

# THE PPA*LITICUS*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE POLITICS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (PPA) ALUMNI

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

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## ANOTHER RYERSON PPA FIRST: SPEED NETWORKING

Two dozen PPA alumni and current students met on February 5, 2008 to talk about the next steps in their professional lives. The event—unprecedented at Ryerson—was held at the VIP Lounge at the Ram in the Rye on the Ryerson University campus. Opportunities to indulge in copious amounts of the local brew or converse about every day happenings were not lost, but this event had a purpose. “Dressed for success” this Ryerson community gathered to get down to business... speed networking business that is.

The activity of ‘speed dating’ (which was originally used to help singles meet and marry), was transformed by Department of Politics and

Public Administration Alumni Association Advisory Group to help alumni and current students meet a large number of people in a short amount of time. The evening of ‘Speed Networking’ was kicked off with welcome remarks from the Department of Politics and Public Administration Alumni Association Chair, Jane Weber. While participants dove into some finger food (generously supplied by the Department), they remained glued to their familiar cliques.

MA graduates Sivan Raz, James Wheeler, and Krystal Kehoe gave a 45 minute presentation on some extremely helpful hints, in-



cluding how to network while still in the MA (PPA) program, how to network your way into a job, and how to network once you are in a job to keep progressing. (See p. 2)

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## POSTCARD FROM THE FIELD: ALLISON HAWES

In September I left home for Cambodia, one of the poorest countries in South-East Asia, and one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. I mention this because I originally came here through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to help improve the functioning of the Secretariat of the Cambodian Mine Action Authority.



After a couple of months, due to the vagaries of developing country bureaucracies, I ended up working for UNDP’s Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes Team. Our group is working to support the upcoming 2008 National Assembly Elections (see p. 4)

## THE SPEED-NETWORKING EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)



After all the presentations, there was a question and answer session to clarify some universal networking dos and don'ts. Participants benefited from having an intimate, open discussion where they could ask questions about their personal experiences and learn helpful techniques from their peers such as how frequent you should keep in touch with your key contacts, and how to sustain long-term networking partners.

There was a large contingent from the current MA in Public Policy and Administration stu-

dents, as some of them took this opportunity to glean "secret information" from their predecessors.

Other participants included 2006 and 2007 graduates from the MA in Public Policy and Administration program.

By the end of the night, everyone was able to make the rounds and speak with each individual on a one-on-one basis. The cliques had been banished! From the organizer's perspective, the first ever Ryerson University, Department of Politics and Public Administration Alumni event

was a huge hit that met its objectives. Some current MA students even boasted that it was one of the most helpful workshops they had attended this year (aside from their regular classes, of course!).

The Alumni Advisory Group would like to thank the Department of Politics and Public Administration for supplying the food for the evening, the Ryerson University, Department of University Advancement for supplying pens and paper, and the Ram in the Rye server, Sasha. We'll do this again!

## MEET THE CHAIR: JANE WEBER

"ALL MEN ARE  
CAUGHT IN AN  
INESCAPABLE  
NETWORK OF  
MUTUALITY"

-MARTIN  
LUTHER KING  
(1929-1968)



Jane Weber likes to call herself a farm girl from Grey County, but there's a lot more to that shy façade. She came to Ryerson University after working for a year abroad. Upon completing her Honours Bachelor of Social Science from the University of Ottawa in 2004, Jane found a job as an Information Officer in the Public Diplomacy Division at NATO, Brussels.

Brussels was nice, but Jane realized that diplomacy had a certain speed that did not match her rhythm of life. She decided that her practical work-ethic was better suited for development work on the ground. She found that ground at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, where she worked in community development by promoting sustainable land use strategies.

After Europe and Africa Jane joined the first MA class in the Ryerson graduate program in Public Policy and Administration. Not having studied politics before, she

felt a bit like a fish out of water, but rose to the challenge with a lot of encouragement and support from the faculty. She was selected for one of the first practicums offered to MA students. She completed it at Citizen and Immigration Canada and finished her studies in 2006.

After graduating she worked as a Project Assistant for the Department of International Affairs and Corporate Office at the National Office of the Canadian Cancer Society, and as a Project Coordinator for the Student World Assembly in



New York.

Jane is currently the Manager of the Canadian Research Network for Care in the Community, a knowledge exchange network between researchers, decision-makers, and providers in home and community care.

Jane originally was wary of signing up for the position of chair, and has put her enthusiasm and leadership successfully to the test. She launched the Alumni Association at the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department, organized the first ever alumni event (speed networking), and is helping to develop the alumni webpage.

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

PROF. BRYAN EVANS

The autumn of 2007 was for me consumed by the project of completing a doctoral dissertation. This was not fun. However, it did get done and it passed without incident. While I patiently waited for feedback from the committee, I reconnected with literary friends from decades long past. It was a welcome respite, an oasis even, which had nothing to do with that dissertation thing. Or so I thought. These tales of personal and professional success and failure brought me back to the time when I discovered them: a time when Jimmy Carter was the President, Enrico Berlinguer led the Italian Communists to near electoral victory, the Sandinistas were entering Managua, and the French Communists still mattered. I found refuge in novels that had precious little to do, at least directly, with my dissertation.

First there was Gustave Flaubert's *Sentimental Education*. Flaubert mixes the politics of the second French Revolution with romance and a lampooning of bourgeois French society. The middle classes are always so full of themselves and base it on so very little. Of course, there is a certain pessimism running through this brooding novel that sits well with my Slavic soul. Aldous Huxley's *Ape and Essence* was retrieved for a similarly perfect afternoon. It begins with the nuclear destruction of the world and baboons replace human beings as the top dog, if you will. (Reminds me of a movie starring Charlton

Heston). The message: it's all rather hopeless. It was also somewhat depressing so I reached for an antidote in Huxley's ode to psychotropic drugs – *The Doors of Perception and Hell*. I rushed to play my copy of Iron Butterfly's *In na gadda da vida* while thumbing through the pages. Somehow it just wasn't the same. I sadly concluded that those days were done and that my brief moment of a sentimental re-education needed something more inspiring. I found it in George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*. It's a bittersweet tale of the Spanish Civil War and the profound revolution unfolding within that conflict. It has it all: Battles, intrigue, betrayal, a story of what could have been rather than what history gave us. The British socialist film maker Ken Loach based his film *Land and Freedom* on this work. Brilliant!

Enough with novels, I returned to the real world. I was recently asked to write a short introduction to a work dealing with new political formations on the Portuguese Left. Suddenly the 1970s were again beckoning. My assignment was to set the current political situation in Portugal in its historical context. The Portuguese Revolution of April 25<sup>th</sup> 1974 was an inspiring event I closely followed as a young socialist. Imagine that--five decades of fascist rule came to an end with virtually no loss of life. The old order just melted

under the pressure. To refresh my memory I consulted John Hammond's *Building Popular Power: Worker's and Neighbourhood Movements in the Portuguese Revolution* (1988). It's an excellent book on the subject. It stands above and against all the other interpretations, ranging from the Stalinist interpretations and apologies of the old Communist Left to the liberal/social democratic accounts.

I've been working on several projects exploring the upper echelons of Canada's public services (yes, that is plural). I returned to Michael Pusey's *Economic Rationalism in Canberra* (1991). Pusey's project is to develop an explanation for Australia's transition from a moderately progressive welfare state informed by Keynesian ideas and policies to a rather aggressive neoliberal state. In other words, how did the Australian state come to change its mind? For Pusey, senior public servants together with key politicians are the 'switchmen of history'. His hypothesis is that the senior ranks of Australia's federal public service have been transformed and so through hundreds of surveys and interviews he attempts to find some evidence for this. And indeed he does. In short he finds that through the 1980s the Australian state was transformed by a new type of technocrat who tended to be decidedly more concerned with the restraint of public expenditures and the demands of economic competitiveness rather than with social and economic equality and full employment.



Bryan Evans will receive his Ph.D from York University at the Spring convocation. His doctoral dissertation explores the links between managerialism, neoliberalism and the restructuring of the Ontario public sector. He joined the Department formally in August 2003 after a decade of involvement as a sessional instructor and as a member of the department's advisory committee. Prior to his appointment he had a distinguished career with the Ontario Legislative Assembly, the Ontario Public Service and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. The recent 50th anniversary issue of *Canadian Public Administration* features an article he co-wrote with John Shields and Janet Lum entitled "Profiling of the public service elite: A demographic and career trajectory survey of deputy and assistant deputy ministers in Canada".

It's still a controversial book and not everyone is convinced of its merit but it is still a very interesting effort.

It's a tremendous joy to be able to teach, research, write and consult on these subjects. But for now, I need to download some Deep Purple

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## ALLISON HAWES @ CAMBODIA (CONTINUED)

in a variety of ways including voter education, increasing youth and women's engagement in democracy, improving the media environment and helping mobilize donor funds for the election itself.

I do two things. The first is acting as the reporting officer, getting the myriad of reports in line

for our various donors. The second is helping to coordinate The second is helping to coordinate our support for the National ID Card program. In a country where few people have proper documentation national ID cards are necessary to protect people's

right to vote. Cambodia is an exciting place to be. Ravaged by wars for two generations, it is slowly reviving. Tourism is growing, and oil and gas deposits have recently been found. Cambodia's 13 million people are turning a new page in their history.



# 45 YEARS

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AT RYERSON

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