

MORE IN NEXT SATURDAY'S NATIONAL POST A BETTER READ

# DAWN OF THE NEW DOWNTIME

We've all heard how time-starved we are. Get ready for the new reality: the leisure economy. Who wins, who loses? We tell you.



# WORK & PLAY

## HYPE REPORT

The issues and companies blogged about most this week at [financialpost.com](http://financialpost.com)

### LOTS OF COPY ON COPYRIGHT SAGA

Just how contentious the issue of copyright has become in the digital age came through loud and clear this week, pushing David George-Cosh's summary of Canada's struggle toward a new Copyright Act into FP Posted's best-read spot. There had been rumblings that Industry Minister Jim Prentice was set to table a bill that would see average citizens hauled into court to face accusations of sharing pirated music online. But the legislation has since been put off.

### R-WORD HAS READERS BACK FOR MORE



Worried investors went looking for comfort this week in FP Posted's second best-read item. Drew Hasselback's report spread the good news from TD Waterhouse that Canada doesn't have to worry about recession. Its chief strategist said the positives in Canada's economy will outweigh the negatives south of the border.

### COLOUR THEM KEEN: JETBLUE STORY SOARS

Web traffic soared on Scott Deveau's report that JetBlue was granted a licence to fly to Canada — even though the low-cost carrier says it has no immediate plans to do so. The third best-read item said JetBlue intends to use the licence for chartered service, but is keeping its options open for scheduled service on routes that are in need of a low-cost alternative, such as Toronto-New York. The New York-based airline offers chartered service for several organizations from sport teams like the Phoenix Coyotes to the White House Press Corps. Without the licence, it was unable to fly these groups to Canada. *Pam Heaven, Financial Post*

## OFF MESSAGE



# Shady characters and strange fruits

By KEVIN BAKER

Our stocking is stuffed with press releases bearing tidings of Christmas cheer.

■ A battle is brewing between rival fruity spirits. Pearl pomegranate vodka delivered the opening salvo: "Unlike the lychee, whose flavour trend

ter dressed for slipping into the night? Sounds like a jewel thief!

■ "2007's landmark 10-millionth case of Absolut vodka" contains "gold-gilded bottles to be sold only in Canada." We wondered about a case of vodka being a "landmark." Reading on, we found it's not the bottles that are "gold-gilded."



Video conferencing allowed Shirley Judd to celebrate her 70th birthday with siblings scattered across the continent.

COURTESY OF THE ROSTIE GROUP



## TRENDS

# Mom's ready for her close-up

By MARY TERESA BITTI

**N**o need to coordinate planes, trains or automobiles this holiday season. Instead, there's a high-tech solution to connecting with loved ones spread out across the continent. While video conferencing has been around for some time, families are getting in on the act for celebrations.

A family based in Canada and the United States got together via bandwidth last season for a pre-Christmas bash. "They bought gifts in advance and were able to open presents together at the video conference party," says Karen Carruthers, COO at the Rostie Group, a Toronto-based firm that rents office space, boardrooms, reception and support services to businesses, as well as hosting private video conference parties for families separated by geography.

"We've connected people in Italy, Australia. It's surprisingly intimate. You feel like you are all in the same room together," says Ms. Carruthers.

That's exactly how Peter Judd felt when he arranged a surprise 70th birthday party for his mom, Shirley. With 10 brothers and sisters, many of whom live in northern Minnesota and northern Ontario, Mrs. Judd, who lives in Mississauga, Ont., hadn't seen some of her siblings in five years.

While the northern folks congregated at a video conference site in Fort Frances, Ont., Mrs. Judd, her husband and sons convened at a video conference site in Mississauga. "She walked in thinking she was going

to be helping me with a work project," says Peter Judd, who runs a small telephone company. "All of a sudden two large-screen TVs come on and there were her brothers and sisters. It was powerful."

At first, admits Mr. Judd, everyone was tentative. But it didn't take long for the family to get comfortable with the technology. "The next thing you know, we're all laughing and catching up," says Mr. Judd. "It was all done in real time, no delay, unlike watching CNN foreign correspondents where you wait for the sound to catch up to the images. We really felt like we were all together."

That all-together feeling is the result of a follow-me camera that follows participants' movements around the room, capturing every moment.

Mr. Judd arranged for birthday cakes to be delivered to both sites so they could all light the candles, enjoy cake and sing *Happy Birthday* together. "Mom cried at the end of it," he says. "At this time in the world, when friends and family are spread out all over, it's great to bring people together this simply," he adds.

And thanks to the growth of video conferencing in business and academia, it is very simple. Video conference sites are now available in even the smallest towns, says Ms. Carruthers. "You tell us where, how many people and when, and we go through the network, make the arrangements and set everything up — anywhere, any time." Costs start at around \$150 an hour.

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