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EDMONTON'S NEWSPAPER SINCE 1903

MONDAY, MAY 30, 2005

## MAN DIES IN BOOZY BRAWL

TEEN CHARGED IN 'SWARMING' DEATH OF FATHER OF 5 / A3

**TRACKING DOWN THE ULTIMATE FRANKEN-BURGER: THE 'MILLET MONSTER'**  
SCOTT McKEEN / A11

**THE TOY THAT 'PLAYS' YOU**  
SEE STORY BELOW

## French say Non to stronger EU

Landslide against constitution stings Chirac



The No side celebrates in Paris after France voted resoundingly Sunday against ratification of the European constitution.

COLIN RANDALL and DAVID RENNIE  
Daily Telegraph  
PARIS

The future of European integration was in doubt Sunday night after French voters humiliated President Jacques Chirac and dealt a devastating blow to the European Union constitution by rejecting it by a landslide.

With the vote, France became the first country to repudiate a treaty that aims to strengthen the EU and

give it a president and foreign minister.

The charter needs approval from all 25 member states to take effect, leading some to see repeat votes on a perhaps altered treaty or even an entirely new constitution.

The most pessimistic warn the entire European project could suffer decline.

With 83 per cent of votes counted, more than 57 per cent of voters had rejected the treaty, the French interior ministry said.

See FRANCE / A9



Expedition leader Ben Gray sails the Peace River with his son Kevin, who plans to stay on for the whole 16-month voyage.

## Rancher riding rivers to sea

Ben Gray hopes to be first to use the Northwest Passage to circle the world

JIM FARRELL  
Journal Staff Writer  
THE VERMILION CHUTES,  
ON THE PEACE RIVER

A long, thin, seagoing craft crested the south bank of the Peace River on Sunday to begin a 16-kilometre portage around an impassable waterfall, then north to the Arctic Ocean and the dreaded Northwest Passage.

If all goes according to plan, in 16 months the 14-tonne Idlewild will have sailed around the world, and will have been the first to use the Northwest Passage to do it.

That's a big "if," but it would make Ben Gray's boat one of fewer than 100 to have

navigated the northern route between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

"It will be a great adventure," Idlewild's Stetson-topped owner said Sunday as members of his support crew cleared logs and debris from the shore, preparing to haul the boat out of the water.

Hitched to a Caterpillar tractor by a cable attached to the Idlewild's bow, the aluminum boat set out on its boggy, winding portage route to a point below the Vermilion chutes.

The journey began last Tuesday, from a dockside near the Dunvegan Bridge, 580 kilometres upriver.

The boat, 17 metres long and only 3.3 metres wide, slipped through the water

like a northern pike for the next five days, powered by its 55-horsepower diesel engine. A fleet of three escort vessels — fast, shallow-draft jet boats — guided its route downriver, past shallows and sandbars.

Without its wheels, which will be removed after Idlewild's second and last portage on the Slave River, the boat needs little more than a metre of water under her. With the wheels, it requires almost two metres.

But twice this week when the wheels hit bottom, helmsman Brian Peterson simply gunned the throttle, and Idlewild crawled over the shallows like a giant metal alligator.

See SAILING / A2

## Head games are what doll plays best

New 'Needies' compete, even fight, for attention

MISTY HARRIS  
CanWest News Service

Everyone knows kids love toys. Now a New York design collective suggests what would happen if children's toys loved them back.

Needies are a trio of interactive plush dolls inspired by co-dependent, high-maintenance relationships. Like their human counterparts, they'll not only trade shameless flattery for love but also compete with each other for attention — sometimes going so far as to plot physical attacks against fellow Needies — in a bid to be their own-



Needies, which satirize not only personal relationships but technology, are being marketed to 20-somethings, not children.

CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

er's favourite companion. It's *Toy Story* meets *The O.C.*, with a dash of *Lord of the Flies* to keep things interesting. "Needies are satires of personal relationships, but can also be construed as satire of technology in a larger sense," says Brett Schultz, who along with Amos Bloomberg and Daniel Perlin designed

Needies for an interactive telecommunications class at New York University.

The limited-production dolls, only available through Needies.com, boast electronic "nervous systems" that allow them to talk, sing, feel hugs and conspire against each other when necessary.

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