



PAAC E-News

Public Affairs: Your Online Newsletter

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[President's message](#)

Up to their necks



by Chris Benedetti
PAAC President

The ongoing Gomery inquiry into the Chrétien government's sponsorship imbroglio gets uglier by the day. It started out as a necessary effort to get to the bottom of things, evolved from there into a public relations attempt by Prime Minister Paul Martin to distance himself from his predecessor by letting it expose other people's misdeeds, and has now morphed into a Frankensteinian monster to him. It's threatening to tear up the Liberals in general and Paul Martin's administration in particular. Keep in mind - when you're up to your neck in alligators, it's difficult to remember that your objective was to drain the swamp.

Certainly, the Liberals are swamped with bad news, and people who wish them no good are relishing the way this thing is evolving. Some months ago we had a tongue-in-cheek article on this web site comparing the revelations of AdScam with episodes of *The Sopranos*. Now, writers in the daily press are making the same comparisons, and not necessarily as a joke. Yet if you step back and take a wide-angle look at it, AdScam looks less like an act of planned villainy than something

well-meaning that went astray because A) people didn't set ethical boundaries for themselves, and B) they didn't set proper boundaries for certain jobs they were doing, including people doing the work of lobbyists.

Chrétien and his people had a cause. They were trying to save Canada from separatism. This all began in the aftermath of that 1995 referendum in Quebec that the separatists almost won. The plan was to defuse separatist sentiment by raising the profile of federalism and getting the fires of patriotism burning. Money spent on that, the theory went, was money well spent. Contacts in the Liberals' home turf of Quebec were necessary because that was the target area. That was their thinking. Not, 'let's steal this money and give it to our friends.' They were out to change public sentiments in Quebec.

Steering public policy - or thinking - for a particular cause, whether it's the public good or an industry client, is the job of lobbyists. It's honourable if it's done honourably, within a set of ethical standards. Yet some of the players in this whole mess didn't seem to realize they were doing this kind of work, or didn't think the rules governing lobbyists applied to them - or didn't care. Nobody set limits. If you needed to do something for the cause, it was permissible. Once you did it, it was OK to have done it because you did it. The thinking was similar to that of the late President Richard Nixon during Watergate, when his famous quote went: "If the President does something, that means it is not illegal."

There isn't anything wrong with lobbying when it's above-board and aimed at complementing the political and public policy processes, rather than undermining them. Europeans seem to get this. Indeed, more and more policy making in Canada is being devolved to industry councils and the like. Lobbyists not only advocate positions, but they help private sector entities better understand what government is all about. In the end, this makes for a better, more informed policy-making process. An open and above-board attempt to steer public thinking in Quebec would have worked, too.

If the people who tried to Save Canada in the 1990s had understood those principles, and how they related to the Federalist cause, they would not now be up to their necks in allegations.

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It is now my pleasure to welcome our newest members to PAAC:

- Roy O'Brien, Canadian Cable Telecommunications Association (CCTA)
- Steve Olmstead, British Columbia Real Estate Association
- Allan Pykalo, Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care
- Don Huff, Environmental Communication Options
- Andre Roy, Solugik Public Affairs
- James Scongack, Bruce Power
- Dr. Lloyd Taylor, Ontario Chiropractic Association
- Dr. Bob Haig, Ontario Chiropractic Association
- Ross Lamont, Bruce Power
- Shelley James, Ministry of Finance
- Sara Anghel, Direct Energy
- Robert Gullins, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- Diane Kenyon, Ryerson University
- Adam Kahan, Ryerson University
- Christian Buhagiar, York University
- Sally Harris, Humber College
- John Bailie, Kodak Canada Inc.

- Kate Jobling, Natural Factors Nutritional Products Inc.
- Kevin Bechard, Waste Management of Canada Corporation

Once again, thanks for your continued support and interest. Please feel free to contact me with your ideas or input at cbenedetti@sussex-strategy.com.



[News you can use](#)

CareerSite up and running

This Public Affairs Association of Canada web site now includes our interactive CareerSite, your portal to new jobs, new opportunities - or new talent. If you're an employer in any public affairs discipline and you're looking for new talent, that's the place to post the information. If you're a member looking for new challenges or new opportunities - or if you're just interested in seeing what's available - that's the place to look.

So when you read this newsletter, don't forget to keep tabs on the opportunities available, with periodic checks. [Click here](#) to zoom directly to the CareerSite.

[Event report](#)

Lindsay speaks about advocacy and education

David Lindsay came to visit us again in March. When he last spoke at a PAAC event, he was founding President and CEO of the Ontario SuperBuild Corporation, talking about partnerships in the creation of new infrastructure. When he returned on March 22 at our breakfast session at the Sutton Place Hotel, it was as President of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO), a position he has held since August of 2004.



David Lindsay, President of ACAATO

His presentation, Education that's Worth More, focused on the campaign by ACAATO to promote recommendations made by former Premier Bob Rae in his review of post-secondary education, which Rae unveiled at Queen's Park in February. Lindsay hopes his organization's tightly focused advocacy campaign will persuade the government to put Rae's recommendations into effect in its coming Ontario budget - particularly what Rae has to say about funding colleges.

Springtime blizzard

Lindsay backed his pitch with a blizzard of statistics, stressing the need for higher education for the sake of the workplace, the economy and our quality of life. According to his statistics, fully three-quarters of new jobs in this economy require some post-secondary education, yet only slightly more than half of those aged 25 to 34 (i.e., those who have a prayer of being hired for anything at all) actually have post-secondary education. This creates a "skills gap" which can only be filled by greater access to higher education. Said Lindsay: "Ontario must attract and successfully graduate more students."

But Lindsay wasn't talking about just any students. He represents colleges, and his challenge is to promote their interests to policy analysts, public servants, bean-counters and human droids at Queen's Park who are for the most part a product of universities. They don't have the first-hand understanding of the college system that readily translates into giving it a high priority without a little help from an advocacy campaign. "They haven't thought of colleges since they were in a guidance counsellor's office in high school in the 1970s."



Above and below, David Lindsay and his assistant, Beverley Ellis, interact with the membership before the beginning of the morning presentation.



The campaign reminds people that while new science and technology comes out of labs and universities, said Lindsay, "the implementation of new technology happens on the shop floor - on the job." College graduates are the key to this new economy. "They are our enablers," he said. "College education needs to be a priority for our economic and social agenda."

Social agenda

Social agenda, yes. Bob Rae's review of post secondary education sucked up 800 submissions and the solicited opinions of some 3,000 concerned citizens in "town hall" meetings across the province, after which the former NDP Premier recommended increases in student aid targeted to make colleges more accessible to the disabled, aboriginal and other special groups in order to achieve greater diversity among student populations. All of which Lindsay enthusiastically supports. Indeed, the ACAATO advocacy campaign is nothing less than a campaign to implement the Rae Report in its entirety. Lindsay is confident of his statistics, his facts and the righteousness of the Bob Rae point of view. But he knows it's a challenge to get the attention the campaign

craves. "It's not a politically sexy story," he admitted. "It's not as interesting as the sponsorship scandal, or special visas for Romanian strippers or banning pit bulls."

Rae wants expansion of apprenticeship programs, with colleges taking point. He wants \$400 million in small unmarked bills by the 07-08 fiscal year. Or Else? Or this: "We under-invest at our peril," Rae told the Toronto *Star* in February. "If we continue on this pattern we really are romancing mediocrity." That quote was part of extensive coverage of the Rae Report the month it hit the news. At the time, the news media sucked up the report and then blew it out in a tremendous splat of Team Coverage and Film At Eleven and just about as much attention as David Lindsay or anyone else could reasonably want. But the half-life of media attention is short - Lindsay guessed about 48 hours. Which won't do. Not with bureaucrats at Queen's Park busily at work on the next budget, due in late April or early May. While they bend over their desks, pencils going *scrit-scrit-scrit*, noses mere millimeters from the page, the clock ticks and the echo of Rae's voice fades, and that won't do at all. Not with everybody else's gimme campaign revving up to redline at the same time. Ergo, the ACAATO advocacy campaign has to maintain the focus of a diamond-cutting laser beam.

Dead last

Ontario, the ACAATO campaign maintains, is tenth out of ten provinces in terms of per-student revenue from government. In other words: dead last. Polls show that the public accepts this statistic as true, and agrees that it's important. Hitting the point even harder, Lindsay's campaign graphs incriminate government as surely as a suspect's DNA on the murder weapon, showing per-student funding dropping as enrolments climbed over the years. But the main culprit is not the McGuinty Liberals, whom Lindsay wants to persuade to fund colleges by way of undoing previous neglect. The main culprit is government cutbacks from that aging but still-serviceable bogeyman, the Jason Voorhees of Ontario politics, which is of course: Mike Harris and his Common Sense Revolution (CSR), known in some circles as the Vile Harrisite Tyranny (VHT).

Cutbacks created a domino effect harming education, producing inevitable cuts in faculty and support staff, reduced instructional time, larger class sizes, a tendency to fall behind in needed repairs and maintenance, and other collateral damage. And with VHT-related damage putting Ontario dead last in college student funding, said Lindsay, what Rae asks now isn't greedy. "Four hundred million in government funding would rocket us right up to the middle of the pack."

Hence an advocacy campaign aimed right between the eyes of public servants who are prepping the budget. FUND EDUCATION THAT'S WORTH MORE. That's the message of the advocacy campaign, which consists largely of short, sharp commands. FUND COLLEGES NOW. Edgy, catchy and memorable bus shelter ads are deployed around Queen's Park, intended to profoundly affect Queen's Park bureaucrats who do not drive to work. Trouble is, so are better-funded campaign ads by doctors, who want more money for health care, and unions, who want more money for whatever their members work at, and every other group who feels needful and underfunded come budget time and always seems to have plenty of money to spend on the finest advertising. This is the 'clutter' and the 'cacophony' Lindsay's people have to cut through with a campaign that tops out at \$200,000, which is less than some people might spend on monogrammed golf balls.

Of course, the other campaigners all see everybody else as part of the clutter *they're* trying to cut through, which is what makes advocacy a sporting proposition. The biggest competition in this case will be from health care. "There is always an elephant in the living room," said Lindsay, "and it's name is health care." Which is why at least one of his ads reminds the viewer that colleges graduate a whole lot of health care workers who are as essential to health care as they could

possibly be, since without them who would carry out Doctor's Orders?

The fact is, what happens as the budget looms closely resembles a springtime bird's nest filled with peeping chicks, their yellow beaks open and upturned as Momma Bird arrives with one worm. And it can be awfully hard for the small chick to be noticed if he's in the shadow of the big one who peeps in a baritone. So Job One in a campaign like this is to get the bureaucrats on-side with more than advertising. Media attention is the key, said Lindsay, stressing the power of positive coverage in the *Star*, the *Sun*, CBC Radio and the widely-read newsletter, *Inside Queen's Park*, which if everybody at Queen's Park higher than the rank of janitor doesn't read, they should.

McGuinty not promising

In addition, the campaign seeks to rev up support in the form of letter and e-mail campaigns at the grassroots level. Students are encouraged to participate. Let the educatees campaign for education. Give them something to do besides protest a war we're not even involved in. Take off that grotesque George Bush mask and get serious about something...

And is the campaign working? Well, Lindsay reported that Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty has been heard, in public places, repeating the ACAATO campaign's tenth-out-of-ten line, so at some level the message seems to be getting through. But although the Premier has been heard saying this and other things which might bode well for his commitment to college funding, he hasn't promised anything. Then again, even if he did, it's hard to forget how a certain boat overloaded with promises can be easily swamped in the high seas of Ontario politics. So the simple fact that the Premier is getting the message is about as upbeat an omen as Lindsay could ask for.

Indeed, maybe ACAATO will get what it wants - or if not that, as Mick Jagger would remind us, they might just find they get what they need. Yet near the end of his presentation Lindsay answered a question from the audience with a rambling answer that touched on his own key messages more than the question itself. Then he reigned himself in, paused to consider what he'd said, and added with a wink and a self-deprecating smile: "I didn't answer your question, did I? But I got my key messages out."

Exactly. Lindsay and ACAATO should hope the Premier of Ontario doesn't react to their advocacy campaign in a similar fashion.

-D.S.

[Photo feature](#)

The boys (and girls) are back in town

March 30 was the big Welcome Back Queen's Park Bash, where PAAC guests rubbed shoulders, shared refreshments and exchanged pleasantries with returning MPPs at The Park. Here are some selected moments from the evening.

(Photography by Jerry Puhl.)



Above: PAAC President Chris Benedetti and PAAC Director Sheena Weir, Manager, Government Relations at the Law Society of Upper Canada, share a laugh or two. **Below:** This being Queen's Park, there was a liberal array of treats. But they were kept under wraps....



Above: Cheerful for the camera is NDP bossman Howard Hampton. To his right: Marcia McVea, a former NDP caucus staffer who handled logistics for this event for PAAC. To his left: His former communications director, Sheila White, who is now executive assistant to Hamilton East MPP Andrea Horwath. **Below:** Former PAAC President Graham Murray toasts the evening with Willowdale MPP David Zimmer, our host for the event.



Above: MPP Marilyn Churley and Derek Leebosh of Environics Research grin for the camera.
Below: PAAC Vice President Elaine Flis with Rod MacDonald, Director of Caucus Relations, Office

of the Premier.



Above and below: A bunch of the gang were whooping it up....



[The Book Man](#)

'Legislatures' misses the boat



by Stewart Kiff

[Legislatures](#)

By David C. Docherty
UBC Press, 2005

Legislatures, by David Docherty, is a recent addition to the ten-book collection that will comprise the Canadian Democratic Audits series from UBC Press. This ambitious undertaking is the product of research initiated by the Centre for Canadian Studies at Mount Allison University and it seeks to examine the status of Canadian democracy at the outset of the 21st century. Various components, stakeholders and mechanisms of Canada's democratic system are examined in an effort to

understand the political life of the country.

This book covers the various legislative functions, such as roles in the assembly and constituency work, as well as key aspects of legislative life such as party discipline and committee work. To the author's credit, he provides a clear summary at the end of every chapter, and a series of good discussion questions at the end of the book.

An "audit" of legislatures

Docherty's book does what it sets out to do, which is to "audit" the functions of the legislatures of Canada. But if you are like me and find the legislatures of this country endlessly fascinating places, full of gripping characters, vibrant idiosyncratic histories, surprising realities and a continuing pertinence to everyday life, then this book will only disappoint. Not that I expect a book that "audits" legislatures to capture their energy in the way John Duffy so excitingly captured the excitement of elections in his 2002 masterwork, *Fights of Our Lives*. But at the very least a reader could expect some sense of fascination and appreciation for the nation's legislatures. Alas, here there is none.

If you can get past this critical shortcoming, there is much here that is useful in terms of original research - all sorts of nationwide analyses of the key mechanisms of legislatures, tables on sitting days, salaries, committee resources and powers, and compositions of the Cabinet and assemblies. But there is a malaise that pervades this work as well. Reading Legislatures, you pass through fact after fact, each phrased in a way that will offend nobody, and in the end, you are left with a feeling as if nothing has really been said.

There is an underlying sense of resignation about government; a sense of unrealized expectations and frustrated democracy. Moreover, when Docherty criticizes the shortcomings of legislatures of Canada he is doing so not compared to a real functioning model, but against an ideal standard that exists nowhere. Consequently, an unreality pervades this work - at least to someone who has seen legislatures in action.

Fractured logic

The book's negative impression of government is in stark contrast to my direct personal experience of how legislatures function. Take, for example, the assumption that pervades Chapter Two: *Who Represents Canadians?* His assumption is that our assemblies in Canada are not as democratic as they can be because they are composed of members who do not exactly mirror the population, in that they do not match the population's racial and sexual composition. This is a whopper of an assumption, albeit a popular one, but one that an expert on representative democracy should be reasonably expected to justify. Yet nowhere in this chapter is the assumption tested - or even debated. It is simply assumed. The fractured logic of this assumption rapidly becomes apparent on page 36 when it emerges that Alberta, which has a tradition of massive governing majorities that completely ignore their opposition, is by Docherty's criteria a leader in legislative democracy! It is this sort of patently artificial argument - which can only be sustained when divorced from the facts - that cripples this work and limits its usefulness.

NOT RECOMMENDED.

Besides being an avid book reader, Stewart Kiff is a PAAC member and is the Toronto Vice-President of Solugik Public Affairs. He can be reached at stewart@solugik.com and welcomes recommendations for reviews.

The colour yellow

by David Silburt
PAAC Web Editor

In the days of the Vietnam war, even Canadian high school students were encouraged to talk about the war in class. In one memorable class the teacher, a genteel bearded Englishman, led philosophical discussions that differed from those in American schools only in that the students were not going to be drafted. And one particular student, a big beefy guy named Doug, had a lot to say about the immorality of war.

Doug's theories on the war in Southeast Asia were that war was wrong and immoral, we didn't have nothing against them Veet Cong, we should give peace a chance, and all you need is love. Doug wondered aloud: What if they gave a war and nobody came? To a certain dweebish guy who sat in the back and said little, it was clear that Doug got his insights from all the most fashionable sources - readers will recognize those quotes above from the popular press and Muhammad Ali and the Beatles and the movies. But there was another reason to know Doug was profiling. Doug was the school bully. There he was, holding forth on pacifism to impress the teacher, while everyone else in the room knew he had built his local rep as the big bad bully-boy, who bragged about the fights he won, how he hammered this guy and dropped that one.

Doug used to go to a local pub where he and his friends could drink illegally because they all looked older than they were. And the only rule observed by Doug and the hulking friends who walked around behind him so he could be brave, was this: Avoid fair fights. It was clear to the dweeb in the back that if big Doug could be sure the Viet Cong were all half his size and unarmed, he would have sneaked across the U.S. border and enlisted.

In those years many young Americans did the reverse, coming north to Canada to escape the draft, and anyone who argued that they were mere cowards was shunned as a right-wing envirotoxic war pig. Yet the view from the back of that class suggested that at least part of the mix, if not the bulk of it, were posing, profiling cowards like Doug.

Harken to those days now, as memories float back on a rising tide of stories about a handful of U.S. soldiers coming here to escape the latest war. The star of the group seems to be Jeremy Hinzman, a U.S. Army deserter who plans to spend as many years as possible here with us, appealing to every court in the land to be deemed a conscientious objector anti-war hee-ro for fleeing combat in Iraq. He has all his quotes down pat. "Canada has a history of being a haven for people of conscience," he told the media. "Hopefully when this is all said and done that legacy can continue."

Canada was indeed once a haven for escaped slaves who fled north via the Underground Railroad to a country that was way ahead of the U.S. in racial attitudes. And there is an argument to be made that some of those Vietnam draft dodgers who sought haven here were creatures of conscience. But Canada's other legacy, of being a haven for criminals running from harsher U.S. laws or terrorists trying to blend into the mosaic, is something to live down, not up to. And Jeremy Hinzman is not a draft dodger. He joined the volunteer U.S. Army during peacetime, before his

country was attacked in the fall of '01.

Apparently he joined not to serve his country but to have his country serve up a low-cost education to him. When World War Four broke out and he was sent to Afghanistan, he pleaded pacifism to his superiors and won himself a nice safe job in the rear with the gear. For a while. But when he finished his tour in Afghanistan and found out his next move was a combat assignment Iraq, he gathered up all his Beatles albums and came to Canada to be a bicycle courier.

Now he'll appeal and appeal and appeal to Canadian courts to let him stay, and he'll amass a posse of supporters and lawyers and quote-writers and placard-wavers and no doubt become a *cause celebre* for America-bashers in Canada. Maybe even for some of those who hold elected office. Jack Layton is bound to give him a hug. But sooner or later someone will carry Hinzman's cause to the Prime Minister for comment, input, action or sound bites. Wonder what Martin will do.

It's worth noting at this point that as the new world war heated up over the past few years some serious damage has been done to Canadian/U.S. relations, beginning with Jean Chrétien being the last and least enthusiastic world leader to pay his respects at Ground Zero in New York, and continuing most recently with Paul Martin's broken promise on support for missile defense. And when the pacifist crowd shows up carrying their hero Hinzman on their shoulders, Martin will have yet another chance to kick our best ally and trading partner in the tailbone, in a minor yet highly symbolic way, and bank a little more support from Canadians who hate America as a matter of political philosophy, and as a result, love the yellow soldier.

So, what will Martin do? His options are: A) Say publicly and for the published record that Jeremy Hinzman is nothing more than physical coward who deserves a year in the stockade on bread and water, followed by a dishonourable discharge and public opprobrium; B) Embrace Hinzman as a man of conscience and heir to the spirit of the Underground Railroad, or C) emit a paragraph or two of meaningless mushmouth that says nothing save that the Prime Minister of Canada is afraid to offend anyone.

At this posting there has yet to be an official Paul Martin / Government of Canada statement on U.S. army deserters. Martin must know there are plenty of Canadians who would like to see him pat this man on the back. There are Parrishites to be wooed back into the fold. There is Jack Layton to be primed for future support on this or that issue. There are polls, which show a sizeable anti-American constituency, to be deferred to. There are powerful journalist allies to be stroked. An election could foam up at any time, and there are votes to be grubbed.

Watch carefully.

[Letter to the Editor](#)

Speaking of missile defense...

I would just like to add two comments regarding David Silburt's excellent analysis of the Liberal's position on the missile defense system. First, I believe the "rogue nation" excuse for missile defense, regularly trumpeted whenever the idea is questioned, is at best exaggerated. North Korea has for years pushed the line but never crossed it. Despite being labelled an unbalanced dictator, Kim Jong Il has been careful not commit any acts that would provoke any response that would

threaten his regime.

The second and more important point about the whole missile defense system is this: It doesn't work. We might as well agree to support an American plan to colonize another solar system. Two anti-missile tests failed when the interceptors couldn't get off the ground. When the interceptors have gotten off the ground it was to try to hit a target missile launched at a known time, following a trajectory already provided to the missile defense system. There was also a radar beacon and GPS locator on the target missile, making it even easier to spot. Yet despite these conditions, why have the interceptors not scored 100 per cent in all their tests?

True, a more recent test of a missile intercept at sea was successful, and showed they can hit a short range missile that's close to the interceptor launcher. But the missile defense system the U.S. hoped we would support has shown little success in tests heavily stacked in its favour, and is definitely not operational. When and if the technology problems are solved, then we should revisit this issue.

-Leon Wu
Government Relations Liaison,
CNW Group

Editor's Note: Many sources agree that it's normal, expected and desirable for failures to occur in flight tests of a new cutting-edge aerospace system, as problems are located and corrected. For an excellent discussion of this, interested readers should refer to Tom Wolfe's historical classic, *The Right Stuff*, detailing the development of Project Mercury.

-D.S.

Have your say

We welcome member input, whether it's a letter to the editor, a story suggestion or a proposal for a guest column. Feel free to email your input or suggestions to us. All submissions for publication on this site are subject to approval by the Editorial Board.

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