

# THE PPA *LITICUS*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RYERSON POLITICS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ALUMNI

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

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## WELCOMING NEW MA STUDENTS: KYLE RAE SPEAKS HIS MIND

The orientation for MA students took place in the famed Arts and Letters Club in mid-September. This year's welcoming invocation was made by Mr. Kyle Rae, the city councillor for Ward 27 which includes Ryerson University.

Born and raised in Toronto, Rae graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Brock University then received a Master of Library Science Degree from the University of Toronto. He pursued his passion for History at the University of Birmingham. He was half-way through his Ph.D. when he returned to Toronto and was made executive director of the 519 Community Centre (at 519 Church Street). He was elected to Toronto city council in 1991. Kyle Rae's politics have been coloured in many shades. He has campaigned as a member of the NDP, and has walked away from the party, largely because of its failure to legislate gay rights in the 1990s. He has supported independents such as John Sewell and Liberals such as Bill Graham and ... Bob Rae (no relation). Gay rights

have been a central plank in his platform, but students, staff, alumni and faculty discovered that there was a whole lot more on Kyle Rae's mind!

The Toronto Councillor was just back from a long holiday in Spain, where he indulged his love of medieval architecture and photography. A student of public administration, he has developed a critical appreciation of how European cities and municipalities are managed. His understandings of how many European cities are developing eco-friendly policies, stubbornly pursuing their mass transit plans and organizing their planning to both protect the built heritage and encourage development, brought Toronto's experience in sharp contrast.

His message in September was eloquent and jarring. He argued that the public

service was too conservative and often an impediment to change. He contended that the government apparatus was not sufficiently aware of what is happening elsewhere and not sufficiently open to new, creative ways of resolving problems. Noting that he was aware of the difficulties and frustrations of working with an often fractious city council such as the one in Toronto, he passionately spoke of his wish for a bureaucracy that was fertile with ideas, new approaches and impatient for getting things done right.



Rae's message was not lost on the audience. "His points, I think, resonate with all of us who have studied the evolution of Toronto," said Neil Thomlinson, the Chair of the Department and himself a longtime student of municipal government. "Students might have been a little surprised by Rae's tone and impressions this afternoon, but it is

### THE THIRD ANNUAL ALUMNI SPEED NETWORKING EVENT

25 February!

(Details soon)



ALL ALUMNI WELCOME

important to understand that a big part public administration and policy work is in fact having to work with politicians, and very often, politicians get impatient with the advice they receive. Kyle Rae reminded us today that this work can be demanding and difficult. It's also what makes it uniquely challenging and rewarding."

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## “POSTCARD FROM THE FIELD” : WILL SNOWBALL

After graduating from the PPA program in the fall of 2008, I was eager to put my new degree to work and at the same time nurse the bite of the “travelling bug.” I wanted to see the world outside of Southern Ontario. Through a friend I was introduced to The Suame Magazine Industrial Development Organization (SMIDO), a grassroots NGO in Ghana that was looking to fill a program development and research position. As soon as I started reading the job description and background of the organization, I was hooked. I sent my resume to them and after a series of emails and telephone interviews I was offered the position. It was an opportunity too good to pass up and a few weeks later I was on a plane to West Africa.

Suame Magazine is an artisanal cluster located in Kumasi, Ghana. The ‘Magazine,’ is one of the largest informal clusters in Sub-Saharan Africa and has a working population of over 200,000 people employed in approximately 12,000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Most activity is related to the auto industry-vehicle repair, spare parts sales and metal works. The entrepreneurs of Suame Magazine are renowned for their ingenuity (one artisan has constructed a

well pump out of old car parts) and customers come from throughout West Africa to purchase their products and services. The Magazine is considered



part of the informal sector: a sector of the economy characterized by small-scale, labor-intensive, largely unregulated and unregistered manufacturing and service enterprises. The government of Ghana estimates that 25% of people working in the informal sector live in poverty.

SMIDO is an umbrella organization of 12 trade associations from the Magazine and has a mission to improve the livelihoods of the Suame Magazine community. SMIDO was formed in 2006, and is funded, through the assistance of the BUSAC (Business Sector Advocacy Challenge) Fund, which is a develop-

ment initiative supported by DANIDA, USAID, and FID. More information can be found at [www.smidoghana.org](http://www.smidoghana.org).

My primary job with SMIDO is to assist in the development and administration of the computer training program that is offered to the artisans at a small school that has been set up in the Magazine. I have been tasked with developing a day-to-day administrative structure for the program and SMIDO to complement the existing governance framework; authoring, administering, and analyzing the results of a student survey and developing the curriculum based on the results, drafting proposals for donors and research reports

for the SMIDO executive, planning professional development sessions, and compiling a ‘Membership Census’ of the over 1000-strong SMIDO members.

The challenges are many: high levels of poverty and illiteracy define the population SMIDO serves and organizational resources are stretched. However, I have loved every minute of my time here. I have been able to put my degree to work, experience West Africa, meet a wonderful group of hospitable and welcoming co-workers, and be adopted as the Canadian member of my host family. It has been a memorable and rewarding.

## PASSAGES...

**Alison Hawes** (MA, 07) joined the ELPPDB, Ministry of Labour, in late September. Alison spent the last two years in Cambodia as part of the United Nations Development Program. While in Cambodia, Alison was Management Support Officer with the Cambodian Mine Action Authority Secretariat and most recently the Project Operations Offi-

cer with the Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes project.

**Ron Branker** (MA, 08) joined the same branch in October. He is also pursuing his Ph.D. at Ryerson U. in Public Policy on a part-time basis. Since May 2008 Ron had been working at the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. Before acquiring his MA

at Ryerson he gained substantial government policy experience from Trinidad and Tobago where he worked in the Ministries of Trade and Industry and Finance.

**What are you up to? Let us know, so we can pass on the news.**

**Simply send an email to**

**[ppaalumni@politics.ryerson.ca](mailto:ppaalumni@politics.ryerson.ca)**

## MY BOOKSHELF...A FALL'S READING

PROF. JOHN SHIELDS

Academics enjoy an incredibly privileged position, occupying a space where we get paid to read interesting books and articles (largely of our own choosing) and engage in curiosity-based research and publishing. Of course, the reality is that this must be fit in between our responsibilities for teaching, graduate supervision, community & university service and academic administration. This means that our actual 'free' time to read is surprisingly limited and highly fragmented, requiring us to be more selective in our reading choices.

Most of what I read on a weekly basis reflects this fragmented character. I rarely seem to have the time to enjoy reading a book from cover to cover and instead find myself selectively digesting bits and pieces of books, manuscripts, articles and the like. There is so much to read and so little time. I confess I don't do much fiction reading. I always feel a little guilty when I pick up fiction; the sense overwhelms me that I should be reading something from the stack of materials directly related to my work, a pile that only seems to grow. The other truth is that I prefer to get my fiction from another medium, film. I have a large collection of DVDs for this purpose, many of them drawn from the label Criterion which specializes in important classic and contemporary films, many of them foreign language. Each DVD also comes with extensive liner notes and short review essays which can be easily and profitably absorbed. Recently, for example, I had the pleasure of viewing the classic *Danton* by Polish film director Andrzej Wajda. The film, set during the height of the French Revolution, is a powerful examination of the ideological and personal clash between two key rev-

olutionary figures, the populist man-of-the-people, Georges Danton, and Jacobin extremist Maximilien Robespierre. The film explores the opportunities, challenges and contradictions of revolutionary transformation, with the ever present danger of political Terror. It is a film whose themes resonate strongly today.

But to get back to print sources; my week always starts with *The Guardian Weekly*, a British newspaper. It is a tight, well written and thoughtful publication that has news and features from around the world, including sections on culture, science, international development, book reviews, and even a crossword, for those who like that kind of thing. Nelson Mandela described the *Guardian Weekly* during his years of imprisonment as his "window on the world". And I certainly find that it is an efficient way to keep up with ever-changing global developments. I particularly enjoy its Finance page which really is a timely political economy informed analysis of leading economic developments – you won't find this kind of analysis in the *Globe and Mail*. Recent stories have focused on the problems of the hyper-capitalist deregulatory model of economic development and the economic crisis. In the *Guardian's* assessment we have entered a new age of insecurity with profound threats to the environment, market stability and the sustainability of quality employment.

I confess that my Canadian news content comes largely from another media source, CBC radio.

Currently I am reading *The Predator State* by James K. Galbraith (son of the late Canadian-born

John Kenneth Galbraith). It is a timely book that takes head-on the issue of the failure of markets and it is a strident defense of America Keynesian and New Deal legacies. Galbraith, until recently, has been a voice in the wilderness in economist circles long dominated by neo-classical economic thinking. The economic crisis has shaken this paradigm to its foundations and Galbraith has emerged as part of the 'new common sense', and there is much of worth in his analysis. Galbraith wishes to see "a world ruled by fear" replaced by, in an Obama-like sentiment, "a world ruled by hope".

He maintains that public institutions have been abused by big business that has been successful at directing public authority for private benefit. In a neo-liberal dominated world there has been a decided lack of countervailing force to resist the power and influence of big business. Moreover, Galbraith observes that markets are simply incapable of forward thinking and anticipating longer term problems for short term benefits. Only public planning within democratic structures, he asserts, is capable of preparing us for a more equitable and sustainable future. This book is valuable in its analysis of the flawed underlying logic of the neo-liberal state and economics, but it does remain trapped within the limitations of Keynesian socio-economic thinking, a framework which proved less than robust under the challenge of global economic restructuring. Still it is well worth the read.

Another book which I have begun to dabble into is *The Social Life of Information* by John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid.



John Shields has been a Professor at Ryerson for over 20 years. He was the founding co-director of the MA program in Public Policy and Administration (with Dr. Janet Lum). At the graduate level, he teaches *PA 8102: The State and the Economy* and *POG 316: Social Policy* at the Undergrad level. He has published four books and over twenty articles. His most recent research explores partnerships between governments and the non-profit sector, public administration reform, and labour market restructuring. He recently assumed the editorship of *the Journal of International Migration and Integration*. He received his BA and MA from the University of Windsor and his Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia.

This is part of my research into knowledge mobilization and its importance for policymaking. The major idea forthcoming from this volume is the insight that information becomes influential and useful only when it gets a social life. When we recognize that the usual academic journal article has a very limited social life – a reading audience that one can often count on their fingers – the use value of getting information to bigger and broader audiences becomes obvious.

Now, to get back to the book...

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THE GRADUATES OF 2009

**BA  
(Politics and  
Governance)**

**Spring 2009**

Attanasio, Kyle  
Bal, Jaspal  
Chan, Yuekiu  
Cooper, Diana  
Diamond, Jaymie  
Dowie, Gillian  
Hayden,

Christopher

Hudecki, Michael  
Ibrahim, Remah  
Lamce, Nertina  
Leung, Jonathan  
Malhi, Amandeep  
Patel, Ashma  
Rodrigue-Todd,

Danielle

Santos, Alexandra  
Seccareccia, Sabrina  
Stevenson, Shannon  
Taylor, Kaitlyn  
Thorp, Jessica  
Webster, Charles  
Taylor, Kaitlyn  
Thorp, Jessica  
Webster, Charles

**Fall 2009**

Cant, Joelle  
Diamond, Jaymie  
Premachandran,  
Yugasanthini  
Sterpin, Spencer  
Sultana, Faiza  
Tiwana, Bipanpal  
Ward, Tara Leigh

**Level 1  
Certificate  
(Public  
Administration  
and Governance)**

**Spring 2009**

Cowan, Kathy  
Dempsey, Mary  
Gold, Lisa

Hasso, Areej  
Loponen, Sandra  
O'Brien, Karen  
Marian, Sebastian  
Ultimo, Tony  
Abbott, Jennifer\*\*  
Lafrance,  
Brenna\*\*  
Pamajewon,  
Dwayne\*\*  
Latter, Leanne\*  
Mowat, Robert\*

**Fall 2009**

Godman, Jordan  
Kiar, Karla  
Xu, Alice  
Diet, Douglas\*  
French, Michael\*  
Gallant, Kevin\*  
Malo, Stephane \*

**Level 2  
Certificate  
(Public Admini-  
stration and  
Governance)**

**Spring 2009**

Carreras, Giselle  
Faleuko, Volha  
Ferguson, Daniel  
Kuchar, Bianca  
Sultafa, Alma  
Tiwari, Kumarpal  
Claveau, Peggy\*\*  
Hoggarth, Anne\*\*  
Monture, Erin\*\*  
Moore, Edith\*\*  
Parker, Linda\*\*  
Shawande,  
Marjory\*\*

*\*In Association with the Ontario Fire Marshall's  
Office and Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs*

*\*\*In Association with the First Nations Technical  
Institute*

**Congratulations !**

Hills, Alan\*  
Pankhurst, Mark\*  
Stocker, Frank\*

**Fall 2009**

Cooke, Wendy  
Mohanakanthan,  
Pathmakanthan

**BA  
(Public  
Administra-  
tion and  
Governance)**

**Spring 2009**

Aden, Mohamed  
Carberry, John  
Kapralos, Ana  
Karp, Lorin  
Keith, J. Patrick  
Lagman, Teresa  
Lyons, Dayle  
Moore, Lorraine  
Owusu-Boateng,  
Maxwell  
Quest, Gayleen  
Roundpoint,  
Rachel\*\*  
Becket, Timothy\*

**Fall 09**

Allison, Harley  
Carreras, Giselle  
Chi, Paul  
Fernando, Kushan  
Gopalani, Shoaib  
Regisford, Loraine  
Schutz, Jake  
Strelchik, Simon

**MA  
(Public Policy  
and  
Administra-  
tion)**

**Spring 2009**

Eldakiky, Magdy  
Lau, Edward  
Lavertu, Julie

**Fall 2009**

Anthony, Lisa  
Bayly-Jones,  
Devon  
Best, Avery  
Brewer, Rachel  
Budhwani, Suman  
Elkow, Jeffrey  
Gates-Gasse, Erika  
Gergolas, Elaine  
Gourley, Laura  
Ha, Richard  
Haydon,

Rosemary

Jenkins, Thomas  
Kang, Ryan,  
Khan, Khadija  
Lee, Jonathan  
Tao-Yang  
Luehof, Sarah  
McClung, Caitlin  
Mehta, Hetal  
Menzies, Mary  
Michaud, Tausha  
Namestnikova,  
Iana

Osawe,  
Theophilus  
Quintal, Daniel  
Ramlal, Sabita  
Raqueno, Jason  
Rivers, Jeremy  
Roberts, Anna Joy  
Rosenfeld,

Matthew

Sapich, Elena  
Sewrattan,

Natasha

Shaheen, Faisal  
Smith, Sarah  
Sully, Jennifer  
Vertzman, Lilya