



KOREAN ADVENTURER

By Alan E. Johnson

D'oh!

Living in Korea has opened me up to new technologies that I was aware of, but had not yet integrated into my life.

I had never owned a CD player before I came here, and I now have a pretty good library of CDs built up. One of the things that has helped keep me sane over here is the ability to soothe my nerves with a dose of good old rock and roll.

Koreans have real strange tastes in music, and they just don't gel with mine.

Another piece of technology that I had yet to discover was the cell phone. When I was in Canada, I had always looked at the telephone with a jaundiced eye, and wondered why anyone would want to have one with them all the time. For use as a status symbol, I thought. Talking on it while driving, and so forth.

But as an expatriate in a foreign country, it can be a useful tool for meeting up with your friends. Sending a text message is cheaper, too.

A third piece of tech-ware that I have adapted for my use is the DVD player. I was setting up my household during my third year here, and was thinking about asking the school to buy me a VCR. A friend of mine suggested I ask for a DVD player, as it would have distinct advantages. I would be able to access English subtitles on foreign language films, for instance. Of course, the trap in owning a new machine like this is the extras that you have to buy to go along with it. For a CD player, you have to replace your vinyl Beatles albums. For a DVD player, the temptation is to start buying movies when the stuff at the rental shop starts to get a little thin. One of the friends I made over here used to come out with me, and we would buy too many DVDs, drink some beer, and gloat over our purchases.

Besides buying a lot of movies, I have also invested in a few TV series, presented in box sets, such as "The Sopranos," "The X-Files," and "The Simpsons." Not a lot of people know this, but "The Simpsons" is partly produced in Korea.

According to an article in the "Korea Herald," The Simpsons was "...sent to Seoul long before exporting jobs overseas became a hot-button political issue in the United States."

The series' characters are brought to life at the studios of AKOM Production Co., and have been ever since the show premiered in 1989.

A team of about 120 animators and technicians create the 22-minute episodes based on an elaborate storyboard and animation instructions from the show's creators, Film Roman, in the U.S.

AKOM gets the storyboard, camera and colouring instructions, as well as the voice tracks, and then takes about three months to turn out each episode. Music and other finishing touches are added in America.

South Korea is one of the leaders in what is known as Original Equipment Manufacturing

(OEM), or animation where a cartoon is drawn according to a storyboard produced by a client.

Nelson Shin, chief executive officer of AKOM, says that "The Simpsons" ended up here because of their high quality of work, but analysts say that the low cost of labour had something to do with it. Estimates show that Korean animators are paid one-third of what their American counterparts make.

Shin teaches animation at a university, and is one of the pioneers of his craft in Korea. He worked in the States in the 70's, on such shows as "Scooby Do." He also animated the light sabres in the original "Star Wars" movies. He started AKOM in 1985, and the studio has been rewarded with an Emmy for its work on "The Simpsons."

The show can be difficult to produce at times, due to the technical demands. Usually, a stock cartoon character has six different mouths that can be used to show different emotions. "The Simpsons" characters have 27.

Any questions can be quickly answered with a phone call to the U.S., and production usually runs smoothly. A staff of mostly young women sit at computers as they scan animation "cells," add colours, and put the final touches on each show.

Cultural differences sometimes pose a problem, as well. When Bart talks back to his father, it is seen as "... so disrespectful for us with our Confucian culture (of respect for their elders)," says Shin.

"The Simpsons" is only one of many shows that are now produced in South Korea, and AKOM has gone on to produce its own creations, such as a full-length animated film based on a Korean folk tale called "Empress Chung," which hit theatres last year.

There are fears that lower production costs might "draw" the show to countries such as China or the Philippines, but Shin is not too worried as yet.

Seeing what goes on behind the scenes of the production of any piece of art is sometimes interesting. It's always good to know just how some things originate, but I guess it can be dull for some folks who just want to enjoy the show, or music, or whatever, without too much thought about where it came from.

Okay, that's the end of my sermon. It's time to pop in another disc. Hmmm, now what shall it be this time...

*I wonder what will happen
in my life today....*

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**Canadian
Passion Play
Update**



www.canadianpassionplay.com

As you may know by now, there are many exciting changes being made at the Canadian Badlands Passion Play site this year. We have a new script, a new musical score, new directors, and new accomplished actors. If you think you've seen the Passion Play, you're wrong!

OUR ACTORS...

We are thrilled to announce that **Nathan Schmidt** has agreed to play the role of Jesus this year. Some citizens of the Drumheller area might recognize Nathan from his many outstanding performances in the Rosebud theatre where he is an instructor and recruitment officer with the Rosebud School of the Arts. He is also an accomplished fiddler and stage fighter.

Tim Hildebrand will be appearing as our narrator Matthew. Tim, a wonderful actor, was last seen in the Drumheller area when he played John the Baptist in the Rosebud Theatre production of "Godspell." Tim has also appeared in CTV's sitcom Corner Gas, in and amongst other regional and national programming and music videos. Not only does Tim act, but he does stand up comedy as well, a talent which is always appreciated during long, hot rehearsals on the set.

TICKETS...

Tickets are still available for all performances as we have plenty of room. Call the office toll-free at 1-888-823-2001 to make your reservation today. If you don't want to risk the weather, we also sell tickets each day of the performances right at the gates. Tickets are also available online 24/7 at <http://www.canadianpassionplay.com>.

\$100,000 grant to Central Alberta Economic Partnership strengthens the region's economic future

The Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) received \$100,000 in funding from Alberta Economic Development to implement the partnership's 2006-2007 business plan. Luke Ouellette, MLA for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, made the announcement on behalf of Alberta Economic Development Minister Clint Dunford.

"This funding will support our three-year plan to build and maintain the foundation of healthy communities," said Julia King chair of CAEP. "Supported by the Regional Labour Force Working Group partners, implementation of the Collaborative Labour Force Strategy and 12 strategic actions supporting education and training; encouraging labour force participation; as well as retaining and attracting workers are already demonstrating positive impacts on the region."

"I am pleased community leaders have come together and continue to work through CAEP on common regional economic development goals and have created such dynamic partnerships," said Clint Dunford. "These partnerships between people, communities, regions and businesses will prove far more beneficial to the region than working in isolation."

"I congratulate CAEP for successfully promoting local and international investment in the region, increasing aboriginal awareness in the non-aboriginal community and developing a collaborative labour force strategy," Luke Ouellette.

The Central Alberta Economic Partnership is a regional economic development alliance (REDA) with 39 members representing municipalities and eleven associate members representing industry and education in the central Alberta region. It is one of 12 regional economic alliances in Alberta.

For more information on the Central Alberta Economic Partnership, visit www.centralalberta.ab.ca



Shift Happens!

Are You a Gump?

by Linda Edgecombe, Accountability Expert, Outrageously funny speaker

I know that I have not had an article out in at least 6 weeks. Is it procrastination or just that the OILERS made it to the 7th game of the Stanley Cup playoffs that's kept me from focusing on practically **everything**.

I mean other than weeding my several acres of gardens; I have basically done nothing for months. I know all too well that what we put out there we get back. It's basic physics; I talk about it all the time as a presenter. I've written about it often in the past. I experienced it again at my 11-year-old daughter's fastball tournament. The more I sat there for 8 hours straight, the more I sat there. I was flip'n exhausted by the end of that day, and I had done not one thing that required energy, well other than cheer and reach into my backpack for more snacks.

Procrastination for me is a way of not looking at what I really want to, let alone need to look at in my life. It's like putting a towel over every mirror in the house so I don't have to really look at myself. And when there's nothing to face, then no decisions are required. Truthfully, I am at a cross roads in my career. I have been a full time speaker for the past 16 years and love being in front of groups. To me there is nothing better than getting people laughing to the point that time just flies for them. However, I have found that the travel to and from the places I go to speak has worn me out. I keep thinking and even more, feeling like some big change for me is coming. I open my computer and expect some revelation to appear through my emails. I was reminded of some sage advise I had given one of my sisters a while back, as she dished it out to me; that in order for doors to open up for us, some have to be closed. But which ones? Now there's the question I need to look at, so I have decided to investigate getting some coaching. Some focus and hopefully some good guiding questions to get me moving in a direction that inspires me.

So enough about me, what are **you** doing these days to keep your inspirations alive? Are you focused or just doing what I call "gumping." Remember Forest Gump? He, like the feather in the beginning and end of the movie, just floated from one thing to the next and made due where ever he or it landed. Now that's me for sure, I've been gumping. I wonder how long one can gump until its time to snap out of it. Now I don't know about you, but I have been a very driven woman pretty much all of my life and find my drive has driven away, so I'm having some guilt around that. Perhaps I should *McGuire* for a while, now he had drive. Or Bond or Joleen, now that woman even hauls her kids around a third world country while doing good for the

Enhancing seniors care and housing services

The Government of Alberta is implementing new care and accommodation standards that will help improve the quality of life of Alberta seniors who receive care services in a variety of settings.

"The new care standards will enable seniors and their families to play an enhanced role in planning their care," according to Candace Spurrell, DTHR Vice President of Community and Continuing Care.

"Monitoring and reporting processes will become more standardized for both DTHR operated and contracted care centres and supportive living facilities," added Spurrell.

The new standards were developed using feedback collected from seniors, their families, and health-care providers by the government's *MLA Task Force on Continuing Care*.

The *MLA Task Force on Continuing Care* traveled to communities throughout the Province last year meeting with various groups with a keen interest in seniors' care.

The Government of Alberta has committed a total of \$98 million in additional funding to enable care providers to implement the new standards by April 2007.

Funding will be used to:

- Increase care hours from 3.1 to 3.6 per resident per day.
- Help purchase patient lift equipment.
- Review medication use.
- Increase access to therapy services.
- Increase benefits for seniors living in designated assisted/supportive living.
- Provide more funding to seniors' lodges.
- Develop a new concerns resolution process for care centre residents.

Long-term care and supportive-living centres, both private and publicly funded, will be required to participate in a recognized accreditation program, which will ensure they meet the following accommodation standards:

- Maintain a safe and comfortable environment for residents
- Serve nutritious meals that meet *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*
- Provide routine housekeeping of resident rooms and common areas
- Perform criminal record checks for new employees and volunteers

"All DTHR care centres have recently been audited and the Region will be working towards implementation of the new standards throughout the continuing care system over the coming year" according to Spurrell.

"These new standards should help reassure seniors and their families that they are receiving excellent care no matter where they live in the province or who provides their care."

For more information on the new standards, please: Visit www.continuingcare.gov.ab.ca or call the DTHR at: (403) 341-8622.

world. That really sounds exhausting, I should probably save up my next professional team, The Eskimos. Have I ever told you all how much I love Canadian Football? You see; I can't even focus long enough to get through this article.

So here's what I propose to you, as I pursue some focused coaching, I will send you updates on the process and if you want to take the "Virtual Coaching Challenge" with me, we can keep each other on track. I will send you some pointed questions to ponder and you can email your answers back to me. We might really be onto something here. And bonus for you, because I will be the one paying for the coaching. You can live/be coached vicariously through me.

So for today, it's back to gardening, as I think I can hear those weeds stretching to the sky. PS: Don't forget your sunscreen this summer.

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