



## COVID, The City and Connections

Marcia Toms

If there is one thing this damned pandemic has taught me, it is to value and cherish close, reliable human connections. People know that humans are social animals, but seldom do city dwellers have their ready access to one another as curtailed as it has become under the encompassing COVID umbrella.

I am a city girl and have always resided and taught in a city: Vancouver. For 35 years I made my living hanging out with teenagers. I can't say I loved every minute of it, but I know that their energy, curiosity and reliable challenges kept me on my toes and craving ever-more lively interactions. Believe me, I gained more than they did. Patience, kindness and taking things slowly don't come easily to me, but the kids compelled me to do some learning of my own. What I learned was that the connections among people that build relationships of all kinds are not necessarily accidental. Certainly, there is often fortuitousness involved, but working at spending time, making time, talking, questioning and planning also bears fruit. Never has this reality had such an impact on me as it did in 2020 when the volunteering work I had done, the public education activism I relied on for political stimulation and the pleasure of organizing garden parties with neighbours all dried up

City dwellers are regularly bombarded with anecdotes and occasionally statistics detailing the loneliness and isolation of city life and decrying the hard edges and incivilities we are forced to endure. Vancouver is, apparently, unfriendly and has been dubbed by some: "No Fun City." One antidote proposed is a move to the country to pursue rural lives or to shift to small towns where everyone knows everyone. And a whole lot more. I beg to differ and suggest that even in a relationship-altering time, with effort, the city is a lifesaver. I look to the past to take inspiration.

My last school was Templeton Secondary, at Adanac and Templeton just off Nanaimo in Vancouver's North East end. It is truly a neighbourhood school and kids walk, bike or take transit to get there. There is no student parking lot. The busy Hastings high street is a hop, skip and a jump away.

One year, it seemed like a good idea to start Social Studies 8 with an exercise to introduce research techniques, get the kids out of the classroom and provide a chance to get to know the commercial and social enterprises of their community. So, they dreamed up a set of questions, partnered in small groups, equipped themselves with a camera or two and set out to talk to all and sundry. With letters of introduction having been dropped off before the survey day, and in hand just in case, and me lurking, out they went. They talked to The Ladies at Bianca Maria, an Italian market established in 1963. At VanCity Credit Union they were ushered into the manager's office and made to feel important and they learned about groceries from Kitty at Donald's Market. The Hastings branch of the Vancouver Public Library welcomed them and so did the proprietors of the Chinese Herbal Remedies shop. Sorrento Barbers was a place to drop in and say "Hi, but no

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## President's Report

Frances Atkinson

Dear members,

I write this in a socially distanced coffee shop in January as I shelter from an "atmospheric river event" (according to the weather report.) I notice a customer having an animated conversation with the teller. With arms extended dramatically, the customer sums it up: "I'm sick of COVID, I'm sick of rain." Well yes I think, I can relate. And I reflect: that's the liveliest moment I've encountered so far today.



As we all are, I'm making the most of the small things. What would they have included had things been normal? By now we would have invited you to an upcoming group lunch in the White Spot to feast on the scintillating flavours or in The Admiral to enjoy the old-time ambience. To top it off, there'd have been the opportunity to partake in one of Percilla Groves' famous quizzes.

In lieu of all that missed excitement I have a few items to report as your SFURA Board of Directors continues to conduct essential business.

Recall we postponed our 2020 AGM scheduled for last May. We have now filed an official report saying "no meeting held", as allowed by BC Registries. Their latest communiqué now says we must have a 2020 AGM before Nov 1, 2021. Our 2021 AGM would normally be in May. Unknown is whether we can have a combined 2020/2021 AGM or two separate meetings, and when. We await further instructions and will discuss whether to conduct them by Zoom or email, or wait until the Fall for an in-person meeting if the province's vaccination programs ramp up in time.

I'd like to draw your attention to a new benefits option the University mentioned in their recent letter to all retirees, showing a "two person" option for retiree health coverage. Until now only individual or family options were available. We were pleased to see that the University acknowledged SFURA for alerting them to the omission and we thank the University for providing the new option.

Our Benefits Committee continues to work on clarifying and explaining our current retiree benefits plans. The Board has asked the Committee to identify possible further improvements and explore how best to achieve them. We hope to focus more on that over the next few months as constraints permit.

Normally by now, SFURA VP Walter Piovesan and I would have had our annual meeting with the offices of the SFU President and Vice President External Relations. We have enjoyed excellent relationships with former President Andrew Petter and VPER Joanne Curry over the years and thank both for their sustained support of SFURA. An in-person meeting has not yet been possible with SFU President Joy Johnson. We will make that a priority as soon as we can.

In lieu of our annual "Ides of March" reception to thank you for renewing your annual membership, I extend those thanks here and remind you to renew before March 31 at <https://www.sfu.ca/retirees/membership-registration.html>. Please do so as soon as possible. Stronger membership numbers give the Association a stronger presence within the University, which is of particular importance this year as we set about recovering from this period of isolation.

On the same theme, I must stress the need for SFURA to have fresh energy for forging new directions when we emerge from the pandemic. In particular we need to find someone willing to become the next SFURA President. In my view this will preferably be a faculty member. It has been 4 years since the SFURA President has been a faculty member; yet more than half our membership is faculty. If you are interested or know someone you think might be interested (whether faculty or not), please let me know.

Meanwhile, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to the current Board members (Jim Boyd, Jay Burr, Apollonia Cifarelli, Walter Piovesan, Allen Seager, Joan Sharp, Jean Trask, Joanie Wolfe) for keeping all essential business going this year and braving the elements to meet outdoors until that was no longer possible.

I want to express our deepest appreciation to Evelyn Palmer who has stepped down from a formal Board position but is still willing to be a communicator, advisor and historian on our behalf. Evelyn's contributions to SFURA have been extensive and invaluable over many years. Evelyn tells me she will turn 85 in this upcoming membership year. See Evelyn's column in this issue for information about the "85+ club" members who are eligible for free lifetime membership of SFURA.

Finally, I extend many thanks to Marcia Toms for editing this issue of the newsletter.

Happy New Year and best wishes to you all for the year ahead.

Frances



Photo: Ron Long / Brazilian Ruby hummingbird

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haircuts today.”

Every small group had a designated note-taker, and every student had a planned question or two. Of course, what really happened was that once the conversations started, the need for prompts disappeared. Long chats developed and during some meetings gifts emerged. VanCity handed out swag bags, perhaps the first time a financial institution has given away anything. The kids’ finished products included photos, short write-ups and some modest statistics, all incorporated into oral presentations. I wish I’d kept the written work, and am very glad I still have the photos.

Those photos have reminded me that while it might be usual to think connections are best made spontaneously, it is just as likely that planning can create memories that are comforting and long lasting. A series of photos I took at Bianca Maria are a case in point. Three or four students chat with Assunta, the sole proprietor from 1969 to 2002, and her sister-in-law Letizia, the owner from 2002 to 2008. The kids are wide-eyed, especially when staring at the food displays and The Ladies are obviously enjoying their captive audience. Assunta, also known as Suzie, was a delightful raconteur: go in for 5 minutes, stay for an hour. It was a natural part of her tireless effort to build her business and care for her neighbourhood. Letizia died over a decade ago, and recently I gave the photos to one of her relatives. Assunta is still going strong, although she has retired from the shop; Letizia’s daughter runs it now. The building still stands, even if the faces behind the shop counter have changed. It’s part of a wider neighbourhood and helps highlight the importance of expansive notions of family.

The practice of neighbourliness and its possibility for invoking a feeling of a ‘greater family’ has always been important to me and in this time particularly, I wanted to be sure not to lose my grip on mine. Thus, when I have felt despair approach during the past 10 months, I have learned to rely on the same method of intentionality I used for years in the classroom.

That has meant arranging meetings and occasional tutoring sessions outside, in the rain and the chill, just to connect with others. Talking about books is most-comfortably done inside where it’s warm, but a toque and a coat, heavy socks and a steaming cup of either coffee or hot chocolate make the outside bearable if not comfortable. We have discovered that it is possible to chat and listen while masked and two meters away. In the summer I reconnected with my pals at Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House, not using my usual MO – either teaching conversational English indoors or just breezing in unannounced for long chats - but by giving a planned, socially distanced workshop about Asian and Black women leaders in historic Vancouver with restricted numbers and pre-registration. That necessitated planning. setting up plastic chairs just so and having sanitizer readily available. Now, rather than dropping by friends’ homes, we set times and places where we can socially distance outside while still being seen and feeling heard.

I am fortunate that in my neighbourhood there is a place where dropping by, having a hot drink outside and being able to count on laughter, exhortations about what will right the world’s wrongs, and stories from friends is still possible. It now has a tilting, but functional propane heater; plastic chairs placed meters apart and a tiny awning that offers basic

shelter (unless a storm blows a fusillade of rain and wild west wind) for the brave and shivering. The regulars keep showing up, so we must be a hardy bunch. It would be easier and warmer to stay home, but I plan my day so either a walk or a bike ride takes me to “The Riviera”.

It offers current comfort and the promise of better days to come even as we line and mask up, both to give drink orders and to make purchases of that other source of warmth and satisfaction: great groceries. Those who work with food – the great connector - have become, along with first responders, among the stalwarts keeping spirits from flagging in these times. As I reflect, I am both astonished and appreciative that we have adapted so readily. Together. So it is that I am happy to spend my COVID time in this city and to practice and benefit from civility with intention. ❖



Photo: Marcia Toms

# Artists on the Mountain: Arts Book Project Update

*Frances Atkinson, Carole Gerson, Tessa Perkins Deneault, Walter Piovesan, Joanie Wolfe.*

In last year's 2020 Summer newsletter, Carole Gerson introduced an ambitious project on the early arts at SFU initiated by the SFURA. With diligent volunteer efforts and generous funding from the Offices of the SFU President, Vice President External Relations, FASS, FCAT, and Advancement for anticipated hard expenses, a core team (named above) from the SFURA and FCAT set out to capture the essential flavour of SFU's early arts period in a book and a website. Our working title is Artists on the Mountain.

This is an update of our thinking and our progress.

In its first decade (1964-75), SFU was a hotbed of experimental and interdisciplinary activities in the arts that were open to and had an impact on students, faculty, and staff from all areas of the university, as well as the community at large. Many non-credit initiatives were undertaken informally, largely through the Centre for Communication and the Arts, in what is remembered by participants as a particularly vibrant era. These participants, initiatives, innovations, controversies and legacies are at the heart of who and what we hope to represent.

The goals of the project are threefold: first, to share the story of a magical, eclectic, interdisciplinary early arts period from the perspective of students, faculty, staff, artists, alumni, and audience members; second, to demonstrate subsequent achievements of participants from the era; and third to discuss the legacy of SFU's first decade - the arts from then to now. The latter includes the move to portables, then downtown, the theatre (now auditorium), connections to today's programs in the SCA, FASS, FCAT, and Art Galleries, and the prospect of bringing the arts back to the mountain in the form of the planned new Edward and Marianne Gibson Art Museum on the Burnaby Campus. The target year for completion is 2024 to coincide with the opening of that Museum.

The intended content covers Dance, Film, Literary Arts, Music and Sound, Theatre, and the Visual Arts. We aim to include well-researched articles, personal stories and memories, archival photos, anecdotes and quotes from contributors, as well as excerpts and reviews from SFU Week, The Peak and Lower Mainland newspapers. We hope to include detailed calendars of events in several key weeks to demonstrate everything that was happening that week. The website will provide a more expansive display of selected images, films, video and audio recordings, and further documentation.



*Illustration: W. G. Piovesan. 1969*

By now the core team had intended to hire one or more research assistants to conduct a thorough search of the SFU Archives and physical SFU Library holdings. Unfortunately the pandemic has precluded this for the moment and we hope to proceed later this year. In the meantime, the team has been concentrating on making connections with key people and on searching online library holdings, archives and websites, with good success so far.

As we continue, we are eager to hear from people with memories or materials to share from that era, as well as suggestions about contacting former participants, especially students whose arts activities inspired the subsequent course of their lives. Please email us at: [early-arts@sfu.ca](mailto:early-arts@sfu.ca) ❖

# Airplane Lands at SFU

By Rick McGrath

“Sure,” Walter Piovesan was on the phone. In persuasive mode.

“TAs are considered staff — you got a cheque every once in awhile, didn’t you? You can join the SFU Retirees Association... and, by the way, we’d like you to write something for our newsletter.”

Like what, I thought. Out loud.

Walter was his usual effervescent self: “You’re a charter student. Dish some dirt on the old days.”

He’s talking very old.

This is not my first historical go-round with Walter. Six years ago he talked me into writing an essay for the *Remembering SFU* book on the 50th anniversary of same, so there was little chance of escaping this time. I repeated myself. Like what?

“OK,” Walter’s voice deepened. “What, aside from *The Peak*, do you remember as being unusual or interesting back then?” His usual technique. Open-ended questions.

A yes or no wasn’t going to work, and it’s not that easy to flash your mind back 50-odd years instantaneously. What do you think of? Why? For some still-unknown reason I blurted out well, there was that time in January, 1966, when the *Jefferson Airplane* played the cafeteria at the end of the Mall. The big student cafeteria. OK, the only cafeteria.

“They did?” Walter is interested.

“Yup.”

“Let’s hear about that, then.”

“And the newsletter?”

“*Simon Says*.”

Simon says this should be damn interesting — basically, I had very few clear memories of that specific event. I needed help. What a moment for some “intentional connections,” this issue’s theme.

My first connection was to *The Peak*’s archives, happily digitized and available to all. It was both shocking and rather embarrassingly hilarious to look back at those early newspapers. And all those familiar names and faces. Where are they now? There was, of course, no mention of



Jefferson Airplane in January, 1966. L-R: Signe Toly Anderson (vocals), Jack Casady (bass), Marty Balin (vocals, rhythm guitar), Skip Spence (drums, percussion), Paul Kantner (rhythm guitar, vocals), Jorma Kaukanen (lead guitar, vocals)

the *Jefferson Airplane* concert that January. But a passel of other problems were brewing: the main (only) student cafeteria (see above) was already too small, designed for a population of just 2,000 students. We were already at 2,300. Yes, an effigy was burned. All the campus clocks were on Singapore standard time. A huge snow dump — we were at 2,200 feet (non-metric then) — made traffic very difficult, given we were still parking within the three-sided quadrangle and a muddy lot between the gym and Hogarth House. The bus system was hitch-hiking. The Library had just announced a new No Smoking rule, except in “smoking lounges.” Plans were shown for the University President’s new home — it would cost \$50,000! And student’s council was under heavy criticism for supporting council president Tony Buzan’s plan to invent a “Student Court” for anyone misbehaving. Kangaroos were mentioned. It got as far as frats.

On the bright side, 20 student clubs had been formed and were seeking members.

But no Airplane.

Why were they even playing SFU?

Turns out there was a student council *Entertainment Committee* of some sort, involving *Campus Crier* Leslie Murray and an old friend, Penn Lewis. A quick call to Penn in Ottawa revealed the concert was most likely on a Thursday night, as the Airplane, according to their website, played the *Kitsilano Theatre* 14 January (Friday) to the 16th (Sunday). He wasn’t sure how they were booked to play SFU.

Regardless, all this time warping research did help my memory bank revive somewhat. I remember three or four of us left *The Peak* office that evening and wandered down the mall to the cafeteria. A fairly large crowd was there, and I was amused that the “stage” was probably about a foot high. No looking up to our rock gods tonight. The band, all five

of them, played what I remember as a shortish, professional set, culminating in their first single, called “*It’s No Secret.*” People danced. Fun was had. Miniskirts were worn. The band were no slouches musically, featuring expert technique — Jorma’s fingerpicking! Jack’s bass! — and strong vocals from their female lead, Signe Toly Anderson, and, of course, the great Marty Balin. And they had hair. Lots of hair for 1966. In Burnaby.

For some reason we hung around after the show and somebody suggested the band go back to *The Peak* office in the Rotunda for a chit chat. Kaukanen, Casady and Balin said OK, and away we went. Who were we? I remember Layout Editor Stuart Clugston and reporter/columnist Stewart Gold, both musically inclined. Folkies. Alan Bell, our News Editor, may have been there, too. And ace reporter Cilla Bachop. I managed to get in touch with Clugston, who said, “You call it as I remember it and it was the comment about the elevation of the stage that got me. I remember either they were standing on tables or some of the audience were. Whatever the case there was a strange vertical relationship not brought on by drugs. I also have a faint memory of little buttons being handed out with *Jefferson Airplane* on them.” Yes, little buttons that said: *Jefferson Airplane Loves You.*

In hindsight it seems incredible we didn’t suss out their willingness to play along with us as part of the rather mundane economic need of promoting their act to the media. We thought they were being friendly. We didn’t even know they were playing *Kits Theatre*. Never mind. We took no photos or notes, and even the concert didn’t make the next paper.

But we did learn things. Like Kaukanen had a degree from the University of Santa Clara. We were all pretty impressed with their levels of education. And that San Francisco was on the cusp of a new cultural scene — a social movement which would burst forth at any time. There may have been some sidelong glances. And there was this drug scene, man, marijuana and LSD — a hitherto unknown factor for us innocents at SFU, at least until *The Peak* ran a story a few months later about “*The Pothead Society,*” which, if you read it today, might remind you of the Monty Python sketch about people dressing up as mice.

And still there was The Hair — not on TV, but right in front of you — over the ears! I think a lot of us decided to saunter past barber shops after that. Certainly by 1967 — the summer of love, courtesy San Francisco music, pot, and acid. Who knew?

So, that was that... a hazy memory of perhaps the first out-of-town rock group to play SFU. Certainly out-of-country. But wait, there’s more! My trolling through *The Peak* morgue did reveal a few more tidbits. The version of *Jefferson Airplane* we all know — with Grace Slick and drummer Spencer Dryden — did return to Vancouver for a gig at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre on Wednesday, 9 November, 1966. Not one, but two Peakie reviewers caught that show and their reviews were in *The Peak* on 16 November. John Lyle announced “Airplane Soars” and praised their musicianship (he didn’t notice Grace?), and Hans Fenger, later of “*Langley Schools Music Project*” fame, decided “Airplane Bombs” but didn’t indicate a target (he didn’t notice Grace?).

So, Walter, that’s my vague and somewhat padded story. Any other ideas? ❖



Artist: Bob Masse / Jefferson Airplane, (Trips Festival) / Vancouver 1967

# The Opioid Crisis: To Decriminalize or not to Decriminalize? That is the Question.

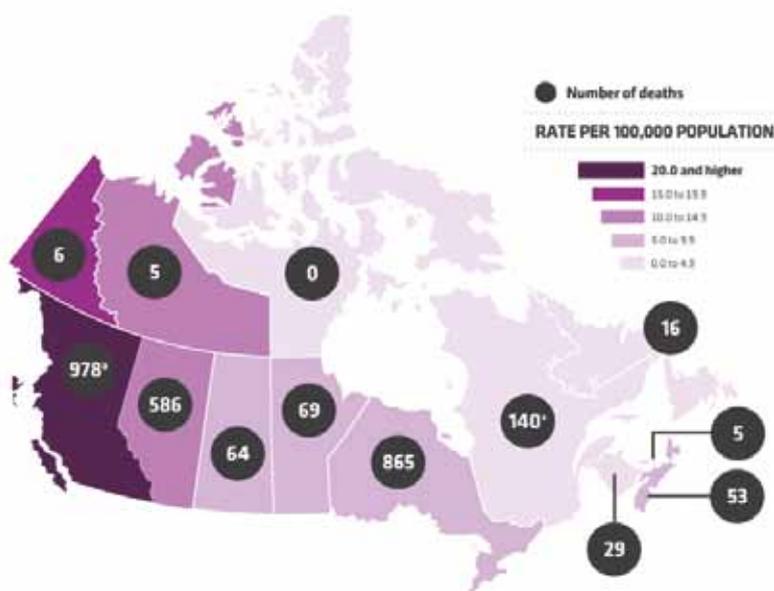
## *Were Social/Medical Problems Ever Solved by Criminal Justice Policies?*

*By Ezzat A. Fattah, Professor Emeritus,*

Few would dispute the reality that Canada's drug prohibition policy, like that of the USA and several other countries, has been a dismal failure. It has cost taxpayers billions of dollars in enforcement, not to mention the inordinate human and social costs, without achieving an iota of success! For obvious reasons, law enforcement agencies have traditionally been vehement supporters of drug prohibition policies. This is not surprising, since enforcing drug laws was an inexhaustible source of funds, manpower and resources. Lately, however, they seem to have been willing to admit their inability to win the so-called wars they declared on drugs over the years.

On July 9, 2020, it was reported that Canada's police chiefs were calling for decriminalization of personal possession of illicit drugs as the best way to battle substance abuse and addiction. It was announced that the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police is proposing increased access to health care, treatment and social services to divert people away from the Criminal Justice System. This would apply to people possessing a small (?) amount of illicit drugs for personal consumption. (CACP Bulletin).

A week later, B.C. Premier John Horgan wrote a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, calling on him to take an "enormous step" to combat the stigmatization of people who use drugs by decriminalizing drug possession for personal use.



Graph: Health Canada. 2016

what the Criminal Code of Canada requires right now".

To this Dr. Henry added: "We know being able to access a safe supply of drugs is one way that we can connect with people who use drugs, and it is a connection that helps us address addiction. And it is a connection that helps us overcome the many reasons why we use drugs. We know that it is multi-factorial, that it has to do with pain, whether it's physical pain, psychic pain, whether it's emotional pain. And unless we connect with people, we don't have an opportunity to help them address those underlying causes," "We must all show the compassion that we have shown in addressing the COVID crisis."(News1130). (June 2020)

It took several months after premier Horgan's letter to the prime minister, for the mayor of Vancouver, Kennedy Stewart, to join the chorus. On November 18, 2020, he was quoted by News1130 as saying: it makes no sense to criminally prosecute drug addicts. "It's not a criminal issue, it's a health issue". Mayor Stewart added that decriminalizing drugs like cocaine, fentanyl and methamphetamine would reduce the marginalization and shame felt by addicts, and possibly

The letter came two months after overdose death rates in B.C. set a record and after the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Report call for decriminalization reported above. It also came more than a year after B.C.'s provincial health officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, advised Horgan's government as to how it could effectively decriminalize drug users without the involvement of the federal government.

In April 2019, four years after the overdose crisis was declared a public health emergency in B.C., Dr. Henry had started the ball rolling by releasing a report on decriminalization. In it she declared: "It's not the drugs that we're talking about. We're talking about people who use drugs, who have small amounts for their own personal use, not being criminally charged, and that's

encourage more users to seek out treatment and recovery programs. He declared that “It is time to end the stigma around substance use, help connect more of our neighbours to health care and save lives,” he said. (News 1130)

While the Chiefs of Police are advocating decriminalization as a last resort remedy, and while BC premier as well as the Province’s health officer and more recently the Mayor of Vancouver are calling for decriminalization as a way of combatting the opioid crisis, prime minister Justin Trudeau, evidently a progressive and forward-looking politician, made quite an illogical and perplexing statement opposing the idea! While solemnly admitting “The opioid crisis is much more of a health issue rather than a justice issue.” Trudeau insisted to the Globe And Mail (Sept.02, 2020) that he would not back decriminalization as a public-health response to the country’s escalating opioid crisis, insisting “the approach, while raised as an option by advocates and medical officials across the country, is not a ‘silver bullet’ solution”. Mr. Trudeau did not explain what a “silver bullet solution” would or should look like! So according to the prime minister’s logic, the crisis is not a justice issue but should be kept within the purview of the Criminal Justice System anyway!

This is where the issue stands right now. The eternal debate continues while more people are dying and more billions are being wasted on a failed punitive policy.

The frustration with the current tragic overdose situation is such that even with the present high preoccupation with the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed yet another important development. A recent vote by the Vancouver City Council set the stage for a clash between the municipal and the federal government regarding decriminalization. On Nov. 27, 2020, Canadian Press reported that Vancouver City Council has voted unanimously for decriminalization:

Vancouver’s council made history this week by asking the federal government for an exemption from Canadian drug laws to decriminalize possession of drugs for personal use.

Council voted on the motion the same day the BC Coroners Service reported 1,386 people have died so far this year of an overdose, with deaths increasing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. (The Tyee.ca).

One cannot help saying kudos to the council: better late than never! One would also be tempted to believe that this overwhelming support for decriminalization at the provincial and municipal levels will make it become a reality quite soon. But this would be rather naive. The way public opinion remains split on an innocuous preventive practice against the Corona virus, namely the wearing of a mask, is a good reason for not jumping to hasty conclusions. Only time will tell what is going to happen. And it will be interesting to see whether rational or political views will prevail, whether a humanitarian and effective drug policy will ultimately triumph over antiquated traditional beliefs and ever-failing punitive practices.

Conclusion: A Brief History

When important policy issues like drug policy are being debated it is always informative and instructive to look back and find out whether any lessons could be learnt from past history and previous experience.

It may be fashionable nowadays to argue and call for the decriminalization, depenalization, legalization and regulation of mood-modifying drugs like cannabis or opioids. But this was taboo in 1960’s & 1970’s. Those who dared at the time to criticize drug laws or call for drug policy reform were considered criminological heretics, were ostracized and even blacklisted by law enforcement agencies.

Half a century ago, a young aspiring criminologist at the University of Montreal, who happened to have first hand experience with drugs policy and drug laws enforcement, decided to draw attention to what he believed was a misguided approach, a socially harmful and evidently ineffective policy, a policy based essentially on out-dated ideas and manifestly wrong beliefs.

Inspired by years of Criminal Justice experience as prosecutor assigned to drug cases in Egypt, his country of birth, Ezzat A. Fattah felt it was both his duty and responsibility to draw attention to the flagrant inconsistencies in Canadian drug policy. Alcohol and tobacco, for example, were legal and readily available while soft drugs, such as marijuana, were prohibited and severely punishable. He highlighted the resulting inequalities and injustices and underlined the enormous waste in human, social and financial potential caused by antiquated drug laws that land thousands of young drug users in prison.

Against advice from Canadian colleagues, he decided to go ahead and publicly denounce the punitive approach in several conference lectures and in papers he published at the time. In one entitled “Towards a New Legislative Policy

**“  
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Regarding Drugs and Drug Addiction”, (1969) he called for a novel, non-punitive approach. He offered evidence showing the self-defeating consequences of using punishment as a way of dealing with or trying to solve what is essentially a social and medical problem.

A relatively new comer to Canada at the time, little did he foresee the consequences of this daring controversial position. Negative police reaction to his views and suggestions was understandable and expected. But having escaped totalitarianism in his country of birth, he did not envisage that in a free democratic country like Canada his so-called “radical” views would be used against him. Yet later on, when he solicited police cooperation to do research on drugs under contract from the Government Commission on the Illicit Use of Drugs (The LeDain Commission) he was flatly turned down. In a meeting with one of RCMP assistant commissioners in Ottawa to explain what the planned research is about, he was bluntly told, “the force will only cooperate with and provide data to researchers who share the police’s views on drugs”!

All this is now history! And history does show that scientific empirical evidence, whether in the social or physical sciences, can be rejected, denounced and ignored when it is in conflict with prevailing attitudes, popular sentiments and opportunistic political policy. The current dismissal of scientifically documented climate change as a hoax is a good example!

I always wonder about the billions of dollars that were wasted over several decades to enforce severely punitive drug laws and to incarcerate thousands sentenced under those laws. I feel sorry for the thousands of social (does not really make sense) and family lives that were destroyed as a result. It does not help to say, “I told you so”, or to try to blame and point the finger at those who steadfastly and strongly defended the draconian policies despite ever failing drug wars that never showed any positive results.

So is there any lesson to be learnt from this painful and very costly experience? Unfortunately pessimism is in order. In the past, critics of drug laws used the example of alcohol prohibition to demonstrate the utter failure of punishment in solving social problems and the ineffectiveness of criminal sanctions as a means of social control. Still their pleas for decriminalizing/legalizing drugs always fell on deaf ears. Will it be any different this time around? Let us all hope so.

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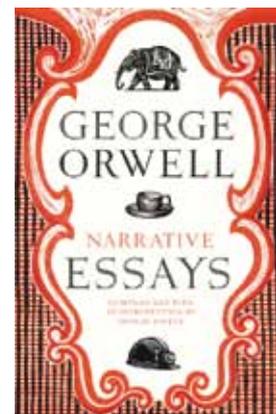
News 1130

## IN FRONT OF YOUR NOSE

“The point is that we are all capable of believing things which we know to be untrue, and then, when we are finally proved wrong, impudently twisting the facts so as to show that we were right. Intellectually, it is possible to carry on this process for an indefinite time: the only check on it is that sooner or later a false belief bumps up against solid reality, usually on a battlefield.”

*George Orwell / Tribune, 22 March 1946.*

*Narrative Essays by George Orwell*



### Marilyn Bowman

We have been faced with major doses of ambiguity as the coronavirus waxes and wanes when it moves into different populations in different forms. People complain that the instructions from health authorities are not specific enough, and when they become specific, they complain because they didn't know them sooner.

Ambiguity is a natural feature of life, and many of life's most powerful experience are full of ambiguity. Beliefs about assisted death or abortion reflect these ambiguities. Years ago I read that psychologists have a uniquely high 'tolerance for ambiguity' as a distinguishing trait. I don't know if that is true, but I have watched as people have reacted across the past year to information that keeps changing, and observed significant individual differences in tolerance for ambiguity. People who have a generally anxious temperament to change whether bad or good, have a particularly low tolerance for ambiguity. They tend to become exceptionally anxious when a situation holds many uncertainties, and may even generate uncertainties that others do not consider feasible.

Within the past year powerful uncertainties have gone beyond the virus to include US politics, economic threats and violence in distant nations. Within Canadian culture ambiguities about specific demographic groups have led to anxiety and anger, whether the group is defined by visible features such as race, ethnicity, or sex, or by less visible aspects such as religion or social values. It is easy to lump individuals into narrow identity silos for good or ill, failing to

“*Life is full of ambiguities and we can be more resilient and kind*”

recognize the ambiguity that all groups are comprised of people with mixtures of positive and negative features. In Gabon in the 1870s, young Trader Horn found that the cannibals were the most honest to deal with, and that they treated their women better than any of the other tribes. When a statue of a dead leader comes under attack by those who focus on that leader's failings, the decision whether to destroy it becomes a challenge, because dead leaders present us with all the ambiguities that live ones do. Genghis Khan is revered in Mongolia and excoriated in Turkmenistan. I feel lucky to live in a country where ambiguity of political support

is considered to be natural; I don't have to register with one party, and can change parties using secret ballot.

Ambiguity is also a feature of history and its cultural products. Some argue that 'cultural appropriation' is evil theft when ideas or images or stories from one culture become adopted in a larger culture. By that standard Shakespeare could not write Romeo and Juliet because it was an Italian story, Pacific north-coast nations could not use their favorite soy sauce on salmon, only Palestinians could use an alphabet to write, and even the act of writing with any script might belong only to Mesopotamians, Egyptians and Chinese.

Within our country the Indian Act began the dangerous business of eliminating ambiguity concerning citizenship by selecting bloodline as a group definition, an early apartheid that ignores the cross-group blending of bodies and cultures across time in our communities. When Pierre Trudeau proposed ending that Act more than 50 years ago, First Nations represented the ambiguities of the Act, with half in favor, half opposed to its demise.

There are some situations where it is vital to reduce ambiguity as much as possible, as when an ill person's risk of having a particular disease is more probable if the patient is from a particular genetic group (as in Tay-Sachs disease, sickle-cell anemia and some cancers). Similarly, some diseases are sex-linked, and when gender shifts away from genetic sex to become ambiguous, individuals with sex-linked diseases may become less readily diagnosed. Courts of justice are given the task of reducing the ambiguities of a person's behaviour to a single decision, guilty or not guilty of an act, but can then accommodate the ambiguity of chaotic lives by variations in sentencing.

Life is full of ambiguities and we can be more resilient and kind if we recognize and accept these. Even science recognizes that there is a range of ambiguity in what we know about the physical world. While all agree that the moon is not made of green cheese, in closer studies on earth the connection between one factor and another is often described in terms of probabilities, because the relationship is rarely absolute. We live in a complex, messy world. Becoming anxious when we face ambiguity does not help us generate clear thinking. We need to understand that there are things that we don't truly know, that new information might change what we know, and that disdained people or their ideas may have some elements of value. With careful sorting we can try to find the best way forward within that complex mess. ❖





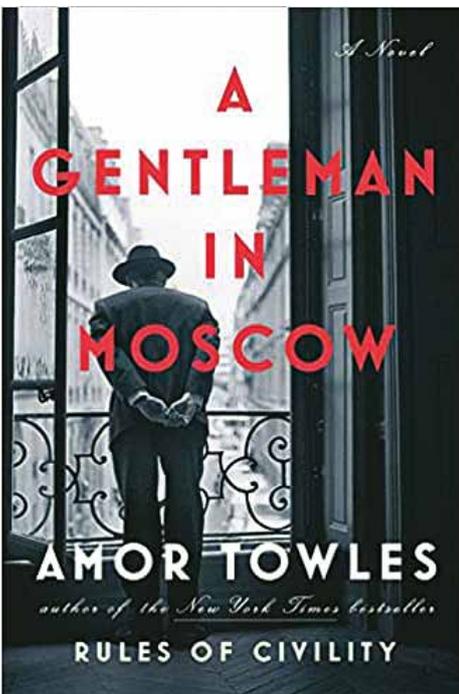


Reviews by Sandra Djwa, David Stouck, Jerry Zaslove

## *A Gentleman in Moscow* / Amor Towles, review by Sandra Diwa

An older friend of mine classifies her reading as either “improving” or “heartwarming.” *A Gentleman in Moscow*, published in 2017 by Amor Towles, falls into the latter category with just a whiff of the former. A parable for our times, it is a novel about confinement and what one might do about it. Count Alexander Illych Rostov, scion of the minor Russian nobility and a connoisseur, is slated for execution by a Bolshevik tribunal in 1922. He escapes death because his name is associated with a 1913 poem to the proletariat. Instead of being summarily shot, Count Rostov is sentenced to house arrest for the rest of his life. As it happens, his house is the grand Metropol Hotel, a real hotel just across the square from the Kremlin.

Although exiled to a miserable room in the attic, the Count is situated at the heart of all things Russian for over thirty years: the privations of the twenties and thirties including the slaughter of the kulaks, the near invasion of Moscow by the Germans during World War II, and that amazing springtime in the late fifties and early sixties when Russia sought to take its equal place in the Western World. After four unhappy years of internment, Count Rostov loses heart and decides to end it all. He climbs up beyond his attic room to the roof, the better to throw himself off. But Fate intervenes—twice—in the shape of an old man and a swarm of bees. One of the pleasures of this novel, aside from the literary allusions, is that henceforth, our hero manages to live a relatively normal life that includes a surrogate family.



He begins by taking stock: “Having acknowledged that a man must master his circumstances or otherwise be mastered by them, the Count thought it worth considering how one was most likely to achieve the same when one has been sentenced to a life of confinement.” After ruminating on the strategies developed by Edmund Dantès in the *Chateau d’If*, Cervantes when captured by pirates, and Napoleon imprisoned on the Island of Elba, Rostov decides to follow quite a different model, that of the energetic Robinson Crusoe. He determines to “maintain his resolve by committing to the business of *practicalities*” *The world’s Crusoes seek shelter and source of fresh water, they teach themselves to make fire from flint; they study their island’s topography, its climate, its flora and fauna, all the while keeping their eyes trained for sails on the horizon and footprints in the sand.*

His girl Friday and the guide to his island is Nina, an eleven year old Ukrainian girl whose Nanny will not allow her to leave the hotel. Equipped with a stolen passkey, she supervises the Count’s education by introducing him to every nook and cranny in the hotel.

*Nina had not contented herself with the views from the upper decks. She had gone below. Behind. Around. About. In the time that Nina had been in the hotel, the walls had not grown inward, they had grown outward, expanding in scope and intricacy. In her first weeks, the building had grown to encompass the life of two city blocks in her first months it had grown to encompass half of Moscow. If she lived in the hotel long enough, it would encompass all of Russia.*

This passage is sufficient for the story line but half the fun for some readers will be the embedded (and sometimes scrambled) allusions. In this case it is John Donne’s poem “*To his Mistress on Going to Bed*”

*Licence my roving hands, and let them go,  
Before, behind, between, above, below.  
O my America! my new-found-land.*

As a man of practicalities, Rostov learns to accept what life offers. In this process he acquires a number of brothers-and sisters-in-arms among the service staff of The Metropol. A Triumvirate of the chef de cuisine, (Emile) maître d’ (Andrey) and waiter (Rostov, better known as “the Count”), rule the unofficial organisation of the hotel through its principal

restaurant, the Boyarsky. And the Count finds not just one, but two surrogate children: at first Nina and some years later, her daughter Sofia. When Nina's husband is imprisoned in the notorious Lubyanka and then exiled to Siberia, she leaves behind with Rostov in Moscow her five year old daughter Sofia for "a month or two." As Nina herself vanishes into the depths of Siberia, Rostov becomes a reluctant but loving father:

*She is no more than thirty pounds; no more than three feet tall; her entire bag of belongings could fit in a single drawer; she rarely speaks unless spoken to; and her heart beats no louder than a bird's. So how is it possible than she takes up so much space?!*

And the former man about town becomes a lover-cum-husband when summoned by the beautiful and tempestuous, Anna Urbanova. Although once the dinner companion of Princesses, Count Alexander Illych Rostov, "recipient of the Order of Saint Andrew, member of the Jockey Club, Master of the Hunt," is quite happy to step back a little:

To be a step ahead in matters of romance requires constant vigilance. If one hopes to make a successful advance, one must be mindful of every utterance, attend to every gesture, and take note of every look. In other words, to be a step ahead in romance is exhausting. But to be a step behind? To be seduced? Why, that was a matter of leaning back in one's chair, sipping one's wine, and responding to a query with the very first thought that has popped into one's head.

Through his working life as a waiter in the Boyarsky, Rostov meets a number of foreigners including an American diplomat, Richard Vanderwhile, who is engaged in intelligence work: the two men become friends. Rostov's knowledge of European languages and his understanding of Western culture attracts a Soviet official named Colonel Osip Glebnikov who wants to learn more about both. And he continues his youthful friendship with the true revolutionary poet, Mikhail Fyodorovich (Mishka), imprisoned and ultimately brought to his death through privation. It is Mishka who recognizes that life at The Metropol was, in fact, Rostov's salvation.

Having taken a moment to look over the kitchen with all of its activity and abundance, to look from gentle Andrey to heartfelt Emile, he turned to the Count. "Who would have imagined," he said, "when you were sentenced to life in The Metropol you had just become the luckiest man in all of Russia.

Time passes. The child Sofia becomes a woman and a talented pianist. When she is scheduled to travel to Paris with a Russian orchestra, Rostov's concerns for his adopted daughter spur him to find a solution that might bring freedom for Sofia, for Anna and for himself. I recommend *A Gentleman in Moscow* as an amusing and thoughtful book.

Blurbs for the author, Amor Towles, state that he received an MA in English at Stanford, and that his profession was Investment Banking. Towles has also said that in his twenties he fell in love with the writers of Russia's Golden Age: Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky. ❖



Marilyn Bowman "Dawn Over Bow River" / Acrylic on Canvas

# Connecting without Consonants in COVID Time

By Frances Atkinson



My grandson (and his parents) moved in on the first day of lockdown. One morning he decides it's cleanup time.

"Ahma, AH-MA, aMAA," he calls out with purpose as he approaches.

I reply, "Good morning J\_\_\_".

He knocks politely, as he has been taught.

Kindly but firmly I respond, "Just a minute. Gramma's getting dressed".

No matter. He rattles the door, grasps the doorknob. The French doors give way easily. Fresh from his night's sleep he appears, armed with beatific smile and present (a coaster from a nearby coffee table), designed to ensure no rebuff.

He carefully navigates the two steps into my room, casually wanders into the bathroom, exclaims over a few pieces of something on the floor, and rushes out to the kitchen calling out, "ushes, ushes". I follow. His parents look bewildered. I explain: "brushes."

Cleaning job done, I pop him on my bed for a 30 second respite. He snuggles in, giggles, hops up, and motions me to join him. I do. He carefully inspects my bedside table, selects an object and motions me to put on my "asses". Dutifully I obey. He looks again, picks up something else, and with a commanding "fone" instructs me to take it and read.

Next he finds my kobo. To get full value from that, HE needs to put on my (thankfully old) "asses". Glasses installed on nose, he props himself up on the pillow, bends his knees, presses the On button, twists the kobo around and around, and watches with satisfaction as the splash screen rotates.

Bored now, he wanders out to the living room. He finds a missing truck. The *tr* sound is a tricky one. It comes out as *f*. Truck in hand, delighted with the find, he flies out to the kitchen, and hollers to their horror, "Mommee, Daadee, F\_\_k!!" ❖



Marilyn Bowman "Lanky Son and Mother" / Acrylic on Canvas

# Immigration and Global Warming

By *Herbert Grubel and Patrick Grady*

Prime Minister Trudeau recently [announced](#) large increases in carbon taxes to reach a new ambitious target for the reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2030. The critical media reaction to this announcement focused on the economic burden that the policy will impose on Canadians, the amount of global warming it will prevent, and the chances that the tax will actually be adopted by future governments.

Absent from the discussion, however, was any mention of how current immigration policies will increase the effort needed to reach this target. Based on past experience, these policies will add three quarters of a per cent to Canada's population every year so that in 2030, all else equal, the country's population and total GHG emissions will be 7.5 per cent above what they would have been otherwise. This gap will be much larger by 2050, the year our government has promised to reduce emissions to net-zero as required by the Paris Accord.

Supporters of current immigration policies are likely to argue that the higher emissions will not require higher taxes on non-immigrant Canadians to attain the zero targets since the immigrants will raise national income and the tax base proportionately to the added cost of emission control measures. That would be true if [immigrants](#) on average paid the same amount of tax as the average non-immigrant. In fact, they do not. As we have shown, using data published by Statistics Canada, recent immigrants on average have lower incomes and pay less tax than other Canadians, which means the latter will have to bear a larger fiscal and economic burden than they would in the absence of the [immigrants](#).

If the higher tax and economic burden of emission control measures were to cause voters to elect governments that reduce the intensity of these measures, that would reduce progress toward net-zero.

But migration also has more direct effects on emissions. Consider a migrant from India, where according to data from the [World Bank](#) for 2016, the average emission of CO<sub>2</sub> (which represents about 80 per cent of all GHG emissions) was 1.82 metric tons per year. In Canada, this average was 15.09 so that after this migrant settled in Canada, global emissions increased by 13.27 metric tons.

The size of this effect created by all of Canada's immigrants is determined by the average emissions in their country of origin as well as the numbers of immigrants from each of these countries. Using data for 2016 from the [World Bank for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions](#) and data on the sources of immigrants from [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#), we estimate that in 2017 the increase in global emissions was 11.33 metric tons per immigrant and that the 286,000 immigrants admitted in that year added a total of 3.25 million metric tons to global emissions and 97.4 million more metric tons over the remaining 30 years of their assumed life-span.

All of the above calculations are based on assumptions that others may question and wish to change, including the assumption that immigrants are average carbon-producers both in the countries they leave and when they get to Canada. That almost certainly is not exactly true, though with existing data more precise assumptions and estimates are not possible. In any case, we are confident that such changes would not alter our basic conclusion that immigrants will add considerably to Canada's contribution to the global stock of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The important implication of this fact is that, given the low average incomes and tax payments of immigrants, the elimination of these added emissions will raise taxes and cause economic dislocations that fall primarily on non-immigrant Canadians.

These increased burdens may well lead to future governments being elected on the promise to reduce or possibly even eliminate the carbon taxes that have been imposed recently. If that happens, Canada's immigration policies will have resulted in a permanent addition in the stock of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, which raises the risk of costly global warming.

This problem can be avoided, however, if the government sets much lower target numbers for immigration and focuses more on admitting workers with needed skills rather than dependents and family members.

In the end, and as it should be, voters will decide whether they want the government to change immigration policies or whether they are willing to accept higher costs to gain the alleged benefits of mass immigration. But voters are entitled to be informed about the costs involved in these choices. The ministers of immigration and of environment should take responsibility for providing this information to Canadians – and to Prime Minister Trudeau before he sets off on another pilgrimage to an international forum to talk about his government's commitment to eliminate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions or increase immigration.

*Herbert Grubel, formerly MP for Capilano-Howe Sound, is an emeritus professor of economics at Simon Fraser University. Patrick Grady is with [global-economics.ca](#). This article will soon be published in the *National Post*.*

# Connecting Through History: Review of Movie *The King's Choice*

By Christine Hearn

Oslo, Norway, April 9, 1940: King Haakon VII is in the Royal Palace when he gets word that the German cruiser Blucher has been blown up in Norwegian waters. It is the start of the Nazi invasion.

He phones his brother King Christian X of Denmark, but Denmark has already capitulated.

The King sets out for Skaugum, 20 km away, the residence of Crown Prince Haakon. Waiting for him there, in addition to the Crown Prince is Princess Martha; the children, Princess Ragnhild, Princess Astrid, and Prince Harald; my husband Erik Tofsrud, and his parents Ingrid and Erling Tofsrud.

Erling is a close advisor to the Crown Prince, and Erik, age five, and Harald, age three, are best friends. Little do they know they are to be separated for the next five years.

The Royal Family and Erik's father head north, ahead of the approaching Germans, while Erik and his mother are left behind. They settle with Erik's grandparents in Kongsberg where both are involved with the Norwegian resistance and Ingrid gets arrested by the German SS.

The King's Choice tells the agonizing story of the King's brave decision not to give in to the Germans, and of the flight to safety of the Royal Family. Although Erik's father is not featured in the movie, he is a key part of the entourage and the movie closely replicates the actual events.

The movie recounts the bombings, the hazards of the journey, and also the tense negotiations between the Norwegian government and the German ambassador. The King takes advice from all, but it is he who makes the final decision, even though it may mean the death of his family and many other Norwegians.



L-R: Christine Hearn, King Harald, Erik Tofsrud

When the government refuses the German overtures, a provisional government under Vidkun Quisling takes charge.

The film, directed by Erik Poppe is a joint Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, and Irish project, short-listed for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 89th Academy Awards. It premieres before the Norwegian Royal Family in September 2016. We are invited to the Canadian premier in Toronto in November 2016, where we have a brief chat with current Crown Prince Haakon.

The movie ends with the King deciding to send the Crown Princess and the children to Sweden while he and the Crown Prince head for the far north where they are picked up by a British warship and taken to London for the rest of the war.

Even though the Crown Princess is Swedish, she and the children are denied asylum. They head north to Finland where they are picked up by an American destroyer and with Erik's father they are evacuated to the United States where they spend the rest of the war.

The Royal Family are close to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and he arranges for them to rent a mansion in Bethesda, Maryland called Pook's Hill, while the White House becomes a second home for Princess Martha and the children. We still have matches from Pook's Hill.

When the war ends the Royal Family returns to Norway and my husband is re-connected with his father and his friend Harald. The two go to school together, spend weekends at each other's homes, sail together, and attend the Under Officers Military School together.

Crown Princess Martha died of cancer in 1954. King Haakon never re-married and died in 1957, when Crown Prince Olav became King Olav V. He died in 1991 and was succeeded by Harald who became King Harald V. Princess Ragnhild died in 2012, Erling Tofsrud died in 1983 and Ingrid Tofsrud died in 1985.

King Harald and my husband have lunch together on our visits to Oslo.

The King's Choice is in Norwegian with English subtitles and is available on Amazon Prime Video and iTunes.

Sheila Delany



In the call for material for this issue, the editor, Marcia Toms, asked for something positive relating to our COVID experience, specifically around the theme of deliberate connections. For me, an American, the best news of the year isn't COVID-related. It's that Trump is out of office. They got rid of him. He's fired! Fascism in my country is on the back burner for now, though still bubbling up and threatening to spill over. He was the symptom, not the cause, and it remains to be seen what happens with those who feel disenfranchised, cheated, determined to right the "wrong" of a lost election. (Written before January 6, these observations have already been amply confirmed by events, with more, probably, to come.)

As for COVID: Like everyone else, I've benefited from Zoom immensely. Wish I had stock in the company! For my birthday in September, my son and grandson in Oakland gave me a Zoom birthday party. The grandson, now 15, has taken up cooking—perhaps not surprising since his father is a chef. Although his specialty is sushi, he baked a gorgeous layer cake with butter cream frosting and candles, all of which he lit. I didn't count to see if there were as many candles as I have years, but there were a lot. Also "attending" were my other son and two old friends, all three living in New York.

We also did a Zoom Chanukah celebration. None of us are observant, but it was an opportunity to see each other and make latkes (potato pancakes, the traditional Chanukah food) and eat together. Admittedly both Lev and I cheated a bit on grating the potatoes: we cooked them first. Don't tell! I have a beautiful silver menorah in the shape of tree branches, so this meant more candle action since it was the last, eighth, night. Probably everyone knows what Chanukah is, but in case some don't: It's not really a religious holiday but a political one, which is why it's not in the Jewish Bible, though it is in the Catholic Bible as apocrypha: the two Books of Maccabees. It commemorates the victory of prolonged rebellion led by nationalist Jewish priests against repressive occupation by the Greco-Syrian monarch Ahasuerus, about 160 BCE. The victory was temporary: the resultant weak, corrupt regimes opened the way for Roman conquest some decades later. This led in turn to further revolts, the Roman invasion of Jerusalem, destruction in 70 CE of the temple there (the cultic and administrative center of the province of Judea), and another diaspora, several others having occurred since the first major one some six centuries earlier. The menorah? There was supposedly a miracle during the priestly revolt, which caused one night's oil to burn for eight nights. That's not in the Bible, either, but a later invention.



Photo: Vancouver Parks Board

Other intentional connections would include my two book groups, one weekly, the other monthly. There are wonderful lectures from various places, in politics (e.g., "Is China capitalist?" from a Toronto group); also art tours (Chicago's Monet collection, Columbia's Wallach gallery show of Harlem artists, most European museums), theatre whether Yiddish or Shakespearean or both (Billy Crystal's grandfather was translator of the famous Yiddish "King Lear"!), song and dance of many cultures from a New York organization, movies (a Chinese series from a UBC summer class, a brilliant Indian one—"Court"—from a New York streaming service). And so on.

A favorite connection was not with persons or events but a place in my neighborhood. I often walk the wooded trail around the Langara golf course. The course closed to golfers during the first weeks of Covid, so it was available to the public for walking, and what a discovery! Its enormity wasn't really clear from walking the well-treed periphery; inside are winding paths, acres of meadow, lawns, groves, a duck-pond, patches of wilderness, loads of birds—a mini-paradise. Now it's open for golf again, so we walkers are excluded and have to retreat to the edges once more.

Happy New Year to all! It will be nice to have a dinner party again, or a book group meeting in person, or browse library shelves.

Viva vaccines! ❖

# Pensez une Tête!

By A. E. Curzon

Canada is a bilingual country. This being so, even though I would not be able to write this entire story in French, I thought I could, at least, acknowledge Canada's other language by writing the title in French, hence " Pensez une tête!" (Think a head).

Sometimes my dear wife, Mona, walks to the local railway station called Holdom. One reason for this is that she takes public transport about once a month to meet a long-time girlfriend and they have lunch together. This procedure means that she avoids the anxiety of driving the car in traffic-unfriendly areas. Because Mona is the best girl in the universe I always wave to her when she leaves the house on an errand. If she leaves in the car then I wave to her as she moves along the driveway, which is on the right of the house when we look out from the front steps. We both agree that I should not continue to wave if she turns right at the end of the driveway and then goes down the road This is infinitely sensible because neither can see the other in this particular location and her safety is not threatened by futile waving. Of course, if she turns left at the end of the driveway and goes up the road, then waving is permitted, provided her head has to rotate less than 90° from the straight ahead position. When she walks down the road it is possible for her to look up towards the house when she turns left on a road called Halifax. From this position she can look back and can see me adoringly waving a white plastic bag, while I am standing on the front steps. After that, she continues along Halifax, turns right down Holdom and eventually arrives at the station. Until today no misfortune has occurred because of our waving procedure which goes to show how important the non-waiving of waving rules are for married couples and also, interestingly, for hairdressers. But today things were different.



Photo: Valentin Salja / unsplash

Most weekdays I walk down to Holdom Station because there is a nearby convenience store where I buy a newspaper for Mona. The routine provides me with regular exercise, which ensures that I will live to eternity or thereabouts! The fact that I am about to tell you about an event which occurred on Wednesday the 20th of January 2016 shows that already, since that event I have added nearly five years to the ambition of eternity. On the date just mentioned, when I returned home from getting the paper, I removed my outer jacket and transferred the contents of the pockets to an armchair. I also removed my shoes. Sometimes I just walk round the house in my socks and sometime I wear slippers. Later Mona departed on a visit to her friend. I soon realized that I did not have the mandatory white plastic bag. I rapidly entered the kitchen and spotted such a bag containing an item of food to be donated later to a food bank. I emptied the bag and ran to the door. I left the front door open and dodged round the screen door as normal so that I would be easily visible on the front steps, and waved to Mona as she walked along. As usual it was a joyous-interaction occasion except for..... except for..... the click. Can you believe it? As I had moved round the screen door it had clicked and locked shut.

I looked into the warm room beyond and felt the January cold concrete of the steps attacking my feet through my socks. I searched my pockets for the keys, which should have been there. They weren't! Fortunately it had not rained recently so all exposed surfaces were dew-dry but very cold. I walked, mainly on concrete, to the back garden and walked on the frigid squares of a pathway towards a bit of old concrete. Underneath it there was a small, protective, plastic bag and inside there were two keys for the basement door. I went to the basement door. The keys worked! Hurray! Indoors I found my bunch of keys where I had left them in the front room after emptying my pockets on my return from getting the paper. I am so delighted that I had hidden some keys outside the house. It just goes to show how important it is to obey the injunction, "Pensez une tête!" or "Think ahead!" By the way, I realized that a bevy of incredibly bright readers, for which SFU is rightly famous, might read about the externally hidden keys and might eagerly search for them when I was out so I now have my keys on a chain attached to my trousers belt so they never leave me once I am dressed! Yet again I have learned the lesson "*Pensez une tête!*" ❖

# Robert Dunham

By A. Geoff Holter

*I was asked to write a piece on Dr. Rob Dunham as part of an examination of relationships and connections that resulted from our years at SFU. Dr. Dunham was an English professor at SFU from 1966 until the time of his death in 1990. He was a great teacher whose influence still affects many of us who studied with him.*

I don't remember which semester it was, but one day in 1970 we all sat expectantly in a lecture theatre waiting for Dr. Dunham to appear. There was a certain restlessness in the room, some speaking quietly to a neighbour, others just waiting in silence. The previous day another professor standing in for Dr. Dunham delivered our lecture. And we knew why. Dr. Dunham was an American citizen, from Kansas City, Missouri and he had received his draft notice. He was absent because he had travelled to Blaine that day to present to the draft board. A minute or so before the lecture was to begin; he walked in, making his way down the steps towards the podium. When he got there, he arranged his papers on the lectern, took a Benson and Hedges (menthol) out of a package, lit it, took a deep draw and then looked up at us and said: "I have flat feet". Cheers and applause filled the lecture theatre. He gave us a slight, impish smile, signalled for silence and then began his lecture on "Intimations of Immortality".

Of course, we all opposed the war in Vietnam, but the cheers were for something else. For our professor who, for many of us, had opened the world of poetry as challenging, meaningful and life affirming. Dr. Dunham, or Rob for those of us who had the great privilege of becoming his friend, exemplified a world of study, sophistication and, above all else, intellect.



Photo: Simon Fraser University Archives. F-247-1-9-0-9 – Dunham, Dr. Robert H., 1986 – 1990

My own friendship with Rob began with that course where he was also my seminar leader. While Rob is remembered by most as a scholar of the Romantic Period, he was also an accomplished scholar of Elizabethan literature. And it was there that he changed the course of my life. It was the late spring of 1972. I had just completed the courses for my Baccalaureate degree and was waiting for my marks. One of my final courses was an Elizabethan poetry course taught by Rob. I was sitting in the liberated Faculty Lounge at the wobbly wooden table where we had shared coffee each morning for the past two years. I was reading. Suddenly something landed with a loud thud on the table that then wobbled more than usual, causing my coffee to spill and flow over whatever I was reading and the small bundle of paper that had created the commotion. Startled, I looked up. Rob was standing there staring down at me. He had thrown my term paper on the table with considerable force. I noticed it was covered in tiny ink notations in his handwriting. And then he said: "You have to go to graduate school".

I was preparing to start law at UBC in September. I had already rented a small basement suite near the UBC gates. My entire teen and adult life had been on that trajectory. I was First Vice President of the Student Society and anticipated a career in law, politics and, well, who knows. And yet with those seven simple words, he changed all that. My father never quite got over it.

I last saw Rob the day before his death in the ICU at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. I see most people list the cause of Rob's death as AIDS but it's more complex than that. The immediate cause of death was emphysema, almost certainly brought on by all those Benson and Hedges (menthols) although it was certainly made worse by his underlying HIV status.

A week or so later Rob's funeral was held in Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver. The church was filled with people from his life in Vancouver as well as his mother, father and brother. The service was carefully choreographed by Rob and led by Robin Blaser. There was music interspersed with Rob's words that Robin read. And there was poetry. The narrative, again in Rob's voice, would reach a point where he said "and when I think of Blake (for example), I think of (name of a student or former student) reading (a particular poem)". The student, or former student, would then approach the altar and read the poem. And so it went for over an hour. One final, wonderful, lecture from Dr. Dunham.

I have read all the encomiums describing Rob as a great scholar; a great teacher; a great intellect and of course all of that is true. But I can also say he was a good man and a fine friend. Even though thirty years have passed since his death I still think of him often. ❖

# Have PowerPoint Will Travel - Netherlands

By Kieran Egan

I arrived in Schiphol airport in the early evening. The travel agent had booked me into a nearby hotel overnight. I walked out into a drizzling gloom to find the stop where the hotel's shuttle would pick up passengers. As seems usual with shuttles, everyone I asked had a different belief about where it would arrive. I eventually located it, and stood getting slightly damp watching people being moved in and out of the airport with money-making efficiency.

On the next concrete island, closer to one of the airport doors, there were three very large and very glossy black stretch BMWs, engines humming peacefully. While I was trying to persuade myself that the shower was refreshing and that the shuttle had not finished running for the day, a group of businessmen strode through a sliding door and headed for the BMWs. Even smarter men with black gloves holding up umbrellas flanked each. Black-suited and black-gloved chauffeurs opened the car doors. Then, the cars oozed contemptuously away from their resting places and one by one, swept past me. I looked down at the vague shadows behind the darkened black windows, and felt indifferent eyes look back, perhaps a hint of pity for the pathetically impoverished academic. The shower had definitely become rain.

The young man at the Pullman Hotel check-in counter switched from flawless English to flawless German directed at the large man who had, peremptorily demanding information, interrupted me. Then the clerk returned to flawless English with a flawless shrug and raised eyebrows in the direction of the departing German. Once in the room I took a beer and

**“The main stops were Groningen, then Enschede in the east of the country, then back to Groningen and then to Amsterdam.**

some nuts from the mini-bar and had my Macintosh PowerBook dial into SFU. I sent next semester's course outlines, which I had finished on the plane, to the graduate programs secretary, downloaded my e-mail, and uploaded some changes to my WWW Home Page. I disconnected, spent half an hour or so replying to e-mail messages, then re-established connection and sent them. I had a light late dinner in the restaurant, and slept the peaceful sleep of the academic who has released a flood of information from his computer.

The schedule of talks in Holland was inconveniently organized. The main stops were Groningen, then Enschede in the east of the country, then back to Groningen and then to Amsterdam. Most of the work was to be in Groningen. I had had contacts with a number of people in different faculties over the years, and when one person invited me I pulled out the names of the others, and lined up a week of talks and meetings. I think someone before me has noticed what the train ride north made clear, that Holland is flat, intensively cultivated, with

neat and prosperous-looking farms the length of the country.

Groningen was another "Venice of the North", with canals watering the town. The taxi squeezed through streets that were made only with thin pedestrians in mind. Cyclists seemed to have supernatural abilities to swerve to one side of the taxi, timing it so that they leaned into doorways for the speedy passing of the taxi and then continued casually. Perhaps Darwinian selection had been working over the generations. I was dropped at the door of the University Guest House.

Groningen University was founded in 1614, though many of the buildings were spacious with nineteenth century confidence. The central university area of the town invites one to be young and--perhaps it was just the way the students cycled easily with the unconscious realisation that they would never encounter a hill--carefree. After a few days, I felt that I had missed one of life's richer pleasures, of being a student in Groningen. I chalked it up as something I would be sure to do next time around.

The city suffered brutal damage during World War II. And I wondered how much of my welcome was due to being Canadian, as it was Canadian troops that liberated the town from the Nazis. It is now a major commercial center and clearly prosperous. The open-air market in the squares around Martinikerk (St. Martin's Church, 1452) overflows with rich and ripe food--fruit, vegetables, and fish of endless varieties. Groningen also boasts the highest per capita bicycle ownership in the galaxy; I was told 2.4 bikes per person, which seemed unlikely until someone mentioned their summer bike and winter bike and touring bike.

A group interested in teaching history invited me to tea one afternoon. I think their extra hospitality was due to their having included me on the program for a conference a few years ago, before asking me whether I could come; which, in the event, I couldn't. They seemed to go to trouble in making it a very English tea, with scones and a prominent set of Carr's biscuits (cookies). It was held in a room of the central Academie-gebouw, a Victorian-style building though I think



Photo: Denise Jans/Unsplash. Amestrdam

it was built early in the twentieth century. Perhaps it was the expansive Victorian feel of the high rooms, and the topic of our discussion, that had me reflecting on Jonathan Dodgson Carr, the founder of the bakery and Carr's biscuit empire in the first half of the nineteenth century. He was from Kendal in the north of England, which I used to visit because a girl friend lived there. (Her father, a policeman who had over a long career developed a jaundiced view of human nature, had brought up two beautiful daughters whose suitors clearly did nothing to improve his view of human nature). But Carr set up his business in nearby Carlisle because it was to have a railway connection to Newcastle, and from there his baked goods could speed around the country on the new railways. He was one of the archetypical Victorian Quaker entrepreneurs. Along with those many other Quakers who built Britain's manufacturing and trading power during the century, and funded many of its sturdy, confident buildings, he showed how capitalism could and should be done. He combined honesty with industry, and with a close paternal interest in bettering the lives of his workers. Some sneer at that Victorian paternalism, but kids working in Asian sweatshops today producing the coolest runners and jeans would not join in the sneering. J.D. was a prominent supporter of the abolition of slavery and persuaded Frederick Douglass to deliver a three-hour lecture in Carlisle. In 1918, J.D.'s grandson, Theodore, managed to pull in Woodrow Wilson to sermonize about peace. Wilson said, in Carlisle with prescience, "it is from quiet places like this all over the world that the forces accumulate which presently will overpower any attempt to accomplish evil on a grand scale."

The difficult part of the trip was getting to Enschede and back to Groningen in time for the next meeting. What made the Enschede visit even more problematic was that the phone number I had for my contact, Jos, was wrong--or at least I assume he didn't work for the agricultural machinery factory that responded, and who swore it was their number. What to do? Should I go to Enschede and hope I could find him? I tried phoning colleges and the university in Enschede, but no-one had heard of him. Jos was to have sent me maps and material about his institution before I left, but Canada Post made its usual contribution to efficient communication.

Still, I had my PowerPoint presentation, and the two days were clear, so why not try it? I did vaguely remember from an earlier e-mail message that he mentioned something about booking me into a hotel near the station. With a small bag holding a clean shirt, pyjamas and toiletries, I took the fast train south and changed at Amersfoort to a more leisurely and older train east to its terminus at Enschede. At each station, the long racks of commuters' bicycles supported Guinness Book of Records claims.

At Enschede I walked in the light rain out of the station and looked around. What now? I'm not sure what I expected, but standing in the middle of a substantial city didn't offer immediate clues as where to go next. There were some large buildings to the left that looked as though they could be hotels. I wish I'd thought to bring an umbrella, and couldn't see

anything that looked like an umbrella shop. The tall buildings turned out to be apartment blocks, so I headed back towards the railway station. As the rain began to trickle down my neck I considered simply getting the train back to Groningen. But then saw a sign to a tourist information office.

After some searching, I realised that the tourist information 'office' was the large map that was fixed in the sidewalk. I located the nearest hotel--the Chaplin; didn't the name ring a bell from e-mails? --and made for it.

"Do you have a reservation for Kieran Egan?"

"Yes," said the young woman cheerfully.

How astonishing that I should have hit it first time.

"Is there a message for me from Jos Letschert?"

"How a message? You are just reserving now."

Ah.

The hotel lobby was under reconstruction, and one of the carpenters and another young woman joined us. It took a little while to dampen the enthusiasm of the check-in clerk who thought she had a customer despite the huge destruction in the lobby. No, there had not been a reservation. Was there another hotel nearby? A few. We will phone them, said the other young woman. You are Canadian? Wonderful! Well, it's . . .

The carpenter took charge of the phone book and called out the first number. The young woman dialed the Dish Hotel and asked whether they had a reservation for me. Yes! Exclamations of delight all round. I felt like cancelling it and staying at the Chaplin, but was urged out the door with clear directions.

There was a message from Jos waiting for me, and he turned up for dinner. Some people one likes immediately and by the end of dinner I felt as though I had known Jos for years. In the morning he would pick me up, and we would walk across the road to his organization--S.L.O., which is the National Institute for Curriculum Development. It is a private research institute, but does a great deal of the government's curriculum development work for the country's schools. Which explained why my attempts to locate him by phone at colleges and universities had been unavailing.

**“** *The generous audience seemed quite pleased at the end, and there was an extended period of questions and sort-of answers.*

He left with me a copy of the announcement, which he had circulated about my talk. It made the event seem something between a major policy announcement by the U.S. President and the Second Coming, with an inclination towards the latter. I used to fear that excessively fulsome introductions would lead to my disappointing the audience, when the false advertising was exposed by my performance. But it has become increasingly clear that most people hear and see what they expect. If it is the Second Coming that has been announced, even though they might be mildly surprised by the unangelic announcer, it is the Second Coming they will experience. And perhaps go away hoping for a little more from the Third. For the same reason, I have come to believe that Gurdjieff, of all people, was right when

he told his followers that they should always demand large fees for talks, not out of greed but just that most people tend to value what you say in fairly close proportion to what they pay to hear it. Is this cynicism? It just seems obviously, if regrettably, true after a while. (Among the papers advertising my talk was the sentence: "In his work Egan argues argues more than once [sic] seemingly certainties and he puts the reader regularly on an other leg.")

As you might expect for an announcement about the Second Coming, there was a good turnout the following morning. I had prepared two different introductions to the talk, and as the audience seemed so engaged and responsive, I gave them both. I spoke in a wonderful high-tech room, with shutters and lights and projector and screen all controlled by switches on the desk at the front. Hard not to keep playing with them. The generous audience seemed quite pleased at the end, and there was an extended period of questions and sort-of answers.

The final leg of this trip was reluctantly to leave Groningen, to which I had returned to give a further talk and workshop, for Amsterdam. I took the train south, pulling my heavy case onto the last carriage. Unfortunately the train I took was not direct, and required a change at Amersfoort. I stood in the space by the rear door with my case. Before the train left, a man got on with his bicycle. As we pulled away, he unclipped bits of the bike and folded it in on itself, bit by bit. I thought he would finish by slipping it in his pocket. It collapsed to little more than the two wheels, neatly slotted side by side with the frame between them.

At Amersfoort we slowly came to a halt. I stood with the cyclist waiting to reach the platform. But we didn't. It seems the driver had miscalculated the number of carriages he had behind him, and we looked far down to stones below. When it was clear we were not going to go further forward, people started running up the train, I followed lugging my big case,

cracking knees, apologizing, moving too slowly. As I approached the next carriage and its door, the train began to pull away. The cyclist was behind me, and had been prevented from getting off by my clumsy slowness. There was an emergency handle, and I reached for it.

"No," he said. "That is for an emergency."

I paused, momentarily bemused amid my emergency panic.

"The train will just pull up to the platform for us to get off."

Ah. But within two seconds it was clear that the train was into major acceleration. It was getting dark now, and we were speeding somewhere that was not Amsterdam. The cyclist said that he would go up the train and find an official and explain our predicament. He returned some while later saying that there seemed to be no official on the train except the driver, and his compartment was locked. But he had learned that we were going to Utrecht.

He said that there was a train leaving from Utrecht that I should take, then get off at the third stop, then take a further connecting train to Amsterdam. But I would need to run at Utrecht, because the other train left only a minute or two after we arrived. I should make it to Amsterdam with not more than an hour or so lost. For him, our adventure would add no more than half an hour to his ride. At Utrecht he lifted his bike under one arm, then grabbed my case with the other to help me, then lugged bike, case, and me down the steps of the station to the underground connecting passage, then up another flight, then hurled me and the case into the train as it began to pull away, shouting "Third stop!" I had only time to wave and shout my thanks as we sped away into the night. I wondered only for a moment whether he might have a delicious sense of humor, and that I was now on a non-stop to St. Petersburg or Belgrade.

In most European cities I have a sense of their medieval cores, and can feel them at moments amid the modern bustle. Perhaps it is the result of reading history as an undergraduate while visiting so many European cities in summers on my motor scooter. Though I suppose it is from Paris southwards that this experience is keenest. Sitting on the great circle of stones in the Dam and trying to feel for the past of the city, I could sense little beyond the cold North Sea. ❖

## 2020: A TOUGH YEAR FOR NOT FOR PROFITS

*Daniel McDonald*

2020 was a tough year for not-for-profit organizations as donations fell. Now, we are into January 2021. The need for these organization's services remains. It is a good month to review briefly and plan some financial aspects of life. Have I "given back" a fair amount by way of charitable donations? Do I have "enough" for myself? Charities can sure use a "hand up" right now. The stock market is amazingly high for the times. Perhaps I should cash in a bit. If you have marketable securities in a non registered account, you may consider selling some winners to raise cash in order to make donations. Or instead, you might consider donating securities.

Imagine this realistic example. You hold some tech stock in your non-registered investment account. They have more than doubled in value since your cost of \$4,000 several years ago and are now worth \$10,000. If you sell them, the tax on the capital gain might be about \$780 [26% on half the gain] so you would only have \$9,220 to give to the charities. If you did that you would receive a charitable receipt for that amount. If you simply give the securities to a charitable organization they would get the \$780 that would otherwise go to the government and you would get a charitable receipt for the full \$10,000.

An easy way to do that is to make the donation through  
<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/donate/donate-securities/>

On the site you can select from their extensive list of charitable organizations and specify the percentage of your donation that you want to go to those you choose to support.

They also immediately send you a form authorizing your broker/investment firm to transfer the securities to the broker of CanadaHelps. In a few days, you receive a charitable donation receipt from CanadaHelps and they distribute the proceeds to your selected charities. Yes, they charge the charities a small processing fee. The charities I support have all reported to me that they are very pleased to work with CanadaHelps as they have no paperwork to deal with. As an added convenience the Canadahelps site retains the history of your giving. It is downloadable and very convenient when it comes to filing your tax return.





## IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Evelyn Palmer



Congratulations to **Sandra Djwa** who has been named to the *Order of Canada* for her contributions to the fields of Canadian literature and Canadian literary criticism. Sandra was chair of the SFU English Department from 1986-1994 and taught Canadian literature for 37 years. Other honours include lifetime membership in the *Royal Society of Canada* in 2019, the 2014 *Canada Prize in the Humanities* and the 2013 *Governor-General's Award* for non-fiction. She has been a member of the SFURA since her retirement and gave us a seminar on her book *Journey with No Maps, a Life of P.K. Page*.

Congratulations as well to **Yolanda Broderick** who was honoured in November 2020 by the City of Port Moody with the *Exemplary Civic Service Award*. The Award recognizes an individual or group that Council feels has contributed significantly to Port Moody's current and future well-being by showing leadership, initiative, commitment and commendable effort. See: <https://www.portmoody.ca/en/news/council-honours-14-port-moody-individuals-or-groups-with-awards-for-service-to-the-community.aspx?fbclid=IwAR0WqVMi1699BbsRsAo6hxMr6hDwldv36zDe6>

Although the award ceremony had been planned for Council Chambers for December 8, due to Covid-19 restrictions the Awardees had to watch the ceremony from their homes. We hope you had a good celebration there, Yolanda.

In the theme of our experiences with the Covid-19 pandemic, **Malcolm Page** writes:

*I find that the most serious consequence for me of the pandemic is being unable to travel or even being able to plan to travel. This matters for me with children and grandchildren in Florida and Australia.*

Another major consequence is not experiencing being part of an audience - which I used to take for granted. In fact, sharing an experience with strangers who have come together for the same reason matters to me, and attempts to perform online/virtual/streamed are different. Thus after 6 months of deprivation, some theatres re-opened for a few weeks in the Fall. The Arts Club mounted 3 shows, each double-cast, making possible performance twice daily every day. Each was a one-person show, as was the play at United Players and at the Mini-Fringe, featuring a one-man *Pride and Prejudice*. Each had the audience carefully distanced, slightly detracting. I write of theatre, while others no doubt feel this more about films, concerts or church.



**Barry Truax** has recently composed a soundscape composition reflecting the current pandemic situation, called *Rainforest Raven*, which takes you on a journey through a West Coast rainforest, starting with water dripping down the rock ledges at the edge of the forest. As guided by a raven, the overall emotional trajectory for the listener goes from joyful to very sombre, and finally we re-emerge (as hopefully we all will from this dark time we're going through) into a brighter day. All source materials were recorded on Galiano Island.

The piece was featured on the national website <https://sonus.ca/> during December and is still accessible there, (look for *Rainforest Raven*) or on Barry's website: [www.sfu.ca/~truax](http://www.sfu.ca/~truax)

Barry is a Professor Emeritus in the School of Communication at SFU and taught courses in acoustic communication and electroacoustic composition. He was a pioneer in the World Soundscape Project. He gave a 50-year Retrospective Concert at the University of Montreal in November, 2019. See <http://www.sfu.ca/~truax/Montre%CC%81aI%20program.pdf>

**Selma Wassermann**, our most prolific author, has just had her eighth post-retirement book published; *MASTERING THE ART OF TEACHING*. She is a professor emerita from the SFU Faculty of Education and holder of the University Award for Teaching Excellence. See the description at; [Mastering\\_The\\_Art\\_Of\\_Teaching](#)

And here is a notice for the **SFURA Club 85**. If you are 85 years of age or will turn 85 during the membership year **April 1 2021 - March 31 2022**, you will receive complimentary life membership in the SFURA. We know who some of

you are, you can run but you can't hide. [Disclosure-I am eligible this year.] Contact me at <evelyn@sfu.ca>. Those of you from previous years will continue to receive your complimentary membership and will receive your card in the mail. We now have about 40 members from previous years.

**Jim Boyd**, Past President of the SFURA and a member of the board since 2013, has a son named Joel. Joel and his wife Amanda have three darling children, twins Audrey and Walter (Jim's Grandtwins) and Lyla.

Joel and Amanda moved to Bermuda ten years ago for a two-year assignment with an accounting firm. They loved Bermuda and extended their time there, and Jim flew down to join them periodically. On December 16, when Jim was getting ready to pay them a Christmas visit, he learned that Joel had suffered a severe stroke and had been transferred by Medivac to John Hopkins Hospital in Maryland. The Medivac trip, which usually takes 2 hours, became a 7 hour trip in a severe snowstorm.

Joel was in critical condition. The doctors determined that he had had two strokes, an ischemic stroke and a hemorrhagic stroke which resulted in a brain bleed. There was so much swelling that they could not do an MRI scan for about ten days, but could do other scans. Johns Hopkins is a top neurology centre and he receive the best of care.

The good news is that he is now out of the ICU, has regained most of his cognitive skills, and is in a therapy unit where he is regaining his motor skills.

His story was written by Owain Johnston-Barnes in the *Royal Gazette of Bermuda*, published January 18, 2021. ❖



A father-of-three who spent nine days unconscious on life support after a major stroke woke up just in time to wish his wife a Merry Christmas, she revealed at the weekend.

Joel Boyd, a 36-year-old accountant, was airlifted off the island on December 16 after his wife, Amanda, found him unconscious at home.

Ms Boyd said he had been sedated and on a ventilator for days before she received a "frantic" call from a nurse at Johns Hopkins University Hospital on Christmas Day.

She said: "I was asking myself what happened? Something happened.

"I could barely hear him, but he said: 'Merry Christmas. I love you'."

Ms Boyd said the couple moved to Bermuda from British Columbia for work in 2012 and planned to stay for two years, but fell in love with the island.

She added her husband felt ill on December 15, but at first thought he had contracted Covid-19.

Ms Boyd said: "I came home from work and he was sleeping.

"He said not to come near him because he thought he had Covid.

"I went to bed with our baby and when I went to him the next morning to check on him I found him unconscious."

Mr Boyd was rushed to the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital, where it was discovered he had suffered a major stroke and he was airlifted to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland.

Ms Boyd said: "Between Bermuda and Johns Hopkins he deteriorated a lot. They weren't sure he was going to make it."

He was admitted to the hospital's intensive care unit where remained sedated and on a ventilator until he woke up on Christmas Day.

Ms Boyd said her husband's recovery had been difficult and that he was put back on life support on New Year's Eve.

But she added he was transferred out of the hospital's intensive care unit last week.

She said: "He has some memory loss, but we are very lucky that he can still speak.

"They didn't know if he was going to be able to speak or if he would have the same personality, but thankfully he can speak and he still has his personality."

Ms Boyd said the stroke came out of the blue and doctors were not yet sure of the cause.

She added: "He has no history of high blood pressure. He eats healthy, he lives healthy. He was the epitome of health."

Ms Boyd said her husband's medical care was taken care of by the insurance provided by his employer.

But she added he faced a long road of recovery ahead and she feared expenses could pile up.

She said: "His rehabilitation is going to be extensive.

"His insurance allows him a set amount for outpatient services, but that probably won't even last a month and he is going to need four to six months for just the physical rehab."

Friends of the family launched a GoFundMe page to help support Mr Boyd's recovery efforts, which fast surpassed its \$25,000 goal.

More than 230 people have donated a combined total of \$33,555 to help cover the cost of rehabilitation and other expenses run up by the family since the campaign's launch on December 29.

Ms Boyd said she was floored by the outpouring of support, from Canada as well as their adopted home of Bermuda.

She added: "The support we have received from both communities has been absolutely indescribable. It's moving me to well up right now.

"It's not just people donating money. People are sending us messages, sending us their thoughts and prayers and love. It's incredible."

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Photo: Joel Boyd, kids and Amanda Boyd.

# The SFU Retirees' Association 50th Anniversary Endowment in 2021 Endowment Scholarship

## Intergenerational Philanthropic Success in Support of SFU Students

*Jim Boyd*

Since the University is still closed for the next semester as a result of the COVID pandemic, it is very important to continue to provide additional support for SFU students who have been unable to physically attend classes on campus in this difficult time.

One way is by building on the past success of this endowment by increasing the contributions by SFU retirees in order to grow the endowment fund balance so that additional scholarships may be awarded going forward. Also aside from being only a philanthropic initiative, further contributions to the fund actually end up being a good investment strategy since the University's current endowment management policy distributes annually a 5% allocation of its own investment income which may be more than retirees own funds may generate.

Once the basic endowment fund balance reaches a balance of \$60,000, then a third scholarship could be awarded to an additional qualified student applicant to ensure their success in completing a degree. Since 2016 the endowment fund has disbursed seven scholarships of \$1000 each plus two increased scholarships of \$1,250 each in 2020 from the fund revenue earned while still accomplishing growth in the fund balance as noted below.

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.

### Schedule of Scholarship Award Recipients since Inception to January 2021

Year	Student Recipient	Program of Study	Amount Awarded
2016	Gabrielle Wish	Psychology Major	\$1,000
2017	Matthew Lynn	Mathematics & Computing Major	\$1,000
2017	Jocelyn Pollock	Communications Major	\$1,000
2018	Elizabeth Pieters	Bachelor of Applied Science (Honours) -	\$1,000
2018	Matthew Lynn	Bachelor of Science (Honours) - Mathematics	\$1,000
2019	Adam Bignell	Computing Science	\$1,000
2019	Matt Wiens	B.Sc Mathematics	\$1,000
2020	Jennifer Krentz	Psychology and Criminology	\$1,250
2020	James Braun	Major in Statistics and a minor in Computing Science	\$1,250
		<b>Total Awards made from inception to 2020</b>	<b>\$9,500</b>
		<b>Balance of Funds currently available for future awards</b>	<b>\$53,763</b>
		<b>Spending Allocation for 2020/21 (5% Allocation Rate)</b>	<b>\$2,674</b>
		<b>Total Endowment Funds on Hand at January 2021</b>	<b>\$56,437</b>

# 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](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.

**Ron Baker** passed away on December 12, 2020 at the age of 96. He was the first Academic Planner of SFU, and was hired by Gordon Shrum to help him set up our University. He returned to BC after serving as the first President of the University of Prince Edward Island, and became active in the SFURA in its early days and until his death. He was a participant in our first Oral History DVD in 2005 and gave a seminar for the SFURA in 2013; Creating SFU, an Inside Story. See: <http://www.sfu.ca/retirees/history/dvd.html>

This is the obituary which Sandra Djwa wrote for the English Department:

**Dr Ronald J. Baker** OC, died on the 12th of December. He was Director of Academic Planning for Simon Fraser University and the founding Head of the English Department, hiring most of the full-time English Faculty members between 1964 and 1968. Born in London, England in 1924, he served as a Navigator in the Royal Air Force. After the war he emigrated to Canada, and took Honours English at UBC, earning a B.A. and an M.A. in the fifties.

As a member of the UBC English Department, he was seconded to the President's Office to assist with MacDonald Report on Higher Education in British Columbia and a Plan for the Future (1963) that set out guidelines for the establishing of new educational institutions designed to meet the future needs of British Columbia students. Subsequently he was called upon by the SFU Chancellor, Dr Gordon Shrum, to help set up a new "instant university" where Baker took pride in initiating a semester system. He left SFU in 1969 to successfully develop a second new university, the University of Prince Edward Island, where he remained President until his retirement in 1978.

His obituary from the Vancouver Sun is at: [http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2020/BakerRon\\_obit.pdf](http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2020/BakerRon_obit.pdf)

**Andrew Kurn** died on November 17 at the age of 72. He came to SFU's Physics Department from Reed College in Oregon and earned his MSc and PhD degrees from SFU. He was a member of The Madrigal Singers in the early days of SFU. He joined the Physics technical staff at that point, and became a valued member of that department. While working at the Burnaby campus he was a member of the choral group Chemsemble. He joined the SFURA on his retirement, but stayed connected to SFU Physics by offering free tutoring to students. He loved dancing, music and bridge.

His obituaries by Jeff Rudd and one published in the Vancouver Sun are at: [http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2020/Andrew\\_KURN.pdf](http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2020/Andrew_KURN.pdf)

**Barbara Rae** passed away at the age of 90 on January 3, 2021. She was the first woman to graduate from SFU's Executive MBA Program and was SFU's first woman Chancellor, serving from 1987-1993. Among her many honours, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada in 1993. She received an Honourary Degree from SFU in 1998, and an Outstanding Alumni Award in 1985

She and her husband, VP George Suart, were avid supporters of SFU Athletics and raised scholarships for women athletes. They were members of the SFURA and for many years held SFURA luncheons at their Whistler Condominium. They also arranged frequent "George's Lunches" in West Vancouver restaurants.

Her obituary tells of her amazing life, especially that of her post-retirement years.

See; [http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2021/Barbara\\_RAE.pdf](http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/retirees/memoriam/2021/Barbara_RAE.pdf)



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## Editorial

Never would I have thought I could fill the role of editor. Edited, yes. Editing other's work, not at all. My early training in sociology was the worst preparation possible for concise, clear, elegant writing. Convoluting sentences, overuse of hyphens and unnecessary parenthetical statements, flaunting Greek and Latin words and mind numbing amounts of jargon violated the advice in George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language."

I did not really learn an awareness of the characteristics of good writing until I took a graduate course from the late Neil Sutherland, professor of history in the Faculty of Education at UBC. He took an active interest in his students' academic welfare and tried to prepare us for suitable careers among the professoriate. That initially meant a focus on book reviews. It was good practice and just might see some of us have our junior work published ... somewhere.

My first effort, a review of Lawrence Stone's "Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500 – 1800" had me preening a little as I wrote. As it turned out, I was a bit like the Ralphie character in the new classic Christmas movie "A Christmas Story." Ralphie wants a Red Rider BB gun and writes a paragraph explaining why. He's confident and anticipates an A. He gets a C+. I

waded into my writing, emerging with a hagiography. Neil took me in hand. Too much 'to be' and not enough activity, overload on the passive voice and prepositional phrases, flabby nouns and pronoun abuse by way of overuse. What about adverbs? I wrote annoyingly, awkwardly, pretentiously, and unnaturally. What about a critical eye? Yikes!

By the time I digested and applied all that, a few years had passed. Then, I put Neil's advice to practical use. First, when I taught Designs for Learning English in SFU's Faculty of Education. Later, I used it in the Writing 12 course I developed at Templeton Secondary School.

At Templeton, Orwell's essay was the first reading every September. It provoked discussion, questions and even dissent.

Kiddo: "Ms. Toms, I completely disagree with this article and I don't think Orwell is even following his own advice. He's not a good writer."

Ms. Toms: "Did you like 1984?"

Kiddo: "No!"

Ms. Toms: "Neither did I, but still, remember this; Orwell's sixth bit of advice is "Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous."

Kiddo: "Yay. I can do what I like."

Kiddo earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree and now

is a pediatric emergency RN working hard in a big hospital in Toronto. She still has strong opinions and sets them down in blistering and original prose. Here endeth the lesson.

- Marcia Toms

*I am happy to be your returning guest editor! What's my connection? I graduated from SFU three times, realizing the old saying, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again." I completed a BA (Hons 1st class) in PSA and then, after at last deciding on a real job, I earned a Teacher's Certificate. Finally, I returned to complete my MA under the able supervision of (now professor emerita) Veronica Strong-Boag who held a double appointment to the History and Women's Studies departments. Involvement with latter was a thrill as two of its founders, the late Maggie Benston and Andrea Lebowitz, were my friends and mentors. The department, resulting from the work of 1960s SFU feminists, including me, fulfilled a dream. I guess I couldn't stay away, so I worked at SFU as a TA in PSA and as a Faculty Associate, a Co-ordinator and a researcher in the Faculty of Education. I like writing, but I love reading, so this project with Simon Says is a great pleasure for me.*