



# UNAC NEWS

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION IN CANADA-WINNIPEG BRANCH  
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Fall 2010-Winter 2011

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## DATE ANNOUNCED FOR ANNUAL PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

The United Nations Association in Canada Winnipeg Branch is pleased to announce that the annual Public Speaking Competition is to be held this year on **May 18th at Grant Park High School.**

The year 2011 marks the beginning of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety. In honour of this, the speaking topics for this year's competition will be based on road safety issues. The competition will encourage students to think

critically about what road safety issues mean both for Canadians and for the rest of the world.

The competition is open to Manitoba students in grades 5-12. For more details, email us at [office@unacwinnipeg.ca](mailto:office@unacwinnipeg.ca).

## FEATURE: UNA-CANADA INAUGURAL MODEL ARCTIC COUNCIL

Whitehorse, October 27-30, 2010

By Dana Mackie



*Dana Mackie went to Whitehorse in October as a staff member for the Model Arctic Council.*

The Arctic Council is a "high level forum to provide a means for promoting co-operation, coordina-

tion and interaction among the Arctic States...Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants..." (Iqaluit Declaration 1998) and it is comprised of eight working groups. The Model Arctic Council (MAC) was estab-

lished as a simulation of the Arctic Council by the United Nations Association of Canada (UNAC), initiated by Kate White, president of UNAC.

High school students from across Canada's North and from Russia came to discuss issues facing the Arctic today at a four day forum hosted in Yukon's capital, Whitehorse. The students were divided into three of the eight working groups; Protection

of the Seas, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program and Sustainable Development Working Group, and represented the Arctic States, permanent participants and observers.

The delegates spent the first day in their working groups, discussing issues important to their delegations such as drilling for oil and preserving culture, amongst others. The delegates then collaborated on memos of

*(continued on p.2)*

**Photo: Dana Mackie (third from right), UNA-Canada Executive Director Kate White (far left) and Model Arctic Council Staff**

## 2011 MODEL ARCTIC COUNCIL

*(Continued from p.1)*

intent which, after proceeding through the voting process, were brought to the Arctic Council sessions the next day. The Arctic Council sessions that occurred on the second day allowed the working groups to come together to amend and vote upon the recommendations that each working group had presented. The final day was when the ministerial meeting took place and the delegates representing the Arctic States addressed their fellow delegates, thanking them for their cooperation and hard work.

The delegates were also

able to hear Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie speak at the opening ceremonies, there was a tour of the Yukon College and Member of Parliament Larry Bagnell left the group with some inspiring words at the closing ceremonies.

MAC provided an exceptional opportunity for students from across the North to not only discuss issues important to the Arctic but it was also an opportunity to come up with creative and innovative solutions for these issues. The inaugural Model Arctic Council was an enormous success and it was thanks to the hard work which notably Kate White, Denise Siele, Ellen Ramsay and David Crowe put into it.

## UNAC WINNIPEG BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010-2011

<b>Past President</b>	Ashok Athavale
<b>President</b>	Lori Darragh
<b>Vice-President</b>	Daniel Little
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<b>Branch Coordinator</b>	Marina Goodwin

## UNAC WINNIPEG IS ON FACEBOOK!

Check us out at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/United-Nations-Association-in-Canada-Winnipeg/179793508700624>

## WITH THANKS....

The branch gratefully acknowledges the support of:

Louis Riel School Division  
St. James-Assiniboia School Division  
Seven Oaks School Division  
Manitoba Teachers' Society  
Manitoba School Boards Association

who all kindly donated in support of our annual programming, including the Human Rights Conference and Public Speaking Competition.

Thank you again to these organizations for providing us with your invaluable support.

## FALL 2010 IN REVIEW

### UN DAY

UNAC Winnipeg's Annual UN Day Celebration was held October 25<sup>th</sup> at the Manitoba Legislative Building.

Remarks were made by branch President Lori Darragh; His Honor the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba; the Hon. Nancy Allan, Minister of Education; the Hon. Dr. Jon Gerrard, leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba; and Mr.

Hugh McFayden, Leader of the Official Opposition. The winners of the branch's 2010 Public Speaking Competition were recognized at the ceremony, and a reception generously sponsored by Manitoba Education was held afterwards.

Entertainment was provided at the event by the Andrew Mynarski and Riverbend School Choirs.



UN Day performance by the Riverbend School choir

### HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

By Jacklynn Stott

UNAC's annual Human Rights Conference, held on December 10th at the University of Winnipeg, was a big success! 162 Manitoba high school students attended a series of sessions to learn about human rights issues and how they can make a difference.

The theme for this year's conference was Peace and Justice in Action. Sessions included topics such as active citizenship, fair trade, woman and human rights issues, and peace in action through theatre.

A keynote address was delivered by music producer and philanthropist, Darcy Ataman whose *Song for Africa* brought together award-winning Canadian artists to educate Canada's youth on AIDS in Africa. The success of the single motivated Ataman to formalize *Song for Africa* into a non-profit organization.

In addition to attending

sessions, students viewed a documentary entitled *The Day After Peace*; many who viewed it voiced a strong appreciation for the film. Students were served a nutritious lunch, catered by the University of Winnipeg, and were invited to share their thoughts at the end of the day through the writing of postcards, in which the majority of students indicated that they felt that they had gained something valuable from the conference.

A number of volunteers were present to lend a hand, hosting sessions and

leading groups. Many showed interest in volunteering for UNAC events in the future. The cost of the conference was covered by donations from Winnipeg school divisions, and through past donations to UNAC.

Thank you to conference chair Sylvia Lapointe and branch vice-president Daniel Little for all of your hard work with the overseeing of the conference, and to all of our volunteers and presenters for their hard work in making the conference a great success!



Students from Maples Collegiate celebrate UN Day

### UN Day at Maples Collegiate

Many Winnipeg high schools showed their support for the United Nations by celebrating UN Day. Maples Collegiate sent us an account of how they celebrated the day.

As part of UN Day, Maples Collegiate student and staff wore something that represented their country of origin. For some it was a simple flag on their shirt, while others wore traditional outfits. In our morning announcements we talked about how important the UN is in the development of a peaceful and collaborative world.

Those that participated in the celebration and event got their names drawn for free locally printed T-shirts. All together, we had close to 80 students that got involved. We created posters and advertisements to commemorate the day as well.

— Fortunado Lim,  
Learning Support, Maples Collegiate, Winnipeg.

# RESERVIST SERVES WITH UNITED NATIONS IN SUDAN



By Capt Jamie Bell

because they ride camels. Although they do not participate in Sudanese society as a whole or take sides in the North-South conflict, nomads often get into fights with various tribes on their migration routes—quite possibly at the urging of groups allied with the Northern or Southern factions. So our tasks included openly monitoring their movements and investigating any incidents.

In all our tasks, we interacted with as many Sudanese as we could. I especially liked meeting children who almost all eagerly came up to us, the only foreigners to likely visit their villages in months, if ever, and immediately start greeting us with whatever English they could. “Hello! How are you? Where are you from?”

It is a very encouraging sign indeed to see most kids under 10 speaking English fairly well, considering they have absolutely no access to television, practically no access to any books or the Internet, and only one radio station — if they can get to a radio. No iPods or Xbox here. School is usually held outside under a tree, or possibly in a mud-walled building, with no teaching materials.

Despite the children’s smiles, we saw few encouraging signs. Some people displaced during the years of conflict have begun to return to South Sudan, but millions more remain in the North or in neighbouring countries. Some reconstruction is under way here and there, but not nearly enough when you consider the peace agreement was

From September 2009 to March 2010, I deployed to Sudan as a United Nations Military Observer, or ‘UNMO.’ I found it hard to leave my family and take leave of absence from my civilian job and The Governor General’s Foot Guards, my Reserve unit, but —as they say—it seemed like a good idea at the time.

The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), which has been in place since 2005, has already supervised the separation of belligerent forces. Most of the work now involves patrolling to various military camps — mostly the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) or the joint Sudan Alliance Forces/SPLA formations created by the peace agreement — to verify numbers of troops and weapons. Of course, this is one of the best parts of this experience, driving in the middle of Africa far from anywhere, getting out and interacting with the local people.

Nomadic tribes constitute one third of the population of Sudan, and they don’t belong to either the North or South; they migrated to this region generations ago from across North Africa. Twice a year, they move with all their animals and possessions from one end of the country to the other, from north to south in the dry season, and from south to north again when the rains begin. The people walk or ride their cattle, and you can tell who the chiefs are

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signed five years ago. Everywhere there was the worst poverty I have ever seen, with little being done about it. Most people seem satisfied that comparatively little fighting is going on, although everyone seems constantly ready either to resume fighting or to run away.

National elections were held this year and a referendum on unity is now under way. Until then, the U.N. and the world community seem to be crossing their fingers, and Sudan is still a place where no one can predict what may happen. The next few years will be the test that determines the outcome of the long-standing North-South unity problem in Su-

dan. It will be an even bigger test for the U.N. and the world community.

For the Canadian Forces, this mission can be overshadowed by the sheer size of our commitment in Afghanistan, but it’s just as important. Whatever the outcome of the elections and the referendum, the people of Sudan face many other challenges. Perhaps, if peace lasts long enough, just a little development and prosperity will follow.

*Capt Jamie Bell is a member of The Governor General’s Foot Guards, an Army Reserve unit based in Ottawa, Ontario.*

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*Photos courtesy of Capt. Jamie Bell*