

Summary:

A. Border Related News Media

Security/Transportation:

- **Fugitive from Georgia caught at NY northern border**
- **Deputies get K-9 training at academy**

Politics:

- **Hochul at home in House**

Business/Trade:

- **Bombardier reports stronger earnings on business jets**

Culture/Tourism:

- **Cities invite tourists to stop and smell the roses**
- **Arts venues collaborate**

B. Border Communications

- **Slaughter Thanks Canada for Contributions to America on 9/11**
- **Modification - Free Trade and Open Markets Fundamental to the Financial Security of Canadians**
- **Congressman Higgins to Introduce Amendment That Seeks to Make Buffalo-Niagara Eligible for 2012 Security Funding**
- **Higgins, Slaughter & Tonko Fight for Security Funding for Upstate New York**
- **Schumer: Southwest Merger With AirTran Presents New Opportunity To Improve And Expand Air Service At Buffalo Niagara Airport – Company Considering New Routes After Joining With AirTran**
- **N.Y. CBP Arrest Woman Wanted on Animal Cruelty Charges**
- **The Capital Corridor Newsletter – June-2011**
- **Embassy: Canada's Foreign Policy Newsweekly**

C. Editorials/Columns

- **A week of hockey hysteria**

D. Citizens Views (write-in letters)

REPORT:

A. Border Related News Media

Fugitive from Georgia caught at NY northern border
Buffalo News - May 30, 2011

A former animal rescue worker wanted in Georgia following the discovery of dozens of animal carcasses on her property was awaiting extradition Monday after being picked up at the U.S.-Canadian border. Christiane Babic, 39, also known as Christiane Judd, arrived with her three sons at the Peace Bridge border crossing in Buffalo on Saturday after being denied entry into Canada. When records revealed that the German citizen is wanted in Long County, Ga., U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents turned her over to Buffalo police, agency officials said. Judd, who authorities say is in the United States on an expired visitor visa, ran a 10-acre animal rescue operation with her husband in Ludowici, Ga., until earlier this month, when she called another rescue group to say she was leaving town. When workers arrived to look after the animals, they found dozens of dead cats and dogs, some of them in cages. Conditions at Loonie Farms Animal Rescue are believed to have deteriorated after Judd's husband, James Judd, was returned to prison earlier this year for violating parole by possessing a shotgun, Long County sheriff's Lt. Tom Sollosi said. Judd has a criminal history of dealing in stolen property, he said. "Things just spiraled downward and her economic situation became worse each month," Sollosi said Monday. Christiane Judd married James Judd last year after arriving from Germany with her children, Sollosi said, but never applied for permanent residency and was ineligible to work after her husband, whose income she relied upon, was locked up. Judd may have been trying to enter Canada on Saturday with hopes of returning to Germany, he said. Authorities were arranging for her sons to be reunited with family in Germany, he said. Sollosi did not know whether Judd has a lawyer and the information was not available Monday from Buffalo police or the jail where she was being held. Investigators found roughly 70 carcasses at Loonie Farms, including at least four dogs that had starved to death. Some of the animals may have died from illness or been euthanized and not properly disposed of at the facility, which accepted castoffs from no-kill shelters and private residents, investigators said. Judd had been warned against improperly disposing of animals during an April 7 inspection, Sollosi said. On the verge of losing the property to foreclosure, she had recently signed the land over to the previous owners and been given 30 days to leave, he said. "The whole thing got away from her," he said.

Deputies get K-9 training at academy
Buffalo News - June 1, 2011

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office saved a bunch of money this week when it sent several of its deputies to a four-day seminar on Tuesday to get nationally recognized K-9 training. That's because they didn't have to travel far. For the first time, the training is being offered in the new Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy, which opened in March at Niagara University. About 40 officers from Western New York and Canada are attending the training this week, including officers from Amherst, Lockport and Niagara Falls. The seminar is being led by nationally recognized Officer William J. Nott Jr., who retired in 2007 from the Ledyard Police Department in Connecticut. A K-9 handler, he founded the Connecticut Police Work Dog Association in 1990. The "Canine Support Team and Tactical Training" seminar gives K-9 officers a trained team to follow as they lead their dogs into an emergency situation. Nott's training is focused on high-risk deployments with dogs, and includes information about communication, team building, clearing a building, officer down drills, rolling cover, shield drills and car extractions. Niagara County Sheriff James R. Voutour is happy to offer such training so close to home. "It's a huge boon in these tough times," Voutour said. "All the locals are represented. That's the beauty of being able to bring it here. We are getting 10 seats at a nominal cost. If we were to send people away, it would cost a fortune." The academy moved to Niagara University in part to allow local trainers to bring in top trainers, Voutour said. Sheriff's Sgt. James Hildreth is a deputy in charge of special services who has worked as a K-9 officer for 16 years. He said this week's K-9 training program provides a lot of information to help keep officers safe, and has never been offered in Western New York. "We like to send options so that an attacker will give up peacefully," Hildreth said. "Barking dogs are very intimidating. A lot of people don't respect the police. You show them a gun and they don't care, but you threaten to release a dog and they really do respect that, and that's our advantage." The seminar includes practice of K-9 skills using intense real-world scenarios which are enacted on the NU campus. "[Officers] never know who they are going to get when they go out to look for someone in a tracking situation. They are holding a dog, not a gun, so this [training is] their support team," Voutour said. Voutour said the university this week also opened up dormitories to provide inexpensive housing, and there is food available on campus for those who are participating. "They have great theaters, including an instructional theater," the sheriff said. We are looking at bringing street survivor school here, a national program on officer survival. It comes to Buffalo maybe once every six years and it's expensive. "If we can host that, we've got great facilities and anytime you host it you get a bunch of free seats," Voutour said. "It's a great deal for the Sheriff's Office."

Hochul at home in House
Buffalo News - June 2, 2011

Rep. Kathleen C. Hochul officially took a seat in the House on Wednesday, and both former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Hochul's 8-year-old niece seemed equally happy about it all. For proof, just listen to what Pelosi, now the Democratic minority leader, had to say about her new Democratic colleague. "Kathy was a great candidate, she'll be a great congresswoman and she really was a winner," said Pelosi, D-Calif., who stressed that Hochul "will bring her independent voice to the Congress." And for further proof, witness what 8-year-old Amanda Courtney did while Hochul was standing at the doorway, greeting guests at a reception Rep. Brian Higgins, D-Buffalo, held in the new congresswoman's honor. Amanda walked up to the 26th District's new congresswoman and handed her a bright green Post-It note that read: "Aunt Kathy -- go, go!" Hochul was surely on the go in her first day in office, a day that carried her from her swearing-in to her first vote to the reception that Pelosi and other top Democratic leaders visited. Even before being sworn into office, Hochul found herself surrounded by a gaggle of national reporters who flocked to her because of the unlikelihood and significance of her victory in last week's special election to fill the seat left vacant by the scandal-scarred former Rep. Chris Lee, R-Amherst. And an hour later when Hochul took the oath of office from Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, the House Democratic caucus erupted in cheers. Hochul later described the experience as humbling, and it certainly seemed to be that as she took to the well of the House to address her new colleagues for the first time. The new lawmaker thanked her family and appeared to choke up when mentioning her husband, U.S. attorney William Hochul, whom she called "my rock and my inspiration." She also thanked her staff, supporters and an important mentor, former Rep. John J. LaFalce, D-Town of Tonawanda. From there, Hochul expressed confidence that Congress can work together for the country's benefit. "Today I enter these chambers confident that we can tackle the challenges that are presented to us," she said. "We can and must find common sense solutions to the problems facing each of our districts and our country." Members of both parties then rushed over to introduce themselves to Hochul, who is both the most junior of the House's 435 members and one of its more famous junior members. Her surprise victory in a strongly Republican district made national news, and therefore made her name known to all of her colleagues in a chamber where new members often toil in anonymity for months or even years. And as irony would have it, when it came time for Hochul to cast her first vote, it was on the issue that propelled her campaign. "Kathy's first vote was to save Medicare," said Rep. Louise M. Slaughter, D-Fairport. "She's already kept her promise." Indeed, Hochul cast her first vote against a procedural measure that, in setting up debate on a homeland security funding bill, reiterated the House's support for a controversial GOP budget that would turn Medicare into a voucher program for those now under age 55. Hochul beat Assemblywoman Jane L. Corwin, a Republican, and "Tea Party" candidate Jack Davis in part by pummeling that GOP budget plan, which Corwin supported. And in wake of her victory, Hochul's winning Medicare message is now the Democratic message. "Democrats stand stronger and more united than ever before in our fight to protect Medicare for our seniors today and for generations to come," Pelosi said in an e-mail to Democratic donors Tuesday that cited Hochul's win. Democrats see that as a message that can win elections next year, and they point to a CNN poll that showed 58 percent of those surveyed opposing the GOP plan to privatize Medicare. Not surprisingly, then, both on the floor of the House and at the reception after Hochul's swearing-in ceremony, it seemed that happy times were here again for Democrats only seven months after they lost control of the House to resurgent Republicans. "The spirits of the Democrats have been lifted by this," Higgins said. "People just seem more jovial than they have been." And none were more jovial than Hochul, a perpetually sunny personality who greeted dozens of visitors -- from several siblings to 18 nieces and nephews to her childhood priest to House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, D-Md. -- with kind words and hugs and her trademark smile. Talking about the job ahead of her, though, she turned serious. "It was euphoric" to be sworn into the House of Representatives, she said. "But then I was really overwhelmed with the weight of it all. I thought of all the people who've served here, and the weight of the responsibility. It all hit home." She said her Washington office, in Lee's old space at Suite 1711 of the Longworth House Office Building, is already open. And at least one of her Western New York offices, possibly also in an old Lee space, could open as soon as next week. In addition, Hochul is already working toward getting committee assignments, with the Agriculture Committee ranking as one top possibility. Hochul stressed, though, that the residents of the 26th district will be seeing plenty of her, just as they did during her campaign. Now a Hamburg resident, she plans to move to the district -- which stretches from Amherst eastward toward the Rochester suburbs -- shortly. "I want to get back to the diners" that were her favorite campaign stops, she said. "I want to go back to the people who put me here."

Bombardier reports stronger earnings on business jets Buffalo News - June 1, 2011

Bombardier Inc., the world's third-largest maker of civilian commercial aircraft, said Wednesday first-quarter profits rose to \$220 million and revenues increased 9 percent due in part to a recovery in the business-jet market. The Montreal-based plane and train maker also announced a firm order for 10 of its CSeries commercial aircraft, with a list price of \$665 million, from a Swedish leasing company. Bombardier said net income was equal to 12 cents per share, above analyst

expectations of 10 cents per share. A year earlier, the company had reported weaker profits of \$195 million, or 11 cents per share. Revenues increased to \$4.7 billion, stronger than expectations according to a poll by Thomson Reuters, and above \$4.3 billion a year ago. President and CEO Pierre Beaudoin said they are starting to benefit from a stronger business aircraft market, especially at the high end. "The cloud of uncertainty hanging over civil aviation is lifting, with a substantial increase in our orders for business jets in the last quarter," Bombardier president and CEO Pierre Beaudoin said in a speech to shareholders at Bombardier's annual meeting. Bombardier booked 77 business jet net orders, up from six a year earlier. Deliveries of commercial planes rose to 23 from 16. Bombardier also said Wednesday that Braathens Leasing Limited, a member of Braathens Aviation of Sweden, has placed a firm order for five Bombardier CS100 and five CS300 mainline jetliners. Investors are looking to see how many orders Bombardier gets for its much-touted C-Series single-aisle plane. Bombardier currently has 100 firm orders for the C-Series, which launched in 2008 and is due for its first delivery in 2013. Bombardier eventually hopes to capture half the global market for 100-149 seat planes and is marketing its touted C-Series single-aisle plane as being 20 percent more fuel-efficient than the comparable Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 family of aircraft. Shares of Bombardier rose more than 4 percent, or 33 cents Canadian, to CA\$7.08 (US\$7.29) in morning trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Arts venues collaborate
Watertown Daily Times – June 1, 2011

Seven performing arts venues in Northern New York and Southeastern Ontario have teamed to produce the "1000 Islands Performing Arts Experience," a unified approach to publicizing music and theater acts staged throughout the region. The combined website, www.Stage1000.com, debuted in May to complement 25,000 copies of a glossy, full-color tri-fold brochure that includes each venue's info/lineup, a map of the region and performances scheduled throughout the summer. American participants are the Clayton Opera House, Ogdensburg Command Performances and the Disabled Persons Action Organization. Canadian partners are the Brockville Arts Centre, St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival, Prescott, Thousand Islands Playhouse, Gananoque, and the Upper Canada Playhouse, Morrisburg. Brochures are available from each venue as well as the New York Welcome Center at the Thousand Islands Bridge in Collins Landing, and Interstate 81 rest areas near Watertown and Alexandria Bay. They are also available by contacting the 1000 Islands International Tourism Council at 1 (800) 846-5263.

Cities invite tourists to stop and smell the roses
Buffalo News - May 28, 2011

More cities are inviting travelers to stop and smell the roses, hoping that they'll also taste the food, see the sights, hear some music - and spend some money. Garden tourism has blossomed as an attractive niche for cities, not only as a way to spruce up their collective curb appeal but to generate green for hotels, restaurants and shops. Around the country, there are as many events to pick from as a field of wildflowers. Buffalo is gearing up for its annual Garden Festival, where the main event is a weekend of meandering through the eclectic backyards of some 350 home gardeners. Western New York neighbor Rochester has its fragrant lilac festival. Albany revels in its showy Mother's Day tulips. In North Carolina, it's an Azalea Festival. And in Deer Isle, Maine, it's the Lupine Festival. There are some 3,000 garden-centered events and festivals in the United States yearly, said Richard Benfield, author of the upcoming book "Garden Tourism." He estimates earth-friendly garden tourism to be one of the country's fastest growing areas of leisure and recreation, appealing not only to an older crowd that may have outgrown the roller-coaster scene, but also to younger homeowners in search of landscaping inspiration and to anyone in search of a simple breath of fresh air. "In terms of our society," Benfield said, "there's an element of wanting more beauty, that people are tired of the sterile, gray, urban. We're looking much more for something a little deeper and there are many studies that suggest flora and biological species do a lot for the human spirit." Buffalo's self-guided free Garden Walk, now in its 17th year, has been drawing crowds of 45,000 to 50,000 people, on par with regional events like the Vermont Maple Festival, Cincinnati River Festival and Little River Blue Crab Festival in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Organizers found 36 states and nearby Canada represented in a ZIP code survey of 2,864 of last year's attendees, while overall, about a quarter of visitors were from out of town. A longer questionnaire of 258 people determined that visitors spent an average of \$68 and reported attending an average of 3.39 garden events each year. "We were impressed," said walk President Jim Charlier, "It was nice to see the breadth of states and Canada." The ever-growing crowds last year inspired the creation of the broader Garden Festival. Instead of a single weekend, five weeks of garden-related walks, tours, seminars and other special events are now promoted to draw in and keep tourists busy at sites that, as an added bonus, often don't need the expensive staffs and maintenance of attractions like amusement parks or museums. Between June 24 and July 31, visitors can vote in a front yard contest pitting landscapers against each other and see "open gardens," a concept borrowed from England in which the best private gardens are open for evening visits.

Tourists also are encouraged to see the Buffalo Japanese Garden, a gift from Kanazawa, Japan, and modeled after that city's scenic Kenrokuen Garden, as well as the Delaware Park Rose Garden and Erie Basin Marina test gardens, where new annuals are evaluated. "For people coming a great distance, you have to show them that there are a critical mass of experiences," said Ed Healy, spokesman for the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau. Visitors need to know "that it's really worth their while to jump in the car and drive up here from White Plains or to get on a plane and come up here from Baltimore," he said. At Albany's annual Tulip Festival, organizers make a point not only to showcase the spectacular 200,000 flowers. They also book entertainment on two stages and have events like the crowning of the Tulip Queen to keep visitors in town, Albany special events spokesman Jason Bonafide said. The weekend typically draws 80,000 people. A newspaper write-up about the Buffalo Garden Walk caught the attention of Jan Kious, a Cleveland gardener who decided to make the four-hour drive from a fellow rust-belt city that has battled public perception. She was so inspired by the way Buffalo's home gardens had boosted property values and community pride that she brought the idea back home with her: Cleveland's inaugural garden walk is June 25. Besides private homes, the tour will include farms, vineyards and orchards that have sprouted up on property left vacant by the nation's foreclosure crisis. "There is such enormous support for it, it boggles the mind," said Kious. The Cleveland Botanical Gardens stepped forward to throw a free party for 300 people, just one of several offers of support. "These are things we didn't even seek out," Kious said. "It honestly feels like an idea whose time has come." No one tallies up the attendance and spending of all of the thousands of events held around the country each year. But one indicator of the nation's love of gardens, Benfield points out, is the National Garden Association's annual survey measuring home gardeners' habits. From 2009 to 2010, household participation in all types of do-it-yourself lawn and garden activities increased by 2 million households, to 83 million households, the survey found. "No one is disappointed by floral splendor at the end of the day," Benfield said. "Flowers don't disappoint."

B. Border Communications

Slaughter Thanks Canada for Contributions to America on 9/11

Introduces Resolution in House of Representatives highlighting the Hospitality of Gander, Newfoundland and Other Towns Which Accepted American Flights as Airspace Closed

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) announced today that she has introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives that thanks the residents of Gander, Newfoundland and citizens of Canada for their contributions to the United States in the waking hours of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

For the first time in history on that fateful day, both the United States and Canada closed their airspace immediately grounding thousands of planes, many of which landed in Canada.

Particularly inspiring are the contributions of the Town of Gander in Newfoundland and Labrador whose airport received 38 flights, the second highest amount in Canada. The stranded passengers practically overwhelmed the town of 9,600 residents who went onto selflessly provide passengers with food, shelter, potluck suppers, guided tours, whale-watching excursions and impromptu concerts.

"I know that you can't ask for any better neighbors or friends than the people of Canada," said Slaughter who represents Niagara Falls, Buffalo and Rochester, NY. "It's been almost 10 years since America was attacked on 9/11. As we look back on that dark day, we remember not only those who we lost but also recognize the friendships that were strengthened and the hospitality of our neighbors to the north who aided American passengers in our hour of need. There has always been a unique bond between Canada and America and for their friendship, we again say thank you."

The resolution, H.Res 286, was introduced last night into the United States House of Representatives.

The resolution states, "Resolved that the House of Representatives, on behalf of a grateful American people, recognize and thank the citizens of Gander, Newfoundland and all other citizens across Canada who, during a time of unprecedented crisis, challenge and uncertainty, came to the aid of Americans and forever cemented the generosity, goodwill and mutual understanding that has defined the bilateral relationship between the United States and Canada."

Full text of the resolution is included below.

H.Res 286

Recognizing, on the occasion of the 52nd annual meeting of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group in September, 2011 in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, the immeasurable assistance Gander International Airport, the Canadian Government and the citizens of Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador, provided to the United States immediately following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001.

Whereas the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration ordered U.S. airspace closed at 9:45 EDT, and all U.S.-bound flights were ordered to land at the nearest airport.

Whereas immediately following the closure of U.S. airspace, Transport Canada ordered the closure of Canadian airports except for outgoing police, military and humanitarian flights, and incoming Canada and U.S. bound international flights.

Whereas this marked the first occasion that either the United States or Canada closed its airspace.

Whereas Transport Canada initiated Operation Yellow Ribbon following the closure of the U.S. airspace to handle the diversion of civilian airline flights bound for the United States.

Whereas the purpose of Operation Yellow Ribbon was to remove all air traffic from U.S. airspace and away from potential U.S. targets as quickly as possible to minimize further terrorist threats.

Whereas NAV CANADA – Canada's civil air navigation services provider – recorded 239 aircraft destined for the U.S. and Canada landing safely at 17 airports in Canada.

Whereas Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed more airline passengers than any other province, with 13,000 stranded individuals.

Whereas about half of the 75 aircraft that landed in Newfoundland in fact landed at Gander International Airport, which is known to airline pilots around the world as the lifeboat of the Atlantic and is the first North American airport on the trans-Atlantic route.

Whereas before the terrorist attacks, Gander International Airport was scheduled to receive eight flights that day and instead received the second most number of flights, at 38, and the second most number of passengers, at 6,600, out of all the Canadian airports during Operation Yellow Ribbon. Whereas the Town of Gander in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, has a population of approximately 9,600, only 3,000 more than the total number of stranded passengers.

Whereas the citizens of Gander and other Newfoundlanders provided stranded passengers with food, clothing, shelter, medicine, potluck suppers, guided tours, whale-watching excursions and impromptu concerts over the course of three tense and uncertain days.

Whereas the kindness and generosity offered by the citizens of Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador to stranded American passengers will forever be remembered as an embodiment of human compassion.

Whereas the stranded passengers have since sponsored scholarships for Newfoundlanders, donated computer equipment to area communities, financed a new conference room for the Gander area community of Lewisporte and held annual reunions to show their appreciation for the goodwill of the citizens of Gander.

Whereas the United States owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to the citizens of Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Whereas all local Canadian communities surrounding the affected airports also welcomed the large number of passengers and accommodated them in their homes and public facilities.

Whereas the United States also owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to all Canadian airports and the surrounding communities that welcomed the remaining flights:

in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1 flight to Deer Lake Regional Airport, 21 flights to St. John's International Airport, 7 flights to Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay and 8 flights to Stephenville International Airport;

in Nova Scotia, 47 flights to Halifax Stanfield International Airport;

in New Brunswick, 10 flights to Greater Moncton International Airport;

in Quebec, 10 flights to Montréal-Mirabel International Airport and 7 flights to Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport;

in Ontario, 14 flights to Toronto Pearson International Airport and 4 flights to John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport;

in Manitoba, 15 flights to Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport;

in Alberta, 6 flights to Edmonton International Airport and 13 flights to Calgary International Airport;
In the Northwest Territories, 1 flight to Yellowknife Airport;

in Yukon, 3 flights to Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport; and

in British Columbia, 34 flights to Vancouver International Airport.

Resolved that the House of Representatives, on behalf of a grateful American people, recognize and thank the citizens of Gander, Newfoundland and all other citizens across Canada who, during a time of unprecedented crisis, challenge and uncertainty, came to the aid of Americans and forever cemented the generosity, goodwill and mutual understanding that has defined the bilateral relationship between the United States and Canada.

Published June 1, 2011

Modification - Free Trade and Open Markets Fundamental to the Financial Security of Canadians

Modification: dollar figure changed in seventh paragraph

Free trade a key part of Harper government's plan for jobs and economic growth

(No. 151 - Modification - June 2, 2011 - noon ET) The Honourable Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, today underscored the Harper government's strong commitment to protecting and strengthening the financial security of hard-working Canadians by deepening and broadening Canada's trading relationships.

In his first keynote speech, delivered to members of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, representing businesses of all sizes from across Canada, Minister Fast stated that "International trade is, fundamentally, a kitchen-table issue, a matter of fundamental importance to the financial security of hard-working Canadians."

"The Harper government will never forget that one in five Canadian jobs is directly or indirectly dependent on exports and that trade accounts for almost 60 percent of our GDP," he added. "That is why we are committed to securing and deepening access to traditional markets—like the United States—and broadening and expanding access to more markets—like the European Union, India and the other fast-growing countries of Asia, and the Americas."

Minister Fast also used the occasion of the Chamber of Commerce's International Trade Day to release [Canada's State of Trade 2011](#), an annual publication of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada detailing this country's trade and investment status. The report indicates that Canadian exports and imports of goods and services to and from all major markets increased in 2010.

However, the Minister emphasized that the Harper government will not sit idle, and is committed to building on and intensifying Canada's pursuit of new and better trading relations.

“The global economic recovery remains fragile, and many threats remain. Jobs and economic growth to benefit Canadians are our government’s key focus. That is why we are committed to aggressively pursuing bilateral and regional trade talks and making more effective use of Canada’s diplomatic assets.”

Among these efforts is the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, which has the potential to boost two-way trade by 20 percent and add \$12 billion to Canada’s economy.

The government is also working to complete an agreement with India—one of the world’s fastest-growing and largest economies, with one billion customers—which has the potential to provide a \$6-billion boost to Canada’s economy.

“In addition, the Canada-U.S. shared vision for perimeter security and economic competitiveness, announced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and President Barack Obama, will see our countries working to create jobs, economic growth and prosperity,” said Minister Fast.

Minister Fast concluded his speech by asking all those who share these objectives to join with the Harper government to address and overcome the risks and challenges both here at home and abroad.

“We will only be as successful as we are united, as we strengthen and build the trade opportunities that will be crucial to Canada’s long-term economic success,” concluded Minister Fast.

“I pledge to you that the Harper government and I as minister are committed to being here for you as a strong partner, whether through tough negotiations on trade policy with other governments, or by ensuring we make even more effective use of Canada’s diplomatic assets in advancing the interests of Canadian businesses around the world.”

- 30 -

Congressman Higgins to Introduce Amendment That Seeks to Make Buffalo-Niagara Eligible for 2012 Security Funding

Homeland Security Bill Slashes Millions of Dollars from Region

As the House of Representatives considers FY2012 Homeland Security Appropriations (H.R. 2017), Congressman Brian Higgins (NY-27), a member of the Homeland Security and Foreign Affairs Committees, announced plans to introduce an amendment to change a portion of the bill that restricts the Buffalo-Niagara region and other cities across the nation from being eligible for Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Program Funding.

Congressman Dave Reichert joined Higgins in introducing the bipartisan amendment, which was also cosponsored by Congressmembers Tonko, Capps, Wasserman Schultz, Ellison, Cuellar, Moore, Fudge, Wilson, Reyes, Berkley, Brown, Matsui, Himes, Heck, Blumenauer, Pierluisi, Slaughter and Rigell that would enable more cities to compete for existing funds rather than subjecting the resources to an arbitrary 10-city cap.

“The arbitrary exclusion of some smaller but distinctive regions from the Urban Area Security Program despite demonstrated risk factors creates gaping holes in our national security,” said Higgins. “We are simply asking to keep the door open and allow regions to qualify based on substantiated security need through a fair application process.”

If the amendment fails to pass, the following cities/urban areas would be excluded from applying for Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Program funding in FY12: Phoenix, Anaheim/Santa Ana, Riverside, Denver, Miami Dade/Fort Lauderdale/Palm Beach, Orlando, Tampa, Atlanta, Baltimore, Detroit, Twin Cities, St. Louis, Las Vegas, Charlotte, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Portland, Pittsburgh, Norfolk, Seattle, Tucson, Bakersfield, Oxnard, Sacramento, Bridgeport, Hartford, Jacksonville, Honolulu, Indianapolis, Louisville, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Kansas City, Omaha, **Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester**, Columbus, Toledo, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, San Juan, Providence, Memphis, Nashville, Austin, El Paso, San Antonio, Salt Lake City, Richmond, Milwaukee.

The UASI program, administered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), focuses on enhancing regional preparedness in targeted areas through collaboration that fosters integrated emergency prevention, protection, response and recovery.

For FY2010, 64 urban areas including the Buffalo-Niagara region, were eligible under the program. As a result of \$162 million in cuts included in the FY2011 Continuing Budget Resolution, rather than reducing allocation amounts, a decision was made to reduce eligible communities to 31 urban areas, eliminating all four New York upstate regions that previously qualified. The FY2012 Homeland Security Appropriations bill further cuts the program to just 10 urban areas.

Congressman Higgins has argued that the Western New York region has unique features beyond population which should factor into security need including: four international bridge crossings; the Niagara Power Project which serves as the largest electricity producer in New York State; and the homegrown al-Qaeda terrorist cell, the Lackawanna Six. It also sits along two Great Lakes which represent the largest fresh water supply in the world and serves as the center point of a 500 mile radius that includes approximately 55% of the US population and 62% of the Canadian population.

The legislation is currently under debate in the House of Representatives. Congressman Higgins will speak on the floor in opposition to the UASI provision that makes more than 50 U.S. cities ineligible for funds, regardless of threat and vulnerability levels.

Higgins, Slaughter & Tonko Fight for Security Funding for Upstate New York

Congressmembers Brian Higgins (NY-27), Louise Slaughter (NY-28) and Paul Tonko (NY-21) sent a letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) opposing the decision to remove Albany, Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse from eligibility in the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Program for 2011.

After the FY11 Continuing Resolution cut the UASI program by \$162 million, rather than reducing funding for all 64 urban areas, 32 regions, including the upstate New York communities, were eliminated from the program entirely.

“Over the last several years, New York’s four upstate communities combined have received a small fraction - just over one percent - of the total funding allocated nationally for the UASI program but the impact of these funds in terms of preparedness is substantial,” said Congressman Higgins, a member of the House Homeland Security Committee. “The upstate New York region has unique risk factors many of which if compromised could have a statewide and nationwide impact.”

“In Western New York we appreciate the many national security needs across the country, but when Upstate Cities, two of which are on an international border, are denied funding only to have funding allocated to smaller cities in America’s interior, I have to question our security priorities,” said Slaughter. “I think that if you ask law enforcement officials in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Albany, they’ll tell you that denying this small amount of funding to Upstate does not mean we are less at risk, instead we’ve shifted the financial burden of security on them.”

“The cuts to these critical homeland security funds are not just unfair but are also shortsighted,” said Congressman Tonko. “The federal government has a shared responsibility to provide the resources to help keep our communities safe, and taking these funds from upstate communities will endanger their efforts to protect the public and prepare for possible terrorist attacks.”

Below is a breakdown of total UASI funding to upstate regions in recent years:

Region	FY 2004 - FY 2010 Total Funding	Percentage of Total Funding
Albany	\$11,505,437	0.21%
Buffalo	\$42,819,785	0.79%
Rochester	\$6,088,401	0.11%
Syracuse	\$4,480,775	0.08%
Total for Upstate NY	\$64,894,398	1.19%
Total for U.S.	\$5,395,977,498	

The UASI program, administered by DHS, focuses on enhancing regional preparedness in targeted areas through collaboration that fosters integrated emergency prevention, protection, response and recovery. Each year eligible urban areas must re-apply for the federal funds distributed through the UASI program.

The following is the text of the letter sent by Reps. Higgins, Slaughter and Tonko:

May 25, 2011

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20393

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

We write to express our strong opposition to the Department of Homeland Security's decision to remove Albany, Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse from participation in the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) program in fiscal year 2011.

This decision disproportionately endangers New York. Suddenly and with little notice our four largest upstate communities learned, halfway through the fiscal year, that they would not receive the resources they planned on for emergency preparedness and response training. These communities encompass multiple international border crossings with Canada, span two Great Lakes, represent multiple transportation hubs for the Northeast region and are home to the regional energy transmission grid. They also encompass nuclear power plants, chemical facilities and other international infrastructure which are vulnerable to attack.

The removal of these cities from the UASI program will endanger the progress the State of New York and these communities have made to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks. This is being done at a time when the threat dynamic is changing and the risk of retaliation by both homegrown terrorists and Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda affiliates are high. This is a time for our communities to stay vigilant, however without the proper resources our communities cannot maintain the proper level of readiness, nor ensure our communities are properly secured. We cannot lay the entire financial burden of securing our cities from this international problem entirely on local governments and expect to adequately protect our citizens and make our cities safe.

Thank you for consideration of this important matter.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 31, 2011

SCHUMER: SOUTHWEST MERGER WITH AIRTRAN PRESENTS NEW OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND AIR SERVICE AT BUFFALO NIAGARA AIRPORT – COMPANY CONSIDERING NEW ROUTES AFTER JOINING WITH AIRTRAN

In Personal Phone Call With Southwest CEO Gary Kelly, Schumer Presses For Continued High Quality Service At Buffalo-Niagara Airport In Wake Of Merger With AirTran

Southwest Is Beginning To Take Close Look At Service In Upstate Markets, Considering Adding Additional Routes

Schumer: We Need To Seize This Opportunity To Improve Air Travel In Buffalo And Throughout Upstate New York

Today, U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer announced that he has called Southwest CEO Gary Kelly, urging him to consider expanding and improving Southwest's service at Buffalo-Niagara airport and across Upstate New York in the wake of the announced merger with AirTran. In response to Schumer's request, Kelly assured him that Southwest's network planning department is beginning to evaluate how best to link Southwest and AirTran's existing routes. Kelly also noted that the airline is considering its options for expanding beyond the combined map of the two airlines routes, opening up new pathways of travel for Upstate New Yorkers.

"The merger between AirTran and Southwest presents a unique opportunity to improve air service at Buffalo Niagara airport and across Upstate New York," said Schumer. "Southwest's arrival in Upstate New York has been welcomed with open arms by tourists, businesspersons, and families throughout the state. I am thrilled that Southwest is taking a close look at its service routes and considering how to expand in Upstate NY. I am going

to do everything I can to ensure that we build upon this success and use this chance to open up new routes and economic opportunities through the skies.”

Southwest announced in early May that it had completed its acquisition of AirTran, allowing the two companies to begin the process of merging. The company will now begin the process of evaluating how best to link its services with AirTran and what new markets they’ll be able to serve. According to Southwest, this merger opens up new opportunities to expand their network to markets that they don’t currently serve.

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics reports that, from the 2009 to the 2010 summer travel seasons, Southwest carried the most passengers at Buffalo Niagara International Airport with a 27.5% share. AirTran and Southwest are important to the economies of cities across Upstate New York, and a loss of any service would have a negative impact on travelers and businesses. When the merger between the two companies was first proposed, Schumer asked that Southwest commit to maintaining the current number of flights that Southwest and AirTran together service at Buffalo Niagara International Airport and LaGuardia Airport.

Access to frequent and convenient air service is vital to the continued economic viability of any region, especially those of New York State. The economies of communities across New York are undoubtedly grounded in the ability of their airports to move both business and leisure travelers alike, which is why maintaining current flights and looking to add additional flights in the future is so important.

Schumer has led the charge to bring affordable air service to Upstate New York. Since 2001, Schumer has helped to bring JetBlue flights to Syracuse, Buffalo, and Rochester, and Southwest flights to Albany. Schumer’s conversation with Southwest CEO Gary Kelly is part of his ongoing efforts to preserve and enhance upstate air service, aiding tourism, business development, and other travel throughout the state.

###

N.Y. CBP Arrest Woman Wanted on Animal Cruelty Charges

(Sunday, May 29, 2011)

Buffalo, N.Y. – U.S. Customs and Border Protection Field Operations announced the arrest of a German citizen wanted in Georgia on animal cruelty charges.

On May 28, CBP Officers working at the Peace Bridge port of entry in Buffalo, New York encountered 39-year-old Christiane Babic, also known as Christiane Judd, a German citizen living illegally in Ludowici, Georgia, as she presented herself for inspection after being denied entry into Canada. Primary system checks revealed the possibility of an active nationwide extradition warrant of arrest in the U.S. Babic was referred for a CBP secondary examination.

During the secondary examination, additional record checks confirmed that Babic was the subject of an arrest warrant for animal cruelty charges issued out of Long County, Georgia.

CBP officers verified the validity of the warrant and confirmed extradition to Georgia. Babic was arrested by CBP and turned over to the custody of the Buffalo Police pending extradition to Georgia.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

The Connection



Special points of interest:

- Security Costs
- Safety
- Logistics
- JIT Deliveries
- Post Office Problems
- Highway Funding

Inside this issue:

Transportation Safety	2
A Slow Recovery	2
Just-in-Time Deliveries	3
No Cash for Trucks	3
No Variable Mileage Tax	4
Notes From the Director	4

Rational Thinking on Security

Imagine you're trying to protect your house from a break-in. You put bars on all the windows, install dead-bolt locks, buy an alarm system and bump up your insurance. Still feeling vulnerable, you wall off your property, build security gates, string razor wire, put surveillance cameras around the perimeter and hire 24-hour guards. At some point, the tens of thousands of dollars worth of extra security exceeds any losses you might reasonably suffer in a robbery. And the chance of a theft is never completely eliminated.

That kind of calculation is a simple cost-benefit analysis. And there's always a tipping point, where additional spending starts to produce negligible benefits. The death of Osama bin Laden, which coincides with a resumption of perimeter security talks between Canada and the United States, is a perfect opportunity to reflect on the costs and benefits of a decade of work to thwart another 9/11.

Provocative new research by Ohio State University national security professor John Mueller and engineering professor Mark Stewart of Australia's University of Newcastle suggests we may already have gone way too far. All the money spent by the U.S. to deter terrorism far exceeds any reasonable estimate of the toll of likely future attacks. No one, for example, has bothered to do a full cost-benefit analysis of air marshals, border guards, body scanners, fences, drones, remote sensors and all the other post-9/11 realities. We do it for bridges, tax changes, major defense purchases, so why not security? The study puts the cumulative increase in U.S. homeland security spending in the decade since 9/11 at more than \$1-trillion. To justify this jaw-dropping sum, the extra security would have to deter an improbable 1,667 attacks every year on a scale of the foiled New York City Times Square bombing, according to their study.

That's because the frequency and severity of terrorist attacks remains relatively low. It's virtually impossible to justify a trillion dollars, based on "any rational and accepted standard of cost-benefit analysis," Prof. Mueller and Prof. Stewart argue. "Like crime and vandalism, terrorism will always be a feature of life, and a condition of zero vulnerability is impossible to achieve." Justifying the money spent is "challenging, to say the least," the authors argue.

These vast sums aren't just out of whack with the scale of the threat, they also create new problems. The study grimly points out that Muslim extremists have killed an estimated 200 to 300 people a year worldwide outside of war zones since 9/11. At the same time, delays and extra costs of enhanced airport security have prompted millions of people to drive rather than fly short-haul, resulting in clogged highways and more than 500 extra road deaths a year in the U.S. alone.

The conclusion too often reached by policy makers is that no amount of money spent on homeland security is too much. Ottawa and Washington are now busily working out what their Declaration on a Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness, signed in February, might ultimately mean. On the table for discussion are items such as better information sharing, coordinated entry-and-exit controls, customs preclearance and harmonized standards. Canada's major business groups are hopeful that the talks will help unlog the now much thicker border. And in theory, moving toward a more secure Canada-U.S. perimeter should reduce costs and eliminate overlap. But there's also a danger that too much effort is put into "security" and not enough on "competitiveness."

Courtesy The Globe and Mail

Transportation Safety

When Washington State transportation officials looked at highway crash data seven years ago, they were struck by how many accidents could be prevented with a relatively cheap improvement to their roads. Adding center-line rumble strips — which warn drifting drivers that they are crossing over into the opposite lane — turned out to be one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce crashes.



Like most states, Washington has long used rumble strips along the shoulders of interstate highways and some rural routes. In 1995, Washington DOT first experimented with them in the middle of the road as well. An analysis of the numbers in 2004 showed great results so the state stepped up the use of them dramatically.

Although this is one example of cost-effective spending on transportation, a recent study indicates that states do this in some categories much better than in others. The study indicated that all states do a solid job of collecting performance data and putting it to use. Information on crashes and fatalities are consistently used for new and improved highways. But in areas like economic development and environmental stewardship, most states are only beginning to employ performance measurement to enhance the quality of their transportation programs. The study

“Information on crashes and fatalities are consistently used for new and improved highways.”

reported that safety is the area in which states are doing the best job of measuring performance and responding to the results. The rumble strips are an excellent example. Washington have increased usage on roads from 100 miles to 1400 miles. These strips are especially effective on 2-lane roads - crossover collisions have improved by a multiple of three in data studied.

The federal government encourages states to look for ways to reduce crashes and fatalities on highways. In addition to the center-line rumble strips, states have cracked down on seatbelt use and driving distractions like cellular phone usage. These initiatives all add up to a continued decline in highway fatalities going back to the 1990s. Rumble strips are especially effective because they prevent crashes that are particularly deadly. Accidents in which a vehicle leaves its lane cause most of the traffic deaths in this country. In Washington during a four-year study, it was found that center-line collisions made up 2% of the crashes but 11% of the fatalities. The difficulty of seeing the center-line markings in bad weather, driver fatigue and driver distraction are all diminished by the rumble strips. This is an idea that more states should follow.

Courtesy stateline.org

A Slow Recovery

Despite the strength of the recovery in 2010, analysis of the world's leading listed transport and logistics companies shows that revenues have barely moved from levels seen in 2007. According to the report, in 2010 the revenues of the contract logistics, forwarding and trucking companies covered in the research grew by over 15% although this still did not make up for the dramatic fall the year before. In inflation-adjusted terms these companies' progress was even weaker, with revenues around or below 2006 levels.



Concerning profitability, the average margins of the companies covered in the report increased significantly in 2010. However the research identified that most industry players have operating profit margins of less than 5% and this raises an important issue. Although this may be sufficient for a 'low asset' operation, it may be inadequate for a logistics provider with its own fleet and asset base to sustain investment. The report concludes that the industry needs to increase its margins in 2011 and beyond.

This recovery still has some way to go.

Just-in-Time Deliveries

Fewer than five months into 2011, New Zealand and Japan have been slammed by powerful earthquakes. Turmoil has erupted in the Middle East with seemingly solid regimes falling and civil war breaking out, while the United States and Europe have experienced unusually cold winters. There has been "slow steaming" on the world's shipping lanes, all-freighter flights have been reduced or eliminated, and the shortage of qualified truck drivers is back.

Clearly, the \$1 trillion international transportation industry faces some formidable obstacles today, and no delivery system is as thoroughly exposed to these negative developments as the much-ballyhooed "just-in-time" (JIT) method of moving goods both domestically and around the world. JIT was first introduced in the early 1980s and quickly spread to the trucking industry — a shipper's dream come true. It reduced inventory to a minimum, saving substantial money while at the same time increasing production efficiency. Little wonder that JIT became the standard logistics system for land, air and sea transportation throughout the industrialized world.

Global political, economic and social conditions, however, have changed fundamentally in the past 25 years. Even nature seems to be conspiring against us. Ironically, Toyota, the first major supporter of JIT, found itself having to cut production

at its North American plants by 75% after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Likewise, despite all the talk about global warming, truckers last winter were paralyzed in many parts of the United States with roads under blankets of ice and snow. Thousands of tons of high-value freight sat in truck terminals throughout the Northeast and Midwest.

The successful application of JIT requires every link of the supply chain to remain unbroken. Trucks and their cargo must arrive within a very precise, predetermined period of time — often only hours before the cargo is needed on the assembly line. With JIT, the shipper is rolling dice with his freight, assuming a seven will come up every time. But the odds are getting longer that it won't. Given the natural and man-made disasters that have occurred so far in 2011, JIT's value must come into question. Yes, JIT could save thousands of dollars by way of lower inventory costs — but millions of dollars could vanish because assembly lines shut down or there's a lack of goods to distribute — and the billions of dollars spent by shippers, carriers and their agents annually are at stake.

The answer may well be "Just-in-Case" inventory, a system that increases inventory costs but assures a steady supply chain. This is a practical, realistic and efficient successor to JIT.



"Clearly the \$1 trillion international transportation industry faces some formidable obstacles"

No Cash for Trucks

The cash-strapped U.S. Postal Service lacks the money it needs to replace its aging delivery fleet, according to a new Government Accountability Office report. GAO estimates it would cost \$5.8 billion to replace the USPS' entire delivery fleet, or \$3.5 billion to refurbish it, using 2005 numbers.

Funds that could be used were already spent buying 40,000 flexible-fuel vehicles and minivans that use E85, a fuel that is an 85% ethanol blend, a fuel that is difficult to find around the country, the report

said. The USPS has met a 75% requirement for alternative fuel vehicles, but cannot put them on the road. Using E85 also can be costly because the fuel is less fuel efficient, postal officials said.

The report said USPS has no option but to maintain the vehicles it has, but noted the cost of that is rising, too, currently running 11% ahead of budget.

It is clear that not only highways and bridges are falling victim to the US cash crisis.





Thousand Islands Bridge Authority
Collins Landing
Alexandria Bay, NY 13607

Phone: 315 482-2501
Fax: 315 482-6064

howardkelly@thecapitalcorridor.com

The Capital Corridor ... Consider Yourself Connected

The Federal Bridge
Corporation Limited



No Variable Mileage Tax

The Obama administration recently officially distanced itself from any talk of instituting a national tax based on the number of miles vehicles travel (VMT), saying it is not considering such a levy on American drivers. In February, Obama discussed elements of a \$560 billion plan to reauthorize transportation spending but said he would leave it up to Congress to find a funding source for his extensive wish list, which included more spending for highways and passenger rail. Since Obama unveiled his plan, DOT and White House staff members have been meeting with congressional leaders in an effort to draft reauthorization legislation that will satisfy the diverse interests in the Republican-controlled House and in the Democratic-led Senate.

Both the American Trucking Associations and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce support an increase in the fuel tax rather than a VMT. Transportation experts feel that a VMT is a logical alternative to fuel taxes that have not kept pace with transportation needs as cars and trucks have become more fuel-efficient and as drivers turn to alternative power sources such as electricity.

www.thecapitalcorridor.com

Notes From The Director

Many of you will receive this newsletter via email in enough time to be reminded of the Capital Corridor's third annual conference, "Focus 2011-Business at the Border." This event, to be held on June 6 and 7 in Alexandria Bay, NY, will feature our usual assortment of bi-national speakers presenting on topics of interest to a wide variety of stakeholders. We will kick off the conference with a high-level look at the Canadian/U.S. trading relationship featuring the Canadian Consul General from Buffalo and the Minister Counselor for Economic Affairs from the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa. We will take a look at tourism issues with a particular emphasis on the motor coach industry with the President of the American Bus Association making the presentation. For those interested in the business of energy, we will have presenters speaking about ethanol production as well as commentary on solar and wind as energy sources. Our agriculture panel will look at wine making on both sides of the border. The day will conclude with a reception at

Boldt Castle in the heart of the 1000 Islands. This event, sponsored by the Thousand Island Bridge Authority, proved very popular last year. The Boldt Castle shuttle will be picking guests up at the conference site dock and returning guests to the resort after an evening of wonderful hors d'oeuvres and drinks.

Day Two will kick off with a presentation by Canadian MP Gord Brown, followed by presentations on transportation, the military and economic development and job retention. For our military panel we will have both the Base Commander from CFB Kingston and the Garrison Commander from Fort Drum. Our transportation panel will have presenters from private industry, Transport Canada and an international expert on tolling.

Registration forms and an agenda are posted on our web site. We look forward to seeing you in June!



howardkelly@thecapitalcorridor.com

C. Editorials/Columns

A week of hockey hysteria by Peter Black Plattsburgh Press Republican - June 3, 2011

I think it's safe to say there hasn't been as big a single week in the universe of Canadian hockey, perhaps ever. That includes the dramatic win over Team USA at the Vancouver Olympics last year and the last time a Canadian team won the Stanley Cup (1993 Montreal Canadians, beating the Los Angeles Kings). There's also the fabled Canada-Russia series of 1972, which Canada won in a burst of Cold War patriotic bravado; but as much as it was a bare-knuckle, skin-of-their-teeth triumph over godless commies, it was a wake-up call for the emerging potency of East Bloc hockey. This week, though, from the Canadian perspective, it was one good-news hockey story after another, and needless to say, the nation may have lost some perspective in all the excitement. The sale of the struggling Atlanta Thrashers NHL franchise to a Winnipeg group seemed to come from out of nowhere, although some hockey sages had foreseen a quick strike on the vulnerable team once the Phoenix Coyotes were no longer up for sale. It now seems few knew how seriously the NHL took the interest from the Winnipeg would-be buyers who have been working diligently to bring back a franchise almost from the day the Jets left in 1996 for Phoenix. It obviously did not hurt negotiations that one of the principals of the Winnipeg group, David Thomson, has some of the deepest pockets in the world — \$28 billion deep. With Thomson on board; a new arena built, albeit smallish at 15,000 seats; and a population demonstrably rabid for the return of big league hockey, the NHL had to listen. All it takes now is for those fans to pony up the cash for season tickets, a target of 13,000 to be sold in advance of the NHL governors meeting on June 21. Co-incidentally, the Thrashers deal has a direct link with the other huge hockey story of the past week. The arrival of an NHL franchise in Winnipeg means the Vancouver Canucks could lose their farm team, the Manitoba Moose of the American Hockey League. The Moose, formerly based in Minnesota, are owned by the same group that bought the Thrashers. The Moose are apparently on the move to St. John's, Newfoundland, to be the asset of an ownership group that includes the millionaire former premier of the province, Danny Williams. This would be good news for fans on the Rock, who have been without higher-level hockey since losing AHL and junior teams in recent years. Until the return of the Jets story blew them off the front pages like a hockey hurricane, the Canucks were the center of a frenzy, as Canadians — and broadcasters — salivated at the prospect of a series with the venerable and easily detestable Boston Bruins. It hasn't been exactly rare that a Canadian team makes it to the Stanley Cup final. In fact Calgary, Edmonton and Ottawa played for the famed mug in successive years in the last decade. But all were considered underdogs and lost. Vancouver, though, looks like it might go the distance, and Canadians, sensing victory, are hopping on board. There is hockey joy this week in another part of the country. For the first time in history, a team from east of Quebec, the Saint John, New Brunswick, Sea Dogs, has won the Memorial Cup, the 92-year-old prize for junior hockey supremacy (won four times by American teams). And finally, there is hockey happiness in Sherbrooke, Quebec, where this week the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League approved the city's application for a franchise to begin play in the 2012-13 season. The sad counterpoint to that news, however, was the dissolution of the only U.S. team in the league: the Lewiston, Maine, Maineiacs. That team, coincidentally, had moved eight years ago from Sherbrooke. Local hockey historians will recall that the one and only other American team in the Q league was the Plattsburgh Pioneers, which played 17 games in 1984 before folding. All in all, for a hockey-mad country, it's been a week of exceptional madness. - *Peter Black is a radio broadcaster and writer based in Quebec City. He has worked on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, in Montreal as a newspaper reporter and editor, and as a translator and freelance writer. He can be reached at pblack@videotron.ca.*

D. Citizens Views (write-in letters)