

NEWS

News Notes

Aliant Strike Finally Ends

The Union representing Aliant workers has voted to accept an agreement with the company and end an ugly 5 month long strike. This month many students have experienced long delays in having phone, cable and internet service installed, not only with Aliant, but also with the company's rival, EastLink Communications, which experienced skyrocketing business.

Polls Wildly Inconsistent in US Election

US President George Bush received a jolt of support earlier this month as the Republican Convention resulted in Bush gaining momentum and forging slightly ahead of John Kerry, the presidential nominee for the Democrats. Yet how far ahead Bush is depends on the poll you read. A recent Gallop poll has him ahead by 13 percentage points with a Pews Associates poll putting Bush very close to even with Kerry. With such wildly different poll results, it is difficult to make any sound conclusion and it appears the race for President will go down to the wire.

Horrific Hurricane Season a Sign of Things to Come

By Nick Stewart
News Editor

In the past month and a half, the Atlantic coastline has witnessed the worst hurricane season in recent memory. Over the late summer, Hurricanes Charlie and Francis proved to be two of the most powerful hurricanes on record. Hurricane Ivan ravaged the Caribbean as well as Alabama and Florida just over a week ago and has been credited with well over one hundred deaths. Last week, four days after Hurricane Jeanne passed Haiti, floods caused by the storm killed close to 700 people. Humanitarian crises have been triggered throughout the Caribbean, in the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Grenada and Haiti. Damage caused by hurricanes in the last 45 days is in the tens of billions of dollars.

The amount of devastation caused by hurricanes this year is more than usual, but scientists warn that if global warming does not stop, the increased intensity of these viscous storms will become the norm.

Jose Etcheverry, a research analyst in the Climate Change Program of the David Suzuki Foundation, was guarded against declaring this year's nasty hurricane season a direct effect of global warming but suggested the last two months are "a synopsis of what the future holds if greenhouse gas emissions are not reduced."

"We should consider this summer a call for action and take proper warning," he added, warning that the expectation of the scientific community is that the severity of hurricanes will increase as their studies indicate the water temperature will rise.

Warm waters provide the key ingredient for hurricanes to gain intensity. If the water temperature rises as Etcheverry predicts, hurricanes will become more intense and there will also be increases in the period of time hurricanes can keep their intensity. In general, global warming is expected to produce longer, more powerful hurricanes.

Local Implications

The consequences will not be limited to the southeastern US and Caribbean. Maritimers may have to get used to seeing more hurricanes in the future. Just last year, the people in the Maritimes were shocked as they were actually hit by a full-fledged Category 2 hurricane which resulted in 8 deaths. Juan may not have been a fluke, but instead a sign of things to come.

"Warmer water means that hurricanes will be able to maintain their strength further North," explains Dr. Brian Wagner, the Chair of the UPEI Chemistry Department. He added that it is possible that the Maritimes could (cont.)



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