veillance, you're not going to come up with anything other than a name." Which is why Lauder, as part of his job at the Guelph Multicultural Centre's Human Rights Equity Program, decided to go undercover to find out about how racist groups operate. He spent three years infiltrating hate groups in southern Ontario and the US. Lauder's research has encompassed both the practical (providing intelligence on racist activities) and the academic (he defends his PhD at Lancaster University, UK, next month.)

"Much of the material produced by the National Alliance in the States would lead to a criminal code conviction in Canada," says Lauder. However "The Beast as Saint," as penned by Strom, doesn't qualify for a conviction.

"It's very slyly written," says Newton. "It doesn't say that black people are all bad, it just besmirches the name of one particular man." The Criminal Code makes it illegal to publicly promote genocide, or the hatred of an identifiable group, but attacks on historical figures are not legislated.

"It's certainly not illegal," says Vicky Samuels of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, which received its copy courtesy of Rev. Newton. "You can't call for out and out banning of it," says Samuels. But "you can make people aware of its existence and get them to critically analyze it."

Shuttle dreams, shuttle nightmares

Growing up with the **space shuttle program** in your **backyard**.

by Doug George

On a wall near my parents' bedroom hangs a black pen drawing from 1977. It shows the original space shuttle, Enterprise, on her maiden test-glide down from thousands of metres. Instead of five black conical engines on her tail, there's a white pyramid jutting backwards—the engines aren't used in a shuttle's descent. A small chase plane is above and behind the shuttle, taking pictures probably. I remember asking my brother if the plane could save the astronauts inside if they needed it.

When the Columbia, the first shuttle into space, disintegrated on Saturday, February 1, I knew how dumbstruck the USA and other space-travelling countries would be. But I also felt the personal devastation of NASA and those who loved the shuttles. After all, I grew up in the California desert towns that gave birth to the shuttle fleet.

About 150 kilometres northeast of Los Angeles, green suburbia gives way to dry lakebeds and scrub desert. This is the Antelope Valley where the towns of Palmdale and Lancaster were once anchored to Edwards Air Force Base. The Base, as we called it, was the backdrop for the Enterprise picture. A hangar in Palmdale was where the shuttles rolled out with initial rapidity: Columbia, 1979; Challenger, 1982; Discovery, 1983. The Endeavor joined the fleet in 1991 as a replacement for the downed Challenger. Edwards AFB was also where the shuttles landed because its lakebeds were perfect runways and the Mojave Desert provided abundant clear weather. Until 1993, the Base was the primary landing site; now it is the primary backup site.

The communities that supported the shuttles teemed with cosmic pride every time a launch from Florida culminated with a dusty touchdown in California, especially in the early years of the flights. The air was electric, local media scampered and if you didn't know that 90 kilometres above your head, a white metallic bird was soaring, something was wrong with you. Here was the penultimate in human technology—people floating, working and sleeping in space. Note this wasn't a strictly American venture. Canada's robotic arm frequently appeared in shuttle photos, maneuvering International Space Station pieces or snatching a decrepit satellite for repairs. Astronauts hailed from many countries, including Canada. And down on earth, we Antelope Valley folks with a connection to space bounced with pride.

We didn't experience the lift-offs of Cape Canaveral but rather the silent swoosh of the gliding landings. Well, almost silent. BOOM-BOOM! A deafening and ubiquitous double sonic boom would explode on terra firma, making our kitchen window rattle in its frame and my cat bolt across the yard in a panic. A shuttle builds air friction as it falls through the atmosphere at Mach 25. Two pressure waves develop—one on the nose and one at the tail. The 56-metre shuttle is large enough to separate the waves by half a second. As the first wave slams into the ground, the air pressure surges instantly, creating the first boom. Immediately, air pressure drops and actually becomes lower than normal. Then the second wave smashes down and the air pressure spikes again, only this time, back to normal. But the result is the same and a BOOM BOOM shatters the desert. I remember feeling flattened from a double boom during a fierce game of tetherball—and the yellow ball slamming into my dazed face. After that, I tried not to play on landing days.

When a shuttle finally taxied to a dusty stop, the thousands of civilians watching from a rocky hillside were denied a long look. Instead, NASA officials whisked it into a hangar and the next time we saw it was on Kennedy Space Center's launch pad 39-A or 39-B strapped to an orange propellant tank and two white booster rockets.

The booster rockets were what brought Challenger down instead of up on January 28, 1986. That morning, our world—Edwards AFB

and the Antelope Valley, that is—froze like the desert never could. I was at home sick that day and listening to the radio when my 10-yr-old brain couldn't understand what was happening. My mother broke into tears and suddenly, space wasn't such a kind place to go. The bombshell kept re-igniting in Palmdale and on the base as month after month passed without a shuttle launch. The NASA family alternated between consoling and cannibalizing itself.

When I walked into my living room last Saturday morning, one of my roommates said, "Something happened to the space shuttle." I knew the Columbia was orbiting because the American media had taken a break from beating the war drums of the White House to cover the January 16 launch of the first Israeli astronaut. I sat on the couch and watched the replay of Columbia cometizing in a crystal blue sky. At that altitude and speed, I only hope the seven people had no idea what happened. And once again, like 17 years ago, shuttle communities halted to say, "There went our people. There went our baby."