

Le Droit

Date: 'JAN 25 2007

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Des élèves du primaire communiquent avec la Station spatiale internationale

Le Droit

Les élèves de l'école Le Prélude d'Ottawa ont vécu une expérience hors de l'ordinaire, hier matin. Certains d'entre eux ont pu parler directement à une astronaute américaine en poste dans la Station spatiale internationale.

Une douzaine d'élèves de cinquième et sixième année ont posé des questions à Sunita Williams, au moment où la station spatiale, en orbite autour de la Terre, passait assez près d'Ottawa pour qu'une communication radio soit établie, grâce à une équipe du programme «ARISS» qui organise de tels échanges.

Les questions des jeunes ont surtout porté sur la vie quotidienne dans la station spatiale. La jeune Sabrina Roy a demandé à l'astronaute américaine combien de temps il lui faut pour s'habiller en prévision d'une sortie dans l'espace.

«Quatre heures», a répondu Sunita Williams au grand étonnement des élèves.

M^{me} Williams a expliqué qu'une sortie dans l'espace demande une très grande préparation qui inclut non seulement l'habillement mais toute une série de mesures pour que ça se passe en toute sécurité.

Sabrina a aimé son expérience, mais cela ne lui a pas pour autant donné le goût de devenir astronaute.

«J'aurais trop peur de m'envoyer de ma famille si je parlais si loin et si longtemps», a-t-elle déclaré. Jahmal Jean, lui, a trouvé l'expérience très intéressante. «Je n'aurai probablement jamais la chance de revivre une telle expérience», a déclaré le garçon de 11 ans. D'autres ont demandé combien de couchers de soleil l'astronaute a vus. Celle-ci a répondu qu'elle en voit 16 par jour puisque la station spatiale tour-

ne très rapidement autour de la Terre.

Les élèves ont tous posé leurs questions en anglais parce que c'est la langue de travail de la station spatiale.

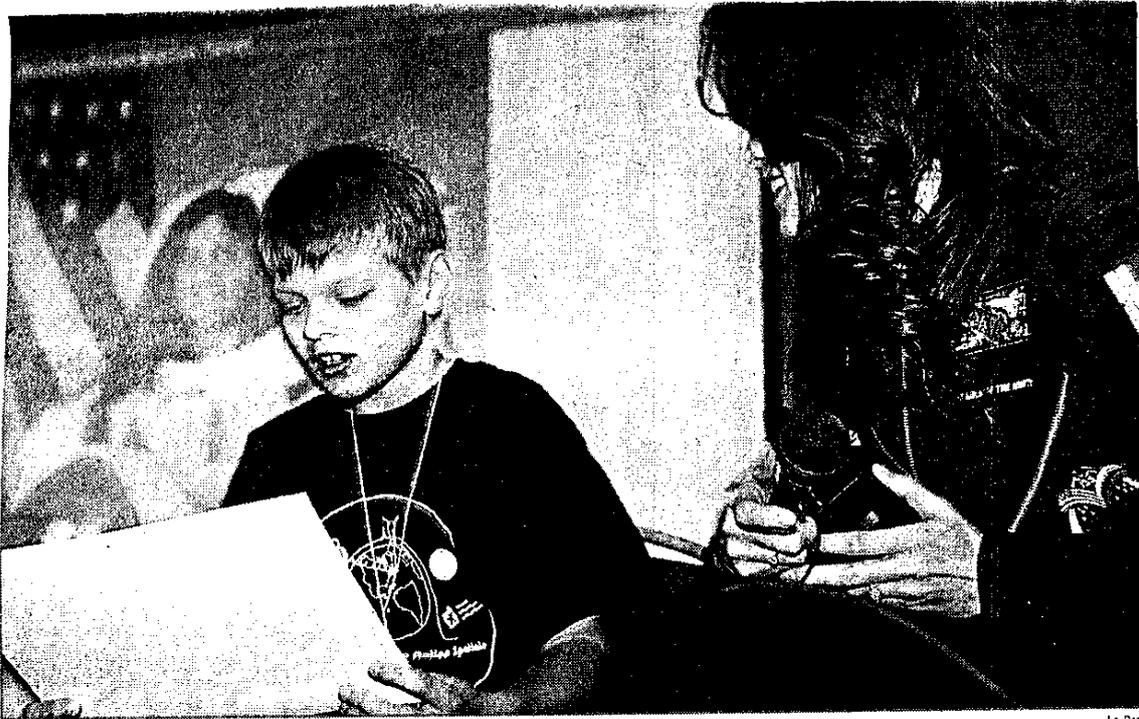
Ces questions avaient été envoyées à l'avance aux responsables de la station spatiale et Sunita Williams était donc prête à y répondre lorsque la communication a été établie.

La directrice de l'école Le Prélude, Andrée Pilon, était ravie. «Nos élèves ont tous pu poser leurs questions et la communication était excellente. Ils ont travaillé très fort pour se préparer à cette journée très spéciale et même si seulement douze d'entre eux ont pu poser des questions, ils ont tous participé d'une manière ou d'une autre», a-t-elle indiqué. Le prochain groupe de la région à entrer ainsi en communication avec la station spatiale, sera une école de Barrhaven, au mois de mai.

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Un élève de l'école Le Prélude d'Orléans, surveillé par Lori McFarlane, mentor pour les contacts canadiens, pose une question à l'astronaute Sunita Williams, qu'on aperçoit sur l'écran à l'arrière-plan.

Ottawa Sun

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Grants make grade

Parents have reached out and grabbed more than \$55,600 worth of grants from the province to fund 25 school-based projects.

A few of the projects include a multicultural website, a parent resource library and a literacy-at-home partnership program. The projects are funded by the Ministry of Education's Parents Reaching Out Grants for Schools program.

The money is allocated to the OCDSB to improve the flow of communication between schools and their parent community.

City Journal

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Date: January 24, 2007

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Deficit plan shocks school board chair

Downtown trustee calls proposed cuts 'quite miserable'

By **PATRICIA LONERGAN**

PATRICIA.LONERGAN@TRANSCONTINENTAL.CA

A proposal to run a deficit budget for 2007 while still imposing heavy cuts on staff and special education programs has astonished the chair of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB).

Rob Campbell, chair of the OCDSB and the trustee representing Zone 9 (Capital and Vanier wards) said he knew the board was in trouble but he was still surprised when he saw the deep cuts proposed for Ottawa schools over the next two years.

But what really caught his attention was the proposal to run a deficit in the first year in an attempt to balance the budget the year after.

"The really amazing thing about this set of proposals that initially rocked me back on my feet a little bit... is for the first time ever staff are recommending that the board go into deficit," Campbell said, adding staff have never done that before, even in the darkest times.

Staff are proposing trustees appeal to the province and go into deficit for the 2007-2008 budget cycle and try to balance their books over a two year period.

Although new for the Ottawa public board, there is some precedence for this, with the Toronto Catholic Board being allowed to balance their budget over a couple of years, Campbell indicated.

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Not only does the management plan for the upcoming budget suggest going into deficit to balance over two years, it also proposes a number of deep cuts, including the loss of over 200 staffing positions.

Those positions include 46 elementary teachers, 9.5 full-time equivalent English as a Second Language teachers, coordinators for both Arts Canterbury and the International Baccalaureate program at Colonel By, and just over 75 full-time equivalent positions from special education (educational assistants, speech and language pathologist, social workers, occupational therapist, etc).

The proposals also include closing two elementary special support units and over seven secondary special support units, and cutting individual school budgets.

"I have to admit I was quite surprised at the depth, the breadth, and the severity of the pro-

posals," Campbell said. "A lot of the cuts are, quite frankly, quite miserable."

The chair said he and other trustees are concerned about the impact the proposed cuts will have on students, in particular those in the immigrant community, special education community, and "beacon" (poorer) schools.

Campbell said he suspects trustees will implement some elements of the budget management plan since there aren't that many options available, but he added he believes trustees will balk at some of the proposals.

"We'll have to see," he said. "Trustees are not a monolithic whole."

Many of the cuts being proposed were on the chopping block last year, but trustees raided their reserves to keep programming in place. Now the reserves have been depleted, so unless the province comes up with more money for the board, trustees won't have any mon-

ey to fall back on during this budget process. At this point, the province has indicated there will be no additional funding for school boards.

The Ministry of Education has indicated there might be a review of the funding formula after the provincial election, but since the board has to have its budget in place long before election day in October, that review won't be in time to help them in their current process.

Although the review won't help now, Campbell indicated he is optimistic the province realizes the formula doesn't work. He added if there's evidence of systemic underfunding, perhaps the Ministry will acknowledge the problem with core funding and move to help fix things.

Campbell indicated discussions are still ongoing with the province and what the board will end up doing at the end of the day remains to be seen. *cc*

Ottawa Sun

Date: JAN 25 2007

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Cell policy on hold

Ontario teachers vexed by lack of provincewide cellphone policy for students

LAURA CZEKAJ
Ottawa Sun

They play music, receive e-mail, access the Internet — and are wreaking such havoc in classrooms that some frustrated teachers and administrators are calling for a crackdown on cellphones in school.

One Gatineau school board went so far last fall as to ban the devices from classrooms after two high school students secretly videotaped their teacher's outburst — after they provoked him — and posted it on the YouTube website.

Teachers in Ontario have been pleading with school boards and the provincial government for help keeping the peace in class.

"It's increasingly becoming an issue for teachers," said Rhonda Kimberley-Young, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

"If it falls down to well over 100,000 teachers individually across this province to deal with it, I don't think it's unreasonable for direction to be given to them as professionals. It shouldn't be left to (their) discretion."

But Education Minister Kathleen Wynne lobbed the ball back into the boards' court yesterday, saying it's up to them to make policies on personal electronic devices, not the province.

'It's a local issue'

"A classroom management strategy would probably be for kids not to have their cellphones on," she said. "That's my opinion. But it's a local issue and I'm sure teachers and school principals will work that out."

Indeed, almost everybody at school has a cellphone, said

Lisa Boroczki, 15, a student at John McCrae Secondary School in Barrhaven.

"It's good to have a cellphone for emergencies," she said. "I'll use it to call my mom to let her know I'm studying with a friend, or I might text message a friend in between classes, to meet me in the cafeteria for lunch."

In Ottawa, there aren't any official board policies regarding cellphones, but students are generally not allowed to use cellphones during class time.

"Principals and teachers make it very clear to students

what's acceptable and what is not acceptable when it comes to classroom behaviour," said Ottawa-Carleton District School Board chairman Robert Campbell.

Boroczki said that's only fair.

"It's not like you see a teacher texting or making calls," she said, adding she puts her cell on silent during class — but many other students, she said, discreetly text message their friends.

If they're caught, the teacher will typically ask that they put the phone away.

"Sometimes the teacher will

take it and keep it until the end of the period, or the end of the day," Boroczki said.

Rick Johnson, the president of the Ontario Public School Boards Association, said the use of cellphones is so widespread boards may soon have no choice but to develop a formal policy.

"In an exam situation, kids could be texting answers back and forth," Johnson said. "It raises cheating to a new level if it gets that far."

— With files from
Nelly Elayoubi and CP

laura.czekaj@ott.sunpub.com

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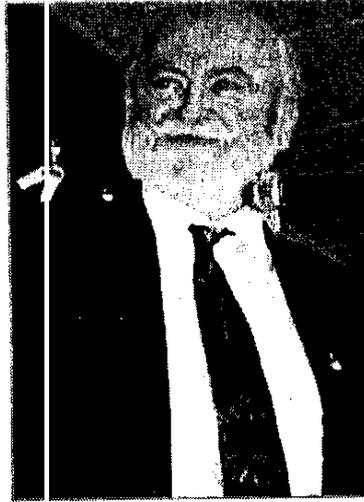
Le Banquet de la francophonie fera place à un rassemblement populaire

Le Banquet de la francophonie, présenté annuellement par l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO) de Prescott et Russell, a été annulé cette année, mais son retour éventuel n'est pas exclu pour autant.

Le Droit

« Nous avons mis tout notre temps, nos énergies et nos ressources à l'organisation des États généraux qui se sont déroulés en novembre et nous avons constaté que nous n'avions pas le temps d'organiser le Banquet. Son organisation exige une préparation de six mois », a affirmé hier le secrétaire de l'ACFO, Julien Levert, qui a profité de l'occasion pour saluer les efforts des deux organisateurs infatigables de première heure, l'ancien président de l'organisme, Jean Poirier et sa conjointe Dominique Saubestre.

Récemment, l'organisme a annoncé par voie de communiqué que le Banquet de la francophonie serait remplacé par un rassemblement populaire qui aura lieu à la mi-mai. L'absence de commentaires de son conseil d'administration laissait entendre que l'événement hono-



ARCHIVES, Le Droit

Jean Poirier au dernier Banquet de la francophonie

rant les grands promoteurs de la langue française, instauré depuis 1999, allait disparaître à jamais.

« Nous envisageons une formule modifiée dans sa forme cette année. Aucune décision n'a été prise pour l'an prochain », a averti M. Levert lorsque finalement joint par *Le Droit* hier. Notons que le président actuel, Richard Lanthier, séjourne présentement à l'étranger du pays. Il ne sera de retour que le 6 février.

Le secrétaire avoue que l'ACFO régionale doit améliorer

ses moyens de communications.

« C'est le reflet de ce que nous sommes. Nous sommes en train de nous remettre en marche et nous avons des progrès à faire », souligne-t-il.

Une ACFO boiteuse

« Nous avons un besoin au niveau du recrutement et de financement », martèle M. Levert qui indique que le nombre de membres, carte d'adhésion en main, n'est pas tellement élevé au sein de l'ACFO.

Les têtes dirigeantes actuelles se félicitent toutefois du déroulement des États généraux de l'automne dernier. L'activité a permis d'attirer deux nouveaux membres à leur conseil d'administration, portant ainsi le total à six. Deux postes demeurent vacants. D'autres ont aussi démontré un intérêt en tant que participants au sein de sous-comités.

En ce qui a trait à la fête populaire du mois de mai, un comité a été mis sur pied. Les membres doivent se rencontrer le 16 février prochain afin de déterminer le déroulement de l'activité. Déjà, il est question de souligner les « réalisations extraordinaires du milieu » lors du rassemblement animé par des artistes locaux.

Les organisateurs souhaitent que cette fête suivra l'assemblée annuelle de l'ACFO régionale, le même jour, au mois de mai.

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L'indifférence générale

La disparition, espérons-la temporaire, du banquet de la francophonie dans Prescott Russell va au cœur du problème franco-ontarien. Elle touche à l'autonomie, au sens de l'identité et à l'engagement individuel et collectif qui furent jadis les pierres d'assise d'organismes comme l'ACFO. Dans l'Est ontarien comme ailleurs en Ontario français, les braises fument encore, et se rallument parfois comme ce fut le cas lors de la crise de l'hôpital Montfort.

Mais le plus souvent, les organisations et les activités tiennent le coup grâce à une poignée d'individus prêts à s'investir pour le bien de la communauté. Au-delà du phénomène de l'assimilation, qui a toutefois son importance, nous vivons dans une société où l'entraide s'estompe. Les gens mènent une petite vie tranquille, bien au chaud dans leur petit chez-soi, et laissent à d'autres le soin de sauver la planète... ou dans ce cas-ci un précieux événement pour la francophonie régionale.

Bien sûr, des organismes comme l'ACFO paraissent parfois désuets dans un monde électronique où l'information circule partout à la vitesse de l'éclair. Bâtir, ou plutôt rebâtir une organisation qui sache bien représenter et défendre les intérêts des Franco-Ontariens constitue un projet lent, qui demande une grande patience et des efforts à long terme. Des efforts comme l'organisation méticuleuse d'un banquet de la francophonie que l'ancien président de l'ACFO de Prescott-Russell, Jean Poirier, et sa conjointe Dominique-Marie Saubestre ont porté à bout de bras jusqu'à l'épuisement.

Ce qu'il faut retenir, aussi, c'est que cette apparente indifférence générale à l'endroit d'un événement si populaire se déroule dans l'Est ontarien, l'une — sinon la seule — région de l'Ontario où une grande communauté homogène francophone continue d'exister. On aurait cru que dans ces conditions quasi idéales, au moins un nombre suffisant de Franco-Ontariens de Prescott-Russell se seraient impliqués et auraient pris la relève de Jean Poirier. Même pas. Le conseil d'administration de l'ACFO régionale réussit à peine à se donner un quorum...

C'est inquiétant, très inquiétant!

High school education needs to be revamped

Re: Acting Canadian is killing our economic future, Jan. 21.

The Conference Board of Canada and columnist Randall Denley make a good point about the need for education and help for Canadian cities. But instead of pouring money into universities, why not revamp high school education?

I have always had a low opinion of high school education, even when I attended a "good" school in the late 1960s and early '70s. Aim at quality rather than quantity and hire better teachers. Most teachers at my school were lackadaisical or downright neurotic. Make public high school education a liberal arts experience, the best grounding for any future education.

As for helping the cities, the City of Ottawa can't seem to figure out a transit plan no matter how many "experts" are consulted, so I guess cities really do need help.

Nobody seems to question the premise: Why do we have to keep up with India and China?

Why not accept that our economy can reach a plateau and tarry there for awhile?

Put more emphasis on people and quality of life, shorter

working hours, longer vacations at all levels of the workforce, especially for the working class.

Columnist Charles Gordon claims we're obsessed with celebrity ("Fabulous lives of misery and lumps," Jan. 21). What we're really obsessed with is economic growth, and no one seems to question this premise.

LOUISE CÔTÉ, Ottawa



January 25, 2007

Cell policy on hold

Ontario teachers vexed by lack of provincewide cellphone policy for students

By LAURA CZEKAJ, OTTAWA SUN

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level if it gets that far."



Cellphones with cameras, MP3 players growing headache for Canada's teachers

Wed Jan 24, 5:10 PM

By Chinta Puxley

TORONTO (CP) - They play music, receive e-mail, access the Internet - and are wreaking such havoc in classrooms across Canada that some frustrated teachers and administrators are calling on school boards and governments for a crackdown on cellphones in school.

For many students, cellphones are a must-have accessory. Teachers, however, consider them a menace that not only disrupt class by ringing all the time, but also pose serious privacy concerns and make it far too easy for students to cheat on exams.

"Every year there is some new advancement of the technology that we have to deal with," said Irene Lanzinger, vice-president of the B.C. Teachers Federation.

"It's amazing how much change we've seen over the last 10 years in what kids have and what they bring to a classroom. Five or 10 years ago, you weren't taking pictures or videos with your cellphone."

Some say it's up to the teachers themselves to maintain order. But the increasing prevalence of modern technology in class has Ontario teachers pleading with school boards and the provincial government for help keeping the peace in class.

"It's increasingly becoming an issue for teachers," said Rhonda Kimberley-Young, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

"If it falls down to well over 100,000 teachers individually across this province to deal with it, I don't think it's unreasonable for direction to be given to them as professionals. It shouldn't be left to (their) discretion."

Modern cellphones, with features that allow users to take photos or shoot video, raise grave concerns about privacy, since candid snapshots and video clips can easily be posted to the Internet or e-mailed to others.

Text messaging and access to the Internet also make it easier for students to cheat while ringtones are evolving into long ballads which disrupt an entire classroom - especially if the student answers the phone.

Teachers are routinely pressured by students and parents alike who don't want cellphones left in school lockers for safety reasons, Kimberley-Young said. But teachers shouldn't be trying to stem the tide of modern technology without some formal guidance, she added.

"They can be a distraction to learning," Kimberley-Young said. "But there are all kinds of issues raised around cellphones in classrooms that extend beyond a distraction."

Toronto District School Board trustee Josh Matlow is calling for a board-wide ban on cellphone use in schools, but the Ontario government isn't interested in setting a provincewide policy, said Education Minister Kathleen Wynne.

Teens shouldn't be allowed to have their cellphones on in class, but it's up to school boards and teachers to deal with the problem, Wynne said Wednesday.

"A classroom management strategy would probably be for kids not to have their cellphones on," she said. "That's my opinion. But it's a local issue and I'm sure teachers and school principals will work that out."

Phones are even creeping into In Nova Scotia's junior high schools, said Mary-Lou Donnelly, the president of the province's teachers' union. While the provincial government hasn't stepped in, Donnelly said schools have handled the problem well on their own.

A provincial or board-wide policy may not be a good fit for every school or classroom, she said.

"Schools have dealt with it like schools deal with dress codes," Donnelly said. A cellphone ban might be appropriate for an urban school with 1,000 kids, but less so for a smaller, rural one, she added.

But pressure to deal with the issue is rising at Ontario school boards. Matlow said he plans to raise the issue of a board-wide cellphone policy at the board's next meeting later this month.

Indeed, Rick Johnson, president of the Ontario Public School Boards Association, acknowledged that the use of cellphones is so widespread boards may soon have no choice but to develop a formal policy.

"In an exam situation, kids could be texting answers back and forth," Johnson said. "It raises cheating to a new level if it gets that far."

Still some say there are more pressing issues in modern classrooms than annoying ringtones. Annie Kidder of the Ontario parent's group People for Education said there are always going to be gadgets and gizmos that distract students from their schoolwork.

Decisions about whether to confiscate cellphones are better left to individual teachers than provincial policy works, Kidder said.

"I think most teachers tell their students they can't be on their phone or text messaging people in class," she said.

"There's a lot of need for a lot of on-high policies, (but) I'm not sure that's one of them."

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Citizen 25 Jan 07

We say 'don't,' but they do

Our response to dealing with teenagers and Internet pornography has to go beyond simply banning 'adult content' on school computers

BY CALVIN WHITE

We were doing a short unit on how the media can influence us, so I curiously asked my Grade 8 English class how many had viewed explicit pornography either on video or on the Internet. I was astounded as the hands shot upward. One of the girls came from a devout Christian family. The beaming faces of three-quarters of these 12- and 13-year-olds were announcing how our social realities have changed.

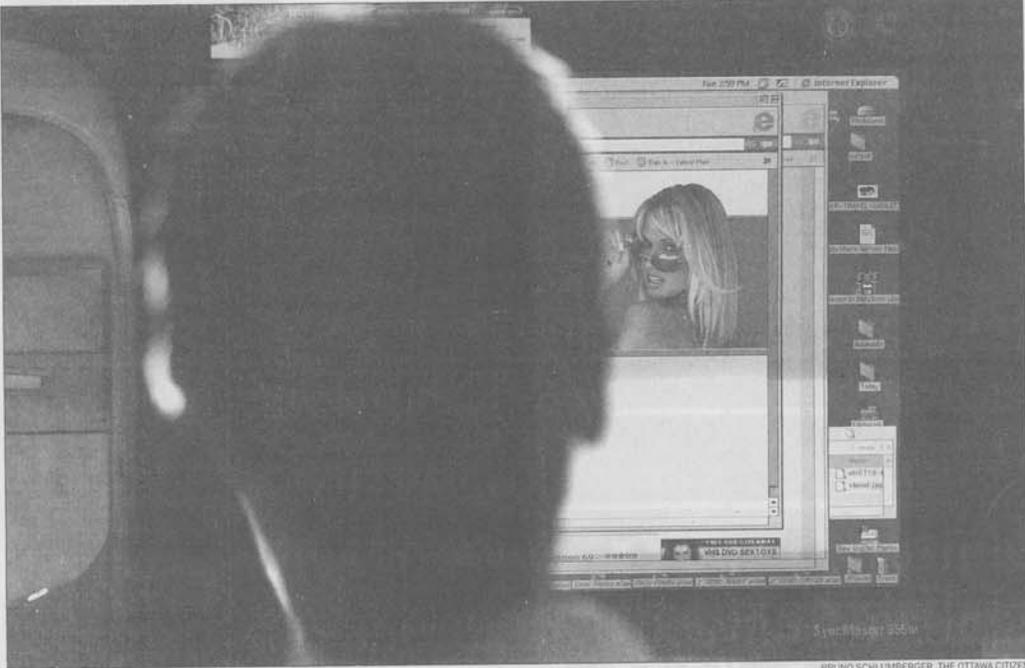
This took place five years ago. Now their cellphones can access the Internet. So much for the crossed-fingers suggestion that "knowing what your kids are accessing" will ensure parental guidance. This is an age in which ever-developing technology is our addiction and, thus, it truly rules. Of course, we never could really monitor our kids since they likely have friends who aren't monitored because their parents either don't care or think freedom to develop is a higher priority than "censorship."

And pornography on the Internet has moved on. What was once basically the explicit depiction of sexual acts has become tailored to as many persuasions and possibilities as an entrepreneur's imagination can create. Sixty years ago, mainstream society's children got their sexual illumination from bare breasts in *National Geographic*. Then *Playboy* gave us the same bare breasts plus bare bums. Next, *Penthouse* brought exquisite colour to pubic areas. When the Internet arrived, economics meant any propriety or restraints disappeared. There was money to be made.

Our children are forming presumptions, expectations and understandings of sexuality. If the imagery and energy of pornography, with all its graphic superficiality, invades that development, how can they not have difficulties in their relationships?

The current situation is one in which a dominant theme in Internet pornography is teenagers. The younger looking the better. The other theme, as indicated earlier, is that everything goes.

In my role as school counsellor, I had a 16-year-old girl see me who had been harbouring a secret for years. It was causing her tremendous anguish. This was a child who was often left home by herself. Just around puberty, she blundered onto a fetish site. At her stage of development the imagery was psychologically invasive. Ever



BRUNO SCHLIMBERGER, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Just as schools have active anti-drug information programs to educate and protect students, so too they should begin teaching about Internet pornography: that it is a manipulative, exploitive product that does not at all reflect healthy sexual intimacy.

since, she periodically ventured to that site and engaged in masturbation. She also was a Christian, and so she felt a high degree of shame and self-loathing. Her life had become a mess.

It's time our schools started taking Internet pornography seriously. The current practice is to post rules that prohibit accessing any "adult" sites on school computers. That's it. There is no education or explanation about why they should not be accessed. It's a variation of the Nancy Reagan perspective — "Just say no."

But our kids are intelligent and they need more than that — otherwise, pornography merely falls into place alongside alcohol and drugs as an adult pleasure to be indulged in secretly until old enough to do it more freely.

Just as smart schools teach about drugs — showing videos, bringing in speakers, promoting discussion and debate, and distributing literature — it is time to recognize pornography as a serious threat to the well-being of our children and the quality of their future lives. We need to teach about it.

We need to start by telling them that pornography has nothing to do with sex. We need to tell them

it's about money — it only exists to develop appetites, foster consumption and make profits for the producers. We need to tell them that those producers are intent on manipulating and exploiting their minds and will create whatever weird scenarios they can think of in order to suck them in.

We need to educate our children about the dishonesty and falseness of the sexual activity they see on the Internet. They do not understand that what they view is not genuine intimacy, it is not how humans share and explore themselves. The people they see are actors, almost always exploited, often hurting, often carrying deep secrets of past abuse and shame. They do not know this because the rush and forbiddenness of seeing pornography creates a psychological barrier to intellectual analysis — or at least impedes it.

We need to teach them that real sexual intimacy is just that — intimacy — and it's filled with shifting emotions, with respect, with risk and with wonder.

That's why pornography is so dangerous for developing psyches. Our children are forming presumptions, expectations, and understandings of sexuality. If the imagery and energy of pornogra-

phy, with all its graphic superficiality, invades that development, how can they not have difficulties in their relationships? Pornography undermines the concept of respect, of awareness, of other's feelings, of responsibility, of the sanctity of potential birth. Instead it shoves into the developing mind the normalization of every imaginable extreme and the notion that self-gratification is everything.

There is no opportunity for making sense of any of it. We tell them "don't," but they do. And then there is no dialogue, no wrestling with the scenes and images they've bathed themselves in. Each kid is alone with the extent to which they've indulged in pornography. We have given them an inadequate compass and then we close our eyes and deny that they need help to find their way.

We know that pornography can be addictive, yet we joke about it incessantly throughout our culture. It's laughed about in sitcoms and even on the Academy Awards show. It's joked about by teachers, musicians, politicians and parents. No message comes to kids that it can be dangerous to them, that it can shape them without their realizing it, and that it dehumanizes them and those they see on the screen.

This is not a moral issue and it should not be dismissed or promoted as such. It's all about taking mature educational responsibility and equipping our kids to make sense of the world we thrust them into. It's about giving them better chances of developing their own true sexualities, with some chance to deal with an uncontrollable and predatory marketplace.

CALVIN WHITE is a high-school counsellor, teacher and freelance writer in Salmon Arm, British Columbia.

SUBMISSIONS

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E-mail: dwatson@thecitizen.canwest.com



ARCHIVES Le Droit

Le recteur de l'université du Québec en Outaouais, Jean Vaillancourt, ne demande pas le dégel des frais de scolarité; en revanche, il a plaidé, hier devant la Commission de l'éducation de l'Assemblée nationale, pour obtenir un meilleur financement de la part du gouvernement.

Dégel des frais de scolarité: le recteur de l'UQO reste muet

Le Droit

Contrairement aux universités McGill, Laval et Concordia, le recteur de l'Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO), Jean Vaillancourt, s'est bien retenu de demander le dégel des frais de scolarité, hier, devant la Commission de l'éducation de l'Assemblée nationale, à Québec.

Cela ne l'a cependant pas empêché de faire un vibrant plaidoyer pour obtenir un meilleur financement de la part du gouvernement.

«Ne pas le faire — accorder un meilleur financement — serait nous demander de cesser d'avancer et de se retirer du développement vital de toute une collectivité», a lancé le recteur devant les membres de la commission.

À plusieurs reprises, la commission a tenté de faire dire à M. Vaillancourt qu'il était en faveur d'un dégel des frais de scolarité au Québec. Ce dernier a répondu que c'est une décision qui revient à l'Assemblée nationale. «La notion d'accessibilité aux études est très importante pour nous et avant de poser un tel geste je crois qu'il faut en mesurer toutes les conséquences sur l'accessibilité», a ajouté le recteur Vaillancourt.

Il a indiqué que la question était prématurée tant qu'une analyse des impacts du dégel des frais de scolarité sur l'accessibilité n'aura pas été faite. «Le réseau des universités du Québec s'était prononcé fermement en faveur du maintien du gel des frais de scolarité en 2004 et à ma connaissance, cette position n'a

pas été modifiée depuis, a affirmé M. Vaillancourt en entrevue avec *Le Droit*.

Le président du réseau UQ sera devant la commission la semaine prochaine et il sera possible de l'entendre à nouveau sur cette question.»

Il manque toujours 375 millions \$ pour un financement adéquat de l'éducation supérieure au Québec, a rappelé M. Vaillancourt en commission. Selon lui les revenus combinés de la formule de subvention des universités mis en place par Québec et la tarification exigée aux étudiants pour les frais de scolarité sont inférieurs aux autres provinces. «Le choix des vases communicants, c'est un choix qui relève de l'Assemblée nationale», a-t-il ajouté.

Le recteur a toutefois admis que les faibles frais de scolarité exigés par les universités au Québec, par rapport à ses voisines ontariennes, étaient un incitatif qui permettait à l'UQO d'attirer et retenir des étudiants sur la rive québécoise de la rivière des Outaouais. En ce sens, une augmentation des frais de scolarité pourrait avoir un impact négatif sur la fréquentation de l'UQO à cause des universités ontariennes dont la carte des programmes est plus riche.

«INCONCEVABLE»

Jean Vaillancourt a mentionné à quel point l'Outaouais était en mauvaise posture par rapport aux autres régions du Québec comptant une université. «Il demeure inconcevable que le nombre de professeurs-cher-

cheurs par 10 000 habitants en Outaouais soit le plus bas de toutes les régions du Québec comptant une université, a-t-il lancé. Il est aussi difficile de croire que l'offre de programmes universitaires dans l'Outaouais est de loin la plus dépourvue de toutes les régions du Québec.»

L'UQO accuse une dette qui atteindra 10 millions \$ cette année. Son déficit pour l'année 2006-2007 devrait atteindre 1,3 million \$, a fait savoir M. Vaillancourt à la commission. Selon lui, le retour à l'équilibre budgétaire, même avec tous les efforts mis de l'avant par l'université pour y arriver «demeure une illusion», sans une augmentation du financement de base de l'établissement.

M. Vaillancourt a expliqué comment la croissance démographique de l'Outaouais, l'une des plus fortes au Québec, mettait de la pression sur son établissement.

Le recteur de l'UQO a indiqué que plus de 3000 étudiants de l'Outaouais s'inscrivent chaque année dans des universités ontariennes, soit près de 60 % des étudiants de niveau universitaire de la rive québécoise de la région.

«À moyen et long terme, les conséquences d'un tel exode vers la rive ontarienne sont dramatiques pour la région et le Québec, a affirmé M. Vaillancourt. L'étudiant développe ainsi un réseau professionnel à l'extérieur de la région et intègre le marché de l'emploi ontarien et développe l'économie de nos voisins.»

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