



JOSH BROWN (THE LINK)

TRAGEDY IN MONTRÉAL The shocking shooting at Dawson College brought calls for greater gun control in Canada.

War and weather caught the country's attention last year

WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

Canada's military role in Afghanistan came under increased scrutiny in 2006. Thirty-five Canadian soldiers and one diplomat were killed there this year, as Canada took on a larger and more dangerous role in the NATO mission. Canadian troops are in the Kandahar region, an area where Taliban resistance is strong and NATO casualties high. In May, the Harper government extended the mission by two years to February 2009, sparking great discussion in the House of Commons. The situation has caused debate in Canada over this country's role as a military rather than peacekeeping force.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Weather was in the headlines this past year as climate change dominated politics in Ottawa. The West Coast was pounded by storms in November, resulting in a boil-water advisory for Vancouver. And in December Stanley Park lost more than 1000 trees to heavy winds. Former environment minister Rona Ambrose was widely criticized for her handling of that portfolio; environment groups accused her of not being clear on the government's position. Early in 2007, she was moved to a different Cabinet position.

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TAXES ON INCOME TRUSTS

In a surprise press conference on 1 November, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced a new plan to collect taxes on income trusts in Canada. The announcement caused much protest among businesses and private citizens alike, and the Toronto Stock Exchange dropped 2.4 per cent the day of the news.

DAWSON COLLEGE SHOOTINGS

On 13 September, Canadians were shocked by shootings at Dawson College in Montréal, where 25-year-old Laval resident Kimveer Gill fired on students and staff. Nineteen were wounded in the shooting, and one, 18-year-old Anastasia Rebecca de Sousa, was killed. Gill took his own life after being wounded by the police.

Globe and Mail columnist Jan Wong wrote a controversial story on the shooting, linking it and other acts

of violence to an intolerant Québec society. The article sparked massive protest, and Parliament unanimously called for an apology from Wong.

CADRE PRINTS DANISH CARTOONS

The Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* threw their small country into the limelight when, in September 2005, it published twelve cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. The cartoons, which were reprinted in numerous European newspapers, brought about violent protests and burning Scandinavian embassies in early 2006. However, the retaliations weren't enough to deter the University of Prince Edward Island's student newspaper, the *Cadre*, from also printing the images in February 2006. Ray Keating, the *Cadre*'s editor, said the decision to run the images was made in defence of freedom of speech. The University's administration, however, said that they didn't support the publication of the images, which they deemed as an "invitation to trouble."

-By Robin Collum, Thomas Wagner, Natalie Climenhaga and Scott Lilwall

Harper tops nation's newsmakers

Warring ex-couple, tortured Canadian and basketball MVP also make list

STEPHEN HARPER

For the first time since the days of Kim Campbell in 1993, Canada saw a Conservative government in the halls of Parliament when Stephen Harper became Canada's 22nd Prime Minister. On 23 January, Canadians voted in a minority government, giving the federal Conservative Party 124 seats.

Since the win, Harper and the Tories have hit the headlines many times, most notably extending Canada's commitment in Afghanistan, calling for a second look at 2005's same-sex marriage legislation and passing a federal accountability act.

MAHER ARAR

Maher Arar's story began in September of 2002 when, on a flight through New York's JFK airport, he was arrested on suspicion of terrorist activities. He was then sent to Syria where he was tortured and imprisoned for over a year. Arar was returned to Canada in October 2003 and an inquiry was launched into his case, which released its final findings almost four years after Arar was originally detained. The September 2006 report found that Arar was arrested on grounds that were later found to be false. The report completely exonerated Arar of any wrongdoing,

and sharply criticized the RCMP for its role in the Canadian's deportation. It accused the RCMP of giving misleading information to the FBI, and obstructing the Foreign Affairs department's investigation. In the end, Parliament offered an official apology to Arar, as did RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli, who eventually resigned from his position in December.

Despite his exoneration, and Tory efforts to clear his name internationally, Arar remains on the US' watch list for suspected terrorists.

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

Despite the fact that he didn't actually win the federal Liberal leadership, Michael Ignatieff enjoyed far more media coverage than any of his rivals. He was the media darling, the front-runner from the very beginning, and as a result, people knew his name. Ignatieff eventually lost to Stéphane Dion, and took a position under him as the party's Deputy Leader. Even though Dion will certainly go on to be the more influential of the pair, Ignatieff stole the spotlight in 2006.

STEVE NASH

In 2006, the country watched as athletes like Cindy Klassen, who won five Olympic medals in long track

speed skating, or Justin Morneau, the 2006 American League MVP, reached new heights for Canadian athletes.

Steve Nash, however, stood out above the rest by winning a second NBA MVP honour in a row. His first honour last year was groundbreaking, as he became the first Canadian to ever become the NBA's MVP his second MVP honour put the son of Victoria, BC in the basketball stratosphere.

PETER MACKAY/BELINDA STRONACH

Peter MacKay spoke soberly of his shock and dismay in May 2005 when he learnt that his girlfriend and fellow Conservative MP Belinda Stronach had crossed the floor and joined the Liberal Party. Needless to say the pair split.

In October MacKay, now Foreign Affairs Minister, made headlines when he allegedly referred to Ms Stronach as a dog during a heated parliamentary debate on the environment. He denied the allegations, but former Alberta premier Ralph Klein couldn't resist the urge to further stir things up by stating that Stronach never had a conservative bone in her body — "except maybe one."

-By Robin Collum, Thomas Wagner, Natalie Climenhaga and Scott Lilwall

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