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## From the President

By Jean-Marie Nkongolo-Bakenda, PhD

It is a great pleasure for me to work as the CCSBE President this year. Thanks to Ed Leach for his fine leadership, and in particular his focus on financial accountability. Thanks also to André Joyal and Louis Raymond, along with their enthusiastic organizing team, for having organized the last annual conference in Trois-Rivières. For those who did not attend, you missed a great opportunity to meet people interested in SMEs and entrepreneurship from across Canada, and also from France, Africa, and South America.

The 2007 annual conference in Kelowna

The next annual conference will take place in Kelowna, British Columbia. The advertising booklet for tourists considers the area "ripe with surprises" and states that "... Kelowna is surrounded by orchards and vineyards. ... Kelowna is a city of 107,000 people, and the arts thrive here. The Canadian Heritage Cultural Spaces program recently named our Cultural District as the - Best in Canada". I invite you to put the dates of November 2nd to 4th, 2007 in your agenda and strongly encourage you to attend. Heather Banham and Shelley Price are carefully planning the conference and you will hear more from them later in this newsletter and throughout the year.

CCSBE challenges, opportunities, and needs for member involvement

How may we increase our services to members without endangering our financial situation? The answer to this question requires the participation of not only the Board of Directors, but also the involvement of each member. Allow me to give you my views on this matter. For a few years, the number of our members has stagnated while our expenses are

increasing. Growth in membership and corporate fundraising are two possible solutions.

Why would an organization sponsor CCSBE?

- The mandate of CCSBE is to support the development of small firms and entrepreneurship in Canada. This purpose counts among the most useful causes in the political, social and economic areas.
- We host an Annual Conference and publish a learned review, with an increased exposure thanks to the recent inclusion of its full-text to the EBSCO online database.
- CCSBE members are very active in the ICSB, and many times have organized conferences of this worldwide umbrella organization.
- CCSBE is one of the rare associations, which brings together students, academics, teachers, entrepreneurs, managers, consultants, and government decision makers.

Questions to be answered together include:

- Broaden the definition of membership (for example, more than double our regular members have subscribed to our journal)?
- Increase services to our practitioner members and other experts from non-academic areas? Launch a journal oriented towards practitioners, or set up an award for the best entrepreneur of the year?
- Find a formula to organize short regional workshops, primarily oriented towards the entrepreneurial and managerial practice?

Dear members, I am asking for your help. If you have close relationships with a given company or entrepreneur, could you make contact with them for the benefit of our association? The Board of Directors could prepare the necessary documents for you. As a priest or a pastor, let me state it this way: do not harden your hearts, please decide here and now to contact a member of the Board of Directors to put your personal relations at the service of the CCSBE.

New initiatives and decisions:

At its first meeting, the incoming Board of Directors has undertaken a few actions that I will share with you. It has been decided to continue or put in place new working groups to examine: membership development, member benefits, program planning, CCSBE funding, and governance. Also, the Board decided to increase the annual fee to \$135.00 and to encourage the trial issue of a CCSBE journal oriented to the practitioners in collaboration with the University of Regina's Centre for the Development of Management. Finally, Shelley Price has been encouraged to continue working, together with Sandra Malach, on the new version of the by-laws. You will receive a copy once the revisions are complete.

In closing, the CCSBE is in good shape despite some constraints and we have a number of exciting initiatives underway that will, we hope, add value to our different categories of members while advancing the entrepreneurship and SME cause. The Board appreciates your support and thanks you for the opportunity to serve you.

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## **Report on the 23rd Annual Conference of the CCSBE, held in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, September 28 - 30, 2006**

By Louis Raymond

Hosted by the Institut de recherche sur les PME of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières ([www.uqtr.ca/inrpme](http://www.uqtr.ca/inrpme)), our annual conference welcomed 135 participants. We had a rather international gathering this year as 25 of these participants came from outside Canada, from countries such as Algeria, Brazil, France, Israel, Morocco, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

Keynote speakers at the conference were Michel Bergeron, vice-president of the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), main sponsor of the conference, Olivier Torrès, author of the book "La guerre des vins: L'affaire Mondavi", and François Hurel, chair of the Forum on Entrepreneurship of the OECD LEED programme. As recorded in the Proceedings of the Conference, a total of 54 research papers were presented, regrouped in ten workshops covering a wide range of topics under the conference's theme: Entrepreneurship, SMEs, and Local Economic Development. Ten panel discussions

were also held on subjects of interest to both practitioners and researchers. Following the General meeting of the CCSBE, the incoming Board of Directors met to plan the future course of our organization.

In addition to the thought-provoking content of the conference and the opportunity to interact and make new contacts professionally, it seems a great time was had by all participants as the location and facilities of the conference, that is, the city of Trois-Rivières and the Delta hotel were particularly appreciated.

We thank the Organizing Committee (presided by André Joyal, UQTR) and the Scientific Committee (presided by Louis Raymond, UQTR) for a job well-done and look forward to next year's conference in Kelowna, British Columbia.

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## **A Canadian Entrepreneurial Business Success Story RENEE'S GOURMET FOODS INC**

By Fred Burke, FCGA, Chief Operating Officer, Renee's Gourmet Foods Inc.

Yes – there is a real Renée! (the most commonly asked question about “Renée’s”)

Renée Unger started making salad dressings at her home in Toronto over 20 years ago and gave them to friends, family and neighbors. At that time consumer's only option in the supermarkets were shelf stable products jam packed with preservatives to maintain a longer shelf life. Over one particular holiday season, after giving out hand made gift baskets using her products and getting requests from friends to make more and willing to pay for them, Renée instantly visualized the potential for marketing and selling the products themselves. Gut instinct told her that consumers were becoming interested in health and fitness, eating healthy, reading labels and looking for alternative foods with no preservatives or additives and only fresh ingredients – and Renée's dressings were all that and more.

In May of 1985, Renée's Gourmet™ refrigerated Caesar salad dressing along with 3 other flavours were first introduced to the Canadian public in the produce section of a major supermarket chain in Toronto. Samples of the products were trial tasted through demonstrations and became an instant hit with consumers. Now, just over 20 years later Renée's Gourmet enjoys the envious position of being Canada's No. 1 manufacturer of refrigerated dressings to dominate that growing category with a national 70% share of market, greater than all its competitors combined. The company markets its superior line of over 300 refrigerated salad dressings, sauces, marinades, dips and mayonnaise products in addition to shelf stable dressings under Excellence Brands and the A1 Steak Sauce brand for Canada. This includes a broad range of products for Foodservice, as well as Private Label accounts.

Like most entrepreneurs starting a business, at the beginning Renée performed all the functions, from making recipes, to buying ingredients, to supervising production and putting on labels. Her partner Arnie Unger looked after the financial records, administration and sales, while Renée continued to develop the dressings.

Over the time these entrepreneurs owned their business, Renée developed hundreds of new and innovative products utilizing her special skills identifying new consumer taste trends and researching and developing new products. She, along with her partner and a very strong leadership team, worked hard together to create marketable winning products which ultimately built significant equity value, making the brand very successful and an acquisition target for their larger, better resourced food manufacturing competitors.

Small business success for these entrepreneurs didn't come without financial, operational or market related challenges along the way. In 1994, after deciding to move into a 90,000 sq ft new manufacturing facility they found themselves in serious financial trouble with creditors threatening to close them down. They brought in a financial professional, Fred Burke, to assist them in implementing a turnaround plan in order to re-finance the company and create a viable business plan. His expertise in finance and operations with large multi-nationals was critical to manage the restructuring and make some very tough decisions. After a tense first 12 months of negotiations with suppliers and lenders, as well as potential equity partners and other large food companies to consider selling part or all of the company, Renée's Gourmet was back on track financially. After that turning point in mid 1990 the company never turned back as sales and profits grew double digit year over year and equity value increased.

In 1997, the owners, along with Mr. Burke, successfully engineered an initial public offering for the company on the

NASDAQ stock exchange which allowed the company to pay down its debt, purchase a manufacturing plant and acquire A1™ Steak Sauces in July of 1999. After four years as a public reporting entity and managing the turbulence of a market correction in late 1990's and early 2000, the company repurchased all outstanding shares in a going private transaction in 2002.

The success of the Renée's Gourmet brand and unique positioning in the produce section continued to attract major food competitors and all were gunning for shelf space. The true success of an entrepreneurial company like Renee's was being there first with the idea and having the consumer ultimately dictates which brand stays. The Company has had to evolve and manage significant change within an extremely competitive marketplace where industry consolidations and competition change at a rapid pace. Although the Company's operational strategies and organizational structure have been flexible enough to adapt to this changing marketplace, Renée's Corporate Mission and Vision has remained solid.

Considering succession options, the Unger family had no desire to sell out and believed that their daughters would eventually take over; however, it became apparent after the company went private again in 2002 that succession to the second generation was not the best option. In addition, the entrepreneurs and management had created a company with unbelievable equity value – so why not cash in, especially when these large food companies were willing to pay a huge multiple for the business?

After some serious considerations with trusted advisors in early 2006, Renée and Arnie Unger decided it was the right time to cash in. A formal bidding process was initiated using the best financial services and legal partners in a global search for a suitor. And after 7 months of due diligence, management presentations and negotiations, Renée's Gourmet was finally sold to HJ Heinz Canada in September 2006. The multiple paid reflected the success of the brand and equity built by the owners.

Renée's Gourmet is a truly Canadian entrepreneurial success story. In this uncertain economic climate where many small and medium sized Canadian privately run enterprises fall under the pressure of competition and financial issues, it is nice to hear about two entrepreneurs that depart as winners. However the most important point is that the brand they created will continue to be enjoyed by consumers for many years to come!

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## Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship (JSBE)

By Bob Anderson, Editor

We have just finished another good year with the Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship. Volume 19 consisted of two regular issues and special issues. Judith Madill and Barbara Orser edited one of the special issues. It focused on gender-related issues and entrepreneurship. The other special issue focused on entrepreneurship in small islands, and was edited by Godfrey Baldacchino and Te'o I.J. Fairbairn.

Papers are coming in in large numbers. In fact, the first three issues of 2007 are already complete and the final issue almost done. And there are at least 30 additional papers in the review and revision process. As a result we are increasing the number of papers per issue to 6 or 7 depending on the length of the papers.

Work is almost complete on the new journal web site. Once done CCSBE members and journal subscribers will have access to the full text of all articles published in JSBE since CCSBE/CCPME assumed ownership. This means that students at our many institution subscribers (150+ universities world-wide) will now find it much easier to access full-text articles. In addition, the author names, articles titles and keywords will be accessible to search engines such as Google, Google Scholar, Yahoo and others. Non-CCSBE/CCPME members and non-subscribers will be able to download articles for a modest fee. We also hope to encourage them to become on-line subscribers.

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## 24th Annual CCSBE – CCPME Conference

By Sherry Price

In 11 months we meet again in Kelowna BC. In one very special location, we can learn and grow from each others' presentations and, at the same time, taste internationally recognized Okanagan wines.

The conference theme and call for papers and workshops will be announced early in 2007. Your committee's objective is to provide multiple opportunities for members to share and test their ideas, research and practices. With a strong array of keynote speakers, the 24th conference promises to be a highly successful event for all.

The conference location is the Grand Okanagan Lakefront Resort in the heart of Kelowna. Early room bookings will ensure an excellent rate. A direct link will be posted on the CCSBE website early in the new year. Your host committee is busy planning your agenda and social events.

Within walking distance, Kelowna's cultural district features a concentration of galleries, museums, theatres, a casino, artists' studios, fine dining, unique shops and a vibrant social life. For hockey fans, Prospera Place is home to the Kelowna Rockets (Western Hockey League). For the wine tasters, Kelowna is at the heart of BC's Okanagan wine region; orchards and vineyards thrive within a 10-minute drive from the downtown core. Although November is off-season for the golfers and skiers, there are still miles of beautiful parkland and other outdoor adventures for the outdoor enthusiasts. For additional tourism information, please see [www.tourismkelowna.com](http://www.tourismkelowna.com).

See you in Kelowna in November 2007!

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## Volunteers for 2008 ICSB World Conference



by Shelley Hessian

The 2008 International Council for Small Business (ICSB) World Conference will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia from June 22, 2008 – June 25, 2008. CCSBE is the host affiliate for this event. To make this a successful event, we need your help. Opportunities currently exist for Program Committee members, Marketing Committee members, Paper Reviewers, Track chairs, and Session Moderators. If you are interested in any of these roles, and would like to volunteer, please contact Lois Stevenson, Conference Program Chair, at [l Stevenson@idrc.org.eg](mailto:l Stevenson@idrc.org.eg) or Shelley Hessian, Conference Project Manager at [Shelley.hessian@smu.ca](mailto:Shelley.hessian@smu.ca).

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### A quick guide to thinking lean ([Website Link](#))

How can you provide your product or service as quickly as possible at the highest quality and the lowest cost? Lean manufacturing is an approach that aims to do just that, by eliminating waste everywhere in your business. This BDC article describes the principles and benefits of lean manufacturing, and suggest steps to maintain your commitment in the long term. It also gives an overview of some of the most popular approaches used today, including push-pull

systems, benchmarking, Kanban, 5S, and SMED.

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## **- - - REGIONAL UPDATES - - -**

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### **From Atlantic Canada. . .**

#### **CIBC Business Plan Competition at UNB**

By Dannie Brown

University students and entrepreneurs from across the province will have an opportunity to show their business savvy during this year's CIBC Business Plan Competition at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. The two-day competition will take place on Thursday, Nov. 30, and Friday, Dec. 1, at the Wu Conference Centre on the UNB Fredericton campus. The competition will bring together undergraduate, graduate, and private sector teams to test their entrepreneurial skills before a panel of experts.

Teams develop business plans and compete for awards. This year the competition will award more than \$20,500 in prize money. Participants will also receive valuable feedback on their business plans. Teams will be judged by experts in the fields of finance, marketing, and entrepreneurship. Each team will be given 12 minutes to present its business plans. The presentations will be followed by an eight-minute question and answer period.

The goals of the competition are to support students and entrepreneurs in their efforts to create real businesses, to encourage commercialization of promising ideas, and to build bridges between the local and foreign entrepreneurial community.

The first day of the competition will be a half-day event comprised of registration, a welcome ceremony, presentation of elevator pitches and a reception.

The second day will involve presentations of business plans, a dinner and public address by John Dunsworth, and Mr. Lahey of the Trailer Park Boys, and an awards ceremony. The evening will conclude with a wine and cheese reception.

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### **ACE in Atlantic Canada**

By Shelley Meldrum

ACE (Advancing Canadian Entrepreneurship) Teams are groups of students that work with a faculty advisor to design and implement projects that encourage entrepreneurship and community development. There are ACE Teams on 49 universities and colleges across Canada and over the past three years the ACE program has seen significant growth in Atlantic Canada.

The fall of 2006 has been very active for the ACE Teams in Atlantic Canada. In October over 100 ACE students and faculty advisors attended leadership forums in Halifax and St. John's. These events provided an opportunity for ACE Teams from across Atlantic Canada to network with each other and share their projects.

The role of faculty advisor is critical to the success of any ACE Team. So far in the 2006-07 school year new faculty advisors have joined the ACE Teams at the University of Prince Edward Island, Mount Allison University, the University of New Brunswick, and the College of the North Atlantic in Corner Brook. These faculty members will all play an important part in encouraging entrepreneurship in Atlantic Canada.

Each ACE Team may operate a number of initiatives over the course of a year. These projects range in size from small to quite large, including many community partners. One project that is being executed by the ACE PEI Team is called Project NAFTA. The project involves a partnership with students in Mexico and the United States. As part of the projects each country is sending ten units of a locally produced project to their two partners. Once the units are received the students will sell the units with a mark up. This will give all three partners the experience of importing and exporting as well as buying and selling in their community. The goal of the project is to provide the students and entrepreneurs involved a greater knowledge of international trade and potentially expose local companies to foreign markets.

For more information on ACE please visit [www.acecanada.ca](http://www.acecanada.ca) or contact James Dyke at [james@acecanada.ca](mailto:james@acecanada.ca).

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## Youth Futures Project Underway

By Shelley Meldrum

When Ryan Brogan graduated from Nova Scotia Community College-Kingstec Campus ([www.nsc.ca](http://www.nsc.ca)) last spring, the thought of leaving Kings County Nova Scotia never entered her mind. "Why would I leave? The opportunities for youth are endless; we are very fortunate to live in a community with strong character and strength."

That positive attitude makes Brogan an excellent fit for her current job with the Acadia Centre for Small Business and Entrepreneurship ([www.acsbe.com](http://www.acsbe.com)), where she works as Youth Business Service Coordinator. The Youth Futures Project targets youth ages 15 to 35 in the Annapolis, Kings and Hants Counties of Nova Scotia. Created through a partnership of many organizations, including Service Canada and the Office of Economic Development for the Province of Nova Scotia, the project helps young people create their own business and make informed career decisions. Youth Business Service Coordinators work out of satellite offices in each of the three counties in the Annapolis Valley of the province. Free services include one-on-one counseling as well as a series of monthly entrepreneurial workshops.

The What's the Big Idea workshop helps participants better understand how they can find a job that really seems to fit their personality. The premise is simple; good jobs begin with good ideas. Create the Job You Want helps youth identify different ways to get or create this perfect job. Participants are encouraged to draw upon their own hobbies and interests to explore potential business opportunities.

Brogan finds herself inspired by many of the region's young business owners.

"Every entrepreneur who I have met has truly impressed me. These people are following their dream; doing something they love everyday, and have a true passion."

For more information about the program and upcoming workshops visit [www.mybusinessidea.ca](http://www.mybusinessidea.ca). The web site also includes a directory of young entrepreneurs from each of the three counties. Additional information may also be made available by contacting ACSBE.

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## From the Prairies. . .

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### Canadian student entrepreneur Michael Scissons earns third place at the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards

Submitted by Warren Weir

TORONTO, ON (November 6, 2006) – The 2006 National Student Entrepreneur of the Year award recipient, Michael Scissons, traveled to Chicago on November 2 and 3 for the annual Global Student Entrepreneur Awards competition.

Michael Scissons took part in the semi final round of competition on Friday morning and was named one of four finalists

to move on to the final round of competition on Friday afternoon. Competing against three U.S based student entrepreneurs Michael represented Canada with pride, placing third overall.

"We were very proud to have Michael Scissons represent Canada at the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards", comments ACE President David Henderson. "He has achieved great business success at a young age and we can't wait to see what's next for this dynamic individual."

Michael beat out hundreds of applicants to receive Canada-wide acclaim in May 2006 at the ACE National Exposition for his ability to attend university on a full-time basis while operating a successful corporation that generated over a million dollars in economic activity during his time as an undergraduate. He also took home a \$10,000 cash prize and the opportunity to represent Canada at the global level.

Michael graduated in May 2006 from the University of Saskatchewan after completing a three-year degree while operating a successful full-time business; General Entertainment Corporation.

General Entertainment Corporation specializes in developing youth-focused branded entertainment properties and partner marketing programs. In the last five years, the company has developed and executed some of Saskatchewan's most successful youth-branded events and sponsorship programs. Their client list includes: Budweiser, Bud Light, Kokanee, Mini, Saturn, University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, and the City of Saskatoon. Michael's greatest accomplishment has been initiating, developing, and franchising two of Saskatchewan's most successful and profitable event brands, Coco-LoCo and X-Jam, both targeted at a youth market. Coco LoCo was sold to the University Of Saskatchewan Students' Union in the Fall of 2005.

On graduation in May 2006, Michael fielded over 20 opportunities to work with mentors at large corporations across North America. After much consideration, Michael decided to fine tune his skills by moving to Toronto and working with branding-titan, Rob Segal, President and Chief Creative Officer at Segal Communications. Through this unique opportunity, Michael has headed significant projects for some of the countries top brands, refining his craft for future entrepreneurial ventures.

As the third place award recipient at the Global Awards, Michael received a three thousand dollar cash prize and a mentoring relationship through the Entrepreneurs' Organization.

#### About ACE

Founded in the mid-1980s, ACE is a national, not-for-profit organization that is teaching and igniting young Canadians to create brighter futures for themselves and their communities. Working in partnership with business and higher education, ACE operates a team-based program, Students In Free Enterprise, and an individual-based program, Student Entrepreneur. Both are achieving ACE's mission to advance Canadian entrepreneurship through the direct involvement of University students, including those who are entrepreneurial-minded and those who are currently operating full-time businesses.

#### About GSEA

For nearly 20 years, the EO Global Student Entrepreneur Awards (GSEA), produced by the Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO), in part through funding by Mercedes-Benz Financial, have recognized students who are successfully building businesses while pursuing academic degrees. The program encourages students to pursue their passions while building the foundation for a solid economic future through regional and global cash award competitions. The Entrepreneurs' Organization is a global community that enables entrepreneurs to learn from each other, leading to greater business success and an enriched personal life. EO is comprised of more than 6,400 members in more than 40 countries, with an average member age of 38 and annual revenue of US\$13.3 million.

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