

X MARKS THE SPOT

a report on off-campus news

by Andrew MacPherson

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

The provincial election is now in full swing with all the hype and posturing that goes along with it. Signs and placards have sprung almost spontaneously from the ground along the island's highways and biways. So far it would appear that Premier Calbeck has a massive lead over her two opponents. Despite her lackluster appearances on television and radio she seems to have captured the minds of Islanders. What this means, however, is that we will see even less of her for the remainder of the campaign. Ms. Mella and Mr. Duchesne on the other hand have been appearing everywhere and actually announcing some new ideas and outlining their respective policies. Mella appeared in Winsloe at the first of her so-called town hall meetings. These meetings are styled after TV talk shows, a format made politically popular by Bill Clinton's presidential campaign. Given the high probability of Ms. Callbeck's victory I believe it would be insightful to see her participate in this style of a debate. It would help ease my mind that she is more than simply an audio visual. The Tories have brought another less welcome American characteristic to this political contest in the form of negative advertising. While Pat Mella goes across the Island making a strong effort of explaining her policies the P.C. advertising team has decided that it would be prudent to make radio ads that simply dwell on the shortcomings of the Liberal government. While the ads are probably accurate, one would hope that Canadian politics could stay out of the pigen in which American politics is mired.

THE UNFIXED LINK

One of the more important issues surrounding the future of Prince Edward Island was debated at Federal Court in Toronto last week. Arguments were heard from those opposing the link

and threats were heard from those in favor of it. An anti-link group challenged the federal government on the issue of the environmental assessment of the proposed project. Strait Crossing Inc. (SCI), the company which has been awarded the contract to build the bridge from Borden to Cape Tormentine, has threatened that any delays could mean the death of the project. As well, federal environment minister, Jean Charest, has said that the project could proceed even while an environmental assessment takes place. The judge's ruling on the court case is expected by the end of this month. One must be a little suspicious of SCI for their unwillingness to compromise on the environmental question. This the same company that got into trouble for building the Old Man River Dam in Alberta, a project that was halted by the Supreme Court because of the damage it threatened to do to the environment. It is a good thing that Islanders have learned to be patient about talk of a fixed link because the closer we get to it, the further it is pushed away.

BREAKTHROUGH ON BOMBING

While there is no way to make up for the lives lost in the bombing of the World Trade Centre, it is encouraging that the FBI has been able to make a breakthrough on their investigation of this act of terrorism. Last week they apprehended Mohammed Salameh of Jersey City, New Jersey. Salameh is believed to be a member of a Muslim Fundamentalist group responsible for the slaying of former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, among others. Authorities were pleasantly surprised by the early progress they were able to make on the case. Mr. Salameh was arrested when he returned to the car rental agency from which he rented a large van in his own name. The van is believed to have carried the dynamite which subsequently killed 5 people and put the centre out of commission for over a week. The FBI says that there will be more arrests in the near future.

A TEXAS STANDOFF

Another week has passed and David Koresh, the leader of the Banch Davidian cult, is still holed up inside the cult's compound. The compound is located near Waco, Texas, and covers an area of 31 hectares. The cult has very radical Christian beliefs, maintaining that Mr. Koresh is really Jesus Christ. They are heavily armed, to such an extent that in an armed standoff with authorities the cult managed to simply outgun their adversaries. In the process 4 FBI agents and 10 cult members were killed. Since then the cult has released 20 children and 2 adults and has been in almost constant negotiation with the FBI and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. It seemed the standoff had come to an end when Koresh said he would surrender if a videotape explaining his group's ideological beliefs were played on national television. Unfortunately, he did not live up to his end of the bargain. Mr. Koresh says he is now waiting for a sign from God that he should surrender. It has been reported that numerous members of the cult want to surrender but Koresh will not let them. The FBI says that the group has enough food on the compound to last them for several months.

BANNING BEN, AGAIN

Ben Johnson was banned from competing in World Track and Field meets for life for having tested positive for using performance enhancing drugs. This was Johnson's second positive steroid test, the first having come in 1988 at the Summer Olympics in Seoul. His original positive test shocked and dismayed Canadians, who believed they had the fastest man in the world. After his two year banishment, Johnson returned to the track in 1990 and turned in several lackluster performances. This permanent black eye on Canadian athletics prompted a federal inquiry into the problem. After all of that embarrassment one would have thought that