



Gardening in the Time of COVID-19

By Marcia Toms

You have likely heard of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s “Love in the Time of Cholera.” What I offer here is less romantic than love and the prose far less polished than that in the novel, but perhaps the message is more practical: Gardening in the time of Covid -19 is worth the effort. I began gardening seriously years ago, but the current reality has injected a sense of urgency into my hobby.



Photo: Markus Spiske

Fifteen years ago, real estate agent Barry – an optimist – helped Peter and me buy a wreck of an East Van bungalow with huge blank spaces front and back, ready for transformation. Sensible people would have demolished the house and built new, but we transformed that, too. By way of a testimonial, gardening has, indeed, put life in my years and years in my life, just as promised on the decorative tile Barry gave us when there was no garden at all.

Cue March 2020, the year of COVID-19 when BC’s provincial officer of health declared a sort of lockdown. Movements arose swiftly to promote homemade sourdough bread, cycling and gardening. Do your own baking, rely on wheels pushed by human power and grow your own fruit and vegetables to ensure a healthy supply while beating the Covid Blues. On the gardening front, early predictions about a run on seeds and bedding plant bedlam, a dearth of organic slug bait and manure futures gone wild proved mostly hyperbole. Still, at first I worried, despite Brian Minter’s soothing reassurances.

I girded my Lee Valley gloves and kneelers about me and by March 7th after a call to It’s About Thyme and two yards of luscious soil amender later, all was ready.

I bought my seeds and sowed them early. I took a trip not too far, picking hardy, cool weather loving starter plants from the flats in Burnaby: spinach, chard, carrots, various lettuces, plain, frilly and fluted, Romaine and barely bitter Radicchio,

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Apollonia Cifarelli

President's Report

Frances Atkinson

Dear members,

September is here and normally we would be inviting you to enjoy our annual Welcome Back lunch with your colleagues and friends. Unfortunately we will not be able to run any in-person social events for the foreseeable future.



Your Board of Directors met recently to conduct essential business and discuss what we could do to help you stay connected. We were appropriately spaced out and taking advantage of a beautiful summer day to meet in a picnic area at Confederation Park in North Burnaby (see photo page 3).

I would like to bring you up to date on the outcomes. One item of business was to decide what to do about the AGM. You may recall we postponed our 2020 AGM, scheduled for May 21, due to the lockdown. BC Registries is allowing societies to file an annual report with "no meeting held", so the Board has decided to do that. If possible, we will have our next AGM in May 2021. Time will tell.

The Board discussed ideas for making light touches online to help with staying connected. We would like to encourage you to contribute small informative or creative pieces to share with the members. Ideas could include sharing tips for growing a winter garden in the local area, creating a pollinator garden, bird photography, sharing special recipes, or contributing a creative piece such as a poem or comedy skit. If you would like to produce something of your choice, send it to retirees@sfu.ca for distribution

The board also discussed whether advancing Zoom literacy might be helpful. If you are interested in learning more about Zoom as a participant or presenter, at a beginner or advanced level, please let us know. Or if you would like to give a presentation on a chosen topic via Zoom, please also let us know.

In the summer issue of this newsletter, Carole Gerson introduced the SFURA's special project to create a book and website on the early years of the arts at SFU. Before lockdown we were successful in gaining considerable support and funding to the tune of over \$60,000 from the Offices of the President, Vice President External Relations, FASS, FCAT, and Advancement, for this project. We intended to use the funding in part to hire student researchers to access resources held in SFU's University Archives and the Library's Special Collections, once they reopened. Despite their continued closure, I am pleased to report that the core team (Frances Atkinson, Carole Gerson, Tessa Perkins Deneault, Walter Piovesan, Joanie Wolfe) has been able to make good progress on several fronts. We've been able to contact some key figures from the era and find new sources, and we continue to refine our ideas. The book, whose target date is 2024 (to coincide with the opening of the Marianne and Edward Gibson Art Museum on Burnaby Mountain), will include memories of participants, analyses by area experts, and selected



Photo: Apollonia Cifarelli

illustrations. The website will introduce the project and continually evolve to provide a more expansive display of selected images, films, video and audio recordings, and further documentation. We hope to have a first version of the website up in a few months.

This is where you come in. Were you around SFU during its first decade? Did you attend or participate in arts events in the Theatre? Do you have saved materials such as programs and posters from those days in your possession? We'd love to hear from you if you have memories to share, documents to show, resources to recommend, or donations of archival materials to offer to the university. Please inform former students, faculty, and colleagues about this project. We can be reached by email at sfura-book@sfu.ca.

Once again, if you've not already done so, please renew your SFURA membership for 2020-21 at <http://www.sfu.ca/retirees/membership-registration.html>. Our administrative assistant Annie Ye will record your renewal and mail out your membership card.

Please note that the SFURA office will be closed until further notice. Any urgent matters should be reported to retirees@sfu.ca.

Finally, many thanks are due to Marcia Toms for guest-editing this issue of the newsletter.

Best wishes to all,
Frances



Photo: Ron Long / Plate-billed Mountain Toucan

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pak and joi choy, peas from seed, and never-fail kale: all went in early. I added a few outliers, too. Dangerous times demand a bit of daring: artichokes, eggplant (in and out of the greenhouse) and two varieties of pepper: banana and chilli.

The cardinal rule of good gardening is: be ruthless. With thinning, with pruning and with turfing out chronic poor performers. My friend John, the reluctant garden guru, advises threatening the latter, something I have only just begun to do, even though the COVID-19 mantra calls for more kindness and less glowering. Maddeningly, it hasn't worked with carrots, raspberries or tomatoes this year.

We enjoyed a brilliant May and as usual when this happens, I prepared confidently for three or more consecutive months of warmth in California of the north. It didn't happen. June was a washout and July, not much better. Despite huge and luscious looking raspberries, the fruit is watery and tasteless. Mustiness lingers on the tongue. My tomatoes, save those in the greenhouse, suffered a similar affliction: oodles of fruit, but with thick skins and only a faint memory of tomato/ish goodness. Those Autumn Bliss raspberries will not have a blissful fall at all. They're coming out and garlic will take their place. I'll put next year's new tomatoes in the blazing sun, swear loudly and cross my fingers.

I've saved the carrots for last. Anyone should be able to grow carrots. I thought so, too, having succeeded in past. In mid-June I contemplated three rows of perfect, green and fern like fronds. It was a cruel masquerade because beneath the soil lurked small, curled up blobs easily mistaken for Hawkins' brand Cheezies. I pulled them all out and threw them into the stockpot.

I'm enduring these fails with a brave face, just as I know great granny Powles did when her East London house was bombed during the Blitz. After all, the eggplants and peppers, which I bet she never ate, look fabulous.

In this, of all years, I wanted everything to work perfectly, unlike the rest of the world. Raspberries have never failed us before, nor have tomatoes. Or carrots. But I suppose it makes sense to heed the words of that fine philosopher, Billy Bragg: "Take the crunchy bits with the smooth." The big question is: can I get avocados to work next year? Think of all that precocious East Van Avocado Toast. ❖



Photo: Philippe Collard



Photo: Markus Spiske



Photo: Jeppe Vadgaard

Marilyn Bowman

I have just read a report issued by the Academic Women group at SFU. It presents a picture of the women who responded feeling vulnerable and fragile in their jobs. This is best reflected perhaps in the refusal of all responding members except myself, to have their names associated with their views. I notice that Trump similarly presents a story of the vulnerability of white people to threats from various kinds of visible others: immigrants, Blacks etc. Many other groups now go further, assigning heritable guilt to others for the sinful behaviour of their ancestral group or historical person. Canada is currently in the midst of such self-flagellation regarding black and indigenous lives, some of it deserved, although it was the British Empire that very early outlawed slavery and vigorously fought even otherwise allies such as the US for its abhorrent practice. (The practice continues in modern African and Arab nations). And it was Canadian policy to use the powers of education to create opportunities for indigenous people to become part of literate cultures to enable skills for modern life, however flawed the policy's execution in the hands of some incompetent or criminal leaders.

I fear that the politics of using self-proclaimed group vulnerability is a destructive direction for any group to use, because it requires Us vs. Them thinking. During our time of viral-vulnerability the tendency to create evil-others/vulnerable-selves may more easily arise, and it usually involves implicit assertions of the moral worthiness of one group against its competitors. Us/Them tribal groups most easily break down on 'visible' demographic lines, with age, sex, disability, and colour being most commonly used, although tribal fears can also be generated within such groups. I fear group-based thinking is very flawed, and is harmful to the common good.

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There is a moral complexity to focusing on group differences with their moralistic attributions, because most groups incorporate both moral failures and goodness, as do most individuals.

Individuals in all groups use derogatory terms to describe those in "out-groups". Bamako pygmies in the central African forest call their Bantu neighbours "animals", French call British "bifsteaks", and Cantonese called Europeans Gweilo/ ghost men because of their light eyes. We can readily think of a long list that ranges from sexist to racist and nationalist, created by both sides of the construct. Every major religion has history of regarding competing religions in derogatory and lethal ways, Buddhist monks in Myanmar against Muslim villagers, Christians destroying Spanish mosques, and Islamic conquests. Even within religions we can see Us/Them thinking, as Christianity's history of bloody religious wars, Islam's Shia vs. Sunni, and the Buddhist monastery wars in historical China and Japan. Within-race rival Sudanese tribes of Dinka and Nuer continue to battle, and Lebanon's system of political power guaranteed to 18 different religious sub-groups represents a notoriously awful modern version of this group-based thinking.

There is a moral complexity to focusing on group differences with their moralistic attributions, because most groups incorporate both moral failures and goodness, as do most individuals. Emily Murphy is revered as a feminist for securing the "personhood" for women and fighting for care for the impoverished in Canada, but her racism is ignored. In seeking power via 'vulnerability' tactics, this moral complexity has to be ignored in favour of only one narrative. Members of groups themselves are often conflicted, wishing to be both treated in a special way in one aspect because of their group, and at the same time to be treated equally to those in other groups. Individuals at times may want their individual life to be considered representative of some group, and at other times may demand to be treated as an individual not representing any particular group. This is why it very problematic to create good public policy that is based on visible-differences groups, which in Canada include groups thriving better than European-origin groups, and other visible groups failing to thrive.

We all notice individual and group differences along any visible demographic dimension and we can easily drift into social comparisons with Us/Them tribal thinking in which we are superior or exceptional when we see values or customs that differ from our own. The historically ready tendency to see our group as threatened by others is probably increased



now when all are vulnerable to an identity-neutral virus. It may be that the pandemic has heightened a fear mentality that spreads easily to close demographic targets such as evil men, or foreigners.

But lashing out at 'others' is not a way to manage our own fears, for these are our own subjective emotional responses. We all have to be adults when confronted with problems, we all have to manage our own emotions then rationally plan what is best for both the community and us. Retreating into fearful-vulnerable silos of those just identical to one of our own-group identities is not a recipe for effective action. We have to shift away from highly-personally defined in-groups and extend our concern more broadly if we want to have communities in which all can thrive.

Most of us have had the experience of meeting someone from a different culture/race/ethnicity in a small personal encounter which easily evolved into discussion of shared human themes such as "are you married, do you have children?" These reflect universal experiences. In contrast, when groups think of other groups, the tendency is the opposite, to focus on differences rather than human commonalities. Humans have a basically social orientation that we have to keep remembering when we think about groups. My leftist orientation leads me to suspect that excessive disparities in basic income and wealth (outgrowths of education, parenting, and family history as they contribute to earnings) are the targets that we should most focus on if we want to improve the well-being of all in our communities. ❖

For Travellers and Dreamers of Travel

Apollonia Cifarelli



This article addresses specifically **Johnson Medoc Travel Insurance** (Medoc) and will give you some historical background on Medoc as well as update you on how Medoc plans to handle travel claims during this COVID-19 situation.

The Medoc contract is a joint group policy involving **UVic, SFU** and **UBC**. It was negotiated in 1999 to meet the specific needs of University retirees.

Although it provides a nominal commission to the Simon Fraser Retiree Association (SFURA), the commission benefits and supports SFURA without directly impacting your cost. In 2019 the annual commission to SFURA was \$1828.00. Medoc is an annual, 1st payer policy. First payer means that costs will *NOT* be subjugated to your extended health plan as is the case for BCAA and bank travel insurance policies. If you are a frequent traveller doing multiple trips per year, and you are concerned about eroding your lifetime extended health limit Medoc is an option you should consider.

COVID-19 has created significant confusion about claims and put most travel plans on hold. For those of you who have annual policies, Medoc has extended the 2020 coverage by four months to December 31, 2020. This gives an additional four months of coverage to your base plan at no additional cost.

Travel between now and December 31, 2020

Do not assume that regular coverage is in place. Coverage is limited to *NON* COVID-19 related illnesses and to destinations *WITHOUT* travel advisories issued by the Canadian Government. Trip Cancellation and interruption for COVID-19 is limited to trips booked prior to advisories going into effect. What this means is that if you are planning on travelling both nationally and internationally, you will need to check with Medoc and review travel advisories.

Travel after January 1, 2021

At this time, Medoc is still working on what their coverage will look like. Their plan is to remain competitive; however, trip cancellation and interruption will likely be discontinued. ❖

Remembering Maurice Gibbons

By *Marvin Wideen*

I feel great sadness as I write this article. As others who have commented on his recent passing agree, I found Maurice to be a gifted scholar and a brilliant person. It is no wonder that people have so many positive things to say about him. A key project that he worked on was *Self Education* about which he wrote a book. It described how students and adults could learn through their own activity and how teachers could provide stimulating situations to support that way of learning. He was a leader of that pedagogical approach in BC and elsewhere in Canada.

As a message to SFURA members noted, he was a gifted scholar and a wonderful colleague.

His pioneering work in self-education traveled with me to many parts of the world. When I did my time in Boulder Colorado working on my PHD, I experienced what was described as the constructivist approach, where teaching for exams had been changed to learning on your own through activity. So, when I first arrived in the Faculty of Education at SFU, I was happy to find that both Maurice Gibbons and self-education were there, too. Some years later, when Ian Andrews and I consulted in other countries where modernizing instruction was the key goal, we drew on Maurice's work.

Maurice was an artist and his works are very interesting. Loretta and I especially like his carvings. We have always enjoyed the two pieces that have pride of place in our living room. When Maurice retired, another of his carvings was placed in the hallway in the Faculty of Education at SFU

Maurice also helped to set up a Golfing Group that included **Tom O'Shea**, **Cornel Ham**, **Norm Robinson**, and me. The Group reveled in the game for years. It led us beyond golf when very enjoyable dinners with our lovely partners became part of the action. As we moved into retirement, Maurice and I would meet often for lunch at a restaurant mid-way between our homes. There, we solved most of the world's problems.

Before closing. I would like us to remember how this Newsletter that we all enjoy developed. Some years ago, Maurice took over as editor and since then it has moved to a new level. I close this article with much sadness.

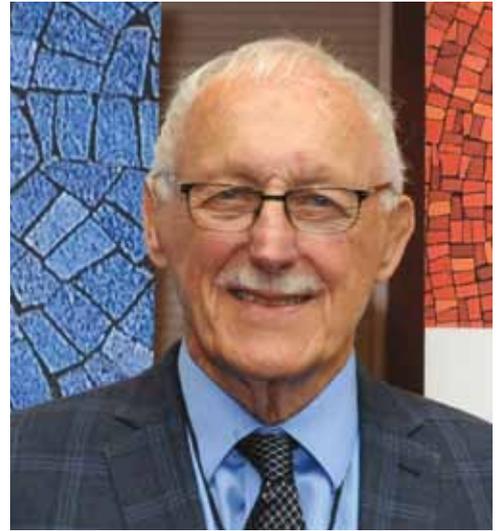


Photo: Greg Ehlers



Carving: Solstice / Maurice Gibbons 1983 / 12'X6' Red Cedar

Pandemic Socializing

Tom O'Shea



What's a socialist to do these days? The novelty of Zoom and binge watching *The Perils of Pauline* on cable TV are starting to pall. The book club's books are fine, but reading is such a solitary activity. Reminds me of Theresa Tam's recent comment that the lowest risk sexual activity during COVID-19 involves your yourself - alone.

Speaking of book clubs, ours recently met in a member's backyard, socially distanced. It was a visceral pleasure to have the discussion in person and to enjoy a home-made peach pie following an animated discussion of *Apeirogon*, a wonderful book based on a true story of the violent deaths of two daughters of a Palestinian and an Israeli. If the beautiful summer weather continues, we'll have the next meeting on another member's back deck.

We spent another afternoon in a friend's garden, along with 25 people socially distanced, listening to a live jazz trio. The group is *Triology* with Jodi Proznick on bass and Bill Coon on guitar (both SFU masters grads) and the inimitable Miles Black on piano. Sitting in the slight afternoon drizzle and hearing their version of *Here's That Rainy Day* it seemed that things were almost normal.

A few weeks ago we decided we needed a break and booked an AirBnB in Victoria near the Empress for four nights. Turned out to be a great idea, with easy access from downtown Victoria to cycling on the Galloping Goose and Lochside Trails. We spent half a day at the BC Museum, always a pleasure, and watched an Imax presentation, our first

experience in a theatre in months. Some streets were blocked to allow restaurants to overflow onto the street giving a very European flavour to the downtown core.

Cycling, now with friends, has become a major part of our week. The traffic restrictions on Beach Avenue and in Stanley Park have made it a pleasure to leisurely wend your way around Lost Lagoon and around the loop in the park. Such a shame that the aquarium has closed again and may not re-open in its present form in the future.

We miss live performances of the Vancouver Symphony and the Vancouver Recital Society. But the MET Opera Stars Live in Concert series

has helped. The recitals by Jonas Kaufmann and Lise Davidsen were phenomenal. I hope the VSO can create some alternatives such as that of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra that recently performed at the Dorval airport parking lot to an audience of people in 550 cars. Giant screens captured the performance and audio was through a special FM band on the car radios. Shades of the old drive-in theatres (without the speaker stands).

But our most memorable and moving experience was about four weeks ago when we visited Maurice and Leslie Gibbons and spent the afternoon in the sun chatting around their swimming pool. Maurice was clearly declining physically but he was alert and his usual good-natured, witty self. We're so glad we had a chance to see him before he departed this life.

And so...off we go this evening to see a film at the Cinematheque. First movie in a real theatre in months. Oh joy. "O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!" ❖



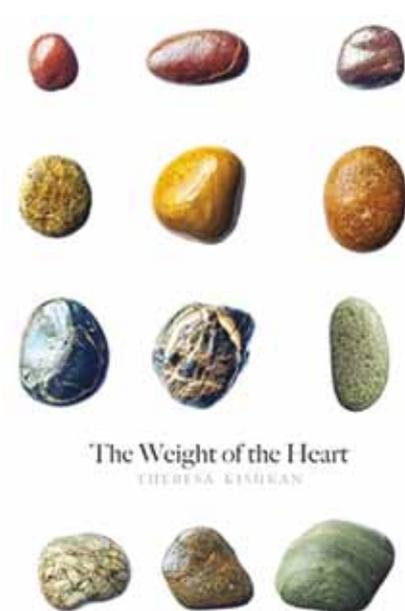
Photo Vancouver Archives : Cycling in Stanley Park Circa 1890.



Reviews by Sandra Djwa, David Stouck, Jerry Zaslove

The Weight of the Heart / Palimpsest Press, 2020, review by David Stouck

Theresa Kishkan was born in Victoria, B.C. in 1955 and is one of this province's most prolific writers. The publication of her first novel *Sea of Grass*, set in the nineteenth-century BC Interior, brought high praise from Edith Iglauer for its evocation of a unique time and place. Her second novel, *A Man in a Distant Field*, set on the Sunshine Coast and in Ireland, was nominated for the Ethel Wilson BC Book Prize. Kishkan writes in many different genres (poetry, travel, memoir) and on widely scattered subjects (plant life, music, weaving, local history, personal ancestry) but she brings an intensity to her subject that makes you feel you should know about it too.



Her recently published novella, *The Weight of the Heart* eludes easy categorization because it is part travel writing, part family tragedy, part literary history and part cartography. The young narrator, Isabel, sets out on a journey into the BC Interior with two seemingly unrelated goals: to learn more about her much-loved older brother who died while kayaking in the turbulent waters of the Thompson River, and to find materials for a graduate thesis she is writing about BC's early women novelists--namely Ethel Wilson and Sheila Watson.

Her first quest, to learn more about her beloved brother, has a suicidal aspect. Before her trip into the Interior she goes swimming at Sombrio Beach and for a moment lets the waves made by a group of whales pull her down into the depths of the water—easy “to simply let go and sink under.” At Lytton where her brother's body was found on the edge of the river, a guide who remembers James takes her rafting and once in the water she has a deep urge to unzip her life-jacket and let herself drown.

But a stronger urge carries her forward—to find the places that Wilson and Watson wrote about, specifically Lac Le Jeune and Dog Creek. This brings her to think about maps as she drives. For James, maps measured distances and he liked them folded “just so”; but for Isabel distances are measured by landmarks—by a giant pine, by the first scent of sage in the air, by the felt contours of the road.

Thinking about the two early writers and how they mapped parts of the province for their readers, she proposes a feminist cartography—maps as dynamic systems with potential for change, where body and spirit meet. “How,” she asks, “did Wilson and Watson find in the hard physical world a correlative for their language?” “What urgency made them write these places into being?” (Dispersed throughout the text are one-page passages, chiefly unpunctuated lists, attributed to the memory function of rivers, birds, trees, and tunnels.)

The book Kishkan has written also has its secrets and the title is one of them. The author has explained that James, in his early youth, was an Egyptologist and his sister references several passages from ancient Egyptian funerary texts. One of these specifically records that the heart when weighed by Anubis must be light as a feather if the body is to pass into the next world.

The story is rich in mysteries and in musical references. We are invited, for example, to listen to certain songs by Joan Baez and Emmylou Harris and reflect on what they might mean for the narrator. But there is nothing mysterious in the author's closing reference to Ethel Wilson and Sheila Watson: “I wanted them to know they have written books so beautiful that they've entered my body, and they have shaped the way I see the land.” Theresa Kishkan extends this experience to her readers in an elusive and richly evocative story that should be read twice. At least, such was my experience. ❖

Four Takeaways From a Recent Trip to Vietnam

By Herbert Grubel, Emeritus Professor of Economics

In February of this year, The Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians organized a 3-week study tour of Vietnam and Cambodia. It attracted 20 members of the Association, including my wife and me. It received no subsidies from any government.

The group included former MPs from all political parties. We had some lively discussions about Canadian politics, but the atmosphere was always respectful and cordial. We enjoyed normal travel experiences enriched by information from competent and friendly professional guides who also took excellent care of the trip's logistics.

What made this trip different from normal tourist experiences were meetings with local politicians skillfully arranged by Leo Duguay, an Ottawa lobbyist, former MP and Prime Minister Joe Clark's Chief of Staff. Thus, we spent a couple of hours with Canada's Ambassador to Vietnam in Hanoi, which brought us up to date on the country's relations with Canada and local economic and political conditions. We sponsored a dinner meeting with ten members of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Saigon, which provided much first-hand information about the opportunities and challenges of doing business in the country.

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We were lucky with the timing of the trip, which started when the Covid-19 crisis affected primarily China and ended when the return flights were still on schedule..

We also met with three members of Vietnam's parliament in Hanoi who served as chairs of important legislative committees. These politicians gave us mainly boiler-plate information about the country's economic and social conditions, but responded with some spontaneous and interesting answers to our questions at the end of the session. This meeting ended with a privileged guided tour of the parliament building designed in grand 'communist' style.

We were lucky with the timing of the trip, which started when the Covid-19 crisis affected primarily China and ended when the return flights were still on schedule. The crisis in China brought us some unexpected benefits through the virtual absence of Chinese tourists in airports, hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions. According to our guide, their absence meant that we were able to visit some attractions without the lengthy queuing required just a short time earlier.

The visit to Vietnam and Cambodia increased my understanding and appreciation of the cultures and economies of these two countries in many ways, but the following narrative focuses on just four topics that involve important takeaways of interest to me as a free market economist and a person interested in the Vietnam War.

The first takeaway involves my memory of the tragedy of that war, which I had expected to be revived during this visit. To my surprise, our guides and other Vietnamese never mentioned it to us on their own initiative. Only once were we given information about a battle, but only after we asked for it. This happened when we wondered about the history of a large, barren space in the middle of the ancient Citadel of Hue. Our guide explained that the historic buildings that had previously occupied this space were destroyed when Vietcong troops infiltrated the area during the 1968 Tet Offensive and American forces launched a counterattack. Before this event, the Americans deliberately had kept their troops out the Citadel to protect its cultural heritage. The guide left the clear impression that he blamed the Vietcong more than the Americans for the tragic destruction of the historic buildings.

I was also surprised by the displays at the "Hanoi Hilton", the prison where US downed pilots were kept. It is now a museum and contains very few displays and narratives about the horrors of the War. Instead, it holds many exhibits showing how well the American prisoners were treated and how many anti-war demonstrations had taken place around

the world. The only disturbing images in the prison are of the French government's treatment of Vietnamese prisoners during the colonial period.

The second takeaway comes from numerous stories by our guides about the personal and economic problems caused by Ho Chi Minh's government after the Americans left in 1975. This government imposed on the South economic and social policies its leaders studied during visits to Moscow during the War.

The guides' accounts of these policies revealed deep resentments over the hardships they caused their people, resentments allegedly shared by many in the country. Under these offending policies, many landowners, members of the middle class and others considered by the communist politicians to be the enemies of the working class, had their properties seized, were jailed or even executed. Many of these victims fled the country and became the boat people of history. Many of them lost their lives at the hands of pirates from the Philippines and Indonesia. Only few were accepted as refugees by Canada and other Western countries.

Very damaging also was the economic planning regime, which forced all production by individuals and companies to be delivered to the government, which transferred it to consumers such that everyone had a fair and equal income. One of our guides told us with some mirth that under this system his father was no longer able to pursue his traditional practice of trading fish for watermelon under pain of being imprisoned. It took Vietnam many years to end the communist planning regime and liberalize the economy.

The third takeaway involves the performance of the Vietnamese economy after liberalization. It was clearly evident during our visit, but the following draws on some statistics found on the Internet to describe it. The country's population is 97 million, which makes it the 15th most populous country in the world (Germany has Europe's biggest population of 84 million). The communist-style planning after 1975 caused stagnation and by 1986 had made Vietnam one of the world's poorest countries. Conditions improved dramatically in 1986 after the government moved away from this model, imitating the successful 1978 reforms by Deng Xiaoping in China. This improvement was evident in numerous ways. The main airports were new and modern. Ubiquitous retail and artisan shops were fully stocked and busy. Restaurants of different quality were filled with customers. Traffic on all roads was very heavy. Construction of buildings and roads was everywhere. People were well dressed. I saw no homeless people or beggars.



Photo: David Emrich

Official statistics back these impressions of economic growth and prosperity. Between 2002 and 2018, per capita GDP increased 2.5 times, though it still has long way to go to make Vietnam a rich country. In 2018 its GDP had reached US\$2,500 while in comparison, Canada's was \$46,000. The growth of GDP of 7 percent in 2018 is encouraging as is the statistic that the rate of poverty shrank dramatically from 70 percent in 1986 to 6 percent in 2019.

These results were created by free market policies. Producers no longer had to deliver their output to government agents but were free to sell it to the highest bidder. Lower tariffs resulted in the opening of trade with the rest of the world. Direct foreign investment was encouraged through low levels of regulation and taxes, low cost of labor, low inflation, secure property rights and a stable political environment. In December 2019 alone, firms mainly from Japan, South Korea and China made direct investment worth \$20 billion.

Of particular interest to me is that the government allows the side-by-side circulation of US dollar notes in private markets. In the ubiquitous restaurants, retail stores selling clothing, shoes and other consumer products, payment is routinely expected to be made in dollars. Only change of less than one dollar is settled in Vietnamese Dong, the local currency. Credit card charges are in Dong but are converted to other currencies at rates that keep retail prices at a bargain level for Canadians. Many private employers pay their workers in dollars, government employees are paid in Dong, which can readily be converted into dollars.

The free market policies brought an interesting symbol of success. In 1986, Vietnam was unable to feed itself and had to import rice. Now it is once again the largest net exporter of rice in the world, taking advantage of outstanding growing conditions in the Mekong Delta, which we toured comfortably for a day on a boat. A bicycle trip of one the islands in the delta allowed us to see these fertile fields and the comfortable homes they support.



I believe that the smooth flow of traffic and the low incidence of accidents is due to the great maneuverability of two-wheeled vehicles.

Another indicator of Vietnam's economic success is the heavy traffic on its urban roads. In Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) it is dominated by 7 million scooters and motorcycles owned by the city's 11 million inhabitants. These two-wheeled vehicles compete with relatively small numbers of cars, trucks and buses. However, in spite of the crowding, the traffic moves smoothly. During many trips in our tour bus, we saw no traffic jams or accidents.

These results are almost a miracle as the traffic is, what someone called "organized chaos." One of its causes motivated the writing on a t-shirt I saw: "Traffic rules in Saigon: Traffic light green: go; light yellow: still go; light red: continue to go. I believe that the smooth flow of traffic and the low incidence of accidents are due to the great maneuverability of two-wheeled vehicles. Observing scooters carrying a woman and two children miss hitting other vehicles by inches is heart-stopping, but we all seemed to get used to seeing such spectacle and no longer were amazed. Besides, wearing helmets was legally required and universally obeyed. A bit of trivia: according to one of our guides, the reason why women on scooters almost always wear long-sleeved shirts and gloves is to protect their skin from the sun.

However, the traffic in the Vietnamese cities raised in my own mind the question of how it will function in the future as the population and incomes continue to grow rapidly. I would not be surprised if, in a decade, there would be congestion just like that in other large urban areas of the world, especially since the greater prosperity will lead to the increasing replacement of two-wheeled vehicles by cars.

My fourth takeaway concerns Vietnam's economic future. The growth in national income foreseen by the members of the Canada-Vietnam Chamber of Commerce in Saigon is likely to be realized. But I predict that it will be accompanied by problems that face all rapidly growing, low- and middle-income countries. One of these problems is traffic congestion. Another is that foreign investment continues to increase the demand for labor and drives up wages. As this happens, the attractiveness of foreign investment and volume will decrease and cause a reduction in the expansion of the economy along with a slowdown in the increase in wages, tax revenues and public spending on infrastructure and social benefits.

In their presentation to us, parliamentarians in Hanoi suggested that the government is aware of these problems and importantly, is ready to deal with them through more deregulation and free market policies. By coincidence, the day before our meeting with these officials, a newspaper reported that a parliamentary committee had announced plans for further deregulation.

However, as the government continues on this path, it faces a fundamental conflict, which I raised in a question posed to the parliamentarians in Hanoi: “How will your government deal with the conflict between the consequences of ever growing liberalization and the maintenance of income equality required by your communist ideology?”

My question brought a burst of laughter among the parliamentarian, which our group were delighted to join. The chair asked one of his colleagues to provide an answer to my question, which brought the standard line that the communist party remains committed to policies that create prosperity and income equality. At the reception after the meeting, the chairman of the group shook my hand and said, “good question.”

I wish for the people of Vietnam that its politicians will be able to deal successfully with the inevitable conflict between free markets and income equality. It will require them to give up much of their power, status and income. Only time will tell whether they will do so.

In conclusion, a bit of information useful to climate change skeptics everywhere: during the period 900 to 1,100 CE, the people of Cambodia had built many temples. Ten of the largest and best preserved are fine tourist attractions. They are so large and elaborate that their construction and maintenance took very many workers who were directed by a large elite of priests and politicians. Many peasants were needed to feed these workers and elites.

What caused this society to lose its ability to maintain these temples and turn them into today’s still spectacular ruins? A guide explained that it used to be believed that prolonged and destructive warfare with neighboring countries was to blame, but that recent research by respected archaeologists has discovered strong evidence that the main cause was climate change – a prolonged drought reducing agricultural output dramatically. If this explanation is correct, cosmic forces must have been responsible since green-house gases emissions by humans at the time were trivial. Might such forces also be the main driving force behind the current global warming? ❖



Photo: Dirk Spijkers

Sheila Delany



PREFACE: It might seem frivolous to write about anything other than Covid or Trump right now, especially for an American. But I have written about both fairly recently, and this column was written well before COVID-19, so I am OK with using it now and returning to “edgier” issues next time. With thanks to our late editor Maurice Gibbons for asking me to write “edgy” stuff for this newsletter and warm appreciation for his friendship and support.

Chaucer in the bedroom, with apologies and gratitude for the title to Donatien Alphonse M. le marquis de Sade (*Philosophy in the bedroom*). When my grandson was little, he had trouble falling asleep. So I would lie down next to him in the dark and tell a story, the longer the better, in an ever-slower and lower tone, ideally a story long enough to last past the point where he’d finally fall asleep. As a medievalist, I had a pretty good supply of long stories. One favorite of his was Beowulf, which falls neatly into three parts, one per antagonist (Grendel, Grendel’s mother, the dragon) and which, since originally probably meant for oral performance, is well adapted to a bedtime story. Another was *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, rather less violent (the severed appendage, GK’s head, is easily reattached, unlike Grendel’s arm)



and a suitable vehicle for inculcating such values as politeness, keeping one’s word, or the hidden magical powers of dumpy old ladies, plus a nice dramatic sound-effect (“Whap!” as GK’s axe is sharpened). There were also Bible stories—not as long as the medieval ones, of course, but interesting nonetheless and generating lots of questions for sleepy conversation: Adam and Eve, Noah, Jonah and the whale. We were all delighted to discover a Beowulf comic strip, a Gawain comic, a Noah’s Ark puzzle, R. Crumb’s graphic novel of *Genesis*.

Chaucer posed more of a problem. The dream-visions are clearly too abstract for this purpose, and too adult, insufficiently action-packed or even narrative-driven: no child cares about the betrayals of text, language and communication (House of Fame), laments about faithless lovers (Legend of Good Women), the mourning of a bereaved knight (Book of the Duchess) or even the debates among various birds as they gather on Valentine’s Day to choose mates (Parlement of Fowles). What about the Canterbury Tales? Surely there’s something in that jolly collection that could meet the stringent criteria of the child’s father (my younger son): no obscenity—which lets out a few of the tales (Miller’s, Reeve’s). The Knight’s Tale is long and soporific enough, though much of its interest is in rhetoric and in good government, neither of concern to a child; likewise the Merchant’s Tale recounting the far-flung trials of pious Constance.

But the sad truth is that I never got around to telling a Chaucer story. The old favorites ruled supreme from visit to visit (the offspring are not in Vancouver), and ancient tales were eventually supplanted by paternal readings of the Hardy Boys and other classics. So imagine my delight when, not too long ago, I received a phone call from the grandson, at that point in middle school, asking for help with translating the opening 18 lines of the Canterbury Tales, his assigned portion in 8th-grade English class and one of the few pieces of poetry I know by heart. I was astonished that the school—private, Episcopalian (Anglican), ecumenical-- had assigned something this difficult to such a young group; my own acquaintance with Chaucer didn’t come until college, and I found it hard even then, constantly flipping to the glossary at the back of my big dark-blue Robinson (which of course I still have). But we worked through it, plus plenty of explanation about what a pilgrimage is, and what the Ram is and why Canterbury was important, etc. His teacher, I later heard, was very pleased with the result. A few months afterward, I gave him as a Christmas or birthday gift a mounted leaf I had, a reproduction of the page in the Ellesmere Chaucer (one of the earliest manuscripts) that shows the poet on horseback reciting his own tale (“Melibee”, in prose). Gold-leaf, floral marginalia and all, it is, as the grandson said, very cool, and I get to see it again when I’m at their house where it hangs among family photos and other memorabilia. I suppose he’ll have to wait a while before meeting up with Chaucer again in his present high school or even later: his current ambition is to move to Vancouver and go to SFU—hope Chaucer will still be in the curriculum and that he likes it as much as I did. ❖

Hurrah For The Blue Jays

By A. E. Curzon

When I arrived here from England I was surprised to learn that the English schoolgirls' game of rounders had been adopted by athletic North American men and was renamed baseball. When the Toronto baseball team wins, their supporters enthusiastically shout "Hurrah for the Blue Jays" because the team emblem is a bird called the blue jay. In Vancouver another blue bird is often seen. Though it is blue and a jay it is not a blue jay, it is a Steller's jay. A biologically ignorant physicist such as myself makes the stellar mistake of calling the Steller's jay a blue jay because it is blue and a jay. I hope you noticed I did not make the astronomical error of misspelling Steller. What follows was written many years ago.

For a number of months I have been feeding peanuts to Vancouver "blue jays" correctly called Steller's Jays. Even though I know that I am using the wrong name I will continue to use "blue jays" in this story. It is the only serious imperfection to which I will admit. The birds arrive shortly after sunrise and perch in the plum tree, which is adjacent to our sundeck. Recently it has been cold and wet and they hunch up in large blue fluffy spheres patiently eyeing the sundeck door. Wednesday the 29th of November 2000 began like any other November day. We had breakfast and Mona, my wife, left for work. She is my sunshine and I always wave to her as she drives up the road on her way to work because in this cruel world you never know when someone leaves the house whether you will ever see them again. That wave signals to her at the start of every working day how important and dear she is to me.

After she has gone I turn my attention to the jays. They all have different personalities. Scientists object to assigning human emotions to animals but I think they are mistaken. Our brain structures are similar and we are what our brains are so I have no trouble in assigning certain human attributes to animals and birds; these include curiosity, fear and timidity. One of the jays is very timid. Instead of landing on the horizontal sundeck rail where the peanut is, it lands on a sloping handrail down which it sometimes slips before hopping on to the horizontal rail. Here it perches with its toes barely on the rail ready to fly away immediately on the slightest movement from me. I generally stand a few feet away in the doorway when they come to feed because I enjoy seeing them so close. Even after several months they still come no closer than they did at the beginning. They are more sensible than humans in this respect!

Many people, especially people over 65, like myself, let their guards down against confidence tricksters as time passes. With age comes forgetfulness. I have been known to forget to lock the door when I go out but through diligent attention I think I have managed to train myself out of this failure. The same can't be said of remembering where I put my glasses! Intellectually I can understand why some people have laser surgery so as to render glasses unnecessary but any mistake in dealing with the eyes through which we perceive so much of the world would be a disaster and I would rather cope with the disaster of lost spectacles than eyes unnecessarily damaged by laser surgery.

In my case there are two things, which I do not forget. These are that I hate exercise and I hate newspapers. Exercise is good for everyone (else!) and newspapers bring delight to Mona so, of course, every morning, when the weather is not excruciatingly bad, I walk to the local store for a newspaper and then I walk further up the hill than is necessary before returning home. The experience provides me with a glorious feeling of self-satisfaction, which, to an observer, must be totally nauseating. Not only have I done something that will please Mona but I have also had some exercise as well!

The weather was good on Wednesday the 29th of November. I made sure I had my keys. I inserted a key in the lock, pulled the door to and one of the locks automatically closed and I turned the key in the second lock. The single key fits both the locks. I left knowing that I had my keys with me and that the house was secure. As I was approaching the store I felt for the 64 cents, which the newspaper would cost. Darn it! I had forgotten to bring any money whatsoever. Wearily I trudged back home unlocked the door and collected the required amount. When I went out I carefully locked the door again, congratulating myself that I had evolved a ceremony of the keys. Her Majesty would have been proud of me! This



Photo: Ron Long

time when I returned from the store I took the extra walk up the hill and though I arrived puffing at the front door I felt pleased. For yet another day I had had my exercise and I had bought a paper for Mona. Yes, indeed, a good start!

There is a metal screen door in front of the wooden front door of the house. I do not lock it when I go out but I do sometimes lock it when I am in the house so that if I open the wooden door to a stranger that person cannot attack me. This may sound a little melodramatic but there have been cases of attacks occurring so I see no harm in being cautious. Well, I gently pulled on the handle of the screen door so as to get to the wooden door behind. The screen door did not budge. I pulled harder. Still it would not move. This had never, ever happened before. Somehow the catch that locks the screen door must have moved when the door had been slammed shut. Naturally I did not have a key to the screen door with me. The screen door barred entry through the front door so the only hope was to get in through the basement door whose keys I did not have with me either.

What should I do? Perhaps Mona has the keys to the basement door. I'll return to the store and phone her from there and if she has the keys I'll go to her place of work by bus to get the keys. Oh, Noooo! I can't do that because I have spent all my money on the paper and have nothing left. Perhaps a neighbour will let me phone. I think some more. I am scheduled to go to retirees' lunch at the University at noon and if I collect keys from Mona I will not get back in time for the lunch, which I particularly wish to attend because I have missed several others.

My brother, Fran, was due to arrive on that day. He has my front door key so I had said that he could use it if I happened to be still at the lunch when he arrived. Everything was going wrong. I could not get in. I would have to borrow money from a neighbour to get to Mona assuming she had the basement keys with her. My brother would not be able to get in if he arrived when I was not there. Imagine his reaction to his finding the screen door locked against him - hardly welcoming! I could have left a note on the door but I hated the thought of doing this because it announces to the world that the house is empty. I was thoroughly fed up. The only thing was to go to a neighbour to phone Mona, borrow some money for a bus or taxi assuming that Mona had the basement keys, miss the lunch and leave a note for my brother (using a pen or pencil and paper from a neighbour).

Darn! Darn! Darn! (modified for the sake of gentility!). Things could not be worse. Yes they could! Perhaps Mona does not have the basement keys with her. Shall I break the glass in the screen door and gain access that way? My avaricious nature denied that possibility. Now the last straw, a blue jay is sending an alarm call in the back. It's probably not alarmed at all. It's just seen me and is scolding for some more peanuts. What a time to choose! Roast blue jay sounds very attractive!

In 1987 I went on sabbatical leave to England and two parents and their children, one of whom liked roasted sunflower seeds, occupied the house. Having been forbidden to consume so many he hid some under something in the basement. A mouse, attracted by the smell invited its relatives along and they set up home. When we returned in 1988 we were distressed by this news and decided to make sure that from then on we would leave not a crumb available to the mice so that they would decide it was a good idea to leave. Small items of food were easily sealed in jars or robust plastic containers but potatoes were a problem. We do not know whether mice eat potatoes but we decided to take no chances and at the end of the day would put the potatoes in the mice-inaccessible drum of the clothes dryer.

A visitor soon arrived. She was terrified of mice so we decided to keep our secret and to pursue our method of mouse eradication. She never did discover our secret, but after the night when she saw us storing potatoes in the washing machine I believe she has had some doubts about our collective sanity. Be that as it may, our method worked and the mice departed. This event resolved me henceforth to store any seeds in secure containers preferably outside the house. The peanuts for the blue jays are stored under an inverted drum in the carport. The drum is weighted down with a concrete block so that not even a super-rodent could ever have access to the peanuts inside.

Returning to the alarm-calling blue jay I removed the concrete block and collected a few peanuts. I went through the back gate and up on to the sundeck. There was a blue jay in the plum tree and it flew down to retrieve the peanut that I had left for it on the rail. I looked disconsolately at the back windows - all fastened shut against the inclement weather. There was no hope of access there. The floor to ceiling door of the sundeck cannot be unlocked from the outside so there was no hope there.

I thought, "I guess I had better start disturbing the neighbours and revealing to them what an idiot I am", but then an idea came. Before I went out I had been feeding the jays. I am forgetful. Supposing, just supposing, I had forgotten to lock the sundeck door before I had gone to get the paper. I pushed on the sliding door's handle. Joy, oh joy, the door moved. I had left it open! At about 11 a.m. I added the basement door keys to my key ring. I checked that the sundeck door was locked. I turned the key in the front door and made sure that the catch on the screen door was fully open so that it could not accidentally lock shut again. I felt ashamed of my thought of roast blue jay and, as I walked to the bus stop where I would catch the bus to my retirees' lunch at the University, I almost shouted out loud "Hurrah for the blue jays!" ❖

Have PowerPoint Will Travel - São Paulo

By Kieran Egan

I had been in touch with various people in Brazil who had indicated an interest in being connected to our S.F.U. Imaginative Education Research Group (IERG), so it came as no great surprise to be invited, via email, to give a talk in São Paulo. The date was not inconvenient, between semesters, and it would be useful to sit and discuss just how IERG might connect up with various colleagues, who included, for reasons I didn't want to explore too deeply, a number of nuns.

Close to the date for setting off, I received a flurry of emails from various of the IERG associates in Brazil, all of whom said they were surprised to discover I planned to be there. One man wrote that he was distressed to see that I was going to be giving a talk to “those people,” his other main concern being the polluted state of the river that flowed, pink-frothed, by the hotel I was to stay in. The IERG associates seemed shocked that I hadn't told them I was coming. As I had casually assumed they must have been the ones inviting me, this all began to seem a bit odd, and who were “those people” I was going to talk to? Attempts to discover from the website whose url was on their invitational message didn't help a lot, being in Portuguese. I gathered they represented the largest conference for teachers in the country—which didn't sound so bad. Surely that many teachers couldn't all be dismissed as “those people.”

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São Paulo is just down there a bit, at the sticky-out part of South America.

São Paulo is just down there a bit, at the sticky-out part of South America. But exploring in greater detail indicated there was an awful lot of “down there” to traverse. Changing in Texas didn't seem too bad, except for the long layover, and then an overnight flight, in which nothing that's much like sleep happens, didn't have me feeling great by the time the pilot announced that we were beginning our descent into the city. When they tell you they are beginning the descent into Vancouver, you are usually over mountains, and you skim closer and closer to them for a long time before coming in sight of buildings. In the case of São Paulo we were over suburbs when the announcement came, and the suburbs and urbs just went on and on. Welcome to

20,000,000 people crammed close together, a very few very rich and lots and lots of poorer than we can easily imagine.

My inevitable arrival anxiety is that no one will be there to meet me, so I always ask for the name of the hotel I am booked into, in case the person designated to get me there has a breakdown, of car or personality, or, in this case, gets caught in a hail of gunfire or is kidnapped. But there were two rather tough looking guys, neither of whom seemed to speak English. I had been told only to go with people carrying the conference sign, which I was careful to see they had, otherwise I might turn up naked in a field somewhere, deprived of my computer and, less importantly, my life. They hustled me out quickly into a large, seemingly armoured—surely my sleep-deprived imagination?—van. They sat up front and I was encouraged to spread out in the back.

The ride into the city was along a highway sided by concrete walled small-scale industrial buildings, like an endless series of car spares yards. Grimy, dusty, heat battered, and grim. Whenever the van slowed down a dozen men, young and old, seemed to rise from the ground and surround us with hardly enticing offers to sell what looked like knock-off GameBoys, PlayStations, and Xboxes as well as cheap jewelry and T-shirts and almost everything else the heart did not desire. This happened at each slowing of traffic, and as we got closer to the city the resigned-to-failure salesmen became more numerous. When off the highway and stopped at traffic lights, the density of sellers increased, one clearly having the franchise to hang various items over the side-mirror, passing from car to car. Timing it to the second, these were neatly removed as we pulled away. I was sweltering inside the van; outside it looked inhumanly hot and humid.

At the hotel I was met, as we'd arranged, by one of the IERG associates, who greeted me in the friendliest way and offered to take me on a trip to meet some other colleagues for lunch. I begged for a two-hour nap first. She was happy to wait and work in the spacious and cool hotel lobby.

On emerging from the hotel, I mentioned that the following day, after my talk, I thought I'd take a taxi—

waving an arm over the rank of taxis waiting below the wide steps—and look around the city. She looked at me as though I was mad, then rustled around in her bag, pulling out a card.

“Here is the number of a secure taxi company. Don’t take those!” She waved her arm as though casting away some malodorous garbage. I learned that from those taxis I might also turn up naked in a field. Though first they would likely cut off a finger and mail it to my family, suggesting a price for which the family might get back the rest of me. I wasn’t keen to put this to the test, for a number of reasons.

“Also, whatever happens, whatever trouble you are in, don’t contact the cops. They will plant drugs on you and sell you back to your family for whatever they will pay.” Here we were again, facing the “\$38.27 tops” offer that seemed to cover my current value. Perhaps the Dean might throw in another \$15?

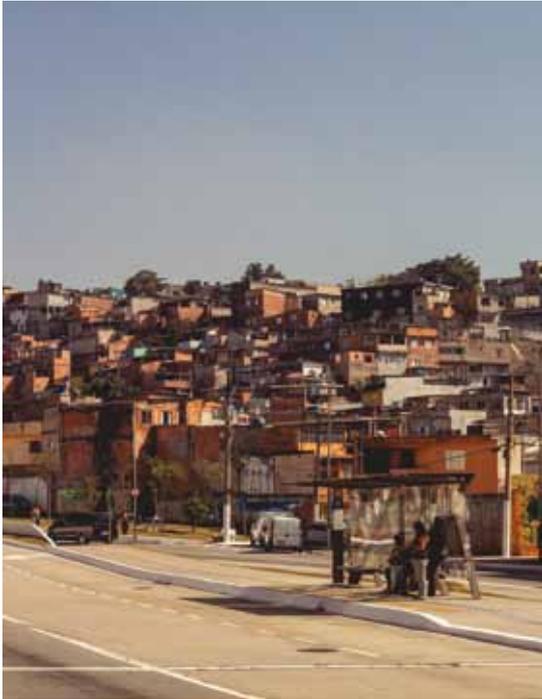


Photo: Bruno Thethe

We drove, doors locked, surrounded at every light by hopeless sellers of identical technological junk and sparkly stuff on strings that was supposed to make women more alluring. After some time we came to a hilly area, and the houses began to have a bit of space around them. Higher up, more spacious, with walls around them. Then we wound around some more and came to a checkpoint that might have made the border between North and South Korea seems a little neglected. A heavy bar across the road, uniformed guards checking everyone in the car, AK-47s bristling. Going for lunch in Kerrisdale isn’t quite like this. Then we were reluctantly allowed in; the bar rose, and fell quickly behind us. We came to the house of another IERG associate, but first had to wait at the eight-foot tall metal gate, and stand clearly in front of the security camera. Then the gate swung open. Inside we had a delightful lunch, for which I foolishly complimented our host, who then brought in the servant to receive thanks.

After lunch we went for a short drive around this protected enclave. At one point we drove past two young women, and it was pointed out with some pride that here they could walk without fear. I discovered that São Paulo is the only other city beside New York whose airspace is divided into helicopter lanes.

The rich will not travel on the surface; they zoom from home-pad to work-pad to airport without ever having to ponder whether their wives might like the jewelry so frequently offered to motorists or their children the knock-off GameBoys or Xboxes, and without having to fear armed gangs killing the driver and guard, cutting off a finger and trying to find out what the rest of the body might be worth.

It seems the conference I had been invited to address was run by the private schools of Brazil. They are numerous and rich. I had a chance to take a walk around the display area before my talk. As with large North American conferences, many publishers had stands with multi-colored children’s books and multi-colored books for teachers, and largely monochrome books for professors. But the greater part of the display floor was taken up with buses. Yes, buses. Clearly the students in these wealthy schools needed to go on fieldtrips and competitive sports outings, and they needed protection from likely kidnappers, who dealt in the finger or ear and how much for the rest routine. These buses looked very impressive, from a military point of view. I didn’t ask questions or get too close, but pictures of bullets barely denting the glass told a story. I imagined James Bond’s “Q” might have walked one around indicating the poisoned gas vents, the heat seeking missiles, automatic 35mm canon mounted rear and aft, and so, lethally, on.

My talk was in an enormous hall, to which I was asked to arrive early to discuss my presentation with the translator. My difficulty in making myself understood by the translator didn’t bode well. (Brought to mind George Crabb’s “Egad, sir, I do think the interpreter is the more difficult to understand of the two.”) Maybe I should skip the jokes? But there seemed a fair number of fluent English speakers in the crowd that drifted in, a number of whom stopped to say nice things, so I thought I’d keep the jokes. As the talk got underway the English speakers laughed at the jokes, but the people with the headphones on for the translations never smiled. I wondered what the jokes were being translated as.

Then back to the airport and the long flight home. Welcomed at LaGuardia by an Irish-speaking customs

officer, who waved me through with an easy smile, after having given the full 9/11 treatment to a granny and nun in front of me in the line and delaying for deep interrogation the single young men.

Why on earth did I travel a gazillion miles to give a barely understood talk to a group of teachers in Saõ Paulo? Do I really need to do this to my body? There was—a first in my giving-talks experience—the brown envelope stuffed with U.S.\$ bills, slipped rather surreptitiously to me by one of the organizers. But why travel an appreciable way across the world’s surface for so brief an event? I pondered this on my way home. And still haven’t come up with a good answer, except that I thought it was someone else had invited me, I hadn’t been to Brazil before, etc. And why did I come home, when I could have melted into the interior, started a new life, rather than return to the routines of SFU’s Faculty of Education? Even now, in a shack overlooking a lake outside Campo Grande, another possible self sighs contentedly. ❖



Woman Wading / Painting : Acrylic on canvas, 16" x 16" / by Marilyn Bowman

<https://www.marilynbowman.com>



IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Evelyn Palmer



Author Author Actor!

Congratulations to **Ted Cohn** on his book, the Eighth Edition of his textbook *Global Political Economy: Theory and Practice* which was published on September 8, 2020. It was co-authored by his colleague **Anil Hira** and was updated to cover the rise of populism, Brexit, the USMCA and so many more recent changes to our lives. A section of the review states: "this book equally emphasizes theory and practice to provide a framework for analyzing current events and long-term developments in the global economy."

Read all about it at:

<https://www.routledge.com/Global-Political-Economy-Theory-and-Practice/Cohn-Hira/p/book/9780367512507>

Ted gave several talks in our Speakers Program and was also a leader in the SFURA Walking Group for several years. He has been an active member of the SFURA since his retirement.

I was alerted to an article about **Louis Druehl** in Time Magazine, September 4, 2020; <https://time.com/5848994/seaweed-climate-change-solution/>, so I immediately wrote Louis reminding him of his two books and his two talks in our Speakers Program. He responded:

*Book wise, my **Pacific Seaweeds** (Harbour Publishing) that sold over 10,000 copies, has been revised and expanded with Bridgette Clarkston (UBC) and has garnered some significant awards. My novel manuscript, **The Kawai Scrolls**, won a Whistler Manuscript competition and has been published by Tidewater Publishers. I have just submitted a novel, **War Bride**, a prequel to **Cedar, Salmon and Weed**, to Douglas McIntyre; keep your fingers crossed. Finally, I just published my 111th issue of **The New Bamfielder** (www.bamfielder.ca). This local paper is fashioned after **The Bamfielder**, started by **Chris Lobban** when he was my SFU Ph.D. student, in the 1960s, doing his research in Bamfield. He is now a professor at the University of Guam.*

*On the home front, wife Rae and I run our kelp business, **Canadian Kelp Resources**, promoting sea vegetables, advising would-be kelp farmers, and doing kelp bed restoration research. Of course, we try to keep up with our children and their children. That is a whole another story. Proud of them all.*

Louis has lived in Bamfield since the early days of SFU when he helped to establish the Marine Sciences Centre, but has maintained his membership in the SFURA since his retirement in 2001. In 2015 he was awarded a British Columbia Community Achievement Award for his community work in Bamfield and received the award at Government House.

We will add *The Kawai Scrolls* and *War Bride* to the website in the Book by Retirees section. *The Kawai Scrolls* is available at Amazon.

Our Physicist Super Senior **Tony Arrott** is now a movie star too. His granddaughter **Lily Ekimian** and her partner **Ahmed Ragheb** have produced a 72 minute documentary, *Portrait*, which has been accepted by one film festival and is being considered for others. The documentary is about Tony and his motivations and passions of a life devoted to the advancement of science, and his late wife, **Patricia Graham Arrott** and her drawings.

Patsy passed away in Vancouver on March 9, 2016. In 2017 Tony put on an exhibit of her art at the Gage Academy of Arts in Seattle. When the exhibit closed he brought the exhibit home to his Vancouver apartment and has about half of the drawings on display. Lily and Ahmed [have a website](#) devoted to Patsy's drawings.

Tony continues his life's work, research on the field of magnetism. Lily and Ahmed run a film production platform, Dog Door Films for which they produced and directed this film. They also run an online arts publication, The Dog Door

Cultural. See snips of Tony at: <https://www.dogdoorcultural.com>

The Press Kit for Portrait is [available here](#) for download as a PDF. It is a touching 11 page pdf document.

SFURA Past President **Jim Boyd** has been active on the Board on the Benefits Committee and as Treasurer of CURAC, along with liaising with other College and University Retiree Associations of Canada. On July 1, 2020 he was appointed as a citizen representative for a three year term to the Finance Committee of the District of West Vancouver by Mayor Mary-Ann Booth. The Committee consists of three elected Council members as well as three citizen appointed members. He is pleased to have been given this honour.

Our always-busy **Yolanda Broderick** did not think she had a story to contribute to the Newsletter, but when she reconsidered she let me in on her recent charitable work. She wrote:

Hi Evelyn, I have not been up to date with SFU but I also want to let you know that for 2020, I am one of 14 women across Canada who were chosen to participate in a Transformative Leadership and Spirituality Program with the St. Paul Providence School with the University of Ottawa (<https://cwlfcanda.ca/our-leadership-program/2020-program-group/>). It is sponsored by the Catholic Women's League of Canada Foundation. The program started May 2020 and runs until April 2021. As we are not able to travel, classes are held on line and we have virtual classes and group discussions and assignments. The goal of the program is to develop transformative Catholic women leaders who will step up and be involved in the Catholic church leadership. The value of the program is 10K. It is an honour to be selected for this program.

Early in March and April, I was involved with a sewing group which made masks for seniors and those with underlying conditions in two churches in Coquitlam and Port Moody as well as masks for staff of Coast Mental Health (<https://www.coastmentalhealth.com/>). Our group distributed over 900 masks - free, washed, ironed and individually wrapped in ziplock bags. The project with Coast Mental Health was through the efforts of the Rotary Club of Port Moody. It was fun doing this project.

Congratulations to **Marjorie Griffin Cohen** who won the 2020 Charles Taylor Prize for Excellence in Policy Research presented by The Broadbent Institute. The Prize is given annually to a researcher whose work has made an important contribution to policy debates relevant to building a more socially just Canada.

Marjorie wrote:

This is part of the reason for it: "Marjorie Griffin Cohen, professor emeritus of Political Science and Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University is the recipient of the 2020 Charles Taylor Prize for Excellence in Policy Research for her extensive leadership and research on the intersection of gender and sexuality and climate and labour policy. Her service as Chair of the BC Fair Wages Commission led directly to an historic increase in the minimum wage in that province."



The award is lovely and the prize itself has an inscription that says "For exemplary leadership on policy to establish fairer wages for British Columbians."



Update Report on the SFU Retirees Association 50th Anniversary Endowment Scholarship

Jim Boyd

The Endowment Fund balance as at March 31, 2020 fiscal year has grown to \$53,513, up from \$51,228 the previous year. As previously reported in the Spring 2019 SFURA newsletter, It was initially funded with a \$10,000 contribution in 2014 by your retirees association as a challenge to encourage donations from other SFU retirees. This approach was extremely successful as a range of donors then contributed an additional \$19,500. In addition SFURA received a \$5,000 matching grant from the SFU Advancement Office.

To date more than 100 individuals have continued to contribute donations every year since its inception in 2014. A new initiative by SFURA involved a Board motion to contribute 10% per year of its own membership fees to the fund which has added another \$1,428 to the fund balance over the last two years. Since 2016 the endowment has disbursed seven scholarships of \$1000 each plus two increased scholarships of \$1,250 each in 2020 from the fund revenue earned while also accomplishing growth in the fund balance.

The current description of the award states that the SFU Retirees Association 50th Anniversary Scholarship “provides financial stability to deserving students while encouraging and motivating them to reach their full potential and achieve their academic goals”. The Senate Undergraduate Awards Adjudication Committee chooses the award recipients from among students who have achieved academic excellence.

The SFU Advancement Office recently commented that SFURA is making dreams come true. Thanks to your members' and other donors' support, SFU students who receive a scholarship, award or bursary are empowered to pursue their passion and become the leaders of tomorrow. In these times of uncertainty, such generosity is more important than ever before. Recognizing students for outstanding accomplishments or helping them achieve financial stability demonstrates that belief in their bright future. Here are three successful examples:

SFU Retirees' Association 2019 Scholarship Recipient, **Adam Bignell**, was the student speaker at the SFU 2020 virtual convocation ceremony and who also spoke at the SFU Retiree's Association Fall 2019 Dinner. The amazing Adam started full time with Google in July! He was a recipient of the Governor General's silver medal when he graduated. Here's a quote from Adam: *"The only way out is through! I have had my share of very low points in life, and it took me a very long time to find a lifestyle that truly fulfilled me. We grow only very slowly, through incremental changes. Each of us needs to define happiness for ourselves, and then push towards it every day, through a commitment to optimism and indomitability. And for the graduating class, this is just the beginning! While we've spent the last little while working on ourselves, it's now a great time to turn our focus outwards. Each of us can decide now to find a way to use our education for the betterment of our communities, no matter how big or small."*

The 2020 Scholarship Recipients are:



Jennifer Krentz: Jennifer is a 4th year psychology and criminology student at SFU who is interested in pursuing clinical forensic psychology. She recently completed her honours thesis which examined the inclusion of risk factors and protective factors in expert reports submitted to the court and review boards for patients found Not Criminally Responsible on Account of Mental Disorder (NCRMD) in BC. She intends to pursue a PhD in Clinical Forensic Psychology.



James Braun: James is pursuing a major in Statistics and a minor in computing science. Growing up, James always loved playing with numbers. He would spend hours reading sports almanacs and try to find interesting patterns or unique facts. This passion for learning from data has stayed with him throughout his post-secondary education. At SFU, he has had the opportunity to take a wide variety of courses in different subjects ✨

IN MEMORIAM



We ask any of you who have further information about any deceased SFU retirees to submit obituaries to the SFURA Webmaster on the link provided on our website at: https://www.sfu.ca/retirees/in-memoriam/a_g.html We post names of all deceased SFU retirees whom we are aware of, not only those who were SFURA members. We welcome tributes to your former colleagues. We will place them with their obituaries on the website.

Peter Borwein A member of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, passed away on August 23, 2020. He and his brother Jonathan came to SFU in 1993 and contributed greatly to the SFU community. Peter was instrumental in establishing The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in the Mathematics and Computational Sciences (The IRMACS Centre). His professional interests were in Number Theory, Combinatorics, Computational Mathematics and Mathematical Modelling.

His obituary is at <https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2020/PeterBORWEIN.pdf>

His friend and colleague Vaselin Jungic contributed an obituary to the Canadian Mathematics Society;
<https://notes.math.ca/en/article/peter-borwein-1953-2020/>

Maurice Gibbons He was a member of the Faculty of Education until his retirement, and was for many years the Editor of our Newsletter and the Editor of *Remembering SFU on the Occasion of its 50th Birthday*. He was a specialist in Self Directed Learning and received the Malcolm Knowles Award in 2007. His wooden sculpture hung in the Diamond Centre until the Centre's renovation and is now in Faculty of Communications office. He gave generously of his time and talents as an artist, author, poet and teacher. A longer tribute is printed in this issue of the newsletter.

His obituary is at: <https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2020/MauriceGibbons.pdf>

Carol Knight passed away on May 25, 2020. She came from the University of Manitoba where she was an archaeological cartographer. At SFU she was program director for information and marketing in Continuing Studies and was responsible for marketing strategies and planning. She was involved in the development of several continuing studies programs. She won a Staff Achievement Award in 1997.

Her obituary is at: https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2020/Carol_Knight.pdf

See the story of her award at: <https://www.sfu.ca/archive-sfunews/sfnews/1997/Jan9/Knight.html>

Janet Menzies worked at the SFU Art Gallery on the Burnaby campus from 1985 until her retirement in 2010. She began as an Assistant Supervisor in the Cashier's Office and then worked at the SFU Art Gallery. She started the annual faculty, staff and student art and photography shows, and was instrumental in increasing the gallery's collections during her years there. She won a Staff Achievement Award in 2010.

Her obituary is on our website at: https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2020/Janet_menziesOBIT.pdf

See the story of her award at: <https://www.sfu.ca/archive-sfunews/sfnews/2002/menzies.html>

Jim Oxtan was a technician in the Physics Department, then for the Faculty of Science for many years. He passed away on August 31, 2020. He was a congenial fellow, well liked by all who knew him.

Further details and his obituary will be posted on our website in the In Memoriam pages when they become available.

Cyril Thong passed away on July 12, 2020 at the age of 73. He completed his PhD with John Webster in 1973, then became a very popular Senior Lecturer in the Department of Biological Sciences. He was well known for his teaching strategies and he won an Excellence in Teaching Award in 2004. He wrote a "*Survival Kit*" for first year students which was adopted for Freshman Orientation at SFU.

His obituary is on our website at: <http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2020/CyrilThong.pdf>

An obituary from his Department is at: <https://www.sfu.ca/biology/people/In-Memoriam/Cyril-How-Sik-Thong.html>

The story of his Teaching Award is at: http://www.sfu.ca/archive-sfunews/sfu_news/archives_2003/sfunews02050407.htm#T4 and his Survival Guide is at: <http://www.sfu.ca/biology/faculty/thong/survival.pdf>



Parveen Bawa : Looking After Yourself



SPEECH INTELLIGIBILITY AND HEARING AIDS

Dedicated to the memory of Professor Maurice Gibbons who got me writing these articles

Making sound and hearing the sounds around us are essential features for our fulfilled survival. Hearing is one of the six senses with which we perceive the environment both around us and within our bodies. We feel enriched by all the memories tied to what we have heard throughout our lives from the world around us: the first words of a baby, the mystical stories told by our grandparents and the soul touching music played in a perfect, acoustically designed hall. So let us look at the process of normal hearing, what can go wrong with it during ageing, and how much we can remedy the age related hearing loss.

PROPERTIES OF SOUND

Sound is a wave of pressure in the air (water or any elastic medium); the wave represents moment-to-moment changes of pressure with respect to time. The characteristics of a pure wave or tone is described by its frequency and amplitude. In simplified terminology, frequency or pitch is measured in vibrations per second or Hertz (Hz) and the amplitude or loudness is expressed in decibels (dB). A normal everyday sound is not just a simple wave with one frequency and amplitude; it is composed of superposition (combination) of a range of frequencies, each with its own amplitude. To get an idea of loudness, let us consider the lowest possible loudness as that of a rustle of a leaf, set that as our reference sound of zero dB; breathing is about 10 dB; mostly 20 dB is the threshold of sound that most people can hear. Sounds above 80 dB become painful and dangerous to the ears; lawn mower is about 90 dB, ambulance siren and rock concerts are 120 dB, and firecrackers around 160 dB. Comfortable human speech is in the range of 50-65 dB when measured at a distance of 1 meter in front of the speaker. The voiced speech of a typical adult male has a fundamental frequency around 100 Hz, with a range from 100 Hz to 8 kilo Hertz (KHz). Speech sound of a typical adult female ranges from 165 to 350 Hz, the higher limit exceeds 8 KHz. There are other sounds in the environment, both pleasant and annoying that our ears take in. Our human physiological system is tuned to hear frequencies in the range of 20 Hz – 20 KHz; human ears are most sensitive to frequencies of 2- 4 KHz. There is a good match between the sounds human produce and what they can comfortably perceive during human-to-human communication.

AUDITORY PHYSIOLOGY

The physiological hearing system essentially consists of three parts: the outer and middle ears which optimize transmission of sound vibrations to the inner ear; sensory cells in the inner ear which change (transduce) the mechanical vibrations into electrical signals, and neural pathways that take these electrical signals to the brain where we perceive sound. The outer ear enhances transmission of sound to the ear drum. Vibrations of the ear drum produce vibrations of three tiny bones in the middle ear. The function of these bones is to improve energy transfer from ear drum to the window of the inner ear. In addition, there is an automatic protection against extremely loud sounds built in our middle ears; tiny muscles in the middle ear automatically decrease transmission of the very loud sounds. In general, these first two parts of the auditory system hardly contribute to age-related hearing loss. The inner ear, which is a very complex, can degrade enormously with age. It consists of a coiled 35 mm long tube called a cochlea. The cochlea carries an important structure called the basilar membrane; sensory or hair cells are located on top basilar membrane. A fluid called endolymph surrounds this combination. Its composition determines electrical potential in that section of the cochlea. Two very important technical transformations take place in the inner ear. (1) The mechanical vibrations arriving at the window of the cochlea are converted into electrical signals by the hair cells. A healthy electrical potential difference in the inner ear structures is important for efficacy of this conversion (transduction). The central nervous system uses only electrical signals for communication, therefore accurate/faithful transduction at this stage is extremely important. (2) A second important technical change that occurs in the inner ear is the splitting of a complex sound wave into its constituent

frequencies (Fourier components). This is done by the basilar membrane. Information about different frequencies with their respective amplitudes is carried along private neural channels (pathways) from the sensory cells to the brain stem, and from there to the auditory cortex. After the signals for different frequencies arrive at the primary auditory cortex, they are combined to produce perception of the original sound.

PRESBYCUSIS (elder hearing)

Presbycusis is the term for age-related hearing loss, the main complaint of the patient is not that they cannot hear, but rather that they cannot understand. The first sign is reduction in ability to understand speech and later the ability to detect and localize sounds. Loss of hearing starts at higher frequencies; as the loss progresses down towards frequencies of 2- 4 KHz, consonants (like t, p, k, f, s and ch) are difficult to hear that makes understanding of speech difficult. As the loss heads further down to even lower frequencies, speech detection becomes more difficult. Not being able to hear warning signals such as beepers and turn signals can have serious consequences. Loss of hearing affects a person's social life that can lead to depression; some literature suggests that it might result in dementia, though it is highly controversial idea.

When there is hearing loss exclusively due to ageing, there can be problems with (i) the inner ear, (ii) the auditory part of the nervous system that carries signals from the brain stem to the auditory cortex and/or (iii) a general decline in cognition during healthy ageing, which affects auditory function along with rest of the intellectual functions. Most of the time (i) and (ii) are intertwined but generally, loss of speech intelligibility involves all three. Having **sensori-neural hearing loss** means there are changes in the composition of the endolymph, deterioration of the basilar membrane, damage to the hair cells, to the nerve pathways that lead from the inner ear to the brain stem, and pathways from brainstem to the cortex. Once this loss occurs, it is permanent. Presbycusis has a strong genetic predisposition.



Since age-related hearing loss develops gradually, it's not always easy to know when your hearing changed.

HEARING AIDS

Since age-related hearing loss develops gradually, it's not always easy to know when your hearing changed. If after the age of 60 you consistently have the following problems: think people are mumbling, ears feel clogged, can't carry on a conversation in a restaurant, avoid social gatherings, or have problems understanding small children, then take a free hearing test with a hearing care expert. There is a lot of information available on the internet about types of digital hearing aids available for normal age-related hearing loss. For presbycusis, the loss is generally the same in both ears, therefore one should wear two hearing aids in order to keep hearing closer to natural hearing. After you have been tested, your audiologist can tell you the types of hearing aids suitable for you.

Basic principle: Essentially, a hearing aid consists of a microphone, an amplifier and a receiver (speaker). The microphone receives the environmental sound, converts it into a digital code as is done in computers. The code contains information about various frequencies (pitch) and associated loudness. The amplifier, requiring the most challenging design of the hearing aid, is programmed to boost the energy of some frequencies and not the others. Further, it amplifies soft sounds more than the loud sounds. The resulting modified signal is sent to the receiver, which acts as a speaker; it relays the modified sound vibrations to the ear drum. The modified sound contains enhanced compensation for deficiencies determined by the audiologist from your test. In "behind the ear" hearing aids, the microphone and the amplifier lie behind the ear and the speaker is located in the ear canal so it can pass the vibrations on to the ear drum.

Blue Tooth is a technology that connects two devices wirelessly, but the two devices have to be close, for example your mouse connecting to the computer or the keyboard talking to the computer without using a physical wire, uses blue tooth connection. Most of the hearing aids these days come with blue tooth technology; it makes the signal more stable, and improves quality of sound; it allows the two hearing aids to communicate constantly with each other, which improves binaural hearing and positioning the source of sound. If your cell phone is connected to your hearing aids, communication is hands free and the sound goes to both your ears. You can connect other small mobile devices to your hearing aids. For example, if you want to hear a very soft-spoken person, you can attach a microphone to their shirt, this microphone picks up their voice and communicates directly with your hearing aids.

Tinnitus: About 6 in 10 people experience tinnitus relief from wearing hearing aids, but the effectiveness varies from person to person. If you don't have hearing loss, you can also try a hearing aid that includes only a tinnitus sound generator and no sound amplification. You can work together with your hearing care professional to evaluate the right solutions for your tinnitus.

Hearing glasses: For people who want to combine hearing aids with glasses, microphones are placed on the spectacle frames in front of the ears. The placement of the microphones in front of your ear creates a unique directionality; the person you are looking at is heard better.

To wear or not to wear hearing aids

Most seniors do not wear hearing aids because they assume hearing aids make them look old, ugly and dumb. And then, there are others who feel that hearing loss is part of ageing, just accept it: why chase doctors and spend money?

When it comes to the nervous system, pathways which are used regularly, stay strong; transmission along the unused pathways deteriorates, and finally disappears. With presbycusis, many of the channels in the hearing pathway ultimately will drop out if not used. In order to keep the maximal range of neural channels open and working, compensatory hearing aids can help.

Hearing aids, especially in quiet environment, do improve communication; but they certainly do not restore normal hearing, especially in noisy environments. When you start wearing hearing aids, don't expect perfect hearing. The best option is to wear them for short periods, and when you feel overwhelmed, take them off. Slowly increase the time periods of use. Getting used to hearing aids needs time, patience and commitment; wearing them regularly will help you adjust fast. But they will never bring your youthful hearing back. There are additional options available in new hearing aids such as directional microphones that help a hearing-challenged person to concentrate on the sound of interest and reject unwanted sounds. Another available technology consists of a built-in telecoil, it is located in behind-the-ear compartment. You can switch it on/off. Certain rooms, theatres, taxis and cell phones are made telecoil compatible; they display the sign for it (an ear with a T besides it). By switching it "on" the quality of sound improves considerably. If you are involved in big gatherings, assistive listening devices are additional gadgets that can help. It depends on how many additional external devices you are prepared pay for and can handle them. Hearing aids do not come cheap! ❖

Celebrating 5 Years

In 2015 SFU was celebrating its 50th birthday. Our SFU Team Kiva had made loans of \$43,375 and was ranked 55th among the 1700 university teams in friendly "do some good" competition on the Kiva microlending platform. Our goal in 2015 was to rank 50th to celebrate the year and we did it!

Now, five years later, we rank 18th among the now 1894 university teams. and our loans to date total \$249,375. Along the way we have out-loaned such notables as UBC, UofT, Yale, Oxford, Ohio State, U Chicago, Northwestern, and UC Berkeley. We caught their attention!

More important we have made loans to 8,700 folks in 80 countries. Our helping hand has brought the name of SFU to all those folks as well as to the microlending organizations in those countries who vet the loans and manage them. Our team exemplifies the aspiration of SFU to be "Engaging the World".

Join us, become a proud member of this internationally competitive team, engage with the world, <https://www.kiva.org/team/sfu>

- Daniel McDonald



Volunteer Opportunity

BC Bereavement is looking for a volunteer treasurer. <https://www.bcbh.ca> gives information about the organization.

For more information please contact:

Marlyn Ferguson President

BC Bereavement Helpline

ferguson49@telus.net

- Percilla Groves

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Editorial

53 years ago today, the day after Labour Day, I first stepped onto SFU's rough, but reasonably ready, concrete campus. My parents had lobbied hard for UBC, but I wanted something more edgy and, having followed the Spring 1967 TA 'Crisis,' figured the new school could deliver. I was 17 and, having made up my mind about my future in the absence of knowing anything, I was unprepared to be disappointed. But that happened immediately. I would not be studying the Romantics. The English Department restricted entry until third year. So, still carrying a grudge after semester number one, I switched to PSA. I never looked back.

In many classes, including those beyond PSA, I benefited from intellectual challenges that upended my considerable comfort. I listened to critiques of the state of the world and considered the causes of the times' unavoidable stimuli: student power, anti-colonial upheaval, anti-war activism, and emerging feminism among them. I relished teachers who both loaded me up with ideas and information and entertained me. In History, after sweating over a research essay on the abolition of slavery in the UK, I learned that "nothing in history is inevitable." From the wise anthropologist Pru Wheeldon, I found that "even in the smallest group of only two people, you have a political relationship." The inimitable Louis

Feldhammer proved that over the top oratory and great jokes made lecture time fly.

By the end of 1970 I completed 8 semesters, a few credits short of an honours BA. I filled in those blanks and by then, the only future I was capable of contemplating was more school. On hearing about my 'plan' to do a Masters degree in Anthropology and fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, my Mum raised her eyebrows, furrowed her brow and noted, honestly: "You'd last 10 minutes. How about journalism in a big city?" Dad lobbied for law. I dithered. I got a job as a TA in PSA and later was admitted to grad school in Anthropology and Sociology at UBC. I lasted a month. I had liked the teaching, but not UBC. As I kept on dithering, I remembered 5 words from Kathleen Gough Aberle's speech at the start of the 1969 PSA Strike: "Teaching is a noble profession." I had never thought of it that way. And so, I was on my way to PDP in SFU's Faculty of Education. The 1970s were flexible and I thought: "If I hate it, I'll just do something else." I didn't hate it. In fact, I loved it.

I returned to SFU three more times, first as a graduate student in Women's Studies. I was there at its humble start as a suite of informal courses taught during the PSA strike. It was later shepherded into a department

by students, support staff and faculty, among them my friends and mentors, Maggie Benston and Andrea Lebowitz, both late of this university. I also worked as a Faculty Associate and then as a Coordinator in the Education Faculty's Professional Development Program.

I really did come full circle. In 1999, returning to the classroom after a year's personal leave spent travelling, painting and writing, I accepted a teaching and department head position at Templeton Secondary School, Adanac and Templeton, East Van. It was the incarnation of a memory. In 1967, five PSA Teaching Assistants were arrested while asserting the free speech rights of the editor of the school newspaper. I never did find out what happened to that kid, but by the time I got there, the school that inspired the crisis that sparked my interest in SFU, was known in the neighbourhood as 'the gem of the East End.'

Walter Piovesan, one of the brains behind this magazine, graduated from both Templeton and SFU. That status confers inestimable Street Cred, so when he asked me to edit this issue, I could not resist. For me, SFU's influence has reached farther than I ever could have imagined.

- Marcia Toms