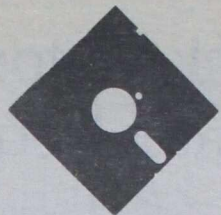


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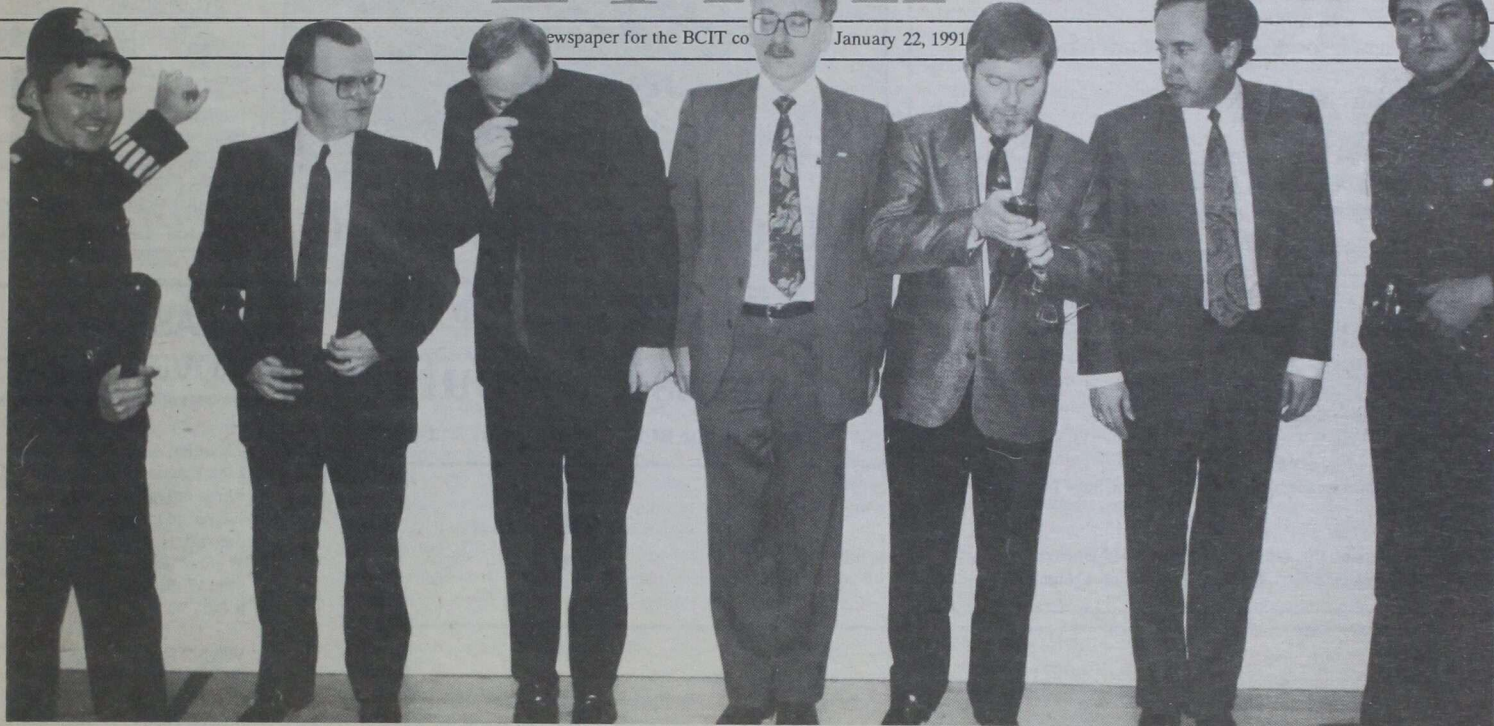
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ACCESS

Newspaper for the BCIT community January 22, 1991



Jail 'n' Bail proved a very successful fundraiser for Winter Fest '91. About \$500 was raised from known felons, including most of the top BCIT brass.

Canadian draft possible if war prolonged

By Matthew Johnson
Canadian University Press
VANCOUVER

If Canadian troops become

actively involved in a prolonged Persian Gulf war, the likelihood of a draft in Canada will increase, says a B.C. Member of Parliament.

Island North-Powell River MP Ray Skelly said the Canadian force in the Gulf is small, and a majority of the troops are over the age where they would be effective in active combat roles overseas.

If Canada's role was active in an armed conflict, he said it would be easy for the force to become overextended due to casualties. Then, he added, Canada would have the commitment but no people to fulfill that commitment.

The next step would be to call for volunteers, and if that force was insufficient, there would be a draft, he said.

"If that happened -- if there was a draft -- Canadians would tear Mulroney apart...from one end of the country to the other there would be people screaming from the rooftops," Skelly said.

People are now more prepared to question and defy a draft than in

previous wars, he said, adding that the Vietnam experience was a real turning point because it was proved that governments cannot order people around to the same extent as in the past.

Lieutenant Gerlad Pash, a public affairs officer for the Department of Defence, said that if there is fighting in the Gulf, "nothing changes. Canadians will undertake to uphold the United Nations sanctions. Any changes (in the Gulf) would be a result of policy made in Ottawa."

He said the chance of there being a draft is "entirely speculative and up to the Minister of Defence and the Parliament in Ottawa." He did note, however, that the Minister of Defence gave a reply to the idea of a Canadian draft in November, and the response was negative.

"Canadian forces are there to (carry out) Canada's policy, we will do the job that is required," he said.

Health Fair

Jan Poersch
BCIT Medical Services

There will be a Health Fair in the racquetball court lobby in the S.A.C. on Wednesday, Jan. 30, 1991 from 1100 hours to 1400 hours.

The focus of this health fair will be on **SAFER SEX**. There will be about ten different groups setting up displays with everything from literature and posters to free condoms. There will also be popcorn and videos.

You can find out the old and the new in birth control methods and the latest information on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) including Aids.

You can talk to Claire, a Vancouver street nurse or a volunteer from the Red Cross Child Abuse Prevention Program or the Victim Assistance Program. The Canadian PID Society (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease) will also have volunteers there with lots of information. PWA (People with Aids), Aids Vancouver, and Women and Aids Project are also sending displays and volunteers.

You can spend a few minutes or an hour or more at the health fair. You can pick up pamphlets and handouts to check out later or you can sit down and check out the different videos that will be there.

There will be about 3 different videos being shown at the same time so there will be lots of choices. The amount of time you spend is up to you. Do come by and check it out... this information is important and vital could save your life.

Rallies announced

Link Staff Report

The conflict in the Persian Gulf has awakened the anti-war movement, demonstrations and rallies continue throughout the Lower Mainland with a big one this Saturday.

End the Arms Race (EAR) is sponsoring a peace rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery, on January 26 starting at 1 p.m. For more information call 736-2366.

Burnaby-Kingsway MP Svend Robinson will speak on the crisis in the middle East on Tuesday, January 29, at the Conferation Community Centre for the Retired, 4585 Albert

Street, Burnaby (one block north of Hastings, just east of Willingdon). Robinson is New Democrat External Affairs spokesperson. The lecture starts at 7:30 p.m., followed by a wine and cheese reception. For more information call 299-4022.

To let Prime Minister Mulroney know how you feel about Canada's involvement in the Gulf, call his office at (613) 992-4211.

Letters to the Link may be submitted through the S.A. General Office in the SAC, through the EAC in the JW Inglis building, or through Access Computers in the Library Lobby.

January 23, 1991

Grouse lift
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Drop by the Recreation Office in the SAC for details

Link Editorial Writer Required

The Link requires an editorial writer. Job involves writing one editorial per week, due every Friday.

Appointment is for the duration of this term.

Remuneration is \$10 per issue.

Interested students are encouraged to contact Don Wright, Link publisher, at 432-8368. Candidates will be asked to present a sample editorial/opinion piece.

The Link is owned by the BCIT Student Association, 3700 Willingdon Avenue, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3H2.

Publisher: Don Wright
Contributing photographer: Mike Gdowski
Entertainment co-ordinator: Jason Veitch
Council reports: Sharla Temple
Distribution Co-ordinators:
Additional contributors this issue: Danilo Anton, Sally Johnston, Keith Spicer

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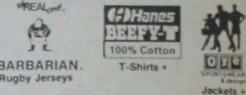
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Feb 20 Lakehead Univ. TBA
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Mar 20 Coping with Test Anxiety
Apr 3 Access Awareness Day (details TBA)
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Jan 14 Intro to Assertiveness
Jan 28 Building Self-Esteem and Confidence
Feb 11 Anxiety in the Clinic
Feb 25 Stress Management
Apr 8 Anxiety in the Clinic
Apr 22 Building Self-Esteem and Confidence

Students may pre-register or drop in on any workshop. For more information contact BCIT Student Services/Counselling, room 1A 229/tel. 434-3304.

This advertising space provided courtesy The Link.



Canadians peeved with taxes

By Sally Johnston

Canadian Science News Service

Canadians are firmly against the federal government's new Goods and Services Tax, a new study reveals. The study also found that many Canadians are fed up with a tax system they regard as unfair.

Nine out of ten people surveyed said they were unhappy at the government's plan to introduce the seven per cent GST, a tax on consumption, in January 1991. Many felt the government should find other ways to raise cash, while others insisted the government didn't need more money in any case.

The study was conducted by justice experts at the University of Toronto and York University. The telephone survey asked 1900 Ontario residents about their tax behaviour and attitudes. The 60 per cent response rate was good, say the researchers.

"Only 7.6 per cent of respondents agreed with the GST as a sole means of raising extra money for the government. Nine per cent thought income taxes should be raised instead," says Tony Doob, a criminology professor at the University of Toronto, one of the report's authors. He wrote the report with Neil Brooks, associate dean of law at Osgoode Hall law school.

Forty four per cent of respondents wanted a little of each; slightly higher income tax but a lower tax on goods and services.

"This suggests a cynicism amongst taxpayers - wanting a way of making sure the government catches everyone a little bit," says Doob. Loading a single form of taxation, on the other hand, is often seen as clobbering some taxpayers while perhaps allowing others to escape harmful effects.

Alternative means of raising money, such as customs and excise duties, were preferred by 23.4 per cent of respondents, while 15.7 per cent rejected the notion that the government needed more cash, whatever the source.

The survey, which followed a similar but smaller survey in Metro Toronto in 1989, also found that most Canadians are fed up with the tax system.

Eight out of ten people feel they pay too much income tax. Still, given a choice, 45 per cent of respondents were prepared to accept the present level of taxation as long as government services remained the same. Thirty-nine per cent would settle for government cutbacks if there were lower taxes.

Fifty-six per cent of respondents thought the tax system was, overall, unfair, giving the highly-paid tax breaks they didn't deserve at the expense of lower-income families.

Allowing child day-care costs to be tax-deductible for families with a household income of \$100,000 was seen as unfair by almost 73 per cent of respondents. However, 80 per cent thought this provision was fair for families earning \$25,000 a year.

Capital gains tax also took a

blasting. Most respondents, 65 per cent, thought it unfair that the current system allowed profits from owning or selling stocks to be taxed at a lower rate than income from salaries and wages. They also felt that corporations and businesses paid too little tax.

Another example of perceived unfairness of the Canadian tax system is that represented by the view of 92 per cent of the respondents, who believe that some people are able to avoid paying their fair share of taxes by hiring experts to find tax loopholes for them.

Cheating the taxman is seen as one way of retaliating against unfairness, the survey found. About eight per cent of respondents, who indicated they were paying more than others with the same income, said it was OK to be dishonest when they filled out their income tax form.

Seventeen per cent figured it was acceptable to avoid paying tax on cash earned 'moonlighting', as long as income from a main job had been reported.

"People seem to feel that only certain areas of their life are the

responsibility of the State," says Doob. "They feel that if they are paying income tax on their main job, then it's wrong that the government should take a cut of a second income earned by their sacrificing evenings and weekends. It's not a theory I agree with, but it's not an entirely crazy approach either."

Hiding rental income gained from letting a part of one's own home is also seen by many people as an acceptable means of tax evasion.

Tax evasion is also justified by some people who say that "it is too difficult" to figure out what is required, the researchers report.

Taxpayers are less likely to lie on their tax returns if there is a strong chance of their receiving a refund rather than having to pay additional amounts at tax filing time, the survey also found.

The researchers say changes are needed to the tax system, to reduce ambiguities in the tax laws and to lower the motivation to cheat.

Funding for the study was provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Council news

By Sharla Temple

The introduction of the new Student Association director, Stephen Miller, opened the first council meeting of the year. Executive reports followed, with Athletic and Recreation chairperson Rory Kine reporting that the last week for intramural registrations was the last week of January.

Karla Winters, Business chairperson, reported that work is now underway on an "environ-menatally friendly" purchasing policy for the Student Association.

The date for Awareness Day was set by Engineering chairperson Derek Bull to be April 4th.

Director Stephen Miller announced that the video games would be back once an alarm system was in place. He said vandalism over the past few weeks was the reason for

the alarm system.

Miller also reported that an ad will be placed asking for interest in a new restaurant in Taps Pub - A&W, the current leaseholder, wishes to vacate.

Duff Gardner, S.A. President, reported on the Campus Centre and said he was "confident" the ground breaking will take place before June 1st.

The rough draft of a student survey created by Kathryn Tiffin, V.P. Student Affairs and Duff Gardner was circulated at the meeting. 6000 of the surveys will be mailed to BCIT students, asking questions about daycare, plans for the SAC, and the Link as well as other issues. The question of cost versus results was raised by Allison Shackell, and others asked if the survey was similar to one done on behalf of the Recreation department. Tiffin said the new survey asked more in-depth, specific S.A. related questions. Gardner said it was important students see that the S.A. is directly interested in their opinions. A final copy of the survey has not yet been completed.

Set photos will be taken from February 4th to 8th in preparation for the upcoming S.A. election, March 27 to 29. The set photos will be given out during the elections to encourage voting, one to each member of each set.

Sharla Temple is a council member-at-large.

**Write for The Link!
Call 432-8368 or drop by
Access Computers and ask
for Don Wright, publisher.**



More suspicious characters, including the new S.A. director (first plainclothes individual on the far left).

New S.A. director hired

By Sharla Temple

The new Student Association director is Stephen Miller. He is originally from Montreal, where he obtained his MBA from the Rochester Institute, in 1974. In Montreal, Miller was director of the Talisman Film Festival which ran films every weekend all year, as well as director of an amateur film festival. Miller then spent six years running two repertoire theatres, offering low admission and variety, the Cinema V and the Seville. Miller also produced two feature films, but when film financing dried up in the 80's, and politics in Montreal were heating up, Miller moved to the Florida Keys and opened a restaurant. After an "unpleasant" year and a half in the restaurant business, Miller headed for Los Angeles hoping to find work in the entertainment business (his wife is a

stage actress).

When he got to LA, Miller actually established a successful career in real estate, but he wanted to move back to Canada where his two boys (age 2 and 4) could get away from the American school system and the transient sort of life LA represents.

"The west coast is the future," says Miller, who is impressed by the local environment and the west coast lifestyle.

Miller agrees taking over as director of the SA is different from his previous work, but says his philosophy is "you can have confidence in what you believe you can accomplish in anything you take on in life. If the confidence is missing, you will most likely fail."

Miller adds that BCIT has a the link, January 22, 1991

tremendous future, supplying individuals focused on specific disciplines to the workforce. He said he has already found BCIT sincerely interested and very education conscious, and likes their motivated approach to education.

In the coming year Miller plans to throw himself into a multitude of tasks. Working with S.A. President Duff Gardner, Miller wants to tie up loose ends on the new Campus Centre, give some attention to SA and SA lease businesses, and plan cultural events for students.

Miller also plans to work on support programs such as childcare and a business opportunity centre, to be located in the Campus Centre.

Quite a varied list, although judging from his past varied experience, if anyone can meet the challenge, Stephen Miller will.

Financial aid

Financial Assistance Information available for the January - May Term For BCIT Technology Students

1. BC Student Assistance

(Canada Student Loan, BC Student Loan, Equalization Payment)

Students who have not yet applied for BC Student Assistance for the 1990/91 academic year can still do so. For students in most technologies, the final deadline for submitting applications is March 15, 1991. Students in programs with year-end May 24 are strongly advised to apply before January 18, since after that date they can be considered for Canada Student Loan only.

Students requiring information and assistance in completing BC Student Assistance applications are invited to attend a workshop held from 12:30 to 1:30 at least one day a week. Students wishing to attend one of these sessions can register at the Financial Aid reception in Student Services. Also available from the Financial Aid reception are an audio tape and sample applications that explain how to complete the BCSAP application.

Important: Students who have applied for BC Student Assistance earlier in the year but wish to have a Reassessments/Appeals can be obtained both in the daytime and in the evening up to 7pm.

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The Support Programs Department of the Student Association is looking for a work study student to fill the position of LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ASSISTANT. This will be an exciting new pilot project for the Programs Department!

The main ideas behind of the Leadership Program is to encourage higher learning in communicating, public-speaking, decision-making, and much more! We want to make you more assertive, more organized, and more accessible to promotions! This will be our ultimate goal through classes, seminars and workshops.

As an assistant, you will be assisting developing this dynamic program by doing library research and report writing. Knowledge of using library materials would be an asset.

If you are interested, and qualify for work-study, please drop off your resume at the Student Association office in the SAC building. No phone calls please. The deadline for accepting applications is noon on Friday, January 25, 1991.

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the link, january 22, 1991



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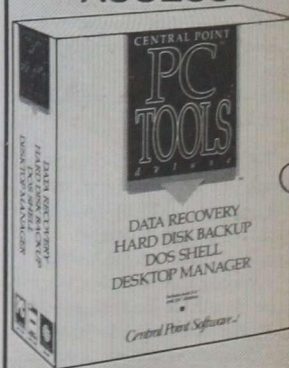
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War is not the answer

Canada is now part of the U.S. effort to obliterate the people and state of Iraq. The U.S., indignantly claiming the high moral ground, is pounding Iraq with every means of high tech death moth-balled with the thawing of the cold war.

To placate public opinion, images of the war have been kept very clean - not a single bloody, mutilated body in sight despite incredibly intense and sustained bombing.

Canadian opinion, expressed through polls, peace walks and rallies, is overwhelmingly opposed to Canada's involvement in an offensive role in the Gulf. There are many reasons why Canada should not be involved in the attack on Iraq, here are a few of them:

War has been shown to be an inefficient and largely ineffective way of resolving conflict at any level.

Canada has gravely damaged its international reputation as a peacekeeper by adding its military forces to the U.S. lead forces in the Gulf, and has therefore removed itself from any possible role in helping to bring post-war peace to the region.

The hypocrisy of the massive military action against Iraq is utterly disturbing. Certainly Iraq's takeover of Kuwait and the subjecting of its citizens to the terror of torture and summary execution is intolerable and rightfully the subject of international condemnation and protest. It is hypocritical for the U.S. however to claim the high moral ground when it has instigated direct and indirect military intervention in so many countries around the world (ie Nicaragua, Panama, Chile, to name a few). It has also not found it necessary to launch military operations against other countries guilty of "naked aggression" as George Bush puts it, for example the continued occupation of Tibet by China, East Timor by Indonesia, and so on.

Finally, Iraqi citizens have been, for many years, among the most brutally oppressed people in the world. Torture and summary execution (that is, without trial) of men, women and children suspected by political opposition in Iraq and the use of chemical weapons against specific ethnic groups is well documented by Amnesty International and other human rights organizations. And who will be the main victims of our war on Iraq? Common soldiers used as cannon fodder and the same men, women and children already viciously targeted by the Iraqi government.

War is not the answer. It's time Prime Minister Mulroney listened to the majority of Canadians who want a peaceful solution to this crisis.

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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THIS CARTOON FOR NEOPHYTES AND A REMEDIAL COURSE FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T BEEN PAYING ATTENTION



Spicer invites students to join in discussion

By Keith Spicer
Chairman, Citizens' Forum,
on Canada Future

The times they are a changin'. But this time it's not the young telling the old how change is coming, change is darkly coming by itself. Canada is threatened by social and political disorder for which no one wants to take responsibility, and there are no day-saving heroes or heroines waiting in the wings.

There is a serious chance this country may break up along regional and linguistic fault lines, to the surprise and dismay of most of the 26 million spectators.

Now is the time for students and all young people - who have the most to lose and win - to step onto the stage and take some responsibility for their future. It's time for students to take the lead again, because the older generations may have so fouled things up that the country needs an entirely new way of thinking about itself.

The Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future has been set up to help Canadians discover this new way of thinking - and, perhaps in doing so, discover themselves. The Forum is an independent, non-partisan group of a dozen Canadians with a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs, which has been asked by the government to report by July 1, 1991, on Canadians' ideas for their country's future.

Think of the Forum as a chance to break an intellectual and emotional logjam - as making it possible for Canadians to talk to each other again, and particularly to listen to each other again.

The Forum wants to make it easier for all Canadians to help reshape their country - and it will especially seek out Canadians who aren't used to speaking up, or speaking out. And it is meant to be an exercise in grassroots democracy: its emphasis is on listening.

In addition to the well-known and vital issue of Quebec, we want to hear about the fundamental but delicate questions politicians often shunt aside. These could include the rights of women, children, the handicapped, and minorities of all kinds; regionalism, evolving multiculturalism; aboriginal rights; a greying society; violence; sagging research; and education and training ill-fitted to the twenty-first century.

The Forum especially wants students' ideas on how to respect the dignity of, and to bring together, groups across Canada feeling left out: westerners, northerners, ethnocultural Canadians, Atlantic Canadians and, of course, Quebecers.

It's not as easy as it used to be to dabble in politics or join crusades for noble causes. Bob Dylan's celebrated political generation spent more money than you do, and typically worked less hard at school,

because there was more money then and more jobs were available.

When students want to change things today, they must often make personal sacrifices. But your help is crucial in getting Canadians to understand each other better, because ignorance, distrust and sometimes outright selfishness are killing the country.

Don't think individuals can't make a difference: I was an overworked, underfunded, even pre-Dylan student when I co-founded what quickly became CUSO. And I worked as a student on the railway while successfully bugging the president of the University of Toronto to set up a course grandly called "Canadian civilization" for foreign students.

I know what students can accomplish - their ideals and drive - and, yes, even their "innocence" - are powerful antidotes for the tired cynicism which clogs the brains cells of every establishment.

If I have hope for Canada, and I a lot, it's mainly because I believe in the clear-headed idealism, energy and creativity of its young people. Nobody in Canada can make a bigger difference than you if you get out and speak up for your own future.

You can and must make yourselves heard. You can do this the link, January 22, 1991

by discussing Canada with friends, lovers, professors or anybody with ears - then calling the Forum's Idea Line": 1-800-66-FORUM to give us your views. At another level, you can organize a group of five to 20 people to run through one of our two-to-three-hour Group Discussion Kits. These can help you define a new future in a free but focused way that will seriously count in our final report.

Or, you can send us letters, essays, even theses if you think these will help. You might ask professors to spend a class discussing the country. Invite the Forum to come to your campus.

To really make things happen, some of you could even form student organizing committees for Canada's Future - as several campuses have. These could rally large numbers of students into discussion groups, make available our kits, and ensure that we get reporting forms from every student you could reach - either in a group or as an individual. To help us help you, we've hired student liaison officers who've temporarily left their studies to work with you.

We'll need a number of students over the next few months to participate in regional and national TV discussions. We'll be able to use student volunteers on every campus to help promote and run discussions.

Many campuses have an

education commissioner, or student who brings in speakers to address a topical political issue. She or he might like to bring in someone currently in national affairs, or with original ideas about the country, and then hold a discussion afterwards. Then send us the results.

We will listen. Don't think you're dealing with a government bureaucracy. Nearly all of us are from outside the government, and we're ferociously separate from it. We've got less than six more months to fulfill our mandate of listening to, and reporting, your, views.

Whatever you say will appear in some form on July 1 in our final report. The Forum's members are not bureaucrats or technocrats - they're something like commandos for dialogue, racing the clock to stir Canadians into talking to and about each other. And into listening to each other.

If you were frustrated last June by seeing eleven politicians try to shape Canada's future behind closed doors, then now is your chance to do it your way - personally, publicly, powerfully. Stand up, speak out, and bear witness to the future you want.

You can, of course, stay quiet now. If you do, then later you will have to endure without complaint the country others will have defined and decided for you. Canada is your country: Act for it today or pay for it tomorrow.

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The following are employment opportunities available through the **Employment Action Centre**, 4th Floor, JW Inglis Building. If you're interested in the following positions please see Betty or call 438-1343 for further details.

Architectural Drafter: full-time position; minimum 6 months manual experience; read and produce drawings; assist manager with site plan studies, shop drawings, solve on-site problems; North Vancouver location; Salary - \$14.00/hr. Ref#J08

Mechanical Drafter: full-time position; accurate hand sketches and detailed drawings for a company which repairs pulp mill machinery; will train; Richmond location; Salary - \$13.00/hr. Ref#J09

Electronics Technician: full-time position; repairing copiers, fax machines and office equipment; trainee position; Vancouver location; Salary - \$8.00/hr. Ref#J07

Automotive Mechanic: full-time; working on steering, brakes and suspensions; apprenticeship offered; Vancouver, North Vancouver, Maple Ridge, Vancouver Island locations; Salary - neg. Ref#J04

Electronics Technician: full-time position; performing preventative maintenance and repair of electronic equipment for distributes lab supplies; Burnaby location; Salary - \$13.00/hr. Ref#J10

Golf Course Mechanic: full-time position; minor and major repairs on gas and diesel equipment; one person shop; training provided; North Vancouver location; Salary - union wages/benefits. Ref#J02

Housing Engineer/Framing Demonstrator: travel throughout Japan demonstrating framing practices and methods; conduct seminars and training sessions; must have suitable experience in house framing, design and construction supervision as well as trades papers; Japan location (2 years preferred); Salary - neg. Ref#D07

Drafter: full-time position; doing layouts for roofs from blueprints; working with CAD; Burnaby location; Salary - \$1500- \$2000/mth. Ref#J01

Forklift Technician: full-time position; completed heavy duty or automotive; apprenticeship offered through company; Delta location; Salary - \$8.00/hr. Ref#J05

Electronics Installer: install anti-glare/anti-static screens on computer monitors; good general knowledge of micro computer hardware; basic background in electronics; must have own transportation; Vancouver location; Salary - \$10/hr. Ref#D02

Pressure Washer: part-time position, flexible shifts - will work around student schedule; no experience necessary, but must have valid drivers licence; Burnaby location;

Salary - \$7.00/hr. to start. Ref#D01

Jr. Test Technologist: full-time position; testing and quality control of products; use and general knowledge of test area and equipment; complete production error reports and day to day maintenance; Burnaby location; Salary - neg. Ref#D04

Qualified Plumbers/Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technicians: full-time; must have 5-8 years experience; Vancouver location; Salary - \$35/hr plus profit sharing; Call Ken Blakeman at 681-9668.

Structural Designer/Renderer: full-time position; junior position preparing drawings primarily for steel and reinforced concrete building; skilled in and specializing in rendering conceptual drawings and models; Tokyo, Japan location; Salary - neg. Ref#D06.

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THIS WEEK	ARTIST	SONG TITLE
1	ELTON JOHN	YOU GOTTA LOVE SOMEONE
2	STEVE WINWOOD	ONE AND ONLY MAN
3	BLUE RODEO	TILL I AM MYSELF AGAIN ***
4	DON HENLEY	NEW YORK MINUTE
5	WILSON PHILLIPS	IMPULSIVE
6	VAN MORRISON	REAL REAL GONE
7	CHEF	SHOOF SHOOF SONG
8	STEVIE N	BECAUSE I LOVE YOU
9	STING	ALL THIS TIME
10	HALL & OATES	SO CLOSE
11	WHITNEY HOUSTON	I'M YOUR BABY TONIGHT
12	GEORGE MICHAEL	FREEDOM
13	DNA/SUZANNE VEGA	TOM'S DINER
14	NORTHERN FIKES	KISS ME YOU FOOL ***
15	BETTE MIDLER	FROM A DISTANCE
16	WILL TO POWER	I'M NOT IN LOVE
17	CHRIS IZZAK	WICKED GAME
18	GINO VANELLI	THE TIME OF DAY ***
19	BREATHE	DOES SHE LOVE THAT MAN
20	STYX	SHOW ME THE WAY

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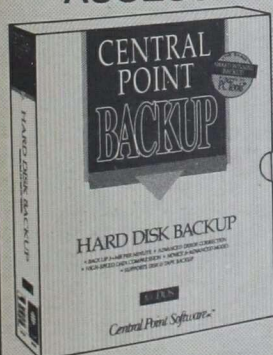
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Thirsty cities: water not endless

By Danilo Anton

Water. Next to oxygen it is the most important natural substance keeping us alive. To many, it seems to be a free and seemingly endless source of life. But it is not endless.

The relentless demand of an increasing global population is placing an incredible strain on existing water resources. This strain has become critical in the larger urban centres of many developing countries. Here, water supplies are not only subject to overuse but contamination as well. Many cities are having problems with both the availability and the quality of water.

A combination of limited resources and poor water management have resulted in widespread pollution, scarcity, and even land subsidence - the actual sinking of cities caused by excessive groundwater extraction.

The larger cities of the developing world show the most visible signs of these problems.

One of the main features of global evolution in the past 50 years has been, and will continue to be, the phenomenal growth of huge urban centres. There are currently as many as 45 cities throughout the Third World with populations nearing, or in excess of, 3 million people.

Eight Third World cities have already exceeded the 10 million mark: Mexico, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Calcutta, Bombay, Cairo, Shanghai, and Seoul. The average growth rates in these cities between 1950 and 1980 was 3.5-4.5% a year. Urban population growth is still very high placing an extreme burden on water resources.

Population is one of the major causes of water contamination. The water on which cities rely is often polluted by enormous amounts of human waste, sometimes channelled untreated into open bodies of water. Other cities depend on reservoirs that cannot provide enough water for their mushrooming populations forcing people to find alternative, unregulated sources of water.

Urban areas also use large amounts of water for industrial purposes. Once used, these waters suffer significant quality of degradation. The polluted waters are then dumped into rivers, lakes, and coastal waters hitting the environment with the double blow of reduced quantity and quality of water. Regrettably, antipollution legislation in developing countries is often vague or nonexistent. Where it does exist, it can be easily circumvented.

In most Third World countries, the economy and environment are caught in a negative cycle. To meet their financial obligations, many countries have concentrated on the production of cheap export goods. This prevalence of industry in urban areas - much of it in the form of multinational companies - is bringing about considerable damage

to the environment.

Meanwhile, government funding for programs, such as environmental protection, is often unavailable or way down on the priority list. Many national and urban governments do not have the money, or the will, to make a long-term commitment to their natural resources.

The environment is, in essence, being sold along with the cheap exports. There is an unfortunate string of examples.

Coffee-production wastes are ruining the freshwater environment in the Magdalena and Cauca basins in Colombia, in the Tiete basin in Brazil, in the Eldoret region in Kenya, and in Northeastern Tanzania.

Tanning-industry wastes have completely killed the natural fauna and flora of many streams in the province of Buenos Aires, in Southern Uruguay, in India and in many other leather-producing countries.

Gold-extraction operations (using cyanide or mercury) are destroying the water environment in many developing countries, such as Brazil, Colombia and Papua New Guinea.

Some heavily industrialized, large urban centres like Sao Paulo, Calcutta, Mexico City, and Cairo have a particularly poor record of environmental protection of their water resources.

Cities, through their expanding populations and industrial exploitation, are damaging or even destroying their life-giving water resources. These urban areas are only beginning to realize that they cannot keep going to the same well.

Where Water Comes From

There are two types of water resources used for urban water supply - surface water (rivers and lakes) groundwater (underground wells and springs). Surface waters are often the easiest source of water and their use can be very straightforward.

These waters, however, are also easily polluted. In most cases, the small - and medium-size streams of Third World cities have become highly contaminated acting as little more than open sewers. Small lakes located near cities have suffered the same fate.

There are scores of cities that have damaged their neighbouring water bodies. Some examples include the Chao Phraya river in Bangkok, the Hooghly river in Calcutta, the Laguna de Bay in Manila, the Tiete river in Sao Paulo, the Bogota river in Bogota, the Xolotlan lake in Managua, and the Amatitlan lake in Guatemala. The list goes on.

Larger bodies of water, like rivers or lakes, are slightly less vulnerable. They can, however, gradually become polluted and unusable because of increasing demand and a lack of restrictions on usage. Once these sources of water

are polluted, the clean-up task is difficult and expensive. The Nile river downstream of Cairo and the Plate river of Buenos Aires are facing serious and expensive pollution problems.

If current urban growth and environmental degradation trends continue unchecked, it is expected that soon very few, if any, rivers in the developing world will be able to be used for water supply without heavy and expensive treatment procedures.

During the latter half of this century, cities have increasingly used groundwater resources to compensate for the gradual loss of surface water. Many of the 20 larger cities in the developing world pump water from the ground to meet the needs of their populations: Mexico City, Bangkok, Calcutta, Manila, Jakarta, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Beijing, and Shanghai.

Underground water reservoirs are contained in the voids of the sediment and rock underneath the earth's surface. These "aquifers", as they are known to geologists, range from relatively thin and shallow pools to huge volumes hundreds of metres beneath the surface.

This water stored under the ground is often abundant and of high quality. It is also significantly less vulnerable to contamination because it is more or less protected by layers of sediment and rock.

But polluted water can, and in fact has, found its way into the underground reservoirs. Few notice this invisible pollution, but it exists, and it is almost impossible to clean up.

Aquifers, although containing abundant volumes of water, are also finite and cannot accept indefinite extraction beyond their renewal potential.

Unfortunately, not many countries have a clear idea of the renewal potential or the vulnerability of their groundwater - Lima, Beijing, and Manila to name a few - are over pumping their aquifers beyond their renewal possibilities.

Water levels in Third World urban areas have been dropping consistently. In Manila, water levels have decreased during the last two decades by about 4 - 10m a year; in Beijing the drop in the city's 40,000 wells has ranged from 1 to 3m every year. Similar figures have been registered in Mexico City and Lima.

In some coastal cities, overpumping has drawn salty sea water inland, a phenomenon that is called saline intrusion. This is the case in Dakar, Jakarta, Lima, and Manila.

Another negative aspect of overpumping is the dewatering of parts of the aquifer. When water is taken out of the aquifer some moisture also leaves the surrounding layers of sediment. The result is a compaction of the overlying land and a dangerous sinking

phenomenon called land subsidence. This has occurred in Mexico City and Bangkok.

Expensive Alternatives

The net effect of this deterioration in both ground and surface water resources is increasing costs in finding alternative water supplies. A basic trend of water resource development is that the most accessible water sources are developing first - and often they are contaminated first. New sources of water are difficult to find and more expensive.

Many cities have actually dropped their standards of water quality, allowing consumption of water that would not normally be considered safe. Although information is scant, there is evidence showing that waterborne sicknesses such as diarrhea, hepatitis, and cholera have become commonplace in many cities.

Other cities have rationed the supply, with water cuts becoming a part of daily life. But this problem is even more pronounced in the poor and slum sections of large cities. It is estimated that about 200 million urban dwellers in the Third World lack the benefits of safe running water. When urban growth and lack of financial resources force governments to reduce their water service, these neighbourhoods usually feel it the most.

Water resource management in developing cities is not getting better. The costs of water supply schemes are booming and many Third World cities are finding it increasingly difficult to afford them.

International loans are drying up because of the growing foreign debt crisis. Infrastructural projects are being postponed or abandoned. Lima will not be able to bring more water from the Amazonian basin - a project estimated at US\$500 million - because of the current deficit situation of Peru. Dakar is still waiting for the construction of the long aqueduct conducting water from the Lac de Guilers to the city site.

In developing world, where there is a lack of resources and a rapidly expanding population, the current attitude toward water resources can at best be seen as short-sighted. At worst it is potentially disastrous.

The solution to the problem is twofold, but there are no easy or simple answers. Adequate and responsible water management must be based on a more in-depth knowledge of the surrounding natural and social environment of each particular city. Research and awareness on the availability of water resources (including underground resources) must become a priority in these large cities. In addition, the consequences of overuse and careless disposal of human and industrial waste should be examined in relation to water availability.

Governments and international development agencies must also recognize the importance of water through increased funding.

Recently, there has been a widespread decrease in funds for urban water supply purposes. The World Bank's financing of water projects in Latin America is the most obvious example. The share of the Bank's funding for water projects in relation to total funding has decreased from 7.2% in 1976-80 to 3.9% in 1986-89. A similar trend can be observed in other areas of the developing world and in other financial institutions. This tendency cannot continue if the large cities of the Third World are expected to have safer and sufficient water supplies.

During the last few years there have been some positive signs. Many international lending institutions, including the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, have included environmental sustainability as a key element in their project-development policies. There is increasing awareness of the problems among the people in developing countries. Governments are being pressed to listen, and some measures to improve the situation have been taken.

If this positive trend does not accelerate soon, however, it may be too late for many millions of urban dwellers trapped in this growing environmental catastrophe.

Danilo Anton is an IDRC regional program officer based in Montevideo, Uruguay. Reprinted from IDRC Report.

