



Vanier Contingent at the  
Forum of CEGEPs.  
Quebec City, June 2004

# NEWSLETTER

# Letter from the Editor: SHIRLEY PETTIFER

This issue launches a one-year trial period for the VCTA Newsletter. Do we need a voice for syndical, pedagogical and social issues of concern to Vanier teachers? Do we need to “see” ourselves in print? Can the Newsletter be a vehicle for professional exchange, reflection, union involvement? Can it help build local solidarity and pride in our noble profession? Can we afford it?

These are the questions you will be asked at a General Assembly in May, 2005 when we will collectively decide whether or not to continue publication of the Newsletter under the present terms.

Two key terms of the current incarnation of the Newsletter involve release time and “vetting” by the VCTA Executive. At the May 20, 2004 General Assembly, it was agreed that the Newsletter editor would receive a maximum of .333 release time for the year. In my case, that will be .125 per semester, a maximum of .250 release time for the year. (This means about 8 hours work per week,

including attendance at relevant meetings.) The editor presents each issue to the VCTA Executive prior to publication, then to Association Council if any article is questioned or rejected.

That’s the background. The foreground is YOU: your articles, suggestions, cartoons, photographs, reviews, drawings, letters. Though I will be prowling the lounges, hallways, happy hours and department resource rooms looking for contributors, you need not wait ‘til I track you down. **ALL SUBMISSIONS ARE WELCOME!** And I could sure use some feedback on this first issue.

Shirley has been teaching at Vanier since 1978. A former member of the VCTA Executive and editor of the VCTA Newsletter, she teaches sociology, has co-ordinated her department, the Social Science and Commerce Honours Program, Women’s Studies and the Explorations Program, as well as teaching courses in the latter two. She is the proud recipient of the Vanier Teaching Excellence Award for 2003-04.

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Drawings: Marnie MacDonald

**Deadline for next issue: Sept. 27, 2004.  
All contributions welcome!**

## VCTA Executive 2004-05

President:	Sylvie Tardif
Vice Presidents:	Eric Durling Dave Oram
Secretary-Treasurer:	Christian Roy

## Office Hours in C-101

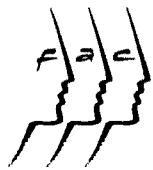
Sylvie:	Mon.	10:30-11:30
	Thurs.	10:00-12:00
Christian:	Mon.	1:00-4 :00
Dave:	Wed.	1:30-4 :30
Eric:	Fri.	10:00-1:00

## Office Assistants’ Hours:

8:30 am to 4:30 pm		
closed for lunch 12:00-1:00		
Susan:	Mon. Tues. Wed.	
Pat:	Thurs. Fri.	

The Executive meets every Tuesday 9:30-12:30; the Association council meets every third Thursday 2-4 pm; General Assemblies are held when necessary.

Join the VCTA and become a voting member. New teachers (full-time, part-time, hourly, Cont. Ed.) may join the Vanier College Teachers Association by paying a 1-time only fee of \$2 at Rm. C101.



# V.C.T.A.

VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

## Message from the President: SYLVIE TARDIF

\* If terms confuse you, refer to glossary at end of article

**O**n behalf of the V.C.T.A. Executive I would like to extend a warm welcome to all faculty and wish everyone a fruitful and rewarding academic year.

You are cordially invited to visit us in Room C101. The V.C.T.A. provides free coffee, tea and bottled water for all members in the V.C.T.A. Lounge, Room C101 and, in the Staff Lounge located in the N Building, Room N172. If you have any concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact us. If we are not around, please leave messages with Susan Panneton or Pat Dichmann, our two great assistants, without whom the office wouldn't be able to operate.

Don't miss our regular Happy Hours. These provide an excellent opportunity for you to socialize with colleagues, meet new faces and get to know your new V.C.T.A. Executive.

Your new VCTA Executive consists of four people: Christian Roy, who teaches music, is our Secretary-Treasurer; the two Vice-Presidents are Eric Durling and David Oram, teachers of English and physics, respectively. Sylvie Tardif, your President, teaches chemistry.

Hopefully this summer was peaceful and restful because we are coming back to a very busy academic year.

### Forum on the Future of CEGEPs

Following the Forum of June 9 and 10, 2004, the proposals by universities and school boards to eliminate the CEGEPs have been scrapped. However, the closing remarks of the Education Minister, Pierre Reid, included the possibility of increasing institutional autonomy. This is the first step to complete decentralization of institutions. The Fédé Development Plan<sup>1</sup> published in February 2003 was of great inspiration to the Minister:

the decentralization of program management (habilitation) and granting of local DEC\*s\* (accreditation) will logically follow in the path of decentralization. The reform plan for CEGEPs will probably be disclosed this fall during the final Forum of Prime Minister Charest on October 13 and 14, 2004.



Sylvie Tardif in Québec, June, 2004

We were stunned to learn from the press that pilot projects, done on a voluntary basis, between school boards and CEGEPs, had Quebec's approval to work together on professional and technical training programs to facilitate the transition of students from a school professional program to a more demanding CEGEP technical program. Clearly this is another orientation of the Minister that will lead to demands for more harmonization among the three levels of education (secondary, college and university). One can anticipate the need for more evaluation for the purposes of establishing credits from one level of education to the next, and an increase of supervisory powers for the Evaluation Commission (CEEC).

Our FAC executive is meeting Minister Reid on September 23, 2004 for questions and clarification.



## Negotiations: Our Collective Agreement

We have been without a Collective Agreement since June 30, 2002. A 2% salary increase retroactive to the first day of the 2003-2004 contract year was paid on July 15, 2004 to all of us according to the agreement reached between the Quebec Government and FAC\*. This agreement was no different from the ones FNEEQ\* and FEC\* reached on April 30, 2002 when they accepted the government proposal (P-5) to extend the collective agreement for one year. The FAC-CPNC\* Mediation of June 23, 2004 led to the dead end of the 173 hours (the additional working hours/new salary structures).

The CPNC\* argued that different salary scales for CEGEP teachers were unacceptable. Remember that FNEEQ\* and FEC\* have already signed the agreement on the recognition of working hours (the 173 hours teachers are to add to their teaching workload) and the new salary structures. For us, at FAC\*, the dossier was incorporated as chapter 6 of the employer deposit of their negotiation demands which they presented to FAC\* on February 2, 2004.

During the summer, the government published a remuneration proposal, to guide the salary demands during negotiations in the public and parapublic sectors, freezing at 12.6% the salary increases over a period of 6 years (compare that to the inflation index from CPI\* and GDP\*...not a match!). This proposal includes a possible upward adjustment of job category for CEGEP teachers from rank 20 to rank 21 or 22 under the salary relativity (equivalent jobs receive identical pay) survey performed in the public sector. Remember that the Quebec Treasury Board argued that college teachers form a job class distinct from that of elementary and secondary teachers in that their functions, responsibilities and qualifications are different. Elementary and high school teachers got paid under the pay equity act while we CEGEP teachers are still awaiting the results of the salary relativity survey.

Note that the pay increases negotiated in the next collective agreement will be on top of any salary increases (max of 12.6% for 6 years) that may be gained if an agreement is reached between FAC\* and the government on the recognition of working hours (the additional 173 hours) and the new salary structures.

It appears that the government is purposely blocking the normal course of negotiations for our collective agreement. Clearly they want to settle the health sector first (number of union accreditations and negotiations of col-

lective agreement) before the education sector. It is easy to suspect that no real negotiations will be possible for us until Fall 2005!

As of September 21, 2004 we can potentially go on a legal strike (mediation conditions have been met!). Our FAC\* negotiation committee is meeting with Alain Lavoie (CPNC\*) this Thursday August 26, 2004.

## Mobilization

It seems that we should maintain our work to rule campaign since the Treasury Board is receiving a lot of calls and complaints from the administrations of FAC\* CEGEPs. Education Minister Reid has a plan that may



A Vanier supporter: Emily Paquette

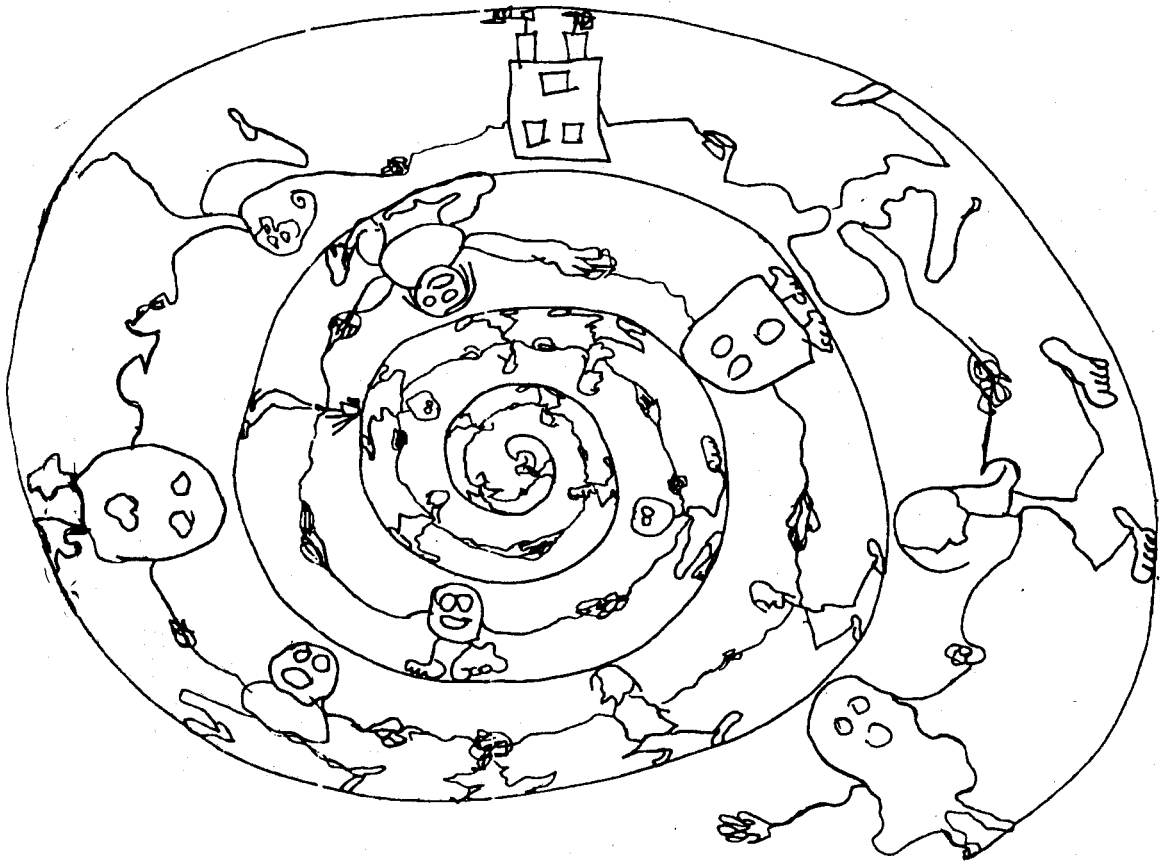
not be in the best interest of teachers, nor the interest of students, parents, professionals and support staff. FAC is working with the Coalition for CEGEPs (see the petition) to organize a parallel forum in October and a demonstration. The plan will follow after the FAC special Intersyndical Council of September 9 and 10, 2004. If you have more petitions please bring them to the VCTA office.

*Continued on page 8*

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SOCIAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL: OCT. 18 -22

# Making Diversity Work



A student panel on multiculturalism, films, speakers, displays, debates—all these on issues of relevance to every Vanier student and all employees! There will even be a Quiz Show—Vanier's very own *Reach for the Top*—during UB.

Myriam Mansour, the Festival coordinator has been hard at work since last June. She has made contacts with outside groups and individuals; consulted and conscripted various Vanier departments and faculty members and lined up a roster of speakers. You can expect a schedule of events soon, but here is a sneak preview:

Graeme Decarie—for the Ron Charbonneau Memorial Lecture, Jaggi Singh, Phyllis Bailey and Hank Avery; these are a few of the "external" speakers.

Judy Ingerman (Anthropology), Karen Tee (Psychology), Sevak Manjikian (Religious Studies), Ricardo Duenez (Geography), Eric Lamoureux (History) and Nancy Leclerc (Anthropology) are the local talent who promise to share words of wisdom. There'll be deeds of wisdom too. The archeological dig is back by popular demand. Matthieu Sossoyan will guide us to the hidden secrets of Vanier's past.

Students are preparing displays and panel discussions. Rooms are booked. Hopefully this is enough advance notice that you will try to set aside some time to bring your students to an event or two. No matter the discipline, no matter the program—making diversity work is Vanier's mission and its greatest strength. ■

# Academic Council: First Report BY RON CURTIS

The general mandate of Academic Council is to “make recommendations to the College on any question pertaining to the maintenance, improvement or development of the College’s academic life,” with specific areas of responsibility as detailed under Vanier College By-Law Number 3. The first meeting for this academic year: Sept. 3, 2004.

In effect, Academic Council is the major internal body in the College which brings together representatives of faculty, administration, professionals, support staff and students to discuss and approve modifications to programs and college academic policies. Historically, Academic Council has also played a significant role in making recommendations regarding major changes or issues within the College, such as in the selection of new Academic Deans and Director Generals, and in providing consultation during major curriculum reforms and College evaluations.

Important areas of concern for the coming year will include looking at the outcomes of the June Forum on

the Future of College Education and the possible impact this will have on the college and the Cegep system as a whole. Council will also be involved in addressing the main priorities in the College Strategic Management / Academic Success Plan, and will be consulted during the process for the selection of the new Director General. Some of the other major issues coming to Council this year are listed by Peter Ross in his August 30<sup>th</sup> letter to Vanier faculty.

At this time, faculty participation in Academic Council, as per the VCTA work-to-rule campaign, is limited to only attending and participating in meetings dealing with the selection of the new Director General.

Ron Curtis is Vice-Chair of Academic Council and as such is a non-voting member of the Search Committee for the new Director General. He also teaches English, shares Coordination of the English Department and is in frequent search of more time to spend with his daughter.

## IN PRAISE OF SELF-DEPRECATATION

The buzzard has nothing to fault himself with.  
Scruples are alien to the black panther.  
Piranhas do not doubt the rightness of their action.  
The rattlesnake approves of himself without reservations.

The self-critical jackal does not exist.  
The locust, alligator, trichina, horsefly  
Live as they live and are glad of it.

The killer-whale’s heart weighs one hundred kilos  
But in other respects it is light.

There is nothing more animal-like  
Than a clear conscience  
On the third planet of the Sun

Wislaw Szymborska in Szymborska, W. 1981.  
*Sounds, Feelings, Thought*.  
Translated by M. J. Krynski and R. A. Maguire.  
Princeton: Princeton University Press

Wislaw Szymborska was born in Bnin (now a part of Kórnik) in Western Poland in 1923. She studied Polish Literature and Sociology at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. She has published more than fifteen books of poetry. Among her many honours and awards are a Goethe Prize, a Herder Prize, and a Polish PEN Club prize. Wislaw Szymborska won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1996. She has lived in Krakow since 1931.

Submitted by Mark Prentice,  
Anthropology teacher

# Pete's Picks BY PETE RASMUSSEN

I first heard Eve Cassidy sing *Over the Rainbow* four or five years ago on Mike Regenstrief's folk music show on CKUT - Radio McGill, Folk Roots - Folk Branches. She brought a different melancholy to the familiar melody and a new depth to the trite lyrics. Intrigued and not knowing who the singer was, I intended to find out but neglected to pursue the matter.

A year or so went by and then I again heard her interpret Cindi Lauper's *Time After Time*, the title tune of a recent release, on an American Internet radio broadcast. Knowing her name this time I checked out her available recordings and to my great delight discovered she was the singer I had heard covering *Over the Rainbow* which was from an earlier compilation called *Songbird*. Well I had to have her version of the Judy Garland song from the *Wizard of Oz* so I bought the CD and not the more recent release.

The initial pleasure of discovery turned bittersweet as I read the liner notes when playing the CD for the first time. The selections from *Songbird* were taken from the three CD's she had recorded before her untimely death at age thirty-three in 1996 from terminal melanoma. At least Billie Holiday lived to forty-four despite decades of alcohol and drug abuse.

The more I played the CD, the more my wife and I were taken with Eva's achingly beautiful soprano and her interpretations of songs from diverse genres. From Sting's *Fields of Gold* to Johnny Mercer's *Autumn Leaves*; onto a soulful take on Curtis Mayfield's *People Get Ready* and the swinging gospel of Pete Seeger's *Oh, Had I A Golden Thread* -from pop to jazz to blues, her lovely voice was also very versatile.

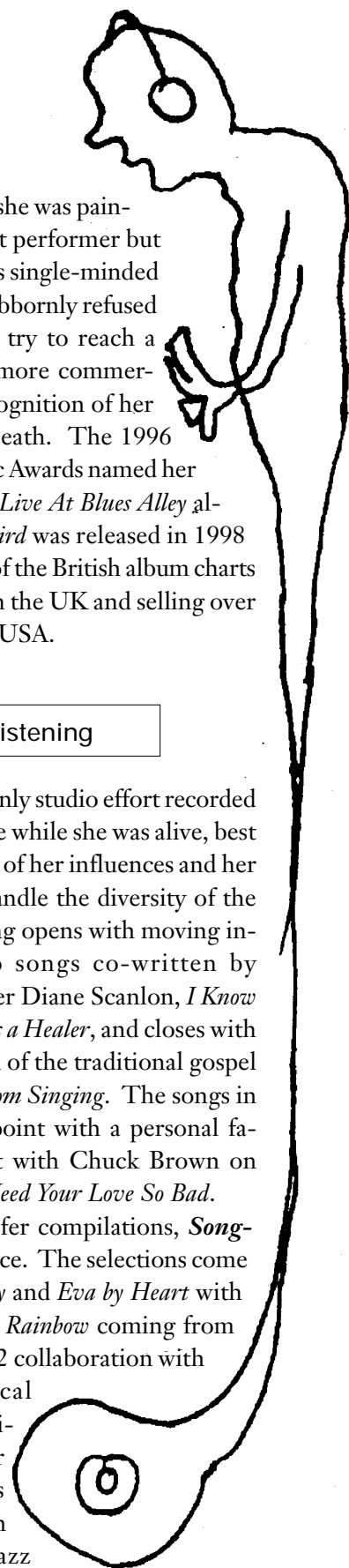
Eva Cassidy was an artist, an accomplished musician and a gifted singer; talents she inherited from her parents. In public and in the studio she often provided her own accompaniment on piano or guitar, perhaps out of financial necessity as her recordings were independently produced and released on small labels. However, the sparse arrangements allow for her voice to remain in the foreground where it belongs.

A complex person, she was painfully shy and a reluctant performer but at the same time she was single-minded about her music and stubbornly refused attempts to get her to try to reach a larger audience or be more commercially marketable. Recognition of her talent came after her death. The 1996 Washington Area Music Awards named her best artist and her CD *Live At Blues Alley* album of the year. *Songbird* was released in 1998 and climbed to the top of the British album charts going triple platinum in the UK and selling over a million copies in the USA.

## Recommended Listening

*Eva by Heart*, the only studio effort recorded and prepared for release while she was alive, best demonstrates the scope of her influences and her ability as a singer to handle the diversity of the material. The recording opens with moving interpretations of two songs co-written by newcomer guitar-slinger Diane Scanlon, *I Know You by Heart* and *Time Is a Healer*, and closes with a toe-tapping rendition of the traditional gospel tune *How Can I Keep from Singing*. The songs in between do not disappoint with a personal favourite being the duet with Chuck Brown on Little Willie John's *I Need Your Love So Bad*.

For those who prefer compilations, *Songbird* is the obvious choice. The selections come from *Live At Blues Alley* and *Eva by Heart* with the version of *Over the Rainbow* coming from *The Other Side*, the 1992 collaboration with Chuck Brown, a local Washington DC musician and bandleader, for whom Eva's voice was an inspiration to do an album of R&B and jazz standards.



Continued on page 8

Chris Biondo, Eva's record producer with whom she was romantically involved, has been responsible for three posthumous releases of her material. *Imagine* and *American Tune* are excellent recordings but *Time After Time* is perhaps the best. The takes on Cindi Lauper's title tune, Paul Simon's *Kathy's Song* and Joni Mitchell's *Woodstock* are definitive versions or should be and there are great covers of Bill Withers' *Ain't No Sunshine* and The Box Tops' *The Letter*.

Perhaps the best way to end is with the words of Welshmen Sian and Peter Charlton from their poetic tribute to Eva Cassidy, *A Whisper in the Corn*:

Singing - somewhere still singing.  
I can hear you in the rain  
A never ending inspiration  
A whisper in the corn - still singing.

Pete Rasmussen, whose "better-half" Pat works in the Vanier Bookstore, has worked at Vanier since 1977 in a number of departments. He is currently in Accounting and forever a music aficionado. Lucky for us, he has agreed to do a regular column for the Newsletter.



Future students: Sisters Emily, Su Ming and Mei Li Paquette

## Message from the President

*Continued from page 4*

It is unacceptable that the media were informed before the unions about:

- The content of our employer deposit of February 2, 2004
- The remuneration proposal of 12.6% over 6 years
- The approval of pilot-projects between school boards and CEGEPs

What else will the education front-line workers learn from the press?

## Local Issues

The VCTA needs an active membership to deal with local issues and tasks. Some of these include: summative evaluation, information to teachers, use of student success grant monies, support to new teachers, support to teachers going on retirement, support to members on all committees, setting up a VCTA website and all those issues that pop up in the regular course of an academic year.

*Syndically yours,*  
*Sylvie*

<sup>1</sup>Fédération des Cégeps, CEGEPs: Spearheading Quebec's Future Development Plan for the Public College System, Montreal, February 2003.

## Glossary of Terms

CPI	Consumer Price Index
CPNC	Conseil Patronal de Négociation des Cégeps
DEC	Diplôme d'Etudes Collégial
FAC	Fédération Autonome du Collégial (This is our federation; comprised of 17 Cégeps)
FEC	Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de Cégep (represents teachers in 6 Cégeps)
Fédé	Fédération des Cégeps—composed of director generals and academic deans
FNEEQ	Fédération Nationale des enseignantes et enseignants de Québec (represents 25 Cégeps)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product



# Good News from the Library BY CHERYL HOLMES

In the H'04 semester, teacher concerns about an "out-of-date" library collection were expressed at Board meetings. Ganesh Harilal requested that the College allocate funds to update the books in the library. This initiative was supported by the Board. In early March, \$15,000 was added to the Library budget for the purchase of books. A letter was sent to teachers to invite them to suggest book purchases that would support the requirements of their courses.

Teachers responded enthusiastically to our request for suggestions for book purchases to update the collection.

From March 1<sup>st</sup> to May 24<sup>th</sup>, forty-seven teachers submitted suggestions. Some submitted lists on behalf of their departments. We ordered over three hundred and fifty books during this period. The amount spent was \$17,000.

This initiative created a positive feeling and a renewed spirit of collaboration between the Library and the teachers of the college.

You can see a list of additions to the Library Collection at: <http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/litc/newacquisitions.html>

The College will add an additional \$17,000 to the Library Collection budget this year for the purchase of books. Please contact Carol Anne Inglis, Collection Development Librarian, with your suggestions.

Cheryl Holmes is the Coordinator of LITC. She has worked at Vanier since 1976.  
[holmesc@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:holmesc@vaniercollege.qc.ca)



## Professional Development

The maximum amount available to individuals is \$400. Teachers with less than a full time workload receive the proportional funds. I.e. Half a workload = maximum of \$200 PD.

Applications and guidelines are available at the VCTA Office: C101. Applications should be submitted to the PD Committee, c/o the VCTA Office-C101, 3 weeks before the start of any activity.

There is no need to submit an application for Employee Fitness activities but you do need a receipt to claim the expense.

Members of the bipartite PD Committee this year are Dave Oram for the VCTA and Nancy Wargny for the Administration.

The practice of combining 2 years of PD funds for one event will be reviewed this year by the PD Committee, the VCTA Executive, Association Council and a General Assembly.

# Employee Fitness: Focus on Tai Chi

BY STEVE ROSENFELD

I remember when I was a teenager—I could do strenuous physical activities for hours on end without feeling anything except thirst. Who did exercise? We just played and had fun. While I have continued to be physically active, over the years a few aches and pains have become a regular accompaniment to “participation”. (Our Vanier faculty volleyball game on Thursday afternoons has continued for about 30 years, and our oldest founding member, Mike Philippas, still plays when he can tear himself away from his lovely Greek Island home—how come we aren’t in one of those beer commercials?).

I have tried several employee fitness activities, looking for a way to keep in shape for my two athletic passions, volleyball and skiing. There is an unexpected side benefit to fitness courses for teachers, at least for those of us that are not “athletically gifted”, namely the humbling reminder of what it feels like to take a course in a discipline in which one is not an expert. The experiences involved (“... raise your left foot, no, the other left foot ...”) with not “getting it” right away helps me to empathize with my students when it seems so simple to me.

I can heartily recommend Karen Runnels’ exercise courses in the swimming pool, and Myra David’s Yoga courses. Both of these provide excellent workouts, and both leave you with a sense of well-being (after you recover your breath and your heart rate slows down). However, I am a slow moving person, so I have to be lucky enough to have a large block of time free to indulge in



Tai Chi teacher, Sergio Arone

either of these programs (15 minutes beforehand to change, 30 minutes afterwards to shower and dress—I said I was slow).

Some semesters I can partake, but too often there is a time conflict, a class to rush off to or a flurry of students asking for help just when I need to leave for fitness class. I hate the ignominy of arriving late to class, not to mention the difficulty finding a place in the crowded Yoga classroom (at least there is always room in the pool).

A few years ago I was one of many to whom Karen gave a personal exercise program to carry out in the Fitness Centre. I still needed time before and after the

workout, but at least I was never late for class. However, I was on my own and I found it difficult to maintain the motivation to go to the Fitness Centre. I tried listening to book tapes while exercising on the machines, but I still lasted only two terms before I found myself missing more often than going.

By chance the very week that my doctor told me to that my blood pressure needed to be lower, Karen wrote a note about the benefits of Tai Chi and mentioned that this was one way of lowering blood pressure. The very next week I met Sergio, Vanier’s gifted and patient Tai Chi instructor. I thought, at last I have found a fitness class that I can run to at the last minute and run back from without a shower afterwards because I’m not even



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Tai Chi is a combination of philosophy, movement designed to increase/sustain physical fitness, and martial arts.

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sweating. Even if I am still the slowest to leave, really how long can it take me if all I have to do is change my footwear? But can an exercise class where you don’t sweat really be doing much for your fitness?

I should explain what I mean when I say that Sergio is patient. It takes a class of Tai Chi beginners half a term just to learn a rough approximation of the warm up exercises. Thus, success in Tai Chi comes through patience and continual practice. (Of the eight individuals comprising the beginner class that I started in, only Rose De Souza and I are still coming to class. I guess that patience is something that many of us have given up on in our society. Still, others have joined us and newcomers are always welcome.)

The most amazing thing is that after two years of lessons and practice, each time I do the warm up exercises with Sergio I see new things. Tai Chi is built of layer upon layer of very controlled movement. I can’t say if Tai Chi has had any effect on my blood pressure (which is down, but there are many factors involved), but I can tell you

that doing Tai Chi has had a solid impact on my flexibility and on my over-all sense of well-being.

Tai Chi is a combination of philosophy, movement designed to increase/sustain physical fitness, and martial arts. It has sometimes been called *meditation in motion*. If you are interested in learning more about the history of Tai Chi, then a nice brief site on the web is <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Philosophy/Taichi/history.html>. Be warned that there are many styles of Tai Chi and while one can see similarities between them, much as family members often resemble each other, the differences can be very confusing. Sergio actually has two styles going in his classes—the advanced group, with teachers who have been doing Tai Chi for as many as fifteen years, practices a style completely different from the one that I have learned.

In my first term of Tai Chi, I lacked confidence to practice much at home and progress was very slow. I went to my library and took out three videotapes on Tai Chi. One was so radically different that I could recognize nothing. The other two were similar to what Sergio teaches, but not enough that I could truly learn the Tai Chi form that I was supposed to practice. Then I talked to Rose De Souza and she explained to me that she practised every morning, even if she was not confident in her movements, and that Sergio could be counted on to correct her. This was hard for me—one of the reasons I ended up studying mathematics was the control: I could always know that I was right. Letting go and just doing the movements and accepting correction was a revelation of sorts, and it has led to much greater progress than only rehearsing the

movements that I foolishly thought I had already mastered. So practising Tai Chi has not only improved my health, it has changed my understanding of the process of learning. The trick of course is to remember this as I enter the classroom and face my students.

Steve Rosenfield has been teaching mathematics at Vanier since 1973. For the second half of his teaching career he has also been carrying out research in the field of mathematics and science education. This research has primarily focused on the integration of technology use in mathematics and science classrooms, and he was involved in efforts that brought Maple V to Vanier, and grants that paid for the electronic classrooms, E501 and B429. He would be the first to tell you that using computers is not a panacea. However, he is also fond of saying that technology is like a tidal wave, and that teachers should reflect upon the wisdom of King Canute—the best we can do with this tidal wave is to learn how to harness its tremendous power; closing our eyes and hoping it will go away is pointless.



Tai Chi teacher Sergio Arone with Steve Byron, Philosophy teacher

## Staff Cafeteria

**Just to remind all staff that the College has put at our disposal a lavishly appointed, clean and quiet boiler room in D wing, first floor, where you can have your lunch or work on your transmission.**

Photo submitted by Mark Prentice, Anthropology teacher.





# Music Corner: Fred's in Town



Okay, I admit it - I'm a bit of a Fredhead. Fred is a superlative songwriter, a riveting performer and a fabulous storyteller. I have seen him perform now about 8 times in 5 different towns. I also have a job so I have missed a few of his shows.

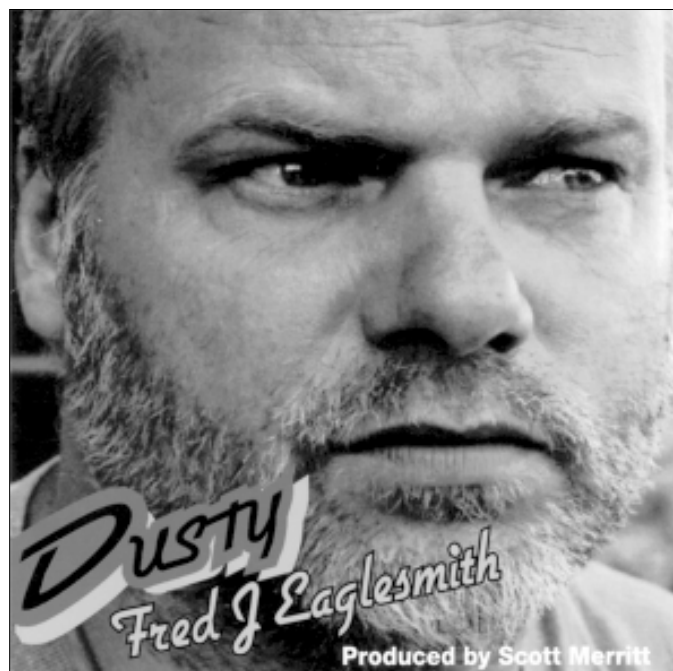
I discovered Fred J. Eaglesmith about 10 years ago when he played The Yellow Door in downtown Montreal. He lit up Canada's oldest operating coffeehouse with searing tales of love lost and found, dogs and chickens, trains, trucks, tractors and other machinery, as well as several achingly accurate songs about what is left of the farming and rural way of life. It all sounds pretty nostalgic, and many of his songs do foreground the loss of a way of life, but there is something uncannily contemporary about his themes. And his laconic humour leaves my face and belly sore.

Fred's musical style is mostly bluegrass/singer-songwriter/country, along with some hard-driving stuff that

has a rhythm like pistons driving a crank-shaft. Think of Lightfoot, John Prine, Guy Clark cut with a bit of Tom Waits and the Stanley Brothers. He usually performs with a crackerjack acoustic band which includes "the legendary" Willie P. Bennett on mandolin and harmonica. Though originally from southern Ontario, they travel to all corners of North America in their own antiquated bus.

That bus pulls into Montreal next week. **Eaglesmith performs at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, September 14, at Club One, 1186 Crescent St., phone 393-1663.** Expect to pay about \$20. entrance.

Jock Mackay had been teaching Sociology and Humanities at Vanier since 1976. He has taught in Explorations since its inception 10 years ago and has also coordinated in Explorations and Humanities. He is currently researching the Student Life History Project with Doug Miller and Guy Quinn.



## Odds 'n' Ends • Odds 'n' Ends • Odds 'n' Ends • Odds 'n' Ends • Odds 'n' Ends

- A Précaire Committee was set up by Association Council at its meeting of Sept. 2, 2004 to address the issues of special concern to new and non-tenured teachers. So far the members of this committee are: Eric Durling (English and VCTA Executive), Hode Erdogan (Physics) and John Tromp (Chemistry). The latter two also sit on Association Council.
- Chalk Talk: Frustrated with chalk that crumbles as you write, makes you cough, leaves a layer of dust over your clothes, your teaching materials, your chair? Call Sam Kay—local 7965—and complain, complain, complain. Work-to-Rule!
- Questions for Reflection: To what extent should/does your course/department/program prepare your students for the English Exit Exam? Is this the sole responsibility of the English Department?
- Style Invitational\*: Take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition. Examples: *sarchasm*: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it. Here is another: *Caterpallor*: The colour you turn after finding half a grub in the fruit your eating. Send your creations to the VCTA Newsletter. Appropriate prizes for the best submissions! (The idea and examples come from the Washington Post.)
- Quote: Bad teaching is teaching which presents an endless procession of meaningless signs, words and rules, and fails to arouse the imagination. (W. W. Sawyer. (1943) *Mathematician's Delight*, Harmondsworth: Penguin)