

Simon Says



Fall 2011
Simon Fraser University
Retirees Association

Thomas O'Shea, President
oshea@sfu.ca

Marilyn Bowman, Past President
bowman@sfu.ca

Marilyn Pankratz, Treasurer and
Membership, mpankratz@shaw.ca

Percilla Groves, Secretary

Mike Roberts, Seminar Series
mroberts@sfu.ca

Tom Poiker, Newsletter
poiker@sfu.ca

Chris Hildred, Digital Archives
childred@sfu.ca

Margaret Jones, Treasurer and
Membership, jonesa@sfu.ca

Penny Spagnolo, Forum
pspagnol@sfu.ca

Telephones:
SFURA 778-782-2297
Marg Jones: 778-782-3360

President's Report

Welcome, everyone, to Fall 2011. Summer was a bit brief this year. I know I over-slept one morning and missed it.

As the seasons change so does the SFURA Executive. It's the great cycle of life writ small. We bid farewell to Len Evenden (Past-President) who will continue in an advisory role, particularly as our representative in developing the program for the 2012 CURAC conference (more on this later). Next in seniority, I think, is Bob Horsfall who was a member-at-large for a number of years and who reported on interest groups, especially on the walks program. Kersti Jaeger was a member-at-large with primary responsibility for regular social events including the annual dinner and the Ides of March. Barb Diggins, a relative newcomer, served as a very effective treasurer with additional responsibility for membership. To these four, many thanks and we hope that we can draw on your experience and advice in future years.

Our incoming executive includes elected member Chris Hildred who will look after the personal technologies interest group and our digital archives. We are particularly pleased to welcome two additional members who have agreed to join the executive: Marilyn Pankratz, who will take over as treasurer and Percilla Groves as recording secretary. All three have long years of service to the university and will ensure the continuing strength of SFURA.

Now, the only missing element is someone to serve as social coordinator. I served as "socialist" for three years before being elevated (or demoted) to the position of president and we need to identify a new person for the job. We have approached a number of people and all have valid reasons for not taking it on. So here is your chance. The files are well organized. I can advise on past events and future possibilities. We await your call or email. Please volunteer or advise us whom we might strong-arm for the job.

I look forward to the usual fine array of SFURA events in 2011-12. In addition, in response to a number of requests from members, we are trying out a new annual event in the form of a Fall luncheon at the Diamond Alumni Centre. We are, as well, supporting the annual meeting of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC) to be held at the University of Victoria on April 18-20, 2012. SFU, UBC, and UVic are co-sponsors and planners for this event. Details and program will be announced later this year.

Membership numbers in the SFURA seem to be consistent across the last few years at around 370 members in spite of the elimination of mandatory retirement. Please ensure our continuing strength by mentioning to retiring colleagues the benefits of membership including seminars, social events, interest groups, annual functions, parking, newsletters, and our new website.

The Coming Talks

by Michael Roberts

The SFURA is pleased to announce the first two talks in its 2011 – 2012 Seminar Series.

September 20th, 2011. Bruce Alexander: ‘A Train Trip through Methland’

Methland is a name given by journalist Nick Reding to the American farm belt, because the recent outbreak of methamphetamine abuse in the US was concentrated there. A train trip through Methland has to be aboard Amtrak, a deteriorating railway system. Taking a train trip through Methland provided retirees Bruce Alexander and Pat Holborn with an opportunity to look into two huge disasters at the same time.

October 18th, 2011. Michael Fellman: ‘Views from the Dark Side of American History’

Although best known for his work on the American Civil War Michael Fellman will, in this reading from his memoir/methodology/collected essays forthcoming in November from LSU Press, connect elements of his personal experiences (including some at SFU) to the way he delved into the darker issues of American history such topics as domination, exploitation, political violence, racism and the experiences of war.

Both talks will be held in the Halpern Centre, Room 126, at 12 Noon.

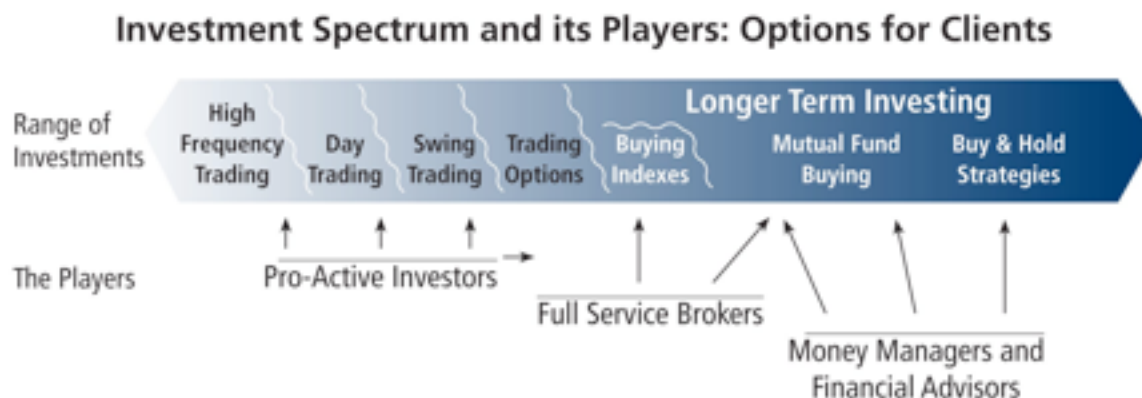
All members of the SFU community are welcome to attend these events. The talks are free and no registration is required.

Financial Planning

Marvin Wideen Tom O’Shea & Phil Mah

The Financial Planning Committee plans to meet soon to organize a series of seminars for next year. We need your advice on what topics and issues you would like to see discussed. We plan these seminars to stimulate discussion and reflection on matters dealing with the financial matters affecting retirement. This applies both to retirees and to staff preparing for retirement. Our past seminars have shown a broad range of topics. We have provided a first draft of a visual to illustrate the scope of investment opportunities open to us. This first draft shown below illustrates a range of investment opportunities from trading strategies on the left to buy and hold strategies on the right and various strategies in between.

Where do your interests fit on this spectrum? What areas would you add to it? What issues would you like to see discussed to further your knowledge of investment opportunities and stimulate discussion? Please contact us with your thoughts so we can plan the year’s program.



Do you want to teach in the SFU Seniors Program?

Tom Poiker

My wife and I have been members of the SFU Seniors Program for years now, taking one course per semester. So I thought, maybe I should give back to the program and offer a course of my own. In my regular service to the university (for over 40 years), my teaching was fairly theoretical and technical, so, I thought, maybe I can prepare a non-technical course in the same area (geography) but maintaining the theoretical and technical direction. Preparing a non-technical course for a technical subject is really a lot of fun.

If you are unfamiliar with the program, let me tell you that this is a great program. The courses are six weeks long, two hours per week. There are also the occasional free lectures on Saturday. The emphasis is on liberal arts topics, the courses are academic but rarely as detailed as they would be in a regular undergraduate or graduate program (thank god!!!) The website (www.sfu.ca/seniors) gives you more information.

The Director of the program, Rosalyn Kaplan, is in constant need of new lecturers. You bring her a general description of the course and an outline of the sessions. The first is for the announcement, the second for the layout of the program. Since the program is always planned more than half a year ahead, your preparation can take half a year or longer. You can develop material for print, up to six pages per session.

I was surprised when I heard that the pay is actually quite good in the program. For six sessions of two academic hours each, you get \$900.- or \$150.- for a double hour. I have a good pension, so I decided to return the money to the University for Seniors who can't afford to pay for their courses. There was a family that donated a fair sum for such purpose and Rosalyn is now working on turning this into a fund, the Ann Watson Fund. The University gave Ann a posthumous Seniors Program certificate and her family donated a larger sum to the program in return. You might consider doing the same, if you can afford it.

Socialist Report

Tom O'Shea

As I mentioned in the President's report, I have relinquished the position of social coordinator starting in the Fall 2011 semester. I took over this position from Elizabeth Michno in December 2008 and am grateful to her and Evelyn Palmer for advice and support. I've enjoyed the task of identifying interesting social activities for members. And I now have a much deeper appreciation of the theatre and sporting events available in the GVRD, as well as the unique interests and talents of SFURA members. It's a valuable experience and I recommend it to whoever is willing to take over from here.

Since I last reported, we have had two events. The first was the Vancouver Canadians baseball game at Nat Bailey Stadium last June 21st. Nine die-hard SFURA baseball fans (plus two rookies—Horvath & Bailin) attended and watched the Canadians defeat the Yakima Bears in what turned out to be a very good game on a lovely day.

The second event was our annual Marg Jones Stakes at Hastings Racetrack on August 13th. Thirty members and guests showed up for the races and buffet lunch in the Silks Restaurant. Members seemed to enjoy the lunch the most, given the number of torn-up race tickets in evidence on the tables. The most successful was a guest of Eng Choo who told me that his winning record was so-so after the fifth race, and this was due to his not betting on any of the races to that point. I should have emulated him rather than once again walking to the bus with reduced weight in my pants pocket. Maybe next year.

I look forward to future events under a new organizer. Step right up.

The Cross Canada Cycle Tour Society

Laurence Weldon

The Cross Canada Cycle Tour Society is a non-profit organization providing services to member cyclists from across Canada, but mainly from BC. Recently, I participated in one of their tours – The Maritime Provinces Cycling and Cultural Tour. This was a 23 day tour (June 15 – July 8, 2011) that started near Halifax, touched New Brunswick, parts of PEI and Nova Scotia. Cycling days were 50-100 km but there were six rest days. The culture part included celidhs, museums, forts, a fossil hunt, a coal mine, and several lobster dinners. As I was reviewing my pictures, I was reminded of some highlights, and I will list my quirky choice for illustration: meeting two old-timers at the beach who related the boom times of coal and shipping, the ship museum near Port Greville, rocky point at Cape Ord lighthouse, lobster with BYOB wine at the Fundy Geological Museum, wetlands park in Sackville, NS, many fox sightings in PEI, tidy red earth farms in PEI, Canso Causeway, the rocky trail in Port Hastings, performances at the Celtic Music interpretive Centre at Jedicque, the bizarre papier maché display near Cheticamp, the museum under the restaurant in Cheticamp and the lady who knew everything about the old ways, the Dancing Goat coffee shop, the Bell museum at Baddeck, the recreated Celtic town near Iona, period actors at Fort Louisbourg, and Rita Macneil's Tea room in Big Pond. Some of us took a couple of extra days to see the Highland Games in Antigonish and a Natalie McMaster performance there. Our group of 20 riders were aged 54 to 78 as you can guess from the attached photo. The group also does day-rides most Wednesdays: many start from Murrayville or from the Peace Arch border crossing. More information at www.cccts.org.



Fall Dinner, Nov. 2/11: Mark the date!

Hiromi Matsui

Our Fall Dinner is set for November 2nd so mark that date in your calendar. A hard copy notice will be sent out later in the Fall.

We're also following up on the interest of many members to have a Fall lunch on campus in September. At this time, we're not able to confirm the date or price because of delays in getting information, but we will let you know as soon as possible.

Ellen and the Lobsters

Marilyn Bowman

We were in cottage country in the Laurentian Mountains north of Montreal, and the live lobsters in the Ste. Agathe supermarket were \$8.99 a pound. Remembering restaurant menus where a lobster could easily cost \$50 we recognized a bargain here. We knew that the best size for tenderness is about 1-¼ pounds, so it seemed we could have a real treat for dinner without bankrupting ourselves.

My pal Ellen enjoys eating lobsters as much as I do when they are served in a restaurant, but it gradually developed that she was quite squeamish about cooking them. She agreed we should buy them only if I cooked. I was happy to agree and we bought two for \$22. It gradually became clear that Ellen was concerned about many things in relation to these lobsters, and over the next three hours she raised many questions about our project.

First she wanted to know how I would carry them home from the store because they were quite frisky. I explained that I would carry them in the standard plastic grocery bag. Sure enough, they clacked and wiggled a certain amount as I carried them into the car. To me this suggested they were nicely healthy. On the drive home she wanted to know what I would do with them at the cottage until it was time to cook them. I responded that I would put them in the refrigerator, which would keep them nice and happy and cool. After another half an hour she wanted to know how I would cook them. I outlined two possible methods. In one method I could heat water (topped up with cinnamon sticks, cloves, orange peel and garlic salt) in a big pot until boiling, then plunge the lobsters in headfirst, giving them instant death. In another I could place the lobsters in the pot with cool tap water and my spices, and turn the heat on so they would slowly warm up and go to eternal sleep. I proposed the latter method. This only partly calmed her, and soon she raised a new question that was really her underlying worry. What would the lobsters feel when I cooked them? I had no answer because that question concerned the neuroscience of pain in small invertebrates and raised deeper philosophical issues about taking an animal's life in order to have dinner. I was not up to answering all of that. We were after all, carnivores and lobster eaters.

In the event I used the gradual method, putting the lobsters into the scented cool water and slowly lulling them to sleep. This triggered only a bit of climbing and clacking in the early minutes. Eventually they turned red ready for eating.

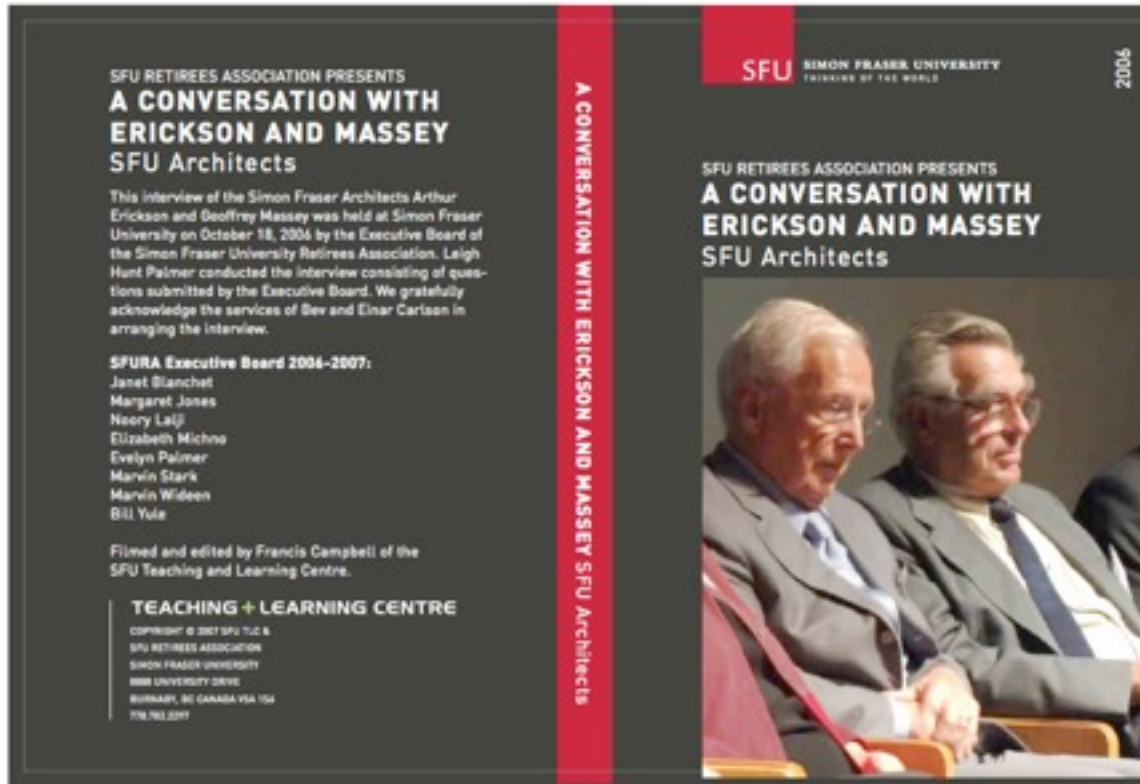
Tackling the succulent creatures took a bit of finagling, as we had to improvise our tools because we did not have any lobster implements. To crack the claws we used a big hammer on the kitchen counter, and for further work we grabbed onto them using heavy work pliers. Both these carpentry tools did an admirable job. Lacking the tiny forks that a restaurant would provide, we used bamboo BBQ skewers to fish the small tasty bits out of all their hiding places. Ellen melted some butter. Our feast was delicious, and she stopped asking questions about the lobsters.



SFURA Oral History Digital Video Disks Evelyn Palmer

In the Newsletter for Summer 2011, I described the SFURA Oral History Project and the DVD's which we produced to document parts of the history of Simon Fraser University.

We have now produced our fourth DVD, A CONVERSATION WITH ERICKSON AND MASSEY, SFU Architects. This interview had been edited by Francis Campbell and put onto YouTube in 2010, on the occasion of Erickson's death. Now it is on a DVD and is available for sale.



We have also replenished our supply of the first three DVD's and again have them available for sale. Numbers 1, 2 and 3 are \$20.00 each, number 4 is \$15.00

- #1 The Excitement of the Early Years: An Oral History of SFU (2005)
- #2 The Instant University (2006)
- #3 Thelma Finlayson – A Conversation with John Webster (2007)
- #4 An Interview with SFU Architects Erickson and Massey *NEW*

The DVD's are described on the SFURA website in the section "About us"
<http://cgi.sfu.ca/~retirees/cgi-bin/retirees/node/10>

The website has an order form which you can download, print and mail. We can have them available for sale at SFURA seminars and at the November 2 Dinner.

We are grateful for the assistance of Joel Schwarz, Stevo DeMuth and Jordan Patterson of the Teaching Learning Centre for the art work and production of the fourth DVD and to Hanif Kassam of Document Solutions for assistance with costs of the DVD's.

Life Writing

Tom Poiker

There is a theory, rarely proven wrong: When your children and grandchildren get interested in your life, it is usually too late to tell them. Therefore, write your stories down.

This is the philosophy of most Life Writing Groups and there are many around. They get together, usually once per month, and read stories to each other. Most of them also publish the stories in a yearly booklet.

I have added to that my own version: My first grandson was born October 14th, 2009, and every 14th of the month, I send a short story to my son who prints it out, reads it to his son and then puts it into a folder, for repeat reading. At this time, my son has the most benefit, as he tells me, because he gets news about me that otherwise he would not have had.

Try it out, write something. Join a group. A few years ago, I tried to start a group for SFURA, announced the first meeting and then spent the loneliest hour of my life in an empty room.



Here is George Suart at the Wall of China.

A Birthday Gift to Science

Marilyn Bowman

I just made arrangements to donate my body to the UBC Faculty of Medicine, as my birthday gift to Science. If your body has exotic disorders, you might consider the same. It is very easy to do; go online to their website to read all the details, at <http://www.anatomy.ubc.ca/bodyprogram.html>

Basically, you just sign two copies of a consent form (downloadable), and send them one, keep the other with your Will etc.

If you die in BC, your Executor has to phone them within 24 hours, at the Body Donation Program, 604-822-2578 to tell them. After they have finished with the body, they cremate the body and pay for that, then the Executor gets the cremated remains. If I die in some non-BC place, I have told my executor to forget about it.

One way to help students after we die.



These are Yapese students from the local college (COM/FSM) just after performing a Yapese stick dance in Yap, Micronesia. The young boy in front of them, Isaiah, is the son of one of the Macimisers. A contribution by Sandy Dawson