

# VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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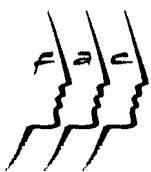
## SPECIAL ISSUE: Holocaust Symposium Week

*Holocaust Symposium Week, Recipient of Le Prix de la FAC for Contribution to College Life (2000)*

## APRIL: ACTION FOR EDUCATION

- April 12 Strike by VCTA and the FAC-FEC Cartel
- April 12 Strike, Montérégie and Lanaudière regions of FSE-APEQ Cartel
- April 13 Strike, Abitibi, Bas St-Laurent, Côte-Nord, Gaspésie and Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean regions of FSE-APEQ Cartel
- April 14 Strike, Lanaudière, Laurentides, and Outaouais regions, FSE-APEQ Cartel
- April 18 Strike, CSQ professionals and support staff associated with the Education Sector: This includes non-teaching professionals at Vanier College
- April 19 Strike, Montreal region of FSE-APEQ Cartel
- April 20 Strike, Quebec City region of FSE-APEQ Cartel
- April 21 Strike Central Quebec region of FSE-APEQ Cartel
- April 25 Strike—ALL Cegep teachers—VCTA, FAC-FEC Cartel, FNEEQ
- May 4 Strike, Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec
- May 5 Strike, Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec
- May 6 Day of national mobilization: 120,000 CSQ workers in education, health & social service called to demonstrate in Quebec City; final gathering in front of the National Assembly

*See page 4 for acronym translations*



# Word from the Co-Editor:

Shirley's invitation to co-edit this issue took me back in time to the days when we were co-editors of this publication in 1986-87. I remember getting all excited about using a computer rather than an IBM-Selectric typewriter, and eventually learning how to do layout with WordPerfect 4.1 or 4.2. My, my, how we have advanced!

This issue coincides with the 12<sup>th</sup> (who would have believed it?) annual Holocaust Symposium started by the late Peter Kleinmann and ably supported by his widow, Esther, the VCTA, and so many other offices and organs within the Vanier Community.

This year, three dozen classes will be attending scheduled events (April 11-15 and April 19\*) and exploring moral choices and possible lessons for today from this horrific genocide. Students and teachers will be connecting with Holocaust material and survivor testimony in ways that amplify aspects of their specific course curricula. In many cases, they will also be left grappling with some of the most difficult questions about human nature and the societies we live in.

This year's Symposium line-up includes several speakers who chose to underline the sad fact that we are

continuing to violate, on a daily basis, the spirit of one of the most repeated post-Holocaust sacred slogans – "Never Again!" Several feature articles in this issue of the NEWSLETTER examine this further. Dare we hope that our educational work with today's students – like the Trip for Tolerance (pages 17 and 18) – will help produce a generation that will, better than we did, make choices and take action that result in a world with fewer victimizers and fewer victims?



Photo: Denis Lafontaine

Neil Caplan

\* Because of the April 12<sup>th</sup> strike, several Symposium events have been rescheduled to the following Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>:

- Photo-journalist Lara Rosenoff, "Never Again? 19 Years of Horror in Northern Uganda", slide-show and commentary - 9:30-11:00 in C318
- Marcia Goldberg, "Women's Memoirs and Remembering the Shoah" - 10:00-12:00 in D544
- Film: "Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust" - 12:00-2:00 in N568 and 4:00-6:00 in N516

## Deadline for Next Issue is May 2, 2005

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All contributions welcome!

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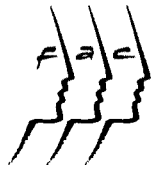
Executive Office Hours H05.  
 Mon. 11:00 - 2:00 (Sylvie)  
           2:00 - 5:00 (Eric)  
 Tues: 2:30 - 5:00 (Dave)  
 Wed. 1:30 - 4:30 (Ian)  
 Thurs. 1:30 - 3:30 (Dave)

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# V.C.T.A.

VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



## Message from the President: SYLVIE TARDIF

I would like to thank all the contributors to the last issue of the *Newletter* and all the organizers of International Women's Week—a recognition and celebration of women crossing boundaries. Listening to Marcela Vega at the Champagne Breakfast, and looking back over the past year, I am proud that we have collectively helped Marcela, Mireya and Alvaro Vega cross the boundary from sanctuary to freedom. The collective efforts of the Vanier Community are much appreciated by the Vega family, including the teachers and staff who continue to work with Marcela to prepare her for formal studies next semester.

We proudly welcome Neil Caplan as guest co-editor of this *Newsletter*. Neil is also one of the organizers of the Holocaust Symposium, launched on Mon., April 11. As a community very much concerned with the present and working hard for a better future, we must not forget the past. Please come to the week's events and encourage your students to attend as well.

### April : The Month of Militant Action

In the last issue, I discussed the possibility of widespread mobilization in the education sector in April. Well the mobilization has materialized! While an agreement in principle was being reached on April 1 between the Education Minister and the leaders of two student federations (FECQ\* and FEUQ\*) the Central des Syndicats du Québec (CSQ\*\*) was adopting a plan to maximize the impact of their two strike days to take place before May 6.

One group, (the FSE-APEQ Cartel\*\*) will schedule their two day strike by region:

- April 12: Montérégie and Lanaudière
- April 13: Abitibi, Bas St-Laurent, Côte-Nord, Gaspésie and Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean
- April 14: Lanaudière, Laurentides and Outaouais
- April 19: Montreal
- April 20: Quebec City
- April 21: Central Quebec. Go to [www.fse.qc.net](http://www.fse.qc.net) for more information.

Our negotiation group, the FAC-FEC Cartel\*\* is walking out

- April 12: full day, with the FSE region named above;
- April 25: with the other Cegep teachers' federation, FNEEQ\*\*\* — also for a full day.

On April 25, there will be picket lines in front of every Cegep in all of Quebec—all Cegeps will be closed!

May 6 is the day of national mobilization for all the CSQ\*\* organizations : 120,000 workers in education, health and social service are called to demonstrate in Quebec City, with a final gathering in front of the National Assembly.

In addition:

- April 18, the CSQ professionals and support staff associated with the education sector are walking out. (This includes non-teaching professionals at Vanier.)
- May 4, the SPGQ, Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec, will walk out;
- May 5, the SFPQ, Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec, will be on strike. Combined, these latter two groups represent about 65,000 members.

Regardless of differences in negotiation demands, the common goal is to reach negotiated and satisfactory collective agreements this spring.

We have not received any serious counter-proposals to our negotiation demands from the government negotiators. The working conditions of Cegep teachers have been deteriorating for over 20 years. To address this deterioration in our profession and in our working conditions, we are asking for:

- Adequate funding specifically dedicated to teaching—reduced class size, reduced number of preparations;
- Resources to facilitate the professional integration of our new teachers—incentives to keep them in the profession;
- Job security for teachers within a reasonable time period;

- Improvement of our working environment with respect to health and safety regulations—conditions which directly affect the quality of teaching and the success of our students;
- Integration of Continuing Education teachers and an end to their status as an hourly paid, cheap labour pool.

As a colleague stated : «The government needs to pick up some serious speed and substance at the bargaining table.»

### April: Time for Non-Permanent Teachers to Submit the General Offer of Service (GOS)

If you want to maintain your hiring priority in regular day teaching, you must send in a General Offer of Service by April 30, 2005. If you or anyone you know has not received the GOS form, please contact the VCTA office at 7411 or Judy Martin in Human Resources at 7200.

*Note that this GOS does not apply to Continuing Education or Summer School courses. You must apply to teach these courses during the specified posting period. Coordinators usually inform teachers in their departments of the dates of these posting periods but it is always a good idea to regularly check the Jobs at Vanier site, via Vanier's Home Page: [www.vaniercollege.qc.ca](http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca)*

### Motion from the VCTA General Assembly re: Recognition of Working Hours-173 hours/ New Salary Structure presented to FAC

The VCTA motion asking that our federation once again consult all local unions on this issue was presented to the Federative Assembly of March 17,18 &19. We also asked that both FAC and government proposals regarding salary scales be made available to all members during this consultation process.

After much discussion and debate, it was decided that the FAC Intersyndical Council (FAC-CI) of April 21 & 22, 2005 would analyze the pertinence of carrying out this consultation before the May 2005 Federative Assembly. The analysis is to be based on the progress report presented by our FAC Nego committee at that meeting. Stay tuned for our memos!

A lot of information regarding strike actions and progress at the bargaining table will be sent to you in the next few weeks. If you have questions or need clarifications, please contact us at the VCTA Office C101.

*Syndically yours,  
Sylvie*

\* Students' organizations include FEUQ, Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, representing 170,000 students; FECQ, Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec, representing 80,000 college students; CASSEE, Coalition de l'association pour une solidarité syndicale élargie, representing 55,000 striking students in the following institutions: 34,828 students in 13 Cegeps across the province, 18,188 students from four student associations of Université du Québec à Montréal, UQAM, 1,472 students from five student associations of Université Laval in Quebec city, 1,159 students from seven student association of Université de Montréal, 40 students from Université de Sherbrooke, and 130 students from l'École secondaire alternative le Vitrail in Montreal. *Note that the more militant CASSEE was not invited to the meeting with the Education Minister on April 1, 2005 where the other student groups were presented with the agreement in principle. They are deemed to be too confrontational in their pressure tactics.*

\*\* CSQ, Centrale des Syndicats du Québec, a federation representing 120,000 members in education, health, social service and daycare centres of the Quebec public sector This includes the FPSS, Fédération du personnel de soutien scolaire, the FPPE, Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l'éducation du Québec, the FPSES, Fédération du personnel de soutien de l'enseignement supérieur, the FEC, Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de Cégep, the FPPC, Fédération du personnel professionnel des collèges, the FSE, Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (80,000 members), the UQII, Union québécoise des infirmières et infirmiers, the FPSSS, Fédération du personnel de la santé et des services sociaux, the FSPSSS, Fédération des syndicats de professionnelles et professionnels de la santé et des services sociaux.

In cartel for the present nego: the FAC-FEC Cartel consists of our federation FAC, Fédération Autonome du Collégial (17 Cegeps) and FEC, Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de Cégep (7 Cegeps).

The APEQ-FSE Cartel consists of APEQ, l'Association provinciale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec, representing 7,500 elementary and high school teachers of English School Boards across the province and FSE, Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement, representing 80,000 elementary and high school teachers of French School Boards across Quebec.

\*\*\* FNEEQ, Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec, represents college teachers in 32 Cegeps across Quebec and is affiliated with the larger CSN, Conseil Syndical Nationale, which represents many workers, including those in the health field.

# SRAM: Motions and Legalities

By Hode Erdogan and Shirley Pettifer

The last four issues of the Newsletter have carried articles alerting Vanier faculty to serious concerns and possible negative consequences of switching from our current student application system (CAS) to the SRAM system. We have urged the Academic Administration to investigate a better route: developing our own in-house web-based system *compatible with the relevant data bases* and to push the decision date from June 2005 to June 2006.

Here, we raise two important points. One is positive: we urge Departments and Programs to consider passing a motion such as the one passed by the Liberal Arts Program. Second, we raise questions about the legalities of implementing SRAM—including the so-called trial run.

## Departments and Programs: Take a Stand

Departments and Programs have begun to assess the impact of the SRAM application system on their enrollments. Smaller and specialized programs seem to have a keener sense of the negative impact the SRAM application system could have. We urge all departments and programs to make this an agenda item.

But how can you assess the impact of SRAM? Resources are readily available:

- Read the *Report to the Joint Coordinators Committee on the Proposed Implementation of the SRAM Admissions System at Vanier College (Nov. 15, 2004)*. It contains a comparative summary of the cost/benefits of CAS and SRAM.
- This Report is available in its entirety in the November Issue of the **VCTA Newsletter** (Vol. 22, No. 3). If you've chucked your copy, you can access the Newsletter in PDF format. Go to [www.vaniercollege.qc.ca](http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca), click on Index: A to Z, then "V", then *VCTA Newsletter Archives*.
- More concerns and recommendations can be found in the *VCTA Newsletter Archives*: October 2004; January 2005; March 2005 issues.

Together, these sources of information provide useful criteria to assess SRAM's impact on your program. Please forward your motions, not only to your Faculty Dean and the Academic Dean, but also to the Vice-Chair of Academic Council, Alena Perout, the VCTA, and to your faculty representatives on the Board of Directors: Mark Prentice and Hode Erdogan.

The Liberal Arts Program unanimously passed the following motion:

The Liberal Arts Program is of the opinion that S.R.A.M. would be detrimental to Vanier College enrollment in general and to the Liberal Arts Program enrollment in particular.

Other motions might refer to the recommendation we made in the March Issue of the **Newsletter**: that the decision about switching to the SRAM application system be delayed to June 2006; that the cost of updating our own system be fully researched before any decision is made.

## Legalities:

Ministerial Regulations\*, Vanier College By-Laws\*\* and our Collective Agreement\*\*\* contain specific procedures for decisions concerning admissions, admission criteria and admission procedures. These decisions must be submitted to Academic Council, the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors and the Board of Directors. Why has the Academic Administration not brought the SRAM discussion to these bodies?

Furthermore, expenditures that exceed \$100,000 are also subject to specific procedures. The service contract for the SRAM trial run alone will cost more than \$100,000. This has not been discussed by the Executive Committee of the Board, nor has it been brought to the Board as required by the Vanier College By-Laws.\*\*\*\*

So, in addition to the grave concerns about the negative impact the SRAM application system could have on programs and student enrollment, we add serious questions about legal procedures that have not been followed. At this point, we question just how legal even the trial run of the SRAM application system is.

### \* **General and Vocational Colleges Act: Article 17.0.2**

*The Academic Council must give its opinion to the Board on any question submitted to it by the Board in matters within its jurisdiction. The following must be submitted to the Council before being discussed by the Board:*

**Item e:** *any draft by-law or policy relating to the rules, procedures and criteria governing the admission and registration of students.*

Continued on page 8

# JEWISH VICTIMHOOD AND TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

by Neil Caplan



Photo: Denis Lafontaine

Since the early 1990s, I have been teaching a college-level Humanities course entitled: “‘Lessons’ of the Holocaust: Explorations into Good and Evil” – with deliberate inverted commas around ‘Lessons’. On two occasions in the past five years, I have also been invited to teach an introductory-level university course on the history of the Holocaust. One of the most difficult educational challenges is to teach students about this painful and difficult subject – one of the twentieth century’s most brutal, thorough and industrialized genocides – without melodrama, sentimentality or moralizing.

But *what*, exactly, should one teach about? There are a number of possibilities:

- The background culture of intolerance, dehumanization and racism that prepared the ground for this state-sponsored plan of mass-murder;
- The socio-economic and religious reasons for the vulnerability of the victims;
- The details of the political program of the perpetrators;
- The motives and psychology of the killers and their accomplices;
- The facts and chilling numbers of the clever assembly-line process by which mass murders were carried out;
- The responses or non-responses of onlookers inside the countries affected and abroad;
- The tales of civil courage of those

who risked their lives to protect or rescue Jews, Roma (Gypsies), homosexuals and other persecuted and targeted groups.

The selection of topics and the emphasis will, of course, reflect the interests and background of the teacher, the nature of the particular student audience, and the contemporary issues that may offer parallels or links to these events of the not-too-distant past.

Another and equally important question also needs to be constantly addressed: *Why* teach about the Holocaust? Is it for the sake of some “lessons” we want to deduce and impart? If so, *which* “lessons” do we want students to learn? Here, too, there is a considerable range of possible answers. There are universal themes, such as:

- That “it” can happen again, here or anywhere;
- The ways we can try to insure that it should “*never again*” happen here, or elsewhere;
- That “it” *has happened* many times since 1945, and *is even happening* somewhere in this world as we speak;
- That victims must cry out against their persecutors and not suffer silently;
- That victims may contain within themselves hidden strengths and resources to survive unimaginable deprivations and suffering;
- That bystanders should at least bear witness to the victimization, if they

are unable to intervene to prevent it;

- That bystanders should hear with compassion the pleas of victims and attempt to act upon such appeals;
- That most of us will likely face moral decisions not about whether we shall be perpetrators, but rather about whether we will be passive bystanders.

Given the fact that the Jews were the primary victims of the Nazi Holocaust, there are also a number of particular “lessons” that can be developed, such as:

- That Jews have always, throughout their long history, been a vulnerable and persecuted minority;
- That Jews should “never again” go like sheep to their slaughter, but should instead display active, heroic resistance;
- That Jews need their own homeland, nation-state and army to protect them;
- That Jews around the world cannot rely for their security on their non-Jewish neighbours, however well-intentioned some of them may be.

While there is nothing inherently wrong with focusing specifically on the Jews as the main victims of Hitler’s “Final Solution,” this emphasis – if inappropriately treated – can lead to undesirable pedagogical outcomes. These can range from students’ weariness and lack of sympathy for the Jewish victims to open resentment

and anti-Semitic attitudes. In attempting to prevent such counter-productive attitudes among students, teachers need to make a conscious effort to avoid some of the unhealthy and inappropriate uses to which Jewish “victimhood” has often been put.

### The Uses and Abuses of “Victimhood”

“Victimhood” – the process of drawing attention to and emphasizing the victimization of a particular group – has been used in many parts of the world for successfully advancing the causes of victims and demanding apologies and/or restitution from the accused victimizers. To cite three recent examples: (a) in North America, aboriginal nations’ land claims have led to lengthy negotiations and settlements, and in some cases to revised treaties; (b) victims

of sexual abuse as children and orphans in residential schools under church care have pursued their abusers and in some cases won recognition of, and reparations for, the harm done to them; and (c) internationally, Armenians are still today lobbying (with only partial success) for acknowledgment that the massacres and deportations they suffered a hundred years ago were indeed a genocide perpetrated by the Turks.

“Claimed victimhood,” Rabbi Michael Goldberg has written, “carrie[s] with it significant moral and political leverage over those cast in the role of victimizers.” Indeed, Goldberg and other commentators have ridiculed the explosion of “the number of squatters staking claims to victimhood on the contemporary American moral and political landscape.”<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, such

competition among victim groups leads to absurd and pathetic results, including pointless debates over which people suffered more (as if there were an accepted standard for measuring greater and lesser pain or suffering), an overall de-sensitization to others’ suffering, and little or nothing pointing to a future in which we might imagine a world with fewer victimizers and victims.

If there is today a long queue of those claiming moral and other redress by virtue of their being victims, many Jews would say that their people deserve to stand at the head of that queue. The recurring victimization of the Jews throughout the ages has indeed left a scar on their self-image and their worldviews.

Interestingly, however, in the two decades following World War II, there was little public focus on the survivors of the Nazi Holocaust. These traumatized victims found that, even if they could muster the strength and clarity of mind to retell the horrors they had just endured, most people were unable or unwilling to listen – leading those survivors to stifle rather than express their experiences of deprivation, suffering, humiliation and despair.

By the 1960s, however, the Jews’ *victimization* during the Holocaust was being transformed, both consciously and unconsciously, into a full-blown sense of *victimhood* that is today treated almost as though it were an inherent and immutable feature of Jewish identity. This role of this “victimhood” as an element of Jewish identity is, I would argue, both dubious and dangerous.

The complex experiences and visceral feelings of Jewish Holocaust victims have too often been reduced to a simple phrase: “*Never Again!*” This slogan was popularized by the



Graphic by Roger Guetta

*Continued on page 25*

# Union 101: Acronyms, Affiliations and Negotiations + Strike 101

By Charles F. Levine

FAC (Fédération Autonome du Collégial), FEC (Fédération des Enseignants Collégiaux-CSQ), FNEEQ (Fédération des Enseignants et Enseignants du Québec-CSN). In times of negotiations and strikes, these acronyms appear in the news almost daily. FAC, FEC and FNEEQ are the three federations that represent CEGEP teachers. Who are they, and what are the relationships among them as we proceed (ever so slowly) towards a new contract?

The VCTA belongs to FAC. FAC, which now has 17 member unions, was established in 1988 as a breakaway from FNEEQ. These local unions left FNEEQ largely because they were unhappy about the relationship between FNEEQ and the CSN (Confédération des Syndicats Nationux). The CSN has many members in the public service (for example, hospital workers), but only FNEEQ represents teachers. People at Vanier and elsewhere felt that the interests of teachers were not well represented in the CSN and often took second place to the demands of other, larger groups.

Since then FAC has pursued an independent course. Among other things, this has meant that there are differences in the contracts among the various unions. The price of independence has meant, however, that we have no seat at the Central table, where, for example, our salaries are negotiated.

FEC-CSQ (Confédération des Syndicats du Québec) has 7 members. It is the smallest of the CEGEP unions, but the CSQ represents most of Quebec's primary and secondary school teachers, hence, is very strong in the education sector. At various times, FAC and FEC have tried to work together. In this round of negotiations, we have agreed to a "negotiation cartel" with FEC. This means that we will work hard to achieve common goals and that FAC will have some representation at the Central Table, via the CSQ.

On the other hand, there are some anomalies, such as the fact that FEC has accepted the deal on the famous "173 extra" hours (an attempt to resolve the pay equity issue in the Colleges), and FAC has not. Moreover, FEC's collective agreement favors local job security, while ours contains a network-wide version of job security.

FNEEQ is the largest of the College teachers' unions, with 35 members. As such, FNEEQ has often been seen as taking the lead in CEGEP negotiations. The problem, as previously noted, is that FNEEQ's efforts are tied to those of the larger CSN groupings, and they have often been obliged to wait while the CSN tries to settle issues in the health care area or among civil servants. Efforts have sometimes been made (particularly in the last round of negotiations) to combine the efforts of all three unions, with rather limited results.

Let us all hope that the FAC-FEC cartel eventually produces beneficial results. Good luck to us all.

## STRIKE 101

As the semester winds through its crazy-quilt pattern of strike days (whatever happened to Monday?), many people are confused about what effects these days will have on their pay checks and what the College can and cannot do about these lost days.

We are paid for 260 days of "availability", which includes two semesters of 82 working days (classes, plus exam period). If we strike, we lose one day's pay for every day on strike. If the College then alters the calendar to compensate for the lost days, we do not recuperate this money, as long as these "new" days fall within the 260 days of availability. That's why you keep hearing about dates like June 15<sup>th</sup> as a "limit" to the semester. After that, they would have to pay us more money.

*Charles F. Levine, a self-confessed dinosaur who teaches Political Science and Humanities, has spent many years on the CRT, the VCTA Executive and the Executive of FAC. He has worked with previous editors of the Newsletter, co-edited the January 2005 issue and continues to volunteer his eagle-eye proof-reading skills.*



SRAM Continued from page 5

### \*\* Vanier College By-Laws: By-Law No. 3 on the Academic Council:

**Article 1.02 Consultation:** *The Academic Council shall be consulted on the following specific items, among others, prior to any decision by the College:*

#### **Item C. Policies concerning development, particularly:**

**Item xi** *any draft by-law or policy relating the rules, procedures and criteria governing the admission and registration of students.*

### \*\*\* Collective Agreement: Article 4-5.02

*Academic Council shall be consulted on the following specific questions, among others:*

**Item f** *any policy concerning admission criteria, classification and establishment of student quotas, or choice of complimentary courses offered to students.*

### \*\*\*\* Vanier College By-Laws: Consultation with the Board; The Executive Committee, Article 5-10 Powers

**Item B** *The Executive Committee has the power to approve any capital expenditure claims, any tender and any service contract where the amount of such claim, tender or contract does not exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000). Where any expenditure claims, tender or service contract exceeds one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000), this will be reported at the next regular Board meeting.*

Hode Erdogan has served many terms on the VCTA Executive, currently sits on the CRT, Association Council and the Board of Directors. He is also the Coordinator of the Physics Dept. and the SA/MS Program. Shirley Pettifer, a former member of the VCTA Executive, has coordinated the Dept. of Social and Cultural Sciences, the Explorations Program, Women's Studies and the Honours Program for Social Science and Commerce students. Currently, she sits on Association Council, teaches Sociology and edits the VCTA Newsletter.



# Master Teacher Program (PERFORMA): Path to Effective Teaching

by Louise Robinson



I'm from what is commonly referred to as Cohort One: I first started in the *New Teachers' Program* in January of 2000. Here it is, the Spring of 2005, and I am still taking courses, but now in the *Master Teachers' Program (MTP)*. Five years later, I think it is great to have this opportunity to share my *MTP* experiences with my colleagues.

I have become a strong supporter of the *Master Teacher Program*. I can't help but think that the more there are teachers involved in it, the better it will be for our students' success and for Vanier College in general. As more experienced teachers retire, new teachers will step in and set the pedagogical future for Vanier College. The *Master Teacher Program* will help new teachers start off on the right track. It will help them understand and implement many different aspects of effective teaching, have a better idea of where the students are coming from and how to assess student needs, use more effective instructional strategies, use assessment as a learning tool, and the list goes on. Getting some of the not so new teachers involved would be great too!

Initially, I became involved in the program because I found that although I love teaching, I was struggling as a teacher. When I started teaching in the CEGEP system, in August of 1999, I thought I knew how to teach. After all, I had already taught for three years in Gander, Newfoundland.

I stood in front of the class, told the students what I wanted them to learn, gave a few assignments and then a test. I could not understand why many students did so badly, why they were not understanding what I was teaching. When I spoke to another teacher about it, he said, "Just because you think you are teaching them something, it does not mean they are learning it."

Unfortunately I really did not know how to do anything differently. This is how I saw teaching when I had been a student. Pedagogy was not even part of my vocabulary yet.

The Department Coordinator realised I was having difficulty understanding why I was not always getting across to the students the way I wanted. He suggested I take the Performa course offered the next semester. And here I am, 5 years later, still in the program and happily, the Coordinator is still encouraging new teachers to sign up for courses in the *MTP*.

One of the great perks of taking these courses is having the opportunity to participate in discussions and exchanges of ideas with teachers not only from other programs, but also from other colleges. The wide range of perspectives is incredibly informative. Our discussions involve everything from pedagogy to discipline problems. I think this exchange is what I will miss most when I complete the program.

Another effect of my *MTP* courses is a new awareness of the importance of English and Humanities courses—an awareness almost diametrically opposite to what I had when I started the *MTP*.

To give you an idea of where I'm coming from, I have a BScEE and a Master's Degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering. While earning these degrees, I did not take a single Humanities or English course. I did not want, nor did I see the need, to take such courses. After all, how would they help me in my chosen field? Unfortunately, this meant that soon after I started taking courses in the *MTP* I realised that I did not know how to write (discounting technical writing, which is very different). Writing to communicate non-technical ideas wasn't something I had ever had to do.

When I started teaching here, at Vanier, I did not see the need for my students to be taking these non-technical courses either. As far as I was concerned, having them take more technical courses would be to their benefit. This opinion changed as I progressed through the *MTP* and came to understand what the program approach is all about. I realised that there are some skills students cannot acquire in their technical courses alone. These include the ability to write coherently, think critically and analyse. I have now become a supporter of general education for technical students and I promote these courses to my students.

Most important, the *MTP* courses have had a major effect on how I teach. I don't just stand in front of the class and lecture any more. I now use a variety of teaching strategies and have a better understanding of what works and what doesn't. I also find that when I teach the same course for two or three semesters I constantly make changes to the course and how I teach it. At one point I thought

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# Israelis and Palestinians: The Shared History Project



Photo by Judith Lerner Crawley: To Neil's right, is a projection of an outline from the 1<sup>st</sup> booklet referred to below.

On March 12, Humanities teacher Neil Caplan addressed about 75 people over Sunday breakfast at the Shaare-Zion Congregation. His topic was: "History's Double Helix: The Intertwined Narratives of Israel/Palestine," the title of a new book edited by Robert Rotberg based on papers presented at meetings of a group of Israeli, Palestinian and American intellectuals at Harvard University. One of the most interesting chapters in this forthcoming volume is about the work of a group called PRIME (Peace Research Institute in the Middle East). Judith Crawley attended the talk, took the photo and provided the web-link from which excerpts appear below.

Shared History Project: *Since January 2001 we held thirteen (13) meetings of a group of 6-7 Palestinian teachers, and a similar group of Israeli (Jewish) teachers led by Prof. Adnan Massalam and Prof. Eyal Naveh (as history experts)...*

*We developed...one booklet of three historical events that the teachers chose (1917/Balfour declaration, 1948 war, 1987-93/first Palestinian Intifada) in which there are two parallel narratives (an Israeli and a Palestinian) accounting for the same event. The second booklet will soon go to print (three additional events: the 1920s, the 1930s and 1967 war) and the teachers work now on the third booklet (the 1950s, the 1970-1980, and 1993-2000). The teachers tried the first booklet with some of their students. We will also develop a teacher guide and try to conduct an evaluation of this method, in comparison to a single narrative approach.*

*The first booklet has been translated into Hebrew and Arabic, English, Italian and French, and will soon be translated also into German, Spanish (Catalan, etc.) and Portuguese...Shoshana Steinberg and Summer Jaber-Massarwa are observing and documenting the process. This project was funded by the Wye River and the Ford Foundation.*

<http://vispo.com/PRIME/news2004.htm>

*Continued from page 9*

that I would reach a point with a course where it was as good as it was going to get. I have since come to realise that I'm probably never going to stop making changes to the courses I teach. Teaching is a never-ending process of searching for and discovering what works best with a particular group of students.

As a teacher, I have gained enormously from all I have learned in these courses. I strongly believe that my students have gained as well, and that they continue to reap the benefits of my studies as I apply more and more of the theory from the *MTP* courses to my teaching practices. I plan on taking the *MTP* courses as long as they are offered.

Louise Robinson, BScEE (UNB); MEng. (McMaster University) will complete the requirements for her DE in the *Master Teacher Program* this spring. Louise started her career in industry, where she worked designing and programming interfaces. She switched to teaching when she moved from Toronto to Gander, Newfoundland. After moving to the Montreal area and a 9-year break to stay home with her 3 children, she returned to teaching in 1999. She has been teaching in Vanier's Industrial Electronics Technology Program for the last 6 years.

# First Impressions of FAC

By Eric Durling

I first became aware of FAC (Fédération Autonome du Collégial), as is probably the case with most new teachers, through the publications that would periodically appear in my mailbox. As I glanced through them, and eventually understood that our Federation is composed of the local teachers' associations of seventeen colleges throughout Quebec, FAC remained a bit abstract for me.

When our Federation did assume a human face for me, it was that of representatives like Jean-Claude Drapeau from Rimouski, who would come to our general assemblies and explain certain issues upon which we would have to vote with our other member colleges. After becoming a member of Association Council, the body that acts as a sounding board for the V.C.T.A. Executive, I became a bit more familiar with FAC as we were given regular reports on developments at the federation level. But I really came to have a concrete understanding of FAC when Vanier teachers were invited to a demonstration with our Federation colleagues. As I briefly met the executives of all of the local unions, I was struck by the warmth and respect that existed among them.

This impression has been reaffirmed since I've been on the Vanier Executive. Going to Federative Assemblies gave me a real idea of the personalities of the various colleges that make up FAC. Here, delegations of three to eight teachers from each establishment get together three times a year to discuss various issues—upcoming or ongoing—that affect the Federation. I quickly understood that different colleges have different interests, but I was immediately impressed by the level of discussion and by the orderliness of the debates. Workshops and informal activities of F.A.'s also al-



*Eric Durling with FAC president Alain Dion*

low delegates to discuss and exchange concerns that affect us all as CEGEP teachers. As chairman of the Non-Tenured Teachers Committee here at Vanier, I am able to confer with my counterparts from other FAC colleges at the regular workshop devoted to issues related to non-tenured teachers.

Decisions reached at Federative Assemblies are followed up at Intersyndical Council. This body, which is responsible for the regular management of FAC affairs, consists of one voting representative per union and meets at least five times a year. I usually accompany Sylvie when C.I.'s are held in Montreal, and they always prove to be interesting meetings. The smaller group allows for dynamic discussions and different points of view quickly become apparent. However, as is always the case with FAC, people on opposite sides of an issue will often be seen joking together during the breaks.

The decision-making process at FAC is a very democratic one. Major decisions that affect the whole Federation are made on the principle of the double majority (more than fifty per cent of all colleges in the Federation and more than fifty per cent of voting members). Although everyone would agree that the principle is a good one, it can occasionally be frustrating for those colleges who find themselves at odds with the majority of those in the Federation. On such occasions, such as

strike votes, those opposed to majority decisions are expected to rally and join with the other colleges in the Federation in whatever action they have voted to take. Though it may not be easy for individual colleges to accept decisions that they have voted against locally, they generally recognize that without FAC, our collective agreement, and many of the rights and privileges it gives us, would only be a fraction of what they are now.

So, for those of you who, like myself, struggled to understand what FAC is and how it relates to you as a teacher at Vanier, I would encourage you to take the time to read the documents you receive from FAC, check out the website at [www.lafac.qc.ca](http://www.lafac.qc.ca), and feel free to ask the V.C.T.A. Executive questions about Federation issues that you don't understand. As a relatively new teacher, I would also like to invite other newbies to join Association Council and the Non-Tenured Teachers Committee. Maybe you will catch the FAC bug like I did.

**ERIC DURLING** has been teaching English at Vanier since 2000. As well as being the Chairperson of the Non-Tenured Teachers Committee, he is Vice-President of the VCTA and Chairperson of Academic Council's Standing Committee on Formative Assessment.

# Retirees' Parking: A Thing of the Past?

by Hanns Wernecke, Martin Byers & IIsedore Jeremie

For the past few years, Vanier retirees who have joined the Vanier College Retired Teachers Association (VCRTA) have had the option of obtaining a free parking pass that enables them to park in the P6 and P7 parking lots near the Sports Complex. This allows them to attend college functions on a casual basis without having to pay the daily parking fee or looking for parking spots off the college property.

The arrangement was negotiated for the VCRTA by the VCTA through the Liaison Committee, with the understanding that there would be an annual review to see if the arrangement could be continued. The idea behind the arrangement is that retirees are part of the Vanier community, should be encouraged to remain active in it, and that it should be made easy for them to participate in Vanier activities, in part, as recognition for their contributions to the college.

To the surprise of the membership, the VCRTA was informed in writing in Jan. 05, that the Management Council had decided to unilaterally discontinue the arrangement at the end of the summer of 2005. In view of the original VCTA-College Liaison Committee agreement, as the very first step, we would have expected an exchange of ideas on how any perceived problems could be resolved, not an outright cancellation. This does not look like a policy of inclusion to us.

The administration's stated reasons appear to be spurious at best:

1. Retirees are taking up too many parking spaces (an unsubstantiated claim).
2. The arrangement is not fair to college employees; everybody should be expected to pay her/his own way. As an example, the administration cited that some support personnel have lower incomes than some

retirees receive in pension payments.

The VCRTA consulted its membership on this problem and arrived at the following positions:

1. **Retirees do not take up a significant number of parking spaces.** During January 2005, we took a survey of our members about their use of the Vanier parking facilities during A04.

Of the 42 people who requested parking tickets, 40 responded. Of those, 11 never used the pass (or never even picked it up), 19 were casual users (parking 1 – 6 times during the semester, and 9 were regular users, parking 1 – 3 times per week.

At most, one parking spot was taken up 12:00-13:00 every day; one spot Tuesdays 13:00-14:00, two spots Thursdays 13:00-14:00, and one spot on Wednesdays 16:00-18:00.

The "heaviest" use was 7-8 members parking Tuesdays from 16:00 to 18:00 for choir practice, hardly a peak period.

Retiree parking at any time is simply insignificant. Some retirees arranged volunteering activities for the college before or after their visits for college events. Retirees reported that no matter what time they arrived, they always had the choice of at least several parking spots.

## 2. The Question of Fairness:

- a. To put this into proportion, note that, of the many full-time support staff members who use the parking facilities, each parks a minimum of 600 hours per semester. Of the few retirees who actually use the parking pass, each might park fewer than 12 hours per semester (maximum) and most of that during off-hours. A small price to pay for

goodwill and recognition.

- b. The "fairness" reason cited by the administration implies that parking charges should somehow be related to income. Does this mean that highly-paid administrators actually pay more for their annual parking decals than less well-paid support personnel and, if this is not the case, why should the principle be applied only to retired teachers?

## P.S. The VCRTA has an open door policy: any retired Vanier employee can join.

We consulted with the VCTA Executive Committee, who was very supportive and agreed to bring the matter before the Liaison Committee, but thought that we should first ask the DG for an interview to commence dialogue. Unfortunately, he refused our request for a meeting.

The VCRTA thought that the VCTA membership should be aware of this development and the administration's handling of it, as well as their reasoning for their unilateral action. Sooner or later, everybody will be a retiree!

On a personal note, (from Hanns) as a recent retiree, I "gave back" some forty days of non-cashable accumulated sick leave at the end of A04. If I had chosen to be "sick" all those days, it would have cost the college about \$6100 in substitute pay. At \$4 per day for parking, maybe I should ask for 1525 days worth of parking as compensation? Even with parking 25 X a year (which I don't expect), I'd have 61 years of parking ahead of me (which I don't expect either).

Hanns Wernecke a teacher of Physics and Humanities, is currently the President of the VCRTA. Martin Byers, Vice President, taught Anthropology and continues to research and publish in his field. IIsedore Jeremie, Treasurer of the VCRTA, taught Mathematics.

# Acts of Resistance

Judith Lermer Crawley



*About Auschwitz*: photographs<sup>1</sup> and information exhibited at Vanier during the 2003 Annual Cégep Holocaust Symposium

In Sept 2002, I traveled to Poland with my older brother George (born Oct 1939 in Poland early in World War II) and our friend, Eda (born Nov 1945 in Lodz, Poland after the War) to visit the places and streets where our parents grew up, as well as Auschwitz Birkenau, a destination they narrowly evaded. Others in our families did not.

As we walked through one of the barracks of Auschwitz, now a museum, I noticed Eda passing a unique and startling hazy image. The photograph jumped out at me. The caption stated: *Auschwitz II Birkenau 1944: Burning Dead Bodies*. I wondered: did the Nazis take this photo? The guidebook added, about this and two other photos: “taken in secret and at great risk by one of the camp inmates in 1944, they show some women being driven into the gas chamber and the burning of the corpses on the funeral pyre.”<sup>2</sup>

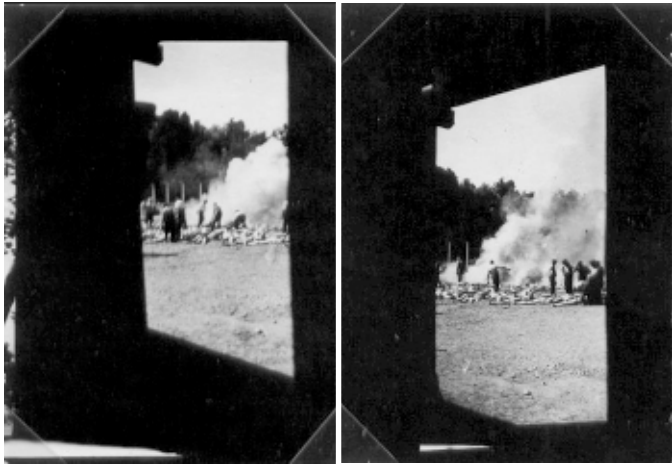
Perplexed, I wanted to know more: given the brutal conditions and reality of Auschwitz Birkenau life, how was it possible for an inmate to take (or as I used to remind my students, make) a photograph? How could someone have the liberty to hold camera to eye and choose a moment to record? Where did the camera come from? What happened to the photo? How and where was it printed? Were there other photographs?

Thus began a research project that took me beyond the resources of the internet to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Library and Archives, as well as four local libraries. Information about the process of making the photographs is sparse. I continue to exchange email

messages with the Head Archivist at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and a historian in Berlin. Though I am still working with the material in preparation for a presentation at the 2005 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences (formerly known as The Learned), I will share with VCTA Newsletter readers some of what I learned about the only known photographs taken by prisoners working in the crematoria in concert with the Camp resistance. Through this project, I became aware of the extent of complicated underground resistance activity carried on by both women and men in (and around) the Camp – a fascinating study; unfortunately, I also encountered the ferocity of holocaust deniers, driving much of the work of historians to counter their claims.

Variouly referred to as one of the “famous Polish Resistance photographs”<sup>3</sup>, Sonderkommando photographs<sup>4</sup>, and “so-called” Sonderkommando photographs,<sup>5</sup> the photo on the wall as reprinted in the photograph above is only part of the original – cropped to highlight the “interesting” part – the horrific activity occurring when the numbers of bodies to be cremated reached a peak in mid-August 1944.<sup>6</sup>

Frequently reproduced to highlight their content, these photographs differ from those made by SS photographers of early prisoners, construction scenes and the arrival of the Hungarian Jews in the spring of 1944. However, the full uncropped version “makes it possible to identify and precisely locate the scenes and the position of the photographer,”<sup>8</sup> underscoring the point of view of the photographer hiding inside the crematorium doorway.



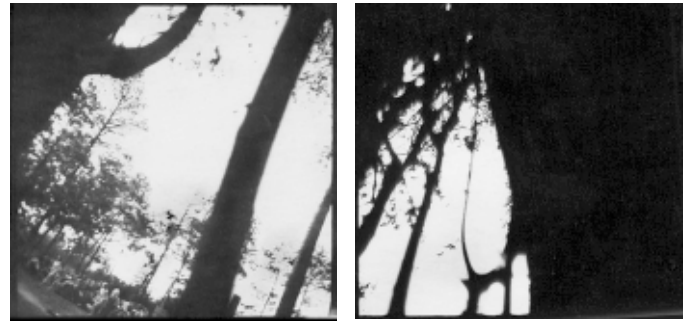
“To reframe it is to act as if Alex [the photographer] were able to take the photograph freely in the open air.”<sup>9</sup> Four photographs in all were “snapped” – another from within the doorway and two out in the open clearly shot “from the hip.”

Jean-Claude Pressac, who began his research as a Holocaust denier, but renounced his position, uses the photos to determine specific facts about the place and operation underway. Most significant for me: though one person pressed the shutter to record the images, the taking / making of the photos was a *collective action*. The elaborate plan involved many people and points to the extent of careful organized underground resistance activity at Auschwitz.

Several members of the Sonderkommando, squads (13 in all) of mainly Jewish prisoners working in the crematoria who were responsible for emptying the gas chambers and burning the corpses,<sup>10</sup> “beginning with those of its predecessors,”<sup>11</sup> were desperate “to record the crimes committed by the Germans in the Auschwitz gas chambers.”<sup>12</sup> The evidence of photographs would warn others to resist getting on the trains and attract the attention of the Allied forces.

#### A camera in Auschwitz:

Information about how the camera was obtained is contradictory – one source claims that a “Polish civilian worker Modarski, who worked on the grounds of the camp, smuggled a camera into the camp...concealed in a double-bottomed cauldron full of food, which was delivered to the Sonderkommando.”<sup>13</sup> It may have been obtained from within the camp; the resistance movement ordered their “comrades in “Canada,”\* whose job it was to classify the victims’ belongings, to locate a camera.”<sup>14</sup> Or “even the Sonderkommando had the possibility to take a camera from the undressing rooms,” since the victims arrived in Auschwitz with valuables, including money, jewelry, small bags, and other belongings. “It is quite pos-



sible that the camera came from the Lodz transports”<sup>15</sup> – the city my parents fled on Aug 31, 1939, the night before Hitler invaded Poland.

In a 1987 interview,<sup>16</sup> former Spanish Freedom fighter and anti-Fascist David Szmulewski claimed that prisoners damaged the roof of the crematorium to create a need for a repair team. “Working as a roofer, Szmulewski had more access and freedom to move around the camp without being suspected by the guards”<sup>17</sup> He lowered the camera, hidden in a false bottom of a bucket, into the crematorium to members of the Sonderkommando below and then kept watch from the roof. Alter Fajnzylberg, from France and also a Spanish Civil War veteran, testified<sup>18</sup> in 1985 that four people were present: he and brothers Szlomo (Szlojme) and Josek (Abram) Dragon, at Auschwitz since Dec 1942,<sup>19</sup> guarded and determined the moment when Alberto “Alex” Errera,<sup>20</sup> a Jew from Greece, “quickly took out his camera and pointed it toward a heap of burning bodies and pressed the shutter.”<sup>21</sup> Then the photographer hid between some trees in the courtyard and another picture was taken as the women and men undressed in front of the trees. Alex “tried to escape shortly after the event and was shot at the beginning of September 1944.”<sup>22</sup>

“The exposed film was taken back to the main camp where Helena Szpak-Daton, who worked in the SS canteen, concealed it in a toothpaste tube and smuggled it out of the camp”<sup>23</sup> on September 7, 1944. A secret message, addressed to the PPS (Polish Socialist Party) Brzeszcze Group leadership, was handwritten in Polish<sup>24</sup> by Józef Cyrankiewicz and Stanislaw Klodzinki (active in the left-oriented Polish resistance movement at Auschwitz<sup>25</sup>):

*We are sending you pictures from Birkenau, from a gassing operation. The picture shows one of the pyres in the open air, on which corpses are burned, when the crematorium cannot keep up with the burning. In front of the pyre lie corpses, waiting to be thrown on the pyre. The other picture shows one of the places in the little woods, where people undress supposedly for a*

*Continued on page 23*

# A Teacher's Life: Before and After the Arrival of Elinor

by Miles DeNora

*“What the hell did we do with all that free time?”* That is the question Marianne and I often ask since Elinor was born last summer. The reality of having another person in our lives has been a difficult change, but an incredibly fulfilling experience.

It is hard to remember what things were like before Elinor came along. The last nine months have gone by too quickly, and it seems like Elinor has been with us for so much longer. Having children can and should be a life altering experience for anyone, however, I think that teachers face special challenges when they become parents. For many of us, “homework”—preparation and marking at home—has been our reality since we entered this profession. How then do you adjust to having a baby, someone that you want to spend as much time with as possible, without it costing your schoolwork? Well, I don't know how other parents have done it, but this is my story.<sup>1</sup>

Let's go back to a few days before Elinor was born. Marianne and I had spent the second half of June getting our house ready for the arrival of our little girl. We weren't able to start preparing any earlier but did not think it would be a problem because Elinor was not due until the end of July. I think of the weeks leading up to the birth as the *Era of Ikea*: I scrambled to assemble all the new furniture we bought, including a wall-to-wall shelf in our office. On quiet nights (we don't have many of them anymore) I can still hear the echo of the curses I uttered over those damn Ikea Allen keys. (The perfect anger management test would involve someone assembling an Ikea desk; if they can get through the process without firing off a list of expletives, they pass!) Due to time spent swearing, I did not completely finish all the assembling before our first pre-natal class, the evening of Jul. 6<sup>th</sup>.

We had only just begun to wrap our minds around the fact that our lives were about to completely change because Marianne's school year did not finish until the last week of June. Finally, here we were—forced to deal with the idea of the actual birth.

The class was interesting, in no small part because we were the couple closest to giving birth (mostly Marianne). There was a discernable sympathy for us, as we were the guinea pigs for everyone else.

One of the things that the instructor covered was the warning signs that you were going into labour. Neither Marianne nor I realized that only in 10-15% of cases is the start of labour signaled by the woman's water breaking (although in 99% of those cases, the water breaking is accompanied by the man screaming in panic).

A more likely sign is that the mother will experience severe back pains, followed soon after by the start of contractions. This was mentioned on more than one occasion. Oddly, during the break in the class Marianne told me, in no uncertain terms, that her back was very, very sore. Now, Marianne and I are reasonably intelligent people (okay, at least one of us is), but we failed



to make the connection between her sore back and the possibility that she was about to go into labour.

The connection was made for us about three hours after the class finished, when soon after going to bed Marianne woke up and said, “Oh my God, I think my water just broke.”<sup>2</sup>

The point of this story is that, in hindsight, I think we benefited from having no time to think about what was going to happen to us. We did not have the opportunity to stress out and get worried about it. It just happened. Marianne would argue with that assessment as it happened only after fifteen hours of labour, but nevertheless, we were quickly confronted with our new reality. We also benefited tremendously from the fact that I was off for the next six weeks so I could be present during this transition to parenthood. And Quebec's generous parental leave policy means that Marianne will be off work (although definitely still working!) for the first fourteen months of Elinor's life.

For me, going back to school was a real challenge. The biggest thing was not being able to spend as much time with Elinor as I had during the summer. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that I had decided to take my first Performa class during the fall semester. Granted, my teacher for this class (the one and only Shirley Pettifer) was sympathetic to my situation and very supportive. Nevertheless it added to my workload.

Another difficulty was that I had an 8:30 am class every day of the week. When Marianne and I saw the schedule in May we both thought it was great: I would be home every afternoon to help with Elinor. We forgot to factor in the lack of sleep issue. There is nothing that prepares you for that. Even though I had people telling me to get ready for sleepless nights, I just assumed that it wouldn't be that bad. I was, to put it mildly, incredibly wrong. On top of my regular workload and my Performa class, I also decided to take on the class of a colleague in the sixth week of the semester. I hoped it would be for a short period. It turned out that I had the class for the rest of the semester.

My first approach to being a teacher with a child at home was simple; I told all of my classes to brace themselves for stories about Elinor. And there were plenty of stories. I had always maintained that I would not become one of those parents who regales everyone with endless stories about the magnificent, unprecedented things that their children were doing. As my students can attest, I fell right into that trap<sup>3</sup>.

I found it impossible not to talk about Elinor. She had, without question, become the most important thing in my life, and I couldn't help but share how much I loved having her around.

I also made it a point to tell my students that there would be times when I would not be returning assignments as quickly as they would like. The reason for that was simple: if it came down to a choice of marking exams or playing with Elinor, Elinor would win every time. I wanted to be honest with my classes about this. I wanted to make sure that I took the time to enjoy my newborn daughter, and to help Marianne as much as possible.

What this meant, however, was that preparation and marking were done whenever Elinor was either asleep or feeding. The hardest part was starting something, only to stop and pick it up at a later time. It felt like I was starting all over again whenever I sat down to do work. Marianne and I quickly realized that I was going to need longer stretches of time to get work done and we made an effort to make sure that happened.

Another issue that made it difficult was Elinor's sleeping pattern. Although she began to sleep through the night after only two months or so (I can feel that the parents who are reading this have begun to lose sympathy for me, if they haven't already), she had the curious habit of staying up until 11:00 o'clock most nights, and sometimes until midnight. This complicated another solution to my diminished opportunities to get work done: to stay up after Elinor had gone to sleep. I was staying up until 1:30-2:00 am and getting up at 6:15 am for my first class. I became, at times, a walking zombie whose lectures consisted of endless mutterings about Elinor.

I tried napping with Elinor in the afternoons but that just meant I wasn't taking advantage of her sleep times to get stuff done and I would also awake in a complete daze, and would remain that way for hours. Of course I know what those of you who know me are asking: "How is this different from any other time?" Well, this daze was caused by a lack of sleep, an altogether different animal. I soon gave up on the idea of staying up late.

The biggest change for me, in terms of getting work done, was the elimination of procrastination. My normal pattern of marking was half an hour of correcting followed by half an hour of avoiding correcting. This was no longer possible; when I sat down to mark I had to get as much done as quickly as I could. Elinor has performed an incredible feat: she has destroyed the system of procrastination that I had developed over twenty years, stretching all the way back to CEGEP! Now when I teach Time Management to Explorations students, I no longer have to stand with my fingers crossed behind my back.

Recently, I was talking to a colleague on the picket line (the best time to talk, what else are you going to do?) and he told me he has found the perfect Game Boy distraction to help him get through the endless hours of marking. I could only listen with envy as I thought about my frenzied attempts at marking, no time for Game Boy!

The fall was, for me, a curious blend of time moving too slowly and too quickly. As far as teaching was concerned, time almost stood still. The semester seemed like it was taking forever. At home, however, time flew by. The changes that Marianne and I could see in Elinor every day made us marvel at how fast she was growing up. More than anything, I wanted the holidays to arrive so I could go back to spending as much time as possible with my little girl.

I would like to say that I found my footing by the end of the semester and that I adjusted to life as a teacher with children, but I would be stretching things. The truth is, I barely kept my head above water for the entire fifteen weeks. I was scrambling to stay one step ahead of the prep work and my marking. What I had been telling my students about it being impossible to catch up once you have fallen behind had come true for me.

I was much better prepared once the second semester started. Although I am taking another Performa class this semester, my schedule is much friendlier with only one 8:30 am class. I have made it a point to stay on top of my marking. (I say this now but what happens when I start collecting IP papers?) Now that Marianne is feeling more rested and better able to concentrate, she has gone back to working on her PhD dissertation and I have been able to give her the time that she needs to do just that. Elinor takes extended naps and goes to bed at around 8:30.

The endless exhaustion of last semester is not being repeated, although we do wish Elinor would sleep a little later than 6:30! Incredibly enough, the novelty of having Elinor around has worn off. This is our new reality and it seems like it has always been this way. As a result, my students are not hearing nearly as many stories about Elinor this semester, although I did tell them that when Marianne holds her up to the window in the morning, she now waves goodbye to me.

I find it amazing how adaptable people can be to changing circumstances. In October, I would never have guessed that I would have enough time (just barely) to work on a story for the *Newsletter*. It seemed like I would never again have a free moment. Marianne has been incredibly helpful in making sure that I have enough time to get marking done and, of course, she makes sure Elinor is as happy as can be.

Although we have become accustomed to our new reality, I must say that I am very much looking forward to the summer. For all the difficulty in adjusting to our new family life, I realize unequivocally, when lying in bed with Elinor asleep on my chest, that I love this little girl and would not give her up for anything in the world.

- 1 At the outset I would like to take full responsibility for the opinions expressed in this piece. Any and all lawsuits should spare Marianne, especially since Elinor needs her more than anything!
- 2 I am still waiting for the refund for the pre-natal class.
- 3 I apologized to my classes at the end of the semester for becoming that kind of parent and I thanked them for their patience. I do think, however, that most of them enjoyed the stories. After all, from their perspective, it was a break from history! When I see students from last semester in the hall, they usually ask me how Elinor is doing.

Miles DeNora is the deliriously proud father of Elinor. He has worked at Vanier College since the fall of 2001 teaching History, Explorations and Methodology courses. Marianne Lynch is the happy mother of Elinor and a member of the Beaconsfield High School English Department. She is juggling her duties as a mother with work on a PhD with hopes of getting a job at CEGEP. Elinor is the object of their affection who so far has shown no desire to enter the teaching profession.



# NOTES FROM THE VOYAGE

Compiled by Neil Caplan from the journal entries kindly provided by Pam Berlow, Karen Tennenhouse, and Jacqui Paull

While most Vanier students and teachers went their separate ways during spring break, on early Sunday morning March 20<sup>th</sup> a busload of 35 students and 5 adult staff set off from the 821 steps headed for New York City and Washington DC.

Thus began Vanier's second consecutive "Trip for Tolerance," organized by members of Jewish Studies and Science Plus, and generously subsidized by the VCTA and other benefactors of the Vanier Community: the DG's office, Academic Dean, Faculty Deans, The Learning Centre, Bookstore, as well as two outside community foundations.

This unique tour in multi-ethnic understanding was led and organized by Matthieu Sossoyan (Anthropology), with the able assistance of Karen Tennenhouse (Physics), Jacqui Paull (Science Plus, Mathematics), Roger Guetta (Communications, Theatre) and Pam Berlow (The Learning Centre).

Sunday March 20, 7:15 am - Our Departure

Why is it so much more exhilarating to begin a journey early in the morning? Everyone arrives on time – now that's a good sign! Parents wave goodbye, and off we go. Most of the 8-hour bus ride is spent chatting, but we also see three short films on anti-racism, anti-semitism and Islam. People begin jotting notes in their journals, which we'll keep up day by day throughout the trip. Border crossing, hotel check-in and unpacking were uneventful. Cold and drizzle are not enough to dampen the students' spirits.

Diversity among Ourselves

All the while soaking in external sights, tastes and sounds, our group experienced a natural internal process of bonding. What a wide range of travelers we were. Some students were under 18, while others were over thirty. They came from a variety of programs (from photography to health science) and had a wide array of

knowledge and life experience to bring to our discussions.

Students and trip leaders represented many different cultures and faiths, with first- and second-generation students from the Lebanese, Romanian, German, Irish, Greek, Italian, Indo-Pakistani and Chinese communities, and native students with Micmac and Algonquin ancestry. We were Catholics, Protestants, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Muslim and Bahai', as well as both Ashkenazi (Eastern-European) Jews and a few Sephardim from Egypt and Ethiopia.

Fascination with The Big Apple  
Some of us felt right at home in New York City, while others were coming to the United States for the very first time. Jacqui loved Times Square. Pam preferred Greenwich Village where, among other exploits, Matthieu devoured a deep-fried Mars bar at an Irish fish-and-chip joint wonderfully named "A Salt and Battery."

Students loved poking their heads into the Tibetan shop, the comic book store, and the many vegetarian restaurants. On Canal Street they picked up fancy perfumes and handbags or samurai swords and CDs, each according to their own tastes. Students were able to eat fairly cheaply in Chinatown, or stock up for the bus ride at the local supermarket.

Monday March 21 - Ellis Island  
Still cold and damp, but no rain today. We sailed by Liberty Island, where we got to see the "Lady" herself. Despite Karen's briefing to students on the bus, everyone was hit with amazement at the "Immigrants' Story" as portrayed at the Ellis Island museum, beginning with the huge piles of old luggage, bags, trunks that greeted us as we entered.

Pam was really excited to find her great-grandfather's name in the registry by logging on to the computer. Matthieu was delighted to discover

that a Sahag Sossoyan had arrived at Ellis Island in 1911. The students really loved this museum and seemed to be able to empathize and relate the artifacts and pictures to their own parents' and grandparents' journeys.

In the early afternoon, after returning to Battery Park, we split into groups. Some students chose the Guggenheim or the MOMA (Museum of Modern Art), some went shopping on Canal Street or in Chinatown, while others walked down Broadway to view Trinity Church, Wall Street, and the Afro-American Burial Ground.

Regrouping on the steps of Saint Patrick's Cathedral we swapped stories and anecdotes. And get this: who would have believed that Roger even met *Leonard Cohen* and got him to sing gently in his ear?! (Ask him about it!).

Tuesday March 22 - Speakers in DC  
Despite the best-laid plans, we arrived late for our first appointment at the Arab-American Institute on a sunny Wednesday morning. We were welcomed by both a young Lebanese-American female Democrat and a young Egyptian-American male Republican. Even the president of the Institute, Dr. James Zogby, dropped by to crack a few jokes and say hi.

Both here and at the Anti-Defamation League (B'nai Brith) and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) meetings, the speakers were enthusiastic, patient, interesting and happy to answer our hard-hitting questions on controversial issues. Our students posed intelligent, perceptive questions, and were sometimes equalled by a certain M. Sossoyan.

The day ended with discussions, and a great Chinese meal skillfully organized by Shiyao and Jacqui. A few of the more energetic types did some evening touring together to view the towering Lincoln Memorial and the Vietnam War Veterans' Memorial Wall, while the more fatigued travelers hit the sack early.

Wednesday March 23 -  
Smithsonian & Holocaust Museum  
Cold, windy, rainy day. We broke into groups to visit selected Smithsonian Museums in the morning. Students commented that they would need two weeks just to see the Smithsonian Museums properly. They seemed to especially enjoy the Museum of the

American Indian, the Air and Space Museum, and of course the dinosaurs and animals in the Museum of Natural History.

We entered the US National Holocaust Museum after 1:00 pm – soaked, cold and hungry. Pam was especially struck by “Daniel’s Story”, an interactive exhibit for children, as well as a fairly sophisticated exhibit on eugenics and the “Master Race” concept. It was also heartening to see a display that was a call to action regarding the current genocide in the Sudan.

Many of the students were particularly touched by the photos of children, the displays of abandoned shoes, and the similarity to the photos at Ellis Island, of what could have been anyone’s family. Many students had some academic knowledge of the Second World War and the Holocaust, but were now relating it to their own sense of freedom, family and identity.

The evening debriefing discussions began in Jacqui’s room and revealed a variety of emotions, experiences, and personal connections; more discussions continued afterwards in smaller groups.

Thursday March 24 – Grand Mosque  
While the Imam, a very friendly and outgoing personality from Sierra Leone, had particular views on certain issues in gender relations, he made a special point of noting similarities and links between Islam, Christianity and Judaism and responding to questions regarding 9-11 extremism by empha-

sizing that he is upset as a person, not as a Muslim, because the scriptures in all religions forbid murder.

The female students experienced the wearing of the hijab and “being a Muslim woman” for a few hours and were very careful not to show any bangs or navels! They were also told that wearing the hijab is not necessarily about oppressing women, but rather forcing men to see the intelligence of a woman rather than her mere looks.

Our students asked many interesting and thought-provoking questions and received many interesting and thought-provoking answers.

Some more mundane highlights  
Our memories of this trip will include many fond everyday moments, like playing soccer in Central Park, or our picnic adventure in a Washington park. Also memorable were the evening trek in DC with Matthieu to see ducks, Abe Lincoln, George W’s backyard, and the spot where Martin Luther King once said “I have a dream ...”. When we got lost in Embassy Row, the son of the Ambassador of Guinea guided us to the zoo. Then there was the fantastic brunch at the Red Roof Inn, and morning coffee with Jacqui, and tea with Karen – our travel connoisseurs.

Issues, Reactions, Discussions  
These were the real high points of the trip. The diffuse theme of “tolerance” opened out into a web of serious social and ethical issues. Most students felt they were fairly “tolerant” already as Canadians, but were prepared to test

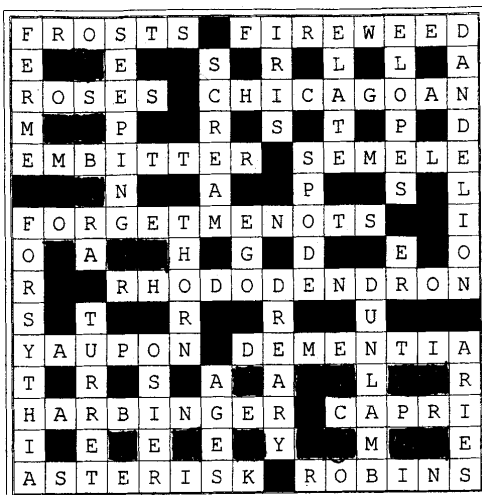
their boundaries and challenge themselves. Some students actually enjoyed having some solid intellectual meat to get their teeth into, grappling with doubts and dilemmas as one complexity unfolded after another.

Some learned to respect others in the group who had different interests or needs from their own, or were appreciating things at a different level. Others enjoyed seeing issues from a different point of view when debating controversial topics. A few were surprised at the many differing perspectives that exist among Americans, and at the uncomfortable history of intolerance that we share in Canada as well. Some came to admit that they did in fact hold some prejudices and stereotypes, and that it is up to them to change this.

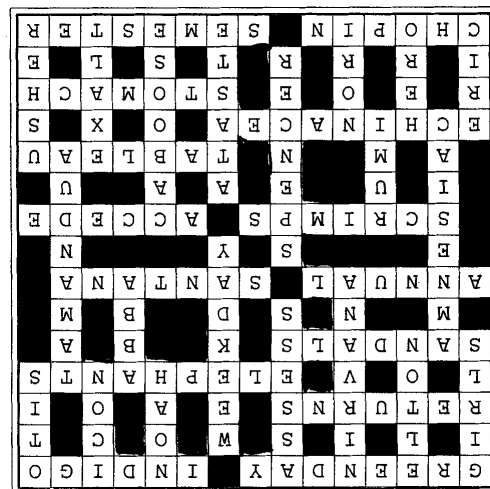
At another level, many students spoke of emotional or personal connections with genocide, racism or intolerance. Some were grandchildren of Holocaust victims, or German soldiers, or Allied soldiers who liberated the death-camps. They raised questions like: “Should we be tolerant of viewpoints that are themselves intolerant?” and “Is hatred an inevitable part of human nature?” One student concludes: “We each have the potential for both evil and good inherent within us. It’s up to us to choose, to bring out the good in ourselves and in others.”

Bottom line: *What amazing students!*  
This trip was a gem! It provides heartening evidence that today’s youth may indeed be capable of changing the world for the better. ■

### Solution for the March Cryptic Crossword “Looking Ahead to Warmer Weather”



### Solution for “There’s Music in the Air” from page 28





## *Meetings with Remarkable People Faculty Praising Staff*

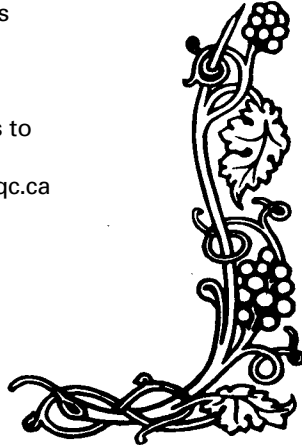

*By Anonymous\**

**D**id you ever need someone to make your doodles into a web page?  
**E**very time you ask for a little help, you get more than you ever hoped for;  
**N**ever a service without smiles and enthusiasm;  
**I**, like many, have been rescued by his talents more than once.  
**S**ometimes you wonder if his kindness and know-how could be bottled.

**L**ast minute or not, he'll try to fit you in;  
**A**fter all, he is the consummate professional.  
**F**or a smile he will save your hide  
**O**r make you look smarter than you are, and he'll  
**N**ever criticize, just offer a helpful suggestion  
**T**o improve your computer savvy  
**A**nd make you look good;  
**I**n his hands everything comes out shining.  
**N**o, there are never too many people of his quality  
**E**specially in this wonderful place we call Vanier.



\*This column gives faculty an opportunity to 'sing' praises for colleagues outside our field. It is by Anonymous so that any and all faculty members can take up the cause whenever inspired to commit praise to print. Send your submissions to Shirley at [pettifes@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:pettifes@vaniercollege.qc.ca)



# Supporting Academic Success in a Tangible Way

by Peggy McCoy

We all know that Vanier students are diverse in terms of background and age. Less well known is that many must overcome hardships that few of us will ever experience. As diverse as these students are, they all share at least one thing in common. They possess a single-mindedness when it comes to trying to better their current circumstances by furthering their education. One of their many obstacles is finding the financial support to attend school and be academically successful. These are our students.

For these students, trying to be academically successful and support themselves at the same time becomes a vicious cycle. They need to work to be able to stay in school and yet working so many hours impedes them academically. Many receive financial support from the government but one small financial crisis can sometimes mean the end to their academic goals. The crisis can be as simple as not being able to afford a bus pass to get to school or as complex and heartrending as having to leave an abusive husband or parents. These are our students.

In February 2005, at the urging of the VCTA\* and others, the college administration set up, through the Vanier College Foundation, a small Student Emergency Loan process. The fund is administered by a committee consisting of the interim Financial Aid Officer/Social Worker, Jim Atkinson; a faculty member, Dave Peters, Special Care Counselling; Hilda Schwartz representing the Foundation and Peggy McCoy, Coordinator of Student Services.

Since its inception the process has provided 12 students with emergency loans totaling \$3,510. Some of the loans covered rent, others books and some fed children and families. In addition to the monies from the Foundation, the Vanier College Students' Association has provided \$500 in cash and another \$500 in the form of supermarket food vouchers. The cafeteria has contributed \$600 in meal vouchers. To date, approximately \$800 has been repaid by students. Below are a few examples of where the money has gone.

■ **JJ** is a 19 year old male whose mother recently kicked him out of the family home. She has been physically and verbally abusive towards JJ since he was a small child. There has been no contact with his father, who left when JJ was three years old. JJ signed a lease today and is in the process of moving in to his first apartment. There is no furniture in the apartment and JJ has no family support. He desperately wants to stay in school; he is a full time student in his first semester of a two-year pre-university program. He works part time in a factory but desperately needs financial and social support to stay and succeed in school.

■ **Dee** is a single mother (32 years old), with three children, ages 1, 3 and 6 respectively. She recently left her husband, who was physically abusive towards her and the children. Her

husband often spent the children's tax benefits on alcohol and drugs. She receives help from her mother, who receives social assistance, but is having difficulty balancing caring for her children, studying full time in a three year career program, and paying the rent on time. She regularly goes to a local community resource for food, but is experiencing difficulty meeting her children's nutritional needs, let alone her own.

■ **Kirk** is a 21 year old male, who lives alone, after leaving the home of his mother, who is an alcoholic and suffers from depression. He moved out of his mother's home because he was unable to concentrate on his studies. Kirk is having difficulty paying his rent; he works part time, but requires additional financial supports. He is currently receiving counseling to try to deal with his mood swings that alternate between depression, anger, helplessness and then anger again.

■ **Lisa** is a 19 year old female student whose father was laid off from his job. Her mother works part-time and cares for Lisa's two younger siblings. She is in her third semester of a three-year career program.

Financial need is only one of their needs. Other Student Service resources such as Counseling and Health Services play an important role in helping these students stay in school.

**These are our students.** Their drive and ambition to stay in school and succeed, in spite of enormous obstacles, makes every effort we make on their part worthwhile and extremely gratifying. If you would like to contribute to their success, you can make a donation to the Vanier College Foundation: Student Emergency Loan and receive a tax receipt. You can also keep an eye out for students who may be in dire straits and refer them to Student Services C203. Please let your students know that help is available.

Peggy McCoy joined the staff of Vanier College 31 years ago. For several years as Coordinator of Student Development and more recently as Coordinator of Student Services, Peggy has seen generations of students pass through our hallowed halls and cross the stage as graduates. Always a staunch supporter of students' rights, she was



instrumental in developing Vanier's Student Advocacy service, and still advises and trains students in their incorporated Student Association. She has a knack for welcoming students and helping them develop a sense of belonging at Vanier. Maybe that is because she thinks she has the best job in the world.

\*Editor's Note: The VCTA contributes between \$3000 and \$4000 annually to an Emergency Fund for Students. These monies are not currently administered by the Vanier Foundation, as described above.

## Women Crossing Boundaries

MARCELA VEGA, the keynote speaker, at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Champagne Breakfast had much to say on this year's theme: Women Crossing Boundaries. She spoke of fleeing Columbia and of her family's 567 long days and nights in sanctuary. Her mother, Mireya, happily accompanied her daughter as a guest of the Women's Studies Program.



Photos by Judith Lerner-Crawley

## Celebration of Judith's Retirement



Photo by Louis Belle-Isle

From left to right: Karen Runnels, Judith Lerner-Crawley, Sylvie Tardif, Janice Paquette and Jock Mackay

Photograph taken at the celebration of Judith Lerner-Crawley's retirement party. Her article, Acts of Resistance, is on page 13 in this issue. Judith taught English, Photography and Women's Studies, and was involved in setting up the Creative Arts Department, now known as Communications. She coordinated her department for many years, did a couple of stints on the VCTA Executive and was editor of the Newsletter – including the collector's item, VCTA Newsletter: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue (April 1996)— for many years. Judith retired from teaching to devote more time to her art work.

# Paranoia for Breakfast

by Louis Daniel Brodsky

It's a matter of conditioning, nationalistic pride,  
A collective genetic defect, egotistical brain damage,  
That penchant for and preoccupation with gratuitous cruelty,  
Malevolence in the abstract and as black fact  
We creatures of the species *Homo sapiens* demonstrate daily.  
First and last causes pale in light of original sin;  
Original sin gives way to survival of the fittest.  
Perhaps it all emanates from human nature's failure  
To appreciate its own fragile ties with life,  
Discriminate between ignorance and intellect,  
Daydreams and nightmares, means and ends.  
And maybe not.

When I contemplate man's myriad extirpations —  
Individual homicides, tribal massacres,  
Genocides decimating hundreds of thousands at a crack —  
Groping to explain the common denominator, hatred,  
I get tangled in a fence of Medusa-snakes  
Disguised as righteous motives,  
Lacerate my face on the fallacious blood-libel barbs  
Perpetuated by history's pariahs: Pharaohs, *Führers*,  
Duces, Popes, pretenders to thrones,  
Zealots, and terrorists fulfilling holy missions —  
Sadistic, sociopsychopathic fanatics all.  
No rational answer clarifies the operative «why.»

This morning, sipping coffee in a packed café,  
I almost flagellate myself publicly  
For dwelling on such an irreconcilable subject.  
Disgust stultifies my desire to drive to the library,  
Dig through the ruins of books,  
Hoping to retrieve relics of mankind's creeds,  
Redemptive deeds done in the name of faith, compassion, love.  
There's no justifying my foolish delusion,  
And now, the noisy voices in this restaurant  
Are crows cawing, clawing my skull, maggots gnawing my guts,  
Death's aggressive advocates  
Discussing the most expeditious way to dispose of my bones.

From: *The Eleventh Lost Tribe. Poems of the Holocaust*,  
1998, Time Being Books

**Louis Daniel Brodsky** was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1941. He is the author of fifty-one volumes of poetry (five of which have been published in French by Éditions Gallimard) and twenty-two volumes of prose, including nine books of scholarship on William Faulkner and six books of short fiction. His poems and essays have appeared in *Harper's*, *The Faulkner Review*, *Southern Review*, *Texas Quarterly*, *National Forum*, *American Scholar*, *Studies in Bibliography*, *Kansas Quarterly*, Ball State University's *Forum*, *Cimarron Review*, and *Literary Review*, as well as in *Ariel*, *Acumen*, *Orbis*, *New Welsh Review*, *Dalhousie Review*, and other journals. His work has also been printed in five editions of the *Anthology of Magazine Verse and Yearbook of American Poetry*. The Center for Great Lakes Culture, at Michigan State University, selected *You Can't Go Back, Exactly* for its 2004 award for best book of poetry.

Thanks to **Mark Prentice**,  
Anthropology, for this submission.

# Acts of Resistance

Continued from page 14

*shower, and then go to the gas. Send the enclosed pictures immediately to "Tell." The pictures can be enlarged and, we feel, be sent further on.*<sup>26</sup>

"Tell" was the pseudonym of Teresa Lasocka-Estreicher of the PWOK (Home Army unit in Cracow),<sup>27</sup> "an active member of the Cracow underground organization Assistance for Concentration Camp Prisoners."<sup>28</sup>

In May 1944, the Sonderkommando had been forced to dig huge pits,<sup>29</sup> since the Crematorium was not efficient enough.

"The pictures reached Cracow,"<sup>30</sup> but not the Polish government-in-exile in London. When they were printed, by whom, or whether in Brzeszcze (7 miles from Auschwitz) or in Cracow, is not certain. Apparently, the negatives never left Lasocka's possession. Prints were, however, used in the 1947<sup>31</sup> Krakow trial of the Main Commission for Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland against "40 major Auschwitz criminals." The original negatives have been lost; the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum has two sets of contact prints, those donated in the 1960s by Wladyslaw Pytlik, a member of the Brzeszcze resistance, and the originals in 1985 by his wife, Danuta Pytlik.<sup>32</sup>

This story is rendered even more poignant as we learn the horrific details of the torturous treatment meted out to "Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi who died in Iranian custody on July 11, 2003, almost three weeks after she was arrested for taking pictures outside a prison during a student protest in Tehran."<sup>33</sup> ■

\* The word "Canada," inmate slang for large storerooms of personal effects stolen from recent arrivals at Auschwitz, symbolized wealth and abundance. During the process of sorting and classifying, workers had the opportunity to "organize" (that is, "lift") items; at great personal risk, they contributed precious objects to the underground.<sup>34</sup>

1 [www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/events/holocaust03/crawley\\_exhibition.html](http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/events/holocaust03/crawley_exhibition.html)

2 Kazimierz Smolen, *Auschwitz Birkenau Guide Book*, Oswiecim: State Museum, 2002, p 9

3 Jean-Claude Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and operation of the gas chambers*, New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1989, p. 422-42

4 Dan Stone, "The Sonderkommando Photographs," *Jewish Social Studies*, Spring 2001, 7:3, p 131-148

5 Dr Piotr Setkiewicz, Head of Archives, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, email correspondence, March 24, 2005

6 Pressac

7 negatives #280, 281, 282A, 283A, Setkiewicz, email correspondence, April 7, 2005. Also, Jean-Claude Pressac, "Auschwitz: Technique and operation of the gas Chambers," [www.mazal.org/Pressac/Pressac0470.htm](http://www.mazal.org/Pressac/Pressac0470.htm) (3/15/2005)

8 Pressac

9 Georges Didi-Huberman. "Images, in spite of all," lecture given at Northwestern University, Feb 13-18, 2004 [www.mauriceblanchot.net/actualites/fev04/gdh/\(322/2005\)](http://www.mauriceblanchot.net/actualites/fev04/gdh/(322/2005))

10 [www.nizkor.org/faqs/auschwitz/auschwitz-faq-07.html](http://www.nizkor.org/faqs/auschwitz/auschwitz-faq-07.html) (3/23/2005)

11 Primo Levi, quoted in Georges Didi-Huberman

12 Alter Faynzylberg, "Testimonies of Former Prisoners," Declaration, cxiv. 57-58; Auschwitz State Museum Archives, *Auschwitz: A History in Photographs*, p 42-3

13 Setkiewicz, March 24, 2005

14 Ber Mark, *The Scrolls of Auschwitz*, Israel: Am Oved Publishers Ltd, 1985, no page number

15 Andreas Kilian, [www.sonderkommando-studien.de](http://www.sonderkommando-studien.de), email correspondence, April 1, 2005

16 Pressac

17 The Holocaust Center of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh <http://www.ujfhc.net/4-4.html> (3/29/2005)

18 Faynzylberg

19 Ronit Rocas, 'We did the dirty work of the Holocaust': Sonderkommando Auschwitz, May 2, 2000 / haArez [www.hagalil.com/shoah/holocaust/greif-0.htm](http://www.hagalil.com/shoah/holocaust/greif-0.htm) (3/ 21/2005)

20 Andreas Kilian, Der „Sonderkommando-Aufstand“ in Auschwitz-Birkenau, [www.shoa.de/kz\\_auschwitz\\_soko\\_aufstand.html](http://www.shoa.de/kz_auschwitz_soko_aufstand.html) (3/ 29/2005)

21 Faynzylberg

22 Kilian, email correspondence, April 8, 2005

23 Setkiewicz, March 24, 2005

24 Mark

25 Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle 1939-1945*, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1990, p 233. They were also members of the international Auschwitz Combat Group (p. 518-9)

26 Hermann Langbein, *Menschen in Auschwitz*, in Setkiewicz

27 Setkiewicz, March 24, 2005

28 Czech, p xii

29 Filip Muller, *Eyewitness Auschwitz*, New York: Stein and Day, 1979 p 53

30 Langbein

31 Czech, p xii

32 Setkiewicz, March 24, 2005

33 [www.cbc.ca/news/background/kazemi/](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/kazemi/) (April 4, 2005)

34 Mark, p 246-7

# VENERABLY YOURS

By SU YI

Inspiration  
is useless  
without actions.

Charisma  
is void  
without public acclamation.

Attraction exists  
only between people.

Admiration comes  
only from a sympathetic audience.

Lack of courage prevents us  
from taking unnecessary risks.

Abandonment helps us  
to appreciate and find new companies.

There are no winners  
unless there are losers.

There are no champions  
unless there are competitors  
and opponents.

Only a half empty cup  
could welcome more liquid.

Only a needy person  
would let others contribute to her life.

When one mourns,  
one could heal.

When one is vulnerable,  
one could be humble.

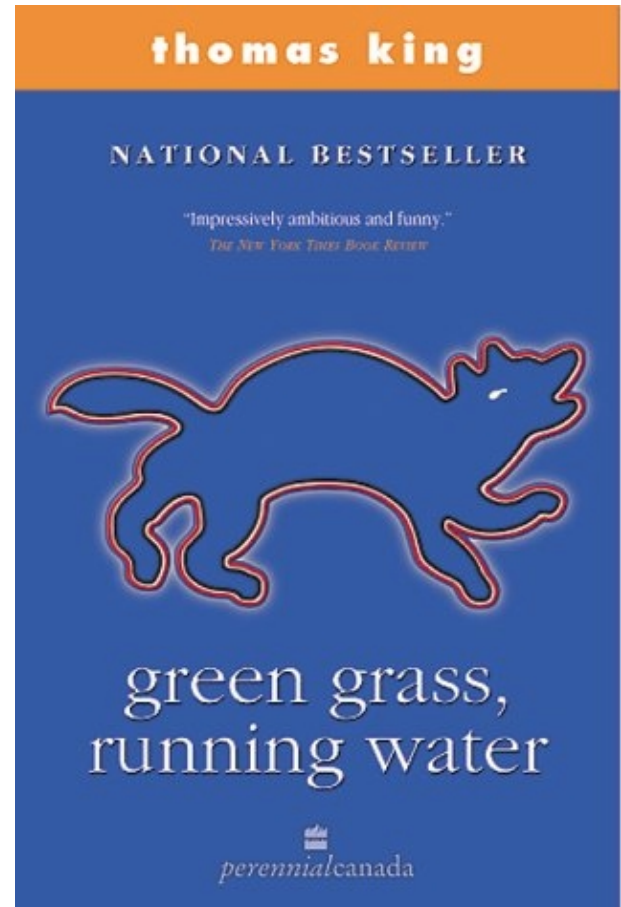
There is always room  
to learn from others;  
especially  
when we recognize and learn to appreciate  
our own vulnerability,  
it could become one of our virtues.

We need others  
as much as  
others need us.

We remain venerable.

Su Yi is the pen name of Laura Pao, a Vanier Sociology teacher. She has decided to nourish her artistic hobbies—find her non-academic, marginal voice. That's how she prefers to live her life. She welcomes pen-pals and loves to exchange ideas with people who have experiences to share. You can always write to her. She thanks Ioannis and Shirley for being a good audience and for their comments and compliments.

## Lyne Marie's Book Corner



This book, by Thomas King—known for his CBC Comedy Radio Show, *The Dead Dog Café*—is such a pleasant read. I read it so quickly, I regretted that it did not go on for longer.

King takes the reader on the paths of different lives: four very old Indians called Ishmael, Hawkeye, Robinson Crusoe and the Lone Ranger; and an eccentric Canadian Blackfoot family: Lionel Red Dog, who sells TV sets; his sister Latisha, who owns the Dead-Dog Café restaurant; Uncle Eli Stands Alone, a former university professor and an activist against the operation of a dam on Indian land; and Charlie Looking Bear, a lawyer.

The old Indians are no ordinary natives. They may be the last survivors of the Indians interned at Fort Marion in Florida in the 19th century. Or perhaps they are the first human beings, as described in traditional myths of creation ... See how these tricksters play on the other characters... This book is clever, funny, greatly entertaining. Not a new publication, but one I am sure you will enjoy.

Lyne Marie Larocque teaches Sociology, Methodology and Explorations courses.



## Jewish Victimhood

Continued from page 7

late Rabbi Meir Kahane, first in the diaspora through the Jewish Defense League and later in Israel through *Kach*, an extremist and racist political party and movement. One of the main thrusts of the slogan was that only a militarily-powerful Jewish state of Israel would ensure that never again would Jewish victims passively accept their fate at the hands of murderous oppressors. The Israel Defense Forces' rescue in 1976 of Jewish and Israeli hostages seized by Palestinian and other hijackers and brought to Entebbe Airport in Uganda stands out as a dramatic illustration of this activist-heroic philosophy. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's decision to send Israeli jet fighters on a daring mission to bomb Iraq's nuclear facility at Osirak in 1981 was another example of a concrete action by the Jewish state motivated by the post-Holocaust slogan "Never Again!"

A number of Jewish and Israeli writers have criticized (in my view, rightly) this particular application of the Jewish self-identification as victim, especially when this claim to "victimhood" has been advanced in order to assert the further claim that the victims have no moral accounting to do before any outsiders. "If I am a victim – and not just any victim but an eternal victim – then I am excused from many things," notes Israeli writer Shulamith Hareven. But, she goes on to argue, there comes a time "when it is no longer possible to use this victimhood as an excuse for everything," despite short-term gains in terms of sympathy or political support.<sup>2</sup>

Writing during the late 1970s, Israeli novelist A.B. Yehoshua had similarly argued that, "[h]aving suffered such a horrendous experience [as the Holocaust], we are liable to

grow indifferent to any lesser suffering. He who has suffered greatly may become inured to the suffering of others. That is completely natural." But, the Israeli writer went on to admonish his Jewish and Israeli readers that *as the bearers of the anti-Nazi message we must whet our sensitivity, not dull it. We must bear in mind that our having been victims does not accord us any special moral standing. The victim does not become virtuous for having been a victim. Although the Holocaust inflicted a horrible injustice on us, it did not grant us a certificate of everlasting righteousness. The murderers were amoral; the victims were not made moral. To be moral you must behave ethically. The test of that is daily and constant.*<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the use of "victimhood" in the construction of ongoing ethnic and religious identity can be dangerous and self-destructive for any people who espouse this line of thinking. In the long run, writes Hareven, "the perpetuation of the victim identity causes complete severance from reality, utter dependence on the past and the past alone, and distortions of all proportions and emphases to the point of warping the personality." Is it possible, she asks, to raise a generation on nothing but traumas that were caused by others, exclusively on a sense of perpetual destruction and deterministic hatred, or whether there are some other things about Judaism, not necessarily related to victimization, that define us both as a people and as individuals. Does being a Jew only mean being a victim, defined by the actions of others? Or does it also mean being a people that established an elaborate judicial system, created a language to be proud of, built a state and established a social order...?

While acknowledging that "under no circumstances are we to forget our tragedies," Hareven warns that "who-

ever bases our identity on them and them alone, distorts the greatness of this people and keeps from its sons not only pride, but sanity itself."<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps we are all, as Michael Goldberg argues, living in an absurd age when "virtually anybody could claim to be a victim."<sup>5</sup> This raises another question: Have we perhaps reached the point where the currency of "victimhood" has become so debased that it may be losing its value in local, national and international politics? If this is so, then that becomes an additional reason why prescient community leaders everywhere should be actively considering alternative "master narratives," myths and legends – and not merely the claim of "victimhood" – on which to base their people's self-image, with which to motivate their followers, and on which to base their claims to justice and a place in the sun.

### Bridging the Unique and the Universal

By trial and error in my classrooms over the past dozen years, I have come to appreciate that a successful approach to teaching about the Holocaust is to avoid the extremes of *either* too much emphasis on its uniqueness (i.e., the horrors happened specifically to the Jews at the hands of the Nazis) *or* too strong an attempt to highlight its universal nature (i.e., diminishing its uniqueness by viewing it as only one of many similar large-scale organized genocides in human history).

Psychologist Fred Katz makes a good case for staking out a middle ground in the somewhat artificially polarized debate between those who argue the uniqueness or the universality of the Holocaust. In his *Ordinary People and Extraordinary Evil*, Katz makes the case that

*[i]n actuality, the unique and the generalizing approaches have much*

*in common. Those who emphasize the uniqueness of each instance of horrendous evil also want to prevent similar events in the future. Those who scientifically compare the Holocaust to, say, other forms of authoritarian control [or genocide] also want to honor the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and they do not deny the unique fate and needs of its surviving victims.*<sup>6</sup>

Working with authentic evidence of the undiluted brutal and specifically Jewish experience, students can explore many unsettling but relevant universal questions, such as:

- the nature of evil and its “beguilings”
- the “banality” of evil
- how ordinary people (and not only psychopathic individuals) are capable of contributing to extraordinary evil
- how certain groups and minorities can become vulnerable under a demagogic leader or in face of populist causes
- the bureaucratic conditions that promote indifference to oppression or suffering
- the human potential for, and the conditions that promote, caring for others or courageous risk-taking in favour of fellow humans who are in danger

Many of the Holocaust survivors who have addressed my students over the years have either raised the issue themselves or have faced it during question period: “After all you’ve seen and lived through, do you think ‘it’ could happen again?” Despite the uniqueness of their precious firsthand testimony which they are painfully reliving each time they stand before their youthful audiences, many survivors have been quick to point to contemporary persecution, suffering, ethnic cleansing and genocide around the world as displayed in Kosovo, in Rwanda, or in Sudan. Some survivors

have gone further, to deplore how little has changed since the Nazi era – how, despite the enormity of the well-documented crimes, the obvious “lessons” have still not been learned. And several of these survivors have specifically exhorted students, as the future generation of leaders, to do better than their parents in demonstrating courage by speaking out and acting in ways to counteract evil as soon as they detect it.

It is in fostering this bridging of the unique (Jewish) experience with the universal condition of continued vulnerability and victimization of peoples around the world that Holocaust education seems to have worked best in my classrooms. The choice should not be between *either* emphasizing uniqueness of the Holocaust and its Jewish victims *or* stressing its universality or commonality; rather, we should be examining how both these necessary aspects of the Holocaust experience are best brought together.

It is reassuring to learn that others, drawing on their own diverse experiences, have reached similar conclusions.<sup>7</sup> In his review of a recent Israeli work on genocide, Yossi Sarid, former Minister of Education in Israel, has written:

*Whenever the “lessons of the Holocaust” are discussed, prominence must be given to the central lesson: This entire atrocity could repeat itself and, in fact, it has already repeated itself and is still repeating itself. The lesson is that the Holocaust was not a just a single, isolated, demonic event, that the Germans are not the only nation on earth capable of perpetrating it and that the Jews are not the only nation on earth capable of being its victims. [...]*

*The basic assumption must always be that absolute evil is not the exclusive province of Nazi Germany*

*or Germans, just as a bitter and cruel fate is not exclusively reserved for the Jews, and that, in any case, no nation (especially if it is strong) is invulnerable to the possibility of becoming a victimizer, while no nation (especially if it is weak and dispersed) is invulnerable to the possibility of becoming a victim.*

Citing the Biblical phrase, “Remember what Amalek did to you” (Deut. 25:17), Sarid concludes that Israelis and Jews

*must certainly remember. But we should remember not just what Amalek did to us. [...] What happened to “us” is supplemented, not contradicted, by what happened to “others.” This sort of merging will add moral significance and universal strength to the memory of the Holocaust and to our justified demand that the world must never forget.*<sup>8</sup>

1 Michael Goldberg, *Why Should Jews Survive? Looking Past the Holocaust Toward a Jewish Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 124-5.

2 Shulamith Hareven, “Identity: Victim” (1986), in *The Vocabulary of Peace: Life, Culture, and Politics in the Middle East*, (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1995), 150-1.

3 A. B. Yehoshua, “The Holocaust as Junction,” in *Between Right and Right*, (New York: Doubleday, 1981), p. 17.

4 Hareven, “Identity: Victim,” pp.148-9, 154.

5 Michael Goldberg, *Why Should Jews Survive?* p.125.

6 Fred Katz, *Ordinary People and Extraordinary Evil: A Report on the Beguilings of Evil* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 24-5.

7 For a good collection of essays on this important subject, see *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, 2nd ed., edited by Alan S. Rosenbaum, Boulder CO: Westview Press, 2001.

8 Yossi Sarid, “No Monopoly on Absolute Evil,” *ha-Aretz* Supplement, April 18, 2003 [review of Yair Auron, *The Pain of Knowledge: Reflections on Holocaust and Genocide Issues in Education - in Israel and Elsewhere* [in Hebrew] Tel Aviv: the Open University of Israel, 2003.

IRAQ: Reality versus Rhetoric

The People of Baghdad  
speak about their city and their lives  
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## «ABOUT BAGHDAD»

(Arabic with English s.t.)

followed by a discussion with special guest  
Raymond Legault  
of «Objection de conscience / Voices of Conscience»

Thursday, April 21 2005 @ 12 noon  
Vanier College Auditorium

*Presented by V.C.S.A. in collaboration with V.C.T.A. and l'Association Le Tiers*



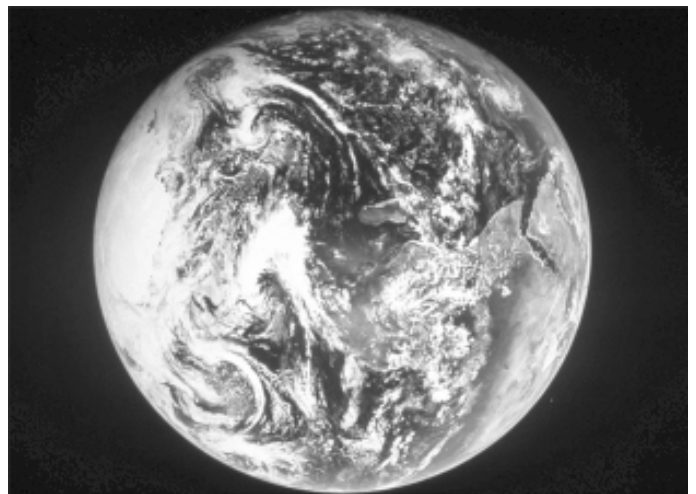
Students learn  
about things by  
being told.

They learn how  
to do things  
by doing them.

Edgerton (1987) cited in laSere Erickson,  
B. & Weltner-Strommer, D. (1991).  
*Teaching College Freshmen*.  
San Francisco: Josey-Bass. P. 106

### Newspapers in the VCTA Lounge

Lately, newspapers and parts of newspapers  
have been disappearing from the VCTA  
Lounge, C101. So we ask, please do not  
remove newspapers or parts of newspapers  
from the Lounge. These are used as  
reference material by many teachers.



# EARTH WEEK

at Vanier College  
April 18 to 22

Campus Clean-Up  
BBQ and Info Booths  
Lecture on Biodiversity  
And much much more!

# THERE'S MUSIC IN THE AIR

by Valerie Broegee

Many of the clues have something to do with the world of music.

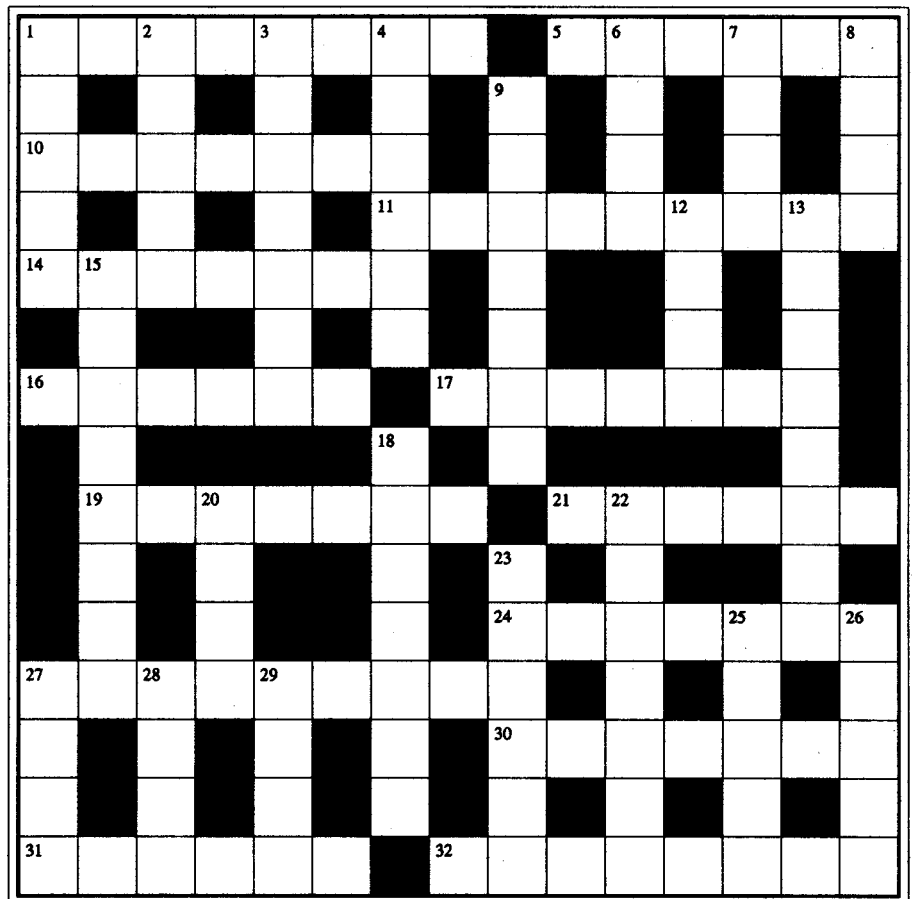
## ACROSS

1. The appropriate musical group to perform on April 22? (5, 3)
5. and 1. DOWN. A group close on the color spectrum to Deep Purple. (6, 5)
10. Tax forms are due when April 30 rolls around again. (7)
11. The planes have mascot animals. (9)
14. Footwear for Polish football team? (7)
16. The Grammy Awards are this type of event. (6)
17. Insect in South America; "North America, beware," says Carlos. (7)
19. Two states share politicians – a move that saves money. (7)
21. Thunder down under gets mixed up with notes to give consent. (6)
24. The end of an Indian instrument is divided by the European Union, but still presents a pretty picture. (7)
27. Each cane I set aside is for you, Herb! (9)
30. Is Tom a choir member you can put up with? (7)
31. Watch opinions with suspicion that are unduly negative about this composer. (6)
32. Choose me! Stereo systems are my priorit for the first six months of 2005. (8)

## DOWN

1. See 5 ACROSS.
2. British rocker sings, "The Spanish Weight." (5)
3. Band reaches state of oblivion to care and pain. (7)
4. Animals begin snarling – an easy thing to evaluate. (6)
6. Shipbuilder who shouts no "Ahoy there" is remiss. (4)

7. I consider Elvis to be one. (4)
8. What an elevator and Redding have in common. (4)
9. Wednesday is one. (7)
12. Musical group has two college degrees. (4)
13. Adam Ant, U2, and other musicians are giving a benefit concert to save the anteater. (8)
15. If you want to review the soundtrack of your life, you can't be this. (8)
18. Davis sings, "I'm a man." (7)
20. Drink I quaff gives me visions of a Sufi poet. (4)
22. Calloway decapitates moose and puts it at the end of the train. (7)
23. Portion of honey in movie and song is sold at a steep price. (1, 5)
25. Ex-alto wishes for her former voice which everyone could still glorify. (5)
26. Theater employee morphs into R&B superstar. (5)
27. Slowhand can clap to nearly every song. (4)
28. The appropriate sandwich for a great man? (4)
29. Press back seaweed. (4)



Crossword solution appears on page 18

# Photos by Alan Harris



# Students Take Action For Education



Photos by Shirley Pettifer