President, Finance attended the annual Canadian Alliance of Students' Associations (CASA) Lobby Conference November 21-16 in Ottawa.

The Wall of Debt was built on parliament hill on Wednesday November 24. The wall consisted of 5000 bricks from across Canada, including a number from Red River College.

Mariani and Turner each met with approximately 10 Members of Parliament and Senators, while the entire CASA delegation sat down with approximately 150 MP's and Senators. The main topics of discussion included; a dedicated transfer payment for post-secondary education, expanding the low-income grant program, and allowing students to apply tax credits to the principal of their student loans.

"The week was hugely successful, the federal government is talking about post-secondary education policy and student finance issues." Turned said of the conference.

Important INFORMATION!!!!

Regarding Your

Student Benefits Health & Dental Plan

Changes to your Health and Dental Plan

Starting September 1, 2004, your Insurance Company for health and dental benefits will be Great West Life Policy # 330827. Please visit the Student Benefits Plan Office RM FM 66 Notre Dame Campus or P-110 Princess Campus Students' Association Office **(reduced hours)** for further details on how to obtain your New SA CARE Card or visit the website at ***www.gallivan.ca/studentnetworks***

New students to the health and dental plan, please visit the Student Benefits Plan Office to obtain your SA Care Card. Students are required to apply to the Manitoba Pharmacare program. Manitoba Pharmacare applications are on hand at both office locations.

DEADLINES: 30 calendar days from the start date of program. No exceptions will be made.

- OPT OUT: Waiver form and documentation of exiting coverage must be submitted to the Student Benefits Plan Office.
- Rescind Waivers: Students, who have submitted waiver forms in past years and would like to rejoin the plan, a rescind waiver form must be submitted to the Student Benefits Plan Office.
- Family Add On: Students may purchase Family coverage for spouse/dependants. Family Add On form and payment must be submitted to the Student Benefits Plan Office.

*Please visit the Student Benefits Plan office to obtain forms and coverage information RM FM 66 Notre Dame Campus (204) 632-2503 or Room P-110 Princess Campus Students' Association Office (204)949-8475(**reduced hours**). Students can download forms and coverage information at* **www.gallivan.ca/studentnetworks**

Bring Back the Break!!

Have you heard that the semester system does not get a break, we the Students' Association would like your support. We have a petition that you can sign @ the Students' Association DM20 or P110.

RRC cafeteria wants more business

By Josiah Thiessen

The cafeteria that opened this fall at the Princess Street campus hopes the weather will help it gain some momentum after a slow start to business.

"Overall from a sales perspective things are a little slow... maybe because of the good weather we've had in October and November," said Rob Olson, director of auxiliary services for Red River College. Olson expects the colder weather will encourage more students to eat at the cafeteria instead of going out.

There have been some student complaints about high prices, food selection and slow service at the sub sandwich bar, but cafeteria supervisor Lorne Hildebrandt says she's seen sales growing daily.

Red River College hired Aramark to provide food services on the Princess Street campus, but Aramark follows the college's suggestions. Lately the cafeteria's been making some changes.

"We're not going to sit status quo with what we have," says Olson.

> "I think we'll ask people point blank, 'what do you want?' and then go from there."
>
> -LORNE HILDEBRANDT

The cafeteria now offers breakfast starting at 7:30 a.m.. Hildebrandt says they plan to replace the TCBY yoghurt stand, which isn't very popular, with a tossed salad bar.

The cafeteria just finished adding up student responses from a survey it's been circulating. Hildebrandt says she got lots of good ideas from the survey. She wants to put out another one to find out more.

"I think we'll ask people point blank, 'what do you want?' and then go from there," she says.

The hot lunch entrées are the best selling item, says Hildebrandt. Lasagna with a Caesar salad and garlic toast costs $5 plus tax. Olson says food prices are on par with those at the Notre Dame campus. A meal at the Buffalo Cafeteria costs $5.26.

Aramark is in charge of the food services at the Notre Dame and Princess Street Campuses, as well as the Tim Horton's at Princess Street. They provide food services to businesses, schools, and sports facilities all over the world. In 2003 Aramark made $9.4 billion in sales with a net income of $301.1 million, a 13% increase from the year before.

Kelly Korsunsky, a first-year technical communications student gets breakfast at the cafeteria almost every day. He says the servers already know him.

"I went to Tim Hortons every day for over a month and ordered the same thing and they still didn't recognize me," he said. Now he eats at the cafeteria. "The food's fairly good for its price," he says.

Genevive, also a first-year student, says the cafeteria needs to improve its soup and lower its prices. She would rather eat next door at Foon Hai, the Chinese restaurant on the corner of William and Adelaide.

"I had a great stir-fry with shrimp and asparagus for $5.95 there," she says. "There are a lot of places around here that have cheaper prices and seem to be better quality."

Program helps inner city youth

By Dave Dickie

A program offered at Red River College's Princess Street campus that prepares youth to work with inner city kids is back on track after an almost three month delay.

The youth recreation activity worker program, funded by the province of Manitoba, working in conjunction the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Club, was in danger of not starting its fourth year.

The program's instructor Kerry Coulter said, "The program used to be funded by both the province and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), but we were told that HRSDC doesn't fund training programs, so the province was left holding the bag. Essentially, we had slipped through the (HRSDC) cracks the last three years."

When HRSDC realized their oversight, funding was immediately pulled.

"The problem is, is that there isn't any other programs like this, so it doesn't fit in anywhere, and it's harder for HRSDC to recognize it," Coulter said.

The 38 week certificate program teaches multiple barrier youth aged 18-29 an array of different skills, from interpersonal skills and non-violent crisis prevention to life skills and psychology.

> "It's like a family atmosphere. Like school, work and therapy all at once."
>
> -SHANNON CUDMORE

Shannon Cudmore, a student in the program who hadn't warmed to the idea of university life, had only good things to say about the program.

"It's like a family atmosphere. Like school, work and therapy all at once," she said. "I didn't know what to expect, but the whole group is very supportive, and the instructors are really accommodating. They care about how you're feeling." The program aims to attract students from the inner city, as well as international students. "I was studying education back home, and a friend of mine told me about the program. So it worked out well for me. I feel very at home in this course, plus the program is free," Edward Santos said.

"I want to get into nursing, and I can put these credits towards doing that," Joanne Javier said.

Steven Raven, one of many aboriginal students in the program, has the community's children in mind. "I just want to work with kids."

USB proves a smarter choice

By Melni Ghattora

Students who are looking for a more reliable way to store their work might consider purchasing a USB jumpdrive.

"A 128mb USB drive is efficient for students who are storing mainly data files," says Devin Armenti, owner and operator of Surefix Computer Repair. Armenti said the units allow storage for items such as digital photos and MP3 files. The 128mb storage unit has 300 times the storage capacity then the standard floppy disc.

Prior to purchasing a USB jumpdrive, Kamal Singh relied on a floppy disk to store data, which he now calls a careless mistake. The Red River College international business student stored six months worth of journal entries only to find that days before the assignment was due, he had lost all his data.

For Singh it is important to have reliable portable storage to save his work.

"It allows me access to saved data at any given time, as long as there is a computer I can get my hands on."

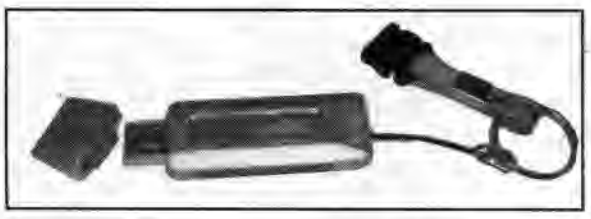


PHOTO | MELNI GHATTORA

Armenti says, "Floppy disks can be easily damaged. Contributing factors include dust, heat, exposure to magnetic force and overuse."

If your data on the disk becomes corrupt you would have to reformat your disk, deleting everything saved on the disk.

In addition to a floppy disk, another alternative is a compact disk, but it too has its faults. According to Armenti, if scratched hard enough, you can lose access to your documents. CDs also require a computer with a writer and unless the CDs are rewriteable, they cannot be used more than once to save data.

Since investing dollars in a USB storage device, Singh has not had anymore careless mistakes, and the tiny little gadgets come highly recommended.

"In fact I have two, I have a backup to my backup," he laughs. "You know, you can never be too safe."

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Low-carb beer fails test

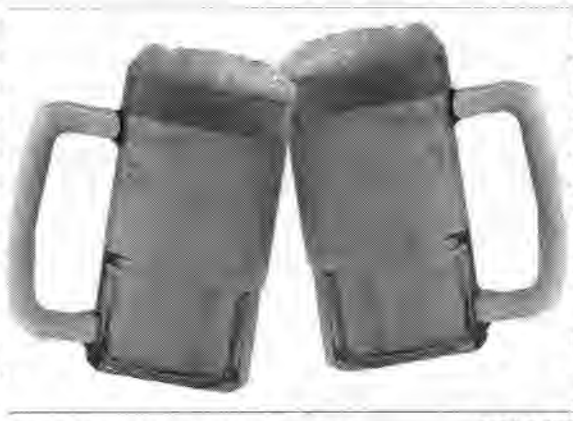
BY KRISTA SIMONSON

This a month to Christmas break, and students' thoughts fall to drinking, and dancing, and how they'll get through it all...

Worried about surviving your two weeks of festive partying? Thinking low-carb beer might be your saving grace?

Think again.

A plethora of low-carb beers have hit the market in the last year, thanks to the resurgence of the Atkins Diet and the low-carb craze. In Canada alone, four major breweries have launched low-carb products in the last year group of Red River students recently took it upon themselves to find out the real deal about these beers.



FILE | PHOTO

The study narrowed its focus on Canada's main beer suppliers: Molson and Labatt. Traditional beers weigh in at about 140 calories and 13 grams of carbohydrates. Molson Ultra has only 97 calories and 2.5 grams of carbs. Labatt Sterling is 88 calories with the same 2.5 grams of carbs.

Surveys and informal discussions showed that students assume low-carb beer is absorbed more slowly than traditional beer, and that its effects would not be as obvious. Some suggested that low-carb beer could be a safe alternative for those in charge of driving for the night.

Having completed four controlled, regulated beer consumption sessions with a focus group, this is obviously a dangerous misunderstanding. Low-carb beer gets you drunk, although at a slightly slower rate. Jenna Khan, said after five beers, "It's not the same as regular beer, but I'm drunker than my expectations."

Both Molson and Labatt allege on their websites that taste is not compromised in their low-carb beers. Blind taste-testing results with focus group were in stark opposition to these claims. All participants quickly identified the low-carb beers, calling them gassy, fizzy, bland, and watery.

Dave Dickie, said, "It's a tepid, putrid beer best used for Chinese water torture."

Not only is low-carb beer bad for your taste buds, it's bad for your wallet. These low-carb beers only come in six-packs. By the time you buy four, you've spent over $40, as compared to $35 for a case of traditional lager.

The liver angst is subsiding, the research is done. If your carb consumption is really so important to you, take this advice: drink real beer every other day.

Eat healthy on low budget

BY TERESA MURRAY

A healthy diet is important for students, but with a limited budget some students are forced to be creative and savvy when shopping for groceries.

Kendra Pauls, registered dietitian at St. Boniface Hospital offers hope to students on a budget.

"Eating on campus might be expensive but healthy eating doesn't have to be."

Pauls suggests that students plan a budget before going shopping.

"Start out by planning your menu for the week. Make a list so that you know which ingredients you need to have on hand."

Dave Dalgliesh, information systems technology student at Red River College, says that his shopping list is always the same. With rent and bills to cover he has a limited grocery budget and can't afford to stray from his cost effective grocery list. Dalgliesh's list consists mainly of fruits and vegetables, all of which are always in season.

Another piece of advice Pauls recommends is to follow Canada's Food Guide to Health Living.

According to Pauls, trying whole grain or enriched products such as rolled oats and bran cereals are wise alternatives to flavored cereals which are more expensive and full of sugar.

Pauls also suggests selecting darker colored fruits and vegetables as they have more nutrition in them. She advises students to buy frozen produce and fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season as they are less expensive.

Due to the high price of chicken and prime cuts of beef Dalgliesh sticks to ground beef, tofu and tuna.

"If you're broke and hungry eat pasta, frozen veggies and ground beef." He also adds that, "If this routine gets boring substitute the ground beef with tuna or tofu."

> "Eating on campus might be expensive but healthy eating doesn't have to be."
>
> -KENDRA PAULS

The most important meal of the day is breakfast, says Pauls, because several studies have shown that it improves memory.

Pauls' final piece of advice is to keep to outer walls of the grocery store.

"This is where you will find your four food groups, choose generic brands as they are less expensive and keep in mind the store puts the most expensive brands at eye level so look at the upper and lower shelves for deals."

Got a story idea?
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Government starts fall session

Speech didn't touch on tuition freeze

BY ROBERT KOTYK

Manitoba's NDP government began its fall legislative session Nov. 22 with a throne speech touting tax cuts and health initiatives, but no hint of whether the tuition freeze would be lifted.

The New Democrats announced a 33 per cent property tax cut for farmland education, increased funding for police and a province-wide diabetes prevention strategy.

It was the eighth time the government has delivered a throne speech since assuming power in 1999.

But student politicians expressed disappointment the speech did not clarify the government's position on the province's tuition freeze.

Rob Marriott, spokesperson for the University of Manitoba student union, said the speech's focus in terms of post-secondary education was on policies that had already been announced.

"There was a lot of talk about the commitment that the Doer government has made over the past number of years in regards to post-secondary education, so there was a lot of touting increased enrolment, the new Red River (College) campus," he said. "We did not see any real commitments or any promises in regards to post-secondary education."

Currently, tuition fees are frozen at their 1999 levels, but so far, the government has been tight-lipped about whether the freeze will continue next year.

In October, when Manitoba universities presented their budgets to the Council on Post-Secondary Education, all three of the province's universities -- the University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg and Brandon University -- requested hefty grant increases from the government.

Becky Turner, vice-president of the Red River College student union, also said the province should act now to further help students.

"I was excited to see that this government wants to make education a priority," she said. "But I really hope that this government can put their money where their mouth is when it comes to continuing the tuition freeze and increasing core funding to the institutions."

Turner commended the government's support of the new Red River College campus in downtown Winnipeg.

"The government played a huge part in getting that campus up and running," she said. "So now it's time for the provincial government to shift their focus to helping students and helping students that are attending that campus."

CUP Central Bureau Chief

Giving Green: Ideas for a Sustainable Holiday

When I first started holiday shopping with the idea of 'sustainability' in mind, I thought that I was adding a new challenge to an already formidable task. Finding parking, fighting the crowds, trying to find that 'perfect' gift, trying to stay under budget and trying to get it all done in time were certainly challenges enough! As I discovered however, giving green can mean a less-expensive, less-stressful experience… and so far all of my friends and family have loved their unique and personal 'earth-friendly' gifts.

The Homemade Gift

If it's the thought that counts, something homemade will almost always be more special than a store-bought gift. So what stops us from making all of our gifts? My two main excuses for not trying this before were: 1) I don't have the time to make something myself. 2) I'm not nearly creative or talented enough to make something nice! As it turned out, both of these proved to be false. Most of the following gift ideas take less time to create than an afternoon spent at the mall, and are not very high on the skill- demand side either!

- **Recipe Book**: Gather favourite recipes from your friends and family, and arrange them together into a recipe book. By adding photos and a line or two about each person, you can make the book even more personal. Once you've compiled the sheets, coil-binding costs only about $1 per book.
- **Edibles:** Baking will always be appreciated, especially if it contains chocolate! As any time-stretched student will tell you, frozen meals are always a welcome convenience. A tray of lasagne, a pot of stew or your favourite casserole will definitely be received with thanks.
- **Plant Cuttings:** Cuttings from plants that you have around your home make for a great personal gift. Try finding unique containers at second-hand stores (teapots, mugs, bowls) to use as planters.
- **Mixed Tapes/CDs:** Who doesn't love receiving new music? Selecting each song with the recipient in mind creates a very personal gift, one that will offer many hours of enjoyment.

The Used Gift

Giving an item an extra-life helps reduce our dependence on new resources, and as any antique-hunter can tell you, browsing through vintage shops and goodwill stores looking for treasures can be a lot of fun!

- **Books:** Winnipeg has a great variety of used bookstores…in them you can find new releases at a fraction of the cost, or old, hard-cover versions of favourite classics and children's tales.
- **Clothing:** Comfy sweaters, flashy silk scarves, or a funky hat or bag… with a bit of effort, you're bound to find a new favourite.
- **Jewellery:** Incredible amounts of energy (and toxic chemicals) are used in the extraction of gold, diamonds and other minerals to make new jewellery. Many second-hand and antique stores have a great selection of vintage jewellery, and at great prices too!

The Non-Material Gift

Giving a gift of service requires the use of little or no natural resources. Whether you buy a gift certificate from a professional, or give a coupon offering your own time, it will be a welcomed treat.

- **Services:** Massage, snow shoveling/lawn care, an evening of childcare or a dog walk.
- **Tickets** to a concert, the theatre or a movie.
- **Skill-sharing/Professional Lessons:** Music, cooking, languages, pottery, knitting, sewing, yoga, home-repair or car maintenance.

The Gift of Charity

What to get for the person who has everything? Make a donation to an organization that is important to that person, and write a note in a card explaining your action. Here are a few worthwhile groups, for a list of other Canadian Non-Profit organizations, visit www.charityvillage.com

- **Winnipeg Harvest:** In Safeway stores throughout Winnipeg you can find packaged mini-hampers available for purchase. Simply purchase the bag of food, and drop it in the donation box.
- **Heifer International:** A well established organization, Heifer has an online 'gift animal' catalogue at www.heifer.org which lets you donate an animal of your choice to a family in a developing country. These gifts help to put the family on the road to self-reliance.
- **David Suzuki Foundation:** This Canadian organization works through science and education to protect the environment. A great gift for any nature lover! Find them online at www.davidsuzuki.org

The Waste Reducing Gift

Consider giving a gift that will keep on giving… to the environment! Check out some of these items which will save energy, resources and money. Your friends and the environment will thank you.

- **Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs (CFLs):** These lightbulbs are now available at almost all hardware stores, and will fit into any standard lightbulb fixture. They use only 25% of the energy of a standard incandescent lightbulb, and they last ten times as long!
- **Low-Flow Showerheads:** Older showerheads can use as much as three times the amount of water as newer, high-efficiency versions.
- **Programmable Thermostats:** These automatically adjust the temperature in the home for day and night levels. More than 60% of the energy used in Canadian homes is for heating!
- **Reusable Grocery Bags:** These heavy-duty cloth bags cost only a few dollars, and save the waste of a plastic bag every time that they are used.

The Ecological/Ethical Gift

Here are a few final things to consider for the other items on your gift list.

- Look for items that have recycled content.
- Choose items that are produced locally. By choosing to buy locally you reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted during transportation of the product, and you support your local economy.
- Look for organic items. When you choose organic, you help to reduce the negative costs to the environment from artificial fertilizers and pesticides, as well as the potential negative health effects to the grower and consumer of the product.
- Buy items which bear the 'FairTrade' logo. This logo guarantees that the artisans and farmers who produced the product have been paid a fair and living wage.

Ten Thousand Villages 134 Plaza Drive963 Henderson Highway
A non-profit group which sells fair-trade products from around the world. They offer an amazing variety of items, including fair-trade coffee, chocolate and tea, fair-trade rugs, linens, pottery, musical instruments, artwork and crafts.

Humboldt's Legacy 887 Westminster Avenue
For over 20 years, this store has been providing alternative products for sustainable living. Clothing made from organic fibres, natural soaps, candles and cleaning supplies, and books and magazines on sustainability are just a few of the things that you can find here.

Neechi Foods Co-op 325 Dufferin Street
An aboriginal worker cooperative, this grocery store sells Manitoba wild rice and wild blueberry jam, homemade bannock and fruit pies, and locally handcrafted aboriginal products.

The Healthy Home Store 827 Dakota Street
One of the only stores of its kind in Canada, this company is dedicated to providing alternative building and renovating products obtained from sustainable, natural and recycled resources. For more information visit www.ecoelements.ca

For other great sustainable gift ideas, visit www.buynothingchristmas.org
For more information on ethical consumption check out unpac.ca/economy/ethicconsumption.html

Season holidays cross cultures

By Kaleigh Allison

When everyone is frantic about last minute Christmas shopping, James Hes isn't worried. The business administration student at the Notre Dame Campus moved to Canada from China in 1990, and never adopted the celebration of Christmas.

"I have no feelings for Christmas. It's just like another day for me," he said. "I think Christmas is great, but I don't feel any of the spirit within myself."

Although Hes and his family do not celebrate Dec. 25 in the conventional way, they use the day to visit family. February's Chinese New Year is their holiday most like the exchange of gifts that is generally done on Christmas Day.

"We receive money in red envelopes and maybe have a big supper with family. It's a Chinese tradition."

Scott Barkman's family is the opposite of the Hes. Barkman is a computer analyst/programmer student at the Princess Campus, and is firm in his beliefs.

The Barkmans celebrations begin on Dec. 1. They put up the Christmas tree and decorate it with ornaments and other things that have a personal meaning. Later in the month they attend a candlelight service at their church where they sing songs and listen to their Pastor's sermon.

Although Barkman's Christmas is based on Christian religious beliefs, he has no problem with other celebrations.

"I think they're great. Mainly what we do, as people, to celebrate Christmas is 99 per cent tradition. As long as the real meaning of Christmas is intact, it doesn't matter to me," Scott said, adding that the holiday has been too materialized.

Pierce Cairns celebrates both Ukrainian Christmas and what he calls Christmas, because his mother is Ukrainian and his father is not. Cairns is a student at the University of Winnipeg, and is working towards his bachelor of science honours degree in biochemistry.

On Ukrainian Christmas Eve, celebrated on Dec. 25, the Cairns family gets together at their Baba's (grandmother's) house. They eat a traditional Ukrainian meal, which usually includes perogies, cabbage rolls, bread, mushrooms, fish, and cheese rolls. They exchange gifts, but the meal is the main focus.

"Beyond that, we don't do a whole lot. The meal is the big thing," Cairns said.

"Usually on high holidays, we go to the synagogue and end up either hosting a dinner ourselves for friends and family, or going to a friend's house where they're doing something similar," said Daniel Kives who celebrates Hanukkah.

The Kives' dinner typically has roast beef, brisket, matza ball soup, and koogle, which is a baked noodle pudding.

The dates of the celebrations change every year, because the Jewish holidays follow a different calendar. This year, Hanukkah will be celebrated from sundown on Dec. 7 through sundown on Dec. 15.

A candle on the menorah is lit each night commemorating the miracle that occurred 23 centuries ago, when oil that was only enough to burn for one night during a rededication ceremony, lasted eight days.

There are a number of other celebrations that take place around Christmas. Kwanzaa is a celebration of African heritage that lasts from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1.

Dia de los Reyes, or Three Kings Day, is a traditional Hispanic Christian holiday celebrated on Jan. 6. Children put decorated boxes filled with grass for the king's camels under their beds the night before, and wake up to find the grass eaten, and gifts left in its place.

Eid al-Fitr, an Islamic holiday, is a celebration of month-long fasting, which is one of the fundamental obligations in the religion of Islam. This year it took place on Nov. 14 and 15. Diwali is one of the most important Hindu holidays. It symbolizes the victory of light over dark. It traditionally marks the beginning of the New Year, and was celebrated on Nov. 12.

This time of year truly is a holiday season.

Spare a shoe box?

By Shawna Skrudland

Operation Christmas Child will be collecting shoe boxes to be delivered to vulnerable and needy children across the world. The organization has set its goal for this Christmas at 7 million shoe box gifts internationally.

Karen Brglez, a student at Providence College, has been creating boxes since she moved to Winnipeg in 2001. She says Operation Christmas Child is her favourite fundraiser to volunteer for every year. Her father, Brian Brglez is the Pastor at the Alliance Church in Winnipeg. The Brglez family annually volunteers the Alliance Church as a drop off center for the shoe boxes as well as creating their own shoe boxes.

Creating a shoe box is easy to do. The first thing needed is an empty shoe box which does not have to be wrapped. If it is going to be wrapped the lid must be done separately. The items to fill the box can be toys, school supplies and hygiene items.

Other accepted items are hard candy, sunglasses, ball caps, socks, jewelry sets, hair clips, and small picture books. Items which are specifically asked not to be included are food items other than hard candy, used items because of restrictions at borders to certain countries, and anything that could melt or freeze, leak, break, scare or harm the recipient. A note to the child may also be included and a photo of yourself and/or your family. According to Brglez, these notes are cherished.

"Our friend was able to get on the volunteer list to take the shoe boxes overseas. She always stressed to us after she returned the importance of those notes. I always include a letter now with a few pictures."

Operation Christmas Child operates under the ministry Samaritan's Purse. The ministry is a global Christian organization that serves the Church worldwide. This organization is set up in Canada as well as in Germany, Ireland, Australia, Netherlands, the UK, and the USA.

United Way warms kids

BY VALERIE KOWALSKI

The United Way wants to keep kids warm this winter. That's why the not-for-profit organization has launched its annual Koats for Kids campaign.

The United Way, along with its sponsors Perth's Services Ltd., United Parcel Service, the *Winnipeg Sun*, CTV, 1290 CFRW, and the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service have distributed more than 80,000 gently used coats to Winnipeg children over the past 16 years. This year, Roots has donated toques and mittens from the Salt Lake City Olympics line.

"This program is a beautiful illustration of ... together we can accomplish amazing things," says Linda Brazier, director of community investment at the United Way. The program will make Winnipeg a warmer place for up to 5,000 children this year, predicts Brazier.

For mother-of-five Beverly Mawakeesic, her children will need the winter coats from the program this year. This is the first time she's used Koats for Kids, and has since become a volunteer.

"It's easy to become a volunteer. When I started, they said that I lightened up the place because I'm a funny person," says Mawakeesic.

> "It's easy to become a volunteer. When I started, they said that I lightened up the place because I'm a funny person."
>
> -BEVERLY MAWAKEESIC

Sylvia Kuzyk, weather anchor at CKY News, says so many people take basic necessities for granted, including winter coats.

"A warm coat can be such a wonderful thing. Seeing the children in need of such things has brought me close to tears. I'm really proud to be a part of the program," says Kuzyk, who became involved with Koats for Kids through CKY.

Items can be dropped off at any Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service station and at all Perth's locations. The items are then delivered by UPS and sorted at the Koats for Kids warehouse. If the program receives items that are inappropriate for children they will forward the goods on to other organizations such as the Main Street Project.

The program receives orders on a daily basis and can always use extra help. Gently used mittens, toques and scarves are also welcome donations. Anyone interested in volunteering for the program should contact Eleanor Marsh at 586-5628.

Top 10 '04 stories

COMPILED BY PROJECTOR NEWS STAFF

10 **Thachuk looks forward to retirement**
Jacqie Thachuk retired from her position as Red River College President after six years of service. Her mark in the school was working to rid the stigma of a once-called 'com munity' college.

9 **Opening speeches at Princess Street campus 'a waste': Mertins**
Candidates in the Red River College Students' Association elections gave their opening speeches to a virtually empty food court at the Princess Street Campus earlier this month, causing organizers to question what went wrong.

8 **Fifteen minutes of fame for RRC student**
Red River College creative communications student Jean-Marc Prevost not only had the opportunity to try out for Canadian Idol, but also met host Ben Mulroney. He had the chance to sing on eTalk Daily.

7 **Swollen Members rock RRC**
On Sept. 13, 2004, approximately 310 eager fans attended an intimate high-energy concert performed by Canada's own hip-hop sensation Swollen Members at the Red River Notre Dame campus.

6 **Notre Dame students face parking fee hike**
Parking fees will jump by 37.5 per cent at the Notre Dame campus and passes are now only valid for eight months, two less than the previous year. Passes will cost $353 a school year or $44 a month as compared to last years prices of $320 for 10 months or $32 a month.

5 **Princess Street's final phase to open fall 2004**
The third and final phase of Red River College's multi-million dollar Princess Street Campus is on schedule to open to all students, staff and visitors this fall.

4 **Solar car project takes off**
Mechanical engineering students from Red River College are preparing to travel distances of over 4,000 kilometers in their homemade solar powered car. The car will race from Austin, Texas through Winnipeg and on to the finish line in Calgary in July of 2005.

3 **MLCC squashes all you can drink events**
Red River College students will no longer be able to save a buck while partying. All you can drink bar events are no longer, thanks to the new MLCC liquor regulations recently set in place.

2 **Giant millipede found**
A giant West-African millipede named Timmy was found in the bottom of a speaker during a television production class. The millipede had been left in the studio after the filming of a horror movie.

1 **Downtown student violently accosted**
A Red River College student is recovering after a violent assault outside the campus during the week of Sept. 20. She was struck three times in the face by a man on the way to her bus stop.

Speak Out!

By Jillian Brown

What do you call a Colorado Spruce tree decorated with lights? A Christmas tree or a holiday tree?

This year, organizers at the Forks decided to call their tree a holiday tree in order to recognize and celebrate all religions.

The *Projector* asks: "What's in a name? Would that which we call a Christmas tree by any other word smell as sweet?"

Heidi Manthei
Diploma nursing accelerated 1st year
"I think it's political correctness gone overboard. A Christmas tree is a Christmas tree. It's been that way for hundreds of years. Other people have other things in their faiths that they celebrate and that's great."

Pam Byman
Business administration
"I think it's a good idea. Not everyone is Christian and this way everyone can appreciate the tree and not be offended."

Rob Sorokowski
Technical communications
"It doesn't really matter. I celebrate Ukrainian Christmas so tradition is not to have a Christmas tree. It's more of a religious holiday and it's about spending time with your family."

Corry Arnason
Diploma nursing accelerated 2nd year
"I think that it's wonderful that they're calling it a holiday tree because they're acknowledging all the different cultures in the city."

Ryan McMorris
Business administration laptop
"I believe it's a little ridiculous that they don't call it a Christmas tree. It's Christmas. What other holiday has a tree?"

David Gasiorek
Joint baccalaureate nursing program
"Everybody has their own religious rituals anyways so I think it should just stay as a Christmas tree."

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Back 2 Bakx

KYLE BAKX
COLUMNIST

Ever since the inaugural plans of having a new arena downtown, I have been a critic. Living south of the city and then in the south end, having an arena in the outskirts of the city would have been ideal. For a few reasons I have since changed my stance on the downtown arena.

The main reason is downtown revitalization. Along with me, thousands of other Winnipeggers have gone downtown and spent money. There I was on the opening night of the $133.5 million state-of-the-art facility, walking to the arena from the Princess Street campus.

The chill sent through my body was from seeing the four Hollywood movie premiere lights because the warm weather sure wasn't doing it. The spotlights pierced through Winnipeg's night sky and shone bright on the neighbouring retail outlets.

Whether shopping, eating or catching a drink with friends, some people would rather go to shows early to snatch up good parking spots or stay late to avoid traffic.

When the Manitoba Hydro office tower is erected on Portage Avenue and the new Millennium Library on Graham Avenue is finished, thousands more people could be lured into the city's core, furthering revitalization.

Another reason why I have changed my opinion about the arena is because of all the different shows now coming to Winnipeg. With some luck and persuasion, I was at the arena three times in the first two weeks after its opening. Besides opening night, I saw the Hip and I also saw my friend go on stage to help assist David Copperfield in one of his dramatic illusions.

Parking has not been much of a problem as it was perceived by the public to be and the post-event traffic has actually been better than at the old arena. As opposed to one large parking lot, having multiple smaller lots and having more people take the bus has helped traffic after events.

Those who have complained about concession prices (i.e. $5-7.50 for a beer), should not criticize because prices at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto (over $9 for a beer) are much higher.

The only thing I am still critical of is the arena's nickname, The Phone Booth. We have to think of something better than that.

Stressless exam season?

It takes some preparation

BY JULIE FOLK

With midterms and assignments piling up and exams only weeks away, stress is beginning to mount for all university students. But who cares, these are the fun times -- the reasons why we come to school -- right?

Okay, so maybe not. But there are ways to deal with the stress, and to make things go a little easier and keep you from going insane.

The piece of advice I think is important is to start early. I know it seems like there is so much time until exams and that they're weeks away, but they will creep up much sooner than you expect. So take a little time here and there to start preparing and you won't be so overwhelmed when exams come -- because how much good does cramming really do?

Equally important is to take care of yourself. So many students come down with colds or a sickness during exam time, because they forget about their health. Getting enough sleep is essential. The more tired you are while studying, the less quality work you get done.

Exercising and eating right are not only good for your general health, but they also help you relax and concentrate, relieving some stress. Even a 15-minute walk or run can re-energize you, helping you to get back to the books.

Plan to take breaks. Organize your time, and schedule breaks doing something that relaxes you or you enjoy.

Many students try to relieve their stress through alcohol or caffeine. This is not recommended; anything that brings you up usually brings you down soon after. Alcohol will especially ruin your focus. Binge drinking may relieve your stress for that night, but the next morning your headache is not going to help you while studying.

Plan to take breaks. Organize your time, and schedule breaks doing something that relaxes you or you enjoy. This includes spending time with your friends, maybe taking a night and going out to have some fun. Then you may not dread going back to the books as much. Never study for more than two or three hours straight; your brain can't handle it. Work a few hours, take a break and reward yourself for doing well. It will give you something to look forward to.

Study groups are beneficial for two reasons: you may come up with new ideas or learn things you didn't know before, or perhaps more importantly, you'll be able to spend time with others in the same amount of misery.

At this time, it seems like every student I talk to feels like they have the hardest exams, the most evil profs and way more work than everyone else. Here's a tip to those people: realize that everyone is in the same situation, working equally as hard. Your professors have not all gotten together in a secret plot against you.

Remember, this is university, and you came here for a reason -- to get a degree. That degree takes work. So work hard, finish your exams and do the best you can. Keep in mind once they're done, Christmas is right around the corner, along with a few wonderful weeks of holidays. Good luck to all on your studying -- which will hopefully be stress-free -- and exams.

The Carillon (University of Regina)

Beware of online auctions

E-Addictions drain wallet

BY DAVE CLARK

Do you often find yourself on your laptop in class, or on one of the school's many computers searching EBay for an amazing deal? Or possibly sitting at home all Friday night, waiting for the auction for the lot of Bat Boy comics to close, making sure nobody outbids you? Chances are you have an online auction addiction!

Now I know what you are thinking: there is no way you really have an addiction, unless of course you are bidding on large quantities of crack cocaine. Wrong. I have seen the dark side; I know it exists. I am even watching my friends slowly cross the line into a hellish world of maximum bids and inflated shipping costs. And really there is nothing you can do. As long as they have a credit card, they will spend.

I, myself, have been there. Until I realized these online auctions were eating away at my soul. I even once thought of selling such soul, however, it had already been tainted. To end the madness I looked for help. Only finding websites for people who engage in too much cyber-sex, I thought I was doomed.

This addiction is really the easiest to start, making it very dangerous.

There was no doubt my addiction was worse than talking about how cyber-hard your cyber-penis was. It wasn't my cyber-bank account that was being drained. It wasn't my cyber-boss that almost fired me from my cyber-job. This was real.

Now I didn't go as far as to rob a liquor store or beat up a homeless person to feed my addiction. I was blowing all my hard-earned money.

The thing about Internet auction addiction is that there are very few symptoms, compared to most addictions. I think I may have come down with a little bit of the carpal-tunnel syndrome, but that's a far cry from track marks down your arms. I've never awoken in a haze, only to realize I had bid on things that would make all my friends lose respect for me, then tried to dispose of the evidence in the trunk of my car, then drove it into the nearest river.

This addiction is really the easiest to start, making it very dangerous. You don't need to be of legal age, you don't need a consenting partner and you don't even have to leave your own home.

Really, the only human contact you will get is when the courier drops off your parcels. I think I would rather have a conversation with a bag of rusty nails just waiting to give you tetanus than the local courier.

So, just be forewarned. Random novelties, like mullet wax or a bag of Paris Hilton's pubic hair, combined with shipping costs, and customs fees, will do nothing for you but make you want more.

When you are shaking in the corner in the fetal position with an empty wallet, you will have nowhere to turn. Not even your autographed picture of the Fonz or your GI Joe collection can help you now.

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(Grant MacEwan College)

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Holiday Preview

By Ryan Hladun

'Twas weeks before Christmas, when all through the 'Peg,
Not a theatre was resting, for a ticket you'd have to beg.

Scorsese's last nerve was hung on the 17th with the Aviator,
In hopes that the elusive St. Oscar would soon be there.
His boy wonder Leo was nestled all snug in the lead,
While the legend of Howard Hughes danced in his head.

And Wesley Snipes with his Blade, and Jessica Biel in her leather,
Had just saved beloved Earth from bloodsuckers, for the better.
When out again from the dead on the tenth there arose such a clatter,
The night-stalkers sprang to resurrect Dracula and he's much madder.

Out of his mind Jim Carrey flew like a flash,
Whipped out the costumes on that 17th as a mad uncle out for cash.
The moon on the castle of Lemony Snicket's Olaf the Count,
Gave luster to the bizarre as the series of unfortunate events mount.

When what to the wondering eyes should appear,
But another heist flick, Ocean's Twelve will endear.
With a face women die for, so lively and quick,
It was known in a moment it must be Brad Pitt.

More rapid than eagles on that tenth they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now, Julia! Now, Clooney! Now Matt Damon and Casey Affleck!
On, Cheadle! On Catherine! On, Bernie Mac!
To the top of the box office! To the top of the world!
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all!"

As dry desert that before the blinding sands fly,
When the Phoenix meets with an obstacle, attempt to the sky.
So into the cockpit on the 22nd Dennis Quaid and his team would hurry,
With quickly dwindling food and water, and Giovanni Ribisi's fury.

And then, in a screeching, on that same day he heard in the next room
The sketching and prodding of De Niro's polygraphic doom.
As Ben Stiller drew in his head, and was turning around,
Standing there were the Fockers, greeting smiles abound.

Bill Murray was dressed in a scuba suit from his head to his foot,
And his Oscar-less mantle was collecting dust and soot.
A talented team he assembled on his sub for a Christmas Day lark,
For Steve Zissou's Life Aquatic, his hunt for a mythical shark.

James L. Brooks comedies – how they can't fail – his genius so very extraordinary!
His dramas are few, but successful and on that 17th Spanglish should carry.
His casting of Sandler tries to prove Punch Drunk Love wasn't flukey,
As a patriarch who shares his home with a Mexican beauty.

The lives of a thousand refugees he held in his grace,
And the smoke of war encircled them giving chase.
Don Cheadle and the Hotel Rwanda held strong despite suffering and demise,
That shocks, and sickens, like a bowl full of flies.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly boy from Philly,
And he bellowed a laugh with the Cosby kids, in spite of being silly.
A wink of his eye and a loud "Hey hey hey!"
Fat Albert soon made known he was coming Christmas Day.

He spoke a harsh word on that 17th, and went straight from his work,
Kinsey filled all minds with sex, and was made to be a jerk.
Studying adolescents' dirty desires in the name of science,
But running into trouble with a team showing defiance.

So spring to the cinema, only five to eight bucks no doubt,
Just make sure you shut your trap when the lights go out.
Well, maybe give a moment to let people know,
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all enjoy the show!"

director's cut

RYAN HLADUN
Columnist

Sam Raimi deserves the best director Oscar in February for Spiderman 2.

Yeah, yeah, I'll admit this is the opinion of a total fan boy but you'll take it seriously because it's in the paper (and you know I'm right anyway).

The scruffy visionary in a black suit – homage to Alfred Hitchcock – turned out a sequel that exceeded all expectations. It was a flawless gem from beginning to end. It gets better every time I see it – twice in theatres, and twice on DVD.

The Oscar for outstanding direction should go to the man who best controls every aspect of production – and from day one Raimi did that for Spiderman 2.

Actual direction is a part of it too, obviously – and Raimi is a master of his craft. His rapid cuts and in-your-face action sequences are a trademark dating back to his Evil Dead films. Few directors can engage an audience with direction alone like Raimi can.

The Spiderman franchise is Raimi. Why should Peter Jackson's film win 11 Oscars to cap his trilogy and the Spiderman franchise (which has made nearly $2 billion world wide) not even be mentioned and probably won't be (that's right I'm putting Spiderman in the same league as Lord of the Rings)?

I mean, Raimi took admirable risks too. Who else would film that awkward scene in the elevator with Hal Sparks, or use the song Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head in today's action movies, without looking ridiculous? It was remarkable to see.

So, Martin Scorsese will have to muster up another fake smile at this year's awards. Beautiful people won't be enough for Mike Nichols. Alexander Payne's Sideways was charming, but he must settle for second best.

Sam Raimi is the man. C'mon Spiderman 2 was the best reviewed film this year – and probably only half of those critics appreciate superhero movies.

While George Lucas commands a blue screen all day, Raimi is closing down sections of New York City and filming a spider and an octopus on a speeding train.

So, this is a plea to the many Academy voters who read the *Projector* – vote Raimi!

Either that or give the Incredibles the best picture Oscar.

Sadly, both won't happen.

Skeletal Bale phenomenal

BY RYAN HLADUN

The Machinist
***
Globe
Now Playing

Olsen twins rejoice! Starving yourself will be the new 'in' thing to do in Hollywood after Christian Bale's eerily real performance in The Machinist.

Bale shed a record-breaking 63 pounds to envelope the role of insomniac Trevor Reznik in the creepy thriller.

For those not familiar with Bale thinking, "63 pounds isn't a whole lot," well, Bale was basically being called a British Tom Cruise. He was the knife-wielding maniac in the lame duck

American Psycho – or you might remember him better as the futuristic fascist fighter in the cult hit Equilibrium.

Apparently he wanted to go from 190 to 110, but his producers stopped him at 130 because any more would pose health concerns (aw c'mon, let the man go all the way!).

Nonetheless, the transformation is a sickly sight – his pale skin cracks over protruding ribs, and it looks as if his spine is trying to escape his body. You can literally see the shape of his last meal in his chasm of a stomach.

The Machinist opens in Reznik's apartment – a pad that would make a typical student's place look like Martha Stewart Living.

Reznik's toothpick arms wrap around the bed board and he grimaces uncomfortably as hooker Stevie (Jennifer Jason Leigh, who is best when playing a hooker) attempts to pleasure him unsuccessfully.

The bags under Reznik's eyes hang below his cheeks – he hasn't slept in a year.

The lack of sleep begins to affect his work as a machine operator – the distraction of a big bald guy named Ivan (John Sharian) causes a slip of hand and leaves a fellow worker armless.

As the plot unfolds Memento-style – one deceptive clue at a time – bizarre details surface, and Reznik begins to think everyone is out to get him, while everyone questions his sanity.

Without Bale's makeover, the film wouldn't work nearly as well, because after watching The Machinist you'll want to do two things: eat and sleep.

The film's atmosphere sucks you in – it's colourless and claustrophobic, depressing and tiring – and all are what give it authenticity. The Machinist is cold as steel.

Unfortunately, greatness is always out of reach. Thinking back, it's almost as if Bale's performance was wasted on the film's disappointing script.

The dialogue is unnatural. In one scene, Reznik flips out on Stevie – Bale does the best he could, but it just comes off as forced.

Also, strangely, with the atmospheric realism director Brad Anderson created, there are some situations where you're left reminding yourself this guy hasn't slept in a year.

In one scene Reznik throws himself in front of a speeding car then walks away with only a limp.

And using the lame dialogue, Reznik, looking like skeleton on crack, successfully flirts with waitress Mary (Aitana Sánchez-Gijón) who allows him to spend time with her young son like all good parents would.

Although, really, the fact that the film is so engaging sensually makes it essential viewing – you can mute the sound and still get the same effect.

Bale will hit your screen next beefed up as the new Batman. That rapid gain and loss of weight can't be good for him, but hey – actors are above regular people, right?

Doc misses point

BY RYAN HLADUN

DiG!
***
Cinematheque
On now until Dec.9

Remember the car commercial with the catchy tune that went, "You've got a great car and I like you...?" Yeah, probably not.

Well, if you do, for your information it was a spin off of the song Bohemian Like You by the Dandy Warhols. Like you care, right?

Well then, that's what you'll probably think of the documentary DiG! It's highly entertaining but ultimately misses its point.

For seven years (beginning in 1996) filmmaker Ondi Timoner followed around two fledgling bands – the Dandy Warhols, who flew straight and professional, and the Brian Johnstown Massacre, whose deranged leader Anton Newcombe prevented them from any sort of success.

The film's aim was to show the opposite paths these bands took and where they ended up, but its failure lies in the fact that both bands didn't make it anywhere – only the troubled Johnstown did it quicker.

It shows how the bands started as great friends, but as they grew farther apart they developed a bitter rivalry. Well, it was more like a rivalry only the whiny, childish Newcombe cared to keep.

DiG! is a blueprint of how to fall flat on your face from the start as a rock band – but is the same story for the other countless rockers, punks and metal heads that don't make it past playing bars and school dances. They all have egos, weak willpower, and are prone to mistakes. So, who cares?

It seems Timoner wasn't sure what focus to take. Interviews with supposed music pundits and people close to the band give indication that Newcombe was a musical genius; meanwhile it shows how he was booed out of his last show and was never heard from again.

The Sundance Grand Jury Award-winning rockumentary is loud, long, and a lot of nothing – although, admittedly that nothing does take you on a fun spin for a good part of it.

The footage is as candid as it comes, and that's where the entertainment factor comes in. The subjects are so outrageous, especially Newcombe, whose actions are unreal. You can't help but laugh at his inane rants, and random tirades. And as a note to other bands: drugs and alcohol before you make it big isn't the wisest choice.

The film focuses largely on Newcombe's band mates, who all have no problem ripping on each other when the camera is on them.

DiG! can be more than a laugh to a select audience, but it's difficult getting past the fact that these bands, who might have been once promising, never hit mainstream, where, for casual music fans, is what it's all about.

Try to avoid... Alexander

BY IAN CALLIOU

People left well before the end of Alexander – I've only seen that once before. Some people even started yelling at the screen before they got up and left.

Nonetheless, Alexander (Colin Farrell) had an interesting life. He won over 60 battles at the head of an often overmatched army, thousands of miles away from home. Should be the makings for a good movie, right? Throw in the controversy surrounding Alexander's life and you should have the right mix for a blockbuster.

Unfortunately, director Oliver Stone chose to put the greatness of Alexander on the backburner. Instead, the movie is largely about less interesting angles like how Alexander wants to be a god, is better than his dad, wants a son, and is apparently in love with fellow solider Hephaistion (Jared Leto)

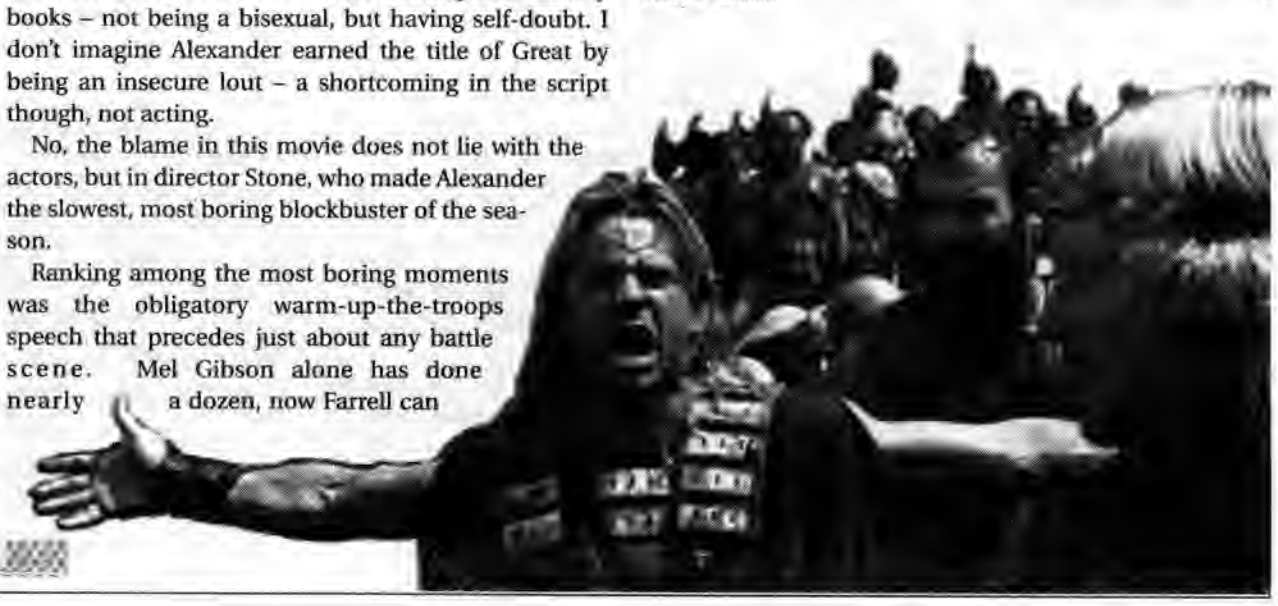
Annoyingly apparent are the actors who came to act and those who came just for a pay cheque. The only solid Greek accent in the whole movie came from Angelina Jolie. The rest decided to speak in his or her native accent (ranging from Farrell's Irish brogue to the American drawl of Val Kilmer, who plays King Philip).

The battle scenes lack the epic feel of The Last Samurai and the Lord of the Rings. Farrell brings out a side of Alexander that seems to be lacking in all history books – not being a bisexual, but having self-doubt. I don't imagine Alexander earned the title of Great by being an insecure lout – a shortcoming in the script though, not acting.

No, the blame in this movie does not lie with the actors, but in director Stone, who made Alexander the slowest, most boring blockbuster of the season.

Ranking among the most boring moments was the obligatory warm-up-the-troops speech that precedes just about any battle scene. Mel Gibson alone has done nearly a dozen, now Farrell can add it to his repertoire. Get rid of these overdramatic, useless rants and get on with the scene already.

At the end of the day, I'm left wondering where my 175 minutes and $10 went, and why the guy was ever called Great.



Comedy shines in sad prairie play Unity

Memorable characters drive historical tale

Unity
Nov. 14, 2004
Prairie Theatre Exchange

BY CORINNE INNES

A play about the First World War and the Spanish Flu is expected to be anything but funny, but when two old grannies steal the show, Unity turns a sad tale into a witty satirical hit.

Unity takes place in 1918 when the war has ended and the soldiers have returned home – with the Spanish Flu. The epidemic overwhelms the town of Unity with panic and they react by cutting themselves off from the rest of the country. No trains are allowed to stop; no one can enter the town, and the mail from overseas is burnt.

They are left with only their telephones to communicate.

The two old grannies are the telephone operators at the centre of the small Saskatchewan town causing more frenzy than help and causing the panic to spread faster than the flu. The women gossip on the phone lines suggesting who to stay away from and sharing their old naïve philosophies.

Not only are the two old women hilarious, but they are backed up by a whole cast of funny characters. There is the blind soldier, Hart, who wanders around the town indifferent to death; a young girl, Sissy who thinks the world is coming to an end and her controlling older sister Beatrice who thinks knitting socks for the soldiers will bring them home safely. The characters keep the show alive during the tough times of the story, each embellishing our weakness of fear.

The only character who remains calm during the epidemic is Sunna, a 15-year-old Icelandic girl who is running the busy funeral home. As an outsider to the town she welcomes Hart, the new suspected culprit for the flu. Hart, indifferent to the death all around him, builds coffins for Sunna with a bright perky attitude.

As the number of bodies rise in the town, coffins are laid out on stage for each death. They slowly become props on the set – benches for people to sit on, and beds for the newly sick to lie on, and even the set for the town's dance.

Continuing the satire of fear, everyone at the dance is instructed to dance a yard away. The play is filled with dark humour about death and reveals a different tale of war's tragedies, and the shattered homes that awaited their loved ones to return.

Unity proves that comedy is essential in a sad tale. If you are thirsty for the perfect combination of history and comedy, Unity is more than satisfying.

A Nonsuch celebration

Famed replica turns 30

BY MIKE UHRICH

Set sail on a voyage through history this month at the Manitoba Museum.

December marks the 30th anniversary of the Nonsuch, the ship which rests comfortably inside the museum, and the ship that is a fixture of elementary school field trips.

Celebrations start on Dec. 3 when Laird Rankin's new book, The Nonsuch: The Ship That Launched an Empire is released at a kickoff at the museum. From there the entire month is filled with Nonsuch programming which includes musicians, a new CD-Rom kiosk outside the ship, a lecture by Nonsuch crew member Sam Richards, and tours of the Nonsuch hold, which up until this point has been closed to the public.

"We want to give people a chance to see Nonsuch as they have never seen her before," said Dugald Lamont, communications coordinator at the museum. "People sometimes think that this is a model—they don't realize that it was an actual working vessel."

In actuality, the Nonsuch housed inside the museum isn't the original ship that Radisson and Groseillers sailed into Canada from England in 1668.

According to Lamont, it is a replica that was commissioned by the Hudson's Bay Company. By using techniques used in the 17th century, the ship was constructed by J. Hinks & Sons in England. After its completion, the ship sailed from England to France and back in 1969, and was then shipped to Canada in 1970.

From there, Lamont says it was taken on a tour of the Great Lakes and sailed the West coast of Canada and the U.S., before being brought to Winnipeg.

It's the old ship in the bottle theory," said Jeff Koffman, senior marketing and communications manager for the museum. "Only this time the bottle was built around the ship."

Koffman said the ship was actually lowered into place, and the entire museum was built around the exhibit.

Andrew Fallack, the assistant conservator at the museum says the conservation of the Nonsuch is paid for by grant money, which originally came form the Hudson's Bay Company.

"We often have to call in experts to work on the rigging," says Fallack. "It's very complicated."

In fact, every two years Inga Thorsteinson from Transport Canada's coast guard division comes to the museum to do a condition report on the ship.

Koffman expects the Nonsuch festivities to bring in over 50,000 patrons in the month of December, which would be above average for the museum.

"The Nonsuch expedition is one of the great Canadian stories," said Lamont. "It takes in Canada's three founding peoples—French, English, and Aboriginal—and was crucial to the opening up of the Canadian west and everything that followed."

Foreign Film Fridays
Friday at 12:00 Noon
in the Tower Lounge

The Office of Diversity & Immigrant Student Support Presents:

December 10 | Dirty Pretty Things

Okwe, a Nigerian doctor, and Senay, a Turkish chambermaid, work at the same London hotel. We follow Okwe as he skirts immigration officials, falls in love, and turns his nose up at the drug dealing and prostitution in the place he is forced to work. When Okwe finds a human heart in one of the toilets our perception of London's underworld is shattered – and petty back alley crimes come to seem like child's play.

December 17 | City of God

Welcome to the world's most notorious slum; Rio de Janeiro's "City of God." This film brings you inside a place where combat photographers fear to tread, where police rarely go, and where residents are lucky if they live to the age of 20. This is the true story of a young man who grew up on these streets, and whose ambition as a photographer is our window into his world - and ultimately his only way out.

January 7 | The Killing Fields

We follow New York Times reporter Sydney Schanberg in his frantic efforts to find his friend and colleague Dith Pran after the Cambodian translator falls into the hands of the brutal Khmer Rouge. The Killing Fields is both an account of a modern war many have forgotten, and a comment on friendship and the tragic results of a journalist driven in his quest of revealing the truth.

January 14 | Cry Freedom

Donald Woods is chief editor at the liberal newspaper Daily Dispatch in apartheid-era South Africa who befriends Steve Biko, a powerful anti-apartheid activist. After Biko is murdered by the police Woods attempts to force an inquest, which ultimately ends in failure. We follow Woods as he and his family escapes the country after they are targeted by state police and shunned by white society.

Diversity & Immigrant Student Support

For more info call: 632-2404
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D105 - 2055 Notre Dame Avenue
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www.rrc.mb.ca/cid

SA hits the slippery slopes

BY NATHAN NUDALH

After a semester of torture at Red River College, you've probably been in something much deeper than eight feet of snow.

Freezing your ass off will be a welcome feeling. Why not have some fun doing it?

The Students' Association has two ski and snowboard trips planned, and according to events co-ordinator Michael Blatherwick, they will eclipse prior years.

The first is the annual trip to Asessippi, Man. on Jan. 28-30. Packages start at $165 and include motor coach transportation, two-night accommodations, tubing, and two-day lift tickets.

"It is a great chance to get away for the weekend and enjoy some skiing and some partying," said Blatherwick.

According to Blatherwick the ski trip is well received each year. He said students have loved the ski hill karaoke, night tubing, and hitting the local bars.

"It's better than a toboggan on garbage hill," said Blatherwick. "There is more to school than what is learned in class – enjoy your college years, go on a RRC trip."

Blatherwick said that over past years there has been lots of snow and good weather.

The second trip this year is new – four days in Fernie, BC from Feb. 24-28. Packages start at $359 and include motor coach transportation, three-night accommodations, pub crawl, and three-day lift tickets.

"The resort is looking at having record snow falls this year," said Blatherwick.

"We are doing three different bar nights. This will be a great chance for students to take advantage of the four day semester break in February."

Ski and snowboard rentals and lessons are available for extra charge. Blatherwick recommends that first-time skiers and snowboarders take a lesson.

"The lesson at the hill is usually better than any lesson your friend can give you."

According to Blatherwick, space is limited and is based on a first pay-first go basis.

Blatherwick said Fernie sales are already at the half way mark.

"Considering past success, students shouldn't wait to sign up."

The deadline to sign up for Asessippi is Friday, Jan. 7 and the SA wants a deposit for the Fernie trip by Wednesday, Dec. 15.

All payments can be made in one of the SA offices; room DM20 at the Notre Dame campus, or room P110 at the Princess Street campus.

"I have run a number of trips and RRC students are the best – always looking to party; always good times," he said.

Blatherwick recalled an incident of naked snow angels.

"I guess some students are immune to snow."

FROM THE PRESSBOX...

Missing simpler times in sports

ZURICK SCHERGER
Columnist

Lately, I find myself wondering why I continue to be a sports fan.

Now when sports fans turn on one of the specialty channels to watch a game or highlights we are inundated with images of men in suits growling at each other; of overpaid, narrow-minded athletes telling us that they think of their families; or of players climbing into the stands to fight with fans.

Who is there left to cheer for?

Do you want to believe that Barry Bonds has doubled his weight in the last 20 years without science? How can a guy like Kobe Bryant go from pinnacle to doghouse in such a short time? Have Todd Bertuzzi and Dany Heatley learned from their mistakes? Did that famous Winnipeg sportswriter just get lazy or did he become cocky, or was this all just a big mistake? What was that guy doing with a sex tape of Gary Sheffield's wife from 10 years ago? Is NFLer Ricky Williams a dope?

It's not as if sports hasn't had its fill of controversy in the past. Kermit Washington broke Rudy Tomjanovich's face in 1977. Bobby Clarke chopped down Valery Kharlamov like a large Russian fir tree in '72. Both Wade Boggs and Steve Garvey had to own up to extra-marital affairs during their illustrious baseball careers. And don't forget about O.J.

When we used to hear the word court, we thought of basketball. Now the word conjures up images of Kobe Bryant, Ron Artest, Dany Heatley and Todd Bertuzzi standing in front of a judge.

It was easy to get excited about the games. Now we spend our time wondering about collective bargaining agreements, rule changes, poor officiating and contract holdouts.

Maybe it's too easy to transport yourself back to a time when sports were simpler. Tune into TSN or Sportsnet most nights and you can watch a vintage game, with the timeless jerseys, wacky hairstyles and good, hard-fought action.

North America has become a me-first culture. Simple times are gone to never return. With the media scrutiny and intense pressure applied to athletes today, it's easy to understand why some athletes feel they need to take extra measures to succeed.

We put them on a pedestal from the time they are very young. For most of them it's all they know. How many times do you have to be told that you are great before you start believing the hype, requiring more adulation?

Moments of violence are forgotten over time, at least until somebody else does something stupid. Mistakes often fade away. In the end, life goes on. I'll keep watching.

Aboriginal Students, get to know your supports and services at RRC

Notre Dame F209 and Princess P407

We would like to welcome Aboriginal Elder, Jules Lavallee, a new edition to our Elders in Residence Program. He is located in F209 at the Notre Dame Campus on December 7, 10, 14 and 17. He is available for one on one consult and can interpret dreams. He will be hosting an introduction to the Medicine Wheel in F213 on Tuesday Dec 7, at noon.

Award deadlines

- **Hannah (Nancy) Boon Bursary - January 15**
- **Sibyl McKay Inkster Bursary - January 15**
- **Royal Bank Native Students Awards Program - January 31**

For Applications drop by F209 at Notre Dame campus or contact Rhonda Klippenstein, Aboriginal Student Support Representative at 632-3773, Notre Dame campus or Princess Street campus at 949-8402.

Upcoming events in F209 unless other wise marked.

- **Thursday December 2nd, 1-4, The Changing roles of Native Men and Women today, presented by Bea Shawanda, International Keynote speaker, storyteller and entertainer. Must register.**
- **Monday December 6, 12:15-12:45, The Unity Ride, a Sharing Circle video presentation.**
- **Tuesday December 7th, 12-1, Aboriginal Women's connection to the Drum. Presented by Mae Louise Campbell.**
- **Tuesday December 7th, 12-1, Introduction to the Medicine Wheel with Jules Lavallee in F213.**
- **Who is an Elder, What is an Elder with Mae Louise Campbell in the Multi Purpose room at Princess Street campus.**
- **Wednesday December 15th, 12-1, A look at Traditional Aboriginal Women's Ceremonies and the Full Moon Ceremony, presented by Mae Louise Campbell**
- **Tuesday December 21, Aboriginal Education Staff Day and Winter Solstice Feast**
- **Friday December 10, 12-1 , Aboriginal Programs Student and Staff pizza party**
- **Friday December 10, 4:30, Children's Christmas Party, please register in F209 with Sara by Dec 6.**
- **May 6th, 2005 Graduation Traditional Pow wow in the North Gym.**

Aboriginal Centre Coordinator- Sara McIvor-Prouty coordinates events and activities at both campuses. Call 632-2106 for information. Check our website for more events and information at http://www.rrc.mb.ca/aboriginalcentre/

Get the scoop: MTS Centre

BY CHRIS KITCHING

Mark Chipman had a specific goal in mind when he began planning for a new downtown arena: making hockey affordable for everyone.

"We were very conscious of pricing when we moved in and (we believe) the games are very affordable," Chipman, the owner of the Manitoba Moose, said from the press box during his team's first game at the MTS Centre, a 4-2 win over the St. John's Maple Leafs.

While the move to Portage Avenue has renewed interest in his American Hockey League team and boosted attendance, it also means an increase in ticket prices.

Compared to last year at Winnipeg Arena, individual tickets at the new rink have gone up by "a few bucks" Chipman said, but fans can save up to $120 if they buy packs of 10, 20 or 30 games.

No matter if it's one game or all 36 at the MTS Centre, Moose fans might want to bring a small lunch or a snack from home.

There are several food stands and restaurants inside the arena - including Tim Hortons, Quiznos and Gondola Pizza – but fans may have to empty their wallets and purses if they want to fill their stomachs.

That's because vendors at the MTS Centre have higher prices compared to their counterparts at the Old Barn.

A jumbo hot dog, for example, will cost you $4 while a nine-inch pizza from Gondola Pizza will set you back $9.

Fans looking to knock back a few wobbly pops during Moose games and other events will have to shell out at least $5 a beer. Hard liquor and other booze prices are even higher, while soft drinks start at $3.

Price increases aren't limited to inside the new arena, either.

Outside – where one of the biggest concerns, aside from safety, raised by critics and others was the issue of parking – certain lots have jacked up their fees by anywhere from 25 cents to two bucks during MTS Centre events.

Parking spots at the Millennium Library, Portage Place Shopping Centre, Winnipeg Square and cityplace can be booked and paid for online through Ticketmaster, Chipman said.

During events, Winnipeg Transit has extra buses running to and from the rink, while arena officials estimate there are 30,000 parking stalls in downtown.

Of those, about 7,000 are within a five-minute walk of the MTS Centre, while roughly 13,000 are 10 minutes away.

Red River College's Students' Association has a series of Moose hockey nights throughout the school year. The next is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 8. Tickets are on sale at the Ox and Mercantile stores for $14. The last sold out according to the SA.

Hockey debuts in new digs

BY CHRIS KITCHING

What a difference a new building makes.

The Manitoba Moose have played their first four home games at the MTS Centre in front of sellout crowds, including the Nov. 17 opener that drew more than 15,000 fans.

Hundreds of Winnipeggers showed up at the rink more than an hour before the first face-off to get a glimpse of everything the state-of-the-art facility has to offer.

"It's going to be a big thing for Winnipeg," said Moose fan Rick Ryder, 52, during the first period of Manitoba's 4-2 win over the St. John's Maple Leafs.

"It's going to draw lots and lots of entertainment that we wouldn't have seen if not for the MTS Centre."

His son lives in Minnesota, where the Xcel Energy Centre in St. Paul has revived that city's downtown, Ryder said.

"I'm hoping it does the same here. The restaurants and bars here will do booming business and after that I'm sure it will filter out," he said.

PHOTOS | CHRIS KITCHING

Ryder and everyone else in the building had to wait a period and a half for the first American Hockey League goal in MTS Centre history.

Eight minutes into the second period, Moose captain Nolan Baumgartner collected his fourth goal of the season when he connected with winger Peter Sarno and fellow blue-liner Kirill Koltsov on the power-play.

Before that, referee Brian Pochmara had already waved off two Manitoba goals that weren't enough to stop the buzz inside the $133.5 million arena.

"This is way better than the old barn. It's definitely a lot brighter in here," hockey fan Brian Crannstone, 31, said from his lower bowl seat during the first intermission.

The Oakbank resident had no complaints about the pace of the game, which has been the biggest knock against the Moose since the Jets left town in 1996.

"It's not the NHL but it's not bad. I used to go to the games when it was the IHL and this is way better than that," Crannstone said.

Two of the MTS Centre's major features are a state of the art scoreboard that has four high-resolution screens, and a "power ring" video display that circles the entire arena.

Winnipegger Janis Urniezius had no complaints about the scoreboard or anything else in the rink from her seat in the upper deck.

"There's a good view from everywhere and all the seats are padded," the 27-year-old said during the third period. "It has a more intimate feel here."

The upper bowl was open for the first Moose game but will be closed for the rest of the season, leaving the 147,000 sq. ft. arena with a crowd capacity of 8,812 people.

Moose players and staff are just as excited as fans are about their new downtown home, team owner Mark Chipman said.

"I've been here every day for a long time and it's been nice to see it come to life," Chipman said during the game. "It really hit home when people sat in their seats tonight."

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Old time favourite a tasty treat

Restaurant decor showcases city's colourful past

BY BROOK JONES

Every city should be blessed with a restaurant like the Old Spaghetti Factory.

It's evident that the Old Spaghetti Factory strives to maintain its original concept of fine pasta and excellent service in a special setting.

The restaurant's tradition began in 1970 when the first Canadian location opened its doors in Vancouver's Gastown. The concept of this restaurant ventured East across the Prairies. The establishment opened its doors in Winnipeg in the early '70s and has been a landmark ever since. The Sanford building in Winnipeg's downtown Exchange District was home to the Old Spaghetti Factory for over 26 years prior to their re-location to the Johnston Terminal at the Forks in 2000.

In keeping with this traditional theme, the restaurant is filled with antiques and pictures of days gone by. The front entrance features the world's largest kiln-dried vase weighing about 300 pounds and looks to be pretty valuable.

Another antique that has made the restaurant famous is the trolley, which came from the era of Winnipeg's 1919 General Strike and can be found on the restaurant's patio.

Newly appointed general manager Graham Thomson and server Amy Milas agree on one thing – that they love working at the Old Spaghetti Factory. It seems very much like one big family.

Milas, 19, who is one of 40 servers, said that there are a lot of regular guests, tourists and families that come to experience dining that is made simple and easy for the guest at old fashioned prices.

You can sit in the restaurant's East side solarium and have the view of the Odena, which is sacred ground at the Forks, used by Aboriginals for ceremonies and dancing. You can take advantage of the luncheon specials. The experience is great -- nice and cozy.

It is evident that one is welcomed and made to feel at home when they enter the doors and are referred to as a guest rather than a customer. This full service family restaurant provides its guests with a relaxing atmosphere.

Guests receive free loaves of bread, a house salad or bowl of soup and ice-cream with every entrée purchased.

The old spaghetti factory has the facilities to accommodate large groups from 20 to 200. In addition, the Old Spaghetti Factory opens its doors daily to the public at 11:30 a.m. and also offers special hours on holidays.

Head down to Confusion Corner

New bar & grill leaves lasting impression

BY CARLY THOMPSON

When you have a guest in your home, you offer them your favorite chair, you offer them your favorite drink, your favorite food. We have guests, not customers, in our restaurant," said Mitch Davidson, an assistant general manager at the Confusion Corner Bar and Grill.

Although it has only been open since Nov. 8, my dining experience at Davidson's establishment was relaxing and glitch-free.

The Confusion Corner Bar and Grill's building has been the site for various automobile dealerships in the past, but since renovating, its interior now resembles a ritzy ski lodge. A large fireplace in the middle of the restaurant sets the tone for the whole place. The lounge looks similar in terms of the deep, rich colors of the walls, linens and the dim lighting, except with big screen televisions on the walls.

We ordered a half-pint of one of the house wines: E & J Galto (Sierra Valley) White Zinfandel, which we both agreed was fabulously flavorful.

Next came our appetizer: Crispy Asian Spring Rolls with a spicy dipping sauce. Although the sauce did not burn my mouth, the temperature of the spring rolls almost did. However, the taste was top notch.

My main course was the Mango Chicken Wrap, which comes with fries or a salad. The fact that the wrap was something different than I've tasted before was satisfying. If you plan to order this dish in the future, eliminate the onions from your order unless you are a serious onion fan.

My friend ordered one of the specials: Bacon and Pineapple Pizza, which was light and tasty with a thin, crispy crust.

Both of us felt full, but not the usual about-to-explode type of bloating typically experienced after a meal out. While taking a peek at the dessert menu, my jaw dropped – two different sizes of desserts – the regular size, or the "three-bite size".

Perhaps the most appealing part of my experience at the Confusion Corner Bar & Grill was that for two glasses of wine, an appetizer, and a main course, the bill only came to around $43.

I will be returning to the Confusion Corner Bar & Grill again. The atmosphere was wonderful, but most importantly, it was the first time I've left a restaurant in a long time feeling satisfied without the urge to loosen my belt.

Christmas is near. Just 19 days to stop being naughty.

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Evolved Hip rock 'Peg

Tragically Hip
Nov. 23, 2004
MTS Centre

BY CHAD SCARSBROOK

Who else could christen the MTS Centre the right way but The Tragically Hip?

Okay, that concert held a few weeks earlier for the old folks didn't count. This was the real deal, the first big show in our state of the art building, and Canada's favourite rock band put on an amazing show. I've seen the Hip play in Winnipeg six times over the past nine years and this was easily their best performance ever in the city.

Lead singer Gord Downie was the most animated I'd ever seen him. From the early strums of Vaccination Scar, the first single of the latest album In Between Evolution, to the last song of the night (during the third encore!) Blow at High Dough, our country's most famous front man was on his game.

Clad in dark blue jeans, complete with a cowboy belt buckle and black button-up shirt, Downie had the crowd of about 11,000 eating out of his hands.

One memorable moment had Downie frustrated with his mic stand's apparent need for the spotlight. The singer chastised the mic for its prima-donna attitude and then, set it to the front of the stage for its "big debut". When the crowd began to sing At the Hundredth Meridian, Downie snarled "Don't help him!"

It was typical show from a band that has made its reputation on its live act. Downie's rants are legendary in this country because the audience simply never knows what to expect.

It's the same with the music. The set list in Winnipeg included such obscure gems as Escape is at Hand for the Travellin' Man and Boots or Hearts. Sure, the crowd wasn't as into some of the new material, but that didn't deter the Hip from treating each song as if it were a smash hit.

The Hip also went through all the favourites in their 24 song set including New Orleans is Sinking, Nautical Disaster, Grace, Too, Courage and Little Bones.

One of the criticisms of the band over the past few years was that they weren't writing music in the Road Apples or Fully Completely mould. There's no question the Hip of today won't be mistaken for the Hip circa long Gordie hair – but that's not a bad thing. The band has evolved musically and personally. We're not living in the mid '90s anymore, so you're just not going to hear a re-write of Three Pistols. Instead, expect to hear more beautiful melodies and more thought-provoking lyrics.

GWAR kills

GWAR
Nov. 29, 2004
Pyramid Cabaret

BY MIKE UHRICH

Let me remind you, I was in Vietnam."

Those were John Kerry's poignant last words before a seven-foot long broadsword wielded by Oderus Urungus, the lead singer of the famed horror-metal band, GWAR, decapitated him.

For those of you who don't know who or what GWAR is, I'll give you a quick lesson. From what I understand, they are one of two things: people dressed up and pretending to be aliens, or aliens that look a lot like people who are dressed up and pretending to be aliens.

Secondly, they play a form of music called metal. Metal, the way that GWAR plays it, could also be referred to as lacklustre at best. Although maybe I shouldn't make a judgment like that while being heavily distracted by the decapitations and disemboweling going on in front of my eyes.

Let's face it – GWAR's music isn't what made them famous; covering the audience in fake blood, killing pop culture icons, and being violent, vulgar and vicious is what made them famous.

These traits were best showcased when a guy crowd surfing put his hands on Oderus, and received one of the worst beat downs I've seen at the hands of a microphone stand. Oderus proceeded to inform the crowd, "if anyone touches me, I'll f---ing kill you!"

Fortunately for the fans who came to see blood, gore, and death, GWAR delivered and then some.

John Kerry wasn't the only one who went down in a pool of his own blood. The band managed to rip through nearly a dozen famous faces: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Paris Hilton, Michael Jackson (and his son Blanket), Osama Bin Laden, George W. Bush, a futuristic Ronald Reagan dubbed "The Reaganator", the leader of their Winnipeg fan club, and Bone Snapper the cave troll. I did leave one name off the list, the corpse of Laci Peterson and her unborn child, whose death took tastelessness to a whole new level – a level that I'm sure tastelessness never intended to go.

As the show came to a close, they wheeled out a blood cannon and put the "splatter guards" that lined the walls of the Pyramid to use. They shot streams of fake blood all over the audience for 15 minutes and were thoughtful enough to hose down the woman in the wheelchair for a half of that time. Bless you GWAR, you are truly a class act.

Metal icons rock the Burt

Megadeth
Nov. 21, 2004
Burton Cummings Theatre

BY JARED STORY

I'm not a fan of the symphony, but a Symphony of Destruction – that I like.

Speed metal band Megadeth, along with openers Exodus, blasted the Burton Cummings Theatre Nov. 21 with a heavy metal roar that made the mostly male 2,000 plus audience scream like delighted school girls.

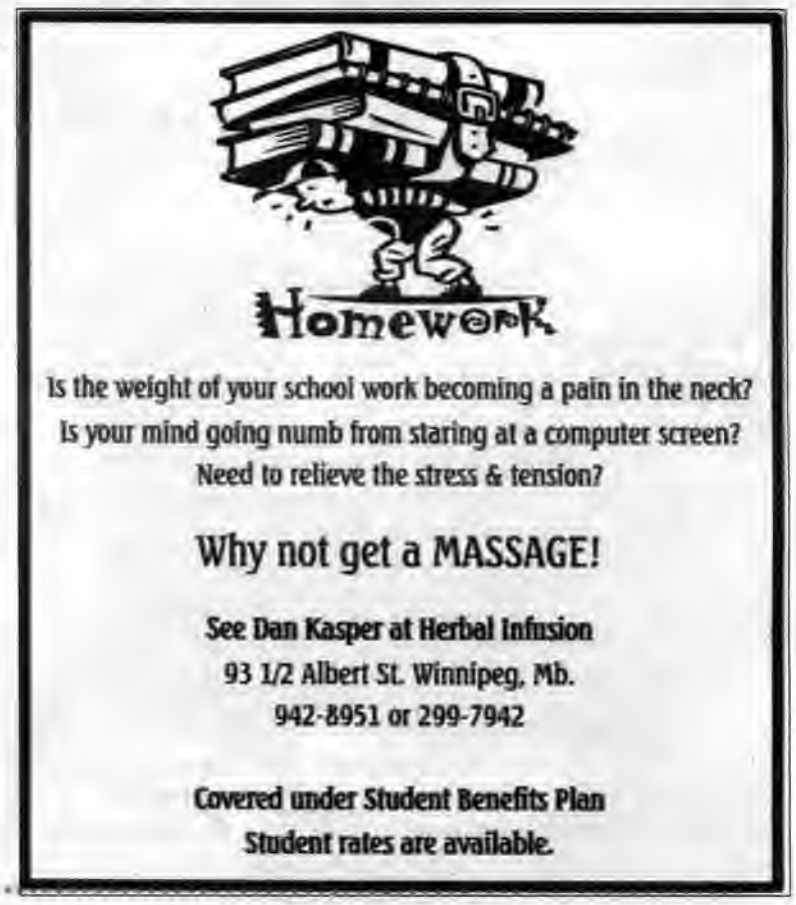
Ex'odus (the band Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett helped form in 1982) got the heads banging and fists pumping early, with a hard-driving set of thrash metal that made the wait for Megadeth much easier on the crowd. Touring singer Steve Esquivel, who is filling the spot of the recently fired Steve Souza, ordered the crowd to raise their "metal horns" and a mass of arms were quickly extended with a two finger salute.

The Winnipeg stop is part of Megadeth's Blackmail the Universe tour so it made sense that the first song was Blackmail the Universe. This was just one of seven songs they played off their new album The System Has Failed. The reception to the new songs was good, but it appeared as though some in the audience hadn't heard them yet, as there were many with confused looks on their faces. Any bewildered looks disappeared when the band pulled out the classics.

Songs like Peace Sells, Reckoning Day, and Trust drew thunderous appreciation. When band leader-vocalist-guitarist Dave Mustaine held out the mic during Sweating Bullets, the singing of the crowd nearly drowned out the music.

In the thrash metal community there is often talk of the "Big 4" thrash groups of the '80s. This is Megadeth, Metallica, Slayer, and Anthrax. Mustaine told the audience that it was actually more like the "Big 5", referring to how Exodus should be included in the list. With that the openers joined Megadeth on the stage for Back in the Day. The song speaks of the glory days of heavy metal, but judging by the crowd's reaction, back in the day may be today.

Megadeth closed their set with Holy Wars... The Punishment Due, off the 1990 album Rust in Peace. The song is as powerful now as it was then with lyrics like, "killing for religion, something I don't understand," fitting perfectly with what is seen on the dinner hour news everyday. Megadeth is a great band because they stay current, relevant, and will always make sense. Oh yeah, and they kick some ass too.



Perms ready to impress

'Peg rockers releasing third album

BY R.D. WARDEN

After seven years, several line-up changes, two self-produced CDs with a third near completion, and relocating to Winnipeg from Brandon, you have to hand it to local power pop band the Perms.

"There's a lot of competition in Winnipeg because there are so many bands," says Scott Perry, who handles saxophone and keyboard duties for the five-piece unit. "But everything we've been doing live has been working in the studio, so we're really excited about this new record."

Brothers Shane (bass and vocals) and Chad (guitar and vocals) Smith started the band in high school in 1997, eventually moving to the 'Peg in 2002 and they haven't looked back.

The current line-up, which is rounded out by John Huver on drums and newest addition Craig Bonnet on trumpet, has been together for just over a year now.

"Fans have said that the live stuff is cooler, but on stage we can experiment more," Perry says. "Now with these new tracks we're really taking our time, evaluating ourselves as we go and it shows, I think people are going to be surprised."

While the last two albums were self-produced, the yet untitled third CD marks the first time the band has worked with a producer.

Local rock legends Lloyd Peterson and Neil Cameron, who have worked with notable Winnipeg bands the Weakerthans and the Wailin' Jennys among others, will be handling production.

"It's been great having Lloyd as that extra ear, giving us that extra little bit of advice," Perry says. "He's been able to give us a fresh perspective and it makes a huge difference in terms of the end result."

Having drawn comparisons in the past to bands like Weezer, Sloan, and even early Elvis Costello, Perry is eager to have people experience what the Perms have to offer.

"We've beefed up the horn section for this record, so it'll be a progression from Clarke Drive," says Perry, referring to the bands second album, which was a mostly guitar-driven collection of tunes. "There's going to be brass on about 80 percent of this one."

With the Smith brothers both being full-time students, and the other members holding down day jobs, they don't get much sleep.

"Yeah, it's been hectic" he says laughing. "We've been real busy recording this album at Private Ear Studios, working and going to school, while at the same time doing as many shows as we can."

Perry mentions that they would like to head to Europe next summer, but that "it's still in the planning stages right now."

"What we'd really like to see this record do is to get major labels excited about the band, we've been working real hard and we're just itching to crank it up a notch, take the next step, get to the next level."

currently kicking my ass

SHAWNA FORESTER | *Columnist*

Get the right mix in your mix tapes

I forgot how much I like mix tapes. I got one in the mail the other day from a friend of mine who runs a record label in the US, and I was super giddy to put it on.

He named his mix Shake It Off, in support of the recent shit-storm of crap flying in my face from all directions. I dig it – a soundtrack for my stress.

Mix tapes are a delicate grey area. I mean sure, platonic mix tapes are fine and easy enough to make and I'm sure even the most musically challenged could pull one off.

I'm talking about the other kind. You know the kind where you are trying to channel the words you dare not say through Prince's lips. The kind we scenester girls make when trying to impress some dork with our love of obscure music.

You can come off too strong in a mix tape after all. It must be every boy's dream to get a mix tape with, "I want a lover I don't have to love," by Bright Eyes. But it doesn't happen very often. Take my advice boys because mix tapes are cryptic messages. Vice versa girls.

Beware of the 'pitching-woo' mix tape. You know the one with Prince's 17 Days. Prince in general should just be approached with extreme caution. You know, coming on just a tad bit strong. It just screams Quagmire and roofies cocktails.

Pacing is also important: you can't have too many up-tempo songs, and you can't have too many sad bastard tracks either. Well you could but it would have to be labeled appropriately like Sad Bastard Remix. I mean you gotta shake it up a bit, but you can't go from declarations of unrequited love to thrashing punk in the span of one song. It's all about transitions.

Just because you love a song doesn't mean it belongs on a mix tape. You may love your orange camisole, but you can't wear it with your purple cardigan. It's the same principle of a mix tape. Pick a theme and stick with it. Or have an A side theme and B side theme.

Like A side could be the Insomniacs and Unemployeds Watch Infomercials Remix (for your friend who stays up all night for no apparent reason). Side B could be The Roofie Colada Remix, songs for the hangover from hell.

I have a mix tape of just Simon and Garfunkel songs. It can be used in many situations like a bad morning, a break-up, or when one has to write shitty poetry for creative writing class. I also have a New Wave remix full of New Order tunes that I listen to when cleaning my house, or when I need to pull a late night.

The point is that you too can put together the ultimate mix tape. You may even be able to get laid if you do a good job! I mean how many people must have gotten some to Foreigner's I Want To Know What Love Is. But don't use that song unless you are trying to lure a mullet, or a cougar, or a bobcat (cougars in training). And if you must – be careful.

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Newsroom @ Noon

CD Reviews

Dream Quest
The Release

I love rock and roll, and more importantly I'm a big fan of progressive rock. I've worshipped bands like Yes, Rush, and Dream Theatre for years, which is why I found it so shocking there could be such a great progressive metal band operating right under my nose.

Dream Quest's The Release is an album that may be the start of something big for this Winnipeg power trio, consisting of brothers Mark and Steve Doerksen, and Phil Janzen. The three have combined soaring guitars with intricate melodies, all while weaving a tapestry of sound in dozen's of time signatures.

The album's opening track, Facekicker, does just that – it kicks you directly in the face as the band sings about the evils of Satan, which is a common topic for Dream Quest. The band is actually a Christian progressive metal band, if that genre wasn't already hard enough to remember.

The lyrics are all very positive and well crafted, but occasionally suffer from bouts of repetition as you get a feeling that all the songs are delivering the same message, which they are – Satan is bad and God is good. A wholesome message that is ultimately quite refreshing in the world of music where it seems that sex, drugs, and getting "crunked" up, are the norm.

All in all, this is a great disc by a great Winnipeg band and should do wonders in getting its career going in the right direction. I see nothing but good things coming from the release of The Release, but Dream Quest will just have to wait to see what the big man upstairs has in store for them.

- MIKE UHRICH

The Saucermen
The Saucermen

The Winnipeg scene is ripe with talented musicians who all bring something different to our city's great music scene – at least when they aren't exploiting and abusing the same tried and true rock formula that seems to be what's big in music today.

The Saucermen are no different, in the sense that they are poles apart from the mould that countless bands have tried to fit in. They are a tribute to the classic rockers of years past. If you're a fan of Deep Purple, pick up this album. If you're a fan of Judas Priest, pick up this album. Even if you're a fan of Joe Satriani, pick up this album. You know what, just do yourself a favour and pick up this album.

Right about now you're probably wondering how they can be breaking out of the mould when they sound like all these great bands. Well, I haven't yet mentioned that the Saucermen have two guitarists, a bassist, a drummer, and a keyboardist...and that's it. No singer. This is instrumental riff-rock at its finest and a true tribute to the rock gods.

Unfortunately, the lack of a voice is the Saucermen's only real downfall. I like what they're doing, and the group of local fans they have accumulated like what they're doing, but unfortunately that's just not enough in today's music business. The Saucermen don't translate well into mainstream radio and, basically, the average music fan won't be able to listen to them for very long without growing anxious to hear a vocal part. Undoubtedly, they'll soon be asking the same question I'm sure the Saucermen have been asked since they first formed: "Why don't you have a singer?"

According to the band, they find the voice is just an instrument they don't use. It's a simple explanation, and one that satisfies me. This band is great the way they are, and I'm sure adding a singer wouldn't hurt, but right now when bands like the Waking Eyes, the Weakerthans, and the Inward Eye are making it big, I hope these guys get a chance to show (not tell) the world that Winnipeg rocks.

- MIKE UHRICH

Pearl Jam
Greatest Hits 1991-2003

In 1991, Pearl Jam helped start a revolution that changed the face of rock music. They are one of the greatest bands who ever rocked the free world. So it should be a good thing when they release a greatest hits album.

But when I found out that Pearl Jam was releasing Rearviewmirror, I was worried for three reasons. How were they were going to release anything better than Benaroya Hall or Lost Dogs? How would they offer anything the 72 live bootlegs didn't already cover? And third, and most distressing, was that this greatest hits album was just going to be a re-release of Ten – but with Rearviewmirror on it.

Putting my worries to rest, Pearl Jam has successfully re-sold their music again – and it's probably the best it's ever been.

The collection, which covers everything from the screaming Ten days to the political protest Riot Act days, is a truly perfect showcase of such a diverse band. They play everything from hard rock to acoustic ballads, and effortlessly meld alternative rock with punk, classic rock, blues and folk.

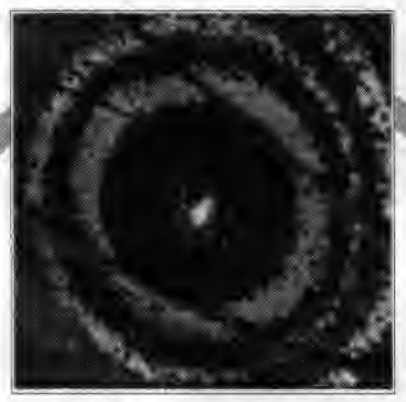
Every album from their 13-year career lends its best to this collection and shows not only their diverse sound, but how much the band has grown both lyrically and musically. It is a beautiful look at Pearl Jam's musicianship, particularly Eddie Vedder's raw, edgy voice and Mike McCready's shredding guitar solos.

Rearviewmirror goes beyond the overplayed grunge anthems like Even Flow, and Jeremy. It also includes beautiful ballads Betterman, Daughter and the haunting Off He Goes. They also throw on some cult favourites such as Corduroy, Hail Hail and the hard rockin' Spin the Black Circle.

But never fear, those beloved grunge anthems still made it on the roster, and have never sounded better. Pearl Jam give us remixes of Once and Alive, and a new, funked-out Evenflow that puts the original to shame.

Rearviewmirror is a greatest hits album that does more than compile the songs that happened to make it to No. 1 – they have given us their greatest work.

- JEN ZORATTI



The Telepathic Butterflies
Songs From a Second Wave

It is time hop on a new homegrown bandwagon and grab a pair of aviators and your '60s finest and rock out retro with the Telepathic Butterflies.

The Winnipeg trio has no shortage of vintage appeal on their newest release Songs From a Second Wave. Anyone who loves stripped down, '60s-style, drums 'n' guitar garage music has definitely found their match here.

Drummer Jacques Dubois's simple marching band beat, Eric Van Buren's funky bass lines, and Réjean Ricard's sleepy vocals, sung in his fake British accent, all make for a charming version of the decade's mod rock.

The band employs all the techniques that make mod music so much fun, much like Scottish darlings Franz Ferdinand and Winnipeg colleagues Novilerro – simple bass and drum lines with pleasant, soft spoken vocals and charming lyrics.

Although, sometimes that combination can make for music that is more dull than delightful. The Telepathic Butterflies have a few standouts like the upbeat Bonhomie and the fast tempo Sickly and The Awkward Gene that keep their album from slipping into a psychedelic lull.

Overall, their songs sound shockingly similar and their titles are more intriguing than the actual songs – The Uncomfortableness of Being is not nearly as interesting as it sounds.

This is not to say that the band is boring. In fact, with Songs From a Second Wave, they've done something quite unique. They've taken a rather uninteresting album and have made it somewhat irresistible. Maybe it's the melodic, sing along nature of Ricard's vocals; maybe it's the rhythmic bass and drums; maybe it's the lyrics – somehow, this album is captivating – despite being a little repetitive.

Their catchy hooks and overall simplicity make for a solid sound – and Ricard can sing. And they've added a certain charisma that makes you want to listen to this album again and again. You can tell that these guys love to play music, and that's really what counts.

- JEN ZORATTI

Where are they now?

They're the brightest in the biz. They're Red River College alumni. Each month, Alana Pona introduces you to a RRC grad making a difference. This month, we introduce you to Yisa Akinbolaji a graduate of RRC's graphic design program.

Yisa Akinbolaji and one of his works

BY ALANA PONA

Yisa Akinbolaji is selling paintings to collectors around the world after the young artist discovered the Internet as a way to show off his works of art.

The Nigeria-born artist and graduate of the graphic design program at Red River College has seen "mind-blowing" results after he started his personal business on the web.

He says that many of his paintings, taken from personal experiences and dreams, sell between the prices of $1,000 to $18,000 for large original prints.

"I did not want to present that I'm not alive at a time when technology is very important," he says. "My experience at RRC let me know that it is a good thing to market yourself."

Although the artist does not update the site himself, www.yisatheartist.com he says his Internet business has drawn clients from around the world, including the U.S., Italy and London.

But it wasn't smooth sailing for the struggling artist, who moved to Canada in 1997 to learn how to use computers. He says he almost withdrew from his first class in graphic design when his teacher asked him to push the mouse, an instruction that he had never heard of before.

"I asked myself stupidly – what is mouse? It's so smart that you guys give it that name because it has a tail," he laughs.

Brian Fawkes, program coordinator for the graphic design and digital multimedia technology programs at the college, says he adjusted the program from two to three years so Akinbolaji could progress to the level of his Canadian classmates.

"He came a long way to get to the level the other Canadian students were at," he says.

"We take artists to show them how to market their skills and that's where his shortfall was. He worked through the curriculum – it was a struggle for him – but he worked through it," says Fawkes.

Fawkes says in the past the program started web training in January, but they've changed the curriculum to begin their online web components as early as October.

"We're now doing more stuff online. We didn't do as much as we do now as far as web training, but he's taken that and applied it."

Mary Brabston, assistant professor in the faculty of management information systems at the I.H Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba says there are more and more people selling their products online.

"Almost all businesses today have a presence on the web, many have a e-commerce businesses on the web as well," she says.

The assistant professor says advertising for an artist on the web can potentially broaden their market and may reduce costs of holding events like exhibitions to display their work.

"But for unique works, it may be better to not use the web presence and sell (your work) in person. Most (businesses) are doing a combination," she says.

But despite his growing success online, Akinbolaji is directing his efforts towards children.

"I realized that certain individuals contributed to make who I am today. I want to give to youth who will become the leaders of tomorrow," says Akinbolaji in an interview at his north end home.

"I felt that a lot of youth out there need encouragement," he says. "I want professionals like myself to help empower the kids."

Toew's triumphs

Mennonite life explored

A Complicated Kindness
by Miriam Toews

BY ALANA PONA

A Complicated Kindness, a novel written by Manitoban author Miriam Toews, is a controversial piece of fiction about the difficulty growing up in a Mennonite community in southern Manitoba.

This book is Toews's third published-piece, which also includes A Boy of Good Breeding and Summer of My Amazing Luck. She is an award winning author and the recent recipient of the Govenor General's literary award, and a nominee for the coveted Giller prize.

The book, in essence, is about Nomi Nickel, a young girl who takes us on the journey of her life, reflecting throughout the book on past and present experiences with boyfriends, friends and loved ones, all of which ultimately shape her into the teenager she grows into at the end of the novel.

The novel is a glimpse into the life of a finicky, angry, adolescent teenager. Readers are thrown back into their youth, reflecting on all the same things they learned to love but hated as they grew up. In Nomi's case, she's embarrassed by her father's suits at the beach, her sister's rebellious ways and her uncle's (referred to as The Mouth) ability to traumatize every member of the community. But above all those things was her religion – something Nomi was confronted with and made fun of throughout the novel. It was also an attempt on the author's part to release inner demons she may have experienced in her life in Steinbach, Man. – which is coincidentally a Mennonite community as well.

Mennos are discouraged from going to the city, 40 miles down the road, but are encouraged to travel to the remotest corners of third world countries with barrels full of Gideon Bibles and hairnets.

Simple, dark and satirical phrases like this one found in the novel are not only Nomi's observations about her religion, but what are the author's own personal opinions about her fellow churchgoers.

A Complicated Kindness is a novel that can be read on many different levels – stemming from the issue of family and relationship problems to religious disorder in a community that, as we see, values the Mennonite religion above all things.

A Complicated Kindness is a twisted look at a religion from a perspective that may be controversial among different audiences. Be prepared for a long night on the sofa.

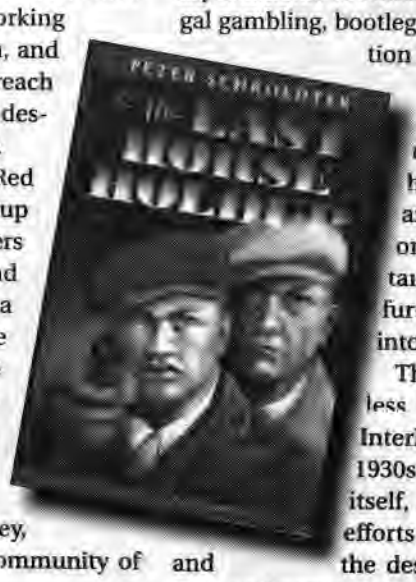
Novel explores Manitoba crime

The Last Horse Holdup: The Final Years of the Newhome Gang
by Peter Schoroedter

BY DARRYL GUNTHER

Set in the Great Depression, Peter Schroedter's non-fiction novel is both the tale of Peter Winters and Ephraim Korts robbery of the Ashern bank, and an introspective look at the history and people of an Interlake community.

The Last Horse Holdup: The Final Years of the Newhome Gang reveals a dark underbelly of the hardworking pioneers of Newhome, Man, and Peter Winters' struggle to reach beyond the predetermined destiny of the farm community.



Schroedter, a former Red River College student, grew up with the story of Peter Winters and the Newhome Gang, and later pursued the matter as a beat reporter for an Interlake newspaper. The research he gathered and the interviews he conducted with remaining eyewitnesses reveal a story that belongs in The Soprano's New Jersey, not in the small farming community of Newhome.

Peter Winters, the young son of Martin Winters, grew up in Newhome. Winters was a young man with big ideas, and the ambition to pursue them. He wanted to see the world that is beyond his small community.

After watching his father try to keep a farm and battle endlessly against an unforgiving environment, he decides to leave the farm (after an argument with his father).

Winters ends up working with Henry, a small time hoodlum. The tasks Winters performs for Henry, along with Ephraim Korts, escalate through the story, starting with arson, and bootlegging moonshine, and eventually ending up with the robbery of the Ashern bank in December 1934.

Murder and assault are a part of the Newhome Gang's business, and eventually it extends to Winnipeg, where an illegal gambling, bootlegging, and prostitution net is established.

The conflict with his father drives him to prove his worth, and the ambitious goals he once set become tainted as he sinks further and further into a life of crime.

The harsh, relentless landscape of the Interlake during the 1930s is a character in itself, with the tireless efforts of the pioneers, and the desperation of those men and women to make it through yet another long winter.

Schroedter escalates the action throughout the novel, until its unforeseen conclusion. The characters he portrays are accurate, and the trials and consequences they experience are real.

Starting and ending in the Manitoba wilderness, it is an unreal story, which just happens to be true.

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