

IN BRIEF

Student aboriginal group to ban alcohol

WINNIPEG (CUP) – The University of Winnipeg's Aboriginal Student Council recently took the first step in an effort to ban all alcohol-related events supported by their group.

Tasha Spillett, the council's culture and sport representative, proposed a motion to ban the ASC's year-end social and as well as a referendum question banning alcohol at all group-sponsored events. It will be voted on at the group's annual general meeting in October.

New website helps students cram

MONTREAL (CUP) – A new note-sharing website is hoping to create an online academic community that will provide students with accurate information on courses, exam notes, and tutoring services.

UniversityJunction.com is a free site created by a group of recent McGill University graduates who were frustrated by their undergraduate learning environment.

"[We] found that the professor didn't explain the concepts as well as they could or [students] just didn't have enough information to learn the material," said Liz Mitchell, the site's communications director.

With files from the Canadian University Press

Debate on 'Net neutrality lags in Canada

By David Bell - The Martlet (University of Victoria)

VICTORIA (CUP) – Canada's Internet is under attack and it's up to us to stop it, says Steve Anderson, co-founder and co-ordinator of SaveOurNet.ca.

The website is a coalition of citizens, businesses, and public interest groups who are calling on Ottawa to stop large telecommunication companies from violating the principle of an open Internet.

Until recently, Canada's Internet has been a level playing field – a place where innovation and new ideas are expressed and encouraged – but that stands to change, warns Anderson.

According to media democracy advocates like Anderson, a handful of companies are threatening the way Canadians can access the web.

"It is a first step in the companies taking control of how the Internet works," said Anderson. "It's the [Inter-

net Service Providers] being able to decide online winners and losers.

"The ISPs want to create a slow lane that is throttled and a special fast lane they can charge companies extra access to use. This could be very lucrative for them, but it would also kill online innovation, as companies would have to have large sums of money just to get on the fast lane Internet to reach people."

Anderson says under this scenario, there will be no next Google or Facebook. The medium will be much more controlled, like cable TV.

This isn't a new issue. Although the term 'Net neutrality' was coined only recently, there have been supporters for a free 'Net since the early 2000s.

Anderson says the issue first became clear in Canada in February 2008, when it was revealed that Bell Canada was slowing access to a BitTorrent that the CBC was using to distribute its hit show,

Canada's Next Great Prime Minister.

Anderson says it would take hours, sometimes days, for people to access the show.

The debate isn't constricted to Canada alone. Countries around the world are tackling this issue.

The threat to 'Net neutrality was first raised in the U.S., and the debate is most advanced there.

Bills have been introduced in the House and Senate, and President Barack Obama has come out publicly in support of neutrality.

In China, where the governing Communist Party has long tried to manipulate the flow of information, many forms of online expression are significantly stifled.

The Chinese government uses sophisticated methods to limit online content, including a combination of legal regulation, surveillance, and punishment to promote self-censorship.

This is especially true for anyone who speaks against the Party.

Canada has seen little government debate compared to the U.S., but the issue is still heated and has the potential to go either way.

"[The] worst case scenario," said Anderson, "[would be] the ISPs get control of the Internet, innovation grinds to a halt, online media starts looking a lot more like the selection you have on TV or your cell phone, [and] new media and technology companies close up shop and move to the U.S. where the open Internet is still available."

Anderson's depiction of a best-case scenario is a little less grim.

In an ideal future, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission will uphold the principles of 'Net neutrality in an upcoming July hearing.

Either that, or the government creates a 'Net neutrality law.

Anderson says the most important thing people can do right now is to send our opinions directly to the CRTC.

Severe temperatures could harm Rye students

By Drew Penner -

The Eyeopener (Ryerson University)

TORONTO (CUP) – Extreme temperatures are putting Ryerson students' health at risk, says Toronto's medical officer of health.

A senior technical officer with Ryerson's engineering department, Dan Peneff, says temperatures in some rooms of the Monetary Times residence building at Toronto's

Ryerson University have been as high as 33 Celsius. Last year he remembers the air conditioning system shutting down.

"I know in my office there were times it was hovering around 28 degrees," said Peneff. "It's a mechanical system. It needs maintenance."

David McKeown, Toronto's medical officer of health, says vulnerable individuals are put at risk when temperature rises over 32 C. The city

requires landlords to keep rental units above 21 C in the winter and below 26 C in the summer if an air conditioning unit is installed.

Arts and contemporary studies student Sarah El-Shaarawi can recite the different temperatures of the library's floors like a Ryerson tour guide. While the eighth floor may be cold, the fourth is just too hot.

"I find from floor to floor it varies," she said. "I don't think it's that healthy for stu-

dents."

Anthony Sangra, a first-year business student, says he spent the winter in Pitman Hall residence and was sick for an entire month because of freezing temperatures.

A pipefitter and plumber from Alberta, Sangra took matters into his own hands, fixing his sink himself and investigating the cause of poor airflow.

"They need to set aside a lot of money to fix this," Sangra said. "It's so old."