

VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION  
**NEWSLETTER**

Vol 24 N°6  
FEB. 2007

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# Personnel Enseignant

FÉDÉRATION AUTONOME DU COLLÉGIAL

Convention Collective 2005-2010

**LOI 142**

JE ME SOUVIENS

Is this a collective decree? Or is it a decreed agreement? Or is it a decrement? According to the Quebec government, this is a COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT because the law says it is. To ensure that we remember that Law 142 decreed our "COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT", we suggest that you come to the VCTA office to get your own personal "Loi 142" sticker to put on your copy of our "collective agreement". Thanks to "Le Secateur", newsletter of the Abitibi-Temiscaminque union.



# Dear Readers:



**Janice Paquette**  
Editor

In this newsletter you will find two motions that were passed unanimously at Association Council on Jan. 18. One is about military recruitment on campus and the other is on the war in Afghanistan. We hope that you will read the Social Justice Committee's statement on these matters and even consult some of the resources referred to in their article because these motions are coming to the General Assembly for consideration on Feb. 27. We also put in a notice about the cross-Canada demonstrations against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which take place on March 17. We will also be discussing the future of the CEGEP system at the same General Assembly and you will find articles related to the under-funding of college education, e-learning and the "devis scolaire" in this issue. Robert Del Tredici has an interesting tribute to our own Gordon Edward who recently won an award on his contribution to the debate on nuclear issues. And of course you are invited to attend the events for Black History month at Vanier and in Montreal. Happy Reading!

- Janice

## Calling All Non-Tenured Teachers

Make sure that you keep track of your workload calculation (C.I.) unless you have a full-time contract for the year. Keep a signed list of students in each of your classes during the validation period. When you get your final contract, remember that anything less than 1.000 for the year is NOT full-time. You may be able to become full-time by teaching cont ed, summer courses or substitution. Make sure that you find out. Come and see us in C101.

**Deadline for Submissions to the next issue  
is March 12, 2007**

**Send contributions to Janice Paquette:  
paquettj@vaniercollege.qc.ca**

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The NEWSLETTER is published by the Vanier College Teachers' Association, 821 Ste-Croix Ave., St-Laurent, QC H4L 3X9.

Janice Paquette is the Editor.

Printing is by Vanier College Graphics and Printing.



Technical assistance by Jason Leonard

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### Executive Office Hours H06:

Mon.	Iannis	10:30 - 1pm
	Hodé	1:30 - 4pm
Tues.	Janice	2:00 - 4pm
Wed.	Iannis	10:30 - 1pm
	Hodé	1:30 - 4pm
Thurs.	Stephen	10:30 - 1pm
Fri.	Janice	
	or Stephen	10:00 - 1pm

Susan's office hours:  
Mon.-Thurs. 8:30-4:30  
Lunch: 12- 1 (approximately)

**TO CALL VCTA  
EXECUTIVE  
MEMBERS**

**Hodé: 7413  
Iannis: 7415  
Janice: 7416  
Stephen: 7414**

# Chronic Under-financing of College Education: Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

## Hodé Erdogan for the Executive

Since the 1990s the college budget has been systematically compressed. As of 2005-2006, the compressions are estimated to be of the order of \$305 million. These compressions were made across the whole spectrum of college financing; including budget allocations for building maintenance, budget allocations related to the operation of academic areas (the "A" portion of FABES) as well as budget allocations for teachers' salaries (the "E" portion of FABES). In the E envelope alone, there is a net loss of \$39 million. At this point, the three teacher federations FAC, FNEEQ and FEC are in the process of negotiating with the government to recuperate some of this \$39 M.

To oppose the recurrent budget cuts and to protect the Cegep network, the partners in the Cegep system (students, teachers, support staff, professionals and parents) formed a group called "Coalition cegeps". Please note that, the only group not included in this coalition is the coalition of administrators, represented by what is known as the Fede (Federation des Cegeps). Over the years, both groups did many studies demonstrating the under-financing of the College network and lobbied the public opinion and the successive governments to reverse this trend. The latest gathering of the Coalition cegeps took place on November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 in Quebec City. There were over 300 participants, representing teachers (the three teacher federations-FNEEQ, FAC and FEC), students, support staff, professionals and parents. The gathering ended with a press release denouncing the systematic budget compressions and demanding new investment into the system from both the provincial and the federal governments. Read the Declaration from the Coalition pg. 22.

Finally, it seems the joint effort of the Coalition des Cegeps and the Fede is producing positive results. The provincial government has already announced \$80 million investment in the college network over three years (\$30 M in 2006-2007, \$30 M in 2007-2008, and \$20 M in 2008-2009). Vanier's share for the 2006-2007 academic year (Yes! It is for this academic year, which will be over in a couple of months) is \$796, 716. According to the Adjoint Deputy Minister Helene Tremblay,

after consultation with the community at large, each college is expected to come up with a project of its own to be approved by its Board of Directors. In spending this new money, the Fede has already identified four major areas to focus on:

1. Accessibility and quality of services (support for teaching and students)
2. Modernization of technology and updating of programs
3. Maintenance of the buildings and the equipment
4. Presence of the CEGEP in its community

In fact, many colleges, such as André Laurendeau, Rosemont have already started their community consultation; while some others, such as Rimouski, have finished their community consultation and have already their project approved by their Board of Directors.

Given that student success is Vanier's major pre-occupation; and considering the current deficit in our allocation project and the over crowding in many sections; should we not consider converting some of this money into FTEs and inject it into the masse salariale to support the front line teaching, including new innovative teaching approaches? At the same time, should we not be trying to get the whole Vanier Community involved in deciding how this money should be spent?

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FEB. 27 • 7 p.m.

1. The Future of CEGEP's
2. Association Council motions on Afghanistan
3. Financial Report
4. Members Concerns

A modest supper will be served.



Hode Erogan & Janice Paquette present flowers to Nicky on behalf of the VCTA membership.



We'll miss Nicky but we all welcome Paula Price who has taken her place in the mailroom.

# End Canadian participation in the war in Afghanistan

## Stop military recruitment at Vanier College



Since the Suez Crisis in 1956 Canada has carved a role as a peace keeper working under the auspices of the United Nations.

In massive demonstrations prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Canadians clearly declared their opposition to participation in the American led NATO fronted war being prepared in Iraq.

The Canadian government of the time refused to join the *coalition of the willing* in that invasion, but agreed to a role in the occupation of Afghanistan.

There was no UN mandate, public consultation or parliamentary vote authorizing Canada to change from a peace-keeping to a war-making role.

The pretext for involvement included overthrowing the Taliban, establishing a democratic government, bringing sustainable development and freeing the women of the country.

The women of Afghanistan are still faced with intolerable oppression unacceptable in modern civilised society. (See- Long Wait for Liberation, Guardian Weekly, Dec. 5,2006, also see articles by RAWA and Malalai Joya, one of the female MP's in Afghanistan, on Znet [www.zmag.org](http://www.zmag.org), click on znet and look for articles on Afghanistan and Canada in Afghanistan)

All our development efforts are dedicated to the war against the Taliban while the farmers of the country have gone back to growing opium and promises to contribute to infrastructure are routinely made and unfulfilled and what aid arrives is diverted by the corrupt leaders NATO has placed in power. (See - Who are we defending in Afghanistan , Ken Georgetti, [www.tuaw.org](http://www.tuaw.org) trade unionists against the war)

The Hamid Karzai government is an assembly of feudal leaders and warlords from the north that has effectively been installed by the American forces and backed by NATO forces and represents an undemocratic one-sided support of one kind of Afghanistan.

The Taliban, regardless of how they were created, are a part of the fabric of Afghanistan society and have not been crushed, but have regrouped and grow stronger as the occupation continues. Estimates place one-half of the country under effective Taliban control. (See - West won't win Afghan war, Eric Margolis, Toronto Sun, Sept. 17,2006)

Canada and the world have become less safe for Canadian citizens because of Canada's illegal occupation of Afghanistan.

The Canadian military has undertaken an aggressive campaign to recruit soldiers because of the shortage of active personnel. The military paid for a glossy 6 page spread in *L'Actualité* in their special *Palmares* issue on Quebec secondary schools. (See also - [www.operationobjection.org](http://www.operationobjection.org))

Canadians and Quebecers in particular are increasingly opposed to the war despite the Harper government and the military brass mounting an aggressive publicity offensive. (See - Half of Canadians oppose troop role, Toronto Star, Sept.18,2006 - New Democrats to Harper: "Support our troops. Bring them home.", [www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca))

Given the above:

We request that Vanier College declare its opposition to Canada's military role in Afghanistan and demand that Canadian troops be immediately withdrawn.

And

We request that Vanier College halt all military recruitment on the Vanier College campus until Canada's role in this war is ended.

### Association Council Votes on Afghanistan

In January, the VCTA Association Council met and unanimously passed the following motions:

(\*Please note that the minutes of the meeting have not yet been approved.)

Motion 1

Whereas the war in Afghanistan is serving no clear positive purpose for the Afghan people and is causing massive loss of life and destruction of land in Afghanistan,

Whereas Vanier is an educational institution and funds spent on this military intervention decrease the funds available for government spending on education,

Whereas many unions across Canada, including the Canadian Labour Congress, have already opposed this war,

Whereas the mission of the Canadian troops has apparently been changed from a traditional peacekeeping role to an aggressor role,

Association Council recommends to the General Assembly that the VCTA declare its opposition to Canada's military role in Afghanistan and demand that Canadian troops be immediately withdrawn, as well as ask the Board of Directors of Vanier College and the whole of the FAC to do the same.



Social Justice Committee members come to present their document to the VCTA Association Council.

### Motion 2

Association Council recommends to the General Assembly that the VCTA request that Vanier College halt all military recruitment on campus until Canada's role in this war is ended.

These motions will come to the General Assembly on February 27, 2007. We hope that you will all attend to have your votes counted.

## End Military Recruitment on Campus

Kim Matthews

Sevak Manijikian and Rebecca Katz recently wrote editorials regarding military recruitment on campus for *The Insider*. I am happy to see that the sparks of a debate seem to be igniting on campus. I saw the military recruiters last semester, one dressed in a sharp dress uniform, the other in fatigues. I watched as a couple of students chatted with them and received pamphlets. It was hard not to be impressed by the demeanor of the recruiters. They appeared intelligent, confident and mature, something many if not most of our students aspire to. I went to class uneasy. I felt that the students were being lured into something that they could not possibly anticipate. Both my great grandfathers survived WWI. They returned to Montreal with lungs that could no longer function properly. They were gassed on the battlefield. My father was conscripted into the British army at the age of seventeen and sent to Palestine; "They sent boys to do a man's job" he will explain to anyone willing to take the time to listen. While the Canadian Armed forces have the right to recruit, I do not think we should be allowing them to recruit on campus. This is NOT like any other career alternative. This is a career that involves killing; recruits are trained to kill and they risk being killed. Many invoke our role as peacekeepers when defending the military. While Canada is known as a peacekeeping nation, the truth is that a number of our more recent peacekeeping missions have been disasters. Somalia, which resulted in the dissolution of The Canadian Airborne Regiment is a case in point. I informally polled three of my humanities classes on their opinion regarding military recruitment on campus.

The majority of students believe that this should not be permitted. One student noted that if he wants to join the military he can make the effort to find a recruiting office. He recalled that when recruiters gave a presentation to his grade eleven class, three of his peers joined. When we allow military recruitment on campus we are implicitly condoning violence as a means to resolve conflict. As a place of ideas, we should be encouraging intellectual alternatives instead.

*Kim Matthews teaches Humanities in Cont Ed this semester her research interests include race and ethnicity, identity, multiculturalism, immigration, diaspora and transnationalism.*

# DEMONSTRATION AGAINST WAR IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

Sat. March 17 1pm  
Dorchester Square, corner  
Peel and Rene Levesque

For more information:  
[www.echecalaguerr.org](http://www.echecalaguerr.org)

# Celebrating the Teaching Profession and the CEGEP Network

In today's knowledge-based society, we rely more and more on education to enable us to live successfully and be responsible citizens. As a result, in some societies education is appropriately valued and promoted simply by making it accessible to everyone and by improving the working conditions of its teachers. By contrast, in Quebec over the last two decades, both education and the teaching profession have been constantly devalued. Instead of seeing education as an investment, successive governments have treated it simply as an expense. In fact, Quebec teachers' salaries are now among the lowest in Canada. In our view, this is due to the combination of factors such as: the lack of public and media support for teachers' professional concerns; draconian anti-union legislations passed by successive governments limiting our right to negotiate; and unsuccessful negotiating strategies used by the union federations in recent years. At this point, we have roughly four to five years until the next round of negotiations to come up with new short and long term strategies to generate support in the society for education. If we can do this, we can improve our working conditions and improve education for our students.

Last semester Association Council passed a motion to work on the following "VCTA Challenges" to raise public awareness by encouraging teachers as well students to participate in projects related to the value of education, and the contribution of the CEGEP network to Quebec's socio-economic and cultural life.

## VCTA Challenges for the Future

I. Promotion of the Teaching Profession and Education  
Improving the salary and the working conditions of (CEGEP) teachers, in the context of the importance of post-secondary education in today's knowledge-based global society.

- Research statistics comparing the College teachers' salaries in Quebec with those of: (a) the College teachers' salaries in other provinces; (b) in other European countries; (c) the College administrators with the same degree; and (d) with other public sector workers.
- Research on the evolution of salaries of the above categories in the past several years.

- Educate the public at large to attract quality teachers.
  - Strategies to influence the nego process in our favor.
- All of the above, to highlight how our salaries have lagged behind other salaries systemically, with a view to obtaining public support.

II. Celebrating the Cegep System (Annual week-long activities)  
Educate the community at large about the contribution of the CEGEP system to the intellectual, social, economic and cultural development of Quebec.

- Identify the courses or programs in which we can give research projects to our students to look objectively into the history of education in Quebec with a view to the Parent Report and the CEGEP system
- Research on the contribution that the CEGEP education system has made towards the development of Quebec
- Research statistics on the range of salaries earned based on respective education degrees
- Ask each discipline/department/program to have a data bank of their past student alumni, through their teachers, with a view to encourage them to participate in annual week-long celebration activities

III. VANIER COLLEGE: What kind of an institution do we want?  
Discuss within the community at large to address the following issues:

- Enrollment numbers and our devis
- Academic Excellence/Accessibility with a strong support system
- Balance between pre-university and technology programs
- Social conscience of Vanier
- "Vanier for Vanier and its community": College-wide annual Fund and Awareness raising activities involving the whole community at large (Phys. Ed. Fitness activity week, marketing students, explorations students, IB students, etc.)

II. Vanier's Pedagogical Platform

- Emphasize Formative Assessment
- Work on external and internal partnerships (CCTTs, student clubs, integrative programs, etc.)
- Different pedagogical approaches (ex., on-line, etc.)

Employment trends in Quebec, by level of education\*\* (in thousands)

Year	No secondary school diploma	Secondary school diploma	Some postsecondary studies	Postsecondary diploma	University degree	Total
1990	927	632	257	910	416	3 142
1992	784	604	233	948	473	3 042
1995	723	553	230	1 082	560	3 148
2000	638	604	281	1 254	661	3 438
2001	626	598	285	1 284	682	3 475
2002	633	607	290	1 374	693	3 593
2003	612	589	314	1 413	722	3 650
Change from 1990 to 2003	-34%	-6.8%	22.2%	55.3%	73.6%	16.2%

Source: Statistics Canada

\*\*According to Statistics Canada terminology, postsecondary studies include all programs leading to diplomas and certificates in the trades (including the Diploma of Vocational Studies), nonuniversity college diplomas and certificates, and university certificates below the bachelor's level. The university sector begins with programs leading to at least a bachelor's degree.

Taken from the study by MELS, Education Indicators-2004 Edition, p.121

September 14, 2006

Consistent with the above "VCTA Challenges", in the months of December and January, two interesting activities were initiated and reported at the last news bulletin (News Bulletin NO 4, January 23, 2007) in detail.

To publicize and regularly distribute the results of various studies regarding the importance of education, the positive contribution of the CEGEP network to the socio-economic and cultural development of Quebec society, the workload of teachers and our working conditions, we will have a regular column in the VCTA newsletter. We invite you all to share your activities with the rest of the Vanier community as Steve Rosenfield has done below.

## Montreal Students Visit Vanier

### Steve Rosenfield

For several years Vanier College has served as host for an afternoon of fun with mathematics for selected Grade IV, V and VI students from schools around the island of Montreal. This event is run by the Quebec Association of Mathematics Teachers (QAMT), usually in late May or early June, between the H and E semesters, when students are largely absent from Vanier, but elementary schools are still in session. Last year Quebec instituted a new, and ongoing, provincial mathematics exam for grade VI students, held in June. As a result, teachers felt unable to bring their top students to such an afternoon while preparing them for the exam. To overcome this difficulty, the QAMT invited grade VI students to an afternoon at Vanier in January, (this past January 17), and the event was a great success, with more than twenty schools bringing three students each. Four workshops were

offered and each student participated in two of the four. Tom Fullerton, a computer consultant with LEARN, had the students working with pie plates and hair pins to produce tetrahedrons, grouped to result in "Bucky Balls". Patrick Ryan, working on Fullum Street with MELS, used number tiles to generate "magic" triangles, stellar stars, and rectangles. Andre Del Castilho, a secondary mathematics teacher at Centennial Regional High School in Greenfield Park, introduced the students to working with the TI-73 Graphing Calculator. Steven Rosenfield, of the Vanier Mathematics Department, had students exploring infinite sums and snowflake fractals.

The following two is taken from the the Fédération des cégeps study done during the forum on college education in June 2004, conducted by Pierre Fortin of the Université de Montréal and his group:

### Graduation Rates at the College and University Levels in Quebec

Year 1967 38%	Year 2002 69%
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Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

Also, another group is in the process of organizing awareness/fund raising activities to support our students in financial difficulty, to help them to complete their education successfully while they are at Vanier. This will be done with the collaboration of the Phys Ed department.

Soon, we will be calling on you, individually and collectively, to make this event a big success. We can not do it without you! And as you will see from Jim Atkinson's article below, there is a great need for such fund-raising at Vanier.

## Can We Stop Students From Falling Between the Cracks?

### Jim Atkinson



As Vanier College's Socio-Economic Officer (a combination of financial aid officer and social worker), I am privileged to work in a front line position where I encounter the diversity of our student population on a daily basis. I have been struck by the financial needs of our student population; last academic year alone for instance, 982 Vanier College students received almost \$4,000,000 (\$3,951,000) in loans and bursaries. However, some students, for one reason or another, fall through the cracks and do not receive the financial help necessary to help retain them at Vanier. Each semester students are forced to leave their family homes due to breakdowns in the family due to addictions, violence, abuse (physical, verbal and psychological), financial strain, divorce, and many other reasons. When this happens, students are at great risk of dropping out of school. If they apply for financial assistance, it can take up to six months

before they receive any money! Often when students receive financial assistance, it is not enough to pay the rent, food and school supplies; they require additional financial support and often do not receive it. I believe it is our duty, as part of the Vanier Community, to do something collectively by rallying around our student population and making sure that they can stay in school. What do you think? How can we stop our students from falling between the cracks and dropping out of school solely because of a lack of funds?

Coming soon to a department near you...

The VCTA Executive is presently trying to visit every department meeting to discuss union concerns of members. Hope to see your department soon!

# February is Black History Month: Celebrate it!

To carry on the Vanier tradition and highlight Black History Month, an exciting agenda full of activities is being organised. Display cases in the Student Mall, The Carrefour and in front of the Library entrance will feature art and elements of Black History. A movie series will present titles such as, "Ali", "Remember the Titans", "Hussle and Flo", and "Head of State". Guest speakers include well known public figures like Alvin Powell who is truly inspirational in his message about the self-destruction and redemption he went through as a black athlete. Gemma Raeburn-Baynes is a senior auditor at the Bank of Montreal, who is the energy behind many activities of the Montreal Black community including, Quebec's first Black modeling agency, Montreal's Caribbean carnival, and has won innumerable awards for community service. Egbert Gaye will talk about the community newspaper and how it serves the Black community. A panel of students will explore the many facets of Black identity. A live display of African art and food along with dancers from Africa and the Caribbean will liven up one UB in the Mall and the *Evolution of Dance* will make sure no one snoozes during another UB.

In addition, everyone should read Vanier this Week for the Black History Month quiz and other information concerning Black History Month.

## Movies

Dates	Title	Times
Feb. 20	"Hussle & Flo"	10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m.
Feb. 27	"Head of State"	10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m.

## Guest Speakers

Feb. 19 Gemma Raeburn 2:00pm - Auditorium

## Other Activities

Feb. 21 Display of African Art, Caribbean Food, Dance  
Universal Break- Jake's Mall  
Feb. 28 Evolution of Dance Universal Break- Jake's Mall



All  
Welcome

If you would like to participate or contribute to the months activities or need more information, please contact: Dany Brown in Student Services, C203 – ext. 7884 or Doug Miller in The Learning Centre, B205 – ext. 7900

## Human Race machine • There is no gene for race

Student Mall, February 19 to February 23 (times will be posted)

The Human Race Machine is a photo-booth-style device that uses a computer and visual scanner to "map" your face allow you to explore it in a combination of different images. Developed by digital artist Nancy Burson, it is an interac piece of art technology designed to challenge your perception of race, age, and other outward human features.

## In Montreal

Feb. 20-24: Black Ink Exhibit, Guy Favreau Complex, basement level Commemorating 400 years of Black History in Canada

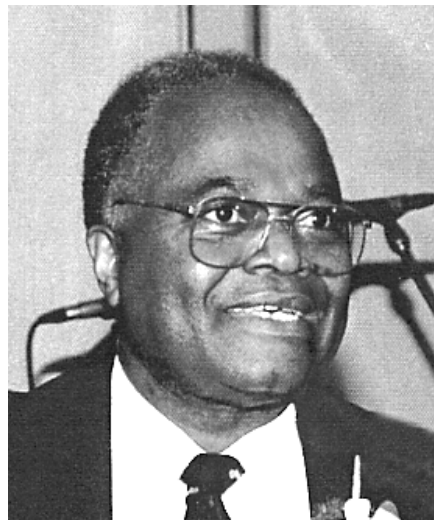
## At the Atwater Library and Computer Centre

Feb. 20: Dorothy Williams hosts an evening of Black History and helps to launch the new "Who's Who in Black Canada"  
Feb. 28: Variety Show: Haitians in Quebec: A Little More of the Story

For more Black History, go to Google, ville de montreal, histoire des noirs and you will find over 40 pages of art and photography exhibits and events of all kinds to commemorate Black History in Montreal New Film to be released in February: On Thin Ice- Blacks in hockey



# In Memorium



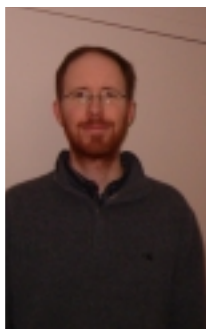
Leo Bertley passed away last December. He was a teacher of History at Vanier College for 34 years. Born in Trinidad, he first came to Canada in 1954 where he went on to obtain seven degrees from five universities, culminating in a Ph.D. in History.

Holding a Quebec teaching diploma and a Queen's Commission from the Royal Canadian Navy, he also became the first person of African descent to become a Principal in a Quebec school. Leo Bertley's book, "Canada and its People of African Descent", attests to the rich cultural heritage and achievements of other African Canadians. Leo used to say that he had always regarded his students as his children, and that "a teacher has to be fair to everyone, as well as honest, just and respectful." He is mourned by his former students as well as his colleagues at Vanier. We will miss his beautiful singing voice in our corridors.

## Do You Need Help with DeCcllic?

Ask Philippe Gagné

As one of the first "online teachers" in the college, I needed a Course Management System (CMS). I could have used any CMS, but I chose DECcllic (a MELS-funded platform) because it is a CMS designed for CEGEP teachers by CEGEP teachers.



Recently, managers at DECcllic offered me some release time to help Vanier teachers who are using DECcllic. I accepted their offer for two fundamental reasons: (1) I believe DECcllic is a very powerful and user-friendly CMS; and (2) My students loved it! They readily

adapted to the platform and whole-heartedly participated in the learning activities. In addition, a bridge between DECcllic and OMNIVOX is possible, allowing easy class registrations, etc.

What exactly does DECcllic do? From a technical standpoint, DECcllic is an official CMS which respects international standards in learning platforms. From a teaching standpoint, DECcllic offers a closed-messaging system, as opposed to e-mailing, discussion groups, a web page editor so that no HTML knowledge is needed, file storage and sharing and team creation, with team web pages, discussion groups, file directories and messaging. It also includes an evaluation schedule for online evaluations, with automatically-corrected multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks and short answer tests possible and when students submit assignments they are dated. All of this and more is possible with DECcllic! Indeed, the pedagogical possibilities are endless—and

teachers can proceed *at their own pace*, selecting only those features which meet their needs.

Finally the platform is bilingual, and users can choose to work within a French or an English environment.

More features are "in the works" and will be added in the coming months. As these features are added, I will let you know—both in this publication and, of course, on DECcllic itself!

If you require support, need more information or would like a login name and password to explore the platform yourself, feel free to contact me at [gagnep@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:gagnep@vaniercollege.qc.ca) or at extension 7515. You can also visit [www.deccllic.qc.ca](http://www.deccllic.qc.ca). To log in, go through Vanier's home page, or bookmark [lms2.deccllic.qc.ca](http://lms2.deccllic.qc.ca). If you already use DECcllic, don't forget that a support person is always online, weekdays from 9 am to 5 pm. As Brent Davis Reid, coordinator for the platform, explained during a workshop held on January 19, "If you need immediate assistance with DECcllic, click on "Address Book" in the right-hand menu and then on "Online Users". Find a user with "Corporation DECcllic" as the identified institution and do a right-click on the mouse. Choose "send a message" and send out your SOS!"

*Philippe Gagné has taught French at Vanier since 2001. He teaches a hybrid course for students in the Faculty of Applied Technology (30% in-class and 70% online). He is passionate about using technologies to enhance students' engagement and to optimize learning. For sure, technologies enhance his own engagement when they help him to reach these goals.*

# The Greening of Vanier

## Guy Quinn



### Shades of Green

Just what does the greening of Vanier look like? The lighter shades are the ideas that have yet to bear fruit. The darker shades represent the ideas that are presently in action. There is a groundswell of action that will continue to grow as we gain momentum. The Social Science program will launch a new major in A'07 called Green Studies. Eventually, our students will be able

to explain "carbon exchange" to us. New recycling bins in strategic places welcome us on our return from the Winter break. Before long, everyone on campus will understand why and how to use them. At the VCTA, the Association Council voted to no longer provide Styrofoam cups and bottled water at meetings. Instead they will provide coffee and water that you can pour into the cups you bring to whatever meeting is being held. Soon everyone on campus will know enough to bring a reusable drinking cup wherever they go and eventually eliminate the need for disposable cups. "Raising a glass" will take on another meaning. The Book Store provides a service that receives dead batteries and disposes of them responsibly. The LITC department takes our antiquated computers and recycles them in a "green" way. Ideas will continue to flow and we will be green in thought and action.

### Chicken Little Gets Another Chance

I overheard this conversation between Chicken Little and his Grandfather.



"Grandfather, why do we have to put all this garbage in the blue boxes?" Grandfather replied, "So the geese will continue to honk in the Spring and Fall, the leaves will continue to change colour, fall from the trees and return in the Spring,

the sap will flow through the trees in the Spring in order that we will have syrup for our pancakes, and so you will be able to play hockey on the frozen pond every Winter and paddle your canoe on it in the Summer." In astonishment, Chicken Little said, "You mean, if everyone doesn't put their recyclables in the blue boxes every week we will lose all these things"? Carefully, Grandfather replied, "Don't panic yet little one, but yes, essentially we stand to lose these things and more." As Grandfather expected, Chicken Little hit the panic button. Grandfather wasn't trying to be cruel, he wanted his Grandson to get a chance to redeem himself from the last episode of panic that was all for naught. He knew that this time the child would be the bearer of truth.

I'll back the old boy on this one. I skated on the frozen ponds of Southern Ontario through the 50's and 60's. I remember the first time we had a Christmas without snow and when my municipality made the decision to discontinue the annual commitment to erect boards and pour water for our natural hockey rinks. We had experienced enough winters with weather that would no longer sustain the ice for enough "skating days" to warrant the effort and expense. That fatal day came in the early 70's. Moving to Montreal in 1976 meant returning to "real winters" and hockey on natural ice again. I introduced my sons to the joys of natural ice and other joyful venues that Winter provides. Now I'm wondering where they will have to move in order to share these natural pleasures with their children.

Yes Chicken Little has license to spread the word now. The ice rinks are my preferred measuring stick and Grandfather shared his; but he, like I, know how gruesome the picture gets when considering where this thing is going. I do believe the people of this planet are responsible for the state of the environment and it's the people who must slow down or stop this runaway train.

### Common Rallying Point

If you compare environmental sustainability to any of the other rallying points people are taking up these days, the environment has to take the poll position. Any arguments I've heard so far reflect short term, selfish, naive, and/or suicidal postures. It's actually very exciting to think/dream of action taken on a global scale. But as we are well advised by whoever it was, "think globally, act locally". Observing the local scene at Vanier, I'd say we're about to see this happening. There have always been a number of proactive conservationists on campus. The numbers are growing however. There's various reasons accountable for this; from closet dwelling environmentalist now coming out, to those who have heard and believe the words of Chicken Little, to Baby Boomers who want to leave a positive legacy, to people with enough intelligence to 'read the writing on the wall'. It doesn't really matter where we're coming from, the important thing is that we're stepping into the same circle and taking action. This brings people of many walks, beliefs, skills and knowledge together and brings additional collective meaning and substance to our educational discourse. The Sustainability Committee is a proactive group that has

a broad representation from across the campus. Louis Philip Belle-Isle is a retired teacher rep who works closely with Robert Isabel. He is the "responsible", assigned by the Secretary General to establish an extensive college wide recycling program. Between them, they have provided the persistence needed to consult and carry out the first phase of the plan. At the meeting in September, draft one of a Manifesto or Mission Statement on Sustainability for Vanier was tabled. The first manifestation of the mission greeted us this week in the form of some very attractive and clearly labeled recycling bins (approximately 40 in all). They're in both cafeterias, the mail student mall and the sports complex. It's not a dump and run operation however. A thorough follow-up is necessary in order that the bins get used properly. The committee (consisting of 12 to 20 people) still has to devise and implement a plan to empty the bins using a team of volunteers. Innovative approaches by which to sensitize students to this cause are needed. Information and announcements will appear on a regular basis in the Intercom and Vanier Today. The next meeting of this committee is to be announced soon. If you would like to be an active member, contact Louis to get on the mailing list; [belleisl@fclass.vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:belleisl@fclass.vaniercollege.qc.ca)

Some of the other plans are for a composting collection site. CD/DVD collection for recycling purposes will be added to the existing battery collection in the Bookstore. Eventually, consideration is to be given to motion sensitive light switches in classrooms and methods for reducing water consumption in the toilets. Are there any other ideas?

#### Leadership Roles

Someone who had an inside track, (before any one else) on who was to be our next and 4th Director General said to me, "You're going to like this person, because he's 'green' and

really cares for the environment" I think my response was something like, "Right, I'll believe it when I see it." Now I must admit, stuff's happening; a sustainability committee struck within six months of his arrival, a long and short term action plan which was drafted by this committee of reps from across the college, a budget for the same plan and for the first time a "functionaire" assigned to implement the plan. It's not a lot at once and it isn't at break neck speed, but it's coming from the right direction and it's a good start. Mr. Heroux is in a very influential place at the point of the pyramid. The base of the pyramid and everything in between is the student body, teachers and staff. We'll respond in kind to the initiatives from the top. We don't realize the possibilities, but as you can see there are a few that are presently in the works. The leadership of the VCTA is essential. We can carry the bulk of momentum in the groundswell response to this cause. Watch as this campus turns from a lighter to a darker shade of green. Guy Quinn is.

Last semester Association Council voted to discontinue the use of Styrofoam cups and plastic water bottles at Council meetings and in the VCTA office and Lounge in the N Building. So come and have coffee but please remember to bring your own cup. Or use one of the cups in the office but please wash it after use with soap and hot water. And if you take it to your office, please bring it back at some point.

# Strategic Management Concerns

## Report From the Executive

Last semester the Director General announced his decision to give a teacher a .250 "release time" in the second semester to co-ordinate the Strategic Plan. Association Council mandated the executive to meet with him to express the following concerns:

- a). It was clear that the money for this position could not be taken out of the "masse salariale" because it is not release time.
- b). Since this position was not a teaching position, we wanted to know if it was a management position or a professional position.
- c). If the position was a management position, our view was that it would be a conflict of interest for a teacher to be a manager at the same time and that this would be in contravention of the Quebec Labour Code.
- d). If the position was a professional position, we made it clear that we have an obligation to respect the collective agreements of other groups at Vanier to the fullest extent.
- e). Since the position had never been advertised to give everyone equal opportunity to apply, the process was not fair

and transparent and could be interpreted as favouritism. f). It was felt that this was another example of a top-down management style where the community is not consulted, only informed after the fact. Furthermore, are there not administrators who could do this job? Why did he arbitrarily decide to use our limited resources on this new position?

g). Is it fair to pay one teacher to do part of the work while many other teachers will be asked to do many hours of volunteer work on the same dossier with no pay at all?

At the meeting with the Director General, also attended by the Academic Dean, the Executive expressed all of the concerns above. We were assured that the money for this position would not come out of the teaching budget and that the administration would consider our other concerns. Later, we were informed by the Director of Human Resources that as the new position was a short-time professional position, there are no hiring priorities to be considered and no posting required. There remain many concerns since the process was neither transparent nor consultative.

# E Learning

*This is the first in a proposed series of articles on e-learning. The views presented here are our own and we are grateful to the VCTA for the opportunity to present them. They were written down in the hope of sparking a real debate concerning e-Learning at Vanier.*

- Helena Dedic and Steve Rosenfield

A quick search this past fall on Google using the phrase "definition of e-learning" yielded 12,100 hits. Reading a few pages of these links makes it clear that it is only a slight exaggeration to say that there are as many definitions as practitioners. At its narrowest, some believe e-learning to be learning that takes place over the web. We prefer a broader notion such as the following: *learning facilitated and supported through the use of information and communications technology, e-learning can cover a spectrum of activities from supported learning, to blended learning (the combination of traditional and e-learning practices), to learning that is entirely online. Whatever the technology, however, learning is the vital element. ...* ([www.internal.bath.ac.uk/web/cms-wp/glossary.html](http://www.internal.bath.ac.uk/web/cms-wp/glossary.html)).

As our society continues its transformation from the industrial age of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to the information and communication age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we see computers, the web, and various communication technologies playing ever larger roles in our daily lives. We also see that the wealth and prosperity of nations in this new age will be increasingly tied to the level of education of their populations. The hallmarks of education for the industrial age were literacy (so as to read instructions) and obedience to "superiors" (so as to follow instructions), and mass public education supplied workers, with both the literacy and training to school obedience, needed by industry. Today the increasing demand is for "knowledge workers", in whom the ability to think, solve problems, and continually learn new skills so as to adapt to rapidly changing technology, supersedes the older, more basic, requirements. Merely to be a well informed citizen today one needs many more skills than 50 and 100 years ago. The questions that arise are: is our education system, designed in an earlier age to meet the requirements of that earlier age, still effective and efficient today; if not, how can our education system be modified to be more effective and efficient?

...the evidence that the system is failing our students is strong...

While some believe that our current education system is just fine as it is, others, such as ourselves, believe that both the students and their educational needs have changed since our generation went to school. The system may not even have been fine then, although as successful students we had no argument with it then. Today, with many of our students we feel that what we are doing is akin to pounding round pegs into square holes. We are happy to debate this issue at length with others.

To us the evidence that the system is failing our students is strong (statistics concerning dropout rates abound), but that is not the core issue for this and subsequent articles. Instead, we will start with the assumption that we agree that our current system can be improved, and the question then is how to go about doing it. Further, we acknowledge our own technological bent, admittedly a personal bias, but given the nature of our lives, and the changes that we see in society around us, we would also like to assume that improvement in the education system might in part be connected to clever usage of computers and the web. That is, we believe that there are possible answers to the "how" question in one or another form of e-learning. This is not to say that there are not difficult issues to grapple with. We don't think of computers and the web as a panacea, a remedy for all problems. However, with good will, honest discussion and hard work, the technological sea that we are afloat in ought to be capable of providing some solutions to problems in the edu-

The greatest danger that we see is a stubborn unwillingness to face change...

cation system. The greatest danger that we see is a stubborn unwillingness to face change, an adamant refusal to examine possibilities - for then the wave of change will catch us unprepared. One analogy to our current situation that we like to make is an imagined discussion that would have taken place when humankind first changed from oral learning to learning through writing. We are not historians, but we can just hear traditional educators saying how such a change would destroy the development of memory in young people. From a modern perspective we can see that without that change advances in all areas of human endeavour would have been slowed or halted, and yet, there probably was some truth in the arguments of traditional educators. In a more modern context our parents, even in their 80's, could recite lines of poetry that they memorized in elementary school (1920's), and sadly we can't because we never did that in our schools. But there was a trade off. We learned many things in school that our parents never had a chance to learn, and our children learned many things that we are struggling to learn now. On balance, we hope that most of us agree that the change, from oral learning to use of written text was a good one, and that it is possible that new technology holds out the possibility of similar benefits.

Enough preaching, what we propose to do in this and subsequent articles is to define several varieties of e-learning, cite examples of where they have been or are being used, cite evidence, where it exists, for that methodology being useful, and present our personal experiences over the last several years, attempts to change what we do as teachers by using computers and the web.

When one is planning to modify how one teaches, the first task should always be to examine those areas in the course

that one is unhappy with, areas that need improvement, areas that one is hoping to improve.

For example, perhaps you are tired of students coming to see you because they have lost the assignment sheet, or because they didn't know that the assignment was due today. Perhaps you teach courses with many mature students, who have familial responsibilities that understandably make attendance less regular. The most basic version of e-learning, which consists of posting materials, notices, lecture notes, etc., on a web-site (at Vanier generally available through First Class or Moodle) can go a long way towards overcoming these problems. We have taken a poll of our students at the beginning of every term for at least the last decade; when we started taking this poll more than half of our students did not have a computer at home nor access to the web. In fact, we used to collect free AOL CD's to distribute to students so that they could sign up for three free months of internet access.

Now virtually all of our students have computers at home and access to the web.

Now virtually all of our students have computers at home, and access to the web. The remaining few who don't, report having access at the house of a friend. Thus, posting information on the web means that students can view the materials virtually anytime that they want to. Where our generation went out at night but were supposed to be home by midnight, this generation doesn't even go out until midnight. Web access, 24/7, to materials gets around the problems posed by paper materials posted on a physical board in school or sitting in a binder at the reserve desk in the library, locked away outside of school hours.

When we first conceived of creating our e-courses, the example above was not what we were thinking about. We were worried by the fact that too many students that we were convinced were bright just were not succeeding at the level we anticipated. From our reading of education literature, particularly the works of Seymour Papert, we became convinced of a rather simple thesis. Each student needs to experience many instances of a new concept before they can grasp it, with the number of instances required depending upon the individual student. There are problems with giving the students the instances that they need. First, for many of the concepts in our physics and mathematics courses, each "instance" might require many calculations, the drawing of a graph, etc., and hence take a long time. Second, this lengthy procedure to generate each instance causes three further sorts of difficulties: weaker students get bogged down in the routine procedures and do not have the capacity to watch what is happening in the more general sense, and thus do not see a pattern, do not grasp the underlying concept; all students, weak or strong, resist doing more than one or two of each procedure because of the amount of time and energy involved; much time in class is required because students resist doing it for homework. Third, while some practice of lower level tasks is desirable, if we are really committed to conceptual development, the required amount of repetition of lower level tasks is more likely to lead to rote learning than to conceptual development.

With these difficulties in mind we began development of many "interactive simulations", designed to lift the burden

of routine work by having the computer do it, giving the students the opportunity to quickly generate many instances while retaining the capacity to see patterns appear. These simulations were imbedded in web-pages, similar to lecture notes or in some cases, more like pages in a textbook. Some of the latter materials could be used in a distance learning context, but they were not designed with that in mind and we have yet to do so. The e-learning design we imagined, and have been using for several years, involved teaching in a computer lab, with each pair of students sharing a computer. We lecture, we demonstrate the use of the interactive simulations, and we ask students to work together using the simulations while we circulate and help individuals, pairs or groups of students who are experiencing difficulties. We have studied the impact of this design at great length, and continually redesign our simulations and supporting materials to make them easier to use and easier to understand. Our comparative studies have shown a positive impact on student willingness to explain what answers mean, or how answers were arrived at, which we view as a measure of conceptual understanding. Furthermore, while many teachers fear that using computers for rote tasks leads to students being incapable of performing those rote tasks, we have found that the ability of students to perform rote tasks was the same across sections using and not using our simulations. The use of this e-learning design has shown benefits for students, but even more, it has changed our role in the classroom, and with it, our view of our role as teachers. Instead of the teacher being the centre of the classroom, as we used to be when lecturing all the time, now our students assume a more central role. If you wish, you might characterize it by saying that we have returned to a more Socratic design, where our focus is on drawing out the knowledge from the students, rather than pumping it in.

### Fair Trade Chocolate

At [www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org), (go to global economy then fair trade), you can read about the horrific conditions of the children who work in the chocolate trade. Here is a list of some stores in Montreal that sell fair trade chocolate. If you know of other places, let us know.

Eco-Quartier on de l'Eglise street near Vanier  
La Maison Verte Co-op in NDG  
Dix Milles Village Store (branches in NDG, Pointe Claire and on St. Denis St.)  
Frigo vert (near Concordia)

## Attention Cont Ed teachers

Last semester the VCTA Executive requested a work room for Cont Ed teachers with a photocopy machine, computers etc. In early January we heard that the Space Committee is looking at part of the old daycare in A wing second floor. Hopefully by next term Cont Ed teachers will finally have a space.

# From “We belong to the land” to “Je me souviens”

Reflections on the nature of Aboriginal struggles in a colonial nation

## Nancy Leclerc



Just as many people comment on those grumpy teachers and their strikes, always complaining about working conditions and pay, too many people comment on those grumpy Indians, always complaining about land claims and the loss of their traditional ways of life. Just

this summer, a fellow French Canadian on a sunny terrace in the Village questioned the legitimacy of the Native struggle by saying, in that cool, collected and passionless way of the self-righteous: “OK, so they were invaded and they lost their land. Boo hoo. Wasn’t that a long time ago? Why are they harping on the past?”

I suggested that she take a walk down the street and read any Québec license plate. Although the origins of “Je me souviens” are unclear and most people probably don’t know what they’re supposed to be remembering, I thought that maybe, just maybe, this would help her reflect on why people “harp on the past.”

Sadly, many people are unaware of the extent to which “the past” haunts Native communities and individuals on a daily basis. However, the current effects of the past range from cultural confusion to domestic violence to high rates of diabetes to teen suicide. Alcohol abuse is rampant and destroys entire families and lives. My beautiful memories of time spent living and working in *Eeyou Istchee*<sup>1</sup> are haunted by the recurring vision of a drunken young Eeyou<sup>2</sup> man keeling over from a front porch, falling flat on his face in the sand and staying there. Other people hanging around did

...we have to take a look at the process of colonisation in Canada....

not bat an eyelash. This has become a normal sight there, as has the sight of children as young as 8 or 9 wandering the streets drunk or high.

To understand how these current phenomena are linked to the past, we have to take a look at the process of colonisation in Canada and to critically question the assumption that colonialism is no longer practiced here. While the loss of land and the displacement of Aboriginal peoples are the most visible results of the European invasion of Turtle Island, considering these as the *sole* results forms an incomplete picture. The Canadian reality is that European colonists gradually imposed a foreign economic, political and religious system on Aboriginal peoples in addition to dis-

placing them. They did this in small steps so that Aboriginal people often thought that the changes were advantageous to them and willingly adopted them. What Aboriginal people may not have realised at the time was that the *intent* behind these small steps was to assimilate them and that this desire rested on pervasive ethnocentric notions of racial and moral superiority.

...many non-aboriginals fail to see the connection...

The links between “the past” and current social problems are there to be examined by anyone who has the will to look beyond their high school textbooks for information on Aboriginal cultures and histories. Nevertheless, many non-Aboriginal Canadians fail to see the connections and see land claims and the ensuing struggles as a plea for attention at best and as a selfish appropriation of what is “rightfully Canadian” at worst. Like the woman cited at the beginning of this text, they believe that Aboriginal people should simply adapt to a “Canadian way of life” since they would be better off that way anyway. It’s understandable, since coming to an understanding of this reality leads to a very disturbing revelation for the privileged: that the system that displaced Aboriginals, made them dependent on Euro-Canadians, discriminates against them and keeps them in poverty is the same system that benefits Euro-Canadians, particularly those of French and English descent.

In spite of this system of institutionalised racism, some people would not qualify Canada at this time as being a colonial nation. However, we must ask: “When the heck was Canada decolonised?” Descendants of European colonisers are still ruling the country and benefiting, in general, from the resources that are available as well as from higher social statuses and standards of living. Aboriginal people are still struggling, albeit struggling with the awareness that they may not ever gain back what they have lost.



How can non-Aboriginals struggle with them, as allies? How can non-Aboriginals give up their comfortable worldview in which their privilege is socially and spiritually sanctioned? One step is to sensitise the general public to the fact that land claim issues go beyond a mere struggle for material resources.

The struggle for land is symbolic of a divergence in worldviews about the place of humans in nature. The Euro-Canadian conception envisions land as something to be owned and controlled by man (yes, "man" because this worldview is also patriarchal), just like bodies of water, plants, animals and, of course, women.

However, Aboriginal worldviews locate land within a web of existence that includes all humans, animals, plants and water. In the words of my friend Jim<sup>3</sup>, an Eeyou hunter that I befriended in *Eeyou Istchee*: "The land. It's not something that humans can possibly own. We belong to the land. The land includes the trees, rivers, plants, animals and us. The Eeyou are responsible for its well-being."

There is an immeasurable sense of connection with the planet that comes with being out on the land with Aboriginal people. I had never felt as though I was a part of this world until, at 25, I had the chance to sit in a hunting blind in a patch of subarctic tundra, listening to the audible silence

that comes with a lack of electric hum, watching geese fly southbound overhead. I had never felt connected to the animals whose flesh I ate until I saw the bodies of two geese swinging gracefully over Jim's shoulder as he grasped them firmly but tenderly by the neck.

My understanding is far from complete and it will always have gaps but now I know, not just intellectually but intuitively, that what affects the land affects all people. I feel it. And I *feel* that struggling with Aboriginals to at least partially restore a system of stewardship of the land rather than one of dominance and exploitation is crucial to the cultural and physical survival of Aboriginals, non-Aboriginals and those of us who are products of their contact.

- 1 Cree land, Eastern James Bay area.
- 2 "The people", also known as Cree.
- 3 Fictional name.

*Nancy Leclerc started teaching Anthropology at Vanier in 2003. She is co-founder of the Native Awareness Group and has helped organize college-wide panel discussions on native issues.*

## Gordon Edwards Wins Nuclear Free Future Award

### Robert Del Tredici



This past December Dr. Gordon Edwards received the 2006 Nuclear-Free Future Award for his sustained efforts in educating the public on a wide range of nuclear matters. German journalist Claus Biegert founded the Awards in 1998 after the success of his 1992 World Uranium

Hearing in Salzburg, Austria. In Salzburg individuals from around the globe gathered to testify on the hazards of uranium mining, nuclear power, and nuclear weapons production. To keep the spirit of the World Uranium Hearing alive, Claus instituted The Nuclear Free Future Awards, establishing four categories of winners: Education (Gordon's category); Resistance; Solutions; and Lifetime Achievement. Each year the awards are presented at a site significant to the Nuclear Age. Past ceremonies have been hosted in St. Petersburg, Russia, Carnsore Point, Ireland, Jaipur, India, Oslo, Norway, Munich, Germany, and Los Alamos, New Mexico. Window Rock, Arizona, was chosen for the December 2006 awards because it is in the middle of uranium country in the American Southwest, and it is the tribal seat of the Navajo Nation. Gordon shared the stage with the President of the Navajo Nation and award-winners from China, India, and the United States.

Prior to the ceremony Gordon gave a seminar on his work.

On the spot conference organizers invited him to be a guest speaker at next year's proceedings in Austria.

At the awards Gordon was acknowledged for his contributions to the debate on uranium mill-tailings, radon standards, and tritium levels in drinking water, and for being instrumental in bringing about moratoria on uranium mining. He was also commended for his pedagogical approach to nuclear matters. It was noted that he grounds his insights and observations on the materiality of nuclear substances, preferring the term "radioactivity" over "radiation" because "radiation" suggests invisible rays and abstract concepts, whereas "radioactivity" suggests bits and pieces of broken atoms that change state and shape and take up residence in fire, water, earth, and air, and inside the human body.

This was the second time that a Canadian has won this international award. Maisie Shiell of Saskatchewan won the Nuclear-Free Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998.



Photo: Felix Del Tredici

*Bob Del Tredici teaches Photography and Portfolio in the Communications Programme. He has documented the Canadian uranium industry and the American nuclear weapons complex. His photographs of Hiroshima, the bomb factories and uranium mining have been exhibited internationally. He nominated Dr. Gordon Edwards for the Nuclear-Free Future Award.*

# How Some Things Work:

## Fred Andrews



### The Devis Scholaire Revisited

Two previous articles have been attempts at explaining some of the devilish formulas used to calculate funding for the colleges. The first one (see "Budgetary Surprises at Vanier" in the September 2006 issue of the "VCTA Newsletter") discussed funding by the Ministry of Education for the operational budgets of colleges. The second one (see "What is the Devis Scholaire???" in the December

2006 issue of the "VCTA Newsletter") discussed how the Ministry sets limits on enrollments at each CEGEP.

Unfortunately, this second article was too short and not clear. Some key explanations were glossed over. Thank you to some readers who pointed out these problems.

Let's revisit and try doing a better job of explaining the Devis Scholaire.

The "Devis Scholaire" is a measure or estimate of student clientele (enrollments) used by the Ministry of Education for each CEGEP for each academic year to adjust funding allotments. Importantly, there is a maximum clientele above which funding will not be provided. What is this maximum for Vanier? How is it established?

To begin, there is a misconception that the maximum clientele allowed for Vanier is equal to 5250 students plus 10% (which would suggest a maximum of 5775 students). Vanier's gross enrollment has inched closer to that value. But the maximum is not based on a simple count of the number of students.

The maximum clientele is, actually, determined by a more obscure yet more exact measure. It is based on a "total raw PES" value for the college. "PES" is an acronym for the French "périodes étudiants par semaine". In English that means periods of instruction (theory + lab +stage) measured in hours per week per student. "Total raw PES" is the simple arithmetic total of PES for all registered students. "Total raw PES" thus accounts for all hours of instruction provided to all students by the college. Students may be full-time, full-time with a reduced course load or part-time at the college. Different programs of study require different hours per week of instruction (e.g. technology students receive several hours more per week of instruction than do pre-University students)

A reference value of "total raw PES" is established for each college using enrollments by program from some previous years. For Vanier this reference PES value was calculated to be 230,370 based on a distribution of 5250 students (averaged over fall and winter semesters) in all programs at Vanier for the academic year 2000-2001. (So this is where the enrollment number of 5250 originates.)

Each college is allowed to exceed its reference PES measure by up to 10% for any academic year and still be funded

completely. If a college exceeds its maximum PES then all funding for the excess drops to \$0 very rapidly.

For Vanier our "devis scholaire" or "total raw PES" can go as high as 253,407 (i.e. 230,370 + 10%). During the past several years Vanier's enrollment has been shifting gradually toward more pre-University students and fewer Technology students. Since pre-University students, in general, have smaller PES values per student than Technology students Vanier's devis scholaire is still not overly close to its maximum limit. In fact the closest approach to maximum was during the year 2003-2004 at about 244,000 PES. For the year 2005-2006 we were about 232,000 PES. So while our overall enrollments have been increasing gradually our total raw PES has been declining gradually after rising slightly from the reference year of 2000-2001.

The "devis scholaire" reference value is revised about every 10 years.

The following link provides more details about the "Devis Scholaire" topic (but it is not easy reading):  
<http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/ens-sup/ftp/reg-bud/Public/A007-v1.doc>

## How Some Things Work:

PES Allocations vs. CI Workloads  
Introduction to PES Allocations

As mentioned above, "PES" is an acronym for the French "périodes étudiants par semaine". In English that means periods of instruction (theory + lab +stage) measured in hours per week per student. For each course, PES is calculated by multiplying the number of "registered" students times the number of hours of instruction per week for the course.

The PES for all "program specific courses" of each program is totaled for the fall and winter semesters. We can call this "program PES" for fall and for winter. These two added together give "program PES per year".

"Program specific courses" are all courses incorporated in a given program excluding the "general studies courses". Examples of programs are Science, Social Science, Communications, Music, Early Childhood Education, Architectural Technology, Business Administration, Nursing, etc.

In general each program has a different average PES value per student per year for its program specific courses. As we have seen previously Technology programs have a greater PES per student per year on average than do pre-University programs. And within these groups there is substantial variation. Each *program PES* is incorporated into a *PES allocation formula* to calculate the number of teachers (measured in FTEs) allocated to the college by the Ministry of Education for each program.

The PES allocation formula has two particular factors, which



differ for each program. For those who are somewhat mathematically inclined, this formula is the “slope-intercept” form of a straight line. The intercept value is a fixed number of FTEs (generally between 0 and 2.5) and the slope (measured in units of FTE per PES) is a tiny fraction which is multiplied by the PES total for the program. Once again these two factors (intercept and slope) in the PES allocation formula tend to be larger for technology programs than for pre-university programs.

FTE is an English acronym for “Full-Time Equivalent”. There is a corresponding French version of this term as well. One FTE is thus the equivalent of one full-time teacher. Thus 4.6 FTE would mean 4 teachers working full time plus one other teacher working 0.6 or 60% of full time for one year.

Since technology programs in general have greater average PES values per year than pre-University programs and the PES allocation formula factors are also greater, it turns out that Technology Programs tend to generate substantially more teaching FTEs per registered students than do the pre-university programs.

All students in all programs are required to take the same number of general studies courses: English, French, Humanities, Physical Education and Complementary. A PES total for each of these areas of study is determined. All of these PES totals are applied to the PES-allocation formula using the same pair of factors to calculate how many teachers are needed to teach the courses in each discipline (English, French, Humanities, and Physical Education) and all Complementary courses. Note that these PES allocation values are separate from the PES allocations for specific programs.

This whole exercise results in determining the total number of teachers (FTEs) allocated to teach all courses in each college. Each college also is allocated a number of FTE’s for coordination release time. This number is determined by dividing the number of FTEs for teaching by 18. The total FTE’s for teaching plus the FTE’s release time for coordination, basically, constitutes the “masse salariale” for the college. “Masse salariale” also includes costs of employee benefits for faculty.

A previous article “Budgetary Surprises at Vanier” (in the September 2006 issue of the “VCTA Newsletter”) discussed funding by the Ministry of Education for the operational budgets of colleges. That article introduced the general mechanism used by the MEQ for funding CEGEPs. Operational budgets are established via a set of budgetary guidelines known by the French acronym FABES. Each of the five letters in FABES, as outlined in the earlier article, stands for a separate category of funding as follows:

- “F” is for a fixed overhead allocated to each college.
- “A” is for pedagogical affairs.
- “B” is for buildings
- “E” is for teachers (“Enseignants”). It covers anything dealing with “masse salariale” that is teachers’ salaries and benefits.
- “S” is for special projects. This covers various research grants such as PAREA and other such things.

The earlier article dealt with the “A” of FABES. Our current discussion of allocations for teaching and release time for coordination deals with the “E” of FABES. That previous article did not highlight the fact that “PES total per program” is also

an essential element in the calculations for the “A” funding per program or per student. PES keeps showing up. It is an underlying factor in several important calculations.

The College determines the teaching allocation to be granted to each program (and department). This allocation is not necessarily the same as that calculated by the Ministry since the College has the prerogative of making its own internal distribution of teaching allocations. The total internal distribution of teaching allocation should equal the total allocation granted by the Ministry each year.

You should think of PES-Allocation (including release time for coordination) as being a budget amount granted by the College to each department for teaching and for coordinating its operations. There are other allotments of release from teaching that are budgeted separately such as union activities, research grants, etc.

The exercise of making enrollment projections for each new academic year for the whole college is tricky, subject to error yet extremely important. It begins in March of each year and continues in stages through January of the following year. Enrollment projections by course yield projections of teaching allocations when the *PES allocation formula* discussed earlier is applied. It is very important that the enrollment estimate for each course for each semester be as accurate as possible. The Ministry only provides funding for actual numbers of students enrolled in each course. If a college distributes more teaching positions than justified by actual enrollments then it runs a deficit that must be paid back in subsequent years.

## An Introduction to CI or Individual Workload

CI stands for “Charge Individuelle”. It is the Individual Workload for teachers. There is an elaborate formula in our Collective Agreement, which sets out the methods for calculating the individual workloads for teachers.

We should think of the combined CI-Workloads for our departments as an expenditure of the PES-Allocation budgets by course. The annoying part is that there is not an exact connection of methodology between PES-Allocation and CI-Workloads except that we must make them balance.

A fuller discussion of CI Workloads is left for a future article.



# The Relevance of Happy Hour

## Iannis Stavrianos

*"Food comes first, then morals"*  
-Bertolt Brecht

To answer the question of the relevance of happy hour events one must first answer a more basic question: what is the role of a union? Unions, it would seem, function at both a micro and macro level simultaneously. At the micro level, unions represent, both legally and politically, the rights of the employee against the position of strength of the employer. Imagine how easy it would be for governments (in our case) and their residual administrative bodies to exploit the working conditions and salaries of employees if unions did not exist. How could a single employee ever combat the pre-determined hierarchical relationship to the employer without some form of legal assistance? This, then, is what unions can provide at a micro level: the right of voice to the subordinate member in the power relationship involving the employer and employee.

The role of a union, however, cannot be reduced to the simple representation of individual members. At a macro level, a union exists as a collective body of strength. The VCTA, for instance, is made up of some five hundred and thirty teachers. Another role of a union, it would then follow- at least from a perspective of strength- is to bring together as one collective body all of its membership in order to have the force to fight for what is right. Under this larger paradigm, however, it is crucial to realize that a union moves from a subordinate position to one of strength (at least in numbers). If Vanier is taken as an example, it is easy to see how the number of teachers is greater than the number of administrators. In fact, only the number of students is greater than that of teachers. There are clearly instances, such as during negotiation periods with the government, when it is wise for a union to work as a collective unit of strength, but the admirable goal of achieving "oneness" should be symbolically sought after throughout the course of a good union's existence.

One of many events which brings union members together is a Happy Hour. At a basic level, it consists of, as Karl Marx

once stated on another issue, "above all food and drink" . But what follows food and drink – the "morals", the discussions, the plain talk, the trash talk- is creative of a greater sense of unity amongst the membership. This effect could be understood as the symbolic and meaningful relevance of a Happy Hour within a union's structures. It ultimately gives members a chance to discuss their working conditions, salaries, or life in general. Whatever the case may be, happy hour events fulfill the function of creating union (sometimes in more ways than I care to explore) –of getting people together, and this is arguably one of the greatest goals the VCTA should have.

If Happy Hours fulfil such an important role in the life of a union, then it is important to thank, wholeheartedly, the members who make them successful events. These people are Janice Paquette, Jacqui Paull, Stephan Newbegging, and Guy Quinn. They have sacrificed time, effort, and thought with the hope that VCTA members, together with other members of the Vanier community, will meet, eat and drink, have a great time, and potentially discuss the morals that concern us all.



## HAPPY HOUR II : THE RETURN

Isn't it great to know that our Happy Hours for A06 have generally cost less than those of A05 and W06, while offering a unique and sometimes exotic flavour. Such cost efficiency is necessary for the kind of flexibility we desire to have for the VCTA, and it is especially timely after the concerns that were raised about running a deficit last year. Our first Happy Hour on 06 September cost \$1,852.24, while the second one on 26 October cost \$1,057.00, and the final one on 08 December cost \$1,480.82. But what has been truly exciting about these events is that the VCTA has raised a reasonable amount of money (\$387.40) for the Student Emergency Fund. These funds go to students who are in need of economic aid, and teachers who have contributed to this fund should be applauded. There are hardly more noble tasks in life than to help young students who are truly in need. The return, therefore, seems to be twofold: we are giving and saving simultaneously.

### FAC CRT Position

FAC is presently accepting nominations (until 9am March 6) for a CRT position. Anyone interested in this position can come to get further details in the VCTA office.



# Let's Do Lunch

## Stephen Block



One of the ideas which emerged from our "syndical practices" meeting last year was that the union executive should look to ways of opening up discussions on what precisely the union ought to be doing for its members and how it ought to be conducting itself. The meeting arose from concerns from various corners that the union leadership was too inward looking, or that those in the know used fancy terms and phrases

(including 'syndical practices'?) that left members far from feeling included. Others expressed concern as to whether those with union leadership aspirations or actual positions were sufficiently fighting for and upholding members' rights. But the consensus was that something had to be done to lessen the feelings of alienation among members. And so the idea was cooked up to initiate brown bag lunches, the first of which was held last term.

It was gently pointed out at that meeting, by a faculty member, that although the idea of brown bag lunches very much appealed to him, perhaps he found items on the menu less appetizing, perhaps a little too dry and lacking zest and flavour. So we decided to try again. This term we are organizing a series of such munches, at least one of which is to have an open forum, that is a forum open to new ideas and suggestions, and we will be supplying the food. The first meeting, on February 7<sup>th</sup>, will be another kick at the can at explaining to teachers how to calculate their own CI's. We seem to be able to finally make, what always seemed a closely guarded secret, available to all and easy to do.

Another suggestion was that we have a noontime meeting to discuss insurance questions and this is being looked into. We are also trying to organize an RRSP seminar in mid February. But what we would prefer is not to allow another year to pass without having teachers run one of these meetings raising their own concerns. So we are soliciting input and suggestions. It should always be understood that sometimes, regardless of the topic, incidental information comes out in discussions which would be helpful especially to new teachers, but that is not the same as their being able to express their own concerns.

So here's hoping to see you at one of our lunches and that when we organize our open forum you will all feel comfortable expressing your interests and concerns.

Happy Hour  
February 22<sup>nd</sup>  
4:30pm

# Oaxaca Teacher in Struggle

## Janice Paquette

In the VCTA office we recently received an email from FAC about the Oaxaca teachers and their struggle, which has become the struggle of the whole community. In May, 2006, striking teachers set up camp in the centre of Oaxaca, the state capital of the area in South West Mexico, to support their demands for a pay raise and to get material and financial support for education. The teachers, who make about \$220 every two weeks, are expected to buy chalk, pencils and other school supplies from their salary. They had been on strike once but had gone back to school to finish the 2005-2006 school year out of concern for their students. They figured that occupying the centre of Oaxaca would finally get the attention of the governor of their state. Unfortunately the attention that they got was an attempt at violent repression. However, the repression did not stop the teachers who were soon joined by many other groups in the area to form the Popular Assembly of Oaxaca and the strike turned into a popular movement which eventually demanded the resignation of the governor. The response from the state government has continued to be very violent. Many people, including a university teacher, the husband of a teacher and a New York journalist have been killed by government forces and hundreds people have been arrested and jailed.

In December, the CSQ (Centrale des syndicats du Quebec) and FNEEQ (the federation with 31 CEGEP teachers' unions) sent a delegation to join a group of international teachers unions who went to Oaxaca to show solidarity with the teachers of Oaxaca. In January some teachers from Oaxaca came to Montreal and talked about their struggle. Perhaps the VCTA could show some solidarity with them also? Should we send a donation to help them continue the struggle? What do you think? Perhaps we should also ask FAC to get involved?

You won't find a lot of information on this strike in the main-line media but it is well covered on-line at the following sources:

[www.zmag.org](http://www.zmag.org) (click on znet and go to Latin America.

[www.rabble.ca](http://www.rabble.ca) news, Jan 2, 2007 letter reprinted from Dec.1, 2006, from Emilie Smith, a Canadian Anglican priest in Oaxaca

While I was looking for more information on this strike, I happened on an American on-line journal called "Rethinking Schools". You can find information on the strike in Oaxaca in their Winter, 2006 issue. Earlier issues look at the role of teachers/unions and lots of other interesting stuff. [www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org).



Thank you to all of you who participated in the Quilt Raffle in aid of the Students Emergency Fund. \$640.00 was collected.

We would also like to thank Doreen Hamel, Nora Soukiassian and Barb Armstrong for all their help. And of course, a thank you to the VCTA for supplying the fabric, batting and thread.

The very happy winner of the quilt is Silke Lach, History teacher.

Susan Panneton & Rita Christie

### ATTENTION NEW TEACHERS!!!!!!!!!!

You must get the official information to assess your education level (scolarity) into Human Resources as quickly as possible. Your pay will ONLY be adjusted retroactively from the date that the information was received if you miss the 30 day deadline. Human Resources assesses scolarity very conservatively. For example, they assess an M.A. from Ontario as Level 16 until they get the official transcripts!

### CAPDHHE CONFERENCE

April 10-13, 2007-02-12  
Vancouver, B.C.

The VCTA pays to send one delegate to this conference on the prevention of discrimination and harassment in higher education. Please give your name to Susan in the VCTA office if you wish to put your name forward. More than one person could go if both use their P.D. money.

# The Circle of Life

**Su Yi**

October 26th, Montreal  
Revised January 11, 2007

**Shall we say that life presents many challenges.**

**Our willingness to overcome them,  
making the best of our lot  
is what life is about  
as we are only human.**

**Our happiness does not need to be grounded in good  
health nor in  
good fortune  
but in our blessings  
and the way we live our life;  
enfolded in friendship  
and embraced by our love ones  
as we give and take  
in a society we cherish.**

**There are no truly ever-green pine trees  
except in the literary world.**

**We follow the natural course of birth and death;  
learning to live our life  
without any cravings for explanations  
nor self-blame.**

**I was not born quite perfect.  
Nevertheless I was bestowed  
many beautiful things  
envied by many.**

**My mother showed me what kindness is  
and my father showed me perseverance.**

**I do have my share of an intriguing life  
with many colours,  
two charming children,  
and many caring friends.  
I shall patiently walk this journey  
with faith,  
in compliance,  
and with inner strength.**

**Let the sun keep our soul enlightened.**

**Let our native humanitarian fellowship  
join the greater universe  
in this circle of life.**

*Su Yi teaches sociology and methodology courses at Vanier College. She would like to thank all her mentors for their comments and encouragement. She also would like to thank Guillame for the wonderful Christmas gift, her first book on poetry writing. How could she not be a proud mom?*

## Déclaration de la Coalition-Cégep

Le sous-financement a assez duré ;  
investissons dans le réseau des cégeps  
Parce que l'éducation n'est pas un privilège mais un droit et qu'à ce titre, l'État se doit de tout mettre en œuvre pour promouvoir l'enseignement supérieur ;  
parce que le réseau des cégeps joue un rôle essentiel dans la concrétisation d'idéaux telles l'universalité, la gratuité et l'accessibilité à l'enseignement supérieur, et que ces idéaux sont l'objet d'un vaste consensus maintes fois exprimé par la population québécoise ;  
parce que le fait que les cégeps soient organisés en réseau permet d'assurer une qualité équivalente de formation polyvalente et transférable sur tout le territoire ;  
parce que la qualité de la formation des étudiantes et des étudiants de cégep, largement reconnue tant par les employeurs que par les universités, est menacée par le sous-financement ;  
parce que le réseau des cégeps participe pleinement, et de manière significative, au développement social, culturel et économique du Québec en formant des citoyennes et des citoyens outillés pour bâtir une meilleure société ;  
parce que le réseau des cégeps contribue au développement d'une société démocratique, dynamique, ouverte et capable de faire face aux nombreux défis contemporains ;  
parce que le réseau des cégeps souffre depuis trop longtemps d'un sous-financement chronique qui menace sa mission et la survie de plusieurs établissements ;  
parce que le sous-financement accentue la concurrence entre les cégeps, les éloignant de leur mission première ;  
parce que le financement actuel du réseau des cégeps est inéquitable et accentue le clivage entre les régions, où les cégeps constituent un pôle de développement irremplaçable ;  
parce que le sous-financement favorise le financement privé du réseau des cégeps, introduisant une ingérence indue dans la gestion des programmes ;

*nous, membres de la Coalition-Cégeps, réclamons :*  
que le gouvernement québécois s'engage à réinvestir dans le réseau des cégeps à la hauteur de ses besoins réels afin de permettre son plein développement ;  
que ce réinvestissement garantisse pleinement le financement du réseau, favorisant la coopération entre les cégeps et mettant ainsi fin à la concurrence entre eux ;  
que ce réinvestissement public assure le plein financement de toutes les activités d'enseignement et activités complémentaires à l'enseignement, ainsi que la gratuité scolaire ;  
que ce réinvestissement public permette le développement du réseau des cégeps dans toute son intégrité en fonction des besoins des étudiantes et des étudiants, incluant les besoins d'encadrement particuliers ainsi que ceux de la société québécoise, en valorisant l'éducation citoyenne ;  
qu'au-delà des mesures ponctuelles, ce réinvestissement assure prioritairement un renforcement durable des services directs offerts aux étudiantes et aux étudiants, par l'ajout de personnel professionnel et de soutien ainsi que d'enseignantes et d'enseignants ;  
que ce réinvestissement garantisse le maintien intégral de la formation générale, le développement et l'accès à des programmes nationaux diversifiés sur tout le territoire, et plus particulièrement pour les cégeps de régions éloignées des grands centres urbains, afin de permettre le maintien de la qualité de l'enseignement et des services.

# Syndical Practices

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At the "Syndical Practices" meeting in June 2006 there were a number of suggestions made to improve the functioning of the VCTA. Some of these have been implemented by the Executive in our first semester.

1. The Executive is now sending out our minutes and Association Council minutes to the Association Council and Academic Council faculty members in a more timely fashion.
2. We have made sure that there are microphones for General Assemblies, as well as visual presentations to help people understand the agenda items.
3. The Executive has made a real effort to be available to the membership with regular office hours in the VCTA office.
4. We have instituted some "brown bag lunches" in the Wednesday free period. The latest one, on February 7<sup>th</sup>, deals with CI/workload calculations, especially aimed at non-tenured teachers and coordinators.
5. The Executive is planning a "tourn ee" or visit to all departments early in the new semester, hopefully via regular department meetings.
6. The VCTA web page is currently "in production" and should be up and running soon.
7. Before the term started, we had meetings with the Academic Dean to discuss the functioning of Joint Coordinators and Academic Council meetings.
8. We have tried to send out more regular information to the membership both in news bulletins and the newsletter.
9. We are trying to have pre-Academic Council meetings when necessary. This point was discussed at a joint meeting of Academic Council/Association Council on January 18, 2007.
10. We have reports ready before meetings and are working to have Reports and Announcements available in advance so that we don't spend too much time on these items during meetings.
11. We have made an effort to waste less food at the General Assemblies by ordering food differently.
12. We try to hold more effective orientation meetings to get more new faculty involved in the union but need to do a lot more work.

On the other hand, there are some suggestions that we have not managed successfully yet but will continue to work on in the second term.

1. We haven't succeeded in getting more people out to the General Assemblies.
2. We don't yet have Association Council minutes on line or in the newsletter so that members are aware of what is being discussed at Association Council on a regular basis.
3. We would like to develop a handbook/information guide for teachers about unions.
4. We would like to see union issues put on the agenda of Joints and the department meetings.
5. We urgently need more women involved in the union structures and coming to the General Assemblies.
6. We need to work on having more effective chairing in our meetings.
7. We should try to get Joints and Academic Council to put their minutes and agendas on line at least 5 days in advance of their meetings.

8. Discussing a constitutional amendment that before anyone becomes an executive member of the VCTA that they serve on Association Council was suggested at the meeting.
9. Getting one of the "eminence gris" of the VCTA to write an article for the newsletter talking about why the VCTA is important was another suggestion that has not been carried out.

What improvements do you think are necessary to make the VCTA more effective for teachers? Send any suggestions to the VCTA office.

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## The Forgotten and Unforgettable Peoples

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Su Yi

Revised 18 January, 2007

**I shall never forget those familiar faces  
to whom we have not been introduced**

**the passers-by dressed  
colourfully, authentically,  
conservatively, eccentrically;  
wig-wagging, cat-walking,  
dragging, nagging,  
chatting, yapping,  
pausing, divulging,  
dancing, bouncing;**

**the people who serve us daily  
proudly, passionately,  
politely, pleasantly,  
patiently, painstakingly,  
playfully, philanthropically;**

**like the hair dressers who make us look  
affluent, and groomed,  
astral and cosmic,  
sharp and bumptious,  
styled and combed;**

**like the waiters and waitresses  
who gladly offer us  
extra cups of tea and coffee;**

**and like memories we carry with us of our family  
members and friends  
that give us most of our anxieties,  
unforgettable moments and  
the reaffirmation of love.**

**Cheers**

**to our world of forgotten and unforgettable peoples!  
It's time for Happy Valentines.**