

VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Vanier Goes KaBOOM!



A Note from the Ghost Editor...

Alan Campbell



Perhaps the spookiest aspect of being a non-permanent teacher evolves from necessarily living on a semi-annual schedule. Committing to new projects that might go on for more than one semester can be spooky. Making a long-term financial commitment can be downright terrifying. Indeed, I hesitate before I agree to anything that might

continue for more than one term. It is spooky! I am haunted by the possibility that the next semester might hold nothing for me at all.

Last term, I counted my lucky stars to be working half time. It could have been less. I began to search for more opportunities and discovered that Shirley would appreciate a co-editor for the Newsletter. I looked forward to learning the ropes of Newsletter publishing and anticipated meeting colleagues in other departments as fellow professionals (not just as hobnobbing, happy hour cohorts).

Luckily for me, this semester I have a very large workload. A large, first semester workload is something a non-permanent teacher is eager to accept, as it might offset a workload shortfall in the subsequent semester. (In fact, I missed the annual hobnobbing at this term's first happy hour as it conflicted with class times.)

Shirley was well underway with the fall semester's first Newsletter before I had a chance to contact her. She suggested that I might prefer to co-edit the second issue once things had settled down. I agreed. We tried to coordinate our schedules and found only one mutual free time. Unfortunately, the editing phase for this issue fell during my mid-term exam period, when

I schedule students for individual testing. These individual exams inevitably fill time outside of regular classes.

It is, therefore, with sincere regret and my most humble apology that I write this opening note in keeping with this season's spooky spirit. I am not a co-editor; I am a ghost editor. My involvement with this issue has been in spirit only. To Shirley, I am but a fleeting apparition that she sees now and then, hears from here and there, and with whom she has made only cursory contact in curt corridor encounters (alliteration appeals to apparitions). I must really spook her, but I can assure her, this affliction will not last for long. It simply cannot last, because I am most certainly not permanent!

Postscript:

I notice that my esteemed colleague, Christopher Smith, has submitted an article in this issue of the Newsletter. Shirley suggested that I had the option to write about submissions to this issue and I thought I might review Chris's. I reconsidered. It occurred to me that anything Chris would write would be undoubtedly over my head. If you know Chris, you know what I mean. If you don't, look him up sometime.

Alan Campbell has been teaching theory and ear training in the Music Department since January, 2002. He has been a post-secondary music theory teacher since 1985, but has been in the CEGEP system only since January 2002. Alan is also a consultant in the pulp and paper industry, help author, technical writer, corporate and industrial trainer, systems integrator and beta tester. He has experience as a senior editor and project manager in the e-publishing business. Alan's personal and employment history is both wide and varied, but one peculiar detail is particularly salient at this time of year: Alan worked for three years as a **gravedigger** . . . and he does have a few eerie tales!

SUBMISSION DEADLINE • NOVEMBER ISSUE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2005

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V.C.T.A.

VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



Message from the President: SYLVIE TARDIF

I hope you all managed to participate in the Social Science Festival put together by Miles DeNora and our colleagues in the Social Science Program. This year's theme, *The Tree of Knowledge*, took us to many fascinating places: some of the economic, psychological, geographical, sociological, anthropological, historical, political, philosophical and religious aspects of life on planet earth.

The weather was not kind to Matthieu Sossoyan's famous annual archeological dig outside the N-Building, but I believe that by the end of the week, the water cleared enough for the dig to go on. I understand that there were interesting displays from the Vanier Social Justice Committee and that the Sociology of Health students' displays are still up. Not to be missed!

And I hope that you won't miss **Happy Hour on October 27th**.

OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT: NEGOTIATIONS AND MOBILIZATION

My message in the last *VCTA Newsletter* (Sept. 2005, Vol. 23, No. 1) urged you to recognize that much is at stake in or contract negotiations. The CPNC/government representatives must get the clear message that, rather than cave in, we would prefer to keep our present Collective Agreement; that we will not accept any government withdrawal from financing College education nor will we accept a reduction in our professional autonomy.

We are also demanding that the monies for student success (student success grant) be allocated to teaching; reduction of class size and fewer preparations, for example. Over the years, with the introduction of the program approach and competency based education, our workload has increased. We do not want to see teaching redefined through the creation of new committees for "institutional development"—certainly not without release time to participate in these committees.

We must stand firm and united to condemn such insults as, *"Cegep teachers only work 15 hours a week..."*

We must insist that the CPNC/government reps acknowledge what we teachers know very well—that teaching involves far more than what happens in the classroom: preparation of courses, classes, labs and field work; tutoring students; preparation and correction of exams; developing pedagogical activities beyond the classroom to meet the goals of competency-based education and the program approach; participation in department meetings and a variety of other

department responsibilities; participation in student welcoming and orientation activities; development of pedagogical tools for student achievement and success; and the list goes on.

The V.C.T.A. Executive asked the Director General, who does not agree with the statement about teachers only working 15 hours a week, to publicly set the record straight at the Fédé* meetings he attends: that a teacher's workload involves all of the above and more. The student-teacher relationship in the Cegep is priceless to say the least!

The FSE-CSQ (Fédération des Syndicats de l'enseignement) representing 80,000 teachers in elementary and high schools have left the Nego table because of the unacceptable attitude and pronouncements of the MELS (Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et des Sports) representatives and of the Quebec Federation of School Board Commissions. At this time, there is no talk of a general strike in the elementary and high school sector.

The Federal transfer of money to post-secondary education in Quebec might bring a new and favourable variable to our sectorial table. The FAC-FEC Cartel will follow these transfers closely to make sure that we get our fair share: 40% of post-secondary students in Quebec are in Cegeps. It is more important than ever to maintain a Quebec network of Cegeps where all programs are offered.

"...government representatives must get the clear message that... we will not accept any government withdrawal from financing College education..."

LETTER OF AGREEMENT NO.12: Recognition of a Master's Degree for Remuneration Purposes (Oct. 28, 2005 Deadline)

The Administration has informed the VCTA that not counting new teachers, from whom the documentation is not yet available, there were a total of 221 requests made by the Sept. 16 deadline, for the recognition of a Master's Degree for remuneration purposes.

Twenty-two requests were denied for reasons ranging from not having a Master's Degree to having a Master's Degree where the link between the discipline taught and the Master's program is not sufficient. Other cases include a designated Master's Degree deemed not to be equivalent to a Master's Degree obtained at a Quebec University, technical and/or professional degrees and certification obtained from universities or professional orders (architects, engineers, lawyers, chartered accountants, etc.).

Teachers who received a **No** response have until Oct. 28, 2005 to contest the decision. They need to fill in the *Complaint*

Form to which all proper documentation should be annexed: a copy of the College's response, a copy of the degree received, a copy of the transcript for that degree. (You can pick up this form and get help filling it in at the VCTA office C101.)

Remember that copies of the *Complaint Form*, with all the necessary documents attached, must be sent to the CNRP-FAC*, FAC and the College (addresses are included at the bottom of the Form). If the Appeal Committee does not reach a unanimous decision, the complaint will be forwarded to an arbitrator appointed by the Provincial Parties, CNRP & FAC. The arbitration decision is final.

SRAM

The SRAM grievance we initially filed was based on a possible change in our working conditions and because we felt this to be premature, we withdrew this grievance, without prejudice, on Oct. 11, 2005. We can file a similar grievance at a later date if we feel that SRAM is not delivering the promised results.

The V.C.T.A. Executive sent a letter to our new Director General, Gilbert Héroux, in which we expressed our concerns about SRAM—the Administration's flawed consultation process, the possibility of negative effects on enrollment in some programs, and on the need for an independent Overseeing Committee to evaluate this year's trial SRAM registration process in a comprehensive and transparent manner. Representatives of all the Vanier College Community would sit on this committee.

In his response, the Director General's proposed that the VCTA accept one seat on the SRAM Operational Team—where the pro-SRAM Academic Dean (Peter Ross), Registrar (Diane Tessier) and Enrolment Management (Bev Chandler) sit. This is a far cry from the broadly representative Overseeing Committee we would like to see created.

The V.C.T.A. Executive received the Director General's proposal on Oct. 12, and will take it to the Association Council meeting of Oct. 27 for discussion. A prompt response to the Director General will follow in the week of Oct. 31, 2005.

Syndically yours,

Sylvie

Glossary of terms:

CNRP	Comité National de Relations professionnelles
CPNC	Conseil Patronal de Négociation des Cégeps
CSQ	Centrale Syndicale du Québec; represents workers in education, health, social services and daycare centres. FEC, with which we have formed a negotiation cartel, is affiliated with the CSQ.
FAC	Fédération Autonome du Collégial, represents teachers in 17 colleges, including Vanier.
FEC	Fédération des Enseignantes et Enseignants de Cégep; represents teachers in 7 Cégeps; affiliated with the CSQ.
Fédé	Fédération des Cégeps—composed of director generals and academic deans



CALLING ALL FACULTY!

Faculty members are needed to sit on Academic Council Standing Committees. This is your chance to learn the ropes, influence decisions, hone your meeting skills, serve your fellow teachers and the larger Vanier Community—and make these committees authentic consultative bodies. Contact the VCTA Office, C101, local 7053 or 7054.

- ❖ **ACADEMIC SPACE SUB-COMMITTEE:** 3 faculty—one from each Faculty—make recommendations concerning academic space, consider proposals about allotment of space and monitor the allocation of academic space. One Academic Council member, 1 coordinator, 1 administrator, 1 student and 1 Cont. Ed. Representative also sit on this sub-committee.
- ❖ **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE:** 3 faculty (one per Faculty) join 1 Academic Council member and 1 student to promote and document the implementation of the Policy on Formative Assessment throughout the College. Any accomplishments or perceived abuses of the policy are reported to Academic Council (while respecting confidentiality).
- ❖ **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING SUB-COMMITTEE:** 3 faculty members (one per Faculty), 1 administrator, 1 LITC representative, 1 Learning Centre representative and 1 student focus on the processes necessary for the integration of information technology in teaching and learning. (The mandate of this sub-committee is further spelled out in the 1998-1999 Committee's Recommendations approved by Academic Council—a copy of which is available in the VCTA Office, C101.)
- ❖ **LONG RANGE PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE:** 3 faculty sit on this body whose mandate is to explore and advise on issues that will have a bearing on the academic life of the College in the future—more specifically, in three to five years' time. The Academic Dean (ex officio), the Vice-Chair of Academic Council (ex officio), 1 administrator, 1 professional and 1 support staff also sit on this sub-committee.
- ❖ **TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD SUB-COMMITTEE:** In addition to the previous year's award winner, 2 faculty members join with 2 students, 1 support staff, 1 professional and the Academic Dean (ex officio) to receive nominations and to recommend to the Board of Directors the name of a faculty member for the Award.

ACADEMIC COUNCIL:

...Concerns of a Teacher Rep

Janice Paquette

Academic Council was very interesting on Fri. Oct. 14. The administration brought its plan to evaluate the “bridging programs”, including Explorations, Modified Science and Science Access to Council. It quickly became clear that the lack of consultation with teachers, professionals etc—those who actually deal with these matters—has led to serious problems.

Hode Erdogan brought a motion from an emergency meeting of the coordinators of Physics, Chemistry and Math to take Modified Science and Science Access out of this evaluation process. He and the originator of the program, Helena Dedic, argued eloquently that Modified Science and Science Access are not, in fact, “bridging programs”, but part of the Science Program. Students are admitted into the Science Program, and they are given some extra support. It was also pointed out that when concerned parents called, they were told that their son or daughter was indeed in the Sciences Program—not in a “bridging program”.

Further, Science Access and Modified Science were evaluated in 2003 as part of the Science Program, and judged to be very successful, so why would they be evaluated again so soon?

A motion from Social and Cultural Sciences, deposited at the previous Academic Council meeting, was the basis for a motion to Academic Council. The motion essentially states that Explorations should be evaluated like any other program. Usually when a program is evaluated, the people who are part of the program are intensely involved in the process. Unfortunately, this is not true of the committee that has been set up to evaluate Explorations.

The Explorations evaluation committee was set up by the administration through a body called the AAC (Academic Advisory Committee—an unofficial body set up by the current Academic Dean. It is not listed under Administration—Committees—on the Vanier web site, oddly enough.) The AAC is made up of administrators, none of whom have had much experience with Science Access, Modified Science or Explorations.

“This unfortunate experience should be seen as a learning experience—something to be avoided in the future.”

If they had come first to Academic Council and to the programs involved, the problems that many of us see could have been avoided. This unfortunate experience should be seen as a learning experience—something to be avoided in the future. However, it would appear that the Academic Dean does not look at it this way. He emphasized, yet again, that the administration can do what it wants.

And the preliminary report from the Evaluation Committee is slated to go to the AAC **before** the final report is written, but only to Academic Council **after** the final report has been written. Sounds like Academic Council is being used as a “rubber stamp”, doesn’t it?

The motion—that Explorations should be evaluated like any other program—was passed. I was shocked to note that two teachers voted with the administration against the motion.*

We also discussed putting teachers from each of the different faculties

on Academic Council sub-committees: Academic Space Committee, Long Range Planning Committee, IT in Teaching and Learning Committee, etc. This would make these committees more representative; they would more easily get input and receive feedback from teachers in the different faculties.

Does this sound like it meets the needs of teachers? Well, at least one teacher representative did not seem to think so. He voted with the administration against this motion.

I can remember a time when Academic Council was an important body at Vanier College, a body that had enormous respect and was really consulted by the administration. It is going to take a lot of work but we need to make that a reality in the future. Will this be possible under the present Academic Dean? Maybe we should be asking him.

*Teachers in technology programs should be aware that many technology students come in through the Explorations Program.



Janice Paquette teaches Sociology and IP. She has also taught Explorations and its precursor, Access. She is a former editor of the VCTA Newsletter, has served on the VCTA Executive and

as our representative to FNEEQ before we became part of FAC. She is a member of the Women’s Studies Program and currently sits on Association Council and Academic Council.

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New Generation of Vanier Teachers: The Dialogue Continues

John Tromp

I was glad to see the responses of Charles Levine and Stephen Block to the article that I wrote last spring. I would like to respond to these articles.

First of all, Charles Levine (p.9) says that in the Summative-Formative question, it would be illegal for the union not to resist any form of Summative evaluation. It is not obvious that the college and government are free to suggest illegal things, so perhaps this is an issue open to legal argument or interpretation. But if that is the end of the legal question, the issue is still not closed. There are still some questions that come to mind.

Can the fact that the union must defend every teacher force the union to do things that might be bad for teachers in general? How vigorously does the union have to defend a hypothetical teacher who harasses another teacher, or assaults another teacher? Do we want to defend a once-hired-now-here-forever policy, leading to the fool-the-hiring-committee strategy—or be realistic about the importance of an evaluation, period? Just because the union has to be formally opposed, does that mean that it is illegal for individual teachers to participate? Can we debate how we think the renewal of teaching personnel in the college should come about? Or are our hands tied by the law?

Stephen Block wrote two articles, one called *The Ageless and the Timeless in Industrial Relations* (p.10) which responded to my article, and another on the creation of a Liaison Office (p. 16). While the creation of a liaison office as outlined in his article is interesting, the devil is in the details. This sort of office always has the possibility of turning into window dressing. Hopefully it would be an open debating space, where people were comfortable to question and criticize our activities. To this end, one could consider if a liaison office should also formally include such a position as the devil's advocate or ombudsman

or something that was there to provide an alternative point of view.

In his other article (p. 10) Stephen presented a point of view which could be briefly summarized as: "There has been a long history of union activity and we have learned quite a few important things that all members should know. New members should not be quick to criticize or question our practices until they understand the complex machinations involved." There is perhaps some validity to this point

"...while it is important to learn lessons from history, sometimes we learn the wrong ones."

of view, and I look forward to reading Stephen's future columns. But shouldn't four years of attending general assemblies and two years of being a member of Association Council be enough? Should we have to take a course to participate? Does mandatory boot camp encourage participation?

And while it is important to learn lessons from history, sometimes we learn the wrong ones. Language that may have been appropriate when the Duplessis government was using goons to suppress union activity may not be appropriate now.

For example, we received a "Letter to members" on Sept. 19 from the FAC-FEC Negotiation Cartel which said "...and so much intransigence on the part of a government whose legitimacy is questionable, we can only put up unwavering resistance." The government was elected, and we live in a democracy, so it is not clear in which way they are illegitimate. Perhaps unwavering resistance is a useful tactic during certain fights, but is this really one of them? What is the purpose of this rhetoric?

Although Stephen may consider me a "success story", I have also developed some feel-

ings of "alienation or disaffection from the union". Like some other new members of the union, I feel no particular enthusiasm doing things that don't make sense to me.

At the last general assembly some people mentioned that we didn't have enough people on the picket lines last time. But then the general assembly voted to start the wheels rolling for another strike in a straw vote. Who is going to be on the picket lines this time? Shouldn't we consider such tactical issues when deciding what we are going to do? Does it make the union stronger to have meager picketing attendance?

When structural realities allow an active minority to take positions that may not be supported by a passive majority, people will get rained on and lonely on the picket lines. A referendum for a strike vote, would let us know we really meant it. When a strike vote for a union of more than 300 teachers is 52-38, perhaps this is not an overwhelming mandate, or a vote of confidence. Members might feel more compelled to support decisions taken by all the membership.

But that does not mean that general assemblies should not play a key role. Why not just subject general assembly strike votes to a ratification vote by all the membership? There are legitimate reasons that people might not be able to attend a general assembly. But if the general assembly, in the debate by all the members who happen to be able to be there that night, comes to a decision, then let everyone participate in a ratification vote. Members will support decisions that they are allowed to make. Perhaps more people would be committed to stand holding picket signs on rainy days for strikes if they had participated in the decision to go on strike.



John Tromp came to Vanier in the summer of 2001 to teach a Cont. Ed. Course in Chemistry and started fulltime in Chemistry in H02. He has also taught History and Methodology of Science in the Liberal Arts Program. John's BSc is from Waterloo, his PhD from Berkeley and he has also done post-doc work at Berkeley, Université de Montréal, and McGill. He was a candidate for the Green Party in Montreal in 1993, running against Gilles Duceppe.

How Jazz Can Make the World a Better Place

Christopher Smith



"If everyone was like jazz musicians," joked a musician friend of mine after a gig, "the world would be a much better place." We all chuckled. After all, who really expects jazz to save the world? But after closer examination I have decided that jazz encourages the type of thinking and habits exhibited by the best citizens.

First off, to play jazz well you must be practically a virtuoso on your instrument. To accomplish this, you need to learn to work effectively, unsupervised, over a number of years, putting in the extra time and effort to keep skills fresh and up-to-date. Technical weakness in any area must be identified and corrected, while constant research in the field is needed. Jazz is not created in a vacuum, either. Most jazz musicians are familiar with a wide variety of music, art, literature and philosophy. You have to be the best "you" you can be.

In addition, to produce the best possible results, you must be able to work well with constantly changing teams, in which

each member has different qualities. Good jazz musicians must be tolerant of idiosyncrasies in others while minimizing their own. You must be a pleasant—not over-bearing—companion, hold up your own end of the load while offering support to those who need it, be willing and able to change roles at the drop of a hat, accept criticism while not being judgmental yourself, and adopt the position of leader or follower according to what the situation demands.

In jazz, effective teamwork brings immediate rewards. Successful collaborations are highly prized and nurtured. Every jazz musician learns early on that the more attention is turned away from self and toward the group, the better the music sounds. Not a bad model for marriage or any other long-term commitment!

Jazz is improvised, generally over a preset structure.

You have to choose or create the structure, then fill in the actual content from your own imagination, adopting and adjusting as you go while taking into account the source material and the contributions of your fellow musicians.

A planned and practiced approach is needed, but often a curve ball requires an immediate change. To be able to accommodate these changes smoothly, the musician has to understand the theory exhaustively, yet be able to "wing it" at any time. Thus, balancing the analytical with the intuitive approach (the Freudian "ego" and "id") is essential.

Traditions must be respected, yet creative personal expression is highly valued. A successful jazz musician must be impeccable in the details, yet keep an eye on the big picture.

According to some new studies, one of the activities that uses more of the brain than any other is music.

Jazz music, even more so.

Now, I would not go so far as to insist that all jazz musicians are more intelligent than the average, but how can

using more of your brain be a bad thing?

Any act of creation — not just in jazz — at some point requires one to stop controlling the creation, to step back and ask the creation, "What do you need?" At this point, the artist is more of a servant to the work than a boss. The work has its own personality, needs and direction—seemingly independent of the creator. Yet, the more the artist serves the work, the clearer the picture of the artist is.

This has important parallels with parenting and teaching. Children (and to a lesser extent, students), though a product of their parents (teachers) are not perfect reflections of them. Recognizing this, yet relating to them effectively, results in better parenting (teaching.) Is it any wonder that jazz musicians (as many other artists do) often refer to their works as "my children"?

*Not a bad model for marriage
or any other long-term commitment!*

Yet underlying the whole jazz subculture is an attitude of altruism. Jazz is widely misunderstood, ignored or actively disliked in mainstream culture. The practitioners often have to subsidize their art by playing commercial music or else by taking up another line of work entirely. Jazz musicians have little marketplace value, especially considering the high degree of education and training they have pursued to attain their skills— comparable to a law or medical degree or more. Most have resigned themselves to a life of relative poverty.

Despite being marginalized, they continue doing what they know is right, not what is convenient or better paying. They can see through the empty promises of pop culture and advertising, because they know what is

important. These are qualities that benefit all of society, and are qualities that everyone wishes our leaders had.

After winning a million dollars, a jazz musician was asked what he was going to do now. He replied, "I guess I'll just keep on playing jazz until it's all gone." May we all be so content in our chosen lives.



Christopher Smith is the proud recipient of the 2004-05 "Rookie Teacher of the Year" award at age 45, having taught music for the last 26 years, five of them at Vanier. His mother still nurtures hope that he will eventually realize his potential.

STAFF CAF: Not Perfect But Much Improved!

Soft lighting, new tables, fresh paint and collegial atmosphere make this a fairly pleasant spot to have your lunch and run into colleagues from different departments and Faculties.

Check it out!



The microwave oven awaits repair or replacement, but the fridge works fine.

The 173 Hours, or Occam Revisited*

Charles F. Levine



Charles F. Levine, a self described dinosaur, has spent many years on the CRT (the French acronym for Labour Relations Committee), the VCTA Executive and the FAC Executive, our Provincial Federation. He teaches

Political Science and Humanities, has been Co-Editor of the VCTA Newsletter and continues to offer his proof-reading talents.

Background

Several years ago, the Province undertook a study in "pay relativity" (as opposed to "pay equity") in an attempt to align the salaries of various types of public sector workers. One of the conclusions from this study was that CEGEP teachers worked 173 fewer hours per year than most public sector workers of similar educational backgrounds. They then offered to negotiate an arrangement whereby the salaries of CEGEP teachers would be brought up to those of other civil servants provided that the teachers agreed to add 173 hours per year to their workload. Last Spring, FAC, our Provincial union finally agreed to such an arrangement (two years after our colleagues in other CEGEP teachers' unions).

What the 173 hours do NOT mean

There is NO increase in our 32.5 hours/week of availability. The 173 hours are supposed to be integrated into our current work week. They do not impinge on the workload clauses found in our Collective Agreement (4-1.00, 8-3.300, 8-4.00, 8-5.00, 8-6.00). They DO NOT increase teachers' workloads or modify the calculation of teachers' workloads. In effect, the 173 hours are supposed to give recognition for work we are already doing.

What is covered

There are two categories: Pedagogical Activities and Program Activities. Pedagogical Activities include such things as tutoring your students or spending time in a resource center, as well as mentoring new teachers and taking professional development programs (eg. The Master Teacher Program, formerly known as Performa). Program Activities involve attendance at official program meetings (maximum 35 hours/year).

A modest proposal

William of Occam, the great medieval scholastic, proposed the following notion: "The simplest solution is usually the best." I believe that our colleagues at John Abbott have achieved Occamite simplicity in the way that they deal with the 173 hours. The philosophy at Abbott began with the notion that this system can only work with the cooperation of the teachers. I suggest that we at Vanier work out a similar arrangement with our Administration.

1. The College establishes its institutional priorities related to the elements included in the 173 hours.
2. Beginning in the Winter Semester of 2006, each department coordinator will submit a form or forms

identifying the projects his/her department/program teachers will undertake the following year as related to the College's priorities. Please note that all of the teachers in a department/program may be covered by a single form. Each separate project would require a different form. The College approves these proposals.

3. Beginning in the Winter Semester of 2007, each teacher will fill out a form relating to the work done during the year just ending. Under no circumstances should teachers be required to account for this work on an hourly basis. The teacher will simply indicate what s/he did and offer suggestions for how things might be improved in the future. So, for example, if you spend 4 hours/week at a Resource Centre, you report the activity, without reference to the exact time spent.

That's all folks.

**With many thanks to Jim Leeke of John Abbott and Kevin Bushell of Vanier.*

The 173 hours issue will be on the Association Council and General Assembly agendas this semester.

Faces of the General Assembly

Drawings by Alanna Horner and Fred Andrews



Thursday, September 29, 2005

Photographs by Shirley Pettifer



EXERCISE MYTHS

...debunked by Karen Runnels



Karen Runnels, who runs the Employee Fitness Program, has taught Physical Education at Vanier College since 1974. She is also a Natural Health Consultant and Chartered Herbalist.

The American Surgeon General of the United States recommends that just 30 minutes a day of moderate exercise can save tens of thousands of lives each year. More than half of Canadian men and women are inactive. Confusion, conflicting advice and misunderstandings about how to get in shape may be preventing many of us from beginning or maintaining an exercise program. Let's explore a few common exercise myths.

1. YOU CAN SPOT REDUCE FAT WITH THE RIGHT EXERCISES.

A common myth among our students at Vanier is that fat can turn into muscle if you "target exercise" a certain area of the body. "Miss, if I do lots and lots of abdominal crunches every night won't that get rid of the fat on my stomach?" They are usually surprised or very disappointed when I tell them that fat tissue cannot magically melt down or turn into muscle tissue with spot exercising. It's biologically impossible. The muscle underneath the layer of subcutaneous fat will strengthen though and tighten up with exercise, pulling in the layer of fat which gives the appearance of being somewhat thinner.

The fat will still be there, it just won't jiggle around as much. This may be an incentive to strengthen those underlying muscles if you intend on strutting around in a bathing suit. You have to burn more calories than you take in on a daily basis to result in general fat loss throughout the body. Unfortunately we cannot command our bodies to take off fat where we would like it to. You can blame your inherited gene pool for where and how fast your body chooses to show the fat loss.



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Overall body strength training, however, does help to contribute to fat loss. Strong muscles require a higher rate of caloric combustion than unexercised muscles in order to maintain their strength. A combination of strength training every 2nd day and at least 30-60 minutes of moderate daily cardiovascular exercise will increase your overall daily caloric expenditure.

2. YOU CAN'T BE FAT AND FIT

The idea that all fat people are sedentary and unfit and at a high risk of disease is not true. Overweight and obese individuals who are fit do not have elevated mortality rates. A study of 25,000 men at the Cooper Clinic in Dallas found that low fitness, whether you are fat or thin, is as strong a predictor of dying as other risk factors like high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes. Fitness is an important predictor of mortality.

3. NO PAIN, NO GAIN

Are you old enough to you remember Jane Fonda's "go for the burn" advice in her early exercise video tapes? It wasn't the best advice as many exercisers gritted their teeth while tearing muscle tissue to knock off just a few more repetitions to keep up with Jane. They paid for this when resulting muscle soreness limited further activity.

Many people still believe that you have to exercise at a very high intensity in order to get a benefit. In a recent Harvard Medical School Nurses Health Study, women who regularly engaged in brisk walking reduced their risk of heart disease to the same degree as women who engaged in vigorous exercise.



The trick is making sure that the exercise is at least moderate-intensity. For example that would be the equivalent of walking at a pace of 3-4 miles (5-6 kilometres) an hour. Heart rate can also be used to determine exercise intensity. Take the number 220, subtract your age to determine your maximum heart rate, and then calculate 60%-85% of this maximum heart rate. Taking your heart rate during physical activity is a practical way to monitor your exercise intensity. If you are below 60-85% of your maximum heart rate, bump up your effort. You don't have to do 30 minutes straight of physical activity either. Shorter bouts, e.g. 10 minutes at a time, are just as good. Walking, dancing, lawn mowing, gardening, vacuuming, throwing a Frisbee...are fine if done intensely enough.

Why not fit in 45 minutes of exercise right here on campus by either participating in our noon time Employee Fitness Program or introducing yourself to our high tech. Fitness Centre. If you need any guidance in this respect contact Karen Runnels at extension 7653, or runnelask@vaniercollege.qc.ca

Strike! You're out. No strike. You're still out!

Stephen Block

The declining and now apparently defunct, effectiveness of the standard strike action has been noted for more than two decades in North America. It is important to understand why this is the case before determining what to do next.



Clearly the idea that teachers should go off on rotating strikes, lose pay and then have to make up the time, without recompense, is laughable, and as John Tromp had implied, kind of masochistic. (See John's article on p. 7 of the May 2005 issue of the *VCTA Newsletter*, now archived under "V" in Vanier A to Z, Vanier web site.)

And it is equally true that unions have to become a lot more creative, to say nothing of competitive, at least in the collective bargaining process, if they have any chance of succeeding with their goals.

As we shall see, regardless of the plans we unfurl to get better wages and working conditions, at the end of the road awaits an employer determined not to pay us anything over and above what we currently earn. The last 25 years has been called the era of 'concession bargaining' for good reason.

What is Concession Bargaining? When a union calls for strike action, or when the public hears of a collective bargaining process, the assumption is quickly made that yet another group of employees is de-

manding, as they say, "more and more", probably outrageously so, and certainly more than the employer or the public can afford. This reaction is quickly milked, if not provoked, by those without sympathy for employees who may only be trying to keep up with the cost of living.

Since the late 1970s, the collective bargaining process has largely seen the employer demanding more and more from employees. Sometimes it is longer hours and what is called greater "productivity". Sometimes it is what has been called "take-aways": demands by the employer that employees give back money or accept lower wages or benefits. Often it is all of the above.

Yet throughout the 25 years that this has been the case, members of the public—unless they have had a personal experience to the contrary and can see what is actually occurring in a labour dispute—still believe that overpaid teachers (or fill in the blank) want ever more for doing ever less.

A recent article in *La Presse* describes how CEGEP teachers teach only 15 hours a week for which they receive very generous remuneration. A local talk show host on an English language radio station, whenever he refers to CEGEPs, is sure to mention that faculty in General Studies teach "basket-weaving". And how often have we heard about the five guys leaning on a shovel while receiving astronomically high union wages?

The capacity of those of bad faith to slander or defame is boundless. It is,

after all, the protected right of free speech which allows the talk show host to say these things on air, though it is a tad more difficult for those of differing opinion or in possession of the facts to have equal air time.

Besides all that, unionists are becoming famous for ineptitude when it comes to publicizing their own causes.

The Media's Role

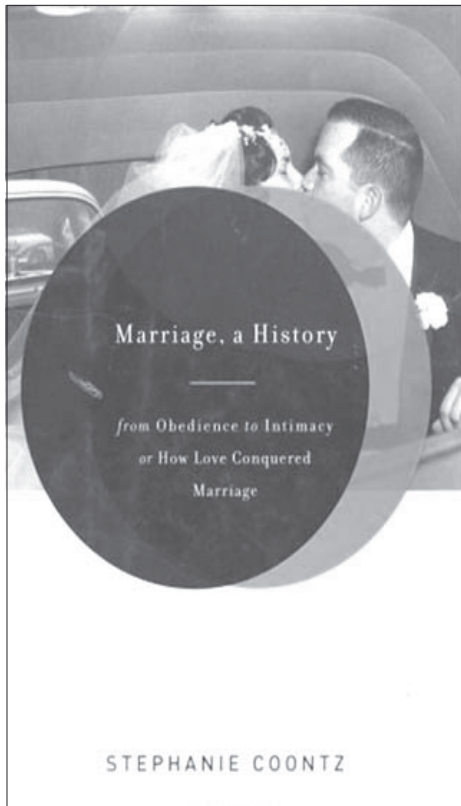
I teach a course in media and propaganda and indeed I became interested in this subject upon noticing a nasty turn in the coverage of industrial relations events in the late 1970s.

You may recall that the blame for the inflation of the time was securely affixed to union demands, even though this was also the era of oil shocks and the skyrocketing rise in gold and silver prices. Gold, for example, went from \$35/oz to \$800/oz, yet it was hardly considered a factor.

The blame fell on the shoulders of employees and no others simply because the issue was how much the businessman (sic) would charge. And his claim, most often taken at face value, was that he needed to constantly raise prices because wages had run so high. In time the logic overtook public sector bargaining as well.

In my class I show students a clip from the famous Quebec general strike of 1983. It was the first of its kind where the government, as employer, not only broke faith with its word and its employees, but also, it should have been noticed, violated the terms of its own contract. But not to worry, the government after all is bound by its own laws and if it does not like an employment contract it signed, it can simply decree another one.

Continued on page 16



Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage

Stephanie Coontz

Wow! What a fun book to read. It demystifies many marriage myths and takes you on a most interesting journey, Coontz starts with the premise that the marriage institution is on the brink of destruction in the Western world. There are so many divorces, after all, and people just don't spend all of their lives together—you know, the old "til death do us part" thing. And what about same sex marriages? Are they not a threat to this sacred institution?

Well, it turns out that this so-called marriage crisis has been in the making for many, many years—one could even say centuries. And what we believe to be 'traditional' is actually quite new.

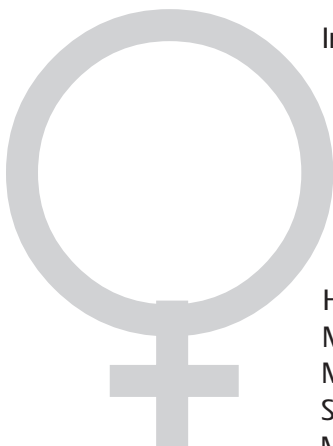
According to Coontz, the revolutionary aspect of marriage is the idea that one should marry for love. Though it does not seem so 'new' to us, according to history, it is quite a revolution in light of the purpose of marriage itself: an economic transaction. But more than that, marriage is a means by which to organise society, and through which you convert strangers into relatives.

I will not go on and on. Suffice to say that despite the sociological and anthropological aspect of this book, it is an easy read, one that is perfect to snuggle up with on the kind of rainy fall days we have experienced lately, and totally right, too, for the cold snaps we are likely to have in a short while. Enjoy!



Lyne Marie Larocque
*teaches Sociology,
Methodology and
Explorations.*

Women's History Month continued...



In the last issue (Sept. 05) Arlene Steiger, the Coordinator of Women's Studies, contributed a short piece: October is Women's History Month. She invited readers to submit names of women who have played important roles in the movement for gender equality. It will be interesting to see how many names will be submitted in time for the March 8, Special Women's Issue of the Newsletter. Keep your suggestions coming. Mark Prentice, Eric Lamoureux and the Editor suggest that we add these names:

Harriet Tubman
Marie Curie
Mae West
Susan Sontag
Margeurite Yourcenar

Mother Jones
Josephine Baker
Oprah
Rosa Parks
Katherine Hepburn

Dorothy Parker
Emma Goldman
Cindy Lauper
Françoise Dolto
Andrea Dworkin

KUDOS!

KUDOS!

KUDOS!



The 5th Annual Social Science Festival, *The Tree of Knowledge*, was a stunning success: a wide variety of well-attended events which have stimulated on-going discussions in Vanier's classrooms, resource centres and hallways. Congratulation to the team that brought us the Festival this year, especially to organizer-in-chief Miles DeNora—History, Methodology and Explorations teacher.



Tenured in A05!

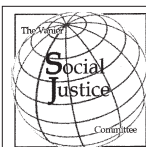
Ali Alousi (Physics)
Stephen Block (Humanities)
Diane Brooks (Nursing)
Gabriel Bulgarea (Physics)
Linda Chipp (Nursing)
Ellen Cooper (Mathematics)
Carole Fontaine (French)
Philippe Gagné (French)
Nancy Giacomini (English)
Bachar Karkoukli (B. S. E. T.)
Caroline Krzakowski (English)

Guylaine Larocque (French)
Martine Leprince (English)
Sevak Manjikian (Humanities/Religious Studies)
Simon McAslan (English)
Laura Pao (Sociology)
Mariam Pirbhai (English)
Josée Roy (Special Care Counselling)
Margaret Sircom (English)
Matthieu Sossoyan (Anthropology)
Hannah Steinwald (Psychology)

Social Justice Committee



Choosing a logo (bottom inset) to represent the
Vanier Social Justice Committee



Logo chosen by the Vanier
Social Justice Committee,
designed by Carlo Tadeo.

A group composed of students, staff, professionals and teachers. New members always welcome. At their Oct. 14 meeting, the group heard a presentation by Roberto Nieto and Père Clément Bolduc who work with foreign migrant workers. They also viewed the submissions to their logo contest. Carlo Tadeo, is the proud winner of the \$50 prize. Thanks to Dean Nancy Wargny for the prize \$. **Next Meeting: Nov. 4.**

Père Clément Bolduc discusses ways the Vanier Community might learn about and find ways to support foreign migrant workers who are working on farms in the Montreal vicinity.



Strike!

cont'd from pg. 13

I explain to my business students that the contract of employment remains the only contract to which only one party needs to adhere and which only one party is allowed to violate (Glasbeek), with proper excuses of course. The problem is the excuses have become the norm.

Hence, company A can no longer pay its pension plan; government B will roll back wages because of a budget deficit; airliner C will break up if employees don't knuckle under; auto-maker D will move to a non-union locale unless unions, in essence, abandon rights accumulated over decades, rights accumulated by bargaining away other rights.

None of this is usually noted by the regular press, although sometimes it is true that it is mentioned in the business press, but then often only to alert businesses as to their prospects for engaging in such alternative negotiating strategies. The best defense is a good offense. And employers and managers, after all, think strategically. That is the nature of their game.

The piece I show my students begins with teachers (apparently) screaming wildly into a very closely focused camera lens. The first two "teachers" have mutton chop beards, and if they are not drooling while they are yelling, it certainly appears as if they ought to be. In fact our colleagues could pass for deranged axe-murderers who just happen to moonlight as teachers on the side. And that was the way the *CBC* portrayed them.

Then, with the strike cause nearly lost, the teachers all cozy-in together to sing a rousing round of "Solidarity Forever" (the vaunted anthem of the "international communist conspiracy"), while the voice over tells us that in spite of the confident talk, the unions are getting squashed.

And, oh yes, the news report neglected to mention the reason for the teachers' anger: that they were being forced to accept a 20% pay reduction and a 20% increase in "productivity" (read: more students per class)—*after a contract had already been signed.*

WHAT IS TO BE DONE, INDEED!

So where to begin to undo the damage and the losses of the past 25 years? Part of the problem of course is that unionists really don't think strategically. Or because of past victories or a great sense of moral outrage and injustice, they overestimate the chances for success, believing that it is mysteriously tied to the rightness of their cause.

They also continue to underestimate the government's determination and the lengths to which it will

...the government has a steady and friendly army of media pundits ready to unfurl the hanging rope.

go to win. From the employer's perspective, the idea is to win, at any and all costs. And s/he is fully aware of his/her advantages in these situations. The moment the mechanics' union or the bus drivers announce their intentions to strike, the government has a steady and friendly army of media pundits ready to unfurl the hanging rope.

Bloodthirsty polemics are never allowed on the air, except when we are considering the bargaining rights of public sector employees. Then radio stations generously make an exception and grant full latitude to the leaders of the lynch mob.

And the employer knows, a la Machiavelli, that the more unreasonable s/he is privately, the more s/he is likely to get the goat of the

employees. Then all that is required is some pleasing public statement about having made a generous offer, or that the cupboard is bare (by coincidence, just this week, M. Charest made a statement to this effect), and the general public becomes a ferocious ally in the cause of curbing greedy behaviour. So much for the public being the innocent victim (Weiler).

For this reason the employer knows that s/he has a great incentive to act in bad faith, to never truly negotiate until so compelled and to make only the most uncivilized of demands, for the public will most often only see the rabid response, not the private taunting.

At our last General Assembly, by coincidence I spoke right after John Tromp. John had asked why we were not recommending a proposal from FAC that we put aside a half-day's pay to assemble a war chest to do publicity. I felt uncomfortable not raising my hand in support of the motion and did not do so primarily because I felt that the suggestion, although one with potential merit, had come too late.

But certainly if this is what John meant by kicking around new ideas, there should be no one to oppose him. And it is my hope that those who would consider these new ideas not get disheartened because of one negative vote.

Right after John's intervention, I made one of my own. I was not at all sure if it was altogether tongue-in-cheek. I suggested that perhaps it was time to abandon the strike option altogether. I explained that in some provinces public sector employees, specifically those deemed essential, do not have the right to strike. (Of course teachers do not fall under that category, until they actually go out on strike.)

Instead these employees have the right to binding arbitration. I suggested that because we no longer in fact truly have the right to strike

(i.e. that when we strike, the right to withdraw our services is effectively taken away from us), perhaps we ought to consider abandoning the strike option in favour of binding arbitration. In truth, I was really not thinking about calling for us to abandon our right to strike. Rather, out of frustration, I was offering a challenge to the government: you don't want us to strike, let's go to arbitration.

My sense was that the government would reject the offer as it likes us just where we are, with a right to strike we cannot ever fully exercise, unless we break the law. Just look at what is happening to the teachers in BC where a judge has now removed the teachers' right to collect daily strike pay. But has any judge there ruled against the employer, now accused by the ILO of breaking international labour law commitments no less than 8 times?

And, my colleague Charles Levine pointed out that the blue collars, having gone that route were not happy with the outcome. Indeed, it is impossible to predict how an arbitrator would rule. My sense is that on most occasions, if the union side presented a reasonable proposal, an arbitrator could find something to agree with.

But I am also reminded of a story told to me at a conference 15 years ago by a colleague working in the labour field. He was assisting an arbitrator. In fact, he wrote up the findings for a case and presented them to the arbitrator. After reading it through, the arbitrator congratulated him on his excellent work and then told him to change the final page. The final page of course is the conclusion page and my colleague had found in favour of the employee. The arbitrator, it turned out, was from a management background and did not see the employee's side of the dispute and wished to rule against him.

So there is always a risk. But in the

end, betting that an arbitrator will be fair is probably a better bet than betting on a government's good faith.

Beyond this, there is so much that unionists could do—and that includes changing the way we picket. Who truly is impressed when a handful of teachers, dressed down in their weekend clothes, stand smiling and talking to each other

... betting that an arbitrator will be fair is probably a better bet than betting on a government's good faith

while holding picket signs?

We can do much better, not just in terms of short-term tactics but also in terms of what we see as possible and impossible. And if it continues to be the case that successive governments take away the effective right to strike, perhaps we have to think about abandoning it altogether.

Again, I say this not because I am advocating capitulation. Quite the contrary. I say this because it is apparent to me that the employer would prefer us to have a merely theoretical right to strike that we cannot exercise, than a meaningful bargaining strategy accompanied by a good arbitration case.

In other words, the employer has caged us in: giving us the right to strike, which is then removed or blunted, while also not providing for us the prospect for binding arbitration. For as has been mentioned in the BC case, it appears as if the employer rejects the very notion of collective bargaining. How a union deals with this problem is something it needs to seriously address strategically.

On top of that, public sector strikes are almost always reviled by the public, hence defeating the purpose

on that front as well. We are now in a twilight zone, the worst of all possible worlds.

We have now been without a contract for 30 months or so and yet there has been no sense of urgency surrounding these negotiations, even to date. Binding arbitration would have settled this issue 30 months ago and we'd now be on to another set of contract negotiations. And our colleagues of lower "equity" ranks would have received the raises the employer agreed to 18 months ago. In that respect the tactic to divide and rule would also have failed.

Unless we have the resolve to take action that compels the employer to take notice and bargain in good faith, we are indeed whistling Dixie. The idea then may not be so much to stop banging our heads against the wall as it would be to re-convince ourselves of the rightness of our cause. As teachers, and as professionals, we have yet to come to understand that in the end we are but salaried employees. As such, unless we are going to learn how to fight for our rights, like any other employees, we will continue to be part of the employer's shill game. This too is a little piece of wisdom passed down from our experienced union colleagues.



Dr. Stephen Block teaches Humanities courses in media, history of ideas and in business ethics. He has a background in labour relations and sits on the CRT (the French acronym for Labour Relations Committee) as well as on Association Council.

End Notes:

Glasbeek, Harry J. "The Contract of Employment at Law", in *Union-Management Relations In Canada* Eds. Anderson, John C., and Gunderson, Morley. Addison-Wesley Publishers, Don Mills. 1982

Weiler, Paul. *Reconcilable Differences* Carswell: Toronto. 1980

POETRY CORNER

COURAGE • by Su Yi

*Courage, to the wise man,
Is the willingness to admit
That rules could be bent for a good cause.*

*Courage, to the leader,
Is the willingness to take sides and utter
opinions
In the face of foreseen opposition.*

*Courage, to the believers,
Is gained by living an exemplary life.*

*Courage, to the dreamer,
Is the non-compromising expression of oneself.*

*Courage is the ability
To best one's opponents,
To confront trying life circumstances,
To be truthful to one's perceptions,
To work towards a better future,
And to never expect less of oneself.*

*Yes, you and,
We can be courageous today.*

TRADITIONS • by Su Yi

*There would always be traditions.
Great civilizations are built on tradition.
Traditions?
Yes, traditions.*

*One can only be blamed when one insists
traditions be mistaken for social mores.
One can only be trapped when rejection of
traditions makes one an outsider.*

*So let us learn to appreciate traditions,
And follow them with comprehension.*

*Let us find comfort, pride, and cultural heritage
In observing traditions
While welcoming new ideas that may bring us to
a brighter future.
Yes, traditions.*

THE ONLY METRO POEM I COULD FIND

Marcia Goldberg

It was important to pause
for the muscular black man in his youth
decked out in red shirt and jeans, on a wheelchair,
with close-cropped hair, black leather driving gloves
and a cell phone in his lap
as he poised himself backwards to descend
thirty-five steps for the second time
without accident.

This happened at Lionel Groulx during exam week
and caused me to be late,
but I was late already, so here's the thing:
checking this struggle going on
in one other spot in the world
regulates extremes in the news,
pressures on the home front,
ought to turn up the sun
as we get out of the metro, the world
full of flame fired by maple leaves,
scorching forsythia or torrents of fleecy snow,
making way for the strongest Presence
among other distractions, all our brilliant work.



*Marcia Goldberg teaches
English, coordinates the
Jewish Studies Program
and also participates in the
Women's Studies Program.*



*Su Yi teaches Sociology and Methodology
courses at Vanier College. Her Chemistry
undergraduate degree gives her an
appreciation for logical thinking and
objective facts. Her Sociology degrees
make her a better citizen and prepares her
to face an ever changing world. Her cultural heritage encourages
her to be modest, considerate, courteous, and thoughtful.*

Odds 'n' Ends

PD Funds

Reimbursements of PD funds are slow because the Accounting Dept., along with all of H-Bldg. has had to move to new quarters. All this, while the audit is being done!

Grievances

First, as of Oct. 11, 2005, the SRAM grievance was withdrawn. Second, the grievances on Summative Evaluation—the VCTA's and the Administration's—have been suspended. They will be reviewed after we reach an agreement in principle for our Collective Agreement. Third, the Right to a Union Rep. to accompany teachers called to any administrative office is reported to be on time. The date for hearing this grievance will be announced.

Fairness in Allocating Courses to Teachers

Teachers are not always aware that workload—not necessarily course choice—is allocated on the basis of seniority. Here is an example of how History strives for fairness among junior and senior teachers:

- Departmental allocation is distributed among the members based on their seniority. For example, if the allocation is 7.500, then the first 7 people get a full-time load and the 8th member is given the remaining 0.500. This means that before someone with lower seniority is given allocation, a full workload is guaranteed over the year to the person with higher seniority.
- Distribution of upper level history courses within the department is not based on seniority. Courses are given, as far as possible, according to our preferences and the availability of courses to be taught.
- Sections of the introductory course of Western Civilization have been divided equally among the teachers.
- Methodology courses are allocated to History teachers, based on the seniority of our members within the Social Science Program. Teachers in other disciplines, such as Sociology, go so far as to take turns teaching Cont. Ed. courses so that the least senior teacher does not get overloaded with evening courses.

VCTA Association Council

Meetings are open to all teachers and are held on Thursdays, at 2:30 pm. Upcoming meeting dates: Oct. 27, Nov. 17, Dec. 1. If you are interested in serving on one of the following sub-committees of Association Council, please contact the VCTA Office, C101, local 7053, 7054 or 7411. Mobilization Information Committee; Retirement Committee; DHPP Policy Committee.

New Teachers

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

Ethiquette: Ethical Consumption in Quebec

As of Mon. Oct. 17, www.ethiquette.ca opened to the public. The site offers a Google-like search engine which finds socially- and environmentally-responsible consumer products currently available in Quebec. Starting with a database of nearly 500 products, ethiquette.ca intends to evolve and expand with suggestions from site users. The site provides evaluation criteria to judge a product's or service's "responsibility. This month's feature article: Where the Good Shoes Are.

Find out More About the Master Teacher Program: Nov. 2

Have you been tempted to take a course about the art of teaching? About how students learn? About assessment techniques that are formative (learning opportunities) and not just summative (a way to give a mark)? The Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence has set up an opportunity for you to find out more about this program. The coordinator of the program, Dianne Bateman, will do a presentation. Vanier teachers who are involved in the program as either teachers or participants will be there to share their experiences. **Wed. Nov. 2. during UB in The Learning Centre's Reading Room: B221**



Andrew Gates presents his research on the Explorations Program. The main themes that emerged from his interviews with teachers in the Program were about the importance of the affective domain of learning—how to establish trust and mutual respect; how to handle extreme behaviour; valuing the collaborative aspects of the Explorations Program; the importance of teachers participating in the SOS weekend trips and getting to know the students in another context.



Vanier Goes KaBOOM!

