

# AuCanada

The Canadian Studies Center at Bowling Green State University

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## Canadian Education Reform: A Model for Ohio?

An examination of the Canadian education experience will be the feature of the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Reddin Symposium. On Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, three prominent speakers will present “**Public Education in Canada.**”

After introducing the main features of education in Canada **Ratna Ghosh**, Dean of the Faculty of Education at McGill University, will discuss the challenges of infusing curricula with bilingualism and multiculturalism from a Québec perspective. Dr. Ghosh is an internationally recognized contributor to the understanding of multicultural policy on society and education. Her most recent book is titled *Redefining Multicultural Education* (Harcourt Brace & Co., 1996).

**Dave Cooke**, former Ontario Minister of Education and current Co-chair of the Education Improvement Commission in Toronto, will reflect on his experiences in designing and implementing education reform. As Ontario Minister of Education and Training, Mr. Cooke was the first to head a new ministry that combined all levels of education and training including elementary, secondary, college, university, job training, and apprenticeship.

**Darrel Skidmore**, CEO of the London, Ontario Public Library, will focus on the erosion of public confidence in education based on thirty years of first-hand expertise as a teacher, principal, and superintendent. During this time Mr. Skidmore developed a track record as an innovator. He is currently responsible for long-range planning and customer service in the increasingly complex digital library environment.

The Canadian education system provides a nearby point of comparison for education reform proposals in Ohio and the United States. School funding arrangements, academic standards, safety, teacher training, vouchers, and many other issues are key aspects of the current debate. To gain a better sense of the strong and weak points of the U.S. system it is useful to compare it to those of our international peers, and the Canadian case is especially valuable in this regard.

In many ways Canada already is what the United States will increasingly become: more ethnically diverse, with politically influential populations whose primary language is not English, and a nation dependent on foreign trade. These forces and others in Canada will also shape developments in the United States. At the core of the education debate within the U.S. is how our future K-12 system will meet these changing domestic and international realities.

The event is by reservation only with limited space available. Contact Linda Snyder at 419.372.2457 or [cast@cba.bgsu.edu](mailto:cast@cba.bgsu.edu) if you are interested in attending.

## From the Director

As we go to press, the outcome of the U.S. presidential election is still uncertain. Eventually, Governor Bush or Vice President Gore will take office in January, but neither will be a clear choice of the electorate. Canadians went to the polls to elect a new national government on November 27<sup>th</sup>. By some miracle, the outcome was clear the next morning. Wonder how they do that? Professor David Wilson gives a quick review of the Canadian political system and how it differs from ours.

Public education reform was hotly debated during the presidential campaign and presents a major challenge to Ohio. Learning about the Canadian experience can enlighten our debate and help shape the development of public education in Ohio. Check out the distinguished roster of speakers for the next Reddin Symposium and plan to join us on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Celebrate Canadian culture with us next semester by hearing any or all of the four speakers in our Canadian Author Series.

Were it not for pioneers like Professor Janis Pallister, we would not be the leading center for the study of Canada in Ohio and one of the best in the nation. Dr. Pallister formally retired some years ago and continues to help us discover and interpret Québec culture. Thanks to Jan, our Canadian Studies program has a strong Québec focus.

Best wishes for the holiday season and New Year.



Mark Kasoff, Director

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# A Tale of Two Elections

The elections of November, 2000 provide an opportunity to compare and contrast the Canadian and American systems. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, American voters cast votes for:

- a President and Vice President;
- a candidate to represent their district in the national House of Representatives;
- in one-third of the states, a candidate to represent their state in the national Senate; and
- in most states, an often bewildering array of state and local candidates, bond issues, school levies, etc.

The Presidential aspect of an American election is further complicated by the fact that the popular votes do not directly determine who will be President, but only decide a state's slate of electors and thus how a state's electoral votes will be cast. As Americans have discovered, that process is not always clear-cut and can result in a candidate winning a majority of the electoral votes, and thus the Presidency, while losing the nationwide popular vote.

A Canadian election follows different rules. It does not occur at a set two or four year interval as in the U.S., but is held whenever, within the five year maximum life of a Parliament, the Prime Minister chooses to call it. Canadian voters do not have a chance to vote separately for their chief executive, the Prime Minister. Rather, the only vote a Canadian gets to cast is for one of several candidates to represent his or her district, or riding, in the Canadian House of Commons. A Canadian ballot is thus much simpler and shorter than an American ballot, rendering unnecessary complex machine counts or disputes over dimpled or pregnant chads. (**Note:** Canadian ballots are ALL hand marked and hand

counted, with results suppressed until the last polling center closes. Despite this, national results of the 13 million votes were available within four hours after the last vote was cast.)

A Canadian election determines the composition of the 301 member House of Commons. If one party wins a majority of those seats, as the *Liberals* did on November 27<sup>th</sup>, its leader becomes the Prime Minister and other prominent members elected to the House of Commons comprise the national Cabinet. A majority government can accomplish a great deal, as long as the party remains unified. Although the Liberals won less than a majority of the nationwide popular vote, with more than half of their seats coming from the single province of Ontario, they are in a position to monopolize national power in Ottawa until the next election.

The party that came in second in both seats and popular votes is the *Canadian Alliance*. Its new leader is Stockwell Day, an American-style, tax cutting, anti-governmental, conservative. While slightly increasing both its popular vote and its seats in the House of Commons and cementing its position as the official opposition, the Alliance failed to expand support beyond its base in western Canada and to make inroads into vote-rich Ontario. All but two of the Alliance's sixty-seven members of Parliament come from the four western provinces.

The third largest party in the House of Commons, the *Bloc Québécois*, only ran candidates in the province of Québec (a reflection of the party's advocacy of Québec's separation from Canada) and suffered some losses at the hands of the Liberals.

The other two major parties, the *Progressive Conservatives* and the *New Democrats* were hurt by the Liberal's portrayal of the election as a choice between the right-wing

extremism of Day and the Alliance and the moderation of the Liberals and their leader Jean Chrétien.

The outcome of the Canadian election is, for Americans, a paradoxical one. On the one hand, the Canadian House of Commons contains greater diversity than the American Congress, with five parties representing a wide range of regional, cultural, and ideological viewpoints. On the other hand, the House of Commons will be firmly under the control of a cohesive Liberal majority that, if it can agree on a course of action, has the resources necessary to provide Canada with strong and effective government.

*Special thanks to Dave Wilson for submitting this article. Dr. Wilson is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Toledo.*

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## Summer Session is Memorable Experience

Students taking summer classes are true academic foot soldiers. Braving classrooms without air conditioning and shunning volleyball and waterskiing, they toil for a few more credits. For Valerie Schaeublin, BGSU junior, this past summer was not spent at the beach but that was just fine with her. As an intern in the Ottawa Legislative Internship program Ms. Schaeublin spent six weeks researching and writing reports on issues relevant to the Canadian federal government. In Ottawa, she was assigned to the Honorable Senator Kinsella.

The highpoint of her experience was crafting a speech on religious freedom in China and then hearing her work quoted from the floor of the Senate. Ms. Schaeublin is now back in Bowling Green continuing her studies in political science and taking the Introduction to Canadian Studies course. As for the beach, well there is always next summer.

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## Francophonie: A Prof's Passion

Dozens of publications, a challenging schedule of presentations, membership in numerous professional societies, directing master's theses, and teaching. The work life of a professor laboring to achieve the next promotion? For Jan Pallister these are mere pastimes of retirement. Retirement indeed! Some sixteen years on retirement is simply a continuation of a vigorous career begun at BGSU in 1961.

Originally, a student who did a report on an African poet drew Pallister to the then somewhat obscure field of Francophone Studies—the study of French cultures throughout the world. If only that student could know her report led her professor down a path with such milestones as a lifetime achievement certificate for work in Francophone Studies. Inadvertently, Pallister became an early architect of the future Canadian Studies program at BGSU.

Jan Pallister was an early contributor to the initial mix that made BGSU the university for the study of Canada in Ohio. Long before a center was formally established, Pallister was busy creating the Québec Studies program. Her interests reached beyond literature into film. The Francophone course options at BGSU grew apace with Pallister's blossoming interests in Québec Studies. A focus on Francophone Studies is de rigueur for any serious Romance Language program.

Pallister's early contributions are lasting; a slate of Québec literature courses and Canadian film are still offered today. Her accomplishments continue during her leisurely retirement. Her book *The Cinema of Québec*

(Associated University Presses, 1996) is an essential guide for anyone interested in Québécois culture. Upcoming is *The Art and Genius of Anne Hébert: Anthology of Essays on Anne Hébert* (Associated University Presses, 2001) in which Pallister penned three essays, edited the remaining twenty-three, wrote the introduction, and established the bibliography and index.

When asked what her favorite memory of her time here is Pallister



takes us back to the 1988 visit of Acadian author Antonine Maillet. While here Ms. Maillet gave an entertaining and humorous reading (en Anglais) to a full house in the Gish Theater, visited with French students, and taped a TV program. Pallister still corresponds with Madame Maillet and

had the occasion to introduce her at a convention of the Conseil International d'Études Francophones in Moncton, New Brunswick two years ago.

As to the future, don't bother setting out the front porch chair just yet. Jan Pallister has no intentions of sitting still. Motivated in part by the death of Anne Hébert in January of 1999, Pallister has begun work on her next book, a major retrospective of Hébert's significant literary influence. As Pallister says, "Everyone should read Hébert, her poetry is fascinating, and her novels are riveting." In the meantime, there are arrangements to be made for acclaimed author, Dany Laferrière first speaker in the newly created **Pallister Québec Lecture Series** (see article on Author Visits). Retirement indeed!

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## Authors To Visit BGSU

The Canadian Author Series moves into its third year continuing our emphasis on English and French Canadian culture. Several authors will visit BGSU during the Spring, 2001 semester. In addition to class time with students each will also hold a discussion that is open to the public.

■ **Daniel Richler**, social commentator and author, will speak on February 13<sup>th</sup> about alternative and underground media in Canada. Mr. Richler will make the case that mainstream media represent events in a biased and incomplete manner. In the process, he will reveal the essential differences between Canadian and U.S. media coverage and provoke a discussion on how to democratize the media.

■ **Dany Laferrière** will be the first author of the new **Pallister Québec Lecture Series** on February 27<sup>th</sup>. The series will feature influential Québécois authors. Mr. Laferrière is known for his controversial approach to themes of ethnocentrism, power struggle, and sexuality.

■ **Gary Geddes**, political poet, will give a reading on March 29<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Geddes has published over 200 articles, poems, stories, and reviews in several countries. His work has been translated into five languages and broadcast on the CBC and BBC.

■ **Lori Saint-Martin**, author and translator, will discuss the intricacies of translating English-Canadian literature in Québec on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Saint-Martin and her husband Paul Gagné just won the coveted Governor General's award for their translation of Ann-Marie MacDonald's novel *Fall On Your Knees*.

If you would like to attend any of these sessions, please contact Linda Snyder at 419.372.2457 or [cast@cba.bgsu.edu](mailto:cast@cba.bgsu.edu) for details.



# Filmmakers Prevail

Canadian films are virtually unavailable in the United States. In fact, due to U.S. dominance of screen time in Canada they are hard to find in Canada. The best chance to see a Canadian film is at an international film festival. But Canadian films were in abundance in Bowling Green this past September. BGSU students and community members were treated to screenings of three Canadian films followed by the opportunity to discuss content, production technique, and financing with the filmmakers.

As students learned, film production in Canada is a growth industry but ironically that is bad news for Canadian producers. Better paying American producers, backed by big U.S. production companies, are pricing Canadian producers out of their own market. It doesn't stop there. Canadian filmmaking is analogous to independent filmmaking in the U.S.—only without the private money. For novice and experienced directors alike filmmaking in Canada tends to be publicly funded with more strings attached.

The series was hosted by Henry Garrity, Chair of Romance Languages, in conjunction with his course on Canadian film. John Laycock, Entertainment Writer for the *Windsor Star* and on hand for the entire series,

joked that he had to come to Ohio to see a Canadian film. Indeed, screen time in Canada is devoted overwhelmingly to product from Hollywood. But before Canadian producers compete for screen time they have to win the resources to make the films in the first place. Each director in the series is at a different stage in his career.

Veteran director **Jean Pierre Lefebvre** reinforced the notion that there are indeed distinctly Canadian methods of storytelling. He opened the series with “Aujourd’hui ou jamais” the last of a trilogy begun during the 1960’s Quiet Revolution in Québec. The trilogy is a metaphor of Québec’s evolving place within Canada over the last four decades.

The second film featured a freshman effort “Full Blast” filmed in Bathurst, New Brunswick by **Rodrigue Jean**, a native of the same province.

The final film, “The Law of Enclosures,” is the most recent release by **John Greyson**. During his visit Greyson explained that he prefers making films in Canada, despite all the difficulties, because he has the control to make the kinds of movies that he wants to make. Prevailing over many challenges, each director in his own way has found a measure of success as an independent artist.







# Post-Election Reflection

The U.S. and Canadian national election campaigns will be the focus of a presentation by Stephen Brooks on April 13<sup>th</sup> at the Ohio-Canadian Studies Roundtable. The close timing of both elections during this past November highlighted some obvious differences between our two systems. Dr. Brooks, Professor of Political Science at the University of Windsor, will explore how these and deeper differences influence the relationship between Canada and the U.S.

The Roundtable, as in previous years, will be a stress-free gathering of Canadianists from colleges and universities across Ohio. Breakout sessions on culture, literature, business and economics, and of course politics will be among the special interest areas in which attendees can choose to participate. The Roundtable is a collaboration with the University of Akron. If you would like to join the group in Columbus this spring, please contact Linda Snyder at 419.372.2457.

## Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for the following events. Please contact **Linda Snyder at 419.372.2457** if you are interested in more information.

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|  January 20, 2001  | Fourteenth Annual Reddin Symposium, BGSU, Ohio        |
|  February 13, 2001 | Daniel Richler, BGSU, Ohio                            |
|  February 27, 2001 | Dany Laferrière, Pallister Québec Lecturer BGSU, Ohio |
|  March 29, 2001    | Garry Geddes, BGSU, Ohio                              |
|  April 10, 2001    | Lori Saint-Martin, BGSU, Ohio                         |
|  April 13, 2001    | Ohio-Canadian Studies Roundtable, Columbus, Ohio      |

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