



# SIMON SAYS..

It's not just what you've done, but what you are doing and what you aspire to do next.



## DEAN CRAIG LAUNCHES RETIREES' FUND

Dean John Craig has introduced a visionary program of research grants for retirees in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences that is a model for the university as a whole. Such support not only encourages the continued work of retired faculty, but also enhances the Faculty itself with the retirees' continued scholarly activities.

Last year, when Dean Craig recognized that many retirees from his faculty were still active in their fields, he allotted \$50,000 dollars from the Faculty budget for a program that enabled any retired faculty to apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 each. The only stipulation is that the money be applied directly to research rather than to general professional activity such as travel to conferences.

The first recipients of these grants, all between \$2500 and \$5,000, are listed below, and demonstrate what can be accomplished with this financial support:

Paul Delany English  
Research for a book on Rupert Brooke.

Shue Tuck Wong Geography  
Translation of a 16,000 word report of atrocities committed in Negeri Sembilan during the Japanese occupation.

Roy Carlson Archaeology  
Funding for maps, drawings, and illustrations to complete a monograph on Paleolithic artifacts from the Sudan.

Jacqueline Viswanathan French  
Completion of third volume of *La francophone de la Colombie-Britannique: mémoire et fiction.*

Hannah Gay History  
Funds for indexing completed volume.

Bruce Alexander Psychology  
Funds for obtaining copyright for items in a history of psychology textbook.

Brian Hayden                                  Archaeology  
Interviews with ritual specialists using caves in Indonesia.

Maureen Covell                                  Political Science  
Third edition of the Historical Dictionary of Madagascar.

Alan Rudrum                                  English  
Revised Edition of the *Complete Poems of Henry Vaughan*.

Peggy Meyer                                  Political Science  
China's security and economic objectives in Afghanistan.

Evelyn Harden                                  Interdisciplinary Studies  
Editing the journals of Anna McNeil Whistler.

The SFURA applauds this new professional opportunity for retirees, and notes the contributions it adds to the Faculty's professional productivity. As Dean Craig says, "The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences is home to a deeply distinguished group of senior scholars eminently deserving of our continued support. The gratifying response to this modest initiative has proved eloquent testimony of this fact."

The fund is creating opportunities. Brian Hayden, for example, says that he was amazed when the funds became available. "I can now think about getting to cave sites where locals still use them in their rituals," he said. "What I learn from that will help me to understand how caves were used in paleolithic times, and what rituals they may have been using."

We invite other Faculties to note the success of this practice in Arts and Science, and to consider offering their retirees support for their professional activities as well. We will continue to keep our readers informed about the success of their colleagues in continuing their work.



#### SFURA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## *Only Connect*

Hiromi Matsui

In retirement, the connections made during work and leisure sometimes come up in different contexts. When I was in CUPE and worked for the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Marilyn Bowman, I didn't ever imagine she would phone me one day out of the blue and persuade me to join the Board of the Retirees Association. As many of you know, Marilyn is not only a good clinical psychologist, but she is a master of "sweet talking" people into accepting roles they may never have considered.

When I first came to SFU, the people I met in the Fitness classes were a great connection with people all across the campus. Something about doing sit-ups besides groaning people in wrinkled t-shirts and shorts opens up doors of communication like nothing else. Who knew that the grey haired fellow who came for early morning runs held a senior position in Human Resources!

The SFU Retirees Association is proud to have members from across all staff groups as well as faculty. When you retire, the titles, offices, and all the other details of working at SFU fade



quickly into the background, and we're left with the networks of people we worked with over a lifetime. Making new connections is hard for many retired people and some people have no interest in making the effort to do that. But the many activities of our Association are great places to connect.

For example, the Walking Group is an interesting mix of SFU retirees and others who are interested (one could say passionately committed!) to walking every week throughout the year. By walking together, people talk in an informal way and they connect. The success of this group is due to the volunteer efforts of those who have organized and led the walks. Thanks for keeping this group going go to Ted Cohn, David Ryeburn, Dan McDonald, Jacqueline Viswanathan, Parveen Bawa and others who have been leaders of the walks.

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## **Alison Watt Urges Us to Get Involved in Kiva**

Recently I started to help microfinance small sustainable projects throughout the world through Kiva. It's easy to do and you will be amazed how quickly the borrowers start repaying their loans so that your capital investment can be used to help other projects.

I've been involved in four projects so far. The first was in the Congo and the recipient has fully repaid the loan; the second is a food project in Kenya and they have already repaid 65%; the third, a team in Ghana, has now raised all the funds it needs and will start repaying soon; and the fourth (in Rwanda) is a project that requires a loan of \$825 to allow the borrower to expand her agriculture business. Most of the funds required for the project (66%) have now been raised, but a further \$275 is needed before they can get underway. Of the funds loaned through Kiva, 99% are repaid.

You can learn more about the Kiva program on their website, <http://www.kiva.org/>. When you contact them, please indicate that you are part of the Simon Fraser University Team and encourage others to get involved. We thank Dan McDonald for his work in promoting this program. You can start with a contribution of \$25 and can check on the web site whenever you want to see how the project is going. Please join the SFU community that is involved in this venture. Thanks!

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**Activate Your Lifetime Warranty**

## Sandra Djwa's New Book on Poet, PK Page



**SANDRA DJWA, *JOURNEY WITH NO MAPS: A LIFE OF PK PAGE***

David Stouck (SFU Professor Emeritus) for *Simon Says*

Sandra Djwa, professor of English at SFU for 36 years, was nominated this year for the Charles Taylor Prize, Canada's most prestigious and generous award for literary non-fiction writing. Her book gives an artful account of how P.K. Page (1916-2010) navigated a career when, in a rapidly changing world, there were few guidelines for women becoming artists. The writing of this biography is closely connected to SFU because poet and biographer met when Page agreed in 1970 to read some of her poems to Sandra's English class. Although Page was then age 54, it was her public debut and this established a first and vital connection between the biographer and her subject.

Like many readers of biographies I suspect, I am first interested in a subject's early years—with struggle rather than success. This biography of Page does not disappoint: an austere prairie childhood, a complicated Montreal apprenticeship, and a long, unrequited love affair are prologue to this poet's emergence as one of Canada's leading artists. Her recognition as a writer and her enduring marriage to Canadian diplomat Arthur Irwin did not happen until middle age, although in one of this biography's more interesting passages we are told that Page had dreamed that all this would happen and that she believed, like Rilke perhaps, that one's life story was written in advance of one's living it.

Page was a serious writer and on one level this is a biography of a spiritual quest. In her reading

she was engaged with such thinkers as Carl Jung, Gurdjieff, Krishnamurti, and with the religious practice of the Sufis. But many readers will have a special interest here in Page's frustrated but unending love for fellow poet F. R. Scott, prominent Montreal lawyer and one of the founders of the CCF party. Sandra Djwa had previously published a biography of Scott but discovered his love affair with Page later. Here it is revealed as the emotional setting for much of Page's writing and for her productions as a painter (signed P.K. Irwin).

*Journey with No Maps: A Life of P.K. Irwin* is a careful, detailed work of scholarship, drawing from letters, diaries, and numerous interviews. But in its intimate exploration of the writer's private experiences, especially her passion for art and friendships, it has the vividness of a work of fiction. Highly recommended.

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*Sandra Djwa will give a talk on P.K. Page for the SFURA Seminar Series on Tuesday, September 17, 2013*

## **'The Ides of March Have Come...and Gone' Soothsayers' Tragedy...Retirees' Delight**

On the afternoon of Wednesday, March 13th, The Ides of March social for SFURA retirees was held in the Diamond Alumni Centre, and the day of disaster for Julius Caesar turned into an afternoon of social delight for everyone in attendance. The change of venue from the Eagle Creek Restaurant on the Burnaby Golf Course was welcomed very positively, and the DAC buzzed with chatter and laughter. President Andrew Petter briefly joined the crowd and the revelry. At the end, celebrants were already looking forward to next year.



Vito Modigliani and Marilyn Bowman discuss existential angst at the Ides party



"The Ides of March have come, Ron Baker," says Wyn Roberts, while John D'Auria looks on aghast.



Presidents Petter and Matsui, Marilyn Bowman, and Jim Boyd, pleased Ron Baker survived the Ides of March.



## *It's All About You*

Evelyn Palmer

**Jared Ralph Curtis**, professor emeritus of English at SFU and visiting scholar in English at the University of Washington, has been awarded the prestigious M.L. Rosenthal Award of the W.B. Yeats Society of New York. He will receive his award March 28, 2013 at New York City's National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South, Manhattan.

During her last three years as a member of the history department at SFU, **Hannah Gay** held a joint appointment at Imperial College London. After her retirement from SFU she carried on working in London for a further five years. She is now living back in Burnaby almost full-time, enjoying time with her husband, Ian, a retired member of the chemistry department, their family and friends. Hannah still makes the occasional research trip to London where she remains an honorary associate of Imperial College.

Her new book, *The Silwood Circle: A History of Ecology and the Making of Scientific Careers in Late Twentieth-Century Britain* will be published by Imperial College Press in April 2013. It is about a close-knit group of ten highly influential ecologists who worked in Britain from the late 1960s onwards.

**Steve Henslow** is part of the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging. This is a national research project headed by McMaster and Dalhousie Universities that is being headed up in British Columbia by Hal Weinberg with the research being done by the SFU Department of Gerontology. There are over 20,000 persons from all regions of Canada participating at different degrees of examination, ranging from a phone call every year and a half to that plus detailed mental and physical tests every 3 years till the death of participants.

When **Steve Lower** retired in 1999, he decided to spend a few months tidying up some of the printed notes he had prepared for his General Chemistry students, with the idea of making them available to others via the Internet. Little did he realize that this would launch him into a new career as an author and webmaster that continues to dominate his so-called "retirement" years.

**It's All About You (continued)**

His Web-based *Chem1 Virtual Textbook* now brings him into indirect contact with far more students each year (7.9 million page viewings in 2012) than he faced in 34 years of teaching at SFU. Compared to conventional chemistry textbooks which typically cost more than \$150, the C1VT is completely free. Leigh and I have known Steve since 1955, so he is our oldest SFU colleague. He was a pioneer in Computer Assisted Instruction, introducing CAI to the Chemistry Department in 1969.

**Sheila Delany**, whose book *Anti-saints. The New Golden Legend of Sylvain Maréchal* was mentioned in the last Newsletter, has had many invitations to speak about her research. She gave talks at The University of Texas (Austin) in September and at UBC on March 1. She will speak at the Learneds in June in Victoria where she has been asked by the Canadian Society for Jewish Studies to give a presentation on "Jews in the French Revolution". She will also speak at Alliance Française this fall.

On Thursday, February 21 **Claire Cupples**, the Dean of Science, hosted a luncheon for retired science faculty at the Diamond Alumni Centre. Entertainment was provided by Chemsemble, the choir composed of active and retired members of the Faculties of Science and Education, four of whom are SFURA members. The Dean spent a few minutes before lunch describing plans for the celebration of SFU's 50th anniversary in 2015. She asked for nominations of Alumni who have built on their science education to establish successful careers, and of inspiring research milestones and breakthroughs in fundamental or applied research. She also asked for our visions for the next 50 years. They will be launching their website in September when the 50th anniversary campaign kicks off. Submit your ideas to Amanda Reaume <[areaume@sfu.ca](mailto:areaume@sfu.ca)>

We were all saddened to hear that **Lionel Funt** died on April 18, 2013, at the age of 89. Lionel was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on 20 January, 1924. He received his B.A. and M.Sc. in Chemistry from Dalhousie University. He later obtained a Ph.D. degree at McGill University. In 1964 Lionel took over as Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Manitoba, and in 1968 accepted the position of Dean of Science at Simon Fraser University, a position he held until 1971. He continued with the university as a Chemistry Professor until his retirement in 1989. Lionel was a member of both the Senate and Board of Governors for many years. He became a Professor Emeritus in 1989.

Lionel conducted research in the field of polymer chemistry. As a researcher, he developed an interdisciplinary field bridging polymer chemistry and electrochemistry and invented a methodology for the electrochemically-initiated living polymerization of vinyl monomers that recently re-emerged, some 30 years later, as "Solar Fuels". In 1991, he was awarded the Macromolecular Science and Engineering Award of the Chemical Institute of Canada for his distinguished contribution to macromolecular science and engineering. He was a Fellow of the Chemical Institute of Canada. Lionel will be sorely missed. We send our condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.





## *In My Opinion*

### *Marilyn Bowman*

### On Dying and Funerals

I've never thought much about death, not from fear, but because I wasn't that interested; I'm a biologist. When my dear man died a year ago, I began to think more about death and how we are expected to behave, and began realizing how many different attitudes and values there are concerning the end of life.

During Andrew's illness, we did not have any of those "ultimate" conversations about life that our culture considers appropriate, because he died too suddenly. I mused on this, uncertain if he would have wanted it, wondering if I was lacking in not taking an initiative. Some believe that a display of emotion is important, and therapeutic, while others, including me, think that mostly quiet stoicism is the appropriate behaviour. I concluded that there is no best way to behave other than giving comfort to the dying, and what feels right at one time feels differently at another time. The end days are not about us, but about the one we love.

Planning the funeral was new to me. I remembered the worst funeral I had ever attended and was determined not to create anything similar. The woman had been mortally ill for a few years and took that time to script her funeral in elaborate detail. It featured a group of cancer women singing a peppy song, many different individuals coming from the audience to read specific poems she had required, to play certain pieces of music, to sing songs, ending with emotional outpourings in an open mike. It lasted more than two hours and represented not only an ordeal to me but the most extreme kind of control from beyond the grave that I could imagine.

Andrew, his sister, and I knew we wanted nothing like that; for starters, he did not want a series of people talking about him. We did not call it a "celebration", a term demanding a certain kind of behavior from those present, and we did not experience his loss as a celebration signal. We wanted his funeral to be a time for reflections about life and for remembering the qualities in Andrew we treasured. The service included some hymns, some philosophical readings briefer than he suggested, and short tributes from three family members read by the minister. It was somber, touching, personal, and not lengthy.

We are all different, and mostly we just do the best we can to manage our feelings and all the tasks that death brings. Now closer to our own ends of life, we might be careful about the kind of guidance we leave for our survivors. I know I do not want to mastermind an awards ceremony for lifetime achievements. In addition to our Wills, our Powers of Attorney, and our health care directives, we might provide suggestions that do not lay a rigid burden on our survivors, for they may want to change things a bit. As the minister reminded us, funerals are for the living.



## The Socialist Report

Tom O'Shea

Alas, I'm afraid your Socialist succumbed to the press of external commitments this semester--having bought a condo in Yaletown in January, sold his house in Burnaby in February, and moved from one to the other in March--and had little opportunity to organize anything in the way of social outings. On the other hand, SFURA members were well served with an excellent series of seminars, financial meetings, and the Ides of March at the DAC over that period of time.

In the previous newsletter I described my enthusiasm for the United Players at the Jericho Arts Centre. I'd like to, shamelessly, promote another theatrical venture. This is a new group calling themselves the Ensemble Theatre Company (ETC, of course). In their own words: " (The ETC) ... is dedicated to achieving artistic excellence while developing a theatre that is accessible and relevant, through productions of challenging contemporary plays and innovative approaches to the classics. The Ensemble Theatre Company sees theatre as an essential cultural force in leading and framing dialogue on important issues of our day. These core values inform all aspects of Ensemble Theatre Company." They are mounting an ambitious repertory season consisting of three plays this July and August, all at the Jericho Arts Centre:

*The Diaries of Adam & Eve* by Mark Twain, directed by Toph Marshall (opening Friday, July 12), *Women Beware Women* by Thomas Middleton, directed by Tariq Leslie (opening Saturday, July 13), and *The Farnsworth Invention* by Aaron [West Wing, Social Network] Sorkin, directed by Matthew Bissett (opening Friday, July 19th)

I believe that this is an initiative that deserves support and I encourage our members to give them a try. Finally, I would like to report that, after sponsoring two presentations at the Wilson Centre in Port Coquitlam, we have decided not to continue this series. I would like to thank Malcolm Page (once again) and Ron Long for presenting at this venue. My thanks also goes to others who offered to present: Parveen Bawa, Charles Crawford, Dorothea Arnett (Wilson), and Richard de Armond. We certainly are a multi-talented group with a fascinating variety of interests.



## Ron Baker Tells How It Was

John D'Auria

A special seminar was scheduled on May 16, entitled, "Creating SFU: An Inside Story." with an attendance of over 50. This unique event brought back to the University, the first Director of Academic Planning for SFU, Prof. Ron Baker. Following his time at SFU, Ron became President and Vice-Provost of the University of Prince Edward Island.

SFU was established in the mid-1960's under the authority of Prof. Gordon Shrum, Chairman of the Board, and Ron was his first appointee along with Patrick McTaggart-Cowan, the first President.

(Baker continued)

In this seminar, Ron presented a number of stories of these early days on how the University was established, how the location was chosen, which departments were installed initially, and many humorous accounts of what really happened behind the scenes.

Following a 25 minute accounting, the event opened for questions and there was lively interaction. One of the key questions was how the leaders decided to establish a department of Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology (PSA). Of course, as everyone knows, this department, which was eventually separated into its parts, was a source of considerable public attention in the early days when it used the University for a social-political experiment. Ron explained how Shrum was desperate to be different from UBC and needed to create large classes to enroll large numbers of students, so he patched them together. Ron also amused the crowd with stories about his boss's gruff manner and swift decision-making.

Hugh Johnston introduced the speaker and Len Evenden thanked him. It was a good session.

*This event was videotaped and will be available through the SFURA website. The SFURA webpage in the Library Archive is <http://summit.sfu.ca/collection179>*

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## FOR A GOOD READ

Percilla Groves



One may (or may not) see a thread leading from one book to another in this list.

Bowering, George. **Pinboy**. Markham, Ontario: Cormorant Books, 2012. George read from this book at the 2012 Word on the Street, using the hand not holding the book to beat out the rhythms as though the lines were poetry. You might want to try reading sections aloud yourself though likely you should be cautious about choosing your audience. George's alleged memoir about his youth in Oliver has already lead to one online warning against his appearance at the next high school reunion.

Derbyshire, John. **Prime Obsession**. Joseph Henry Press, 2003. This book about the Riemann Hypothesis, the most important unsolved problem in mathematics, brilliantly interleaves chapters on the people and history behind the problem with chapters which give a substantial overview of the mathematics without getting too technical. The heart of the book is a touching look at the personality behind the hypothesis, Bernhard Riemann, a modest and devout family man who died tragically young, but whose profound insights led directly to the developments of Quantum Mechanics and Relativity.

Garfield, Simon. **Just my type: A book about fonts**. London: Profile Books, 2010. All print junkies know the power of the typeface. The right font pulls the reader in; the wrong font repels. Garfield's anecdotes on the subject range through Apple to bestiality to Microsoft to Zapf Dingbats. How did the calligraphy courses at Reed College affect what you see on the screen of your computer? Read this book to find out.

Kishkan, Theresa. **Mnemonic a book of trees**. Fredericton: Gooselane, 2010. Kishkan's book is a standout among the many personal histories published in the past decade. Observations on the natural world from the Greek islands to the Sunshine Coast are skillfully presented in the context of a life completely ordinary in some ways and totally amazing in others. For those contemplating putting our lives on paper there could be no better place to begin than reading this book. Kishkan is open and direct and without sentimentality.

McGauley, Tom, (ed.) **Jack Shadbolt Between the Wars: Local Developments, International Influences.** (West Coast Line #75. Vol. 46, No. 3. Fall, 2012). One delight of this hardcover issue of SFU's major literary journal is that many surprises are packed within the eighty pages of this unusual book. The central item is a transcription of a historical/cultural talk given by Shadbolt in 1975, preserved over the decades by Ralph Maud, carefully annotated for this edition and enriched by an essay on the photographer Harry Redl. Tom McGauley has the gift of imparting much within a short temporal space, a gift that he carries to this book.

Popoff, Alexandra. **The Wives: The women behind Russia's literary giants.** New York, London: Pegasus Books, 2012. Many readers of this column will have typed a paper for a romantic partner, but how many of you have allowed said partner to pawn your wardrobe down to your last dress? Anna Dostoevsky, Sophia Tolstoy, Nadezhda Mandelstam, Vera Nabokov, Elena Bulgakov, and Natalya Solzhenitsyn contributed their energy as editors, publishers, transcribers, archivists, publicists during successive hostile periods of Russian history. Compelling reading.

Some may have detected that each column lists one book that is not like the others. Well spotted! I confess I sometimes draw from the reading list of my partner Andrew Seary, a mathematician and programmer. (The only overlap is our shared interest in mysteries and police procedurals.)



## *SFU Retirees' Coffee Group in the Okanagan*

We are organizing a Coffee Group for SFU retirees in the Okanagan. At the meeting we will discuss how we could make our life as SFU retirees more enjoyable among fellow academics and staff residing anywhere around our beautiful lake.

Time: May 21, 2013, 2:00 pm

Place: Pulp Fiction Coffee House: Antiques & Vintage  
1598 Pandosy St., Kelowna, BC.

The Pulp Fiction Coffee House is a welcome new addition to Downtown Kelowna, with hundreds of the most intriguing books, with unique curiosity objects, good food, and excellent coffee.

For more information contact Zita McRobbie  
Ph.: (250) 448-9232 or (778) 918 8422  
e-mail: [mcrobbie@sfu.ca](mailto:mcrobbie@sfu.ca)



# The Financial Section

## FIG Plans Future Investment Seminars



The Financial Interest Group (FIG) Marvin Wideen, Tom O'Shea & Phil Mah.

For this issue of the newsletter, we provide a FIG summary of our last seminar, an advance notice of next FIG seminar planned for May, and a suggested plan for coming years.

During our February Seminar, Brett Creed from Wealth Management, National Bank Financial described five commonly overlooked fixed income products that have low risk, low fees, and higher returns. None were proprietary to National Bank Financial. He began by outlining some of the common pitfalls of many fixed income products. For example, the inflation rate is frequently greater than many of these guaranteed investments. He then outlined five frequently overlooked opportunities which include:

**1. Dividend and bond ETFs.** Many investors are now turning to such ETFs instead of mutual funds because fees are lower, ETFs are attracting better managers than mutual funds, and they are fully invested all the time.

**2. Real return bonds.** Such bonds are Government guaranteed and adjusted to inflation. They have low management costs and a hand's off approach until maturity.

**3. Perpetual preferred shares.** These produce better yields compared to fixed income, and dividends are not subject to fluctuation like common stocks.

**4. Loan portfolio ETFs.** These ETFs that are new to Canada have been tested in the U.S. for some time. They have much better yields than fixed income and lower management costs.

**5. Covered call strategies.** If you own a blue chip stock, you can profit from selling a call option against the stock. You may have to sell your stock if it gains in price and option is called.

For more specific information about these fixed income opportunities contact Kris Taylor at (604) 623 6794, or Kris [Taylor@nbc.ca](mailto:Taylor@nbc.ca). A copy of Brend Creed's power point is available upon request from one of us.

For our next seminar to be held in May 21st we plan to focus on real estate as an investment opportunity. Tom O'Shea will introduce Aman Bhangu who will discuss the pitfalls of relying on the real estate market as a source of retirement equity or, in rental investments, an income stream. He suggests that Canadian real estate can be a very risky asset class. Aman Bhangu was recently interviewed by the Globe and Mail.

For the future we plan to offer at least three seminars each year, two standard events and one elective. The standard events will draw upon ongoing investments that involve many of us, and the elective one or more will focus on current issues of interest. As always, we are always open to your suggestions.

## *Does Rise of the East Portend Decline of the West?*

*James W. Dean, Professor Emeritus, Economics*

**I'm often shocked in casual conversation** with the intelligent but nevertheless unwashed masses who've never studied economics when they come up with whoppers like, "Well of course the Chinese make everything; there'll be no more work for us; we are doomed to growing unemployment; they're so much richer than us; and we survive only because they're lending us hundreds of billions". Etc. etc.

The simple facts are that average productivity -- meaning marketed output per hour of work -- in the West + Japan + South Korea + a few smaller Asian economies is about five times average productivity in China, India and most of the rest of the East. In other words, the average person in the West generates about five times as much income per hour of work as does the average person in the East.

**Moreover the percentage of people who are totally unemployed** – not underemployed in subsistence farming, but sleeping in train stations in Beijing and Shanghai or on streets in Bombay and Calcutta – is higher than in North America or Western Europe even now, when sustained Western unemployment is the highest it's been for fifty years.

And the reason that China lends so much to the US is that China can't get as good, safe and liquid returns from its surplus savings at home as it can from the US government and from the US financial system. For all the problems that New York and London have visited on the globe over the past seven years, New York and London are still capable of allocating the bulk of the world's savings to productive uses far more efficiently than China's banks or India's banks or anyone else's.

Yes, China is the world's second largest economy and will be the world's largest within 20 years, but it will be perhaps 50 years, if ever, when it delivers the world's highest average incomes.

**None of this belies the fact that the West is in serious trouble.** In 2007, Wall Street precipitated a financial meltdown that quickly spread to Main Street and that brought US growth to a halt and doubled their unemployment rate. It took three years, until 2010, for US growth to recover weakly and almost five years for their unemployment rate to begin declining gradually.

The US financial crisis of 2007-8 quickly spread to Europe (but not to Canada) because a lot of British, French and German banks bought toxic US mortgage backed securities. Triggered by that, borrowing costs rose in peripheral European countries and in 2008, Iceland and a few small economies in Europe that were already vulnerable because of high sovereign debt found themselves in trouble. The so-called PIGS – Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain – fell first, but now the rot has spread to Italy and France.

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**But this story is recent. In the longer scheme of things, what went wrong in the West?"** Until 2007, the West, led by the US, was growing slowly but steadily: income per person was increasing at 1 or 2 percent per year, more or less at the same rate in North America and in the core countries of Western Europe. This had been so with minor interruptions since the mid 1980s, after Western central banks, led by Paul Volcker at the US Fed, and by Western politicians like Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in the UK, lowered taxes and deregulated industry and finance. Then, led by the US, the IT industry took off in the 1990s and US productivity growth surpassed the rest of the West until the financial meltdown of 2007.

The huge fly in the ointment of the IT boom was that nearly all the productivity gains went to the

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top 10%. The gap between top executive salaries and average employee incomes went from about 50 to one to about 500 to one between 1985 and 2005. Middle class incomes were almost stagnant. The bottom 10% got poorer. The financial sector – “Wall Street” – expanded to over 25% of US GDP.

The financial sector – via venture capital – financed the innovation boom. Ironically it was the financial sector that brought the boom down. Ironically, too, it was a well-meaning attempt to help the bottom 10 or 20 percent who’d been left out of the boom that encouraged the sub-prime mortgage lending that brought down the boom. The ever-so-clever financial industry saw a way of leveraging low cost mortgages into more money for itself by bundling these dicey mortgages into marketable securities and selling them to big Wall Street banks, who then sold them to gullible banks and institutions all over the world.

A meltdown of Wall Street quickly became a meltdown on Main Street: banks lost trust in one another because of the toxic assets they held , the interbank lending market froze up , and thus banks stopped lending to Main Street. Growth stopped and unemployment doubled.

Does the rise of the East portent decline of the West? 1. Most of us are far better off due to the rise of the East. China *et al* have brought us much cheaper goods, much lower interest rates, and zero impact on aggregate unemployment. That we sometimes feel worse off as others catch up with us is a vile virus that can, unchecked, infect the better parts of human nature. 2. Our income can continue to grow (though probably not relative to the East) as long as we retain free trade and continue to invest in education and innovation. 3. Growing inequality of income and wealth is a by-product of unfettered free trade and market-driven rewards to innovation: hence inequality is growing even faster in the East than in the West. The 20<sup>th</sup> century’s challenge to the West was (and remains) to temper that inequality without blunting enterprise and innovation. The 21<sup>st</sup> century’s challenge to the East is the same.

*James Dean is presently writing a book called Paradoxes of Globalization.*



Photo courtesy of Ron Long

## The Way We Were--Perhaps

*When a passage about the history of SFU in Bruce Alexander's 2010 book, The Globalization of Addiction: A Study in the Poverty of Addiction, came to light, a number of people responded. Here is a taste of Alexander's passage, and a taste of the responses that appeared in email. The book is available in the SFU library and at Amazon Books.*

### **...a fragment from Bruce's book**

"Arthur Erickson, architect of the Vancouver university where I worked for 35 years, dreamed of a community of scholars atop a small mountain in the rain forest. Because of the climate, he designed the whole university as a single sprawling building that would allow anybody on campus to visit anybody else, without getting damp in the long winter drizzle. Faculty offices were not to be segregated by department, but rather interspersed to facilitate interdisciplinary exchange. He understood that high-level scholarship requires social interchange as well as solitary exertion.

The dream has faded since his building opened in 1965. As times changed, the university strove harder and harder to fulfill its designated market function by graduating the maximum number of employable experts and conducting profit-oriented research in collaboration with high-tech corporations. These activities occurred under the management of a business-oriented board of directors and ever more market-oriented administrations."

### **...fragments from the responses**

Dear Bruce, I must say I have rather different take on the evolution of our university to the one you presented. Clearly, the original planning of the university envisaged a small institution with limited class sizes, extensive use of tutorials and a tad of social engineering in the mixing of faculty offices regardless of discipline. All of this was put together in the classic Erickson combination of inspiring external building design and an oppressive, leaking concrete brutalism of the building interiors....Altogether the institution was going to be a liberal arts college along the lines of an Oberlin because of the adoption of the semester system. A better term would be a small liberal arts university because the granting of masters and doctoral degrees were approved from the beginning.....It was an strange outcome: why would a province with a demonstrable need for more university places develop a small liberal arts college / university with a limited number of students? Mike Roberts

Dear Mike, I will attend Ron Baker's talk if I possibly can. Maybe we can continue the discussion. I don't disagree with your memory of the events. It's just that I favor the small liberal arts university model and wish it could have been continued. Bruce Alexander

Regarding Mike's reference to "the granting of masters and doctoral degrees [being] approved from the beginning;" in the course of the opening ceremonies, a Ph.D. was awarded under the auspices of the then PSA Department , embargoed for ten years because it dealt with 'Cape Coloureds' and named names....The intention from the beginning was to avoid SFU developing as a small liberal arts college. This in some quarters was what UBC was thought to wish for. To avoid that fate, doctoral programs were launched immediately in the Department of History. Philip Stigger.

While SLACs (small liberal arts colleges) are common in the USA, I think they are rare in Canada. I don't think that SFU was ever conceived to have become a SLAC. Otherwise why would W.A.C. Bennett (a very clever fellow who had never himself attended a college or university) have selected Gordon Shrum, a physicist, to lead its organization? Shrum is the man who insisted on PhD programs from Day 1. He put a lot of noses out of joint at UBC with that move. Leigh Palmer

Leigh got it right!!!! I should know as I was recruited from IBM in California in 1964 on the basis of SFU going to be a real UNIVERSITY with graduate programs but being on the forefront of new ideas which were incorporated in many departments including the Faculty of Education. I remember a vote of the Senate to limit enrollment to around 10,000 students. But people believing in growth for growth's sake outlived me and my influence.Thanks, Leigh, for setting the record straight. Klaus Rieckhoff,



## Editorial

As editor of *Simon Says*, I want to express my appreciation for the impressive contribution of news items and photographs made by members of the SFURA. The quality of writing is outstanding for a small newsletter like ours. I am especially appreciative of our regular columnists who provide such informative and perceptive pieces for each issue--Marilyn Bowman, Percilla Groves, Evelyn Palmer, James Dean, and Tom O'Shea. They, along with our President, Hiromi Matsui, are the backbone of the Newsletter. My thanks to all contributors. For the first time, I have several overflow items that must be held for the next issue.

This issue contains a number of reports and pictures about interesting events, but I am painfully aware of one distinct shortcoming: there simply is not enough representation of our staff members--hardly any pictures of them, references to them and what they are doing, or stories by them. I want to change that for the next--and future--issues. Everyone can help by being sure that when pictures are taken at an event that staff are well represented. And I appeal to staff retirees themselves to send the newsletter any photographs, reports, or stories of events that involve them. Babies, marriages, volunteering, travel, and the work you are doing are as important as books, grants, and awards. Help us to be a newsletter for all retirees.

The SFURA has launched an exciting initiative that is currently in its exploratory stage. With the cooperation of Dean Magnussen, the first Retiree Representative has been named in the Faculty of Education. There will be a full report on this in the next issue. I am on the team conducting that initiative, along with Tom O'Shea and Marv Wieden. We have a faculty representative in education and we want to ensure that staff has a voice as well, but we have been unsuccessful so far and we are unsure how to do that in an appropriate way. We can have a staff representative as well as one from retired faculty, or a staff appointee or volunteer can raise staff concerns through the faculty representative, if that is more desirable. We cannot contact staff members because phone numbers and email addresses are not available, and there is no staff organization that we can confer with. Retired staff members, please let us know how we can best serve your interests. Contact any one of us, or anyone on the SFURA executive. Help us to make your voices heard, and your interests spoken for.

It is an amazing group of retirees that keeps producing so many activities worth reporting in your newsletter. From another point of view, please keep doing ever more interesting things so we can continue to have great articles about them. We end with this poem sent by Marilyn Bowman. Keep thinking; keep being--and don't forget to 'activate your lifetime warranty.'

### Beyond Descartes    by Marin Parker

Since brain and memory  
have long since said goodbye  
"I think, therefore I am"  
does not apply.

On good days, though,  
I take some heart because  
I think I thought  
Therefore perhaps I was.