Simon Says...

It’s not just what you’ve done, it’s what you are doing, and what you may aspire to do next.

Report from President John D’Auria

This is my final report as President of the SFURA and it allows me to summarize SFURA activities during the past year. The main goal has been to ensure the continued social activities of the Association, to ensure that the benefits of all Retirees are protected and possibly improved, and finally, to put into place a campaign to increase the membership of the Association. Elsewhere you can read about some of the social activities this year, the outstanding seminar program, the outstanding walking program, and other opportunities for members to interact with former SFU friends and colleagues.

Attempts to increase membership included a special luncheon for new and pre-retirees, meetings to push for the renewal of pre-retirement workshops by SFU HR, and special email messages to potential new retirees. Concentrating on achievements over the last 12 months, effective May 1, 2014, a new method of payments for membership and ultimately SFURA events has been started using PayPal on the SFURA web site (www.sfu.ca/retirees.html). PayPal is a very secure web site for making such online payments and will reduce the efforts required manually by SFURA volunteers; however, using personal checks is still an option.

Free occasional parking at SFU is still available to SFURA members but temporarily one needs to display the SFURA membership card on the car dashboard. In about a year this will change to a system based upon license numbers of your automobile. We will alert you on details later. Most importantly, we have proposed (and it will probably be approved by the time you read this newsletter) that SFURA members can use any Visitors parking lot at SFU rather than just the North Visitors parkade.

Through our efforts there is now a program in the Faculty of Science to provide funding for the research projects of SFURA members that is similar to the grant
program offered by The Faculty of Arts and Social Science. Considerable effort is still underway to establish and finalize an appropriate activity or event to be sponsored by SFURA for the SFU Open-of-University 50th Anniversary in 2015. The following motion was approved by your Executive for presentation at the AGM (May 1), namely "Moved that in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Simon Fraser University, SFURA provides up to $10,000 in matching funds for an undergraduate scholarship honouring academic achievement". If approved at the AGM, details will be made available on how SFURA members can financially support this activity with matching funds, but any such funds or commitment must be provided before June 30, 2014.

Clearly it has been a busy year with many activities, financially SFURA is quite sound, and it appears that all SFURA members are “happy”. I wish to thank all members of the Board and Executive (Hiromi Matsui/Past President, Denyse Dallaire/Treasurer, Percilla Groves/Secretary, Evelyn Palmer/Archives, Jim Boyd/Vice President, Jean Trask/Membership, Jackie Viswanathan/Seminar Program, Tom O’Shea/Social Activities, Maurice Gibbons/Newsletter, and especially Margaret Jones/Executive Assistant) for their outstanding efforts, cooperation, and support over the last 12 months.

Through the efforts of the executive we have also begun an initiative to place retiree representatives in each faculty. Their role would be to maintain contact between retirees and faculty, to speak about the concerns of retirees, and to offer what assistance may be useful. The executive decided that before we launch such a program, that the idea should be tried in one faculty and examined for its practicality. With the cooperation of Kris Magnusson, Dean of the Faculty of Education, retiree Adam Horvath was appointed as our first representative. We will hear his report in June, when we will decide whether or not to proceed with this initiative. In the meantime we welcome your comments and suggestions.
The ongoing drama in Ukraine is rife with paradox.

(Full disclosure of my pro-Ukrainian bias: I visited Kyiv nine times 1998-2002. I taught short courses in a World Bank/George Soros-sponsored economics MA program bent on turning communists into capitalists, and brought seven Ukrainian students into our PhD program at SFU.)

Dani Rodrik, an economist at Harvard, published a book in 2011 called *The Globalization Paradox*. At the heart of his paradox is a trilemma between globalization, nationalism and democracy. Ukraine since independence is a good example. In 1991, in a wave of nationalism rooted in the West and centered in Kiev, Ukraine made history as the most important ex-Soviet state to secede. The spelling of Kiev was changed to Kyiv and universities adopted Ukrainian as their official language. The best university, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, long considered by Moscow a hot-bed of nationalism, and finally converted into a Soviet naval academy, was re-opened. My home when I taught there was a flat that had housed Soviet officers.

The new nationalism was cloaked in democracy, and the English-language Kyiv Post that we read as a source of restaurant and night-club tips also published editorials quite critical of President Kuchma, who was alleged to have engineered the killing of a journalist found be-headed amongst the birch trees. Viktor Yushchenko, who after his later poisoning and disfigurement inspired the Orange Revolution against Kuchma, was Governor of the Central Bank when I was there and was idolized by my students, some of whom worked for him. But just before I arrived, the Deputy - Governor was shot dead in the back of his head with a silenced pistol as he stepped down the front stairs of the Bank after work. So democracy and the rule of law had its enemies.

The third element of Rodrik's trilemma, globalization, was playing itself out then too. I was introduced to NATO officers in mufti, there to “advise” the fledging Ukrainian military. Jeff Sachs’s soon-to-be-disgraced Harvard Institute for International Development employed many of our students. An implicit paradox of our program was that though we were avowedly educating an new elite to lead Ukraine, in truth the best and brightest of our students wanted nothing more than to move into a top US PhD program, with no plans to return home.

Looking at current Ukraine through the lens of Rodrik’s trilemma, we see a battle for democracy disturbingly confounded with sometimes very nasty nationalism of a neo-Nazi flavor. The very fact that it was a street battle, not an election, that restored “democracy” is a contradiction in itself. And globalization seems to be at odds with democracy as well, with three large trading blocks - the Russian Federation (RF), the EU and North America - each advocating a different agenda to help the Ukrainian electorate decide how best to realize the governance they really want.

The bald truth is that Western Ukraine looks west and Eastern Ukraine looks east, but both want independence. With wise face to face negotiation between their
respective leaders, Ukrainians might in principle be able to work out a new and looser Ukrainian Federation that would remain politically independent but exploit obvious, win-win gains from trade with both the EU and the RF.

But instead, the new Ukrainian leadership is mobilizing troops and badgering NATO for more arms. This can only end in tears. Just as misguidedly, the new leadership (installed with the blessing of the IMF) is preaching bone-crunching austerity to pay back the foreign debt that was run up and squandered by the just-deposed kleptocracy. Ukraine runs the risk of repeating the disaster that has been Greece: a messy default preceded by much blood in the streets. Far better to negotiate debt relief early on. But at present, political barriers to that are daunting to say the least, since the creditors - Russia and Western Europe - are on the brink of a lose-lose sanctions war.

(Your comments on this piece are welcome: jdean@sfu.ca)

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**Bhutan, Land of the Thunder Dragon**

Marilyn Bowman

(Talk given on 1 April, 2014, at the Halpern Centre.)

I visited Bhutan in the fall of 2012, flying in from Kathmandu to Bhutan’s sole airport in Paro. The town is at more than 7,000 ft. and is tucked within a small valley surrounded by close steep mountains, so handling an aircraft there is a big challenge, bending this way and that through the big lumps of mountain. We were told that there are only nine pilots in the world accredited to land there. I was completely oblivious to these technical matters, being totally entranced with the intense greens of the small valley and the highly decorated massive square buildings set among the fields. We were flying on Drukair, (‘dragon’ air), and the thunder dragon was a frequent symbol in our travels, with even the king’s name, Druk Gyalpo, incorporating this mythical idea.

Bhutan is a tiny country in the Himalayas, smaller than Switzerland, at 27 degrees North about the same as Orlando Florida, with 700,000 people concentrated in subsistence farming along the mild bottoms of deep valleys surrounded by peaks as high as 24,000 ft. The weather in the valleys is semi-tropical and stays above freezing. Average annual income is about $1,500, making it one of the poorest countries in the world. Maternal and infant mortality levels are still very bad, but improving.

The new king crowned in 2006 after the abdication of his father, seems to be setting the country on a good path, with improving education (all done in English now). The previous king made some modernizations, including access to the world via internet and television in 1999,
but held rigidly theocratic and autocratic views which he expressed in major ethnic cleansing of Hindu Nepali ethnic citizens in the late 1980s, decreeing rules that forced more than 100,000 to flee within days, to refugee camps in Nepal, despite their having lived in Bhutan for generations. To deflect foreign attention from this the fourth king advocated his concept of the index of Gross National Happiness, instead of GDP. Under the now modern constitutional monarchy with its new young, Oxford-educated king, elections recently led to the victory of the non-monarchist party, and the new Prime Minister has been working on more concrete goals, including one rototiller for each village and one SUV for each district.

The sunshine was dazzling, the sky bright with fluffy white clouds, and the monks and families of all ages were dressed in their best. Their garments were colourful, and the men quite sexy as they switched their mandatory long white silk scarves back and forth to rearrange them, topping off their short skirts and natty knee-socks. The people were relaxed, happy, and in a festive mood, friendly to chat with and all enjoying the events in the plaza. The program consisted of a long series of dances with religious implications, but not at all solemn. Some were formally graceful, with whirling dancers in elaborate costumes, others were bawdy, playful, and funny, with clowns. It was a wonderful event.

On other days we drove in a small van up into the mountains to see famous mountains such as Kanchenchunga, famous historical sites such as the ruins where the Bhutannese drove back invading Tibetans in 1633, and to the lookout for the iconic Taktsang monastery, is set at 10,000 feet on a cliff face. The story was that a Tibetan warrior monk founded it in 650, after flying in on a tigress from Tibet and staying within a cave there for three years, three months, three days, and three hours. It is a gorgeous sight, all rebuilt since a fire destroyed it a few years ago when burning yak butter votive lamps set decorative silk banners on fire.

Bhutan’s main sources of income are hydro power sold to India, and tourism, which it is trying to manage in a way that will best benefit the country. To accomplish this it controls tourism very tightly, requiring visitors to spend US $250 per day, through tour agencies that arrange all travel.

It really is a wonderful place to visit, and shows every sign of becoming a place where its people can thrive.
The Socialist Report

Tom O’Shea

Our estimable editor, Maurice Gibbons, has given me the green light to expand this column to include commentary on social activities in Metro Vancouver that may be of interest to our membership, as well as reporting on those organized by the SFURA itself. Seizing advantage of this opening, I’d like to bring attention to what, in my opinion, is the most significant entertainment development this century; that is, the high definition live transmission of opera and theatre to local cinemas. This innovation was begun by the New York Metropolitan Opera in 2006, and can now be seen in 66 countries. Singers can no longer just “stand and deliver,” they must be convincing in their roles as the five cameras record every movement and expression. Intermissions are filled with backstage interviews with singers, conductors, set and costumer designers, and all those who contribute to the production. The result is three or more hours of in-depth immersion in all aspects of the world of opera. Tickets for seniors in Vancouver are approximately $22 each, can be purchased in advance for the season or for individual operas, and provide reserved comfortable seating. Details are available at [http://www.metoperafamily.org](http://www.metoperafamily.org).

Along similar lines, Britain’s National Theatre is now transmitting live HD into local theatres. I’m particularly looking forward to the live presentation of King Lear on May 1st. The summer season consists of a number of new productions as well as encore presentations of past plays such as War Horse, The Habit of Art, and Frankenstein. Details at [http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk).

Turning to SFURA events, by popular request we are returning to Nat Bailey stadium this year to attend a Vancouver Canadians baseball game. We first started this tradition in 2009 and, with the exception of 2013, have continued each year. Usually about fifteen SFURA fans turn out to cheer for the Canadians, eat Mrs. Lovett’s hamburgers, and quaff an ale or two. This year’s game is scheduled for Friday, June 20th at 1 pm. Mark your calendars. If the Canucks can’t do it, maybe the Canadians can. More information will be forthcoming as we get closer to game time.

On a similar note, for horse racing enthusiasts, we have scheduled the annual day at the racetrack for Saturday, July 19th. Veterans will note that this is somewhat earlier than previous meetings at the track, but no races are scheduled this year for Saturdays in August. Hence an earlier date for our Marg Jones Stakes. Again, check your emails for information and registration details early in the summer.

(Your comments on this piece are welcome: oshea@sfu.ca)
I was raised in Salt Lake City, Utah. I half jokingly say that the Mormons converted me to atheism—I don’t think I would have been such a dogmatic atheist without them. At that time my atheism was focussed on opposing them, God and religions generally.

It was that way for decades until I came across Richard Dawkins’s *The God Delusion*, which put atheism on a rationale basis and gave me an understanding of probability—a way to show that God does not exist. But it was not until I read his *The Blind Watchmaker* that I saw how humans evolved from lower species by Darwinian Evolution and then his *The Selfish Gene* which made me understand that Natural Selection created more than our physical bodies but our mental makeup as well, in other words, how we behave.

I thought that I finally figured out what atheists were all about: advocates for Reason and Science!
But then I stumbled on Steven Pinker’s *The Blank Slate* and realized that you can be an atheist and be dead wrong! Many atheists, particularly in the social sciences and humanities, believe in the Blank Slate (your genes have little to do with your nature), the Noble Savage (that man is essentially good) and the Ghost in the Machine (the mind is more than the brain). And many had a disdain for science, calling it scientism as if it was the N-word. They were The Modern Denial of Human Nature and I thought to myself, “How is that different from The God Delusion?”

Recognizing that atheism was a term too broad, I found a narrower, more accurate description for my kind of atheism: Naturalism (As persons with bodies and brain-instantiated minds, we are completely causally connected to the world via genetics and environment, both in our development and in our current experience and behavior. [http://www.naturalism.org](http://www.naturalism.org)).

In other words instead of using a word that connotes a negative (disbelief in God), use one that embraces a world view: a materialist world that’s deterministic, without contra causal free will.

Now that I HAVE figured it out, at least in broad strokes, I can’t get anybody I know to agree, much less understand! Except for maybe, though I don’t know them personally, Richard Dawkins, Prospect Magazine’s 2013 No. 1 Top Thinker of the World, and Steven Pinker, No. 3.

Who else do I need?

(Your comments on this piece are welcome: stan_kanehara@sfu.ca)
You might well be asking, “What the hell is an Island Hopper?” The Island Hopper is a 737 Boeing jet that leaves Honolulu three times (M/W/F) a week headed for Guam. It flies from one Micronesian island to the next. In the course of one day, the plane travels from Honolulu to Mauro, the capital of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), to Kosrae, one state of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), then to Pohnpei, a second FSM state, and finally to Chuuk, the third FSM state, before it lands on Guam, some 15 hours and 3700 miles west of Honolulu.

A typical flight leaves Honolulu on Wednesday (say) at 6 am. Four and a half hours later it lands in Majuro at 8 am, Thursday. Yes, I know that sounds crazy, but the flight crosses two time zones and the International Date Line, thereby losing a day but gaining a couple of hours! Disembarking in Majuro means spending at least two days there since the next flight won’t come till Saturday. From 10 000 feet over Majuro, it appears that the plane is going to land on a snake like strip of land. The runway is a major water catchment basin for Majuro, gently sloping downward from the ocean side to the lagoon side. The plane is 120 feet from wing tip to wing tip and the Majuro atoll, including the runway, is only about 500 feet wide! Not much room for error.

You might also ask, “What are you doing in all of these far-away places?” And the answer is that I am the Principal Investigator of a five-year, National Science Foundation funded ($3.5 million) project entitled “Mathematics and Culture in Micronesian: Integrating Societal Experiences” (MACIMISE, pronounced as if spelt ‘maximize’) that works with 20 University of Hawaii graduate students in creating mathematics curriculum materials that are based on local cultural practices. To date, of the 20 students, 10 have received Masters degrees, 6 have received Doctorate degrees, and the other 4 should complete their doctorates in the next year. I ‘island hop’ to visit these students roughly twice per year, and have gathered them together for summer institutes on Palau, twice on Saipan, (two islands not mentioned in the article for lack of space) and Pohnpei. We will next gather for the summer on Majuro in 2015. Now back to our flight to see the students.

On Saturday, we catch the next Island Hopper flight heading for Kosrae. Stopping first on Kwajalein Atoll, (pictured below and looking much like the Majuro atoll) where we can’t get off because Kwaj is a highly restricted American military base, we go on to Kosrae—The land of Sleeping Lady (can you see the lady in the picture at the bottom of this column?)—is the most religiously restrictive FSM island.

Sundays on Kosrae are devoted entirely to attending church and singing, some of the most wondrous singing I’ve ever heard—the voices of angels. No one cooks, or swims, or fishes, or, or, or on Sundays on Kosrae.

The Island Hopper
A.J. (Sandy) Dawson
Because we’ve ended up on Kosrae on a weekend, we can’t catch the next Island Hopper to Pohnpei till the following Tuesday. Pohnpei is different once again from Majuro or Kosrae. Pohnpei is known for Nan Madol, a Venice-like city, whose means of construction hundreds of years ago is still a mystery. Drinking sakau, a mild sedative drink (being prepared from tree roots in the picture on the left below) is an everyday occurrence.

Thursday we board the next Island Hopper flight heading for Chuuk (known as Truk during WWII). The immense Chuuk lagoon is the graveyard of half the Japanese fleet, the victim of a surprise WWII attack. One would think after bombing Pearl Harbor that the Japanese would not have kept their fleet in a lagoon from which there was little escape if attacked. Well, I’ve run out of space and it’s time to teach so images of other parts of Micronesia will have to wait until the next time.


(Your comments on this piece are welcome: dawsona@hawaii.edu)

Housing Alternatives for an Aging Population -- 23rd annual John K. Friesen Conference
Simon Fraser University's Downtown Vancouver Harbour Centre Campus, 515 W Hastings Street on May 28-29th 2014
This conference explores the range of tenure arrangements, housing forms, and service models currently available and under development for adults 55+ in British Columbia. These include cohousing popular in the USA; life-lease projects, popular in the prairie provinces; mixed-tenure models and ethno-cultural models currently in operation in the province as well as housing and service options that do not require a person to move from his/her current home (e.g. the "village" model; Flex housing). Keynote speakers and expert panels will describe the S pros and cons of each housing option.
**Jim Boyd** was appointed to the West Vancouver Community Grants Committee in September. Their function is to allocate funds to West Vancouver Arts and Cultural groups as well as youth groups.

He was also accepted as a mentor by the Canadian Youth Business Foundation ([CYBF.ca](http://cybf.ca)) and was assigned a young entrepreneur this past October. The organization is a federal program funded by the Business Development Bank which offers up to $45,000.00 in start-up funds for a new small business project. His 'Mentee' as they sometimes refer to the young entrepreneur is starting an online fitness matching business for busy downtown professionals.

The young man plans to have various fitness instructors on call along with various venues available in and around downtown and all the busy professional has to do is book an appointment online and then go for a workout!

Over the past year, **James Dean** spent time in Africa (Uganda), Asia (Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaysia and Thailand), New Zealand, Oceania (Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia) and South America (Argentina). The latter was funded by a generous grant from the Dean’s research fund for retirees. Summer plans include several visits to New York and a month in Paris. He is currently working on a book called “Paradoxes of Globalization,” and plans to teach a graduate course with that title this fall at SFU’s downtown School for International Studies.

**Sheila Delany** is still busy with her translation project from the work of revolutionary atheist Sylvain Maréchal (1750-1803). The first instalment "Anti-saints", a translation of Maréchal's all-female satirical legendary, came out in 2012, and was mentioned in the last Newsletter.

The second one translates his epistolary novella, "La femme abbé" (1801), about across-dressing girl obsessed with a handsome young priest; she poses as a man to enter seminary and becomes the priest's private secretary. Eventually she dies and the other characters all emigrate to Canada. The third component in the project will be a translation of Maréchal's big Bible study, "Pour et contre la Bible". Stay tuned.

Sheila’s volunteer work continues with the manuscript collective of the journal "Science and Society", and locally with two groups, Seriously Free Speech Committee and Independent Jewish Voices.

**Dan McDonald** has been active in promoting the KIVA program, Loans that Change Lives, and reporting on the friendly competition between SFU and UBC for donations to the program.

This is Dan’s update for the period March 31, 2013 to March 31, 2014:
Number of participants
SFU participants have increased from 52 to 66 a 26.9% increase
UBC participants have increased from 66 to 75 a 13.6% increase

Cumulative $ lent
SFU $ loans have increased from $19,125 to $28,250 an increase of 47.7%
UBC $ loans have increased from $17,525 to $22,800 an increase of 30.1%

Of course the focus must be on making loans which empower individuals in developing countries. The teams are just to add a bit of interest. You can join as many Kiva teams as you want but please set SFU as your default for the score keeping.

Here is a note for folks that want some assurance that they are dealing with a not for profit organization that is financially responsible, accountable and transparent. It tops the rankings. Kiva has been awarded Charity Navigator’s highest rating [http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.summary&orgid=12978#.UzYLAvtOrdI](http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.summary&orgid=12978#.UzYLAvtOrdI)


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When Yasmin Jamal took early retirement from the Library in July 2012, she decided to adhere to a semi-retired lifestyle; work on a contract basis, immerse herself in an interesting research project that had been on her mind for a very long time, continue with her voluntary assignment, enroll in a gym and most of all SLEEP IN!!

She began by spending 6 months in beautiful Kelowna working as a contract librarian at the Okanagan College Library. The calm and tranquility of the Okanagan helped her to plant the seed for her research project. Her primary research project as part of the 40th anniversary of the expulsion of the Ugandan Asians was born! Her qualitative research involves interviews with subjects who were expelled and asked to leave their homeland in 3 months. Jamal says “it is important to bring these memories alive for generations to come….oral history needs to be preserved, making real world connections, rather then just reading content from text books, it is projects such as this one that help to fill in gaps in written history”. Jamal would love an opportunity to share some of her stories during our retirement get together. Keep tuned for her publication titled “Forty untold stories: Ugandan Asians and Idi Amin”.

In addition to spending time conducting research, Jamal spends hours volunteering for an early literacy project called SEED (Supportive Environments and Experiences for Development) in her local Ismaili Community. She still makes time for family and friends, especially her grand dog, Rayah, who she simply adores!

(Your contributions to this column are welcome: evelyn@sfu.ca)
Reflections

Marilyn Bowman

On the Power of Old Letters

When I recently started reading letters I saved after I finished my BA and left for a job 400 miles from home, I was overwhelmed with their emotional impact. I began searching for a particular letter in which a very adventuresome beau had been part of a real Cold War escapade in East Berlin that scared him a lot. I wanted to refresh my memory, in part because he later married a friend of mine and I thought she would be very interested in his frightening brush with serious bad guys. I knew the letter would be in the period 1962-70, so dragged up some boxes of letters and began reading.

The results completely astonished me with their power. I started reading everything because I became entranced and then very emotional, submerged in the complex past that I shared with my mother, brothers and close friends. The emotional impact came from what I know about what happened over the next 60 years.

I remembered most of the dramatic transition years of early adulthood. We were wandering around Europe and Canada, were having dating missteps, finding mates after false starts and adventures, were producing offspring, studying and graduating, and getting jobs in distant places that were not what we expected. My recently widowed mother was watching my brothers graduate and leave home while she kept working to be able to send money to all of us. Nearly everyone had money problems at one time or another. The letters included every mixture of the hilarious, clever, tortured, and buoyant, but what I was totally unprepared for was the power of re-entering those lives with my knowledge of their futures.

I was especially shocked by the poignancy of reading events as they unfolded when I knew what tragedies lay ahead. One dear friend was building a family with two beautiful and smart children, filled with innocent hope for their futures. I knew that instead, she suffered years of struggle as both developed major mental illness, then one committed suicide and the other died prematurely from cancer. Heartbreaking. I knew that the futures of others included abortions, babies with congenital defects, divorces, struggles with sexual identity, alcoholic mates, and premature deaths.

My family’s letters were equally poignant but for a different reason. My mother and my brothers pleaded with me to write to them, and my shocking realization was how completely I had taken the love and support of my family for granted. When I had parted from my parents for graduate school in Britain, I gave them a nice kiss and hug at the train station in Edmonton and climbed aboard, happy to be heading off to a distant land. I had no second thoughts at all. Years later my mother told me they went home and wept at my departure, and in fact I never saw my father again because he died prematurely within 6 months. I was entirely careless of such possibilities. I apparently sent some letters to my brothers, but I took their endless availability as brothers as completely for granted as I had my parents. Even though I loved my family and we had no unhappy histories to separate us, my focus was almost entirely on my own unfolding adventures.

The larger world held its own array of drama, for these complex happy and sad and piercing personal events were set within the period of anti-Vietnam war protests, of Expo 67 in Montreal where I lived then and danced the nights away in the Martinique pavilion with a luscious man. Then came the October 1970 political murders and separatism crisis, with soldiers brandishing bayonets lined up at the doors of the consulates and tanks blocking off my street.

In re-visiting all these stories, I finally reached a bit of equanimity when I realized that all but one of the friendships from those distant times have now persisted across sixty years, and has included very good, wonderful, close friends, and renewed loving family relationships. But I think the letters have now made me a more chastened person, aware of how lucky I am to still have loving brothers and friends whose goodwill has been a lifelong blessing to me, regardless of my years of casual, free-spirited inattention to them. I hope I don’t take any warm relationship for granted anymore.

(Your comments on this piece are welcome: bowman@sfu.ca)
During our last FIG meeting on March 4 of this year, Brett Creed, a financial planner, from Wealth Management, National Bank Financial presented on the topic, *Eight Risks Every Retiree Should Know About*. He has been involved in the investment industry since 1989. Kris Taylor who also works in the National Bank in Business Development organized the session.

The eight risks discussed in the presentation included the following:

- **Health:** *prescription drug costs: check the pension coverage, and buy early to lock in lower premiums.*
- **Health:** long term health care costs: *professional care facilities are available with trained staff.*
- **Retiring with debt:** *fixed income is very sensitive to rate changes.*
- **Misunderstood risk, bond funds:** *a 10 year bond will fall in value by 7% for each point interest rates rise.*
- **Misunderstood asset allocation:** *real estate is an investment like any other with its own risks.*
- **Inflation coupled with taxation:** *purchasing power of a GIC investment will drop over time.*
- **Taxation on business and vacation properties:** *Purchasing power of a GIC investment will drop over time.*

Brett Creed drew on several sources to expand on each of these risks. For example, he drew on a CARP study that shows that health costs increase by 10.05% per year in retirement. He closed the session by showing the benefits of having a proper financial plan that deals with these risks, such as properly planning for tax efficiency, ensuring adequate asset allocation, and ensuring that beneficiaries receive the assets you hope to leave them.

* Contact Kris Taylor, *(604) 623 6794, kris.taylor@nbc.ca*, to obtain a brochure covering these topics. His mailing address is PARK PLACE #3300-666 Burrard St.
Vancouver. BC. V6C 2XY

* Upcoming Seminars. We plan to have two additional seminars this summer. The SUN Life pension group will make a presentation on Monday, April 28, and a seminar on Quantitative Easing will be offered on June 18. If you have other ideas please contact Marv Wideen- wideen@sfu.ca; Tom O’Shea- oshea@sfu.ca; or Phil Mah-pmah@sfu.ca
MY ACADEMIC CAREER . . . to be continued

Sandra Cusack

This is the title of an article Susan Jamieson-McLarnon wrote in the Simon Fraser Week (February 3, 1994). The article was brilliant . . . as well as prophetic. Here is a clip:

This could be the last chapter in a saga entitled My Academic Career but Sandra Cusack – who received her PhD at last June's convocation and has won the Norcen Energy Postdoctoral Scholarship from the Canadian Association on Gerontology – is still developing the plot line. Her road to a doctorate was a long one...

From the time I was 5, I wanted to be a doctor. But at that time the world didn't allow women to have families and be doctors. I chose to have a family and returned to school in 1976 when my kids went to school. When I found SFU, I knew that I had found my way home. I am grateful to so many people who became like family. Teachers who taught me about learning and life, all of them brilliant: Gloria Gutman, Mike Manley-Casimir, the late Helen Gee, and Wendy Thompson--I call them my DreamTeam.

With my team I researched, taught, and wrote Flying High: A Guide to Shared Leadership in Retirement; Leadership for Older Adults: Aging with Purpose and Passion (SFU Author of the Month March 1999); and Mental Fitness for Life: 7 Steps to Healthy Aging (SFU Authors of the Month 2003). I was Reaching for the Top. The air was clean and fresh and pure. I was on fire. They say pride goeth before a Fall. The Fall was long and far until I hit Bottom.

The first two MAJOR EVENTS went something like this: I was 50, halfway up the mountain and going straight to the top: I was Flying High, the title of my first book. I was 57, climbing higher; Aging with Purpose and Passion, the subtitle of my second book. I was 60 and still climbing when we planted the Flag on Top of the World. The sign read: Mental Fitness for Life: 7 Steps to Healthy Aging. Breathe in air so rare sweet clean pure. Was I too full of IT? Going down was tricky twisty and painfully slow, like riding donkeys down into the Grand Canyon. Within a period of 7 years I suffered 5 strokes and I lost everything: my car, my home, and my Mind. It was LIGHTS Out NOBODY HOME not even me; I was so sick I didn't even know enough to be depressed.

I was a Professor at work in my office at the Gerontology Research Centre when IT stopped me dead in my tracks. It was 11 a.m.--the 11th hour--when I opened the door and gazed into dazed faces: WHERE am I? WHO am I? WHAT am I doing here? In a flash, I was in a Hospital Emergency Room at VGH (Was I trying out for a part in the new TV Series on Knowledge Network?). The whole show: Best friend beside the bed doctors nurses tests doors swinging in and out. More Questions: Where are we? What day is it? What year is it? Who's the Prime Minister? I'm finally getting the answers right. Can I please go home now? Husband took me Home and I went to bed. Next day same time
same place  same people  same story  same scene. ER at VGH. Dejavu. But this time it was different . . . I didn't go Home. I was shoved into an ambulance screaming through the scary dark streets  then me emerging from big back doors shot through a cannon and onto a Psych Ward at UBC. This is even more exciting than ER at VGH! A new experience . . . locked up with inmates shuffling back and forth and round in circles  the screamer in the padded cell  dining alone in a square room full of silent people with paper name cards holding cardboard boxes on cardboard plates chewing on cardboard food. In a tight office with no window  wise faces surrounding me  eyes wide  questions  pens scribbling madly. I want to go Home. I'm not crazy. Why am I here? Ask me anything. I just wrote the Book on Mental Fitness. I have workshops and lectures and interviews booked. I want to go Home. A week later I went back to Work.

# 3 came 5 years later; #4 THE BIG ONE a year later, and #5 the final straw a year later.

I didn't know who I was or where I was and nobody else did either. Gloria Gutman assumed I had met a man and gone to live in some exotic faraway place. In the end, she was right about 1 thing, I had gone to an exotic place. Somehow, by the Grace of God and the help of some Guardian Angels I landed in Whitecliff in White Rock in the very best Seniors' Residence there could possibly be.

May 28, 29 I'm going to be presenting at the 23rd John K Friesen at SFU Harbour Centre: Housing Options for Seniors and I will be speaking about MY HOME @ WHITECLIFF in WHITE ROCK about how good the food is (isn't that the first thing seniors want to know?) We have a French Chef – and she is the very kindest and most generous Chef I have ever met. By the way, you're all invited for lunch. Let me know so I can book it. Seriously, it won't cost you a cent.

So I really am finally HomeAgain. Home at Whitecliff and Home again amongst friends and colleagues at SFU. Which brings me back to the beginning when Susan Jamieson-McLarnon first wrote in 1994: My Academic Career . . . to be continued. She really was psychic.

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**ORAL HISTORY DVD'S**


Among the six Oral History DVD's produced since 2005, the first four are for sale and details can be found on the website. The titles are: *The Excitement of the Early Years, The Instant University, Thelma Finlayson, A Conversation with John Webster,* and *A Conversation with Erickson and Massey, SFU Architects.*

The fifth DVD was of the panel discussion presented on January 17, 2012 by the SFU Retirees Association: **Times of Turbulence; Three Views**. Speakers were George Stuart, Klaus Rieckhoff and Jerry Zazlove.
Editorial  Maurice Gibbons

Congratulations to our highly esteemed President for the fine year of leadership he has given to the SFURA. One of the advantages of editing our newsletter is that I get to see the quality of the contributions to Simon Says, in this issue starting with John D'Auria’s report on the many things accomplished during his term. James Dean decided to write about the situation in the Ukraine, and once he began thinking about it, wrote another article published in the Financial Times, which you can see at this site...


So here we have, in our modest newsletter, a brilliant analysis by a world leader in his field. Then we turn to the sensitive, exquisite commentaries of Marilyn Bowman looking back through the medium of her old letters with the melancholy counterpoint of what actually happened to her correspondents later. Sandra Cusack hits us hard with with her own collapse even as she was writing books on keeping fit—a moving story which fortunately ends with Sandra back among us, still writing. These pieces and all of the others are so good it is a pleasure to receive and edit them. Many of our writers would like to know what you think and so we have added their email addresses at the end. Drop me a line about the Newsletter at maugibbons@telus.net.

Quilters Unite
Percilla Groves

A fledgling group of SFURA quilters has produced its first masterpiece. Early in January an email invitation went out to all SFURA members inviting response from everyone interested in making a quilt that would be a fundraiser for the Campus Community Bursary. By production time five quilters with various levels of expertise ranging from novice to artisan were on board: Percilla Groves, Lynn Kumpula, Susan Stevenson, Jackie Weinstein, Phyllis Wrenn. All of us worked at SFU for many years and yet some of us had never met before the inaugural meeting. Thanks to a surprising mix of anarchy and tight organization our first quilt is complete as of the last day of March. Here’s a picture for your enjoyment.

Interested in being part of the next quilting project? Email groves@sfu.ca