

Vanier College Teachers' Association

# NEWSLETTER

Vol 25 N°6  
APR. 2008

## May 1: International Workers' Day

Come and join us for a coffee and bagel to celebrate May Day in the VCTA office (C101) and in the Staff Lounge in the N-Building (N 127)



**2008**  
**FÊTE INTERNATIONALE  
DES TRAVAILLEUSES  
ET DES TRAVAILLEURS**

**ENSEMBLE  
POUR LA SANTÉ**

**GRANDE MARCHE  
À MONTRÉAL**  
SAMEDI, 3 MAI 2008  
RASSEMBLEMENT À 12 H  
PARC LA FONTAINE



May Day! March with us on Saturday, May 3



**V.C.T.A.**

VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

## Non-tenured teachers: ALERT

Please check out the continuing education postings for next year. They will be on the Vanier website on May 5 and you must apply for each posting that interests you using the posting number by May 16. Please remember that you **MUST APPLY** for cont ed courses separately. The **GOS** only covers day courses. And do not forget that the **GOS (General Offer of Service)** must be submitted by April 30. If you want hiring priority, you must submit this form **AND** respond to continuing education postings before the end of the posting.

**The VCTA Association Council joins CUPE and Reverend Desmond Tutu in congratulating the Durban, South Africa dock workers union for refusing to unload a shipment of arms destined for Zimbabwe.**

### Deadline for Submissions to the next issue is August 11, 2008

Send contributions to Janice Paquette: [paquettj@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:paquettj@vaniercollege.qc.ca)

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#### VCTA Executive 2007-2008

President: Ganesh Harilal

Vice-President/Info: Janice Paquette

Vice-President/External: Eric Durling

Secretary/Treasurer: Stephen Block

VCTA Secretary: Susan Panneton

#### Executive Office Hours W08:

Mon.	Eric Durling 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Tues.	Ganesh Harilal 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Wed.	Janice Paquette 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Thurs.	Stephen Block 9:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Friday	Stephen, Eric or Ganesh 10:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

#### Secretary's hours

Susan Panneton

8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

Monday to Friday

Closed for lunch from

Noon – 1:00 P.M. (approximately)

#### Zatoun Olive Oil

Available from Neil Caplan,

**Local 7152**

# FAC Report

## Ad Hoc Negotiations

### Eric Durling

In the last few weeks, there have been developments at FAC, our union federation, of which the VCTA Executive would like to keep you informed. The first of these concerns is about the ad hoc negotiation file. As we have mentioned in previous communications, these extraordinary negotiations have attempted to put the 2% salary increases that we receive for each of the last three years of this contract (2005-2010) in line with those of the other two federations representing college teachers in Quebec. We receive our increases later than our colleagues at FNEEQ-CSN and FEC-CSQ, apparently a consequence of FAC's rejection of the agreement in principle, offered after the government made a law to end negotiations in 2005. One of the reasons that the VCTA voted to reject the agreement was the elimination of certain advantages offered to some of our teachers who teach Continuing Education DEC courses (cont ed courses with at least 60% of students working toward their DEC)

In the autumn of 2007, the General Assemblies of FAC colleges voted to give a negotiation mandate to FAC with the purpose of achieving salary parity with the two other federations. Although the mandate did not include any discussion of Continuing Education DEC courses, it soon became clear that the employer's negotiators considered this to be a necessary part of any discussion of salary parity. For this reason, the representatives of FAC's local unions voted to end the ad hoc negotiation process in December. However, since then, the FAC Executive has come to feel that, for the purposes of addressing unrest on the part of some of its member unions and to bring us into harmony with the two other federations before the beginning of the next negotiation round, this issue must be resolved as soon as possible. At the most recent

Federative Assembly of March of this year, the representatives of FAC's local unions voted to do an analysis of Continuing Education DEC courses in our federation with the possibility of re-opening the ad hoc negotiations in May (The Vanier delegation voted against this motion). The results of this analysis, though not exhaustive, were presented to representatives of the member unions on April 18th, who voted to enter into exploratory discussions with the employer's negotiators on this issue (the Vanier delegate abstained). Vanier appears to receive a bit more than eight full-time equivalent workloads for the Continuing Education DEC courses. We will see what comes out of the initial discussions and whether or not the ad hoc negotiations are re-opened.

### Lionel Groulx

Another recent development involves one of FAC's member unions, College Lionel-Groulx in Ste. Therese. Some of you may recall that, in the spring of 2006, a motion to disaffiliate from FAC was narrowly defeated at this college by a vote of 120 to 109. This vote was a result, in part, of the dissatisfaction on the part of some members with FAC's refusal of the agreement in principle when negotiations were ended in December of 2005. At that time, the union executive of Lionel-Groulx worked very hard to convince its members to remain with FAC. Recently, however, the same Executive has initiated a process to question the internal functioning of FAC as well as its political orientations. This process has led to another disaffiliation vote which will be held in the near future. The VCTA Executive is very concerned by this development and with the implications it could have for the future of our federation. We will keep you informed as this situation evolves.

**Eric Durling** teaches English at Vanier and is the VCTA rep at Fac.

## Gifts of Magic

### Lyne Marie Larocque

The Department of Social and Cultural Sciences (DSCS) in the Faculty of Social Science, Commerce, Arts and Letters is concerned with the plight of less privileged people and their access to education.

For the past two years, the DSCS has collected money from its teacher members to purchase Gifts of Magic (see below) through UNICEF.

- In 2007, we collected \$250 with which we bought a School-in-a-Box.

- In 2008, we collected \$165 for the purchase of three Gifts of Education: Exercise Books and one Gift of Education: Send a Child to School.

We intend to make such contributions on an annual basis, and we are eager to encourage other departments to follow our lead. Special thanks to colleagues in the following disciplines for their contributions: Anthropology, Geography, History, Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Sociology.

Here are brief descriptions of the Gifts of Magic:

- The School-in-a-Box has become part of the UNICEF standard response in emergencies, used in many back-to-school operations around the world. The kit contains supplies and materials for a teacher and up to 80 students. It has basic school supplies, such as exercise books, pencils, erasers and scissors and a set of three laminated posters (alphabet, multiplication and number tables). The kit is supplied in a locked aluminum box, the lid of which can double as a blackboard when coated with the special paint included in the kit. The contents of the kit are culturally neutral, can be used anywhere in the world, and are often supplemented by locally purchased products. Learn more about the School-in-a-Box at [http://www.unicef.org/supply/kits\\_flash/schoolinabox/](http://www.unicef.org/supply/kits_flash/schoolinabox/)
- The Gift of Education: Exercise Books will change the life of each child in that classroom as education prepares children for the future. These gifts provide exercise books for an entire classroom for the whole year.
- The Gift of Education: Send a Child to School will provide a child's books, school supplies and even pay for part of the teacher's salary.

# Unity in Diversity

Unity in Diversity (UID), the new group for students interested in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues, has come out of the closet! On April 25, in collaboration with the Open Door Network, The Vanier Social Justice Committee and the Women's



Studies Department, they hosted a Day of Silence to take action against the silence surrounding LGBT issues and bullying based on homophobia and transphobia. On Wednesday, April 23, people wishing to take a vow of silence were given a card to show to people to explain their silence on April 25. Then on Friday, the silence was broken at 11:00 AM in Jake's Mall. People were invited to bring noisemakers! Unity in Diversity encouraged all members of the Vanier community to participate to the extent that it would not interfere with their work.

For more information about this group, contact them at [unity.in.diversity@live.com](mailto:unity.in.diversity@live.com) or at local 7272.

## Journée internationale contre l'homophobie May 17, 2008.

*(taken from a longer letter from the Table nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie du réseau collégial)*

In March 2007, the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ) made public a consultation report of the Groupe de travail mixte contre l'homophobie: De l'égalité juridique à l'égalité sociale... vers une stratégie nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie. This report described the real experiences of sexual minorities in various sectors, notably in education, health and social services, families, immigration and ethnic communities. The report also validated data related to the manifestations and impacts of homophobia, as well as difficulties encountered by sexual minorities and homoparental families.

Those at the local level who are in charge of student affairs and human resources, student and parent groups and local unions are invited to participate in actions designed to combat homophobic attitudes and behaviors. At a time when the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse is encouraging public agencies to come up with strategies and plans of action, both supported by official Quebec policy to combat homophobia, those active in the college sector are opting for more and more concerted actions to counter homophobia.

There is actually a research project presently being undertaken in 26 colleges in the public sector, under the supervision of researcher Line Chamberland. The theme of the research is « L'impact de l'homophobie sur la persévérance et la réussite scolaires ».

The Fondation Émergence produces and distributes publicity materials (posters and pamphlets) related to the 2008 campaign. The theme for 2008 is: L'homosexualité n'est pas une maladie. This material will be available in mid-March 2008 in the student affairs office of your establishment. Considering how much they cost to produce, you should really maximize your use of these materials.

Additional materials may be obtained free of charge from the Fondation Émergence at (514) 866-6788 or [courrier@fondationemergence.org](mailto:courrier@fondationemergence.org).

Members of the Table nationale have contacted every Board of Governors' Chairperson and Director General requesting that each college adopt a declaration denouncing homophobic acts and expressing their intention to take appropriate measures to prevent homophobia.

There are a good number of publications and audiovisual resources on this topic. We suggest that you establish and maintain a documentation centre on sexual diversity in the library or in a resource centre. You will also find the following documents in the materials accompanying this communiqué:

- **Jeu-questionnaire;**
- **List of French documentation,** pedagogical and training guides, videos/DVDs, plays, research and legal opinions;
- **List of English pedagogical tools,** pedagogical guides, and videos/DVDs.

The Internet sites of the Fondation Émergence ([www.homophobie.org](http://www.homophobie.org)) and the Centrale des syndicats du Québec ([www.csq.qc.net](http://www.csq.qc.net)) now have many directories and publications.

In conclusion, we think that any action you may initiate in your college would represent an interesting educational and citizenship experience, especially considering the age of the young Quebecers who attend our colleges.

Thank you for facilitating this major effort towards acceptance of diversity in our society. Have a great campaign!

**Jacques Pétrin**, on behalf of the members of the Table nationale

The Table nationale de lutte à l'homophobie du réseau collégial is composed of:

- the Fédération des cégeps,
- the ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS),
- the Fédération des Associations de Parents des Cégeps du Québec (FAP),
- the Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ),
- the Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante (ASSÉ),
- the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) and its constituent bodies, the Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de cégeps (FEC), the Fédération du personnel professionnel des collèges (FPPC), the Fédération du personnel de soutien de l'enseignement supérieur (FPSES),
- the Fédération autonome du collégial (FAC),
- the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) and its constituent bodies, the Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ), the cégep sector of the Fédération des employées et employés du secteur public (FEESP).

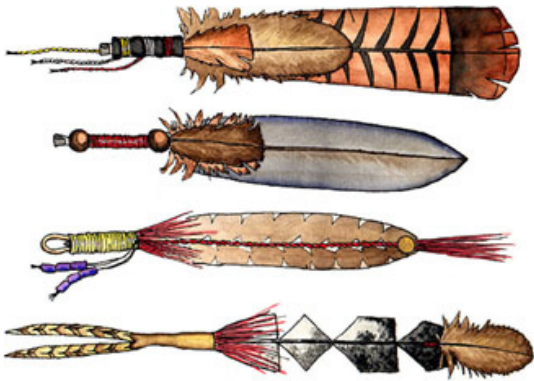


# Promising Futures:

## A Native Women's Panel

Kim Matthews

*Women's Studies, in collaboration with Vanier College's Native Awareness Group, hosted "Promising Futures: A Native Women's Panel" as part of International Women's Week 2008.*



Three Native Canadian women of various backgrounds, including Vanier students Pricilla Gilpin from Chisasibi, Quebec and Katsitsahawi Ashley Thomas from Kahnawake, and former Vanier student Tina Pisuktie discussed how their life choices

are geared towards the continued improvement of their communities. Their shared link to Vanier helped to make the talk particularly meaningful to the audience.

**Pricilla Gilpin** from Chisasibi is a Cree woman. She was raised by her grandparents in the bush, where she learned to love her culture and way of life. Pricilla is one of the few in her generation who is fluent in the Cree language. Many youth "do not know who they are", in part she thinks, because they are not interested in their culture. As a teenage mother, she has faced many challenges while pursuing her education. She took a three-year hiatus to raise her son and to work for the Band Council as the editor of the local Chisasibi newspaper. In this capacity, she focussed on health issues and found that humour is an excellent way to encourage healing. As a teenage mom, she recognised that the community needed more sex education, despite the fact that sex education is taboo in her region and a topic seldom discussed, especially between parents and children. She is presently negotiating with the education committee in her community in an attempt to get Sex Education included in the school curriculum. As a member of a woman's group, she organised workshops on birth control but then realised that she wanted to do even more for her community. Her goal is to become one of the first Native psychologists in her community. She came to Montreal to pursue her studies. She credits Vanier teachers for inspiring her along the way, helping her to believe that she can achieve this dream.

**Katsitsahawi Ashley Thomas** from Kahnawake has a goal to teach Mohawk in her community. This is a calling she shares with many of her family members who have taught Mohawk through the years. To this end, she is currently a Social Science Major specialising in Early Childhood Education here at Vanier College. Many teachers are retiring so she knows there will be a need for her services once she is done. She has chosen this path since keeping the language alive is essential

to maintaining Mohawk culture and traditions. "Children need to **live** the language," Katsitsahawi explained to the audience. Most parents do not speak Mohawk; this leaves only the elders to pass the traditions and language along to youth. She turns to her grandparents to speak Mohawk, and intends to be a bearer of the language in her community. She also notes that land and housing are an issue. There simply is not enough housing for everyone. There is overcrowding. In fact, she is now living in a nearby town rather than in Kahnawake as a result. Katsitsahawi faces ignorance about her Mohawk identity on occasion, a state of affairs she attributes to a lack of Aboriginal issues in the curriculum. She does her best to clarify matters when these events occur, but hopes that one day this will no longer be necessary. Meanwhile, she is continuing her studies with a view to majoring in Early Childhood Education at Concordia University.

**Tina Pisuktie**, an Inuit woman born in Montreal, is currently completing her degree in Community Development and Policy Studies at Concordia University. She is very active at the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal, serving as the Secretary on the Board of Directors. Tina works with the homeless, those at risk of becoming itinerant, and youth in the form of outreach and prevention. Through this work, she came to the decision not to emphasize her qualifications when meeting people. She believes that we learn from everyone we meet and that informal education is just as important as the formal. Tina thinks that a promising future depends in part on coming to terms with the past. Due to difficult conditions, she could not see a future when she was growing up. She is now in an excellent position to empower others who may feel this way. She strongly believes that it is essential to seek guidance from the elders in order to work to improve the conditions for the indigenous population. Her choice of studies at Concordia University is a reflection of her goal to change the current system rather than helping people to deal with the system as it currently stands. Her parting remark to the auditorium: "What you give back to society will come back to you" garnered a round of applause. She is a testament to this reflection.

These three women overcame many obstacles in their lives. All are powerful agents of change; their willingness to share their experiences with the Vanier community, and the eloquent and passionate way they communicated their ideas will have a lasting effect on our students. Indeed, Pricilla's parting remark: "Baby steps can take you far" elicited a big round of applause. Judging from their accomplishments, this group of women will continue to be excellent role models, building the future along the way.

Kim Matthews teaches Humanities at Vanier.

# The Sweetest Thing

## Alexandra Abrol

I learned more about myself on my eighteen day trip to Malawi than I have in the last eighteen years. As a student whose passion is African culture and history, I went to Africa with a number of expectations. My acquired knowledge of the continent served as a crucial grounding tool. However, no textbook, teacher, or transcript could have prepared me for what I saw in Malawi those two weeks in January.



Alexandra and friends at a school in Malawi.

On a more serious note, the last place I ever imagined to meet the most pleasant people in the world was in this poor village in Malawi. Above all, this occurrence was the most unforeseen because in all honesty, swollen-bellied children and intense grief were highly anticipated. Fueled by contemporary stereotypes, we often develop similar prejudices which severely distort reality. Therefore, we must, especially when leaving our nest, become informed and aware of the veritable situation because contrary to what many believe, ignorance is not bliss; it is a weapon. To further explain this, I will use the concept of solidarity over charity. Over the course of time, assisting those in need has been linked to the idea of charity. However, from the moment we set foot on African soil to the moment we headed back to the Occident, we recognized the need to promote solidarity. Despite prevalent opinions, the cargo culture mentality is unfavorable to the destitute. Simply sending resources is insufficient for it only leads to more requests and opposes self-sufficiency. As an alternative, we must get to the root causes of poverty, political corruption, and underdevelopment. We must pressure governments to ensure that employment is provided to all citizens and that community services become more accessible. In this way, long-term solutions can be adopted. Nevertheless, we must also stay involved upon our return in order to defy the customary definition of international relations as the mere interaction between the rich and poor. We need to tear down the walls alienating the people in need and replace them by bridges, thus connecting peoples on either side of the ocean. Individuals who can relate to one another must come together and work as one. If we can do that, then we can declare ourselves to be moving in the right direction.

I went to Malawi presuming it would change my life. Immediately on my return, after seeing a porcelain toilet bowl, my hypothesis proved to be correct. Back in Montreal, I found myself longing for discomfort, as strange as it may sound. I felt as though I could no longer relate to those around me and I constantly wanted to be left

alone. I needed space to process what I had gone through. After much contemplation, I decided that isolating myself from others was not a great idea (that was a tough decision to make!). Instead, I needed to find persons who had acquired comparable knowledge. So here I am, several weeks after our arrival, and I'm finally settled in. Surrounded by people who share my interests and are determined to make a difference, there are no longer negative influences in my life and I am proud to announce I accomplished that goal all by myself!

To end, I'd like to propose a challenge to my fellow Canadian youths, to be precise. Might I be so bold as to remind you just how significant of an effect our present-day actions will have on future generations? May I also reiterate that our parents and grandparents have something to be extremely proud of – the fact that we are all here living freely? Then I need not emphasize how vital our contribution to this planet will be. Regardless of what we do (or fail to do), the future will be shaped by our hands. This is our duty and we cannot ignore the responsibilities that are associated with it. In my opinion, we must first spread awareness about certain global issues such as HIV/AIDS. Then, we must provide information to those who are unable to access it. Finally, we must contribute to the cause by volunteering and focusing our energy on the gravest issues. In addition, we can critically advocate a positive message to our surrounding communities. Although, the most important ingredient in the recipe for change is of course love because "Ain't love the sweetest thing"?

The International Education Office would like to congratulate **Alexandra Abrol** and her team for organising the 'Foundations Festival' - a fundraiser that took place on Saturday March 29th. Funds raised are going directly to support Vanier's WUSC Local Chapter Committee's 'Bike for AIDS' initiative. Activities during the evening included songs and poems about HIV/AIDS and the situation in sub-Saharan Africa. Art by various local artists was also displayed and the proceeds of the sales went towards the cause. A grand total of \$3,000 was raised for the initiative - a huge success and accomplishment. Congratulations once again to the team and thank you to all Vanier members who supported the event!

**Sonali Srivastava**  
International Education Officer

# The Vanier College Retirees Association (VCRA)

The VCRA is Vanier's "official" retirees association, welcoming members from all the different segments of the college. Our annual membership fee is \$20, part of which goes to the Student Emergency Fund. The membership fee also entitles retirees to free parking on college grounds, a reduction in the price of tickets to the annual Retirement Dinner, and participation in college events such as Ped Day, Happy Hour and other events (cultural, sports, use of the fitness room, swimming and so on).

The forerunner of the current VCRA started about 1995, right around the time that Keith Barrett retired. Pat Tedford and Hanns Wernecke had set the ball rolling in arranging the first Vanier retirement party so that Keith would retire in style. Well, it wasn't so much in style -- the party took place on campus -- but it was the first formal college-wide retirement party, and everybody seemed to have a good time, although it was a bit crowded.

Shortly afterwards, a few of us early retired and semi-retired teachers started meeting informally so that we would keep in touch with each other. The people that come to mind of that early group included Keith Barrett, Harvey Berger, Kathy Kaiser, Arnie Greenberg, Luisa and David Stephen, Brenda Pinsky and Margaret Rose; there may have been others, but Kathy and I could not think of any more. We met occasionally to share a restaurant meal and to pass on any information we had about Vanier and mutual acquaintances.

Then came the insurance crunch that prompted Martin Byers to organize the retired teachers into the Vanier College Retired Teachers Association (VCRTA) so that we would have a collective voice with the VCTA and FAC, and hence influence government policies concerning retired teachers. Martin recalls that the immediate cause was the government's push in 2000 to reorganize the medical insurance system so that everybody in Quebec would be covered. Many unions decided to consult their retired members and eventually got them coverage that was similar to that which they had when they were active members. Not so FAC, which apparently decided not to cover retirees as before, making the decision without even consulting their active members.\*

That galvanized Martin to formally establish the VCRTA (with the generous financial assistance of the VCTA in the early years); he also kept in touch with the Dawson Teachers' Association and their retirees group, which was established at the same time. Through the VCTA, the retirees concerns were brought up at FAC, which then took a more proactive stance. For example, one summer Desjardins wanted all retirees to sign up for a new version of the insurance policy with an unreasonable deadline for signing. Many of our retirees would have been out of town until after the deadline, so Martin approached the VCTA (Hodé Erdogan was the president at the time) which worked through FAC to have the signing deadline extended to a more reasonable date; otherwise a number of our members would have found themselves without health insurance coverage.

Another issue that went through the VCRTA and the VCTA was locating retirees who were entitled to the government settlement of the illegal salary deductions during a strike in the '80's, a settlement that the government had fought tooth and nail against for over twenty years. These events show that it is in the interest of the VCRA to keep close contacts with the VCTA, not only for the sake of the present retirees, but also with the view that many of the currently active VCTA members will be retiring soon, and the more the VCTA executive is

aware of potential issues, the better the current and future retirees can face future problems.

Although the VCRA was formally founded as a retired teachers association (VCRTA) for former active members of the VCTA, it became clear as time went on that the other unions were too small to have their own viable retirees organizations. So there was a drive from within the VCRTA to admit all Vanier retirees with the eventual result that the name was changed to VCRA (Vanier College Retirees Association); we even have a couple of members who did not retire from Vanier but happen to live in Montreal and needed a "home" among people who shared similar careers.

Over the years the VCRA has developed a program to encourage social interaction among the members by arranging lunches, outings and other activities. There are efforts under way to establish a mutual support network (for members who are temporarily in hospital or housebound for whatever reason), and we are always looking for ideas on how we can make the VCRA more inclusive and more attractive. Our membership is currently around 90, which represents less than half the "Vanierites" who have retired. Of course, some retirees no longer live in the Montreal area, and others seem to be eager to cut all ties with the college, for whatever reasons.

If you expect to retire soon we would like to encourage you to get further information about the VCRA and its activities from the executive:

**Sally Cooper** (president) [salcooper@videotron.ca](mailto:salcooper@videotron.ca)  
**Donna Moffatt** (vice-president) [donnamoffatt@aol.com](mailto:donnamoffatt@aol.com)  
**Ilseore Jeremie** (secretary-treasurer) [jeremhi@sympatico.ca](mailto:jeremhi@sympatico.ca)

We hope that you'll join and that we will see you frequently.

## Vanier College Retirees Association

\*Note from the editor. Not everyone has the same interpretation of this matter.



Earth Day display in the F-wing Carrefour.



# Congratulations: Art, Media & Theatre

Congratulations to the Faculty and Staff of the Communications Department for their 8th Annual Art Exhibition which was held April 15-April 25. Below are some of the works exhibited:



Claire Salsberg - Karl's Shoe Store - 1992 Ceramic Sculpture



Roger Guetta - Buying Back a Soul - Mixed Media 2008



Annie MacDonald. - Le Reve. - Etching 1976



Dale Kevin Robinson - Sweet Innocence  
Digitally Printed Photograph 2008



Burt Covit - Alliance Nebraska  
Photograph: digitally scanned colour print. 2007



Louise Drouin Robinson - "God give Me Strength".  
Mixed Media. 2008





**Ellen Cooper, Math teacher, visits the exhibition.**



**Alanna Stalker Horner**

Other artists exhibiting were:

**Keith Orkusz** - Minotaur Caressant une Dormeuse.  
Drawing: graphite on paper.2008

**Alanna Stalker Horner**  
- Seasons in the Sun. Pen and Ink on Paper. 2005  
-Memories, Dreams and Reflections.  
Drawing, Mixed Media 2008

**Afshin Matlabi** -The Sacred and the Devine  
Colour Crayon and Ink 2008

**Henry Lehmann** - Untitled  
Mixed Media 2008

# The Internet As We Know It?

## Hans Werneke

When we send or receive e-mails, go on a website, or make phone calls over the Internet, everybody has been treated the same so far. The messages are all transmitted with equal speed, with nobody given priority.

That may well change. There are efforts under way to make it possible to speed up some messages or slow down others. Ways may be introduced to pay for having your messages sped up (and perhaps other people's messages being slowed down).

The implications are far-reaching. Special interests could in effect restrict access to certain websites (say women's rights organizations or seniors' pressure groups) by slowing them down so much that most people would give up trying to access them.

In her keynote address at Vanier College's Ped Day on March 12, 2008, Professor Starke-Meyerring (McGill) mentioned that the same kinds of commercial interests that are against net neutrality are also against open-source programs. Open-source programs are usually free and often much better than commercial programs because they are developed collaboratively by many experts who volunteer their time.

The upshot is that the Internet as we know it is threatened by narrow commercial interests and we should all inform ourselves as to what is going on. Professor Starke-Meyerring suggested strongly that we visit [www.neutrality.ca](http://www.neutrality.ca) and, if we agree with the opinions expressed there, sign the online petition.

# Focus On Education:

## Study Trip to Malawi

*For Vanier teachers and other staff.*

*When: June 16-July 12*

*Makupo Village,  
Chilanga near Kasungu, Malawi*

This is a chance to live and learn in a village setting as part of the community based tours program of Makupa Development Group. The focus is to study the education system at the primary and secondary level and to develop support for local teachers and students.

Contact **Doug Miller**.

doug.miller.mtl@gmail.com  
514-744-4271



**Those darned coffee cups have escaped again from the VCTA office. If anyone sees one hiding in their office, could you please send them back to the VCTA office?**

### **Factuel: April 2008-04-25 The Discipline-Competency Duality**

Several people have mentioned that this edition of Factuel is a very interesting one for all Vanier teachers. Articles include *The Origins of the Competency-based Approach*, *When Change is a Step Backward: Threats to the teaching of literature at the college level* and *The Trojan Horse of the Utilitarian Paradigm*. We have a few copies left in the VCTA office (C101).

### **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)**

The employee assistance plan is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling Groupe Santé Physimed at (514) 231-5033 or 1-800-667-2683. Short-term counseling services are available to regular employees. Further consultations will be at your expense, but eligible expenses may be reimbursed by your group health insurance plan after the short-term action programs.

**VANIER BOARD REFUSES A MOTION TO  
"VALUE AND ENHANCE THE COLLEGE TEACHING PROFESSION".  
See next bulletin for details.**

**Reserve Wed. May 14 for an afternoon  
General Assembly and a Spring Happy Hour**