

# NEWSLETTER

No. 14, Spring 2005

## Prof Goes to Afghanistan



**Ron Wheeler** was one of 10 Canadians invited by the Department of National Defense to spend time with the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan in December 2004. Camp Julien, near Kabul, houses the Canadian Forces attached to ISAF (the International Security Assistance Force) that defends the Afghan government and assists with the reconstruction of Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11 and the collapse of the Taliban. Canada plays a principal role in ISAF, patrolling inside and outside Kabul and helping to train the new Afghan National Army.

The following are excerpts from informal notes Professor Wheeler made regarding Afghanistan and his visit to Camp Julien:

“Afghanistan is a country of many contrasts. It has beautiful and majestic mountains and a proud people with a long and distinguished history. At the same time, it is the poorest country in Asia and roughly sixty percent of the population is without work. The only valuable cash crop is opium. Most of Kabul shows the effects of Soviet bombing during the 1980s and American bombing in 2002. Many people live in bombed out buildings with pieces of wood, plastic, cardboard or metal used to make temporary shelters or roofs for what is left of a small building. Health conditions in Afghanistan are also among the worst in the world. Life expectancy is about 42 years and Afghanistan ranks third in the world in infant and maternal mortality. Diseases such as hepatitis, rabies, TB, malaria, meningitis, tetanus, and diphtheria patrol the country along with foreign troops.

Kabul and surrounding areas are also subject to violence from Taliban forces, al Qaeda, warlord armies and even organized crime, especially connected with the opium trade. Taliban (and perhaps al Qaeda) operatives maintain

surveillance on Camp Julien. This is one reason no-one is allowed to leave the camp except in armored vehicles and accompanied by armed soldiers. Aircraft are not safe flying over Afghanistan either. When Canada sends a Hercules transport aircraft in or out of Kabul, its pilots vary their routes and fly evasive maneuvers to make the aircraft less vulnerable to ground fire.

Camp Julien houses the roughly 700 Canadian troops and the support staff that are committed to ISAF. It is an impressive camp that may become the standard for NATO. The living quarters are heated and the food is excellent. It has a well-equipped hospital, post office, an internet café, and even a gymnasium! Camp Julien also has a deep well where it obtains its own water which it purifies and bottles right in the camp. It is almost a city within canvas tents! It is well defended from attack, with barricades and bunkers everywhere, well designed entry points, and continually manned outposts in strategic locations. However, military dangers surface regularly and unpredictably. For example, a large arms cache for a presumed attack on Camp Julien was discovered one evening while I was there. On another occasion, a local citizen turned in a 65 kilo explosive device that the Taliban asked him to keep in his apartment for 24 hours that presumably was intended for use during the Karzai inauguration which took place while I was there.

The authority of the Karzai Government doesn't appear to extend very far. Karzai has been called the “Mayor of Kabul” because, despite the national-wide presidential elections that were held last year, his government controls very little of the country and even that requires the help of foreign troops. Most of Afghanistan remains in the hands of traditional authorities, warlords, drug dealers and even the Taliban. No-one knows if the Karzai Government will be able to unify the country or to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of the people of Afghanistan, particularly outside the cities, but ISAF is there to guarantee a period of safety within which the central government can seek to transform the state and its power within it.

The American forces excel at attacking their enemies, whoever they are. But from Vietnam to Afghanistan to Iraq, their plan always seems to be to hunt down the enemy, pacify the area, and then move on. The Canadian Forces want to make a difference in Afghanistan. They want to leave a better Afghanistan behind and are prepared to do the hard work with local citizens to make this happen – whether they are assisting non-governmental agencies to help in the countryside, working with CIDA on development projects, or meetings with tribal leaders by Cimic (Civil Military Cooperation) teams. Their sensitivity to the people's plight, to their religion, and to their traditional ways is what impressed me the most. I was taken by their spirit, their morale and their

sensitivity to the importance, not just of guns and ammunition, but of people-to-people relations.

The Canadian Forces perceive themselves as ambassadors for Canada. As one soldier told me, whatever else happens in Afghanistan, the Canadian Forces can at least show its people what our values are and how we operate – or, as he put it, “what we are made of.” They also know, as I was told many times, that Afghanistan’s future ultimately depends on what is in the minds and hearts of the people. Perhaps it is the children who will matter the most. What do they think? What goes through the heads of the children who play beside the open sewage, run from one bombed out building to another playing games, or who try to sell scorpions and local cigarettes to patrolling soldiers? I don’t know. But I do know this – if they find a future filled with fear and hate, it won’t be because of the way our soldiers have acted in their country.”

## Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program



Interns -- Left to right: Kevin Chernoff, Kyle Toffan, Alyssa Peel, Rhiannon Stromberg, and Ken Pontikes (Program Director)

Candidates for the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship program were selected last summer from applications submitted by senior students or recent graduates at the University of Saskatchewan. The selection committee included two former speakers of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly and a former intern. (This is the fourth year of the program.)

The interns started their internship in Regina on January 10, 2005. They began with an intensive two-week orientation that involved meetings and briefings about the legislative structures and processes. They met with politicians, caucus staff, news media representatives, and legislative officers.

Following the orientation, they began a three-month assignment with a member from one side of the Legislative Assembly (excluding Cabinet Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition). Then, they were assigned to work, for another three months, with a member from the other side. The program concludes in July 2005.

For the first three-month period, the interns have been assigned as follows: Kevin Chernoff with Jason Dearborn (Opposition MLA, Kindersley); Alyssa Peel with Ted Merriman (Opposition MLA, Saskatoon Northwest); Rhiannon Stromberg with Doreen Hamilton (Government

MLA, Regina Wascana Plains; Kyle Toffan with Glenn Hagel (Government MLA, Moose Jaw North).

Assignments for the second three-month term have not been totally finalized.

The program also has an academic focus—since the internship program is a six-credit course within the Department of Political Studies' calendar (POLST 382.6). All interns are required to prepare a research paper on a topic related to the legislative processes or a public policy issue in Saskatchewan.

Ken Pontikes, Program Director

## STUDENT NEWS

**Gerelt Bayantur** (MA student) will present her research paper “Democratic Transition in Mongolia” to the Research Committee on Asian and Pacific Studies at the Midwest Political Science Association, which will hold its 2005 International Round Table Conference on “The New Dimension of Political Development and International Relations of Asia and the Pacific in the 21st Century” in Chicago, USA, during April 7-10, 2005.

**Jodi Blackwell** (BA '95) is Director of Research for the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce.

Former student **Kirk Eaton** (BA Pub Admin '02) writes: “I spent the summer in Ottawa working at the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) in the Results-Based Management Directorate and it was a tremendous experience. Positioned as it is at the strategic apex of the federal government, TBS is a great place to learn about the machinery of government. I got first-hand exposure to many of the issues we covered in the New Public Management and Partnerships classes. The readings for these classes proved to be invaluable resources, and I found myself consulting them on a regular basis.”

In January 2005 **Marla Minke** (BA '04) obtained employment with the Saskatoon and Region Home Builders' Association as a research assistant on local government issues.

As of January 2005 **Trevor Lynn** (MA '98) has been working for GPC Public Affairs as a senior consultant. GPC is one of Canada's largest full-service public affairs firms. He writes: “We offer client services in government relations, communications and opinion research. I will focus my time in the energy and natural resources practise serving the government relations needs of a wide range of companies.”

**Rhiannon Stromberg** (BA Hons '04) was recently awarded an Asset Scholarship worth \$1,000.

Congratulations to our Master's program graduate students who defended their theses in 2004. They are: **Sean Kochan, Jesse Semko, Stacey Smith Coleman, Nicole Pogue, Karla Radloff, Rachel Whidden and Cathy Nilson.**

## A U of S Classroom in the Tropics!

Winter 2005 is probably one of the harshest for those in Saskatchewan. But for the U of S students on the Guatemala Term Abroad, it has been one of the warmest. Based in Antigua, a city founded in 1543 by the Spaniards, and once the seat of power of their colonial government (until it was destroyed in an earthquake in 1776), students are able to enjoy the architectural glory of the colonial world as the city has

jealously guarded its ancient splendour over the centuries. Each day on their way to classes, students pass not by snow banks or ice patches, but numerous galleries, ruins,

monuments, cathedrals, monasteries and convents which grace the cobblestone streets of this city. On occasions, they have been greeted too by the rumble of earthquakes (albeit minor) and by the roar of the volcano Fuego (one of three which surround this city) whose ashes, lava and smoke are just enough to offer excitement without fear (and we hope it stays that way). Not surprisingly, Antigua been designated a UNESCO heritage site, to be preserved for future generations.



Students from Saskatchewan and Guelph (Term Abroad program) at one of the temples in Tikal

The beauty and wealth of Antigua, however, stands in stark contrast to the much harsher realities which prevail in the rest of Guatemala, realities which are the focus of much of our studies. The legacy of 36 years of civil war, the ongoing violence in the society, the tensions between the indigenous and the Ladino populations, the rampant corruption, the gaping divide between the rich and the poor, and the persistent underdevelopment, are some of the themes being studied. Learning occurs not only in the classroom where courses in Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Politics and Spanish are taught, but also through field trips and guest lectures. Amongst the places visited have been Tikal, located in the vast tropical jungles of the Peten, and the site of the ancient Mayan empire (the destruction of which is still a mystery, or at least a subject of debate). There they were able to climb the towering pyramids of the Maya and also to observe first hand the challenges of environmental degradation due to timber extraction, cattle ranching and the slash and burn farming techniques of the peasants. In the next few days, students will tour the tropical Lowlands and rainforests of the east by navigating the expansive Rio Dulce River which opens onto the Caribbean Sea. Cutting through massive sky-scraping cliffs from which hot springs flow and which serves as the habitat for many exotic birds and animals, the Rio Dulce offers a fascinating lesson on the environmental challenges which face the people of that region. Along the way students will stop at various NGO sites such as Casa Guatemala (which works with children) and Ak' Tenamit, a project devoted to addressing a variety of social concerns amongst the indigenous peoples such as health care and education.

Complementing the courses and field trips is a guest lecture series which was inaugurated by the Canadian Ambassador to Guatemala, James Lambert, and which allows students to hear from and interact with scholars, activists and NGO workers and others who are experts on the country and

the region. Many students are also trying to give back something to the community which has been hosting them by

becoming involved in volunteer activities—in schools and hospitals. Others will be participating in the Terry Fox Run hosted by the Canadian Embassy here in Guatemala.

When free time presents itself students enjoy independent travel to such places as Honduras and Belize; for some inexplicable reason most head to the beaches. During February, they have also been able to take advantage of one of the most spectacular International Cultural Festivals which runs for two weeks in Antigua. Performances in jazz, ballet, tango, opera, and theatre, by renowned artists are some of the world class events to which students are able to avail themselves for the cost of a movie admission in Canada.

Wouldn't it be nice if our winter semesters could always be spent in the tropics?

K. Deonandan

Coordinator, Guatemala Term Abroad, 2005

## UPCOMING PASS EVENTS

### The Annual Graduation Dinner

will be held:

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 at The Willows

6 p.m. Cocktails, 7 p.m. Dinner, 8 p.m. Program

Tickets are \$25/person, and can be purchased

from any PASS member in person or

e-mail: [pass.club@usask.ca](mailto:pass.club@usask.ca) or [ceb705@mail.usask.ca](mailto:ceb705@mail.usask.ca)

The Department would like to thank PASS for all their hard work this past year. We are proud of you all!

## MORE FACULTY NEWS

Gordon Barnhart (University of Saskatchewan Secretary) launched his new book titled *Saskatchewan Premiers of the Twentieth Century* on January 28, 2005 at McNally Robinson Booksellers. It is the third book in the 'Saskatchewan Lives Past and Present' series.

(continued next page)...

## POLITICAL STUDIES STUDENT ADVISING

Two group advising sessions will be scheduled for mid-March. Advising will be available for all Political Studies, Public Administration and Aboriginal Public Administration Students.

Any student who wants to take a 4th year POLST course **must** attend an advising session and **submit a seminar request form** (IS and STM students included.)

Session dates and times will be announced in all POLST classes and on posters in the Arts building.

## FACULTY NEWS (continued)

**Joe Garcea** will be making a presentation to the Saskatchewan Institute on Public Policy (SIPP) on Saskatchewan's efforts to increase immigration to the province. Professor Garcea's presentation will be televised and telecast on Access television. The focus of his presentation will be on the obstacles to effective provincial management of immigration with a special focus on what he terms the "implementation deficit."

Professor Garcea has also been invited to make a presentation to the National Conference on Homelessness to be held in Toronto in May 2005. The presentation will be based on a report that he wrote for the Bridges and Foundations Housing project on the value and viability of creating residential urban reserves for providing adequate and affordable housing for Aboriginals with and without core housing needs in Saskatoon.

Joe Garcea has been appointed to serve on the Métis Electoral Consultation Panel which is mandated to consult with the Metis community on their views regarding the existing electoral system and their ideas for reforming it. The Panel will conduct hearings and produce a final report that will be released within the next few months.

As was recently reported in *On Campus News* "**Bohdan Kordan**, founding director of the Prairie Center for the Study of Ukrainian Heritage and a professor of political studies at St. Thomas More College, was awarded the Commemorative Medal for the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II November 19 last year. The award goes to Canadians who have made significant contributions to their community and Canada." Writing on the Orange Revolution in Ukraine Professor Kordan's analysis appeared in the *World Peace Herald* (January, 2005) as "History and Democracy in Ukraine."

**Hans Michelmann** has been re-elected for a second term to the Board of the Canadian Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

**David O'Brien** has a forthcoming publication entitled "University-Government Policy Linkages and the Knowledge-based Approach to International Development", *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*.

**Greg Poelzer** attended the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Symposium in November, in Reykjavik, Iceland, and will be traveling to Moscow, Russia in mid-February as part of a working group funded by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to develop curriculum on Canadian/Russian Northern municipal governance. Some recent publications are: Gary Wilson and Greg Poelzer, "Still Forgotten?: The Politics and Communities of the Provincial Norths," *Northern Review*, 25/26: 11-16. (forthcoming); Tracy Summerville and Greg Poelzer, "The Tailings of Canadian Politics: The North-South Divide," *Northern Review*, 25/26: 108-124 (forthcoming).

**Roy Romanow** has been very active. In November 2004 he gave a paper on Patriation of the Constitution and was a panellist at the "Symposium Honouring the Late Mr. Justice

Kenneth M. Lysyk," at the University of British Columbia. In January 2005 he provided the opening and closing

remarks at a seminar entitled "*The Heavy Hand of History: An Analysis 100 Years in the Making*" organized by the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy (SIPP) at the University Regina. In February 2005 he was a panellist and participant at a forum entitled, "The Private Role in the Public Interest," Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs Leadership Forum, held at Carleton University.



### Aboriginal Public Administration Students' Society (APASS)

will be holding an inaugural meeting for prospective members. All students are welcome and encouraged to attend. If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact: Jordan Wapass at [jordan\\_wapass@hotmail.com](mailto:jordan_wapass@hotmail.com) or Drew Lafond at [drew\\_lafond@hotmail.com](mailto:drew_lafond@hotmail.com)

## Department of Political Studies

### University of Saskatchewan

919 Arts Building - 9 Campus Drive  
Saskatoon, Sask. Canada S7N 5A5

Telephone: (306) 966-5208 Fax: (306) 966-5250

Web: <http://www.usask.ca/politic/>

e-mail: [political.studies@usask.ca](mailto:political.studies@usask.ca)

#### Important Contacts:

Department Head: D.C. Story (966-5224)

Graduate Studies: J. S. Steeves (966-5234)

Undergraduate Studies: R. Wheeler (966-5226)

Public Administration: A. Hunter (966-5506)

Aboriginal Public Administration: A. Hunter (966-5506)

Newsletter Editor: Geoff Kennedy (966-2913)

Newsletter compilation & design: Lorrie Burlingham

**Look for the next issue of this Newsletter in the Fall of 2005.**

**All former students, we want to know what you're up to! Please submit your news to: [political.studies@usask.ca](mailto:political.studies@usask.ca)**

**Good luck with finals, and we hope you have a great summer!**

