

Quest for Fire

by Mark Snaychuk

FILE COPY



At the dawn of civilization, men in furry speedos walked upright and gazed in awe at the lightning that ripped up the sky.

Although these early hominids were primitive and had no cable news networks, they realized that the ability to harness and store energy was critical to their own well-being. Accordingly, the cleverest of the homo-erectus clan captured fire and built strong tribes that smashed in the skulls of various beasts, thereby securing their place as masters of the world.

As history unfolded, the pattern of energy capture and empire-building repeated itself. Society learned that you could get more energy from oil than wood, so the race to capture hydrocarbons went into high gear. Mankind hunted whales to the point of extinction for their body oil before realizing that oil could be

recovered in greater abundance by tapping the earth's underground reservoirs. This set off an exploration boom in North America that served the empire well, but as the new millennium beckoned, Uncle Sam began to slip down the list of world oil producers to the point where he had a dangerous reliance upon rival tribes for his own well-being.

Let's journey back three decades to see how a succession of American governments

dropped the ball on energy policy and ended up "3rd and long" in a critical game. In constant dollar terms, the price of oil hit \$70 a barrel in 1973, and there were long lineups at the gas pumps. Interest rates rose to 20 percent, inflation was rampant, and the price of gold soared. A young rock star named Ozzy Osbourne sang about our paranoia and the wheels of confusion. Dick Nixon, the paranoid, hard-right president in the White House, fumed about the recession that was brought on by staggering oil prices. Curiously he did nothing to establish a "Fortress North America" energy policy that was sorely needed. As the years oozed by, Nixon's successors offered little or no mention of the American dependence on foreign crude. As a result, American oil imports rose to their current levels of 11 million barrels a day, and the U.S. foreign trade deficit soared to \$50 billion a month.

Just how much money has the import policy cost? Well, if we assume a modest constant dollar price of \$30 per barrel, then simple math demonstrates that in the last 30 years, the U.S. has spent \$3 trillion on imported oil. Sadly, that number does not tell the whole story. In order to protect this vital supply, the Americans built a

multi-trillion dollar military and sent young men off to die in cultures that we do not understand, thereby pushing the real cost of imported oil to incalculable heights.

What a shame that some forward-looking politician in Washington didn't sit down with some economists after an episode of the Partridge Family to draw up an energy policy that would have provided for a secure future. The province of Alberta, a long-term

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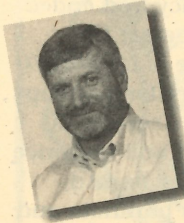
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Ed Logue, SAFA President

Well, it's the start of another academic year—how time flies—and on behalf of the SAFA executive and staff, I would like to welcome all you old timers back. For those of you who are new to SAIT, I would like to take this opportunity, not only to welcome you to SAIT, but also to extend an invitation to drop in to the association office (N201) with any questions you may have or just to say hello.

The following is a more or less tongue-in-cheek look at a management style that is fast losing favour with all organizations but the one in which it originated, the military. Since many of you have not served in the military, see if you can spot any similarities with an organization you are more familiar with.

Top-Down Management:

A stroll through any bookstore or library would reveal, to the casual observer, a deluge of books expounding the virtues of various management styles. A quick glance at these books would show this casual observer that the one style of management that seems to have lost favour with the majority of companies and organizations, in these enlightened times, is the top-down style of management.

The top-down management style is said to have had its origins in the military command structure. In the military, authority is the prerogative of the officer corps. This officer corps is, by design, isolated from the common soldiers. A Field Marshall is the officer in charge of the army. The Field

Marshall is omnipotent and answerable only to the Government. What the Field Marshall orders done, is done, no questions asked. The Field Marshall is aided by a General Staff. This General Staff consists of senior officers who act as advisers to the Field Marshall. Below the General Staff are the Field Officers who are in charge of the various departments that make up the army and are responsible for implementing the directives of the General Staff. The Field Officers are not encouraged to have ideas of their own or to show initiative. They simply funnel the decisions of the General Staff down to the rank-and-file.

In many countries, the Government will also set up a War Cabinet to oversee the Officer Corps. These War Cabinets tend to consist of government appointees, many of whom have little or no interest in things military; therefore, in most cases, these War Cabinets tend to become simply a rubber stamping organization or to deteriorate into social clubs.

As already stated, officers, due to their exalted position, must remain isolated from the common soldier. In order to get the decisions of the General Staff conveyed to the rank-and-file, another level of command is required. Some members of the rank-and-file are given authority over their fellow soldiers. These Non-Commissioned Officers are given orders from above and relay them to the common soldiers. They are also tasked with evaluating the performance, qualifications, and competence of their fellow soldiers. In the military, it is very rare that one of these Non-Commissioned Officers, no matter how dedicated they are, will be promoted into the Officer Corps.

This style of management is deliberately designed to instill blind obedience in the rank-and-file. The military organization has no room for those who would question authority. I think we can all agree that they have a point. It would probably not be a good idea for soldiers to be questioning orders or debating alternatives in the midst of battle. ♦♦

PERSPECTIVES

Temporary Parking Senator Burns

I need to run to my office on Sunday afternoon to print assignments which were emailed to me on Saturday—I would like to mark them Sunday afternoon. I will be about 30 minutes to 40 minutes printing off the files.

I do not subscribe to SAIT's parking—I was under the impression that SAIT was emphasizing the U-Pass, for environmental reasons, of course—so why would I pay to park, when the U-Pass is so economical?

Now, I am expected to pay \$2.00 for 30 minutes of parking outside of Senator Burns, while I run to my office do work for SAIT, so that I can spend my Sunday evening marking assignments for SAIT.

SAIT has missed a REALLY great revenue-generating opportunity—we have a football field outside the Campus Centre crying to be paved and made into a parking lot!!

SAFAGRAM

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SAFAGRAM editorial policy, as approved by the SAFA Executive on June 14, 1995, is as follows:

1. The Editorial Board has the final say as to what is included or deleted from the newsletter.
2. Editorial Board decisions about newsletter material must be agreed to by consensus.
3. The newsletter will include a disclaimer stating that the views expressed in its content do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.
4. All material included in the newsletter must
 - be signed by the author when submitted to the editors but anonymity may be requested and granted for printing.
 - be based on "reasoned argument" if personal criticism is used.
 - not involve name-calling.
 - not include sexist, racist, or homophobic comments.
 - be related to SAIT, although this will be interpreted broadly.

The views expressed in SAFAGRAM do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.

Update on Demutualization of Mutual Life



By Heather Sagan

In March 1999, Mutual Life recommended to its policyholders that it demutualize; i.e., change its status from that of an entity owned and controlled by its policyholders to an entity owned and controlled by shareholders.

As a result of this, in July 1999, SAIT elected to take a one-time cash payment from Mutual Life of \$1.18 million. In October and November 1999, administration met with SAFA and AUPE and had discussions about the possibility of returning a portion of these funds to employees. Following these meetings, a letter was to be sent to SAFA and AUPE from SAIT administration. No letter was issued to employees at that time. SAFA received a letter in November 2000 clarifying questions that had been raised by SAFA at Joint Advisory Committee (JAC).

In the Fall of 1999, the NAIT Academic Staff Association (NASA) became aware that NAIT also received funds from the demutualization of Mutual Life. NAIT administration advised NASA that no portion of these funds would be returned to employees. NASA decided to bring a court action against NAIT. In August 2002, Judge William Wilson of Alberta Court of Queens Bench handed down a judgment that a portion of funds belong to the academic staff members. (Check www.lancaster.com/about/headlines for detail of this decision.)

The Supreme Court of Canada has dismissed NASA's Leave to Appeal. This means that the decision of the Alberta Court of Appeal stands and its premises are to be applied in the resolution of the demutualization case. Basically, the decision states that NASA members, who were in the benefit plan (LTD and Life policies) at the date of demutualization (December 29, 1997), are entitled to payments based on their direct contributions (deducted from their paycheques) to Mutual Life between 1988 and 1997. This amounts to approximately \$308,000 with accumulated interest of about \$92,000.

Reprinted with permission from NAIT Academic Staff Association Intercom, September 2004

SAFA filed a Statement of Claim on behalf of faculty members in March 2001. It was agreed between the Employer and the Association that the Statement of Claim would be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the NAIT court case. As the Supreme Court has dismissed the Leave to Appeal of the NAIT Academic Staff Association, SAFA will be initiating discussions with the Employer to settle this matter. ♦♦

*Quest for Fire
continued from page 1*

American ally with a passion for country music, would have been the perfect vehicle for a giant research and development project that could have built a reliable strategic reserve for our cousins to the South.

For the uninitiated, sweet home Alberta is often called the "Saudi Arabia" of coal and heavy oil, and it has long been a leader in the field of energy research. Coal bed methane, enhanced oil recovery, and wind energy are just a few of the interesting alternatives that have been around for many years but regrettably have been grossly underfunded.

Now, let's imagine an alternate universe where Alberta's public education and research institutions had gained a mere one percent of the 3-trillion greenbacks that were guzzled down by foreign producers. In this other time-space continuum, we gaze out the window of the Penthouse to observe a SAIT campus that is many times its current size.

The institution stretches north to join up with the U of C to create a mega-campus that is the largest in the world. The Energy department is housed entirely within two skyscrapers that sit where the mall now rests. The Energy complex towers have adjoining buildings with state-of-the-art labs, a wind farm, a fuel cell research centre and, of course, ample cheap parking. Office space is luxurious with surrounding tennis courts, bowling alleys, and gourmet cafeterias. Instructor positions pay a minimum 120K before bonuses.

In the Kensington area, there are miles of condominiums which serve SAIT's student population of some 30,000 souls. With multi-million dollar endowments and scholarships, we attract the best students in the world, and every program is oversubscribed at least 10 to 1. Where the soccer field now stands, we find a convention centre and several hotels that serve to entertain oil and gas executives from around the world.

Yes, these things were all possible, and if the supply situation continues to deteriorate, then they may yet come to pass. One thing is certain. Life for public education and the population as a whole would have been easier if we had looked after ourselves first by funding research that addressed our energy needs—the number one concern for any viable society. North America cannot live in isolation from the rest of the world, but there is an old expression that says "Charity begins at home." While "do-nothing" politicians debated the silly Kyoto Accord, precious years ticked by, and our drunken bash with foreign oil left us with a hangover that might last decades. Thus, it appears that for all of our sophistication, we still struggle as our early ancestors did to find the freedom that fire brings. ♦♦

LIBRARY REPORT



by Dave Weber (284-8476) and
Nora Robinson (210-4073)

Over the summer, we made several changes to the Library—both in its look and in the way services are delivered.

- ⇒ We are now using the SAIT ID number as the library user ID numbers for staff and students. New SAIT identification cards have preprinted barcodes that represent SAIT ID numbers. The preprinted barcodes make library account registration much more streamlined. If you have an old card that has not yet expired, we will print a new barcode label for you. The old library user numbers will no longer get you access to the Library Electronic Resources off-campus or allow you to borrow and place audiovisual bookings. Please stop by the Library Information Desk to activate your new user ID.
- ⇒ The new Information Desk area on Level 1 provides better space utilization, improved client/staff visibility and contact with less entrance congestion.
- ⇒ The campus-use video collection shifted from Level 0 to 1 to improve access for clients. The arrangement of the collection changed from ISO numbers to Dewey Decimal System numbers to match the book and home-use video shelving arrangement. With this change, the videos are shelved by subject to improve browse-ability. Last-minute bookings are now taken at the Level 1 Information Desk. We encourage you to book in advance. Requests may be dropped off at the Information Desk, placed through the Requests feature of the online library catalog or phoned in (284-8616 or 210-4423).
- ⇒ A new gateless security access was installed. Removing the gates has improved access for mobility-challenged clients and has removed the necessity to enter and leave the Library through the right gate only. New carpet tiles were installed between the southeast Heart Building hallway to the Library entrance.
- ⇒ We reorganized our Electronic Resources web page to make database access clearer. The databases are grouped by subject to assist users in selecting the best database for their needs.
- ⇒ You can now search the library catalog for a specific e-journal title. This is made possible through our new Serials Solutions service. We now have individual listing in the catalog for the over 7000 e-journal titles included in our databases.
- ⇒ Our new Article Linker service lets you move from one database to another database—without redoing your search—if the full text of an article is not available in the first database. For more information, contact Nora (4073) or Dave (8476). ♦♦

In May, we heard the sad news that Mary Elrick, a retired SAIT Library staff member, had passed away. In her memory, we purchased several plants. We invited Mary's family to a dedication ceremony in June. The plants, which are a living memory of Mary, will be part of a new area set aside as a comfortable reading area at the north end of the Library. We already have some cozy armchairs and are expecting the coffee tables soon.



2004/2005 SAFA Executive Committee

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SAFA 2004 – 2005 Executive Committee and office staff

Left to right

Heather Sagan, Doug Spurgeon, Cochrane Mowbray, Rob Salomons, Ernie Grummett, Shoab Nasir, Ed Logue, Luda Paul, Ann Kostiuk (office assistant), and Perry Osweiler

PERSPECTIVES

SAIT Cuts Cleaning Services to Reduce Costs—Yet the Institute Posts a Surplus

SAIT administration decided to implement a change to the daily cleaning schedule effective July 1, 2004, to reduce the cost of the contracted cleaning services to the Institute.

At the Board of Governors annual planning meeting in September 2004, the Board endorsed SAIT's new vision statement:

"SAIT's vision is sharply focused – to be recognized as Canada's premier polytechnic, one of the world's finest, setting the standard in education, training and innovation."

On September 29, the SAIT President and CEO sent a message to all SAIT employees that on the previous day, the SAIT Board of Governors approved SAIT's audited financial statements for 2003-2004. "The financial news is good, with SAIT posting a \$4.6 million surplus over our approved budget."

Why would an institute of technology, with a vision to be recognized as Canada's premier polytechnic, setting the standard in education, training and innovation, and with a significant financial surplus, cut a basic service such as cleaning to three days a week?

When the cleaning services were contracted out, there was a very noticeable drop in the level of cleanliness about the Institute. Now with the decision to cut cleaning services to three days a week, there will undoubtedly be a further drop in service.

Although SAIT's vision is sharply focused to set a world standard in education, training and innovation, apparently cleaning services are not part of that standard! ↔

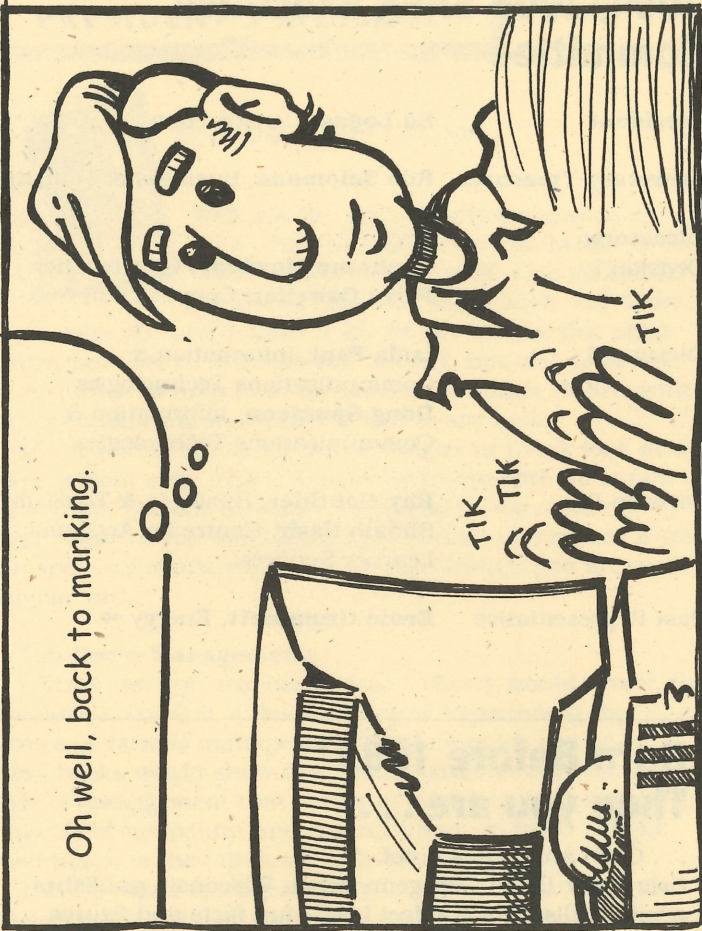
Born Before 1985? Then you are ...

... OLD! And here's proof.

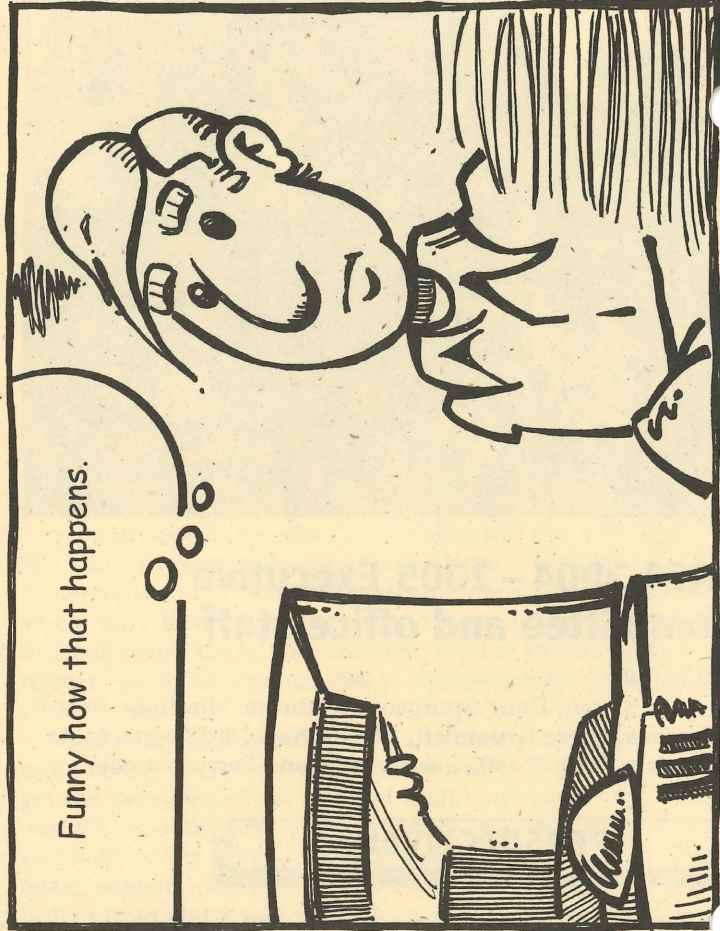
Every year Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin publishes what it calls "The Mindset List"—fun facts and figures about the incoming crop of freshmen so professors will be able to relate to their new students.

So to better understand how the class of 2007 thinks, most of whom were born in 1985, read this and feel your age:

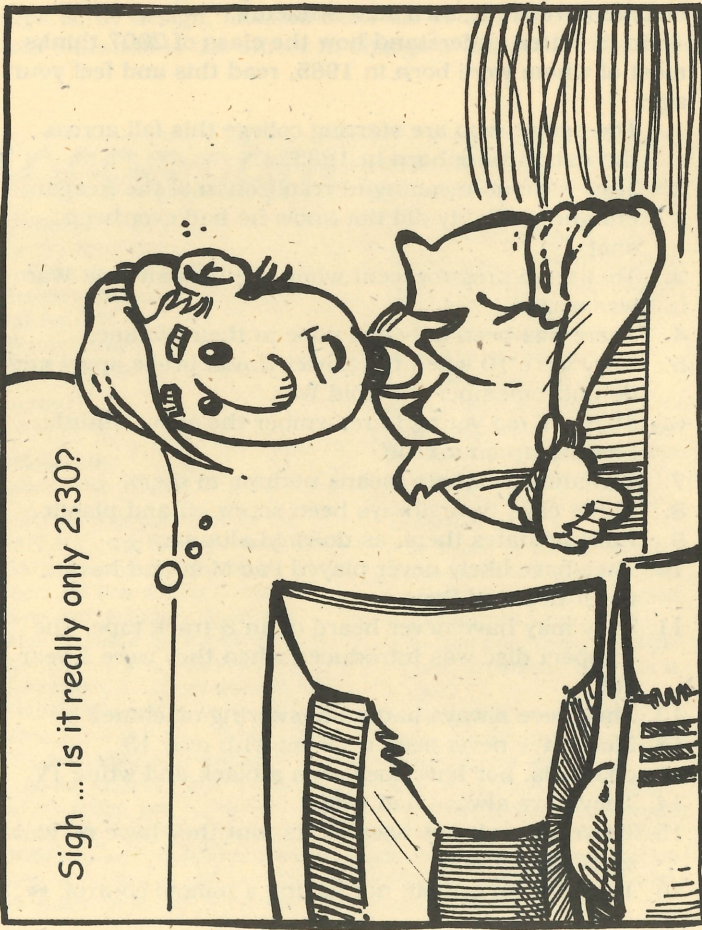
1. The people who are starting college this fall across the nation were born in 1985.
2. They have no meaningful recollection of the Reagan era and probably did not know he had ever been shot.
3. They were prepubescent when the Persian Gulf War was waged.
4. There has been only one pope in their lifetime.
5. They were 10 when the Soviet Union broke apart and do not remember the Cold War.
6. They are too young to remember the space shuttle blowing up on takeoff.
7. Tiananmen Square means nothing to them.
8. Bottle caps have always been screw off and plastic.
9. Atari predates them, as do vinyl albums.
10. They have likely never played Pac Man and have never heard of Pong.
11. They may have never heard of an 8-track tape. The compact disc was introduced when they were 1 year old.
12. They have always had an answering machine.
13. Most have never seen a TV set with only 13 channels, nor have they seen a black and white TV.
14. They have always had cable.
15. There have always been VCRs, but they have no idea what Beta was.
16. They cannot fathom not having a remote control. ↔



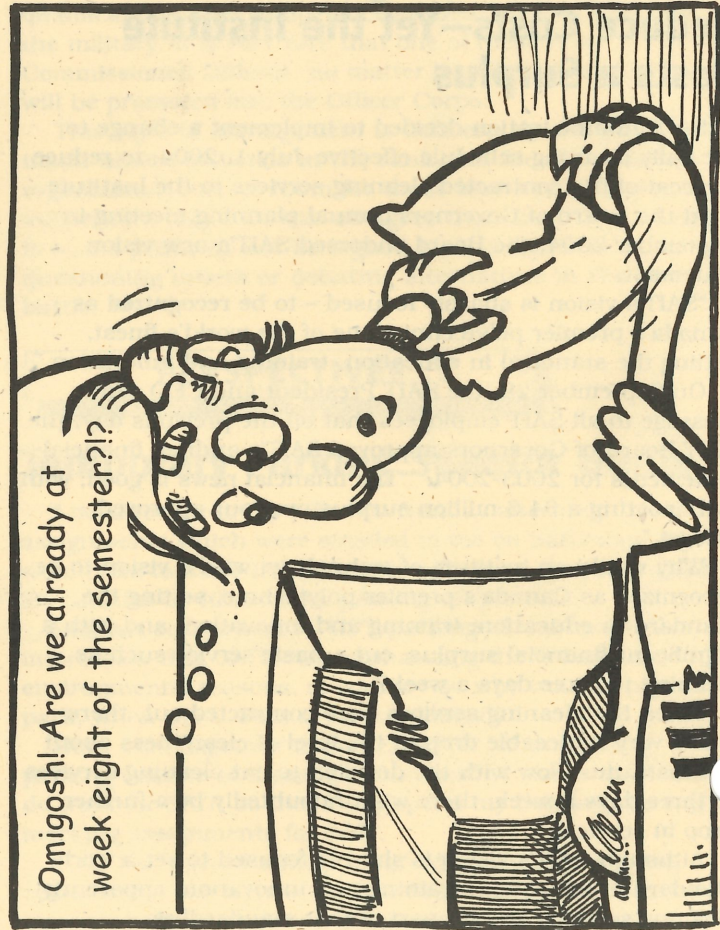
Oh well, back to marking.



Funny how that happens.



Sigh ... is it really only 2:30?



Omigosh! Are we already at week eight of the semester?!?