



THE MESSENGER

Students gain insight about the real Iraq



Louis Fintor, US Embassy Spokesperson in Baghdad, spoke about his experiences in a recent Open Forum at McDaniel College Budapest

By Geoff Peckham & Estefania Luraschi

As young adults, we are used to simply reading about history, not witnessing it as it happens. Louis Fintor is a part of history. It's difficult to say what future generations will say about the war in Iraq, but as the U.S. Embassy Spokesperson in Baghdad, Mr. Fintor would be one of the people to ask.

After assignments in Budapest and Kabul, and now positioned in Baghdad, Mr. Fintor has watched the events of the Iraq War unfold before his very eyes. McDaniel College Budapest was lucky enough to have him as a guest speaker at an Open Forum earlier this month. Nearly forty students turned up to listen to Mr. Fintor talk about his many responsibilities, as well as what life is really like in the turmoil-filled country.

Mr. Fintor noted the many misconceptions about Iraq, one being that many believe it is mostly Americans there fighting, when in fact the British play a large part, too. He also noted that while there is a degree of danger and uncertainty in Baghdad, "80% of the country is safe."

Throughout the 16-hour workdays, Mr. Fintor holds a daily conference call with reporters, where they ask a variety of questions. He said that a large portion of his responsibilities extend beyond dealing with the press. He also

spoke of how much of what the press reports is different from what is originally presented, as a result of the many filters the information goes through from source to editor. Despite this, Mr. Fintor was adamant that "a free press is essential to the growth of democracy."

"What I do is very quietly back-channel," he said to the attending students. He then made reference to how he helped someone who worked for him get his sick infant child to a combat support hospital. "It took all night to do, but we are able to do it," Mr. Fintor said, referring to the difficulties in transporting the child to the Green Zone.

The responses of the students present seemed very favourable, largely because they were listening to someone who had been there and was able to accurately talk about the situation.

"You always hear stories about life in Baghdad...listening to Louis Fintor made everything seem so much more real. People actually live like this," said Meredith Degyansky, a junior graphic design major originally from San Francisco. "It makes me feel like an ignorant American."

Mr. Fintor was not the only person in the room to have been to Iraq. Second year student Herman Lugaro was in the Army and stationed in Iraq from 2003 to 2004. He identifies a lot with what Mr. Fintor was saying, and credited him with being honest.

"I liked the way he used his personal experiences to give a clearer view of how life is in a war zone," he said. Lugaro understands the sense of duty associated with serving in such a place, and how those involved need to "get over [their] fears and move on."

Others, like senior Political Science major Matt Lufkin, showed a great amount of appreciation for the work Mr. Fintor does. "It is inspiring that Americans endure those kinds of torments so that we and our allies can be free," Lufkin said, referring to the constant danger that Mr. Fintor acknowledged.

Senior Communications major

Dani Göcző couldn't help but wonder why Fintor would be there when he has a family, but understood it can be difficult to understand when you haven't gone through the same experience. "Maybe when you are there, you see it differently. I think he knows a lot of things," he said.

Junior Dadvey Zargaran and senior Sven Pomykalo appreciated the opportunity to meet an experienced diplomatic representative for the simple reason that his knowledge and experience were practical and very evident. Sophomores Katie Lawson and André Butler-Payette were also impressed by his willingness to speak truthfully, specifically with regard to the media.

"I have a better appreciation for the effort they're putting into maintaining stability and making sure the war doesn't spill over the borders," Butler-Payette said.

The general vibe among students was more or less the same, a sense of appreciation for being able to listen to a man who was right in the thick of events that are having both an immediate and long-standing impact on the United States and the rest of the world. Many students will probably never go to Iraq and see first-hand what is truly happening there, so the opportunity to listen to Louis Fintor was one not to be missed nor forgotten.



Travel



Getting to the Balaton Airport on 1110 Forint

Student finds adventure at no additional cost

By: Meredith Degyansky

A cheap flight from Hungary to London may be a challenge to encounter. However, with the aid of budget airliner, Ryanair, a one-way ticket can cost a mere 5000 forints. The catch is that there are only two flights departing from the Balaton airport each day, one to London and one to Frankfurt. Meaning one must be punctual when arriving to the airport. This can be challenging because Balaton is approximately 186 km southwest of Budapest. But have no fear, I have discovered a cheap, efficient, (well, perhaps not so efficient) but cheap way to get to the Balaton airport from Budapest.

A train departs from Deli Palyaudvar in Budapest and arrives at a small Hungarian town called Balatonszentgyörgy. The ticket only costs 860 forints. One negative factor may be that you must depart at 3:45 am in order to get to the airport by the 11:00 am flight departures. Despite stopping for what feels like every 100 meters, the train will get you to Balatonszentgyörgy on time after four hours of lovely views of Hungary's countryside. If traveling by car or on a train of normal speeds the trip would take about two and a half hours but for 860 forints, it is bearable.

After arriving to the station in Balatonszentgyörgy, which is still 12 km away from the Balaton airport, it is necessary to transfer to a small two-car caboose train for no additional charge. The train ride is approximately ten minutes long. Seats offer plenty of legroom so long as you put your bag on your lap. The cars also come equipped with a public water closet, just be certain to bring your own toilet paper. The caboose drops you off in Keszthely where you will have to board a bus to

take you to the airport, the final destination. The bus comes every 15 minutes and it only costs 218 forints. You can pay the driver when boarding the bus; no reservations are necessary. The bus winds through the narrow roads of Keszthely with a few stops along the way. In a matter of minutes, you arrive at your destination.

The bus drops you off directly in front of a sign that reads, "Balaton Airport 1500m", with a convenient arrow to point one in the correct direction. As you walk on the tiny gravel road take note of the old Russian bunkers surrounding you. The airport location used to be battlegrounds for the Russians as stated by a Hungarian who happened to be making the walk beside me. There are conveniently located signs every 500m to inform you of the distance left to the airport; this is reassuring when you have been splatting through mud puddles for a while and have seen no sign of an airplane. Finally, you arrive at the airport and do all other procedures as usual. The actual flight is comfortable, reliable, and safe, giving Ryanair thumbs up.

The total time of the trip from Budapest to the Balaton airport is approximately five and a half hours and costs 1078 forints. I must include that unless you are a Hungarian speaker, you should befriend one on the way. If it were not for the friendly British/Hungarian man who read the signs for me, spoke to the ticket controllers for me, and basically held my hand through the process, I would still be in Balatonszentgyörgy. If all this seems daunting, you can take the airport fly bus shuttle from Deli Palyaudvar to the Balaton airport. It departs at 6:00 am and arrives at 8:50 am and costs about 3000 forints. I think I will do that next time.



Staff

Introducing The Messenger's Staff

By: Katya Ivanova

Estefania Luraschi (The Almighty Editor)



Major: Communication and Political Science
Music: Brazilian DnB (drum and bass), Salsa, Latin music

All time favorite song: "Genetic World" by Telepopmusik

Why she writes for The Messenger: Because I never wrote for the high school's newspaper and I regretted it so much.

Sven Pomykalo (Layout)



Major: Communication
Music: House, Mixes of his own music
No all time favorite song

Why he does the layout of The Messenger: Because that is one of the things I want to do in the future. I'm interested in designing websites, newspapers, whatever comes my way. I like it 'cause it's fun!

Meredith Degyansky (Travel, Feature)



Major: Graphic Design at the University of San Francisco

Music: Classic rock, Bob Dylan, The Waterboys
No all time favorite song

Why she writes for The Messenger: I've always liked writing, but didn't really have a chance because of my major, so becoming a member of

The Messenger's staff writers was a good opportunity for me. Plus, I wanted to meet new people.

Dadvey Zargarán (Commentary, Creative)



Major: Political Science
Music: Pop, classical music, everything except hip-hop and Metallica

All time favorite song: "From This Moment" by Shania Twain

Why he writes for The Messenger: To gain experience and improve my journalistic abilities; and also, to get the extra credit for it.

Geoff Peckham (Budapest Correspondent for *The McDaniel Free Press*, Feature, Sports, and a bit of everything)



Major: Communication, Minor in Journalism at Westminster, MD (main campus)

Music: U2, Foo Fighters, Frank Sinatra
All time favorite song: "Where The Streets Have No Name" by U2

Why he writes for The Messenger: I wrote for The McDaniel Free Press back home, and it feels like the right thing to do here as well.

I like to write, it's fun!

Katerina Ivanova (Editorial, Commentary)



Major: Communication

Music: Metallica, Nirvana, Queen, Dead Guys, The Killers

All time favorite song: "Unforgiven" by Metallica

Why she writes for The Messenger: I think it's cool that someone, somewhere actually reads my pessimistic views on life in general. But also, I was always interested in journalism, and this was a good opportunity to train my writing skills.

*The Messenger has two more valuable writers that unfortunately were not available for this interview.

Maja Florsic (60 seconds..., Travel, Feature)



Chelsea Blair (Contributor writer, Jokes)

Music: Spanish persuasion, and I particularly enjoy "Manu Chau."

All time favorite song: Casey Jones by the Grateful Dead and Walk on by Neil Young.

Why she writes for the Messenger: I am writing for the messenger, because I would like to take advantage of every opportunity at McDaniel and to improve my writing skills while working with like minded individuals.

Missing Tina...

Although Tina Okeke is not on The Messenger's staff anymore, she deserves a place on this page anyway.

Tina was a member of the school's newspaper for years until last semester when she successfully graduated in December 2006. Since then her life has changed significantly. She moved to Austria, got married on the 24th of February 2007 to her boyfriend, Barry, after dating him for 4 years, and now is trying hard to learn the German language. Even the Counselor of the Nigerian Embassy of Budapest went to Tina's wedding, bringing along some family members with her. The wedding was held in the registry know as the Rathaus in Linz, Austria.

So it looks like the carefree student years are over for Tina, and reality has warmly welcomed her. We'll miss her, and hope that everything will turn out the way she always wanted it to be.



Puzzle

Lateral Thinking Puzzles

By: Chelsea Blair

Q-A man lives on the twelfth floor of an apartment building. Every morning he takes the elevator down to the lobby and leaves the building. In the evening, he gets into the elevator, and, if there is someone else in the elevator -- or if it was raining that day -- he goes back to his floor directly. Otherwise, he goes to the tenth floor and walks up two flights of stairs to his apartment. Why does he act this way?

A-The man is a dwarf. He can't reach the upper elevator buttons, but he can ask people to push them for him. He can also push them with his umbrella.

Q-A man walks into a bar and asks for water. The bartender pulls out a gun and points it at him. The man says, "Thank you," and walks out. What is going on?

A-The man has hiccups; the bartender scares them away by pulling a gun.

Q-A man is found hanging in an otherwise empty locked room with a puddle of water under his feet. What happened?

A-He stood on a block of ice to hang himself

Q-Three switches outside a windowless room are connected to three light bulbs inside the room. How can you determine which switch is connected to which bulb if you may enter the room only once?

A-Switch on the first switch, leave it for a minute, and then switch it off again. Then switch on the second switch and enter the room. The second switch will be connected to the light that is on, the first switch will be connected to the light with the warm bulb, and the third switch will be connected to the light with the cold bulb.

Q-Six drinking glasses stand in a row, with the first three full of water and the next three empty. By handling and moving only one glass at a time, how can you arrange the six glasses so that no full glass stands next to another full glass, and no empty glass stands next to another empty glass? What is the minimum number of moves to solve this puzzle?

A-The problem can be solved by moving one glass. Simply pick up the middle one of the full glasses, pour the water into the middle one of the empty glasses, and return the glass to its original position.

Q-A man came to visit at a convent while the Mother Superior was out of town. He left before she returned, and was careful to leave nothing behind. The nuns said nothing about his visit, so how did the Mother Superior figure out that a man had been there?

A-Because a toilet seat was up.



Jokes

A Thought for Mid-Term Week

Submitted by: Estefania Luraschi

O Lord, hear my anxious plea
 Calculus is killing me
 I know not of 'dx' or 'dy'
 And probably won't until the day I die.
 Please, Lord, help me in this hour
 As I take my case to the highest power.
 I care not for fame or loot
 Just help me find one square root.
 And Lord, please let me see
 One passing mark in organic chemistry.
 Oh such a thing I constantly dread
 I'd just as soon join the Marines instead.
 Lord, please give me a sign
 That you've been listening all the time.
 Please lead me out of this constant coma
 And give me a shot at my diploma.

GIBBLEGUTS

By Dan Gibson



Jokes

Submitted by: Estefania Luraschi



Sports Schedule

The hours below are available at the Veterinary College gym (across the square) for student use:

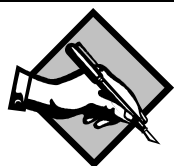


Friday

Football: 4:00 - 5:30

Basketball: 5:30 - 7:00





The Messenger staff encourages our readers to send their comments in letters to the editor.

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