



SFURA NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2003

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The Office of the Retirees' Association is located in AQ 3048 and is staffed on a volunteer basis by Penny Spagnolo.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS since the March Newsletter: We are pleased to announce that Leonard J. Evenden and Joan Koronko have joined SFURA.



UPCOMING EVENTS AND FUTURE PLANS.....

June 19th: Walk in Mundy Park, followed by lunch at Paros Taverna, Burquitlam Plaza, Coquitlam

July 23rd : Lunch at the Whistler home of Barbara Rae and George Suart. Due to space limitations, **30 people only** may attend on a first come, first serve basis. **Please contact Marg Jones, ONLY, regarding this event.**

August: We are hoping to arrange a **FREE** tour of one of the Lower Mainland Watershed areas, the date is still to be arranged.

September 24: A Walking Tour of Chinatown beginning at 10:00 a.m. and lasting one and a half hours, followed by lunch in the area. The cost of the tour is \$4.00. Participants will meet at the Chinese Cultural Centre, 50 East Pender Street.

October: SFURA Fall Dinner.

November: Sulky Races in Cloverdale begin in November, and there is a plan to attend. Details later.

For further information or details on upcoming events, please contact:

Bev Carlson at 604-988-1521 or (carlsone@telus.net)

or

Marg Jones at 604-291-3360 or (jonesa@sfu.ca)

For events at the SFU Theatre on campus, you may phone 604-291-3514, or send an e-mail to theatre@sfu.ca

There have been several inquiries from hopeful bridge players, and there has been some discussion of setting up a Duffers' Bridge Club, or arranging a bridge tournament. Please, if you are interested, get in touch via the contact numbers above.



Discussions at recent executive meetings have given rise to another question, and that is:
A suggestion that the Executive Board explore ways to make it possible for retirees' voices to be heard on political issues and current affairs.

Please let us have your reaction to this proposal, and any ideas you may have for implementation. The Executive Board welcomes feedback.

On another matter, SFURA members are invited to inform the Executive Board if they encounter problems with, for example, pension statements.

SFURA members should also be aware that the Executive has decided to cancel the telephone 604-268-6717 in A.Q. 3048 because it was used so seldom. Please contact individual members of the Executive by telephone or e-mail. For those without e-mail, the Executive Board will continue to make every effort to maintain contact by mail or phone.

Good News: APPLE has agreed to authorizing the S.F.U. Microcomputer Store to sell to SFU retirees at the educational pricing level. The price is shown on the products. This policy applies to Apple branded products only. SFURA members may use their SFURA membership cards to identify themselves as SFU retirees. Verification for non-members will have to be handled via Human Resources.

TRAVELS AND CHANGES.....

Editor's Note: Following are some excerpts from e-mail messages from Frank Manuel. Frank and his partner Victoria are presently in China, teaching English. They both completed the TESOL Diploma Program at Vancouver Community College. They have taken early retirement, and embarked on a 10-year plan of teaching and travel. At present they are based in Kaifagu near Dalian in northeast China.

"The people here are wonderful. We find them kind and helpful whenever we are on a shopping adventure. It's quite surprising to be fumbling through my Mandarin Phrase Book to cobble together an explanation of whatever it is that I'm trying to say, and have a face pop out of nowhere and ask if they can help. Many people have some command of English, and don't hesitate to use it when they see us in need.

The school is quite a remarkable building. It's all concrete with pink paint on the outside walls and whitewash over the internal walls. It looks nice but everything echoes like a parking garage. Makes the classroom an interesting place acoustically. It has about 1,000 students from grades 1 through 9.

We had arrived here with the impression that we were to be working with students who had several years of English and we would be working at increasing their speaking skills. This turns out to not be the case. Victoria works with the Grade 9 students, and I with the grade 8 students. Only about 10% are capable of understanding English. Almost all can read English, but what they do is make the appropriate sounds for the symbols without any idea of their meaning. Rather like personable mynah birds. Some have no ability to read, write or speak any English, so we are trying to completely revamp the program in order to make it useful for the students.

Shopping is always quite an experience. There are places with fixed prices and there are those where haggling is expected. We're not very good hagglers as the prices are so low to start with and the people work so hard that we haven't quite caught the spirit of it all yet. We went to the

Peacock Down Factory today and bought down coats and vests in preparation for the winter. My knee-length down-filled coat cost 100 Yuan, about \$20.00, and a down vest was 80 Yuan, about \$16.00. The prices were fixed, thank heaven, as I couldn't imagine trying to get those prices lower. The items, which we bought, were on clearance before the new stock moves into the store.

We made a trip into Dalian recently. It's about 20 minutes by bus from where we live in Kaifaqu (Kie-fa-chew) and quite different in pace. Kaifaqu has a very leisurely pace to it, much like Whistler. I've never seen anyone walking fast, and even the traffic is relatively slow, though somewhat chaotic by Western standards. The basic rule is everything yields to whatever is larger, and pedestrians yield to everything, even bicycles. Crossing the road is the live version of Frogger. We usually cross mid-block and refer to crossing at an intersection as Advanced Frogger. We have to look out for both street and sidewalk vehicles, as there is a wide strip between the sidewalk and the buildings where people occasionally drive. Sure keeps us alert. I think the drivers are allowed a certain number of sidewalk kills before having to take to the streets. It's rather incongruous that you can be fined for walking on the grass, but it's O.K. to kill someone walking on the sidewalk.

Food is always an interesting affair. I recently was hired to read a script for a local TV station which was putting together a sales CD for a seafood consortium. After the recording session the director and graphic designer took me and my interpreter to dinner at a nearby restaurant. When we stepped in the door I looked to the right and the entire wall was covered with tanks containing live sea creatures of all descriptions including rainbow trout. We each selected what we wanted, ordered our drinks and then were taken up two floors in an elevator to a private room.

As we sipped beer and exchanged rather stiff pleasantries the food began to arrive. First in the door was a bowl which contained shrimp. Alive and hopping about! I looked at my interpreter, Jasmine, and raised my eyebrows about a foot or so, and she nodded. I asked her if she was going to eat them and she said "No" very softly, but very firmly. I looked across the table at the amused face of Mr. Chue and through Jasmine said, "You first." He grabbed one, tore off its head, peeled it, dipped it into the sauce and popped it into his mouth. "Well," I thought, "he's still alive." So I grabbed one and did the same, thinking "It's just REALLY fresh sushi." The feel of the little thing moving in my hand was rather disconcerting. I'm not used to food that wriggles. Off with it's head, peeled it, dipped it in the sauce, and popped it in my mouth, and started to chew. "Not bad," I thought, then realized that the sauce was almost pure wasabi! After a good drink of beer I looked at my hosts and realized that that act had cemented the evening. From that moment on the atmosphere changed to one of relaxed conversation with no subjects forbidden. I did have to avoid looking at the waving antennae on the decapitated shrimp heads, but otherwise the food was splendid. We dined for several hours and parted with a promise to meet again. Lovely evening."

You never know where studying E.S.L. will take you. A call to Douglas College provided the information that the Department of Developmental Studies (604-527-5463) mounts two E.S.L. courses. One is an intensive crash course mounted in the summer, from June through August. The other is a "semesterised" program that proceeds at a more leisurely pace. My informant explained that the length of this program depends upon the English language skills of the student. The Douglas College website is www.douglas.bc.ca

Please take the time to send us accounts of your projects and your travels; they make for most interesting reading and demonstrate clearly that there is life after Simon Fraser University. Editor's Note.

MEMBERSHIP

This is just a gentle reminder to those of you who have not renewed your membership for this year, that this is the time to do it! There are only a few people we have not heard from and we eagerly anticipate that they will be in touch very soon! Remember, it is only \$20 per annum and for that, you not only have the right to free parking in the Visitors' Parkade at SFU but also may take advantage of all the interesting and fun events that are planned for members throughout the year.

Membership renewals, and new memberships, should be sent to:

Marg Jones,
Treasurer, SFURA,
c/o Recreational Services,
TC 2002,
Simon Fraser University,
Burnaby, B.C.
V5A 1S6



PASSAGES.....

It is with great sadness, we note that one of our members, Peggy Evans, wife of Harry Evans, a founder of the Simon Fraser Retirees Association, passed away on April 30, 2003.