

The logo for PAAC E-News features a stylized graphic of overlapping squares in shades of blue and grey to the left of the text. 'PAAC' is in a bold, black, sans-serif font, and 'E-News' is in a white, sans-serif font inside a dark blue oval with a halftone dot pattern.

Public Affairs: Your Online Newsletter

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The camera was clicking almost non-stop at the PAAC's July 8 Summer Social at Toronto's Duke of York. Put faces to the names of the folks who share this profession with you.

President's message

The forever changed, political landscape



By Joe MacDonald, PAAC President

More than the weather, change - often profound change - is in the air. In both Canada and the United States the past year has seen dramatic and permanent changes in the political landscape. Yet, while politics have changed, most of the "players" and almost all of the public remain blissfully unaware. Sure, missing the boat will provide the politicians and the pundits with copy and talking points for the next couple of years. But the essential changes happening right under our noses will remain hidden, right in the open.

Much has, and should, be made of the rise of the junior Senator from Illinois. His campaign from all perspectives has been touched with gold. Using the Internet in (insert breathless note here) imaginative ways, resurrecting what we're now told is "narrative" in speechmaking, and generally taking the U. S. and most of the West by storm, Obama is "the" story of the early part of this century. Why? Because regardless of who actually wins the U. S. Presidential election, politics in the United States has changed forever. There is no going back to some kind of "business as usual", no way back to the comfortable and destructive identity politics of the late 1970s and 1980s (unless, of course, one remembers the Ontario and Federal NDP).

More than at any time in their history, Americans can say the American Dream touches everybody. Think about it: for the first time ever entering the convention season, the leading candidate for president of the United States is not a white guy! Winning the

presidential prize is not, in my estimation nearly as significant as this one fact. Long after the election of 2008 - and maybe 2012 - it won't matter that Obama won or lost. What will matter was that he had a meaningful, broadly supported, opportunity to win. It will mean that he was beaten. It will mean that the mold has been broken, never to be repaired and that the United States, for all its other weaknesses and foibles, can take pride in the courage of one individual and the toil and support of millions.

It isn't exactly like somebody has taken the Canadian public by storm, captured the collective imagination and set tongues a-wagging, but changes have been significant nonetheless. The current federal government has been quite effective in its pursuit of a radically decentralized federal system. The federal spending power has been severely restricted under the guise of "tax relief". The business of the House of Commons is now open to litigation by a government angered by unwelcome questions and, dare it be said, "opposition". The media, just about the only people paying any attention, have been sidelined in favour of selected questioning. And the provinces are now being treated to a federal disengagement (read here "respect for their constitutional responsibilities") that will see further reductions in the scope and leadership of the federal government. Changing the federal system is all well and good. Doing so on the sly isn't. To be fair, the Opposition ain't, and it bears much of the responsibility for what is to come. In the meantime Canadians grouse about the weather, the lack of gold medals, the final destination of Mats Sundin and glory in the success of Barack Obama. More than anything, Canadians want change. Now they've got it.

The PAAC welcome these new members:

- Joyce Barretto, CEO, Stewardship Ontario
- Mark Adler, CEO, Economic Club of Toronto
- Rowena Orajada Materne, Director of Corporate Services, Keewatin Yatthe Regional Health Authority
- Lise Ponto, VP, Federated Press Inc.
- Priscilla Mouzakiotis, AstraZeneca

Metrolinx's Maclsaac is a mover and shaker in the GTA

By Melanie Cummings, PAAC Editor

In the Second World War gas rationing posters asked drivers, 'is your trip necessary?' It was a reminder of the fragility of society in terms of transportation. Needless travel interfered with the war effort.

It's a familiar scenario in the current environment where diminishing oil supplies, high gas prices and smog alerts are common concerns.

Such dire combinations make Metrolinx chair Rob Maclsaac's work pressing. Plans must be put in place today for the impact of tomorrow, 30 years down the line. But as the person charged with improving transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, he shares the pioneering, driven mindset of turn-of-the-century American city planner and architect Daniel Burnham who said 'make no small plans'.

By 2038 the GTA's population is expected to reach nine million, making it larger than Chicago - which is Maclsaac's favourite city in North America, primarily for its logical planning genius - or London, England. The population burst could bring 1.5 million cars with it.

The question is: do GTA communities want to look like London, Paris, Los Angeles, or Atlanta, Georgia, asked Maclsaac.

The current means of delivering transportation services are "fracturing and unsustainable" Maclsaac told PAAC members at the July 23 breakfast presentation.

The GTA is the fifth most congested region in North America, a situation Maclsaac blames on governance and funding. "We have to find a better balance in modes of transportation." The supply and demand for scant road space in the GTA has turned commuting into what Maclsaac calls a soviet-style transportation system: space is limited so all those who want use of it have to wake up early and get in line.

It's the same scenario in GO stations. Surrounded by a sea of vehicles they appear as if they were designed more for cars than buses and trains.

Little wonder the system is in disarray. With six municipalities in the GTA operating 11 different transit systems, taking a bus from one

municipality to another is not a smooth transfer. Similarly, a system of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) driving lanes that only appear in "fits and starts" between these communities is disjointed. Such solutions are "a prescription for paralysis," in MacIsaac's view. "The days of 50 people waiting in a streetcar for one person in a car in front to turn left should be over."

Operating with Santa-style funding, pouring big money into the system once in a while, has further crippled cohesive transportation planning and delivery. Infrastructure budgets grew annually by five per cent between 1955 and 1977, but were decimated between 1978 and 2000 dwindling to an average .001 per cent annually. Investment has to be steady to keep up with current needs said MacIsaac. "We're paying the price for it today,"

Where Toronto's subways, streetcars, and the provincial GO bus and train systems were once the envy of the world, this is no longer the case. As much as MacIsaac is leading a made-in-the-GTA solution to improve transportation woes, there are plenty of successful international examples from which to draw. Consider Madrid, where more subways have been built in 10 years than the GTA has built in 75 years. These underground transport lines are also built along developing industrial lands, so that expansion will pay for itself in the future.

MacIsaac also foresees doing away with the 50-year-old token and transfers for a universal, streamlined fare system, instituting customer reward programs for transit like Airmiles, providing on-board services and creating connector hubs at airports, hotels and high rise apartments as is the case in Europe and Hong Kong.

"Like the economy, we are competing with cities abroad. It's not Hamilton versus Toronto but the GTA versus world."

The journey is far from complete, said MacIsaac. "We have to stoke the fires of prosperity to do what previous generations did for us." As the architect Burns pointed out, it entails no small plans.

PAAC Infrastructure and the Environment in Ontario Series

Climate Change: Science or Sound Bite

The second in the Series

September 18, 2008
8:00 am at the Albany Club, Toronto

Featuring:

The Hon. John Gerretsen, Ontario's Minister of the Environment

With:

Kate Holloway - President and CEO of Carbonzero

Rick Smith - Executive Director of Environmental Defence

The Book Man
Muckraking in America



Book review by Stewart Kiff

The Obama Nation: Leftist Politics and the Cult of Personality
By Jerome R. Corsi, Ph.D. published by Threshold Additions, 364 pages

As I write this, the Democratic Party nominee for the presidency of the United States, Senator Barack Obama, is just slightly ahead in the polls. This is a problem for Obama and his supporters. With current polls showing that the Democratic Party will dominate both the House and the Senate elections, the Republican presidential candidate should be easily beaten. Yet, these polls hint that Obama may be heading into trouble in winning an election in November. So, why is the charismatic, young, energetic communicator not doing better?

Unlike U.S. Senator John McCain, an authentic war hero, with his decades of experience in the United States Senate, the 46-year-old Obama comes to us - the general public and those who follow American politics - as a relative to complete unknown. In fact, as Jerome Corsi notes in this book, *Obama Nation*, he is so new to the United States national-level politics that he has essentially passed through to without a thorough vetting of his past. This is the intensive process where a candidate's life is thoroughly researched by skilled and ruthless investigators who dig out facts that may prove politically damaging in the middle of a campaign. As many campaign operatives will tell you, it is better to know the bad behaviour of your candidate and be prepared before your opponent uses it against you.

Essentially, this book, *Obama Nation* is a 364-page critical and negative opposition research tome that digs into Obama's past in a highly critical and suspicious way. This is so dangerous because Obama's campaign to date has been highly centered on his personality and his image. With actual experience being largely absent, it has made sense for the Obama campaign to focus on his great oratory and the image of transcendental politics that he offers to the American people.

Corsi looks at the "experiences" that Obama is not proud of, and that sometimes stand at great odds to his current image as a man who is above politics.

In particular, it goes into detail about the following issues: Obama's deep relationship with the Reverend Jeremiah Wright of the Black Liberation Theology Trinity United Church in Chicago, his links with the slum-landlord empire of Chicago political fixer Tony Rezko, who helped Obama purchase his home, and his extensive connections with Islam as well as his close personal association with William Ayers, a domestic terrorist with the Weathermen Underground Movement.

Obama has built what Corsi describes as a cult of personality meaning that because he has portrayed himself as a candidate that transcends race and ideological boundaries, he is the solution for all of America's problems. Corsi's argument in this book is that while this may be interesting and may have been a successful tactic against a sleeping Hilary Clinton in the Democratic primaries, the fact is we are still some 90 days to go before the American Presidential election. And during that time, the focus on personality will lessen and the focus on issues will return. Obama's stand on issues will come under closer and closer scrutiny. He has very little actual public record. His personality and his past choices will therefore be examined more and more, and on reflection, Obama will be diminished.

In short, *Obama Nation* is best classified as muckraking, but I am bringing it to your attention because it is very interesting muckraking. With some 45 pages of footnotes, Corsi has written a book which is highly readable, very well researched and I would say one of the most dangerous investigations in a political sense into Obama's past - precisely because it has the quality and the content which means it cannot be easily dismissed. While it may be torqued, Corsi's work is rigorously footnoted and rigorously documented.

In fact, Obama's campaign has been working to prevent "Swift-boating", the process by which the previous Democratic candidate John Kerry, had his credibility undermined by a group of called the "Swift Boat Veterans"

Part of Obama's content and speeches during the month of July have especially tried to inoculate his supporters against the expected "swift boating" of him by the Republican negative machine. Corsi's argument and documentation in this book basically argues that this process will not succeed precisely because Obama has not the depth on the issues that will prevent a negative turn in the perception of him. Corsi is arguing in his book that Obama's past is, in essence, too radical and too left-wing for the American public to finally accept.

Even worse for Obama's Campaign is that Corsi's book reached #1 on the New York Times Non-Fiction list on August 18. Clearly, many Americans are reading this book. So worried is the Obama campaign about Corsi's book that they have published a 40-page rebuttal and debunking of Corsi's work, under the title "*Unfit for Publication*". (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/4773726/Unfit-for-publication>). This rebuttal was in fact better covered than the release of the book itself. I have looked at the rebuttal as well and would strongly recommend anyone who reads the book look to also read the rebuttal. It is however, a campaign document, and a highly torqued one at that - in addition it is attributed to the campaign, and not an individual.

I have not seen a book like this in the Canadian political context, not something that is so thorough, yet at the same time is clearly a purely partisan document on such a narrow subject.

All and all, an excellent read; although for those who support Barack Obama, it will doubtless be something that is as aggravating as it is recommended.

Recommended.

PAAC member Stewart Kiff is the President of Solstice Public Affairs. He welcomes your feedback and suggestions, and can be reached at stewart@solsticecanada.ca.

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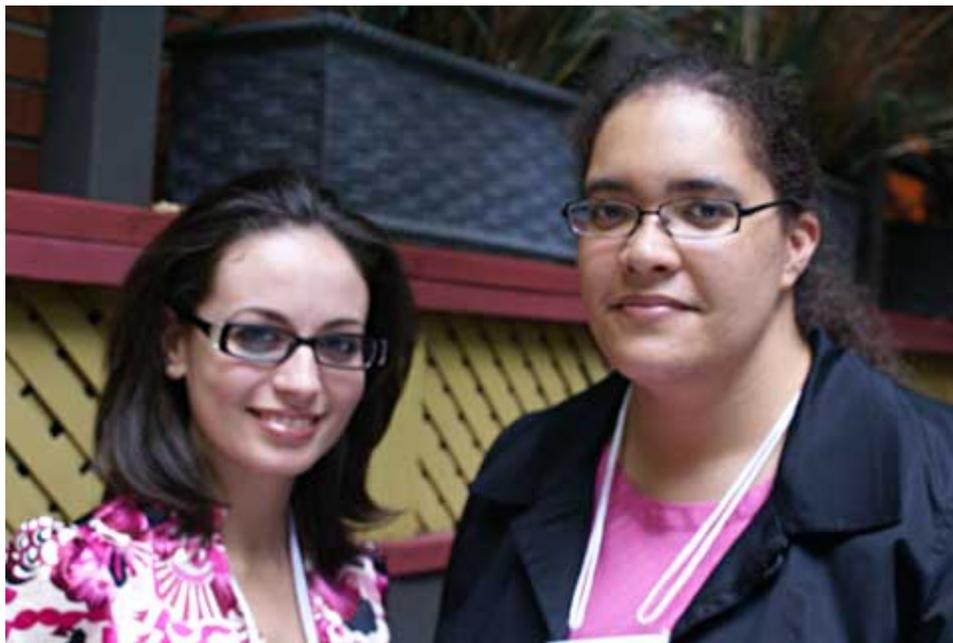
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(l-r) PAAC Director Lawrence Sereacki, PAAC President Joe MacDonald and PAAC Vice-president Paul Burns.



(l-r) Kim Wright and Scott Browrigg, both of Sussex Strategy
Graham Murray, GP Murray Research and PAAC Board member John Shalagan.



(l-r) Base Consulting's Andrea Freitas and Danielle Russell. Base Consulting and Management Inc. is the current Association Management Company for the PAAC.



(l-r) Teresa Sarkesan, The Cement Association of Canada
Daniel Dorsey, Gary Lau, Brad Foley, all of CNW Group.



(l-r) Elaine Flis, Canadian Restaurant and Foodservice Association and
PAAC past-president with John Shalagan.



(l-r) Shelley Romoff, SickKids and Mark Romoff of the Ontario Centres of Excellence.



(l-r) is Kendra Dubyk, Brown and Cohen Communications and Public Affairs Inc. and PAAC Director Kathleen Perchaluk



(l-r) PAAC Director Norm Cheesman and Ted Wigdor



(l-r) Andrew Szende, electronic Child Health Network and John Tucker, Canadian Chiropractic Association



(l-r) Amy Terrill, Ontario Chamber of Commerce and PAAC Vice-president Paul Burns.



(l-r) Neil Shorey Associated Toronto Taxi-Cab Co-Operative Limited and Kendra Dubyk



(l-r) Beaches-East York NDP MPP Michael Prue and Kim Wright of Sussex Strategy.



(l-r) Harvey Cooper, Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
Beaches-East York NDP MPP Michael Prue and NDP Caucus staffer Laurie Orrett.



(l-r) Richard Chartash, WSIB and Graham Murray.



(l-r) Neil Shorey with Beaches-East York NDP MPP Michael Prue.

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