

THE CORD WEEKLY

The tie that binds since 1926

TRANSFORMERS

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THE BOY WIZARD

Pottermania gets exclusive blogs on **CORDWEEKLY.COM**



Volume 48 Issue 3

WEDNESDAY JULY 18, 2007

www.cordweekly.com



Sydney Herland

PHASE ONE - This table in the Bricker building will be wireless in September; the next phase of the wireless project will see some outdoor areas able to gain wireless access as well.

WLU goes wireless

With 60 new hotspots and no set-up fees, laptops campus-wide will have access to the net

LAURA CARLSON
NEWS EDITOR

Though located in what the Intelligent Community Forum has recently declared the world's most intelligent city, the incentive to be a forerunner in technological innovation has somewhat been lagging at Laurier. But this year, WLU will take the initiative to greatly enhance its current networking system by going completely wireless for September.

"You look around and it's the way of the future. It's something

that we should just be offering for the convenience of students," explained John Kearney, Director of Informational Technology Services (ITS).

In addition to the 20 wireless access points that currently exist on campus, 60 new hotspots are being installed over the course of the summer. This will increase signal strength in places where students have traditionally been able to access the internet, as well as provide connectivity in new areas such as the Bricker Academic Building, Northdale and St. Mi-

chael's campus.

Later in the year, ITS is also planning to set up additional hotspots in and around the quad, Alumni Field and Knight-Newbrough Field (formerly University Stadium) so that wireless signals can be picked up outside.

Aside from contributions by ITS and the VP: Academic, the new wireless network, which costs \$120,000, saw half its funding come from the 2006-2007 Student Life Levy. Since students already pay \$9.91 per half credit course into this fund, no additional costs will fall directly on students for this new service.

- SEE **WIRELESS**, PAGE 2

LORIS leaves students frustrated

Registration website's propensity for crashing has spawned an angry student backlash

ASHLEY JANG
STUDENT LIFE EDITOR

Since replacing the pen and paper class registration method four years ago, LORIS, Laurier's online registration system, has caused many registration problems for WLU students.

"I think the issue is that they're just not reliable enough," said Kyle Wood, a fourth-year English and history student who recently created a Facebook group to raise awareness of LORIS' shortcomings. "I don't even know who to call about problems with LORIS; it feels like they want to give you the run-around."

Registration opens for students in each year at midnight on different set dates, and as a result of so many students trying to access it at the same time the system often crashes, sometimes for hours at a time.

"LORIS is treated as kind of the end-all for registration and I think that we should go back to a system where the profs have a little more say," said Wood. "If we're going to put that much weight on it, I think we need to know that the servers are going to be reliable enough to handle the rush of people," he added.

But Laurier is not the only school experiencing problems with online registration.

Asher Howe, a third-year student at Ryerson University, has experienced similar difficulties with RAMS, Ryerson's online registration system. "During peak hours it doesn't allow a lot of people to use it. It will say that the volume is too high and you can't get in," he said.

McMaster's program, MUGSI, also has its problems. "When you check marks or people are choosing courses, usually it's backed up pretty bad so you have to try constantly to get in," said Kevin Tan, a fourth-year geography student at McMaster.

Ashley Persaud, entering her third year at York University, has also experienced some problems

Vocal Cord

FOR STUDENT REACTION TO LORIS, SEE PAGE 5

with their registration program, called Passport York. "I've had problems logging in when it's really busy; it goes down for one to two hours," she said.

"Sometimes it won't let you enter a course even though there is room," added another York student, Tom Wood.

Other universities, however, do not experience such problems. The University of Waterloo offers scheduled times throughout the day for students so that not too many people are accessing their program, Quest, at once. "They'll give you a timeframe of like a week when you can access it and you can go on anytime during that time period," said Matt Chan, a third-year student at UW.

The University of Toronto avoids big crashes in the system by doing constant maintenance on their registration website, ROSI. "I've never had it down or anything. They have a schedule for when they do maintenance on the site. I think it's daily but it's usually pretty short," said third-year U of T student Kirill Tatarinov.

- SEE **LORIS**, PAGE 5

LORIS

Backlash by the numbers

3 - Number of members in Kyle Wood's "Laurier United Against LORIS" group when he created it.

458 - The group's membership as of 4:30 pm yesterday.

135 - The number of signatures on an online petition against LORIS at the same time yesterday.

THE CORD WEEKLY

- The tie that binds since 1926 -

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Everyone goes drinking; I just want clowns and balloons."

- Web Editor Dan Belgue while contemplating the best way to celebrate a birthday.

WORD OF THE WEEK

Clandestine - To execute with secrecy or concealment, usually for the purpose of subversion or deception.

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COLOPHON

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Preamble to The Cord Constitution

The Cord will keep faith with its readers by presenting news and expressions of opinions comprehensively, accurately and fairly.

The Cord believes in a balanced and impartial presentation of all relevant facts in a news report, and of all substantial opinions in a manner of controversy.

The staff of *The Cord* shall uphold all commonly held ethical conventions of journalists. When an error of omission or of commission has occurred, that error shall be acknowledged promptly.

When statements are made that are critical of an individual, or an organization, we shall give those affected the opportunity to reply at the earliest time possible.

Ethical journalism requires impartiality, and consequently conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest will be avoided by all staff.

The only limits of any newspaper are those of the world around it, and so *The Cord* will attempt to cover its world with a special focus on Wilfrid Laurier University, and the community of Kitchener-Waterloo, and with a special ear to the concerns of the students of Wilfrid Laurier University. Ultimately, *The Cord* will be bound by neither philosophy, nor geography in its mandate.

The Cord has an obligation to foster freedom of the press and freedom of speech. This obligation is best fulfilled when debate and dissent are encouraged, both in the internal workings of the paper, and through *The Cord's* contacts with the student body.

The Cord will always attempt to do what is right, with fear of neither repercussions, nor retaliation. The purpose of the student press is to act as an agent of social awareness, and so shall consider the affairs of our newspapers.

Student gets his 'wish'

WLU student's anti-abortion Facebook group wins CBC contest; garners media attention nationwide

DAN POLISCHUK
NEWS EDITOR

For fourth-year economics student Dave Gilbert, getting the entire country's attention was something he never intended to achieve in his graduating year at WLU. But a larger than expected contingent has responded to his initiative to bring the harmful effects of abortion out into the spotlight.

Using the CBC competition named the 'Great Canadian Wish

and mentally," said Gilbert.

"But, you know, I think it shows a lot of people think that abortion is a closed issue and, really, a lot of young people do want to talk about it," he added.

Not surprisingly, Gilbert is one of those aforementioned individuals. The fact that his own mother considered abortion when she became pregnant with him as a teenager gave Gilbert a lot of resolve, taking the initiative to join the national debate after he came across the contest watching CBC one afternoon.

"I THINK IT SHOWS A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK THAT ABORTION IS A CLOSED ISSUE AND, REALLY, A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE DO WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT."

- Dave Gilbert, WLU economics student

across the contest watching CBC one afternoon.

"I think this was a good experiment on CBC's part," he said. "I think it was interesting and it just shows that when you have an unmediated, open-

forum debate it shows that abortion does come up to the top of the issues that people do want to talk about," said Gilbert.

"A lot of people are surprised [with the support] because it doesn't get the coverage in the mainstream media. But it just shows that, when you have uncensored discussions, this issue comes up in the front."

Asked if he expects any real change to come from his intended efforts to improve what he classifies a 'human rights issue,' Gilbert was just pleased that "for the immediate short-term, it got people thinking."

"It got the coverage from coast-

to-coast of Canada and I hope it shows politicians out there that there are people who want to bring up this debate, want to talk about it and to not be afraid of where you stand on the issue because you will not lose votes - you will actually gain people's support," he

theorized.

"I think that some people don't want to talk about it because everyone's like, 'Oh, well you're infringing on rights.' ... But people forget that abortion is infringing on other people's rights as well."

Free Wi-Fi at WLU

- FROM WIRELESS, COVER

Allan Cayenne, 2006-2007 president of the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union (WLUSU), explains that this project fits directly within the mandate of what such student fees should be going towards.

"The Student Life Levy was founded on two main tenets; the first is to enhance technology and [the second] is to enhance the quality of student life," said Cayenne. "This fit perfectly."

Though it is often difficult to find projects which directly benefit every student, Cayenne feels that this is one initiative where the majority of individuals will see tangible benefits for their remaining time at WLU.

"Sure, not everyone has a laptop, but I think that at some point everyone will see the advantages," said Cayenne.

All newer laptops will be compatible with the system including Macs, as well as computers that use Linux or Windows Vista.

A simple one-time set-up

process (which students can do themselves) is all that is required before one can get access to the system, and thus there is no longer a need to have additional software installed by the Laurier Bookstore.

With over 1800 students opting to pay the \$20 activation fee last year alone, the Bookstore will see a loss in revenue from this new wireless system, however this does not concern Ron Billing, manager of the Bookstore.

"[The new wireless system] is such a better opportunity for the students, so by all means we should be doing that," said Billing.

While the hotspots are set to be installed for when students arrive back to school in September, Kearney explains that it will take some time to get everything running smoothly.

"You'll see a big increase in coverage from day one and we'll be working through September and October to fine-tune the system."

Campus Construction

Dr. Alvin Woods Building (DAWB)

The most significant (and longest) construction project on the Laurier campus, the DAWB, is guaranteed to be done by the start of the school year, according to Rob Vanderspeck, Manager: Facilities Planning, Design & Construction.

While academics will be moving into their new offices (floors 2-5) on August 3, offices to be located on the main floor (International, Graduate Studies and Research offices) will commence move-in day on August 15, almost two weeks later.

Target Date: Complete move-in by late August.

Outlook: On schedule.

Career Development and Co-op Building

The three-storey, \$5 million building on the corner of King and

Lodge St. is doing "very well" according to Vanderspeck, in terms of not hitting any "snags" with construction of the building.

Target Date: Late August/Early September.

Outlook: On time, but will be tight for end of August.

University Stadium

Despite having fallen victim to a labour strike, the stadium work is basically caught up to its initial timeline, according to Vanderspeck.

He also noted that the new rolls of FieldTurf are on the "edge of the stadium grounds" and are just about ready to be laid out.

Target Date: September 1, 2007.

Outlook: On schedule.

Alumni Hall

With a 9,000 square foot expansion project in the works since

mid-March, reconstruction of the building is right on schedule, according to alumni administration.

To cope with the construction, Alumni Relations staff were moved to a converted board room in the Bricker Street residence. The remaining offices within the existing portion of the building were shuffled and relocated within Alumni Hall.

Target Date: September 1, 2007.

Outlook: On schedule.

Athletic Complex

Having already completed a layout redesign along with the creation of suspension flooring in the free-weight section of the fitness centre, fixing leaks, caused by frozen roof drain pipes as well as inefficient storm sewers, is next on the agenda at the AC.

With the problem located specifically in the basement dance studio, a consultant is being brought in this week to determine how much work will need to be

done to "get it fixed right," according to Roly Webster, Coordinator of Facilities/Events/Sponsorship.

Target Date: September 1, 2007.

Outlook: To be determined.

Leupold Residence

As reported by *The Cord*, the residence building has fallen victim to a "minor mould problem" and is being worked on diligently by Physical Resources to be brought back to adequate standards.

According to Vanderspeck, repairs should be completed by next month - ahead of move-in day for incoming residence students.

On July 23, asbestos removal will also begin on the main floor of MacDonald House student residence.

Target Date: September 1, 2007 (at the very latest).

Outlook: On schedule.

Compiled by Dan Polischuk

East Timor still unstable

Small island nation, which gained sovereignty just five years ago, is still struggling for stability

LUKE REIMER
CORD INTERNATIONAL

East Timor is experiencing continued delays on its road to political and national stability. The July 5th elections resulted in the Fretilin party becoming the leader of a minority government with 29 per cent of the vote, leading to talks of a possible coalition government to be formed by four of the remaining parties.

The fledgling Asian country became an officially recognized nation in 2002, having finally overcome a brutal and violent history of Indonesian occupation. Since that time, the country has attempted to move forward in establishing a politically sound government and efficient public institutions.

The coalition government has been proposed by former East Timorese President Xanana Gusmao, although it has not been said whether or not he would take the post of Prime Minister should such a coalition prove to be successful. It is said that a formal request to form the opposition will be submitted to current President José Ramos Horta shortly.

The current political structure of East Timor consists of a President as Head of State (Ramos-Horta), a Prime Minister as Head of Govern-

ment (currently Eng Estanislau da Silva), and various other Minister positions. Additionally, 88 officials hold seats in the National Parliament, or Parlamento Nacional, which is in its first term of office.

East Timor's journey of autonomy and sovereignty began when Portugal vacated in 1975 - having occupied East Timor since the 16th century - leaving the country weak and vulnerable. Indonesia's subsequent invasion marked the start of a bloody and violent period during which little progress was made.

Multiple instances of United Nations intervention occurred as human rights issues arose concerning the East Timorese people. Progress was slow, but eventually Australian and U.N. forces secured the country to bring peace to the nation in 1999. During the various occupations, an estimated 200,000 East Timorese were killed and another 300,000 made refugees.

East Timor is a small island, rich in resources but lacking in a sustainable economy, thus rating as one of the world's poorest countries. What used to be a pure and unified effort of resistance against Indonesian authority has now become a complex political struggle as the numerous political parties face off in elections and in campaign platforms.



RIG THIS - UN and Aussie peacekeeping forces help transport ballot boxes to the far reaches of East Timor.

From an international perspective, Indonesia can be viewed as the historical aggressor to East Timor, although military occupation has long since ceased. Australia, on the other hand, can be seen as East Timor's 'big brother', having stepped in with military force throughout the past as well as closely monitoring and supporting the current political struggle for an effective democracy.

Domestically, political unrest has manifested itself as dissention and gang warfare. The largest rise of violence occurred earlier last year when nearly 40 were killed and over 100,000 driven from their homes. Although instances of this magnitude have since quelled, low-level unrest continues.

Opinions of the country's future stand mixed. Many retain the pessimistic discouragement brought by

years of violence and injustice that seem to continue now in a more peaceful form of governmental failure, lack of unity and the overshadowing of developed neighbouring nations. However, some see hope in the sovereignty gained in 2002, the ending of violence and the current push for democracy that can be seen within the country.

Despite their destructive history, and through their current issues, East Timor continues to strive for peace and unity. A secure future will largely depend on the final outcome of the political shifting and the creation of an organized government - whether it is a minority Fretilin rule or a majority coalition government.

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FIFA comes to Canada

LAUREN MILLET
SPORTS EDITOR

24 countries, six continents, 52 games, one world title.

The 16th edition of the FIFA Under-20 World Cup is taking place in none other than our own country

of Canada. This event occurs every two years, and some people might find themselves asking, "Why Canada?" Well, in fact, the U-20 World Cup has a history of being hosted in nations not generally associated with soccer: United Arab Emirates in 2003, Malaysia in 1997 and Qatar

in 1995.

This edition features 24 teams coming from six continents across the world to battle through 52 games in search of the top title. Soccer fans across the nation will have the rare opportunity to witness the sport on a world class level, an oc-

casional that will surely spark a rise in interest in the sport in Canada. Not only that, but it presents the chance for our young boys to play against teams from around the world, something that will allow unprecedented growth and development for their futures.

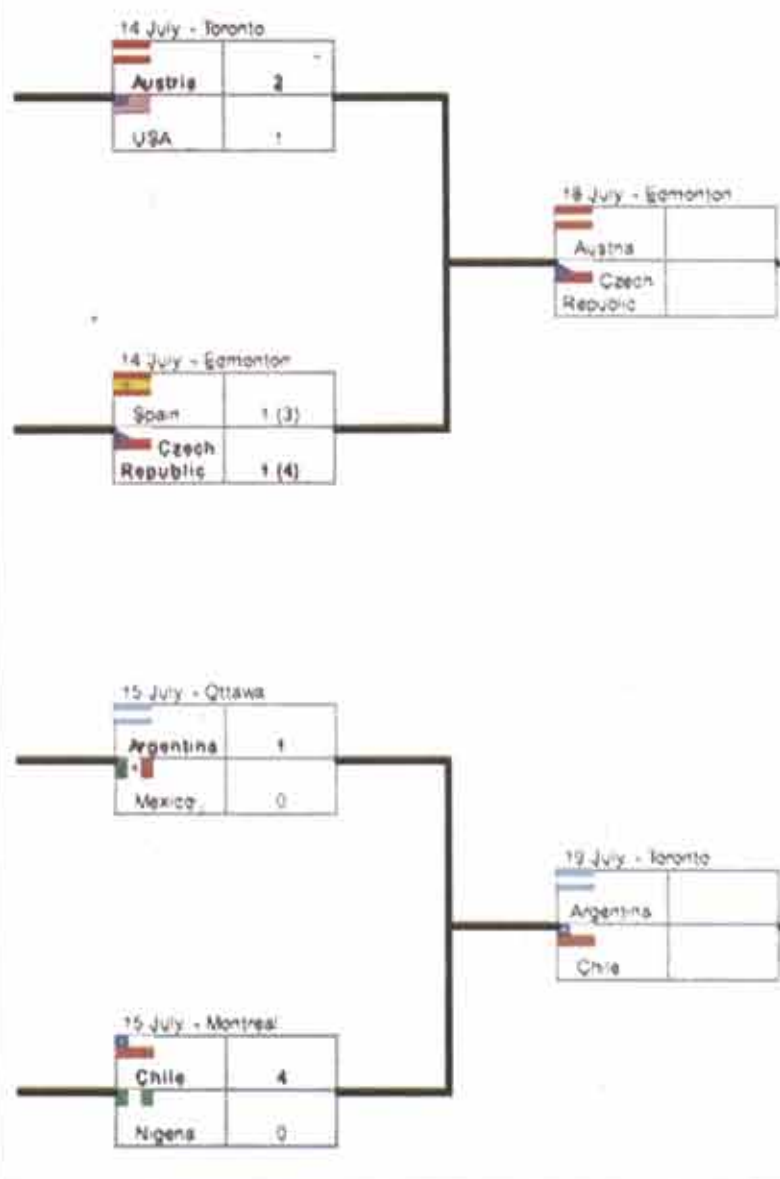
The tournament runs from June 30 to July 22. On June 28, two days before the games began, 950,000 tickets had been sold, thus making this the largest single sporting event that has ever taken place in Canada.



Photos by Tom Barnett - Excalibur (York University)

PATRIOTIC FAILURE - Canadian fans turned out in full force (top right) despite the country's colossal failure on the field, as evidenced by their 3-0 loss to Chile in round-robin play (left and bottom right). In a 24-team field, only three teams lost all three of their games - and the other two, New Zealand and Scotland, at least scored a goal.

> The tourney soldiers on sans Canada



Contributed graphic

AND THEN THERE WERE FOUR - Austria and the Czechs meet today in one semi-final, while Chile and Argentina battle tomorrow.

A worldly experience

News Editor **Dan Polischuk** scored tickets to seven games in the Under-20 FIFA World Cup and he's here to tell us just why it was money well spent



If there were to be one sport with which to compare the majesty that's associated with a classical painting, it would be the one so aptly named "the beautiful game."

And how lucky I have been to bear witness to the masterpiece being unfolded on the canvas that is the soccer pitch at Canada's National Soccer Stadium in Toronto - one of six cities across the country hosting the Under-20 FIFA World Cup.

Although securing a spot for seven games during this event came with a somewhat hefty price tag, I've put it in perspective for family and friends - who simply don't understand what God-forsaken reason I'd have to spend \$400-plus on a *sporting* event. I call it a bargain when you get to 'travel' the world. With three games yet to go, the

U-20s have exposed me to various languages and traditions over the last two weeks - right from my mid-field perch. While these may be limited to obscene language and somewhat diverse traditions (such as the incessant drum beating and chanting of the Uruguayan supporters), it's an interesting lesson in cultural studies all the same.

While the split support at any one game is truly a sight to behold - especially for someone who has never attended a world-class match in his life - the soccer itself was the ultimate reason I was drawn to this tournament. And it certainly hasn't disappointed.

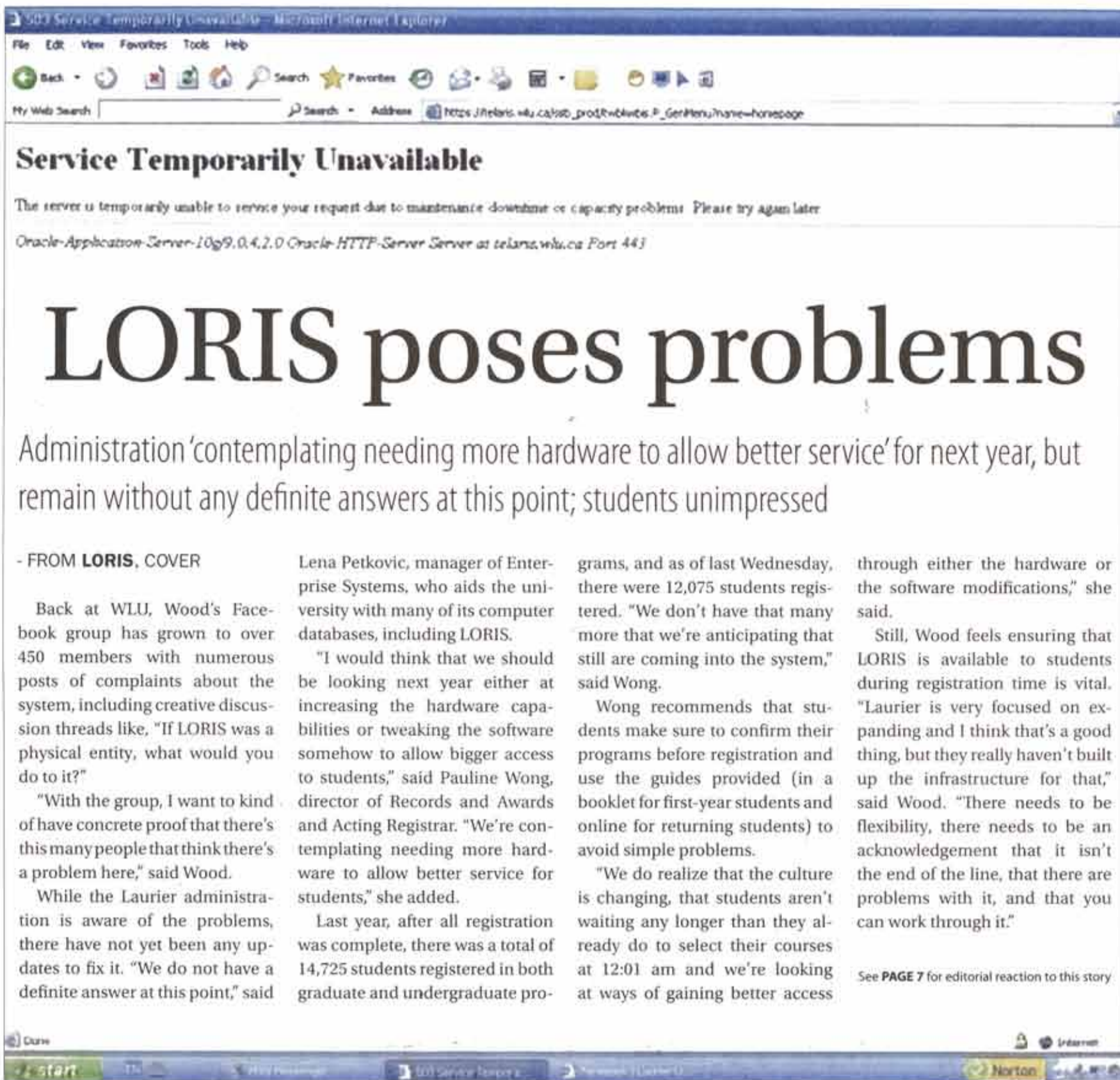
Even though watching the Chileans virtually dance around Canadian defenders in the opener on Canada Day was just slightly embarrassing, the talent the South Americans showed was simply dazzling.

Only their continental brethren from Argentina were able to really surpass them when it came to 'dancing' with the ball. My jaw will still drop seeing replays of striker

Sergio Aguero flick one over the head of a Polish defender before depositing it for a goal in a recent round of 16 match. 'Brilliant' is the word that constantly comes to mind.

It is moments like these that make the decision to fork over \$8.25 for a tall-boy of Carlsberg (because you really can't watch soccer without a pint in your hand) and \$28 for an official t-shirt that much easier. The fact that crowds in Burnaby, Victoria, Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto have come out in waves proves just how special this event really is.

Sure, it may not be the best each country has to offer in terms of talent - due to the age restriction - but during a time of serious drug allegations and inflated salaries taking the forefront of other professional sports leagues, soccer seemingly remains to be the only 'pure' sport. Is there really anything much more "beautiful" than that?



LORIS poses problems

Administration 'contemplating needing more hardware to allow better service' for next year, but remain without any definite answers at this point; students unimpressed

- FROM LORIS, COVER

Back at WLU, Wood's Facebook group has grown to over 450 members with numerous posts of complaints about the system, including creative discussion threads like, "If LORIS was a physical entity, what would you do to it?"

"With the group, I want to kind of have concrete proof that there's this many people that think there's a problem here," said Wood.

While the Laurier administration is aware of the problems, there have not yet been any updates to fix it. "We do not have a definite answer at this point," said

Lena Petkovic, manager of Enterprise Systems, who aids the university with many of its computer databases, including LORIS.

"I would think that we should be looking next year either at increasing the hardware capabilities or tweaking the software somehow to allow bigger access to students," said Pauline Wong, director of Records and Awards and Acting Registrar. "We're contemplating needing more hardware to allow better service for students," she added.

Last year, after all registration was complete, there was a total of 14,725 students registered in both graduate and undergraduate pro-

grams, and as of last Wednesday, there were 12,075 students registered. "We don't have that many more that we're anticipating that still are coming into the system," said Wong.

Wong recommends that students make sure to confirm their programs before registration and use the guides provided (in a booklet for first-year students and online for returning students) to avoid simple problems.

"We do realize that the culture is changing, that students aren't waiting any longer than they already do to select their courses at 12:01 am and we're looking at ways of gaining better access

through either the hardware or the software modifications," she said.

Still, Wood feels ensuring that LORIS is available to students during registration time is vital. "Laurier is very focused on expanding and I think that's a good thing, but they really haven't built up the infrastructure for that," said Wood. "There needs to be flexibility, there needs to be an acknowledgement that it isn't the end of the line, that there are problems with it, and that you can work through it."

See PAGE 7 for editorial reaction to this story

A day in the life ... of a DE Prof

Professor Bing Ran touts the benefits of Distance Education and responds to its stereotypes

ASHLEY JANG
STUDENT LIFE EDITOR

Distance education (DE) classes may seem to many an easy way to ace a course, but there is much more to it than meets the eye.

Professor Bing Ran, a WLU distance education professor, chose the DE route because it provided him with the flexible schedule he needed. "I have been teaching psychology for seven terms and, at the same time, I'm doing my PhD so time is really important for me. Distance ed. has given me this flexibility," said Ran.

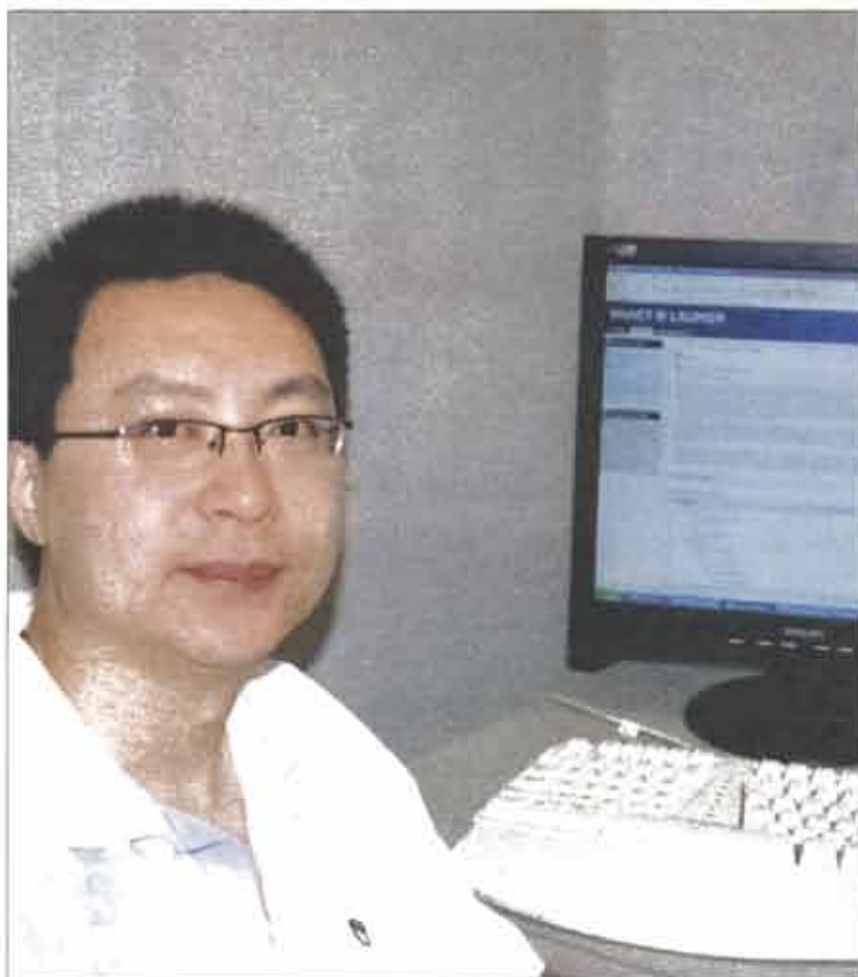
According to Ran, the time that is put into teaching a DE class really depends on the time of year. Preparing for the class before it begins and exam time prove to be the busiest, while the middle of the term is a little more relaxed, consisting of marking assignments, answering questions, dealing with group conflicts, etc. "I would say at most one hour a day, or 5-10 hours per week," goes into this, he estimated.

One way that Ran brings the classroom experience to WebCT is by creating groups who each have their own discussion board and are given assignments to do together. "Group activities definitely force students to participate in one

way, and in small groups of five or six, you are more comfortable with each other," he said.

Similar to in-class group assignments, DE groups sometimes have disagreements. "I know some stu-

dents hate this because of the uneven efforts devoted to the group activities, and those students who put more effort feel they were taken advantage of, but that's natural," said Ran.



E-LEARNING - Since he rarely sees them face-to-face, Professor Bing Ran gets to know his students by their writing and emails.

One of the primary differences between in-class and DE courses is the student-professor relationship. "In the classroom you know the students personally and you set up a kind of bond," said Ran. DE courses allow professors to get to know students on a different level. "You know them from their writing, from their emails, from their interaction with their groups."

Despite the lack of face-to-face interaction, Ran believes that student retention isn't any more difficult in DE classes. "If the course is boring and the material is boring then you lose students anyways, regardless of whether it is distance ed. or on-campus," he said. Ran tries to keep students engaged and interested by having weekly discussion topics, preparing attractive course notes and selecting topics that most interest his students.

Though there is a common stereotype that DE classes are easier than in-class ones, Ran believes this is true only in certain aspects. "I don't think it's an easier course; it is easier in terms of flexibility, so you say it's easier because you don't have to sit in the classroom," he said. "But in terms of content, in terms of work levels or in terms of the mark, it's not that different from on-campus courses."

> VOCAL CORD

How has your LORIS experience been in general?



"Bad. It shuts down at midnight. It's also hard to choose classes."

- Chris Bynoe
Fourth-year Biology



"I really haven't had any problems with it. I think it's convenient."

- Johnathan Conner
Fourth-year Business



"LORIS has been the bane of my existence for all of my five years at Laurier."

- Karli Imhoff
Fifth-year Communications



"I'm still tired from staying up until 3 am clicking refresh."

- Keren Gottfried
Third-year Political Science and Philosophy



"It's a little frustrating and it lags. Also being early isn't always the best."

- Malaika Mendonsa
Third-year Business

Compiled by Laura Carlson,
photos by Riley Taylor

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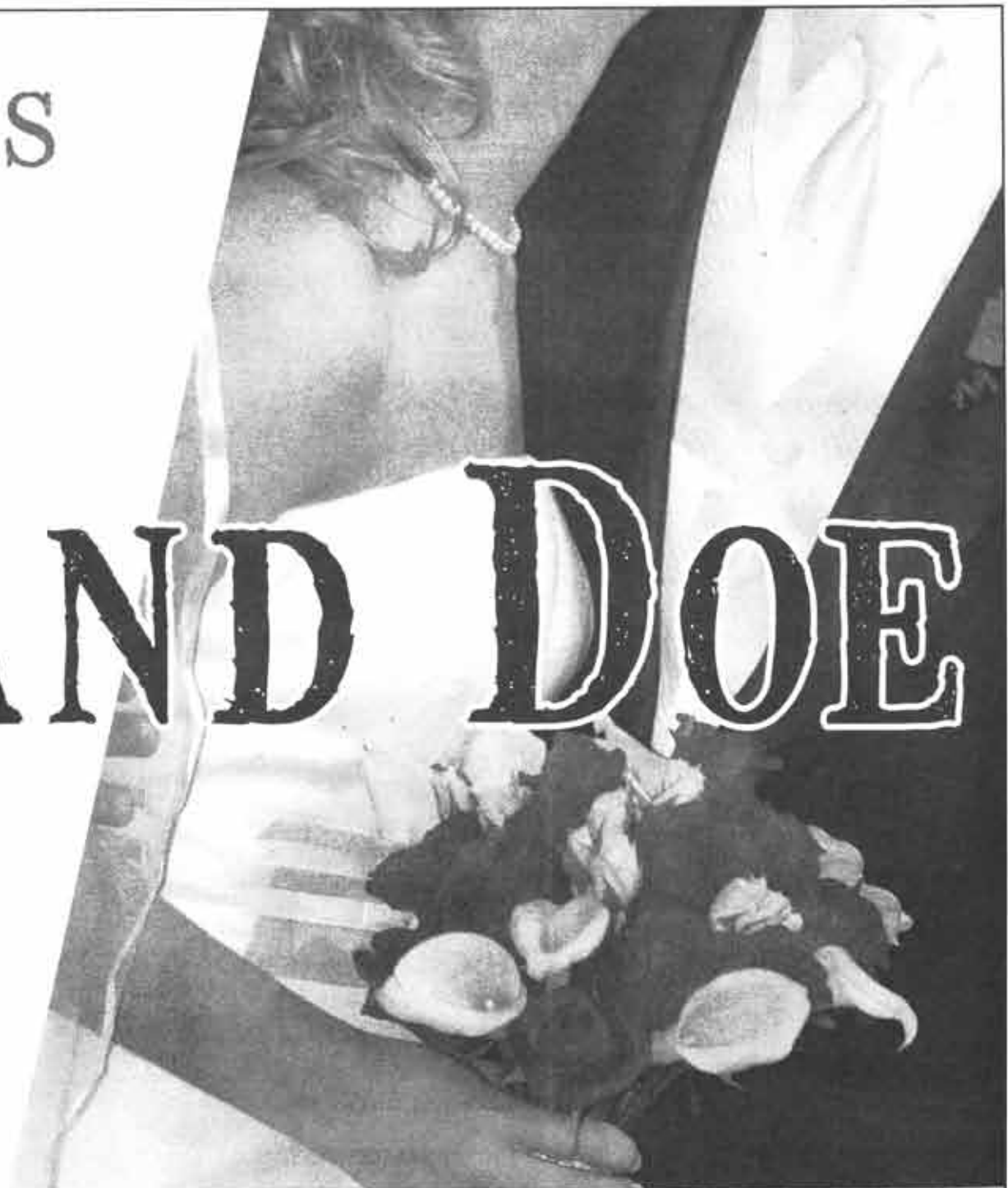
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LORIS failing

Four years ago, WLU students were given a new and very welcome alternative to paper registration. The Laurier Online Registration and Information System (LORIS) was introduced, allowing students the convenience of on-line registration. Oh, if only.

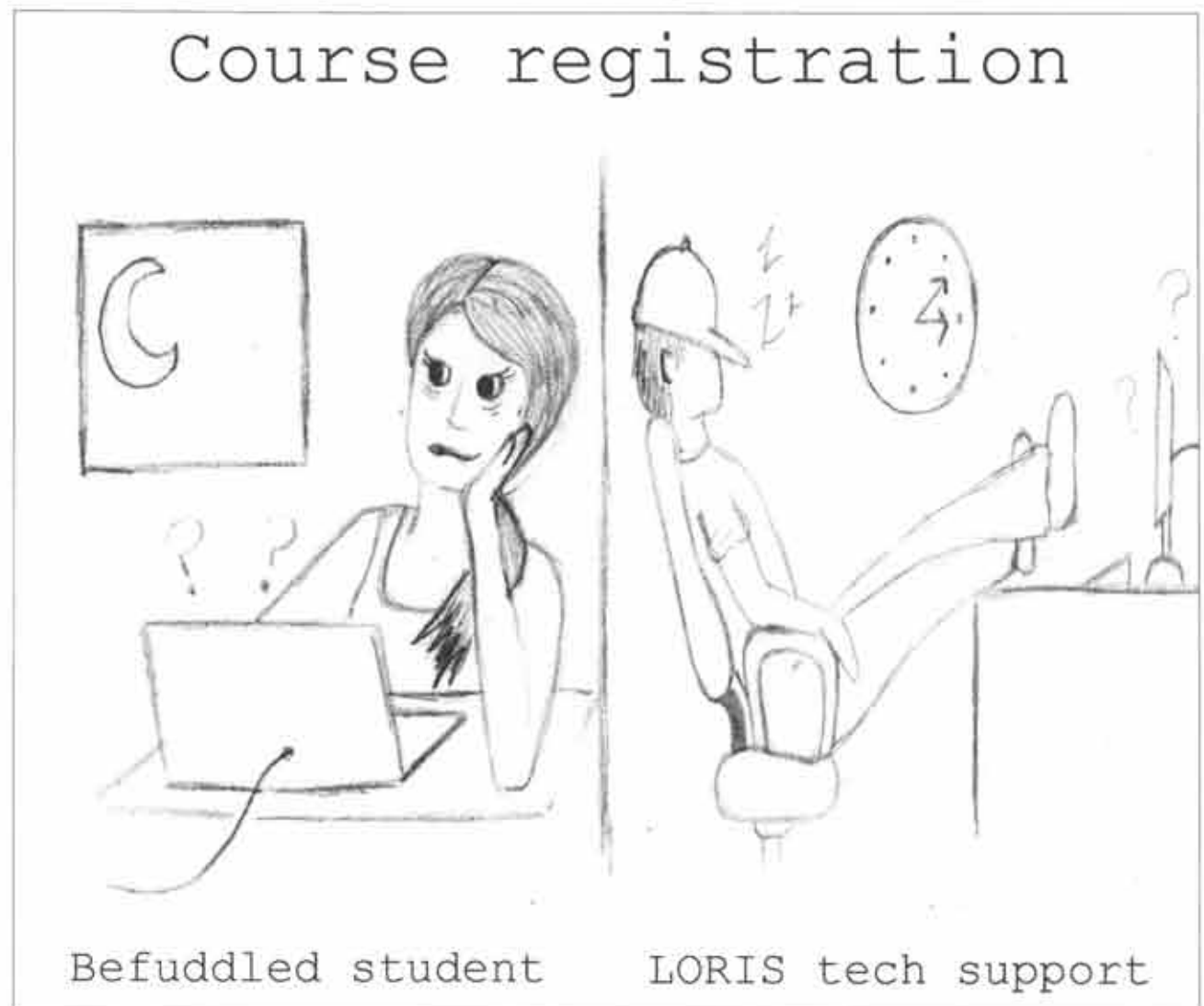
Today, though the formidable drawbacks of paper registration don't even cross the mind of most undergraduates, the problems that plague LORIS have become a shared source of frustration. Getting the run-around at the Registrar's office, blocked registration and vague error messages only begin the list of complaints students have.

Pauline Wong, just appointed Acting Registrar, said, "I would think that we should be looking next year either at increasing the hardware capabilities or tweaking the software somehow to allow bigger access to students."

Students would be glad to see access improved, regardless of how the changes would be made to improve the functionality of LORIS. But it is not impressive that Wong barely acknowledges a concern, and then discusses its solution in such non-committal terms.

A working registration system is vital to the university. And while it is to be expected that problems will arise, the system should not remain stagnant with administration accepting problems in the system. At this point, LORIS should be considering upgraded features – things like waiting lists, more detailed error messages and simplified searches – rather than being considered for basic functionality improvement, like making sure students can actually access it come time to register.

These unsigned editorials were agreed upon by at least two-thirds of The Cord's editorial board and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Cord's volunteers, staff or WLUSP.



Julie Marion

THE CORD WEEKLY

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First Nations' image blackened by media



ALEX HUNDERT
JOURNALISTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The message coming from the Assembly of First Nations' (AFN) annual general meeting in Halifax this past week was that Native protests must continue. Reports consistently contained calls for continued action and dialogue.

The AFN is presenting a cautiously optimistic perspective. The June 29 Day of Action has gained them some political and social momentum, but they have not lost sight of the fact that little meaningful change has resulted from it.

The federal government has allocated \$250 million per year to deal with over 1000 outstanding land claims – a number described this week by at least one AFN chief as "chump change." The new funding is only scheduled to last for ten years, but at the current speed of the land claims process, it would take over 200 years to settle all the existing claims.

Money, however, is not the primary issue. Despite the *Toronto Star* declaring on June 30 that the Day of Action's "real aim was to restore [the] 2005 Kelowna Accord," in truth, the aim was much deeper than that. For while it should be obvious that there is something reprehensible about the Conservative government having reneged on the Kelowna Accord, the injustice that First Nations seek to address would not be undone by it – it would be but one of many

stepping stones.

Kelowna isn't the only case where our current government has prevented a major breakthrough in its relationship with the country's First Nations. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People was sunk by Canada and Australia, amongst others.

The "better life" called for by the Day of Action must include achieving a new and just arrangement for how the lands of First Nations will be controlled and used in the future and for improved relationships between First Nations and the federal and provincial governments.

One thing to remember, though, is that the AFN does not speak for all First Nations people any more than the ruling Conservative Party speaks for all Canadians. In fact, there were calls from some grassroots activists to boycott the protests called for by the AFN, calling them "collaborator chiefs" seeking only to "acquire corporate donations and access government funds." That, admittedly, is a radical position that rejects the legitimacy of the AFN as 'stand-ins' for the federal government (which shouldn't have the legal right to determine forms of government and status for First Nations peoples).

While that is a reasonable stance to take, it was not a part of the stated goals of June 29. The Day of Action "called for the recognition and understanding of First Nations issues, particularly the need to eradicate poverty and address outstanding land claims, which has caused so much cri-

sis and conflict in [aboriginal] communities."

Despite the June 29 Day of Action not being about anything politically radical, many so-called "militant" and/or radical activist groups did participate. Most of our media has hyped up the "militancy" of the blockades that occurred in Ontario that day. These reports are highly sensationalist.

Most of the "blockades" in and around Ontario's 'cottage-country' were merely traffic slowdowns where information was handed out to passing motorists. Even the blockades held by the Mohawks of Tyendinaga, led by Shawn Brant, were entirely peaceful. Also, the protesters were off the 401 by 11 am; it was the OPP who kept the road closed into the afternoon.

The portrayals of Brant as some sort of pseudo-terrorist are unfounded, and while (of course) neither he nor anyone else should be above the law, the fact that he has been imprisoned without bail for a charge of mischief stemming from legitimate protest should be seen as an affront to Canadian justice and morality. Members of the AFN said that they would support Brant while he is dealing with the legal system; Canadians who care about human rights, freedom and justice should do the same.

Media reports continue to describe the Day of Action as "largely peaceful." We should be clear that, in fact, the day was entirely peaceful – there were no incidences of violence.

letters@cordweekly.com

> Letters to the Editor

Mould action swift

I would like to respond to Laura Carlson's article (Mould in Leupold, June 27) and the related editorial. Both contained incorrect and misleading information about the Leupold mould situation and Laurier's health-and-safety management practices.

Wilfrid Laurier University is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment to all members of our community. When concerns about Leupold were brought to the university's attention, officials acted swiftly to conduct an air-quality test. The test determined mould levels in the building were not "unusually high" and did not pose a significant health hazard.

The editorial said, incorrectly, that there were "higher-than-normal levels of mould in the building." If this had been the case, and the levels had posed a significant hazard, immediate corrective actions would have been taken. However, despite the low level of risk, we will be taking the pro-active steps recommended by the consultant to ensure unhealthy levels don't develop prior to the students occupying the building, which has been the plan since the consultant's report was received.

The article's alleged failure to communicate and respond to the concerns is also incorrect. Laurier's Environmental/Occupational Health and Safety

(EHOS) office was first informed of a concern January 26; an indoor air-quality study (including mould) was conducted February 15; and a final report was received March 15. This report was distributed the following day, as per standard procedure, to the faculty, administrative and building managers, Physical Plant and Planning (PP&P), and the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC). It did not, as the article suggests, take four months for the report to reach the appropriate parties.

The article also incorrectly implied that the university has no requirement to take action on such concerns due to the lack of specific mould regulations. As I informed Carlson during our interview, there is a legal requirement to "take every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety" even though there are no specific mould regulations.

An accurate history of the case shows that comprehensive action was taken, the lack of immediate concern was confirmed, and pro-active steps will be taken. The university has exemplary commitment to health and safety, as the response to the Leupold situation demonstrates.

Stephanie Kibbee
Manager, Environment/Occupational Health and Safety

Check out cordweekly.com for Kate Klein's column, "Society lacking a moral compass."

Transformers worth a big screen look

Action sequences and nostalgia factor are enough to overcome the film's complete glossing over of character development



ARIEL KROON
STAFF WRITER

Transformers is the summer action flick that every '90s child has been looking forward to for years. The SFX-heavy movie's premise is basically this: two warring factions of ancient, giant, alien robots come to Earth looking for a "Cube" (or "all-spark") which will be able to recreate their destroyed home, and then duke it out over New York to determine which side will be able to hold the power.

This relatively simple narrative avoids appealing solely to a cult audience by centering around the teenage Sam Witwicky (Shia LaBeouf), whose great-grandfather's Arctic expedition discovered the Cube and the hostile but deeply-frozen Megatron (leader of the bad guys, voiced by Hugo Weaving) in a crevasse. Sam's character is the typical high school loser, who really only wants to get into the pants of Mikaela (Megan Fox), the requisite Hot Female Lead, but instead ends up with giant transforming robots after him for information on the Cube. Thus, Sam is the convenient vehicle of character which frees up the Transformers to beat the crap out of each other for the rest of the movie.

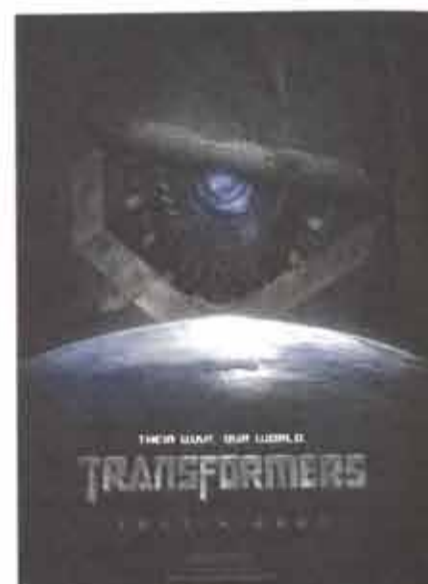
Let's face it: there was no character development whatsoever on any of the Transformers, who are supposed to be the heroes and main characters of the movie. The filmmakers left it up to the audience to have educated themselves on the personalities of the Autobots (the good guys) and the Decepticons (the bad guys). Sure, I watched *Transformers* as a child, but do you really expect me to remember all their names and personalities, especially considering all the knock-offs of the original show (*Beast Wars*, anyone)?

Any hope I had that my fading memories would supply me with detail was unfortunately destroyed by heavy character redesign. Yes, they had to look real, but really, I only recognized Optimus Prime (voiced by Peter Cullen) because he transforms out of his trademark truck. The quick introduction that Prime gives Sam to the other Autobots doesn't allow moviegoers the time to affix names to metal faces, as their personalities are each summed up by a short catchphrase or quip that each Transformer gives after being introduced, and then the plot moves on.

That said, the movie in and of itself is packed with a lot of good battle scenes, where CGI blends very well with live action. The plot's heavy involvement with the US military and its forces in the Middle East was handled well, surprisingly enough, instead of opting not to acknowledge the fact that there is a war at all (something which a fair amount of movies tend to do). The

humour is witty and well-done, and often at the expense of the Bush administration. Somehow, director Michael Bay managed to get a political slant on a movie about giant robots, and it fits.

In conclusion, *Transformers* is a movie which - though lacking in substantive characterization - is a fun, nostalgic-with-a-twist action flick that is definitely worth seeing on the big screen.



Transformers

Director: Michael Bay

Starring: Shia LaBeouf,

Megan Fox, Josh Duhamel

Original Release Date:

July 4, 2007

Recommendation:

SEE IT IN THEATRES

Live Earth a great concert - but little more



PAUL ALVIZ
A&E Editor

They're at it again. It's that time of year when celebrities discover their mission on Earth is to lead the misguided fools making up the rest of the world into salvation. And this time, it's salvation from ourselves.

Live Earth, the largest entertainment event in the history of the planet, was actually a series of methodically placed concerts around the globe. Noticeably lacking was a show in Canada, although Montreal did have a special francophone concert to mark the occasion, along with smaller shows in Toronto and Vancouver. They aren't, however, listed on the official line-up of performance venues. To be fair, the point was to have at least one con-

cert on every continent, completed by Nunatak, an indie band made up of scientists performing research in Antarctica.

Worldwide benefit concerts are generally quite successful in bringing out heavyweight acts, and Live Earth was no exception. This time around, Giants Stadium in New Jersey was lit up in a cultural mish-mash, with acts including living legend Roger Waters (of Pink Floyd fame), the long-lost Smashing Pumpkins (who promoted their new album rather than environmental issues), and American rappers Ludacris and Kanye West.

The U.K. didn't disappoint either, with rockers Foo Fighters, oddball Madonna, old white rappers the Beastie Boys and funky monks RHCP playing at Wembley Stadium. V.I.P. tickets were going for as much as \$1,000 on eBay.

Organized by Al Gore under the SOS campaign, the purpose of Live

Earth was to raise awareness on climate change, and to inform people of ways they can contribute to protecting our environment. Unfortunately for Gore, the focus quickly shifted from the overarching theme of the event to the real reason everyone came, which was to see their favourite performers live.

EVERYONE AGREED THAT

ENVIRONMENTAL DESTITUTION WAS A BAD THING, BUT THEN PROMPTLY SWITCHED TOPICS. POLLUTION BAD, MUSIC GOOD.

What separated Live Earth from some other benefit concerts was a sting of harsh criticism from various observers regarding the intent of the concerts. Debate centered around the lack of an identifiable benefactor, raising awareness to no particular end. Bob Geldof, organizer of Live Aid and Live 8, went so far as to refer to Live Earth as little more than a worldwide pop concert.

Everybody already knows about global warming, which begs the question, how much more aware-

ness can really be raised on the issue? Cameron Diaz, one of the vapid celebrity presenters in New Jersey, advised people to drive hybrid cars, a venerable 'revelation' in the school of environmental awareness. Similarly, at Wembley in the UK, Adam Youch of the Beastie Boys gave the vague and apathetic, "Let's all do our part."

Critics have also pointed out that the concerts themselves had enormous negative environmental impact. According to organizers, measures were taken to ensure the shows were as green as possible, which isn't saying much. Al Gore attempted to have all the participating artists sign a seven point green manifesto that ensured their dedication towards reducing their own carbon emissions, and not just pointing the finger at others. Still, private jets flew musicians around the world (enough flights to go around the world nine times over, actually) and some, like John Mayer, refused to even sign the agreement.

Was Live Earth a success? As a performance, yes, it was a phenomenal show and a rare opportunity to see so many big-time acts in one place. As a cause, everyone knew why the event was happening and agreed that environmental destitution is a bad thing, but then promptly switched topics. Pollution bad, music good. Unfortunately for Al Gore, pollution plus music does not equal solutions. Nothing has changed in terms of our energy-consuming lifestyles, except for acknowledgement of our hypocrisy in wanting a cleaner environment while not wanting to deal with it.

In short, the artists can't be blamed for not giving viable solutions to climate change; their job was to draw the crowds, which they did. However, based on the environmental impact of the shows, this might be a case where the old adage that "something is better than nothing" does not ring true. They've conveniently left the onus on the fans to change, raise awareness, and make the whole thing worthwhile.

