

# VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Vol 23 N° 3  
DECEMBER  
2005



**Support our Support Staff!**

December 13, 2005

Come join the picket line  
between 7am & 12 noon!

I teach History, so dates matter to me. Last year at this time as I was correcting Montreal History papers in a Côte-des-Neiges café when I looked up and realized that the tragedy I was reading about in the assignment in front of me happened about a hundred yards away. Plus I was also sitting directly in front of the memorial "Nef pour quatorze reines"; a nave for fourteen queens. In that crowded café, I cried openly.

I had never met any of the fourteen women murdered at the Université de Montréal on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1989, but I can't think about what happened without becoming emotional. Why is this relevant to the VCTA newsletter? Those women could have come from Vanier. They were barely older than our own students. In 1989, I was their age and now I teach women like them – aspiring geniuses, national leaders, captains of industry, mothers, world-beaters all. And I love being involved in getting them where they're going. I can't believe how privileged I am to do this job. Yet thinking of that day unnerves me.

I hate to sit around feeling angry and helpless. So instead, I propose to do something positive. If this should hit the stands before December 6<sup>th</sup>, I invite



*Eric just cannot get out of school. Between 1986 and 1999, he got bachelor's degrees in English Literature, History, and Education from Concordia University. During that time, he went backpacking in Europe five times. He also began working with a local organization dedicated to ending global poverty and visited Central America with them. That work inspired him to get a Master's degree in the History of Africa from McGill University. After teaching in primary and high schools, he decided CEGEP students were the most interesting and so hounded Vanier until they hired him part-time in 2003. His fields of interest include Third World History, Western Civilization and the History of Montreal.*

the Vanier community to come to my Montreal History class that day at 2:30 in room D-506 for a 15-minute memorial tribute. If that date has passed, then take a moment now to think of the wonderful and essential nature of the women in your world. Maybe even thank them for being that way. Spread a little positivity in our school.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE • SPECIAL ISSUE:**  
**BLACK HISTORY MONTH &**  
**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK**  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2005**

VCTA Office: C101  
 Telephone Extensions:  
 7053 / 7054

VCTA Executive 2005-2006  
 President: Sylvie Tardif  
 Vice Presidents: Eric Durling  
 Alena Perout  
 Secretary-Treasurer: Ian MacArthur

Executive Office Hours A05:  
 Mon. Eric 8:30 - 9:45  
 Sylvie 1:30 - 4:00  
 Tues. Exec. Mtg. 9:45 - 12:00  
 Eric 8:00 - 10:00  
 Alena 1:00 - 3:00  
 Wed. Eric 8:30 - 9:45  
 Sylvie 12:00 - 1:30  
 Ian 1:30 - 2:30  
 Thurs. Ian 8:30 - 9:30  
 Alena 10:00-12:00  
 Fri. Alena 10:00-12:00

Office Assistants' Hours:  
 Ext. 7411  
 8:30 am to 4:30 pm  
 Closed for lunch 12:00-1:00  
 Susan ..... Mon./Tues./Wed.  
 Pat ..... Thursday/Friday

<b>In This Issue</b>	
From the Co-Editor .....	2
myVCTA.org .....	3
New Generation of Teachers	
...continued .....	5
Message from the President .....	6
Lessons from Alinsky .....	7
December 6 National Day of	
Remembrance and Action .....	8
Student Enrollment .....	9
Poetry Corner .....	11
Book Review .....	11
The Master Teacher Program .....	12
College Teaching Course at	
Vanier in Winter 2006 .....	13
CYN(d)ICAL Practices .....	14
Low Cost Labour .....	15
Open Door Network News .....	16
Odds 'n'Ends .....	19
Calling for Contributions .....	19
Cryptic Crossword Puzzle .....	20

The NEWSLETTER is published by the Vanier College Teachers Association, 821 Ste-Croix Ave., St-Laurent, QC H4L 3X9.  
 Shirley Pettifer is the Editor.  
 Technical assistance by Gloria Di Murro.  
 Printing is by Vanier College Graphics and Printing.

# my VCTA.org

Kevin Bushell

I'd like here to jump into the discussion initiated by John Tromp last May. Let me state at the outset that I too have often had feelings of "alienation and disaffection from the union," and have consequently slowly decreased my involvement with the VCTA in the recent past. For several years I was a member of Association Council and, for one semester, on the Executive. Now I hardly go to General Assemblies.

But I'm not off to a very good start with this article. My mom used to tell me that if I didn't have anything nice to say, I shouldn't say anything at all, so I'll heed that advice and couch this in the positive, using my most respectful tone. While my participation in the VCTA has been dwindling, I have been giving a good deal of thought to the state of unions today and where I think the VCTA should go. I'll try to articulate these ideas and concerns here. Consider it a sort of wish list—the type of union I'd like to have.

First of all, like some other members, I've become skeptical about the efficacy of the strike as a tool in collective bargaining, particularly in the public sector within an "essential service." As I write this, the VCTA Executive are preparing for a General Assembly at which yet another strike mandate will be discussed and probably approved, and the main argument presented in favour of the strike will be historical: this is the way we've always done things. Someone might even remind the attendees of the successful strike twenty-five years ago that saved several part-timers their jobs. But what worked twenty-five years ago does not necessarily work today. We live in a completely different economic context and must look to new tools appropriate for that context.

*"We...cannot assume to have public support, but must win over the electorate with solid arguments..."*

Towards that end, I have been suggesting for several years that we must use the media much more effectively than we have. We live in a media-rich society, and must be much more proactive in using the media to get our message out to the public. Last I heard, we

had approximately \$80,000 in the bank. In conjunction with funding by the FAC-FEC "cartel" and other unions, why not hire an advertising agency to put together some nifty, biting, full-page ads in newspapers, maybe even a short spot on local television? If the students could put together television ads last spring, why can't we now?

*"...the tax base has been eroding as corporations contribute less and less to public revenue...."*

The concept of the strike, it seems to me, is based on the premise that the union and its employer are alone at opposite ends of a conflict. Historically, this was the case. Corporations wanted to maximize profit margins by minimizing manufacturing costs through the suppression of wages and working conditions. And by stopping production, the strike was an effective means of sharply cutting into those profits.

However, in the public sector you have a third party, namely the public. Strikes in the public sector run the risk of angering the public and alienating the union. We therefore cannot assume to have public support, but must win over the electorate with solid arguments for why such a strike is in its interests. Only then can we be sure the government will sit up and take notice.

We have been far too complacent about this aspect of our strategy in the past. We know that the government has used and will continue to use the media to discredit teachers and belittle our work, so we need to combat that propaganda in some way. It's not enough to point to news reports in corporate media as evidence of "getting our message out." Often such reports are cursory and superficial, at best listing our demands.

A strike today in the public sector is seen not as a means of cutting into the employer's profits; indeed, as John Tromp has pointed out, strikes actually result in us working for free and saving the government money. Rather, they are seen symbolically as a means of "putting some pressure" on the government, at least that was the argument given by our Executive last year when it came to us with a strike motion. We were told that a strike was needed or the government bureaucrats would ask, "Where are your troops?"—a sign of some sort of weakness, a lack of solidarity or, at worst, apathy.

In such a dialogue, it seems that symbolic protests are about as effective as actual strikes, and have been

used in lieu of work stoppages. I believe that the poor participation on the picket lines in recent strikes is a direct indication of a general skepticism about the efficacy of symbolic or rotating strikes.

Another reason why I think strikes are not effective is that they target the wrong institution. Corporations have the power today and should be seen at least in part as our adversary, not only governments. I tend to believe Charest when he says that the government doesn't have enough money to meet our and other public sector unions' demands, and it's because the tax base has been eroding as corpora-

*"I want a comprehensive recycling program involving glass, plastics, metals and paper."*

tions contribute less and less to public revenue. But when I suggested in an Association Council meeting years ago that we support a local coalition that was lobbying Montreal City Council to declare Montreal a GATS-free zone, I received only polite nods around the table. Good idea; no support. (GATS=General Agreement on Trades in Services—basically free trade in services.)

One more point about strikes before I move on: if we are going to strike, our coalition is nowhere near wide enough to cause the government serious concern. We have multinational corporations today and need multinational or, at the very least, national unions to combat these forces.

I believe that a percentage of the Executive's time should be spent in reaching out and building and maintaining coalitions with other unions in public education. To its credit, it has done that to some degree in communicating with FEC and other unions, but we've yet to see a motion for an indefinite general strike in education across Quebec. If we are going to strike, let's do it right!

If I'm skeptical about the amount of pressure we can assert on our provincial government, I'm very confident that we can exert considerable pressure locally.

I'd like to see the VCTA mobilize to improve food services at Vanier. (I stopped buying lunch and have brown-bagged it ever since the Sodexo renovations last year.) I don't want to see posters of people practicing meditation or yoga at Food Services to convince me of their interest in my health; I want good food at reasonable prices served by people not also handling money.

I want metal cutlery, not to have to pay for plastic utensils that are then thrown out, and real cups and plates instead of polystyrene (Styrofoam) boxes. Above all, I want a comprehensive recycling program involving glass, plastics, metals, and paper.

I know this is all possible because I've witnessed it at Rosemont College where I used to work, and my students tell me that the cafeteria at our sister college is very good, and it's because they have a very strong student union which lobbied its local administration hard to get it. Why can't the VCTA lobby hard for this essential service? I'd also like to see a green box in every classroom. Why isn't the VCTA taking a more active role in supporting The Green Team?

Finally, I offered years ago to create a website for the VCTA. I even made it a part of my re-election platform, but we won't go there. I still feel a website would be very helpful. I'd like to be able to download forms in PDF format and access all sorts of information about college policies, our collective agreement, insurance, benefits, news from FAC, educational documents about our union and its affiliations, etc. in a much more active manner than receiving bulletins in my mailbox. I'd even like to be able to log in and contribute to ongoing discussions such as this one via a blog. Some of us are using blogs in our courses to create a more inclusive classroom, and perhaps a blog would help those of us feeling alienated and disaffected feel a little less so.

In general, I'd like to see the VCTA be more proactive, not always reactive. I'd like to see it be responsive to the needs of the membership at the grassroots level. I'd also like it to be more open and willing to listen to dissenting opinion and to give serious consideration to new ideas and strategies.

I guess what I'm leading to is that I'd like to see it become more democratic and inclusive. When it does this, I'm confident that a new generation of Vanier teachers will become more involved and committed to their union, and it will remain the strong force it has been in the past.



**Kevin Bushell** started teaching in the English Department at Vanier in 1996. He has also taught at Rosemont College, John Abbott, Marianopolis, Université de Montréal, and HEC. He has a B.A. Hon. from the University of Western Ontario, an M.A. from Concordia, and is completing part-time an undergrad degree in Classics at Concordia. He is also a published poet and is currently completing his first book-length manuscript. The working title is *The Testimony of Birds*.

# NEW GENERATION OF TEACHERS

John Tromp

...continued

## *A Plea for Due Process*

At our last General Assembly (Nov. 8), a strike vote was on the agenda. Minutes before the meeting was to start, a proposed amendment about replacing strike days with "working for charity days" was circulated. The amendment seemed like a breath of fresh air to many, and the membership embraced it with an unsettling enthusiasm. Although many in the room had first heard of the motion only minutes before, and although there were possibly complex legal issues involved, we had soon voted to amend strike days to "working for charity days". I voted for this amendment with misgivings, since it can be reckless to embrace something without a chance to give it much thought, but I thought openness to change should also be supported.

It is not clear that this is the best way to proceed. Perhaps we should introduce new ideas earlier in the decision cycle. For example, new ideas can be proposed in *VCTA Newsletter* articles, or notice of motion can be given. One month earlier, at the previous General Assembly, the strike issue was first addressed through a straw vote. If the concept of "working for charity days" had been introduced then, or in a *VCTA Newsletter* article, we could have discussed it before it was popped on an unsuspecting General Assembly expecting a strike vote. Debate and democracy would be enhanced if participants knew what they were going to be debating in advance.

Eventually, the amended motion was defeated, and now "working for charity days" is on the agenda for the next meeting. It is not clear that the union can compel us all to donate to a specific charity, and our internal social harmony could be stressed if it were left as a voluntary donation, but now at least we can discuss these things for the next month.

The enthusiasm of the General Assembly for "working for charity days" could be interpreted in different ways. Clearly there is a desire to explore new tactics or strategies, and there is not an overwhelming enthusiasm for more conventional strike days. However, voting for the amendment could also be interpreted as a protest vote, an attempt to throw a monkey wrench into the works without regard for the consequences to our union or our federation.

I have been arguing in favour of a reconsideration of some of our traditional union practices, and initiated an open discussion about our practices through the *VCTA Newsletter*. That discussion is still ongoing, and is hardly complete. When traditions are questioned, they should also be respected. Traditions got us where we are today.

*"...there is a desire to explore new tactics or strategies..."*

## *To Strike or Not to Strike or Never to Strike*

Last spring I criticized our strike strategy, likening it to us beating our heads against a wall, since we had to make up days missed anyway and still lose pay. Since then several other perspectives have been presented. For example, Stephen Block wrote a *VCTA Newsletter* article (Oct. 2005 issue), where he agreed that the strike was less than completely effective as a tactic, given our situation of having to work the days missed. He suggested that perhaps we could consider asking the government for binding arbitration instead and also pointed out some potential pitfalls of this approach. This seems like an interesting avenue to explore.

But while we explore other options, we still retain the same tools and alliances. We are part of a large group of public service workers. Many of them have come together to try to present a stronger front for negotiations. While we CEGEP teachers do not withdraw a service directly when we go on strike, if we are part of a larger body of striking workers, then maybe the distinction is less important. If we are alone on a field of battle with ineffective weapons, then the campaign will fail. However, if we are only a small part of a larger movement many of whom have more effective weapons, then the symbolism and solidarity we show by joining them could be more important than the fact that our guns only fire blanks.

It could be that we wasted our energy in adopting an ineffective strike action last spring, where we were not part of a grand coalition, and now that conditions are more favourable, we are like the person who has heard the boy cry wolf too many times.

*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 1993, running against Gilles Duceppe. He would like to thank Su Yi for discussions, and her poem "Traditions" in the last Newsletter.*

**Editor's Note: Past issues of the *VCTA Newsletter* are archived on the Vanier Web site: Click on VANIER A to Z, then V. Previous contributions to this debate can be found in the May 2005, September 2005 and October 2005 issues.**



# V.C.T.A.

VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



## Message from the President: SYLVIE TARDIF

### BOARD SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS!

While we were holding our General Assembly of Nov. 8, the Board of Directors unanimously passed the following resolution:

*"Given the recent controversy over teaching workloads in colleges and the unfortunate and erroneous reference to a 15 hour work week by college teachers, The Board of Directors of Vanier College would like to express its concern over the impact such erroneous information has on the people involved and on the institutions they represent. The Board feels that such a statement is a misrepresentation of the commitment and dedication of teaching staff in our institution and we would like to recognize their contribution to the quality of services and the pursuit of excellence at Vanier College."*

It is heartening to receive such support. One can hope that our Director General and Academic Dean will carry it to their Fédé meetings.

### NEGOTIATIONS

At times, the government appears to do more negotiating in the media than at the bargaining table. Media portrayals of teachers as unreasonably rejecting all government offers are clearly ploys intended to weaken our resolve and to turn public opinion against us. This is the same government whose election platform promised investment in health and education; the same government which has held up genuine negotiations for the past three years in favour of public wrestling matches in the press.

And now, while we are actively present at every bargaining table, they are threatening to impose a contract by decree if we do not reach "an agreement in principle" by December 2005.

The Fédé representatives (Fédération des Cégeps, composed of directors general and academic deans) are trying to join the negotiation action and impose their views. They are asking for college resources to meet the new levels of responsibility and accountability demanded of departments and programs. (These are also known as Type 2 and Type 3 Activities.) Since this would mean an erosion of departmental autonomy, our response is a firm NO!

As of November 22, 2005, the CCN (our Negotiation Cartel Council) unanimously adopted a motion to give our FAC-FEC negotiation committee a mandate to explore our priority: WORKLOAD. It is understood that a satisfactory settlement of that dossier (also called Type 1 Activities), is only possible if allocation and resources are added to TEACHING.

At the central negotiation table where salaries are discussed, we are demanding 12.5 % over six years, excluding the pay equity adjustment. The government has not budged from its offer of 12.5% over six years, including the adjustment for pay equity. This is a contradiction of the government's own pay equity legislation! We are not asking for the moon.

Stay tuned. There is a movement under way for a large demonstration of all unions on December 13 or 14, in Quebec and/or Montreal!

### THE COEXISTENCE OF COLLEGIALITY AND UNIONISM

At the last General Assembly, Steve Rosenfield's motion regarding working strike days had the merit of creating a lot of enthusiasm on the question of mobilization.

We raised the idea of a working strike at the FAC Intersyndical Council (CI) and FAC-FEC Negotiation Cartel Council (CCN) meetings—where it was not retained, probably because it was not a

motion from a general assembly. (We did not vote on this at the GA of Nov. 8.)

However, your union executive has understood its mandate and we intend to address Steve's motion at the General Assembly of December 14, 2005. We have asked FAC to look into the legality of implementing such a motion. Questions concerning individual rights, if individuals can be obliged to make a charitable donation, the mechanics of special union dues for donation, the income tax implications and the choice of a charitable organization will all have to be exhaustively investigated and answered in writing.

I can assure you that members' concerns voiced at our last GA—about losing pay for strike days and then having to make up for these strike days—were echoed in the general assemblies of other Cégeps across the province.

In closing, I feel it is important to say that we—all Vanier teachers—are the Vanier College Teachers' Association. At times, we will have to agree to disagree on issues, but it is important that all of us feel free to express our points of view and have the chance to express them. All of us are bound by the Collective Agreement. In that regard, we are all equal.

The four elected members of the V.C.T.A. Executive have the legal obligation to apply the Collective Agreement and to make sure that our decision-making process is legal, understandable, objective, transparent and in our collective best interest. Next semester, we intend to hold General Assemblies with plenty of room on the agendas for teachers to express their concerns, questions and ideas in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

*Syndically yours,*

Sylvie

# Lessons from Alinsky, or the Art of Not Shooting Ourselves in the Foot

Mark Prentice

*"Men are tormented by the opinion they have of things, not by things themselves. -Epictete cited in Montaigne*

For more than two years, we have been negotiating—or trying to negotiate—a collective agreement with the Quebec Government. As could be expected after such a long period, the enterprise has met with limited success. A clear analysis of what worked and what did not, and more importantly why, will have to wait until an agreement has been reached. It is too early for a post-mortem.

What I would like to put forward at this time are a few ideas, or "rules", to employ Alinsky's<sup>1</sup> term, that could inspire some of our actions or strategies in future negotiations. Some hold in themselves an explanation of why we are in the present conundrum.

Consider these as provocative ideas—some apply, others do not. Some are less feasible in our context, while others appear to be made just for us. These are not the Ten Commandments; they require common sense and critical evaluation. They are not a grid that can be mechanically applied to all realities. If one were to do so, I am sure Saul would turn over in his grave.

As you read each of the "rules", try to come up with ideas, strategies and tactics that could be applied to our situation as college teachers in Quebec.

**RULE 1: "Power is not only what you have, but what the enemy thinks you have."** Power is derived from two main sources - money and people. "Have-Nots" must build power from flesh and blood. (These are two things of which there is a plentiful supply. Government and corporations always have a difficult time appealing to people, and usually do so almost exclusively with economic arguments.)

**RULE 2: "Never go outside the expertise of your people."** It results in confusion, fear and retreat. When organizing people, speak to them in their language. Refer to their daily experiences.

**RULE 3: "Whenever possible, go outside the expertise of the enemy."** Look for ways to increase insecurity,

anxiety and uncertainty. (This happens all the time. Watch how many organizations under attack are blindsided by seemingly irrelevant arguments that they are then forced to address.)

**RULE 4: "Make the enemy live up to its own book of rules."** If the rule is that every letter gets a reply, send 30,000 letters. You can kill them with this because no one can possibly obey all of their own rules. (This is a serious rule. The besieged entity's very credibility and reputation is at stake, because if activists catch it lying or not living up to its commitments, they can continue to chip away at the damage.)

**RULE 5: "Ridicule is man's most potent weapon."** There is no defense. It's irrational. It's infuriating. It also works as a key pressure point to force the enemy into concessions.

**RULE 6: "A good tactic is one your people enjoy."** They'll keep doing it without urging and come back to do more. They're doing their thing, and will even suggest better ones. (In this sense, activists are no different from any other human being. We all avoid "un-fun" activities, but we revel in and enjoy the ones that work and bring results.)

**RULE 7: "A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag."** Don't become old news. (Even radical activists get bored. So to keep them excited and involved, organizers are constantly coming up with new tactics.)

**RULE 8: "Keep the pressure on. Never let up."** Keep trying new things to keep the opposition off balance. As the opposition masters one approach, hit them from the flank with something new. (Attack, attack, attack from all sides, never giving the reeling organization a chance to rest, regroup, recover and re-strategize.)

**RULE 9: "The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself."** Imagination and ego can dream up many more consequences than any activist. (Perception is reality. Large organizations always prepare a worst-

case scenario, something that may be furthest from the activists' minds. The upshot is that the organization will expend enormous time and energy creating in its own collective mind the direst of conclusions. The possibilities can easily poison the mind and result in demoralization.)

**RULE 10: "If you push a negative hard enough, it will push through and become a positive."** Violence from the other side can win the public to your side because the public sympathizes with the underdog. (Unions used this tactic. Peaceful [albeit loud] demonstrations during the heyday of unions in the early to mid-20th Century incurred management's wrath, often in the form of violence that eventually brought public sympathy to their side.)

**RULE 11: "The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative."** Never let the enemy score points because you're caught without a solution to the problem. (Old saw: If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem. Activist organizations have an agenda, and their strategy is to hold a place at the table, to be given a forum to wield their power. So, they have to have a compromise solution.)

**RULE 12: "Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it."** Cut off the support network and isolate the target from sympathy. Go after people and not institutions; people hurt faster than institutions. (This is cruel, but very effective. Direct, personalized criticism and ridicule works.)

<sup>1</sup>These "rules" are taken from Alinsky, Saul. (1971). *Rules for Radicals*. New York: Random House.

<sup>1</sup>**Saul David Alinsky** (Jan. 30, 1909, Chicago, Ill - June 12, 1972, Carmel, CA.) is generally considered the father of community organizing. A criminologist by training, Alinsky in the 1930s organized the Back of the Yards neighbourhood in Chicago (made famous by Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*). He went on to found the Industrial Areas Foundation while organizing the Woodlawn neighbourhood, which trained organizers and assisted in the founding of community organizations around the country. In *Rules for Radicals* (his final work, published one year before his death), he addressed the 1960s generation of radicals, outlining his views on organizing for mass power. A young Hillary Clinton was a major admirer, writing her undergraduate thesis on his work and ideas." In [Wikipedia](#).

A recovering cynic with regular relapses, **Mark Prentice**



studied Anthropology and Law at Laval and McGill Universities, where he has also taught. He started teaching part time at Vanier in the winter of the ice storm and has been teaching full time since 2000 in Anthropology, Methodology and Explorations. He has sat on Academic

Council, Joint Coordinators and Association Council and is currently a faculty representative on the Vanier Board of Directors where he also sits on the Executive Committee. A voracious reader, Mark is a founding member of the RIOT Squad—the Rio Interdepartmental Organizing Team.

## *National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women • December 6*



December 6 is the *National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women* in Canada. Established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, this day coincides with the sad anniversary of the death of fourteen young women who were tragically killed on December 6, 1989 at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal because of their gender.

Beyond commemorating the loss of these fourteen young lives, this day represents a time to pause and reflect on the phenomenon of violence against women in our society. It is also a time to have a special thought for all the women and girls who live daily with the threat of violence or who have died as a result of deliberate acts of gender-based violence. Last but not least, it is a day for communities to reflect on concrete actions that each Canadian can take to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.



# Student Enrollment Actual and Projected Numbers: 1998-2013

*Hodé Erdogan*

In the spring of 2004, the MEQ (Quebec Ministry of Education) published a demographic study of student enrollment for individual colleges as well as for the whole Cegep system. Their statistics show actual numbers (1998-2003) and enrollments they project (2004-2013) for pre-university, technology and Accueil/Integration/Transition programs. The information that follows is from the MEQ study.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 1: Vanier

	1998	2003	2007	2010	2013
Pre-University	2 891 (60 %)	3 321 (61 %)	3 740 (64 %)	4 021 (64 %)	3 962 (63 %)
Technical	1 688 (35 %)	1 806 (33 %)	1 778 (30 %)	1 933 (30 %)	1 930 (31 %)
Accueil/Integration/ Transition(*)	226 (5%)	320 (6%)	359 (6%)	378 (6%)	369 (6%)
Total	4 805	5 447	5 877	6 332	6 261

(\*) *Session d'accueil et d'intégration et Session de transition*

TABLE 2: Some Sample Colleges Across the System (Total Enrollments)

	1998	2003	2007	2010	(Projected % Change between 2003-2010)	2013
Vanier	4 805	5 447	5 877	6 332	(+16 %)	6 261
John Abbott	4 932	5 276	6 000	6 431	(+22 %)	6 357
Dawson	7 369	7 255	7 984	8 565	(+18 %)	8 472
Rosemont	2 357	2 490	2 773	2 965	(+19 %)	2 845
Ahuntsic	6 403	6 256	6 693	7 211	(+15 %)	6 931
Vieux-Montréal	6 009	5 818	6 333	6 829	(+17 %)	6 473
Saint-Laurent	2 783	2 166	2 538	2 710	(+25 %)	2 630
Rimouski	3 165	2 523	2 412	2 291	(-9 %)	2 032
Jonquière	3 880	3 395	3 070	3 073	(-9 %)	2 670
Rivière du Loup	1 512	1 275	1 162	1 101	(-14 %)	931
System (*)	166 642	154 624	162 349	169 346	(+9.5 %)	157 626

(\*) *System includes both public and private colleges. Private colleges represent roughly 7% of the system.*

Table 3: Distribution of the Pre-U, Technology and Accl./Intgrn./Transtn. (in Percentage)

	1998			2003			2007		
	Pre-U	Tech	Acc/ Int/Tr	Pre-U	Tech	Acc/ Int/Tr	Pre-U	Tech	Acc/ Int/Tr
Vanier	60%	35%	5%	61%	33%	6%	64%	30%	6%
John Abbott	71	23	6	67	25	8	67	25	8
Dawson	68	29	3	68	29	3	68	29	3
Rosemont	45	55	0	39	49	12	40	48	12
Ahuntsic	34	66	0	34	64	2	35	63	2
Vieux-Montréal	33	66	1	33	66	1	33	66	1
Rimouski	32	60	8	33	61	6	34	60	6
Jonquière	25	70	5	24	73	3	24	73	3
Rivière du Loup	27	71	2	30	68	2	32	66	2
System	47	50	3	47	49	4	49	47	4

In the somewhat distant past, Vanier had about 6,200 FTE (full time equivalent) students on its premises—more than Dawson at the time. In the last decade or so, as Dawson enrolment skyrocketed in its new location, Vanier enrolment slowly dropped to 4805 in 1998. Since then, under the leadership of the previous DG, the whole Vanier community worked very hard to reverse this downward trend.

Based on our physical space, our current *devis pedagogique* is 5250 +/- 10%, giving us a maximum cap of 5775 students. Dawson's is 7075. (*Devis pedagogique* is set by the government and refers to the number of students a college may enrol.)

The MEQ demographic studies for Vanier and the rest of the Montreal area English and French Colleges indicate an upward trend in student population until 2010, with a slight drop by 2013.

*The projected increase in demand for post-secondary education raises question for society in general, and for the Vanier community in particular...*

At this point it is worth noting that part of the reason for Vanier's decision to change its admissions system from CAS (the *Common Application System* we shared with Dawson, Champlain and Marianopolis) to SRAM, for a one-year trial basis, was the anticipation that SRAM would give Vanier wider exposure in the whole college application system and hence more student applicants.

However, all the English colleges (I believe most of the Montreal area French colleges as well) are experiencing severe space restrictions. It is questionable whether we will be able to accommodate the increase in students that the MEQ forecasts. Some colleges are continuously looking for ways to expand their facilities to accommodate the additional potential applicants. (Examples include Dawson's new theatre building, the new student residence at Cégep Saint Laurent and talk of a new science building at John Abbott).

The projected increase in demand for post-secondary education raises question for society in general, and for the Vanier community in particular: Will Vanier demand its share of the expansion? Can Vanier fulfill its obligation to make post secondary education accessible and accommodate the projected increases in student enrolment—an increase that could provide opportunities for new teachers? Should we revisit our admissions criteria? We are already late in organizing an open, transparent forum to debate our choices.

What principles will guide us in making these choices? Vanier's Strategic Management Plan refers to "continue recruitment of high caliber students for all programs of study". Vanier's Mission Statement refers to " DEVELOPING our students' sense of their civic, social and environmental responsibilities at both the local and global levels... WELCOMING the participation and support of members of the surrounding communities in our activities and programs". The Parent Report emphasizes accessibility to post-secondary education—to the democratization of education in Quebec.

Indeed, the Cegep system, under the umbrella of the Parent Report, has fulfilled its mandate very successfully. (See the Fédé study prepared for the Forum on the Future of College Education, conducted by Pierre Fortin of the Université du Québec à Montréal and his group.)

Graduation rates at the College and University Levels in Quebec	
<u>Year 1967</u>	<u>Year 2002</u>
38%	69%

Region	% of students that continue beyond High Sch. (Cégeps, Colleges & Univ.)	% of students that pursued at Cegep and/or College levels
Atlantic	78	33
Quebec	84	79 (*)
Ontario	85	46
West	77	37

(\*) *The high percentage of almost 80% for Quebec is explained by the possibility of a DEC in both the Pre-U and Technical sectors before attending university. The lower percentages reflect the fact that colleges in the rest of Canada are offering only professional and technical training.*

Given all this, what choices can we make as a community? Do we focus exclusively on student applicants of the highest academic quality? Or do we do we seek some kind of balance between high academic qualifications and improving our support programs for those students who experienced various difficulties in high school? Do we want to be recognized as an institution that attracts only the academically best students? Or do we also want to be known as a college with a social conscience? Should we take more pride in what kinds of students we admit or in the kinds of students we graduate?

*continued on page 13*

# MY DREAM WORLD

By Su Yi

My dream world is a world without  
stairs or elevators  
where  
the rich and the poor  
are not separated by gates, hedges,  
walls or ditches.

Children play in the crisp air  
of spring,  
autumn,  
summer, and  
winter.

While growing up I learnt that  
Confucius utopia is also a dream world  
where  
citizens  
would not lock their doors in the day.

I am a dreamer.  
Let me dream for a little while longer.  
Don't wake me up to a world of inequalities.

I hope one day  
You will share my dream too.

*Su Yi is inspired by "Ray Charles" who refused to lead a life as a cripple, stood tall and gave us the most moving romantic songs of his time.*

*Su Yi would like to extend her thanks to Dollarcinema that caters to her movie addiction while she strives to improve her English. She also would like to thank Marcia Goldberg and Iannois Stavrianos for their comments and encouragement.*



# Drowning Ruth

Christina Schwarz

This novel is the haunting tale of two sisters, Amanda and Mathilde. Set in the 1920s, the sisters were brought up by a stern father. The values of the small Wisconsin town where they live remain very old-fashioned, despite the telephone, cars and other modern items surrounding them. This social environment will lead indirectly to the drowning of Mathilde in circumstances that cannot be revealed to the rest of the villagers, and even less to Mathilde's husband. Ruth, their small daughter, holds a piece of the mystery, but she is too young to know or understand: this explains the title of the book.

The enigma of the novel is most captivating. Even though the reader knows all of the details concerning the drowning, the characters in the book do not, and somehow, one gets caught up in the lies. The reader is in one way terrified about the truth being hidden, yet cannot help but understand the reasons behind this silence.

This book is a great read!

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

LYNE MARIE'S BOOK REVIEW

# Meditation

by Marcia Goldberg

Snow melts December twenty-fifth, six days  
into the Festival of Lights, the earth's mud on garden steps  
thins around slips of ice, cat prints  
half-inch deep between grass plantings—  
plurality, diversity as roof snow melts in triplicate drops.  
what multiplies comes to mind, eyes earthwards, ears  
tuned to the Queen's televised prayer for Christmas  
and Pope Jean's for peace  
fresh as miracles—the new box of candles yesterday  
just in time to light the samech  
and gifts of karma soap, bubble bomb and tangerine melts  
for the bath to keep cold locked outdoors  
and this poem, itself, without rhymes! Multiples like these  
and hundreds more gather in the brain, in the inner room's warmth  
under the shelter of Brucha's shawl. Earth is a heavy chocolate,  
takes on weight of molten iron and minerals, spins  
with a force mighty and unfathomable  
save as a grounded dreidle, magnetizing, mesmerizing Expression.



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

# Signing up:

## The Master Teacher Program

Ganesh Harilal

Of recent times, I have not been satisfied with my teaching—particularly my reliance on lecturing. The traditional lecture format, I felt, was not adequate to deal with the Vanier students of today, not arousing their curiosity, motivation, excitement; not fully engaging them in Political Science, especially not the Law and Society Majors.

I wanted renewal, to try something different, to explore new skills and classroom strategies. And I was curious. What is new out there? What does the research say about effective teaching and learning?

So, in January 2005, after twenty-five years of teaching and after having completed several courses in the old Performa Program, I decided to enroll in the new Master Teacher Program.

I must admit that I was nervous and apprehensive during the first few weeks of classes, sitting with all those young and motivated teachers from Vanier, John Abbott, Dawson and Champlain. But they made me feel comfortable and their enthusiasm rubbed off on me. So far I have completed the first two courses in the program, *College Teaching: Issues and Challenges* and *Psychology of Learning*.

In *College Teaching: Issues and Challenges*, one of several assignments was the writing of five reflective journals in which I examined my own teaching and compared it to the current literature on effective learning. This exercise forced me to critically evaluate what works in the classroom and what doesn't. It helped me explore a number of issues: What do I want my student to learn? How can I make these goals clear to myself and to my students? Why are some students so motivated while others are not? What strategies can I use to motivate the unmotivated? How do the courses I teach contribute to the Social Science Program? To the "formation fondamentale" of students who graduate from Vanier?

Discussing and debating course readings with colleagues from a variety of disciplines was another

highlight. Distinguishing between knowing, understanding and thinking<sup>1</sup> made me look at my course content in a new way. Recognizing absolute, transitional, independent and contextual learners<sup>2</sup> makes me more responsive to my students and, I believe, a more effective teacher.

Another interesting assignment involved "Teacher Shadowing"—a visit to a colleagues class, to observe his teaching style. I came away with many insights, including a technique that involves each class starting with a set of questions based on students reviewing their notes from the previous class. Simple yet surprisingly effective in motivating students.

All in all, this has been a great learning experience for me—one that I have thoroughly enjoyed. I would recommend these courses to other "old" teachers as renewal courses; and to teachers new to the profession, as courses that will enhance your confidence, know-how and effectiveness in the classroom.

<sup>1</sup>LaSere Erickson, B., & Weltner Strommer, D. (1991). *Knowing, understanding and thinking: The goals of freshman instruction*. ALSO: *Encouraging student involvement in the classroom*. Both in *Teaching College Freshmen*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

<sup>2</sup>Baxter Magolda, M. (1992). *Teaching responsively to different ways of knowing*. In *Knowing and reasoning in College*. Gender related patterns in students' intellectual development. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass



**Ganesh Harilal** has taught Political Science at Vanier College since 1980. He has also taught Methodology and the Integrative Project in the Social Science Program. An active supporter of the VCTA, Ganesh has served on the Executive and as a faculty representative on the Vanier Board of Directors, including its Executive Committee. He currently sits on Association Council and the CRT (French acronym for Labour Relations Committee).

**Student Enrollment:** *continued from page 10*

Will admitting more students with higher academic qualifications mean the expansion of pre-university programs at the expense of some technology programs? If the answer is yes, are we prepared to close some of our technology programs? What would this mean for Vanier's stability as an institution?

To what extent do our *session d'accueil et d'intégration* et *session de transition* programs feed Vanier's technology and other programs? If we decide to close or reduce our Explorations Programs, will this have a negative impact on these other programs? Should these statistics be collected (if they don't already exist) and be made available before any decisions are taken?

If we close our doors to students who come in through the Explorations Programs (*session d'accueil...*) where will they end up life? What impact will this have on the collective good of our society?

Do we wish to align ourselves with the private sector vision of competition—take only the best? Or, as a public institution, do we want a more balanced approach, somewhere between attracting only the most highly qualified students and meeting our social responsibility to those in need of supportive transitional programs.

As a public college in Quebec, how do we see our role in contributing to the intellectual, social, economic and cultural development of our society? How do we see our role as a community resource?

These are all legitimate, complex and very real questions. How we answer them will have serious and broad ramifications for our community. While it is important that such questions are addressed by college-wide committees (Long Range Planning, Space, Devis Pédagogique), it is not sufficient. These issues should be debated in different forums—at Joints, Academic Council, local Associations—so that we can make informed decisions together, as the community who will live with the consequences of our decisions.

At the end of the day, isn't the bigger picture about our collective responsibility to make post-secondary education accessible to all high school graduates, or as many as possible, and to give them the best possible education/formation so that they live responsibly and well as they compete in the knowledge-based global economy?

*<sup>1</sup>The source for the MEQ Demographic Study on Student Enrolment is the Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la recherche, des statistiques et des indicateurs, Système prévisionnel SIPEEC, version printemps 2004)*



Hodé Erdogan, who teaches Physics, has coordinated the Physics Department, the SA/MS Programs and has served many terms on the VCTA Executive. He currently sits on the CRT, Association Council, Academic Council and the Vanier College Board of Directors.

## College Teaching: Issues and Challenges

*Offered at Vanier College Winter 2006!*

*Course Facilitator: Shirley Pettifer*

### Times & Dates:

9am –Noon, Jan. 11, 12, 13,  
and Fridays, 3-6 pm, Jan. 20, 27; Feb.10, 17, 24;  
Mar. 10, 17, 31; Apr. 7, 21, 28; May 5

**Sign up with Wanda Kalina, ext. 7512.**

Course costs are covered by your  
Professional Development Fund.

# CYN(D)ICAL PRACTICES: ON UNION GAPS, GENERATION GAPS AND OTHER 60'S BAD IDEAS

Stephen Block

FIRST, I agree with you John that the timing of our two recent articles made it appear as if we are arguing or debating at cross-purposes. So in my reply to you I resolved to take you up on your challenge as the devil's advocate (who informs us that the devil is in the details!). In so doing, I address the devil (in disguise) and not you personally as, as you have indicated, the gulf between us is not so great.

The devil, I think (my not being a religious scholar), is a cynic. His (sic) desire was to stir up as much trouble as possible; you know, divide and rule, sow misunderstanding, etc. My idea of creating a liaison office was, to as large an extent as possible, to undermine the devil. I should say that although I referred to the "wisdom of the aged", (for which I was chastised by a colleague, albeit lovingly) my point was not to silence or discourage discussion nor to try to be a blind PR agent. My intent was to defend this union.

## Devilish idea #1:

### On the union gap and the alleged generation gap

When I first arrived at Vanier, not that long ago, I attended several union meetings. Very quickly my heart went out to those at the meetings and for several reasons. I vividly recall a comment made by a teacher now retired that she was barely able to pay her mortgage. Other comments left the impression that teachers were under siege and felt powerless in the face of the onslaught.

But my reaction was quite unlike what I have been hearing about the alleged disaffection of new young teachers with our union. My reaction was to suggest that since the government seemed entirely unwilling to participate in a good faith collective bargaining process, we should simply announce that we were abandoning the process altogether, that we would no longer be bound by the norms of collective bargaining, knowing, as we all now know, how one-sided those "norms" are.

*...when I arrived at Vanier,  
I was ...very favourably  
impressed by the high level  
of involvement of  
union members*

Of course we cannot opt out of the collective bargaining process, unless we decertify. I must admit to spending a considerable amount of time brainstorming for an alternative, as decertifying would have been an act of self-mutilation to show our disgust with what our bosses were doing. Today, we have resolved to take our anger out on our own union, in essence on ourselves, itself a form of self-destruction in my view. My reaction, that is to say, was not to reflexively blame the union for its own impotence, until and unless, that is, I could discern reasons, of the union's own making, responsible for that impotence. That then I was not able to do.

Indeed, when I arrived at Vanier, I was very impressed, very favourably impressed by the high level of involvement of union members in their union. I was impressed by the quality of the discussion, the commitment to the union and to defending the rights of all faculty, and especially, as it turned out, those new to the College.

My experience elsewhere was with faculty showing interest primarily in what their raise was. On the key perennial issue of the protection of younger faculty, the majority resolved, in a most aggressive way, to annually cull the young, cut them away like disposable goods. Consequently it was more than a relief to arrive here and find no such inclination in our own union, especially amongst its most active (read, older) members!

As a consequence it occurred to me to try to assemble some of the older faculty members who had been through many

wars, who had considerable experience in the Vanier union, considerably more than I, who had a strong sense of many of the intangibles of "syndical practices", or union principles. I wanted to assemble them before they disappeared into retirement so that a record could be made and passed on to the succeeding generations. This was not with the intention of imposing anything, in any paternalistic sense, but rather to preserve something which cannot be bottled or easily duplicated, something which is not easily reconstituted or automatically re-established with each generation.

## A Case in Point:

### SRAM, SCAM, SHAM OR JUST MANAGEMENT WHAM-BAM?

A conversation we had at our happy hour gathering captures the point. A complaint was passed on to me (by a soon-to-be retired faculty member) that the union was wasting its time with SRAM. It was a management matter. But a younger faculty member confided in me after that he was suspicious and somewhat fearful about SRAM because he did not have tenure and worried that a shift in allocations under SRAM could threaten his workload and so his job. That's precisely why I, as it happens, fought very hard with others to try to ensure that we would be able to know and understand as much about SRAM in advance of signing on to it.

My colleague mentioned in passing that perhaps it was because the older faculty member was retiring and could care less about the destruction in its wake as it did not affect their self-interest. I suggested that it was not just a matter of what anyone else's self-interest was on this matter but was quickly offered the retort that it was self-interest which created the possibility of the younger faculty member to gain insight into the negative implications of SRAM.

*continued on page 17*

# Low-Cost Labour, High-Cost Exploitation

by Marianne Smith

*While conditions vary from institution to institution, most sessionals are — as I am — highly skilled and educated, working without benefits or transparent hiring practices, paid vacation, status, seniority or job security.*

It was interesting for me, a long-time contract worker in the academic system, that the seven-week CBC lockout made contract labour front page news. The locked out CBC employees, full-time unionized employees, were justifiably concerned that their jobs might turn into temporary positions.

But what about the working conditions of those hundreds of contract workers already in the system? In an era of cutbacks, contract work is here to stay. The dilemma, as I see it, is this: how do we recognize the rights of contract employees while also protecting full-time jobs?

My official job title is sessional instructor. I've been teaching at various post-secondary institutions for about 12 years. I've never in my life had a paid vacation, or paid sick days. No contract has ever offered me dental benefits. I re-apply for my job every four-to-twelve months.

Recently, I calculated all the hours I spend, not just in the classroom, but during mandatory office hours, preparing lectures, responding to email from students and other faculty, running around town renting videos or buying books (all out of my own pocket), doing research in the library, preparing assignments, grading papers, writing reference letters, responding to grade appeals, student crises, and late paper submissions. My hourly wage clocked in at about \$11 an hour, and I think I was being generous.

A sessional instructor is a university or college contract lecturer, engaged for four-to-eight month periods, with the same teaching responsibilities per course as full-time faculty, but earning a quarter to a third of their pay. Few, if any of my students are aware that many of their instructors work for less hourly pay than they themselves made during their summer jobs.

Department chairs and administrators, generally hard-working, decent people,

are forced by the system to put fundraising, departmental prestige, and enrollment concerns ahead of labour conditions. And I wonder if maybe they don't feel a little bit guilty, too. After all, it's our low-cost labour that affords them research time in the form of sabbaticals, summers off, and generous leaves.

These days, as retirement of the baby boom generation peaks, sessional instructors are teaching an increasingly large proportion of classes in Canadian universities and colleges. In my department, at the university where I teach, over half of the course offerings are taught by sessionals. An increasing number of under-employed Ph.D. graduates are, in desperation, taking sessional employment. And — no surprise here — it's also a sector dominated by women.

*...hard-working, decent people, are forced by the system to put fundraising, departmental prestige, and enrollment concerns ahead of labour conditions.*

While conditions vary from institution to institution, most sessionals are — as I am — highly skilled and educated, working without benefits or transparent hiring practices, paid vacation, status, seniority or job security. We save universities millions of dollars, but our work is scandalously undervalued. As cutbacks to education continue, sessionals are an attractive option for cash-strapped post-secondary institutions.

Paradoxically, however, we are a largely invisible workforce, isolated from regular faculty and the university at large. If unionized, sessionals are usually merged with graduate students, which makes organizing difficult. Independent organizing efforts are almost non-existent; without job security, no sessional wants to be seen "causing trouble." Indeed, our fragility within the system constitutes yet another troubling aspect

of sessional work: the loss of academic freedom of speech.

## SOME ORGANIZING INITIATIVES

Recently, the **Coalition of Contingent Academic Labour**, (COCAL), a North America-wide organizing effort, set up shop on the UBC and University of Toronto campuses. At its 2004 annual conference, held in Chicago, sessionals from across North America marched through the downtown core. A "Progressive Report Card" was presented to five Chicago institutions that employ large numbers of sessionals. The marks were not impressive. Their final grades ranged from C+ to F.

The **Canadian Union of Public Employees** (CUPE) and the **Canadian Association of University Teachers** (CAUT) have also attempted organizing drives. It remains to be seen whether this will impact upon the troubling exploitation of sessional instructors within the university system. It does seem clear that a coalition of sessional-only unions, focusing on sessionals' specific concerns, is the answer.

Five years ago, all of Quebec's university sessionals' unions adopted a joint plan of action. They conducted a province-wide publicity campaign, highlighting sessionals' contribution to the university and demanding equal salaries for work of equal value. Because of this initiative, most Quebec universities have raised the standard sessional rate-per-course from \$5000 to nearly \$6000. It's not nearly enough. But it's a start.

## CONDITIONS WORSENING

In the meantime, contract work is not going away, and, where I work, conditions are getting worse. I'm now teaching larger classes for the same wage I got ten years ago. And I'm travelling more, commuting between universities and even between cities. My back goes out more often, and I'm prone to depression and a constant feeling of fatigue. Some times, I can't sleep at night,

as feelings of helplessness and anger descend. I love the work I do, but dismal working conditions jeopardize both my own and my students' well-being

I recently acquired a Ph.D., in the hopes of finding full-time tenured work. But sessional work takes up most of my time, preventing me from keeping up with my area of research and building up that all-important publication record. My

colleagues and I talk endlessly about these issues, and occasionally dream up big, utopian ideas, like the fantasy of a country-wide walk out, all sessionals, every university, every province. The whole university system would close down. They'd finally take notice.

But for now, there's another lecture to prepare, a student to meet, and hundreds of essays to mark...

The system is broken, and it's leaning on me to keep it alive.

*Marianne Smith is a pseudonym. She makes her home in Vancouver and Toronto. You can be in touch with her by email. [academicgrl@yahoo.ca](mailto:academicgrl@yahoo.ca)*

Retrieved October 31, 2005 from [http://www.rabble.ca/in\\_her\\_own\\_words.shtml](http://www.rabble.ca/in_her_own_words.shtml)



## Open Door Network News

The Open Door Network (ODN) is a college-wide effort to inform and sensitize faculty, staff and students about sexual orientation and gender identity. The goals are to breakdown the invisibility and silence surrounding LGBTTIQ\* students and faculty and to make Vanier College a welcoming and respectful place for LGBTTIQ youth and employees.

The Open Door Network puts a number of Vanier College's policies into action. The ODN's mandate corresponds to our college's mission statement, which states that we are to provide our students with a welcoming and caring learning environment. It also helps to fulfill our Discrimination and Harassment Policy, which seeks to develop a respectful environment for all members of the Vanier College community.

Last February the Director General, all unions, and the Cadres Association signed a letter of support for the Open Door Network. This letter was distributed to all employees of the College. During a recent visit to our new Director General we were assured of his support for this initiative.

This semester we began giving workshops to interested College employees. The workshops develop a person's understanding of LGBTTIQ realities as well as offer access to people who work in the LGBTTIQ community. Together we discuss how to increase inclusion and reduce homophobia and transphobia.

Each workshop participant received a sticker to display at their workplace showing that they are a part of the Open Door Network. We have also placed posters briefly describing the purpose of the Open Door Network around the College.

Further workshops will be held next semester as well as subsequent semesters. We'll let you know well in advance when they will be held.

But first, let's congratulate our Fall 2005 semester Open Door Network workshop graduates:

Jim Atkinson, Student Services  
Anne Renée Belair, Sociology  
Tricia Bell, Humanities  
Marilyn Bicher, Sociology  
Viviane Bouchard, History  
Gillian Bowman, Counselling  
Diane Brooks-Desjardins, Nursing  
Evangeline Caldwell, Psychology  
Sheila Cross, Nursing  
Francis Ho, Psychology  
Judy Ingerman, Anthropology/Humanities  
Maureen Jones, Humanities

Lisa Jorgensen, Humanities  
Guylaine LaRocque, French  
Nancy Leclerc, Anthropology  
Rebecca Margolis, History  
Lisa Millelire, Psychology  
Shirley Pettifer, Sociology  
Kelly Purdy, Psychology  
Karen Runnels, Physical Education  
Matthieu Sossoyan, Anthropology  
Arlene Steiger, Humanities / Women's Studies  
Karen Tennenhouse, Physics  
Karen White, Psychology

For More Information: [odn@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:odn@vaniercollege.qc.ca)  
[jonesm@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:jonesm@vaniercollege.qc.ca)  
[leclerca@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:leclerca@vaniercollege.qc.ca)  
[jorgensl@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:jorgensl@vaniercollege.qc.ca)  
[caldwele@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:caldwele@vaniercollege.qc.ca)

\*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex, Queer



## CY(ND)ICAL PRACTICES

*continued from page 14*

I am not going to pretend to be so naïve or utopian as to suggest that we are going to do away with self-interest or that it is particularly inexcusable for younger faculty to be concerned with their own self-interests. I would think that is normal, that the very insecurity of the life of a young faculty member would nearly compel him or her to think in terms of self-preservation. However, that is not where union principles lie. Of course there are, and always will be, contending interests.

For example, departments do have their own interests. But the union's interest is to preserve the rights of all its members to the very best of its abilities and to lessen the feelings of insecurity among its members. In no way did it even occur to me that this was somehow a zero-sum game, that the younger generation would have to be shunted aside, or stunted in its growth to accommodate the preservation of such practices. My intention was to offer the incoming faculty what seemed to me a gift, a gift in the form of the wisdom and experience of those who had preceded them. This I wished for entirely independently of what a new and younger generation would decide for its future and its union.

A colleague wrote after our last general assembly:

*the last thing [we] need is more chaos...i.e. an amendment which, logically, has nothing to do with a motion...has anyone noticed that the motion at the GA was to strike and that the amendment was not to strike?(at least not in any traditional sense)...there is no question in my mind that the amendment should have been treated as a counter proposal...as it was originally...all it takes is a little rational thinking...we should always keep in mind the constructive nature of our decisions and actions, and it worries me if, once again, we (meaning those concerned about the inner workings of the union) have to deal with people who might try to destabilize an already vulnerable situation.*

The last remark, I should hasten to say, was not a reference to the mover of the amendment at the general assembly, to donate money to charity, rather than to strike. And I can hear Charles Levine re-

minding us that the general assembly is sovereign: that it can do whatever it chooses to do. So the motion, as it was developed, perhaps did not have to be considered as a counter proposal, even though it may have been that.

But I have to say that I share the concern

*My intention was to offer the incoming faculty what seemed to me...a gift in the form of the wisdom and experience of those who had preceded them.*

of my colleague when he talks about the prospects of destabilizing an already vulnerable situation.

### The De-Generation gap

That said, there is another example of the devil's handy-work in this talk of competing generations. (As it so happens I published a paper in 1993 on this very subject.) My first recollection of such a suggestion was the idea that a generation gap existed between the younger generation of the 60's and the rest of humanity. "Never trust anyone over 30" was the alleged mantra of the 60's generation. But I vividly recall thinking, how comes it that I love to read Plato and Hegel and Sartre and, dare I say, Marcuse, that I admire and revere many of my teachers. What is this talk about a generation gap? I would realize many years later that it was pure artifice, a way of making the profound disconnect of a person approaching the age of 18 look abnormal should s/he question the idea of going abroad to serve in an illegal and brutal all-out war of annihilation and conquest, or equally appalled by the demands for utter conformity should one wish to be successful at all in life. But this reported tale of a conflict between generations was a good yarn spun by a press intent on making the protest movements look silly.

Next we heard in the mid 1980's of a "new generation" rebelling against the baby boomers. They were "generation X, angry that the baby boomers were controlling all the cushy jobs and making it impossible

for the younger generation to get on with it. Baby boomers drove Volkswagens (and, heaven forfend, new ones to boot) and poor gen Xers had to get along with crappy old beaters. Baby boomers had ruined the world with their self-indulgence and, because of their numbers, had been controlling the world for "decades". By my calculation, the oldest baby boomers then were about 39 years old.

And what was then the most contentious sin of the boomers come-of-age? They had ushered in the era of the two-tiered pay raise. Briefly the two-tiered pay raise had it that if you belonged to a union, and had some seniority, you were entitled to keep your fat paycheck. But any suckers who happened to be on the outside looking in could expect a much harsher reality.

TWA, for example, in 1987, paid its flight attendants about \$35,000. The new second tier system allowed management to pay new hires only \$12,000. This of course was the fault of the baby boomers who gave their younger workers up, it was argued; never mind that (mostly their older colleagues) were given a choice: allow management to change the starting salary, or shut down the airline. The union had fought tooth and nail to prevent this but in the end it came about simply because unions themselves were dissolved. (The rate of unionization in the US in the private sector is now roughly at about 8%, down from over 35% a generation ago.) And this, in the end, is the fault of the generation which fought as hard as it could to hold off management take-backs?

Notice, according to the yarn, only baby boomers were to blame, not the older workers, not the younger workers, not the managers. Many of those criticizing this supposed trans-generational abdication, argued loudly, as they do today, that unions should allow managers to manage, that it is their fellow workers who are the enemy, especially when they resist sensible ideas coming from the management side.

The purpose of forcing unions to accept the two-tiered principle was not just to destroy the union movement. In so doing it was meant to instill in the workforce a sense of survival of the fittest, of keen and ruthless self-interest, indeed of an antagonism toward the very idea of unionism. The best way to do that was to make the life of union members so difficult that they would prefer to be without the

union. And so the devil came up with this idea of a generation gap and boy he must be bustin' his gut now.

Such generational arguments from my perspective have always been absurd, divisive and damaging. Now that boomers have inevitably become the generation to retire, we must understand that once they are gone they are not coming back. When they leave they take a treasure trove of information and insights with them. Instead we are asked to understand this in very different terms. It is implied that the older generation is stifling debate, holding younger faculty down, getting in the way, preventing them from finding their own way and deciding for themselves what is right and what is not. That just strikes me as being an entirely unproductive and wasteful set of ideas.

Of course the younger generation will find their own way. But why cut off pre-existing limbs, ties with the past, rungs which can help them get from A to B. We have trail-blazers in our midst who show a willingness, indeed a nearly desperate eagerness to offer a hand up and this help is interpreted as a form of stifling paternalism?!

On the other hand, perception, as Machiavelli pointed out, is reality. And if young faculty, or those new to the Vanier community, feel alienated and disaffected, then mechanisms need to be put in place to do something about this.

In the end, I agree with the valuable suggestions made at our recent syndical practices meeting that we need some forms of mentoring, if it is not happening informally. We need to ensure

that if and when younger faculty need assistance that they do not find a cold blank stare, or nowhere to go and no one to talk to. This happens enough at a new job and some of it is inevitable. But we, unlike some universities, welcome our new faculty. We want them in our community and there is nothing more interesting to me than this idea, this fact, that a new generation comes along, with interesting new ideas but at the same time they carry on where others left off.

If there is a problem and younger faculty feel under-represented in their union, that too can be addressed. But in my view we should be wary of wholesale changes. For in the end we should recall the words of Warren Beatty who when asked to comment on Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposal to change "the system" replied that, "the trouble is the system is called 'democracy'".

We need to tread very carefully when we propose to make changes and in my view it never hurts to consult with those who have already considered these critical issues in the past.

So I end where I begin, by thanking John for starting this discussion.



*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 (French acronym for Labour Relations Committee) as well as on Association Council.*

*Here Ye! Here Ye!*

The next issue of the VCTA Newsletter will celebrate **Black History Month (February)** and **International Women's Week (early March)**. Let these grand occasions spark your creativity. Contributions of all types are welcome. Deadline for submissions is Jan. 30, 2006. Contact Shirley at local 7784 or [pettif@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:pettif@vaniercollege.qc.ca)

## Professional Development Funds

The maximum amount available to individual teachers is \$500. Teachers with less than a full time workload receive proportional funds. I.e. half a workload = maximum of \$250. It is possible to combine 2 years of PD funds for one event (maximum \$1000), with a letter addressed to the VCTA prior to filling in an application.

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

You do not need to submit an application for Employee Fitness activities or CPR renewal courses, but you do need a receipt to claim the expense.

Members of the bipartite PD Committee for the 2005-06 year are Ian MacArthur for the VCTA and Nancy Wargny for the Administration.

# Odds 'n' Ends



## Happy Hour Committee

The VCTA Executive is looking for volunteers to work on this committee—to plan and prepare each happy hour and to brainstorm for some new ideas.

## The Vanier Social Justice Committee

spent the Fall semester getting its feet on the ground. We made our first presentation to Sophie Jacmin's Humanities class on the subject of Canadian refugee policy and we are working on projects for Winter, including a film festival highlighting various social justice themes including refugee issues, global poverty, and racism. We have speakers available for classroom visits on these and other issues. Staff and students are all invited get involved. Please contact Eric Lamoureux at [lamouree@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:lamouree@vaniercollege.qc.ca) or Doug Miller at [millerd@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:millerd@vaniercollege.qc.ca) for information.



**Tuques for Tolerance:** Want to keep your head warm this coming winter? We have the solution: a Tuque for Tolerance! For only \$5,



you can get yourself a tuque, and support the Trip for Tolerance at the same time. We will be in the Market Place (near the cafeteria) on Feb. 1 & 8. Thanks for your support! Matthieu Sossoyan



**World March of Women:** This past year the World March of Women held another "march" with a quilt, *la coutrepoinite*, made by women in participating countries. About 45 countries have participated to date. The central theme is the World Feminist Declaration of Human Rights. If you are interested in this project or want to obtain a copy of the declaration contact Marche Mondiale des femmes, 110 Ste. Thérèse St., Office 203, Montreal, QC H2Y 1E6. By Email: [info@marchemondiale.org](mailto:info@marchemondiale.org) or visit their web site: [www.marchemondialesdesfemmes.org](http://www.marchemondialesdesfemmes.org).

**Quote Corner:** *"The mediocre usually gain power because of long service, corruption, back-room manipulations, error or luck. But from time to time they arrive at the top precisely because they are the accurate image of the power structure in place. And so occasionally, when a leader not good enough for the job wins office, the citizenry should be grateful for what amounts to a moment of truth."*

John Ralston Saul in *The Doubter's Companion*



**Invitation to Governor General:** Her Excellency, Michaille Jean, has been invited to deliver the keynote address, "Joining Hands to Work Together", for Black History Month and International Women's Day at Vanier College. Student Services, Women's Studies, the Vanier College Students Association and

the Director General worked together to compose a compelling letter of invitation. Keep your fingers crossed!

**Rant and Rave**—where the ranter-of-the-month gets things off the chest. Send your "rant" to Shirley at [pettifes@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:pettifes@vaniercollege.qc.ca)



This one was received as we go to press: ***How is it that I erase my blackboard diligently, after every single class, having been taught this was basic teaching etiquette, yet I constantly arrive in class to boards covered in complex equations and formulae? Is this a gift from my colleagues? If so, thank you but it's gibberish to me! Please, please, please take 30 seconds to erase your board when you are done. If you think this is such a trivial thing to take care of, then why don't YOU do it?***

## DAILY BUDDHIST WISDOM

Now, there are many, many people in the world, but relatively few with whom we interact, and even fewer who cause us problems. So, when you come across such a chance for practicing patience and tolerance, you should treat it with gratitude. It is rare. Just as having unexpectedly found a treasure in your own house, you should be happy and grateful to your enemy for providing that precious opportunity.

- His Holiness the Dalai Lama

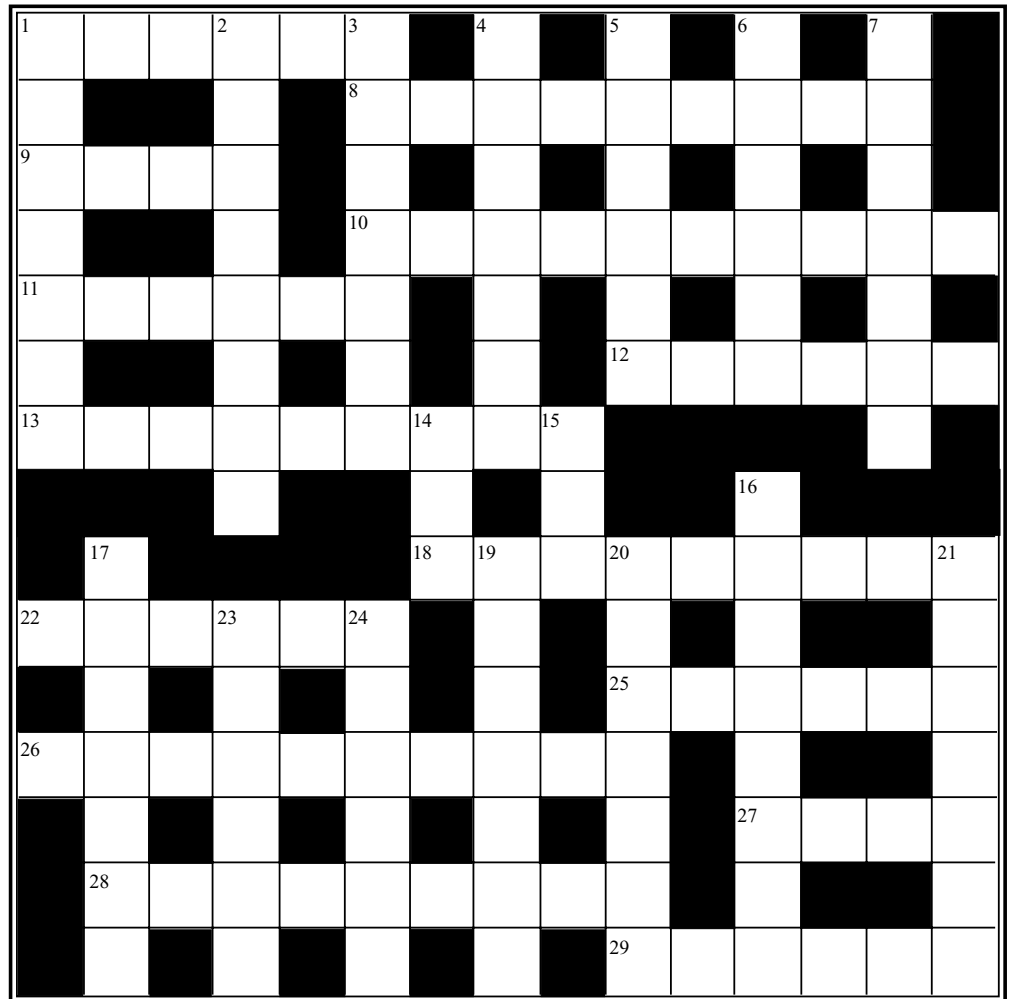
From "The Pocket Dalai Lama," edited by Mary Craig, 2002.

Reprinted by arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Boston, [www.shambhala.com](http://www.shambhala.com)

Many of the clues have something to do with the world of movies and TV. Yet again, I am offering a free lunch to galvanize your puzzle-solving efforts. The first person to give me the correct solution before the next Newsletter comes out will be the winner!

# THE CELLULOID KINGDOM

by Valerie Broege



## ACROSS

1. Sea voyage with scientologist. (6)
8. and 21. DOWN - Defunct writers association is subject of movie. (4, 5, 7)
9. Donohue at war site. (4)
10. "Look intently, Orson," sounds like the appropriate response to these architectural structures. (10)
11. \_\_\_ \_\_\_, will travel: business card of itinerant funeral home director. (3, 3)
12. What most actresses aspire to be. (6)
13. Grade Eric terribly on his performance as Tarzan's father. (5, 4)
18. Sam flirts outrageously with J. Lo and Penelope Cruz. (4, 5)
22. Med aid backs up headache headband. (6)
25. Neither Whoopi Goldberg nor Dick Clark are Laplanders. (6)
26. Named a cat unsuitably as a "Murderball" competitor. (4, 6)
27. Playwright says writing about a bus stop is no "picnic." (4)
28. The U.S.A. is the no. 1 nation, argues director. (9)
29. Star of white heat in the torrid zone. (6)

## DOWN

1. and 2. Childish dare gives entitlement to film. (5, 2, 2, 3, 3)
3. Actor says there is no such thing as a somewhat sane Red. (2, 5)

4. Blake's dark mills are cast in a rough metallic sculpture. (7)
5. What is hopefully generated between two romantic leads. (6)
6. The movie "Serenity" is anything but this. (6)
7. I ingested man to keep him separate. (7)
14. Initially indicate my feelings about big money organization. (3)
15. Bruce Lee in retreat was a slippery customer. (3)
16. What actors Jan and Hayden have in common. (8)
17. Mr. Ed's main troublesome role has been as a band member. (7)
19. Johnny Depp became a crane. (7)
20. Mona dictates a letter descriptive of a tiny simple organic unit. (7)
21. See 8. ACROSS.

23. Lower the position of the demo telescope carefully. (6)
24. Maggie Smith travels with a relative of mine. (2, 4)

Valerie Broege has been teaching Humanities at Vanier since 1974, and taught mature students for several years as part of the Explorations Program. She loves knitting and crocheting as well as solving and creating cryptic crossword puzzles. In the summer of 1995 while on a train trip to Toronto she had "a cryptic crossword creation epiphany" and spontaneously tried her hand at making a cryptic crossword of her own. Her initial experiment was successful and she hasn't looked back since!