



# PAAC E-News

Public Affairs: Your Online Newsletter

July • 2007

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Summer is upon us, so let's enjoy it.

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[President's message](#)

## PAAC wishes you a great summer



*by Elaine Flis  
PAAC President*

With summer upon us in full, I just want to wish everyone at PAAC a great one. Here's a hearty welcome to our newest members: Will Fripp, Ted Wigdor of S.A. Murray

Consulting Inc. and Tara Bingham of AstraZeneca Canada Inc.

There will be more events coming along soon, and our annual Conference this fall. In the meantime, have a healthy and fun summer.

And as always, I invite members to contact me at [eflis@enterprisecanada.com](mailto:eflis@enterprisecanada.com) with suggestions or input.



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[Event Report](#)

## Lobbying for non-profit organizations

Our June 5th event took place at the Albany Club in Toronto, one of this land's oldest private clubs, which claims Sir John A. MacDonald as a founding member. There, PAAC members and guests assembled behind oaken doors and beneath stained glass windows, the air thick with history, the visage of Sir John gazing down from the firmament, and discussed problems of a much newer sort than those which troubled Sir John: how to lobby the government on behalf of non-profit organizations.

Non-profits have special concerns, needs and handicaps to consider in their government relations efforts, and we pulled in two experienced women from two very different NPOs to tell us what they do and how they do it. First up was Rosemary McCarney, chief executive of Plan Canada, formerly known as Foster Parents Plan. Following her was Jo-Anne St.-Godard, Executive Director of the Recycling Council of Ontario. Handling the emcee and introduction duties was PAAC Past President Chris Benedetti, who not incidentally is Chair of the Board at RCO, and a man with no small experience in government relations pertaining to environmental matters.



**Serving good causes** - Above, PAAC past president Chris Benedetti (left) and current PAAC president Elaine Flis (right) trade pleasantries with Rosemary McCarney before the presentation. Below, that's Jo-Anne St.-Godard at left, with Chris and Rosemary.



McCarney's organization changed its name to Plan Canada from Foster Parents Plan, to make the name consistent with those of affiliates in other countries. McCarney is a legal expert with great experience on the boards of both for-profit companies and NPOs, and she was there to tell us the rebranding was necessary because the work of Plan Canada and its world affiliates has a much wider scope for the welfare of children than simply encouraging people to sign up as foster parents. It's an ambitious scope that makes government help a necessary part of the picture.

Yet the organization, like other NPOs, had traditionally focused on raising money for charitable work, but not on working with the media or lobbying in Ottawa. McCarney knew those things had to change, yet the unease people feel for the term 'lobbyist' was clear in her words. "We are NOT lobbyists," she said. The term lobbyist is widely connected in the public mind with political villainy, while organizations like Plan are clearly good guys. That's why McCarney likes the sound of the word advocacy a lot better. "Lobbying is understood to be about pulling strings - pressuring members of government to vote according to special interests. Advocacy has a better sound to it." Still, the challenges they face can only be met with the help of media and lobbyists.

### **Major challenges**

Organizations like Plan Canada have two major challenges: Engaging the public, and engaging politicians. First, she said, "We have to engage the Canadian public on issues that don't directly affect them." Bingo. Their issues around the world are of a certain kind. Calamities like hurricanes, tsunamis, and human atrocities by medieval governments are background noise to most Canadians, not because we are uncaring but because it's natural to face your immediate daily life concerns ahead of those which are greatly removed by distance and politics. Like others in developed nations, Canadians need a shove before they'll come to grips with far-flung humanitarian issues, which they normally perceive only peripherally, save for occasional flare-ups that happen when a particularly big disaster or third world pogrom catches international media attention until the next commercial for iPods. Said McCarney: "It's tough to engage people with things they see only on CNN at night."

Yet that's the job, because people won't help if they aren't made to care. So far, she said, about 150,000 Canadians care enough about Plan issues to donate. It's a start. "We live and breathe on the donors' generosity," she said, but stressed that raising charity dollars is not enough; they have to increase the level of impact they have on the issues themselves. Their goals are to improve literacy and reduce child mortality in some of the world's worst hellholes, by bringing the issues of the third world to the people of the first. To do that, they must get attention from media, then citizens, and finally from political leaders. Only then are they likely to create an impact on government policies toward stricken areas such as the "Democratic" Republic of the Congo (DRC,) Darfur, and similar pits. "Canadians want us to hold governments accountable," she said. "Donors want us to be very vocal for issues that affect children around the world."

The role of an organization like McCarney's is therefore to re-frame public discussion of key issues, which is why it's such a coup to get high-profile media attention. An example was the May 25 Toronto *Star* article by Carol Goar, mentioning Plan's global campaign to publicize culture-based oppression of girls and women all over the undeveloped world. Goar and the *Star* gave major attention to Plan's *Because I Am A Girl* campaign, which will focus on the lives of 135 girls born last year in nine undeveloped nations, and follow them until 2015 when they will be considered "halfway to adulthood" by local standards. Goar handled the story diplomatically, but it's clear that with 135 girls born into cultures that will victimize them as a matter of course, media attention will likely accomplish what McCarney said she hoped it would when she was quoted by Goar saying, "I deeply hope

the *Because I am a Girl* campaign will create the focus and outrage needed to force change."

Some call it journalism, but it comes down to public affairs. Plan activists work in the most evil-ravaged places in the world, and want the public to know about the plight of those born to misery. "How can we serve them if we don't speak out in the power capitals of the world?" McCarney said. As a practical matter, her organization's efforts are built on a tripod construction of Impact, Influence, Income - raising the dollars and mounting the campaigns to put their issues front and centre while pressing their case through a set of achievable initiatives. It makes sense. After all, how many foolish campaigns have you seen where street marchers 'demand and end' to this or that social ill, rather than make constructive suggestions that can actually be implemented?

Plan activists are not so silly and self-aggrandizing, so they seek real impact, not just an Andy Warhol Moment. Once, Darfur was under the media radar, except for occasional mass murder flare-ups on CNN. With help from McCarney's organization, Canada developed a position to advance at the June G-8 summit. While protestors who claim to be onside with the disadvantaged did their best to stop the summit, or at least to injure as many policemen as possible, Plan Canada had another idea. "We drafted, with some difficulty, a statement we felt the government could take to the G-8," said McCarney. Then they walked it through the advocacy process to the top, eschewing protests in favour of lobbying. Nobody ever helped a child by behaving like one. Added McCarney: "You need to be trusted by both media and government. You can't blindsides the government, or they'll find ways to ignore you next time."

### **Similarities, differences**

Next up in the agenda was Jo-Anne St.-Godard, whose Recycling Council of Ontario is enjoying high profile as the environment looms ever larger on the public agenda. Like Plan Canada, they have established both a tactical and strategic framework for their advocacy. Unlike the Plan, they're Ontario oriented, not global in focus. Also unlike the Plan, RCO's 320 members, two staff and 16 Board members need not worry about getting shot early and often by 12-year-old Sudanese thug-soldiers as they try to help people. Yet there are similarities, including the need to advocate responsibly, and to be persistent. "We spend a lot of time beavering away at waste issues," she said.

Persistence has served RCO, and the Ontario environment, well. RCO got started in the late 1970s with five people meeting in a basement, back when gasoline was cheap and the environment was not top of mind. To worry about litter and recycling and environmental impact in those days was forward thinking. Now it's normal thinking, and RCO advocacy initiatives are more complex, covering issues of stewardship programs - what's on the market, how is it sold and packaged, what impact it has and who owns it once it reaches the end of its useful life. Earlier this year, St.-Godard spoke at the EnviroPharm conference (mentioned here last month) where people in the pharmaceutical industry examined environmental problems and stewardship issues concerning outdated prescription drugs. For emerging issues like this, or for established issues, RCO's power words are Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. They must choose their

projects carefully to do the most good with the resources they have.

Both speakers touched on the potential risk to credibility and reputation for those NPOs who choose their allies unwisely. There are ways to manage such risk without sacrificing a potential ally. Plan, said McCarney, once accepted money from an oil company working in Sudan and used it to finance a water drilling project in that parched country. They saved some lives. Nevertheless, workers in another charitable organization criticized them for taking money from an oil company. McCarney's answer: "What principle is that? People in Sudan cannot wait for perfect conditions." With this argument, they convinced the other group that what they did wasn't such a bad thing. But it took some convincing, she added. "The not for profit community tends to be a little puritanical."

St.-Godard and RCO had a similar consideration involving a waste reduction co-venture with Tim Horton's. There was risk in placing the RCO name alongside the name of a major producer of that which blows in the wind. To avoid potential loss of credibility, RCO set out clear benchmarks for the fast food chain's performance. "They're going to sell doughnuts and coffee no matter what we do," said St.-Godard, so when the chain asked for help putting together a program in response to a government regulation, the answer was yes, because it was a chance to do something worthwhile, and convert a corporate entity to the cause. The benchmarks were there to ensure that they didn't just wind up lending the RCO name to fast food sales.

RCO's other outreach projects include a Lead Waste Reduction Week in Canada, the Ontario Waste Minimization Awards, and a National Task Force on E-waste, among other efforts. E-waste in particular is gaining in its public profile, in these times when popular electronic gadgets have ever-shorter lifespans as newer ones come onto the market, and more of the old ones wind up in landfills where their poisonous materials such as heavy metals can leach into the environment. Unlike her counterpart McCarney, St.-Godard doesn't have to fight so hard to get the public onside. Environmentalism is a home-based issue, and it's already uppermost among public concerns. "I've never seen so much media as when we had a press conference about the plastic bag waste issue," she said. Another big hit was the ban on incandescent light bulbs and the rise of the Compact Fluorescent Light, or 'Squiggly Bulb,' in its place. "We are about to roll out a stewardship program for CFLs," added St.-Godard.

RCO's power to engage the public is different from that of McCarney's Plan because the heavy work of getting the public onside has already been done through years of environmental activism by many people, working on many fronts. It's more of a grassroots issue, too, because municipalities have jurisdiction over trash, and small organizations voicing popular public concerns, such as RCO, can acquire a special leverage there - if they can establish rapport with elected officials. Like McCarney, St.-Godard recognized the need for and the power of lobbying, and was similarly at pains to put a smiley face on the negative public image of lobbyists as Machiavellian manipulators. She even came up with a definition that lobbying is all about influencing regulators, while advocacy is merely about influencing the public. "We're always lobbying for environmental gain, not for political gain," she said. "That's the distinction." We can wish her luck with that, but McCarney was probably more pragmatic when she chose not

to argue definitions. Instead she simply opted to register as a lobbyist and get comfy with the term.

### **NPOs share common ground**

Still, both women recognized, as other NPOs must, that lobbying in particular, and public affairs skills in general, are tools in the box for any NPO that aims to achieve a positive impact, rather than content itself with staging candlelight vigils or Marches To End All Evil. "We have to look at who might be allies in an issue," she said. "Who will care? What are the *politics du jour*? Who will pledge allegiance to you and who will vote you off the island?"

The other aspect of their work where they shared common ground was what might be dubbed the Shaming Principle - the ability to get political leaders to take a moral stand by creating a public mood that shames them if they don't. Neither woman talked about this in so many words, but the idea seemed to float in the air above what they had to say, whether the topic was child-murder in Sudan or land-rape in Ontario: Politicians want to be the good guy.

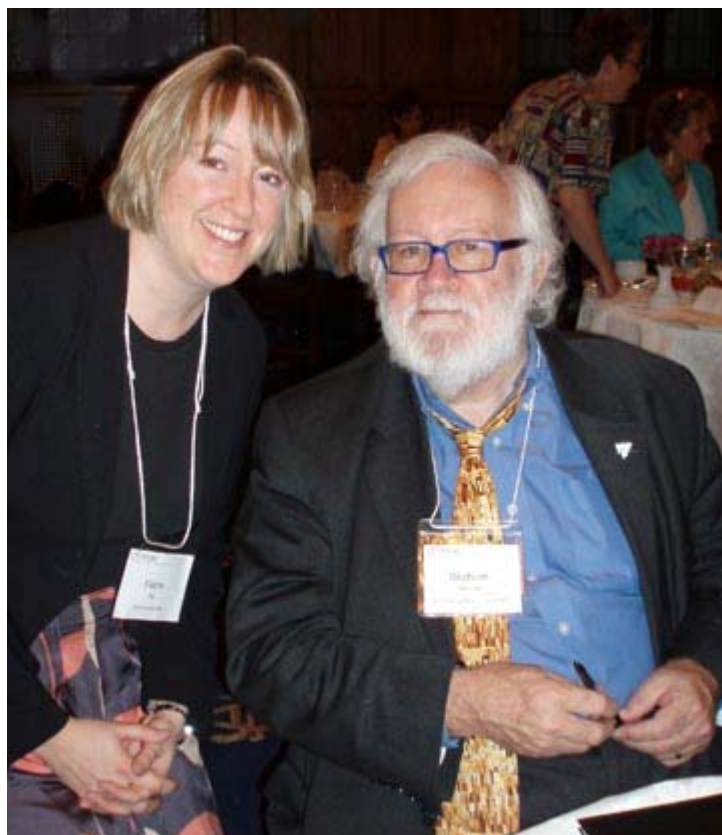
Non-profit groups have a built-in ability to use that in their advocacy efforts, but wherever government relations people can figure out how to bring similar factors to bear in any issue, they too can be successful. Just look at what happened to Mayor David Miller and Toronto City Council when they tried to remove the yellow ribbons in support of Canadian troops from Toronto emergency vehicles. *Res Ipsa Loquitur*.

-D.S.

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[Photo Op](#)

## Legislature recognizes the honourable member from PAAC



**Hear, hear** - At our June event in the hushed environs of the Albany Club, PAAC President Elaine Flis bestows a smile and congratulations on PAAC former president and long-time stalwart Graham Murray, who this past May was named an honorary intern of the Ontario legislature. The Right Honourary Graham Murray - it has a nice ring to it.

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[Our Summer Social](#)

## Pubbing atop the Pilot

June 25 after work was the PAAC Summer Social on the rooftop bar at the Pilot Tavern on Cumberland near Bay. Herewith selected pictures from the event.





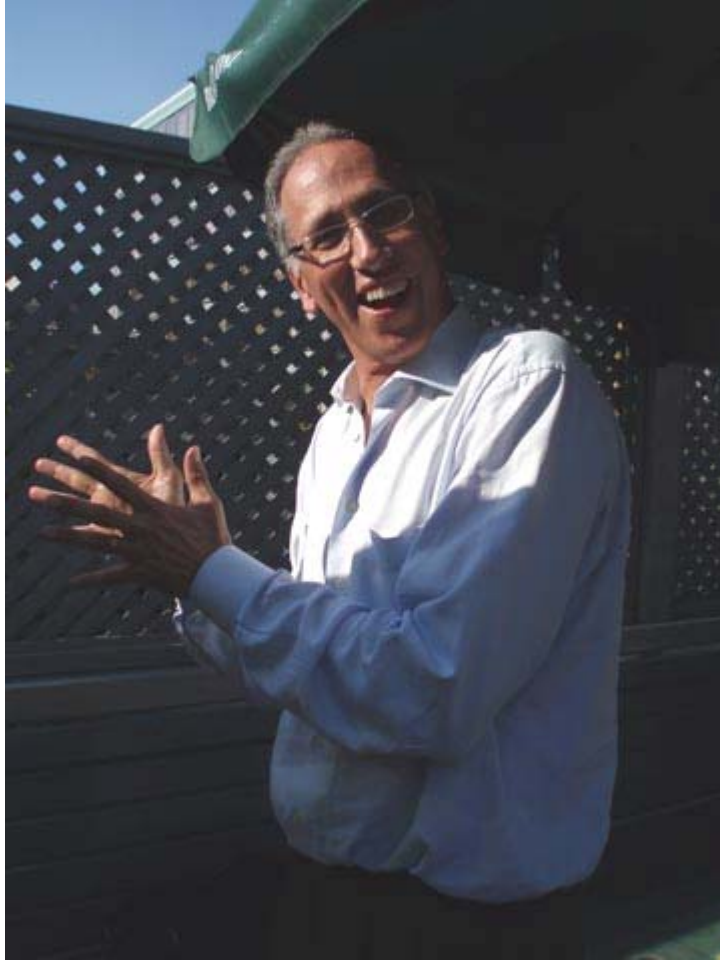
Taking it easy with a drink (above) or squinting into a savage late afternoon sun (below) those who didn't mind a little summer heat had a fine time networking and socializing.





If you haven't yet met Francesca Davino at our management company, that's her above. Below, Richard Chartash deals with the Pilot's famous munchables.





Above, Howard Brown cares not that it's hot. Below, no, that's not the spirit of Hunter S. Thompson. Behind the kewl shades and 'neath the ball cap was a casual Norm Cheesman.



Above, Linda Ambros of MTO and James DeMonte, Government Services

Ontario, were guests, sampling the PAAC ambience.

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[Event Report](#)

## Hey-hey, ho-ho, green coalition is on the go

On the morning of June 27, with Ontario in the grip of a fearful heat wave, three of our nuclear generating stations down for maintenance, wind generation becalmed and our backup coal plants keeping the place running while the government threatened brownouts if people didn't conserve, **Bruce Cox** spoke to a PAAC breakfast audience about a new environmental coalition which plans to be a main player in the Ontario political campaign. The title of the presentation was, *Coalition Building: Capturing the Public Mind and the Political Agenda*.



**Bruce Cox of Greenpeace.**

Former PAAC President Joe MacDonald introduced Cox, who is Executive Director of Greenpeace Canada and a protester from way, way back - he started his career at age six, protesting against American nuclear weapons during the Cold War with the Soviets, and he moved on from there. Today's he's a force to be reckoned with in Canadian environmentalism and all things Green and Peaceful, particularly what Joe called - with a grin *this* wide - "peaceful acts of civil disobedience."



**How big is the environment?** Big, said Joe MacDonald, introducing Bruce Cox at our breakfast session. "Politicians want to talk about it. People are concerned about it, but they may not be ready to pay for the changes that have to be made." That's Melinda Van Patter from Marketwire (formerly CNN Matthews) at the right of the photo. Below, Joe confers with Bruce before the presentation.



"I always welcome the opportunity to talk about our favorite topic," Cox said. By 'ours,' he means a newly formed coalition of 13 environmental groups working together to influence and to judge Ontario parties and their candidates during the upcoming election. The groups have combined under the banner *Priorities for Ontario*. It can be called a Coalition of the Confronting, at least in the enviro-political sense, and its traditions go back a long way.

Cox harkened back fondly to a time when Madonna was starting her Blonde Ambition tour, Ahh-nold was just an actor with a new movie called *Total Recall*, First Nations

people were doing disobedience at Oka, Brian Mulroney was Prime Minister and the Premiers had just sparked the bolts in the neck of a lumbering and doomed Son Of Meech. These days totally recall those, said Cox, because that was the last time concern for the environment topped public opinion polls. Blue boxes were a new thing. In Ontario, there was Premier David Peterson, expecting to skate uphill to a new term, being confronted on campaign stops by a fellow named Gordon Perks demanding answers on environmental issues. It was good timing then, and it's good timing now.

### **A key issue**

Peterson lost that election, but whether those pointed environmental questions had something to do with it wasn't Cox's point. His point was that the tactic of confrontation on these issues made sense then because their cause was hot at the time. "That's the last time the environment played a significant role in an election in Ontario," he said. "It was a key issue." After that, the environment went on a back burner. "There we are, the life of the planet in the balance, and we can't get it on the agenda," recalled Cox. Now they can, and they will. The Priorities for Ontario coalition, which includes Greenpeace, the Sierra Club and a long list of other "birdwatchers and flower folks," as Cox put it, wants to promote six priorities to all politicians regardless of party affiliation, and judge them on their responses. The issues are:

**The Boreal Forest.** Cox said Ontario has made promises about land use planning in order to preserve these environmentally sensitive areas but has not kept them.

**Green Energy.** Cox wants to shut down coal and shut down nuclear, encourage conservation, promote co-generation, push the use of wind energy, and raise electricity rates.

**The Great Lakes.** The Coalition wants to protect the environment, handle sewage more carefully, stop the invasion of harmful non-indigenous organisms, and protect water purity by acting on the lessons of Walkerton.

**Greenbelt Conservation.** The Coalition wants to fight urban sprawl and encroachment on our green space.

**Toxic substances.** The proposal here is to pass an Act to fight pollution and prevent cancer caused by toxic substances in the environment.

**Waste handling.** The Coalition wants government action that says yes to the three Rs - reduce, reuse and recycle - and says no to waste incineration, with or without energy generation from it.

The goal of all this: To offer an easily digestible number of solutions in specific areas, by choosing carefully from an otherwise confusing menu of environmental topics. "We want to focus this huge agenda on a small number of issues, with consistent messages and clear solutions." To that end they will promote their list of priorities without choosing a side in the election. "We'll tell them what we want as a movement and what we expect



from politicians."

### **Building a coalition was hard**

Finding topics for their attention was easy for the likes of Cox and his colleagues. Building a coalition was hard. It is, he said, very tough to get a roomful of environmentalists to agree on such a concise menu of priorities - to agree on which issues are concrete, amenable to clear descriptions and can be promoted to the public with a set of achievable goals. If Kyoto and global climate change aren't part of the list, worry not. Those issues are embedded in Coalition goals, but the six priorities had to be tailored to a provincial scope. "Climate change is an issue that cuts across them all. A call to 'stop global warming' might have been a tall order for a provincial government," Cox conceded. Yet the inclusion of larger issues in their apparently small and focused list of priorities is hardly accidental. "Some of the priorities are Trojan Horses. For clean water, we said to implement the recommendations of the Walkerton inquiry. Well, there were about a hundred recommendations."

Cox said he thinks the very fact that environmental people formed such a coalition and were able to agree on a list of priorities sends a clear message to government. The Coalition hopes the government will accord them high respect as a result, even as they hope voters will turn to their Coalition for guidance as they sort through their environmental concerns. "It's a practical, affordable environmental agenda."

Coalition people have met with political leaders, said Cox, and told them, "This is how we were going to benchmark you." They approve of Dalton McGuinty's announced \$17-billion initiative on mass transit, but don't care for his commitment to more nuclear energy. "We've had a very good meeting with John Tory," he said, but he has no love of proposals for 'clean coal' generating technology. They've been trying to pry an environmental agenda out of the NDP, so far without success - that party doesn't want others to Bogart their ideas, as has happened before, so they're playing it coy early in the game. When they do come out with an agenda, "The environmental coalition will be looking for a very firm commitment to Shut Down Coal Period," declared Cox. He also declared they want a televised leader's debate specifically on environmental issues.

There was a time when such a demand would be like yelling at bad weather. This time it may not be. And with or without a televised debate, an ongoing public debate is assured. "People are looking for answers," he said, and when the Ontario public looks for answers, he knows they are looking for *simple* answers. That's what the Coalition of the Confronting offers, and what it plans to inject into a debate that's hotter today than it has been since Brian Mulroney ruled the nation. Almost as hot, in fact, as was the blazing June sun the day Cox came to speak. The election, however, will be held in October. For a coalition campaigning to shut down both nuclear and coal plants, timing is indeed everything.

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[New Member Profile](#)

## Natasha Lemire-Blair: New member in Ontario

*by Guy Skipworth*

Natasha Lemire-Blair, of the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA), comes to us with a lifelong interest in public affairs and politics. Listening to her parents debate political issues around the dinner table as a child led Natasha to pursue a political science degree at Wilfred Laurier University. Before joining OREA eight years ago, she worked for the Canadian Council for Public Affairs Advancement, a government relations support association. Today, Natasha applies her knowledge of public affairs to help OREA advance its interests among policy makers in Ontario.



**Natasha Lemire-Blair**

OREA was founded in 1922. It represents more than 43,000 brokers and salespeople who are members of the provinces 43 real estate boards, and is one of the largest single trade associations in Ontario. Natasha's key responsibilities for the organization include management of OREA's online grassroots lobbying group, the REALTORS® Political Action Coalition, as well as building relationships with politicians and bureaucrats. She also develops publications and brochures to help OREA members and real estate boards in their individual lobbying efforts. Her publications include a political affairs manual, an elections manual and a manual on lobbying at the municipal level.

Another key responsibility for Natasha is organizing OREA's annual Political Affairs Conference held at Queen's Park. This task includes coordinating three days of business sessions that focus on industry-related issues, lobbying techniques, a Queen's Park media panel and keynote addresses.

Natasha is a firm believer in professional development, which is why, to back up her degree in political science, Natasha is about to complete the Communication for Professionals certificate program at the University of Toronto. It's also why she joined PAAC. She says a key benefit of being a PAAC member is the opportunity to network with her peers and enhance her government relations skills through participation in PAAC's educational programs and events.

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[The Web Editor](#)

## The cry of the hunter

*by David Silburt*  
*PAAC Web Editor*

His name was Fred. He was born on an Alabama farm, raised from a domestic piglet until he grew to be a thumping big beast the farmer didn't want anymore, then assassinated by an eleven-year-old farmboy in what is commonly called a canned hunt. Fred's story is nothing special to Americans, but for Canadians debating our infamous federal long gun registry, it is an allegory.

In many U.S. states, canned hunts are popular among those who imagine themselves heroic, but who quail at the thought of facing a wild animal because it might bite them. Such people typically transact business with a "hunting preserve," where a pre-captured animal is released into a fenced-in area so the "hunter" can brag about making the kill without taking any real risk. This was at the root of Fred's story, which broke earlier this summer as the tale of how brave young Jamison Stone, age 11, bagged a "monster wild hog" with a .50-calibre handgun. Published photos showed the boy posing with the carcass of a pig the size of a cow, brandishing a big Magnum revolver and doing as much as a chubby-cheeked eleven-year-old can do to look like Clint Eastwood. But reporters soon discovered it was a canned hunt all along, and that the only hog-wild item involved was the original published version of the story.

In the original story, the youthful Mr. Stone was quoted boasting, "It's a good accomplishment," but lamenting, "I probably won't ever kill anything else that big." This gives us insight into the mind of someone taught during boyhood to value killing as accomplishment. We should pay attention, because it's an honest look at the motivation of sport hunters in America, Canada, or anywhere else. Even real hunts, as opposed to the canned variety, tend to be risk-free exercises, with the "sportsman" killing an animal at great distance using a long-range rifle and a powerful scope. The animal, far from posing a danger, is dead before he hears the gunshot. Trophy hunts for allegedly fearful beasts are done this way because the pleasure is not in the hunting, it's in the killing. Canned hunts provide similar safety within handgun range.

This editorial department has derided the federal gun registry in the past. That's because the \$1.3-billion-and-still-climbing cost of it might have bought us better public safety had it

been spent on more police, improved body armour for them, and perhaps a few police helicopters, rather than a database that tells officers whether someone has a gun registered, or has no guns registered, but who may nevertheless have one anyway. As for those who argue that it's an intrusion into the rights of law-abiding people, let's be clear: Most hunters are not aboriginals who need the meat to feed their families. Nor are most of them hardworking farmers hunting dangerous predators to protect their livestock. Most are people who drive vans and sport trucks, buy their groceries at supermarkets, and own guns to go killing on weekends for pleasure.

Just like Jamison Stone's family down there in Alabama, where one of those Smith and Wesson .50-calibre Magnum revolvers costs about \$1,000. That would buy a truckload of groceries, but meat wasn't the point. Killing something big; that was the point. Listen once more to Jamie's morose lament: "I probably won't ever kill anything else that big again." Hey, cheer up, young fella. Maybe one day it will be legal in Alabama for you to take that big wheelgun to the zoo and use it on an elephant, from the safe side of a chain-link fence.

In the meantime, this here Canuck hopes Fred didn't suffer. Let's hope that, rather than chasing the terrified animal through the forest as he claimed, the eleven-year-old "hunter" walked up while Fred was peacefully foraging, and put the muzzle of that Smith behind one of Fred's big floppy ears, and that Fred never heard the shot.

As for Canadians listening to arguments about gun control, it's worth remembering the late Fred when we hear from "sport hunters" about the gun registry, complaining that it infringes upon their rights. There are many excellent reasons to criticize Canada's costly and impotent laws governing gun ownership. The cry of the hunter is not one of them.

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## 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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