

VANIER COLLEGE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

Vol 23 N° 7
May 2006

Spring Special

Poetry Supplement

Selected Poems
from the

Poetry Slam
Mar. 1, 2006

THANKS

To all the contributors, VCTA Newsletter Vol 23
September '05 to May '06

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Danielle Brown • Kevin Bushell • Evangeline Caldwell • Neil Caplan • Alan Campbell • Eileen Chan •
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Sylvie Tardif • David Trautwein • John Tromp •
Nadia Turbide • Johnny Wisdom •
Cemal Yalinpala • Su Yi

**Special
Thanks to the
Guest Co-Editors**

Tricia Bell
Danielle Brown • Alan Campbell
Eric Lamoureux • Doug Miller



Dear Readers:



Shirley Pettifer
Editor

With this final issue of the *VCTA Newsletter* for this school year, I step down as Editor and happily pass the baton on to Janice Paquette, newly elected Vice-President (Information) to the VCTA Executive. I applaud the General Assembly decision to make information central to the tasks of one of our Vice-Presidents and I hope that the *VCTA Newsletter* will have a long and useful life as a result.

Two years ago when a group of us asked the General Assembly to vote for resources to revive the *VCTA Newsletter*, we argued that it could—as it had in the past—provide a forum for teachers, new and seasoned, to exchange views and debate issues; that in this period of great faculty turnover, it would acquaint new teachers with Vanier culture at the same time that it reflected the changes taking place in that culture; that it would provide an image of who we are and a sense of the syndical, pedagogical and social issues that matter to us collectively; that it would be a tool to build union solidarity and pride in who we are and in what we do best: teaching.

A tall order. If any of this has been accomplished, it is most certainly due to the enthusiastic readers and the many contributors—mainly teachers, some staff, some professionals and even the occasional administrator. While some became regular contributors, others proposed one article or a poem, some just succumbed to my incessant hounding, others gave support behind the scenes and still others agreed to sit in the Guest Co-Editor seat.

I was often overwhelmed by the generosity and enthusiasm I encountered along the way, and always, I was warmed by the way people grabbed up a new issue when it came hot off the press...and by how few copies I found in the recycle bin beside the mailboxes. (Yes, I have been checking...)

Readers and contributors: I thank you all. I wish you a speedy end to your marking, great gusts of imagination as you plan your courses for next semester, and a summer where the living is easy.

- Shirley

Deadline for Submissions to the next issue is August 21, 2006
Send contributions to Janice Paquette:
paquettj@vaniercollege.qc.ca

VCTA Office: C101
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Ray Shankman	Raanan Shankman
Kevin Bushell	Roger Guetta
Brian Lewellyn-ap-Dafydd	Marcia Goldberg
Devon Trautwein	

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VCTA Executive 2005-2006

President: Sylvie Tardif
Vice Presidents: Eric Durling
Secretary-Treasurer: Ian MacArthur

Executive Office Hours H06:

Mon.	Eric	8:00 - 9:45
	Sylvie	11:00 - 12:00
Tues.	Exec. Mtg.	9:45 - 12:00
	Eric	12:00 - 2:00
Wed.	Eric	8:00 - 9:45
	Sylvie	11:30 - 1:15
Thurs.	Sylvie	9:30 - 12:00
Fri.	Hode	9:30 - 12:00

NOTE: Ian MacArthur, Secretary-Treasurer is on sick leave. Alena Perout has resigned as Vice-President of the VCTA in order to apply for another position. Hode Erdogan, incoming President, will step in early and be in the VCTA Office on Friday mornings.

Office Assistants' Hours:

Ext. 7411
8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Closed for lunch 12:00-1:00

Susan Mon./Tues./Wed.
Pat Thursday/Friday



Technical assistance by **Jason Leonard**

Message from our Out-Going President

Sylvie Tardif



Sylvie in Quebec City, June 2004

First: Congratulations and best of luck to all the teachers elected for the 2006-07 academic year (VCTA Elections, April 2006).

Next year, and probably for a few years after that, union reconstruction will be important syndical work—that is, if we don't want our union to be remembered as architects of our own destruction.

Don't worry. I'm not leaving the VCTA Presidency on a negative note or with bitterness. That is just not my style! On the contrary, as a member of the VCTA Executive and as your representative at

FAC, the “ups” have far surpassed the “downs”. It has been an enriching learning experience. Over the past five years, locally and provincially, I have been surrounded by great people with a strong work ethic who have been completely dedicated to the interests of Cégep teachers and to the VCTA. I leave the VCTA Executive with few more grey hairs than when I first came in, in Sept. 2001 but each one is worth it!

Why do I say that we need to invest energy in rebuilding our Union? Well, I look at the number of teachers we had on the picket lines during our negotiations and at the low attendance at the General Assembly of Jan. 2006. With regard to that GA, I fully recognize that many of you saw that we were in an absurd position: to vote for a ridiculous Agreement in Principle (which provided no additional resources for real teaching and which was forced on our negotiators on Dec 15, 2005) or to vote to live with a decree imposed on us by our Employer-Legislator—the current government. That VCTA General Assembly was no different from others held by FAC local unions.

Also, there is division within FAC. As you all know, Cégep Valleyfield is no longer with us: they have joined FNEEQ-CSN. Cégep Lionel-Groulx will vote on disaffiliation on May 9, 2006.

At the March Federative Assembly of FAC, Cégep Andre-Laurendeau, Cégep Sorel-Tracy and Dawson College voiced some dissatisfaction with our federation and supported a motion mandating the FAC Executive to meet with the CPNC* and the Treasury Board regarding extending the Agreement in Principle, to be followed up with a consultation of local unions.

At the April CI of last week we learned that both the CPNC and the Treasury Board met with the FAC Executive but refused to discuss the expired Agreements in Principle. So if the recently disaffiliated Cégep Valleyfield is getting any resources associated with the Agreement in Principle, they are getting them from their new federation, FNEEQ-CSN—and not from the present government which refuses to reopen any sectorial or central table negotiations. This is the case for all unions in the public sector.

The negotiation demands generated locally at Vanier in 2001-2002 were:

- Salary increase with full indexation;
- Retroactive Pension Indexation (including retroactivity to all retirees);
- Gradual Retirement with eligibility age reduced from the current age of 65 to 60;
- No Actuarial Reduction after the retirement eligibility age of 55;
- Maintaining local agreements;
- Job security for teachers hired in Cont. Ed. and for those who teach in AEC programs;
- Better accounting of allocations for programs and related activities;
- Review of the parameters used to calculate teacher's CI (*Charge Individuel*, individual teacher workload).

Of all those demands, the only thing we got was to maintain local agreements!

Talking with teachers who were here in the 70's I found out that salary loss started in the negotiation of 1978-1979 and followed with a huge cutback of 20% during the 1983-1984 negotiations. Our salaries are not protected, are not indexed to the cost of living or the consumer price index. We will continue to lose buying power until year 2010. Not normal to say the least!

We need to start lobbying and demanding a provincial committee to protect the salaries of the public sector employees including teachers. We also need a comparative study of College teachers' salaries across the Canadian provinces and we need to present the results of such a study to the Ministry, the Treasury Board, the CPNC, the Fédé** and the public.

For those of you who are wondering about the famous **0-0-2-2-2-2%** salary decree, you can consult the table that appears on page 22. The first 2% will apply on December 1,

2006 and the final 2% on December 1, 2009. After 2010, a new bargaining session will commence.

My experience of the past 5 years tells me that we'll need to avoid making demands that appear to be a Christmas wish list of 300 demands. We probably need to elaborate 5 important fields containing about 10 demands each. To this we need to append an explanatory document complete with tables, schemes and numbers that support every one of our demands: a strategy that might get us a gain or two!

United we stand, divided we fall! In the large urban centres, student enrolment is up in the pre-U programs at the expense of some technology programs. In the Quebec regions, student enrolment figures are down across the board. This is attributed to industries closing down and people migrating to large cities and their nearby suburbs. In the regions, the MELS (Ministry for Education, Leisure and Sport) is consulting with the Regional Conferences of Elected Officers (CREs) where Cegeps have no representation. Without this representation the Cegeps can play no role in the future development of their regions.

The situation at Cegep de Gaspé is so bad, for example, that 11 programs will probably be closed in September 2006. It is crucial that they participate in these CREs. This is where the Cegep must play a role—develop their own expertise in connection with the new businesses, services or industries that could be attracted to the region—and hence participate in the future economic development of their area.

There has been some discussion of a larger Autonomous Federation regrouping more Cegep teachers and colleges. I say yes, let's discuss it—but let's be careful that we do not get lost in cumbersome democratic procedures that dilute the concerned voices of teachers.

When we look at the complexities that Cegeps and Cegep teachers are dealing with, one might well agree that the last thing we need to do is to create more contractual obligations for ourselves. So, regarding Entente #12, which is how we now refer to the famous 173 Hours, the VCTA Executive is working closely with Association Council and its subcommittee to reach an acceptable implementation framework that will be advantageous to both the VCTA and the Administration. Stay tuned for news and guidelines which you will receive in the next 2 weeks.

In the semesters ahead, we need to set priorities and concentrate our energies on our primary goal: Cegep Teaching. We should not be afraid to open the doors of our Cegeps and our classrooms to celebrate our profession and to seek recognition for the valuable work we do. A future generation that will make the best decisions for themselves, their families and their aging parents; a generation that will contribute to their own fields of expertise while making the world a healthier and safer place—this is the great social project in which Cegep teachers play a vital role.

I wish us good luck, as the union is all of us!

Syndically yours,

Sylvie

***CPNC**: Conseil Patronal de Négociations des Cégeps

****Fédé** : Fédération des Cégeps—composed of director generals and academic deans

See page 22 for Salary Scales

Retirees Pub Lunch

Wed. May 31st 1:00 pm
Resto Bar St.Laurent
Marcel Laurin Blvd and Thimens Blvd
St.Laurent

Sponsored by the College Unions and the Vanier Retirees Association, this event is a chance to get together over lunch at this local establishment. Last year the inaugural event was a great success. We gave out a "graduation certificate" and a Vanier teddy bear to all retirees in attendance. This part of the get-together will take place around 2:00 pm with a chance to roast and toast the individuals who make it to the event.

This is where we get a chance to honour our retirees from various departments and unions in the college in an informal and fun manner—and sometimes, it is the last chance since most events to honour retirees are limited to their departments.

The Director of Human Resources has promised the Retirees Association that he will compile a list of retirees and forward the information to them.

Everyone is invited to attend—the event is open to all! There is plenty of space in the restaurant. We encourage colleagues to attend and if they wish, to make a few comments as well. The speeches will start at 2 sharp and should finish by 2:30.

Everyone is responsible for their own meal and beverages although many people chipped in to pay for "their" retiree's lunch last year.

Please put this on your agenda. Your presence will add to the fun of this "more-the-merrier" event!

A “New” Teacher Looks Back:

Reflections on the Last Ten Years at Vanier

Mariopi Spanos



In a year where all kinds of interesting, disturbing, frustrating and sometimes, rather sad events, have occurred at Vanier, not the

least of which is the pending departure of the much beloved Kevin Roch from our college, I decided that it was time to add my two cents to our *Newsletter*.

Much to my surprise and most probably, to the surprise of dozens of other staff and faculty who have absolutely no idea who I am, ten years seem to have flown by for me in the vertically-inconsistent hallways of Vanier. The old phrase, “Where does the time go?” seems rather *à propos* at this juncture. If you will indulge me just a bit, I would like to share with you some thoughts, memories and general musings about my time here at Vanier College.

First, I would like to state for the record that the reason I remained at Vanier College is directly linked to the people in the Print Shop. I have never met a more helpful, funny, kind and supportive group of people in my life. I knew that our Print Shop staff were something special from the very first time Kevin and Nicki asked me, with genuine concern, if there was anything I needed. (And as I waited patiently in *another* college’s print shop to find out what the protocol was for getting photocopies and where I could find things, and I was promptly *yelled at* for NOT giving 24 hours notice for my print job, I knew right away I would never work there.)

Vanier was calling me, and it was my calling. I have never looked back. I have never regretted my very conscious choice to teach only at Vanier even when I was offered steady work elsewhere. It is my understanding that several faculty members have had this very same experience. My colleagues embraced me with a

warmth that I did not expect in such a large institution. I was literally, the new “kid” on the block, a rookie amid a whole lot of knowledgeable veterans, eager to do my new mentors proud.

One of my most vivid memories plays in my head just like that scene from *Le Fabuleux Destin d’Amélie Poulain*, where Amélie guides the blind man down the street to the metro, describing everything in detail as they walk briskly past. Picture the college, first week of classes, students wandering aimlessly (shocking), the entire first floor of the A wing packed with students lined up for the “basement” Bookstore.

And then, picture one energetic, Welsh chap from the English Department guiding me through the hallways of low-ceilings, as hundreds of “books for sale” notices rustled in our wake, pointing out mailboxes, internal/external mail, offices; introducing me to the Print Shop staff and any faculty member that happened to be around; explaining how things work, where things are and what not to eat: a stark contrast to my first day at that *other* college.

And then, of course, there was my “key interview” with Kay Audette. Don’t pretend that you don’t know what I’m talking about. It’s that rather uncomfortable interview where you have to *explain* why a seemingly healthy individual needs an elevator key. I used an old back injury to do the trick and got my key to the elevator. Two weeks later, I dislocated my collar bone. Coincidence? Maybe...

I consider myself extremely lucky to have begun teaching here when I did. I had the good fortune of meeting and working with some truly amazing individuals before they retired. And as I think on it, dozens of names come to mind: Martin Hallett, Mary Spoel, Pat Conway, Pat Tedford, Bill Webb, Harvey Berger, Heather Lewis, Fran Davis, Ri-

chard Lock, Brian Campbell, Tom Lozar, Denis Sampson, Evelyn Wajcer, and those are just people from my own department.... By golly, I even managed to work in a Science Orientation with the ubiquitous Joe Schwartz, and he did *magic!*

As *cliché* as it might sound, I cannot believe how quickly the years pass. It seems not so long ago that I was asked to stand in line at the Bookstore by security, as I tried to go in to order my books; not so long ago that I explained to colleagues, “my LAST name is SPANOS, NOT OPI; I AM NOT MARY OPI”; not so long ago that we submitted handwritten final mark sheets, and did class cancellations over the phone, trying desperately to fit in all our information before the bloody machine cut us off. But it has been a while: in fact, it’s two DGs, two Academic Deans, and three Faculty Deans later. And it’s no longer hundreds of students later; it’s thousands (gulp).

As my tenth year comes to a close here at Vanier, I am still confused about *exactly* how C.I. is calculated, how the K-Wing came into existence, and how students manage to go an entire term thinking that my name is simply “Miss.” One thing that I’m definitely not confused about is that Vanier is an amazing, supportive, highly-professional and talented community, and I consider myself lucky, blessed and honoured to be just a small part of it.

Mariopi Spanos has been teaching such exciting courses as *The Philosopher Kids (Children’s Lit.)* and *Science Fiction and the Media in the English Dept.* at Vanier since 1996. She is very passionate about teaching, music, traveling, and, of course, hockey. Anyone interested in viewing a great post-card collection from all her global adventures need only drop by her office. Oh, and according to one rumour mill, she has a huge crush on Kevin Roch...

Rock 'n' Roll

(Dedicated to Gloria and Kevin whose good will and good humour kept us all rollin' along)

Stephen Block



Upon hearing that I was running for a VCTA Executive position, a colleague and friend asked why I would do such a thing: "It's really a thankless task. You're going to be blamed for everything, whether you do a good job or not. People who don't like unions to begin with will criticize you for doing a lousy job. Half the people don't understand the issues 75% of the time." Etc.etc. In

sum: "You gotta have rocks in your head"—and I believe the next line was going to be, "Or, you will when you're done."

On my way home last week, before the VCTA election results came in, I found myself singing a song from Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows*. His nut-case ensemble wanted to make fun of rock'n'roll music. So how does a bunch of Jewish slapstick comedy writers make fun of Elvis and company? By doing a routine called, *I got a rock in my head and a roll in my mouth*.

After the ratification vote, which seemed to indicate that the team that ran for the Executive was taken seriously concerning its campaign promises, the song's title seemed funny again. Before the vote I was feeling like Josef Stalin, or one of those famous octogenarians who would applaud back when being applauded at a public meeting. A high approval rating, before taking office, is a very nice thing, considering the alternative. But now what can one actually do in office to make the union work in a way that the great majority will feel represented, not alienated and disaffected?

Well, one idea is to consult with the membership on a regular and on-going way and in a way so that teachers feel they are being kept in-the-know. Documents (even those already in English) will be translated into language most of us can understand. Discussions and preludes to decisions, from Association Council for example, will be summarized for public consumption. Members will be encouraged to sign up to receive regular email from the VCTA. Without snowing people under, the idea is to try to ensure that members feel comfortable and informed about the decisions that are being taken on their behalf and in their name.

A good Executive member, it seems to me, should have, as my former thesis supervisor used to call it, *toches*—a Yiddish word for the part of one's anatomy one sits on. When someone is said to have *toches* what it means is that s/he will be sitting in a seat for long hours doing what needs to be done. In this case it will mean seats in seats, in the VCTA Office as much as is possible and certainly before important deadlines when one can expect teachers to have questions.

The hope is that the team soon to be inhabiting Executive

positions, as well as the many others who have volunteered their time to serve on committees such as Association Council (the VCTA Executive's advisory board) and Academic Council (the college-wide decision-making body) will be recognized as devoted teachers and as being skilled in many important ways, none more important than their willingness to listen and learn.

Many older faculty have lamented the long past days of militancy among Vanier teachers. Many believed both the union and the purpose for the union had seen better days. At every turn, it is argued, we seemed to be outsmarted or crushed, our rights trivialized or ignored. What the ratification vote I hope signaled was an understanding of how important it is for those representing Vanier teachers to be competent, diligent, serious about their work of representing their colleagues and sensible and available. By the time our new representatives take up their positions we will have a virtually complete turnover in the Administration. As teachers, we can only ask that if we do our jobs professionally the Administration will work with us for the good of our students, our programs and of course, we hope, our working conditions.

I suppose the next question my colleague might have asked me is, "What in the world have you been smoking?" Well, just in case our friendly insurers are looking in, I will hasten to point out that I don't smoke anything. But while I am on the subject of insurance policies, certainly as an Executive member the idea will be to try to fight for an improvement in our benefits, especially given that we are locked into a tight-fisted (not to mention perhaps illegal) employment contract for the next four years.

My desire, when I started contributing to the *VCTA Newsletter* a year or so ago, was to raise the awareness, if not the spirit, of the union (meaning its members' sense of their union's purpose). I am quite a bit more optimistic that we all can make that happen now.

This week we had a General Assembly to discuss Entente #12 (previously known as the infamous 173 hours). And though I would have liked to see more members in attendance, the GA was, for me, one of the highlights of the year because of the document completed for the meeting by a subcommittee initiated and chaired by Karen Tennenhouse which included Jeanne Masterton and Iannis Stavrianos. An example of my reason for optimism: the thoroughness of the document and the professionalism of the work. It reminded me of precisely my own reminiscing on the subject of the importance of having a union working intelligently and diligently on behalf of its members.

In hard times such as these it is difficult to remember why we even need a union. But there is an irony in that view as

well. My colleagues across the hall reminded me of what it was like seeking a job, even at Vanier, 30 years ago. Temporary contracts were issued which were just under what would ensure job security; impressions were left that the teacher had to negotiate one-on-one with the employer and each of us had no rights. At the same time teachers would engage in wild-cat strikes, sometimes just to save the job of one colleague.

So in fact it is the success of this union which now has it seem that it has fallen on hard times, as if, as they also said of other social movements, that its time has come and gone, its usefulness expired.

I hope the next year will be a year where we all begin to prove the nay-sayers wrong, where we can show, by our actions, our hard work, our devotion and our good will that we can be teachers, colleagues, professionals and good unionists all at the same time.

Stephen Block has a Ph.D jointly granted in industrial relations from Université de Montréal's school of industrial relations and in public affairs and public sector economics from Concordia University. He sits on the CRT (Vanier's Labour Relations Committee) as well as on Association Council. He teaches Humanities courses in media, history of ideas and business ethics.

AQPC:

Association Québécoise de Pédagogie Collégiale

AQPC is an organization of over 800 members from Quebec CEGEPs. The goal is to have a network of college educators who promote, stimulate and support the development of teaching at the College level. As such, AQPC aims to promote pedagogical development within the college network—to develop a thoughtful approach to teaching and learning and to exchange information on teaching tools.

AQPC publishes a journal, *Pédagogie Collégiale*, as well as books which promote the quality of teaching and learning in Quebec. Also, AQPC organizes an annual conference. The 26th annual AQPC convention will take place June 7-9, 2006 at CEGEP de Sainte-Foy in Quebec City.

For information about this conference go to <http://aqpc.qc.ca/colloque/index/php>. To learn more about the AQPC organization, go to www.aqpc.qc.ca or contact Marilou Alforque, Project Coordinator at malforque@place.dawsoncollege.qc.ca. Janet Wyman, Biology teacher at Dawson College is responsible for meeting with educators from anglophone Cegeps.

Deadline for PD Applications & Expense Reports:

JUNE 1, 2006

No claims will be processed over the summer.

(Message from Susan & Pat, VCTA Office)

At Academic Council: More Questions than Answers about another "Top-Down" International Project

Janice Paquette



At the last Academic Council meeting, Judy Macdonald presented the latest Vanier International venture, which is to do a food processing project in the Congo. Evidently a grant request has been made to the Association of Canadian Colleges to get money for the project, which will be run jointly with the Alfred campus of the University of Guelph. Alfred will do the technical

food processing part while Vanier works on the pedagogical process.

The teachers on Council agreed that this international project was much better than the one that deals with the Saudi military hospital—which unfortunately was passed at the last Board meeting, despite our efforts to stop it. However, even though most would agree with the principle of the project, there are still some real questions that we should raise.

First, why is this, once again, a top-down project? When consultations are done at the end of the process, rather than at the beginning, we can't really consider this consultation but rather that we are involved or asked to be involved in rubber stamping. In future it would be great if there is real consultation.

Other important questions concern how much of this project will be at the expense of Vanier students and staff. It is clear that the project will only be done if a grant is received from the ACCC. But what Vanier resources will also be devoted to the project? How much personnel time will be used? (Who does the secretarial work? The writing up of the project?) How much more space at the College will be used for international projects? What other college facilities will be used?

At a time when space and money for our basic mission—educating Vanier students—is in short supply, how much can we afford to turn over to international projects? The Ministry of Education is pushing the idea of CEGEPs doing international projects but where is the new money to do so? Should we be using money, space and services to support these projects? Is this short-changing our students? Will we be consulted?

Janice Paquette, who will soon step into the position of Vice-President (Information) for the VCTA Executive, started teaching at Vanier in 1980. She currently teaches Sociology and IP and has also taught courses in the Explorations Program, and before that, Access. She has previously served on the VCTA Executive, represented Vanier teachers at FNEEQ (the federation we belonged to before we joined FAC) and at FAC. She currently sits on Association Council and looks forward to taking over as Editor of the VCTA Newsletter in the fall.

STATUS FOR ALL!
march on
montreal!



DAY OF ACTION
VANCOUVER, TORONTO, MONTREAL

Demand justice and dignity for migrants and refugees!

SATURDAY, MAY 27

12PM: PHILLIPS SQUARE
STE-CATHERINE AND UNION, METRO MCGILL

Solidarity Across Borders

848 - 7585 sansfrontieres@resist.ca <http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org>

STATUS FOR ALL! NO ONE IS ILLEGAL!

A DAY-LONG, CHILD-FRIENDLY MARCH THROUGH THE STREETS OF MONTREAL, WITH KIDS' ACTIVITIES, SPEAKERS, PICNIC AND MORE!

LAST YEAR NON-STATUS MIGRANTS AND THEIR ALLIES MARCHED 200KM, FROM MONTREAL TO OTTAWA, IN OPPOSITION TO DETENTIONS AND DEPORTATIONS, AGAINST SECURITY CERTIFICATES, AND FOR THE REGULARIZATION OF ALL NON-STATUS PERSONS LIVING IN CANADA. ONE YEAR LATER WE WILL TAKE TO THE STREETS AGAIN, IN CITIES ACROSS CANADA, TO DEMAND STATUS FOR ALL!

TOO MANY OF OUR FRIENDS, FAMILY MEMBERS, CO-WORKERS AND SCHOOLMATES HAVE BEEN DEPORTED, DETAINED OR DEGRADED BY THE UNJUST AND RACIST IMMIGRATION SYSTEM. TOO MANY PEOPLE LIVE INVISIBLE LIVES OF ANXIETY AND ANGUISH DUE TO OUR LACK OF PERMANENT STATUS. WE REFUSE TO BE SCAPE-GOATED IN THE SO-CALLED "WAR ON TERROR". WE REFUSE TO BE USED AS CHEAP LABOR. WE REFUSE TO BE DENIED OUR VOICE, OUR RIGHTS AND OUR DIGNITY. THE ONLY JUST AND REALISTIC SOLUTION IS THE IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF A FULL AND INCLUSIVE REGULARIZATION PROGRAM FOR ALL NON-STATUS PEOPLE IN CANADA. WE CALL ON YOU TO JOIN US IN A NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION TO DEMAND STATUS FOR ALL!

FOR EVERY ARBITRARY DETENTION, FOR EVERY SUMMARY DEPORTATION, FOR EVERY MINUTE SPENT IN JAIL WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL, FOR EVERY ANXIOUS AND DEHUMANIZING DAY SPENT WAITING FOR STATUS ~ ALL THE DAYS, MONTHS AND YEARS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS STOLEN FROM US ~ WE WILL CONTINUE TO MARCH AND STRUGGLE, FOR JUSTICE AND DIGNITY.

ORGANIZED BY SOLIDARITY ACROSS BORDERS ~ A MONTREAL-AREA CAMPAIGN INITIATED BY SEVERAL GROUPS ACTIVE IN DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS, IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES.

OUR DEMANDS:

1. THE REGULARIZATION OF ALL NON-STATUS PERSONS;
2. AN END TO DEPORTATIONS AND DETENTIONS;
3. THE ABOLITION OF SECURITY CERTIFICATES.

**JOIN US AND TAKE
BACK STOLEN TIME**

Service Education:

When Volunteer Work is Part of a Course

Interview with Danielle Brown

Community Service/Volunteer Coordinator



Tell us about how the volunteering works right now. Is it in a course? Do teachers work it into their courses?

Dany: Yes, in some courses there is a compulsory community service component. At the moment, I work with a lot of Explorations students. About 95% of the volunteers that come to see me are Explorations students and the other 5% are just students

in the community who want to do some volunteer work. Most of them are planning going on continuing their education in university and know that they need to have references in their application. Universities aren't just looking at your marks any more. They want to see the complete person, the solid citizen.

It is interesting to note that about 60% of colleges and universities in the United States have a compulsory volunteer component; i.e. you cannot graduate without doing community service.

Most of the Explorations courses set up a 20 hour volunteer component, which is really not a lot, but when you are looking at completing the assignment in 15 weeks, you have to be committed. Some choose to do it in a weekend, though difficult, but it can be done. Most students choose to do it throughout the semester so they really do gain valuable experience from beginning to end of the semester.

What are the advantages of volunteer work or community service for the students who do it?

Dany: The advantages of volunteering are endless. Our students often learn or develop new skills, they gain valuable work experience, which they can put on their CVs. They also build self esteem and self confidence, feel needed and valued, make a difference in someone's life, meet new people. In terms of personal growth, I see that it gives them a sense of well-being that comes from the feeling that they have done something—contributed to the community in some way.

In some competitive university programs, like the medical schools, that have contacted us for references, they want to know what kind of person the student is outside the classroom. They aren't just interested in grades. So I often tell these students that want to go to medical school, they've got to have more—that the medical schools want to see the complete person, the community involvement.

Also important is that they we exposed our students to places and people that they would not otherwise have contact with had they had not been guided to these places. Many students come to see me and want to be doctors or lawyers and once they go out and start seeing what else is in their community they see that there is a whole different world out there; they realize that they've narrowed their focus too much and that there is so much more that they can see and that they can do in their lives. Volunteer work gives them a chance to think outside the box, to use a cliché.

They get to think and act outside the box in different ways. For example, one of the things that we see here on campus is that it is tough to get students to volunteer in the Montreal West Island Rehab Centre (N301), but once they go they come out with such great experiences. Many say that they were not comfortable with "those" kinds of people and yet they come to see that they are people just like us. It's really amazing to see the changes in attitudes and perceptions.

We have a lot of activities right here on campus that gives them a sense of inclusion in their school. They get to know the school—they develop a sense of belonging, a true sense of belonging. Many alumni often will come back and visit us because that sense of belonging is so strong and important at this time of their lives.

And there are many other skills that they can develop. They may learn how to do posters to publicize activities, and even learn to use a computer program so that they can design the poster. They learn to organise activities, develop some administrative skills, do office work, just to name a few. Most don't come in with those skills at all.

How is the volunteer work organized?

Dany: Well, it all starts with the student coming in to see me. We sit down and we talk. Most do not have any idea where they would like to volunteer. They ask me if I have a list of organisations that need volunteers. I often decline to show them a list, and tell them they already know of many non profit organisations that require their help—every school, every hospital, every nursing home, every sports team, etc.etc.—it's easy. I tell them that they could actually give me a list.

It is important to know what **they** identify as interesting to them and then I can tell them about a lot of things in and around them in their community that are connected to that interest.

Where do students do their volunteer work?

Dany: There are lots of places at Vanier or close to our community: The West Island Rehabilitation Centre, the Learning Centre, and the Lester B. Pearson Co-Op Program, which a lot of the kids have tried this year. This is a program that is somewhat similar to the West Island Rehab Centre. There is the Math and Science Resource Centre, the Language School - Conversation Partners, CORE Plus (where we do things like organizing Nite of Nations, the Food Fair, etc.) Athletics, where a lot of the male students want to volunteer and are surprised that they are not just doing sports. They learn that they are other responsibilities in the department like compiling stats or preparation and setting up with events on game day.

There is also the CORE + + , which consists of students helping students. Although students complete their 20 hours, most choose to join CORE and stay until the end of the semester. So many students have come to me asking to assist with the Nite of Nations. It's also a great social event. Many of our students arrive on campus and feel isolated, lonely or very shy. Here is a great way of building a social network. CORE + + and The Learning Centre are excellent resources for these students

We've had other students who have gone to work in hospitals and then pursue their education at McGill or Université de Montréal in medical school. So sometimes there is a direct correlation between the volunteer experience and their career goals.

Others have volunteered to work with the elderly, like at Maimonides Hospital, or other geriatric centres. Some of these elders get really attached to our volunteers and many find it really hard to stop once they have completed their 20 hours. They have developed a relationship and a sense of value and community. This is really important.

We've had some amazing experiences that have come from our volunteers. One student chose to volunteer with a Fire Department (they usually never open their doors to volunteers) but this experience really helped turn this student's life around. When he first spoke to me about school and his future, he was hemming and hawing and generally disinterested, but by volunteering with the Fire Department, he turned his life around. He is now finishing a degree and plans to jump right into a fire school.

Other experiences touch you to the core. There was this one young lady in Explorations. Her mother died of cancer and she started to work at a palliative care unit. She explained to me about the therapy volunteering in palliative care gave to her, that it was so good, that she could feel her mother there with her, helping her along. I had tears in my eyes listening to this young woman. Look at what this experience has done for her. She was devastated after her mother was taken from her so quickly, and now she is working with families and patients like her mother. She tells that she feels that her mum is watching and encouraging her, "You've got to help them." She said that she feels so good working with them. Most people would find it difficult and depressing to work with the terminally ill, and here is this beautiful young woman, who at seventeen years old volunteers her time up to three times a week to work with people in palliative care. It's absolutely fabulous. For this young girl the experience is life enriching.

It also brings so much when she comes back and reflects her experiences to her class. The teacher told me that she just blew the whole class away. Most kids didn't even know what palliative care is. It is not something that most students her age would ever even think about. It impacts our students in a strong, yet wonderful way.

In conclusion

It is my role as educator to have a positive attitude and encourage our youth to volunteer. The volunteer experience can touch and enrich many lives. Our students benefit from such meaningful assignments that develop their personal growth and skill enhancements. The experience enriches both those who give and those who receive in the communities and society as a whole.

Dany Brown, co-editor of the Feb./Mar. 2006 issue of the VCTA Newsletter, is one of Vanier's secret treasures. She juggles many portfolios where she works in Student Services: C203-E

Convocation Address

A few years ago, when CBC Radio's Daybreak program asked listeners to call in a convocation address, our own "Johnny Wisdom" (aka Sociology teacher, Jock Mackay) took them up on it. Turns out he won first prize and read it for CBC listeners on Daybreak, June 11, 1999. Here it is.

The River by Johnny Wisdom*

If life is a river, then you the graduating class of nineteen and ninety-nine have descended the tributary we call education. This great stream of learning, drop by drop, from solutions to liquidity, has prepared you for the river of life. One day you will anticipate the estuary of your later years, the delta of retirement, as I do. But as you course downstream, past the falls and rapids, the white water and rocky shores, the calm ponds and winding beds through which this river of life will carry you, as you extrude detritus and as detritus floats past you, remember this: ALWAYS DRINK UPSTREAM FROM THE HERD.

Claudette Rivest is Retiring...

Cemal Yalinpala

I was away on leave last fall. When this term started, I was talking with some friends about “old” friends who are no longer with us. Over the last few years many have retired and a few have died. Yet, “just a few years ago” when we started teaching at Vanier, many of us were in our late twenties or early thirties. Who would have thought that one day we would be talking about faces and voices no longer with us? It was as if we were, to quote Longfellow, listening to “distant footsteps echo through the corridors of time.” (The editor told me not to get too sentimental! I will try!)

Then someone asked, “Do you know that Claudette Rivest is leaving in June?” I knew she had been on a reduced workload for some years. That was a sign she would retire one day. Still, I was not ready for the news. I was truly stunned. Her too? There was silence. Then someone said: “She is a *Mentsh**.” Everyone nodded. That was the right word to describe her.

In my discussions with many other friends after that, I kept mentioning that she was leaving. It was as if I was trying to get used to the idea. The reactions were invariably the same: disbelief and sadness.

Most of you know Claudette Rivest. For those who are relatively new and have not come to know her, all I can say is that I just hope you will get to know someone like her in your future years at Vanier. Then you will understand.

She is not just an Administrative Assistant in Human Resources. In fact, she does not treat people as “resources” to be used, but as individual human beings with their particular human concerns and questions. They are not merely “employees” on seniority lists. Always, her starting point is to help. That is what has made her happy and that is why she loved her job. One could see it in her warm smile and feel it in her voice.

I know that she went through a difficult and painful period during the illness and following the loss of her husband, her companion of 40 years. Helping people was her way of coping with life during that period. But that was also her way for more than 25 years at Vanier. Now she is ready to move on. Apparently there is still life after Vanier!

Recently I was in her office and had a long chat. She told me she would go back to playing the piano. That was news to me. I did not know that she played the piano and loved classical music. “Great! I used to play the violin for many years. But I stopped largely due to problems in my arms. Also I was pretty poor at it.” She laughed. After so many years, we found out something new about each other. Too bad it took so long. We often have such one-dimensional opinions of people we have known for years.

I had come to her office on “business.” The previous day I had given in my application for a leave for next fall. When she saw me, she said: “Oh, Cemal, I just called you and left

a message. Cemal, this is not the type of leave for your needs, especially if you decide to retire soon. You should take the reduced workload plan. That would be the best one for you.”

That is Claudette! She did not need to do that. She could have just let it go. Why be concerned about what was “best” for me or for anyone else? Also, though I am a person who knows the Collective Agreement quite well, I obviously did not know what was best for my own self. But she knew and she let me know it. I changed my leave.

Over the many years I have known Claudette, I may have had more contact with her than most teachers. The explanation is simple. I have spent a good part of my life at Vanier on the VCTA Executive as Vice-President or President. Claudette was present at all of our meetings with the Administration at the Labour Relations Committee.

More importantly, I must have had hundreds of discussions with her either in her office or on the phone during those years. Why? Because virtually all union issues concerning teachers—contracts, leaves, seniority, experience, hiring priority, salary scales, workload calculations, union grievances—went through her office. (I am sure that list is just the tip of the iceberg!) She must have answered thousands of individual questions, not only from teachers and coordinators but also from the support and professional staff. I cannot imagine the enormous amount of work this meant for her.

However, the most important thing is not the sheer volume of the work: *it is how she did it*. She treated people as individual *human beings* with individual concerns that mattered. She did not simply quote articles from the Collective Agreement or College Policy. She did her best to put herself in place of the individual and she took pleasure in solving her/his problem. Always with patience and a smile. She did not have the slightest trace of callousness, which often creeps in with many people who deal with so many problems. After all, her office was really like a “clinic.” People did not go there unless they had a problem. (The same applies to the VCTA Office, by the way!)

I remember many instances when I called her about a particular issue concerning a teacher. I would give her my interpretation and solution based on the Collective Agreement. She would give me hers. I must admit there were many cases where mine was wrong! If she was not sure, she would check with others, including the Director of Human Resources, and call me back immediately—not ten days later. I always had the feeling that she wanted to find the best interpretation for the teacher. I simply trusted her.



Claudette at Champagne Breakfast, March 8th 2006

I know that all union executive members over the last 26 years did too. I have recently talked with several of them and they all said the same. Instead of some issues becoming bitter Union-Administration disputes, we solved many of them with her on the phone. Oh, yes, sometimes her answers were not to our liking. But it was just not possible for us to get upset with her. We trusted her and respected her knowledge.

Why did we deal with her so much? The answer is simple: over the years, we have had several Directors of Human Resources. When they first started, they knew little or nothing about the Collective Agreement, past and present college policies concerning teachers' working conditions and unwritten local practices. Given the overwhelming complexity of these things, even after years, Directors of Human Resources would still not be totally familiar with certain aspects. The same applied even more to the changing members of the VCTA Executive. But she knew! She was like an encyclopaedia for all of us. I am sure that over the years, she trained not only the Directors of Human Resources but also the union executive members on numerous issues!

Now let me be a little philosophical. Such rare occasions lead us to reflect also on our own lives. Heraclitus, one of my favourite pre-Socratic philosophers, said: "You cannot step in the same river twice." Sounds strange and alien to many of us so accustomed to the comforting illusion of permanence. I have quoted Heraclitus for many years mainly in relation to natural, political and social change. It was as if it had nothing to do with me!

But in the last few years, this statement has gained a deeper meaning as I see so many of my good friends leave. Next fall when we step into Vanier, it will not be the same Vanier, not the same river. Claudette as well as many of our colleagues and friends will not be here. I will not hear Kevin in the Print Shop, with his disarming smile, say: "How can I help you today Cemal? No problem, no problem, my friend." Without people like Claudette and Kevin, we will not be the same either. Without even being aware of it, they have changed us.

Thank you Claudette. Thank you Kevin. And by the, I have every intention of visiting Claudette to listen to her play the piano and, perhaps, reminisce a little.

**Mentsh is a delightful Yiddish word meaning a special person. This involves a whole philosophy of life. Mentsh means a human being in the moral and ethical sense; not merely a person, put a person with worth and dignity, one who can be respected.*

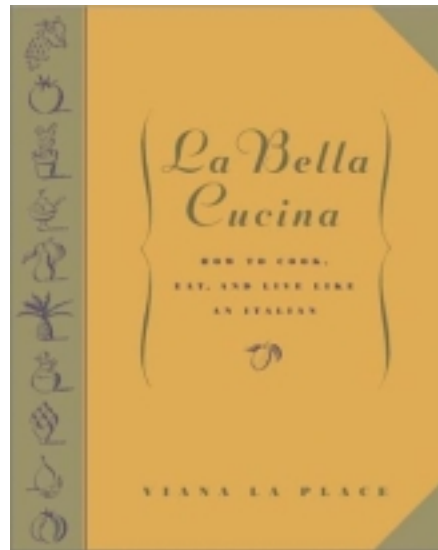


Cemal Yalinpala has been teaching Economics at Vanier since 1973. He has served many years on the VCTA Executive, represented us at CSN and FNEEQ when we were part of those federations, and he is one of the founders of FAC. (I think he even represented us on the Women's Committee at the CSN a few times!) When he is not at Vanier, he is likely in Turkey pursuing his great interest in archaeology and environmental issues.

Book Corner

La Bella Cucina: How to Cook, Eat, and Live Like An Italian

by Viana La Place



For a change, let me suggest a recipe book as your next reading. Not just any recipes – Italian recipes. Hummm? Because it is so pleasantly presented, *La Bella Cucina* is a recipe book that you actually want to read. It is for the dreamer in you, for the one who wishes to go to Italy but has not been able to, or for the one who – like me – has been fortunate enough to see parts of that wonderful country and have had the exquisite pleasure of eating there!

Along with her recipes, the author shares memories of living in Italy; each recipe is accompanied by a delightful story or anecdote as well as instructions on how to prepare the food in the authentic Italian manner.

She starts with breakfast – yes, she will teach you how to make an authentic *espresso* and prepare *biscotti* for your lazy Sunday mornings — and she will instruct you how to prepare the meats and pasta the true Italian way. There is even a list of menus for every day of the week.

Enjoy the reading, rejoice in the cooking and take pleasure in the delightful feast. Don't forget to invite your friends to your meals – sharing is the best part – and usually the guests bring the *vino*! For a taste of *la dolce vita*, this is the book for you. Enjoy!

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Thanks to **Lyne Marie Larocque** for this piece. Lyne Marie teaches Sociology, Explorations and Methodology. This photo was taken at Kaboom 2005. Lyne Marie is on the right.

Make Poverty History:

Hats off to Students!

Janice Paquette



This year Vanier students have run a wonderful campaign to “make poverty history”, joining many other young people across Canada to fight against poverty (www.makepovertyhistory.ca). At Vanier the idea is to raise money to build a school in Kenya while sensitizing people to the reality of poverty in the developing world. All semester there have been signs up about the

project, sales of fair trade coffee and events to give out information and collect funds.

The school building projects are done through the group “Free the Children”, a child-to-child help network, started in 1995 by Craig Kielburger and some of his 12 year old friends, to fight against child labour. Kielburger, now a University of Toronto student, was recently awarded the world “Children’s Nobel Prize”. Go to www.freethechildren.org for more information.

At Vanier the campaign culminated last Wednesday in the auditorium with short presentations on poverty by Doug Miller, Mathieu Sossoyan and Nancy Leclerc. Doug Miller stunned students by informing them of the reality of foreign aid where poor countries give back more money in interest TO rich countries than they receive in development aid FROM rich countries. He presented the Vanier Social Justice Committee and invited students to join it (teachers are also welcome of course). Mathieu talked about the nightmare in Darfur, a genocide according to many sources. Nancy Leclerc reminded the audience that there is massive poverty amongst the indigenous people right here in Canada and explained why we should support the native people in Caledonia, Ontario who are trying to stop a housing project being built on land which rightfully belongs to them. She

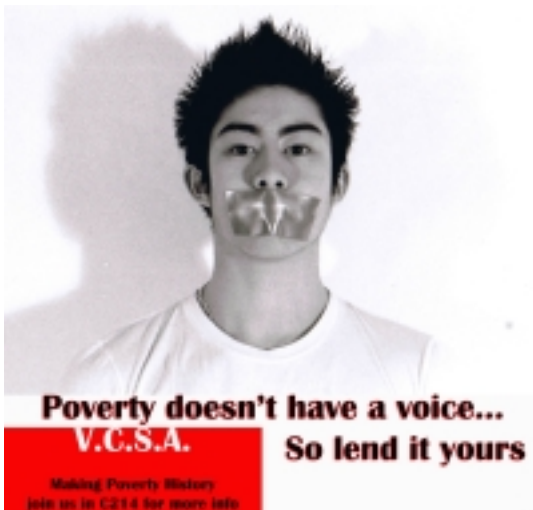
urged us to support native struggles and invited people to join the Native Awareness group at Vanier. (www.sisis.nativeweb.org/action)

The organizers of the campaign at Vanier described the school project in Kenya and invited everyone to donate money to help build the school and local bands then entertained with some great music. Students who I later talked to felt that they had learned a lot from the event and many of them donated what they could afford.

The VCSA has shown great initiative in organizing this project and they now have enough to actually build the school but are still fund-raising for the furniture, books and all of the necessary supplies to actually start educating the children in the area of Kenya where the school will be built. A Vanier student, Alessandra Salituri, will be going to Kenya this summer to help with the building.

Why don’t we all think of creative ways that we can help them raise the rest of the money? Maybe we could pass the hat at department meetings? Happy hours? Maybe we can tell our students about the glass jar in the student’s union office where they can donate? I will be taking the project to the next Association Council meeting to get our union to support financially in solidarity with our students. Any other ideas out there?

Janice Paquette, who will soon step into the position of Vice-President (Information) for the VCTA Executive, started teaching at Vanier in 1980. She currently teaches Sociology and IP and has also taught courses in the Explorations Program, and before that, Access. She has previously served on the VCTA Executive, represented Vanier teachers at FNEEQ (the federation we belonged to before we joined FAC) and at FAC. She currently sits on Association Council and looks forward to taking over as Editor of the VCTA Newsletter in the fall.



Geo-Alcoholics

From the Aug. 1987 issue of the
VCTA Newsletter

According to the as yet uninvented field of study known as geolcoholics, the Western Hemisphere may be divided into a series of horizontal bands, determined by the dominant alcoholic staple for the zone in question and the way that it affects the drinker.

The northernmost band is the grain-spirit zone. This covers Scotland, Scandinavia, Finland and the greater part of the Soviet Union. The drinker of grain spirits looks for oblivion. He tries to get drunk as quickly as possible, whereupon he tends to keel over. He can be violent and is capable of extravagant excesses that verge upon the poetic and is often to be seen in the streets on high days, holidays, and at other times in a condition of considerable disorder. Although he will drink wine, indeed will drink anything, his favourite tippie is hard liquor; beer he regards as a chaser. The hard-liquor belt favours writers, journalists and those who lead active outdoor lives. It does not suit steady and regular indoor work at repetitive jobs and is the wrong place entirely to look for a willing and able industrial proletariat.

This is to be found in the second zone, which provided the work for the first Industrial Revolution. Its staple is beer and it includes England, northern France, the Low Countries and the Ruhr, while nowadays much beer is also drunk in Japan. Beer drinkers tend to get bloated rather than drunk, become owlsh, morose or a little brutal. For those who work in overheated environments, such as steel mills, beer is positively beneficial since it replaces lost liquids. The beer belt has been the chief supplier of skilled and semi-skilled industrial labour ever since the Industrial Revolution.

Below the beer belt comes the wine belt, the culture of southern Europe, from the Iberian Peninsula through southern France, Italy, Greece, southern Germany and Austria. The serious wine drinker seldom becomes drunk but is seldom sober; he remains perpetually pickled. While his liver holds out, he can be a charming companion, a raconteur at his best at a café table holding forth to friends. Peasants and small-business men, traders, civil servants and middlemen flourish in the wine belt. Unless one loves hard work or the poetry of absolute drunkenness the wine belt is the pleasantest of the three. To its south alcohol ceases altogether and Islam takes over with mint tea, sweetments and hashish.

The Russian climate is such that the Soviet Union has no beer belt, and this is one reason for the shortcomings of its industries—vodka drinkers are notoriously unreliable on production lines. The vodka belt extends across the full stretch of Great Russia until it reaches the southern republics of Armenia and Georgia, where vodka gives way to wine.

*Excerpt from Alex de Jonge, **Stalin and the Shaping of the Soviet Union**, Collins, 1986.*

World March of Women 6th International Meeting July 2-9, 2006 PERU

The Fédération des Femmes du Québec (FFQ) will send a delegation to Peru to work on ideas for worldwide actions in 2010. Contributions can be sent to the FFQ and marked MMF-Pérou to:

Barbara Legault
110, rue Ste-Thérèse. bureau 309
Montréal, QC H2Y 1E6

Barbara can also be reached at
blegault@ffq.qc.ca
The FFQ website is at www.ffq.qc.ca

From La Presse, May 2, 2006

There are about 341,000 workers in Montreal who make less than \$20,000 a year. This is 40% of all workers in Montreal! Between 1979 and 1998, the minimum wage went up 98%. That sounds like a huge rise, doesn't it? Unfortunately, the cost of living went up 127% during the same period.

“Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says, “I'll try again tomorrow”

- Mary Anne Radmacher

Thanks to **Judy Ingerman**, Anthropology and Humanities for the quotation.

Special Poetry Supplement

Selected Poems
from the
Poetry Slam Benefit
March 1, 2006

**Poetry, by giving dignity and utterance to our distress,
enables us to hope, makes compassion reasonable.**

Irving Layton in the Foreward to *A Red Carpet for the Sun*, 1959

Holding Hands

**Oft times, a woman's inner strength
And journey through life's plans
Her drive to always go the length
Is expressed by her hands.**

**They are those of a healer
Of a soldier, or a bard
A suffragette, a sweet coquette
A calm whilst times are hard.**

**These hands, when joined together
So sure, steadfast and strong
Have withstood any weather
Tried righting every wrong.**

**They sow seeds of tomorrow
And have sewn in glories past
A growing force, from sorrow
Building legacies to last.**

Gloria Di Murro

*As she does each year, **Gloria Di Murro** wrote this poem for the International Women's Day Champagne Breakfast, where it graces the tables and is also read aloud by Fran Davis. Gloria's poem this year is inspired by the 2006 theme: *Joining Hands to Make a Difference.**

What Are Big Girls Made of?

Marge Piercy • Performed by Myra David

* The Editor asked Myra why she had chosen to read this poem at the Poetry Slam Benefit for Gloria Di Murro. Myra responded:

Primarily I chose this poem because it is written by a woman and I wanted a poem that would express the challenges and oftentimes unfair demands placed on women not only by society but as a result of our own choices. Gloria's illness came to light at the same time as a very dear, close 'forever friend' of mine is also doing battle with cancer. It has been a long struggle and still she maintains a positive hopeful outlook—how much of that is for others, I question.

I wanted a poem that was not a soft peddling of what it is to be a woman and Gloria has written much in her own poetry expressing such issues...so the poem was for her and Judy, my daughter and late mother and all the young women we teach here at Vanier—to let them know it's okay to be who you really are and not feel defeated and less-than when being different—in fact, this is something to applaud.

The construction of a woman:
a woman is not made of flesh
of bone and sinew
belly and breasts, elbows and liver
and toe.
She is manufactured like a sports
sedan.
She is retrooled, refitted and re-
designed
every decade.
Cecile had been seduction itself in
college.
She wriggled through bars like a satin
eel,
her hips and ass promising, her
mouth pursed
in the dark red lipstick of desire.

She visited in '68 still wearing skirts
tight to the knees, dark red lipstick,
while I danced through Manhattan in
mini skirt,
lipstick pale as apricot milk,



hair loose as a horse's mane. Oh
dear,
I thought in my superiority of the
moment,
whatever has happened to poor
Cecile?
She was out of fashion, out of the
game,
disqualified, disdained, dis-
membered from the club of desire.

Look at pictures in French fashion
magazines of the 18th century:
century of the ultimate lady
fantasy wrought of silk and
corseting.
Paniers bring her hips out three feet
each way, while the waist is pinched
and the belly flattened under wood.
The breasts are stuffed up and out
offered like apples in a bowl.
The tiny foot is encased in a slipper
never meant for walking.
On top is a grandiose headache:
hair like a museum piece, daily
ornamented with ribbons, vases,
grottoes, mountains, frigates in full
sail, balloons, baboons, the fancy
of a hairdresser turned loose.
The hats were rococo wedding cakes
that would dim the Las Vegas strip.
Here is a woman forced into shape
rigid exoskeleton torturing flesh:
a woman made of pain.

How superior we are now: see the
modern woman
thin as a blade of scissors.
She runs on a treadmill every morning,
fits herself into machines of weights
and pulleys to heave and grunt,
an image in her mind she can never
approximate, a body of rosy
glass that never wrinkles,

never grows, never fades. She
sits at the table closing her eyes to
food
hungry, always hungry:
a woman made of pain.

A cat or dog approaches another,
they sniff noses. They sniff asses.
They bristle or lick. They fall
in love as often as we do,
as passionately. But they fall
in love or lust with furry flesh,
not hoop skirts or push up bras
rib removal or liposuction.
It is not for male or female dogs
that poodles are clipped
to topiary hedges.

If only we could like each other raw.
If only we could love ourselves
like healthy babies burbling in our
arms.
If only we were not programmed and
reprogrammed
to need what is sold us.
Why should we want to live inside
ads?
Why should we want to scourge our
softness
to straight lines like a Mondrian
painting?
Why should we punish each other
with scorn
as if to have a large ass
were worse than being greedy or
mean?

When will women not be compelled
to view their bodies as science
projects,
gardens to be weeded,
dogs to be trained?
When will a woman cease
to be made of pain?

The Machine

Ray Shankman

Isaac and Ishmael receive the cotton bales;
they stand on opposing sides
as the cotton pushes through quicklypacked.
Isaac ties on one side, Ishmael the other;
this rhythm is repeated over and over again.
Isaac and Ishmael have to keep up to the machine;
they have to sweat and breathe to the same motion;
they cannot rest; the machine won't let them.

Isaac and Ishmael are not brothers though they used to be.
They are not even friends; the machine won't let them be.
Isaac works on his side; Ishmael works on his.
They are bound by the binding.
After work each goes his own separate way,
back to family and friends where
Ishmael talks about working with a Jew
who works like a machine
and Isaac talks of the taciturn souless Arab
who works like a machine.
What are they working for?
Have their minds become repetitive like the machine?
They don't see the machine separates them,
that the machine enslaves them,
that the machine demands production,
not relationship.

(Published in *Tel Aviv Review and Outlook*)

First the killed the sheep

Ray Shankman

Preamble:

I teach the literature of the Holocaust and I'm pro animal rights and since I've long considered the possibility that the killing of animals offers a training and a sensibility that encourages wanton slaughter of human beings, this poem, "First They Killed the Sheep" came out of the question, how the Nazis could do such heinous things, how could a genocide happen, what kind of mind can dehumanize and slaughter? And thus the poem represents an attempt at this exploration. It all starts with animal sacrifice:

For sacrifice they killed the sheep.
For Aryan purity they killed the lame and infirm,
those with hair-lips and double chins.
Then they killed the Jews and the Gypsies,
to propitiate the swastika God,
whose petty black moustache
trembled to welcome the odious odour
of charred corpses,
ash drifting lyrically in the wind,
descending on the land

like snowflake fallout,
while muted villagers,
hell bent on redemption,
revelling in their reawakened primitive appetite,
revile the victims,
heap scorn and curses
upon their neighbours.
The sweet smell of death saves them from their sins

First they killed the sheep...

(Published in *So Others Will Remember*, a Holocaust anthology)



Ray Shankman has been teaching English at Vanier since 1974. He has taught his colleagues in Performa, lost students and been lost himself. Poetry is one way of locating oneself, so every now and then he dabbles in the playful/painful exercises of hide and seek and lost and found.

Starving in Somalia

Raanan Shankman

It hasn't been easy I have something to explain
that for nine years now I've been in constant pain
and I'm starving in Somalia and still there is no rain
oh why is the sky so dry, so dry, so dry

It's dry like my mouth which no drink can appease
it's dry like my eyes with no tears to release
and I'm starving in Somalia next to the grocery store
I collapsed defeated by the door

And when it rains the rain is barred
from seeping in the ground is so hard
but I want to be open I want to be soft
so when the rain falls and rain's not lost

And if you come to this station you can find me there
next to the guy with flies in his eyes who no longer cares
I can tell you're a stranger from the way that you stare
from the way that you stare

So join me if you can in my search for a cry
for a prayer so strong it will reach the sky
to rise above the desert wind
to rise above the crowds
to a place beyond this suffering
bringing precious thunder clouds

Then heal me heal me rain
Quench my thirst cool my pain
Give me tears to let me cry
Prayers to unlock the sky

Raanan Shankman, an ex-Vanier student, now 33, has environmental hypersensitivities, is an organic farmer and sleeps outside. In his poems he makes the metaphoric connection between world calamity and his own deterioration and desire to heal. He gives regards and affection to Vanier, to his ex-teachers and to his own dad, who read this poem at the Poetry Slam Benefit.

Yes

Kevin Bushell

for Gabriel

I could have killed you with a word,
a despot's order, your preformed body
suctioned out of this world, and that life
you seized in a sudden act of desire.

Those first few moments are
hard to imagine, now, when I was able
to let you go, and might have
gone on with my life

without you—and the chance
of what you might become, dropped
like a stone in dark water, the pale face
first glimpsed, then gone.

The Flying Monk

Kevin Bushell

Thou art come! A matter of lamentation to many a mother
art thou come;
I have seen thee long since; but I now behold thee much
more terrible,
threatening to hurl destruction on this country.

Brother Eilmer of Malmesbury, upon seeing Halley's
Comet
foretelling the Norman Conquest.

You look pretty silly in your bird costume, perched
on the abbey tower, a real public spectacle
better than circus sideshow. With your unorthodox wings
strapped to arms and legs, you climb awkwardly
onto the parapet, steady yourself in the gusting Wiltshire
wind.

150 feet below, the crowd sways and cheers.
They want to see a death. But to you up here
it sounds like jeers. Even the jackdaws mock you
with their endless circling overhead, curious
and wary of this other winged thing.

You've thought about this for years, the minutiae of every
moment,
so much that now, as you utter a final prayer, it's almost
familiar,
like déjà vu or remembered dream, as if
this were not you—your body, your death.
How else could you do it?

Arms outstretched, you inch forward, feeling for the wind,
then fold one wing over to cross yourself,
a gesture mistaken below for a wave.
But your eyes are fixed on the horizon
as you wait for the wind to steady. Then leap.

Your prayers are immediately answered.
As you plummet, nose-first, your arms are forced
up and back, stabilizing the glide and preventing
panicked flapping, well back of your chest,
the centre of gravity, so you do not stall

but level off in a downward arc
of the high trapeze—clear the wall, then a tree, then
another—
heading for the river, six hundred feet
before speed and lift and nerve leave you
stalled twenty feet up, now flapping like an overgrown
fledgling.

You hit the embankment to the sound of snapping ash and
bone,
but live to tell how you should have had a tail.
You'll hobble lame through the abbey's hallways
well into your eighties and be the first to see
the ominous tail of Halley's Comet arc through the heavens.

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



Out of the Groove

Roger Guetta

Strike while the iron is hot
Move to the beat and hit the spot
Choose the road and mark your time
Tip off the oracle, share her wine

Now is the time to mourn and grieve
For all who live the lie, and bank on the thief
Sacred cows and holy books
Gospels, Gita, and mother's look.

Faked it out for years on end,
And where did it get you, my hungry friend?
Heart-stricken, broody, and out of the groove
You lash, you hurry, you moanfully move.

What's up? , the dirge sounds
You had it and lost it in the first few rounds
Desolation, a tragic end, a wretched flash
Rich and powerful, still looking for the stash.

Making sense is too removed, it's too stale now
So, you walk on shells to reach the "Now"
You ask, you fumble, you make your move
Only to burrow and rot in that familiar groove.

The answer my friend was once blowin' in the wind
The wind was a hurricane that held you still
As the answers soared and surged around your head
You reached by default, and admitted you were dead

You buried it that day in the eye of the storm
You surrendered, you confessed, you lost your form
So now, you think, even money is the worth of your life
You, criticize, you're unstrung, you tenure your strife.

Give up and lose the game
Or rise, mature, to seek your fame
Padlock the cramps, the twitch, the tingle and the prickle
Reclaim what's yours and ignore the elder with his sickle.

Roger Guetta teaches Theatre in the Communications Department, regularly contributes ideas and covers to the *VCTA Newsletter* and works behind the scenes to coach the student sound and light technicians who work the program for the International Women's Day Champagne Breakfast. The Poetry Slam Benefit for Gloria Di Murro was his brain-child.

In Too Deep

Roger Guetta

In too deep, I'm just a guy,
rotten and ruthless.
I won't listen to no one,
poisoned morals, pleasin' fool.
I would be proud, if I lived clean,
but I'm molded in dusty scraps.
these are grounds for judgment,
she dances, she laughs.
Good and evil are only words
only angles and stars explode.



Poetry is just the evidence of life. If your life is burning well, poetry is just the ash.

-Leonard Cohen

Poetry is a deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary.

- Kahlil Gibran

Driving home: thinking of you

Brian Llewellyn-ap-Dafydd

Driving home;
Thinking of you,
A tree grew between my legs:
An enormous oak,
Full of life and bursting with sap.

The leaves were quivering with excitement.
In the branches, birds built nests
And had noisy families.
The trunk was so wide
I couldn't see where I was going.

As I drove along
With the tree sticking awkwardly through the roof,
I wondered if you would
Come
And play in these branches;
Maybe climb slowly up,
Wrapping your slender legs
So tightly round,
That you scraped the inside of your thighs
On the rough bark;
Until you inched your way
All the way up, and out onto a limb
Where you could establish a tree house.

We could nestle together
On a soft couch,
Drinking tea from china cups.
Under the eaves we would place notices,
To ask the birds to sing quietly in the mornings,
As we would be busy as bees
Fulfilling love's sweet and sticky devotions.

On the motorway,
A policeman stopped me,
As I was exceeding the speed limit for heavy goods
vehicles.
When I got to the weigh station the branches of the tree
Got stuck in the weighman's office windows.
I handed the policeman a packet of acorns as payment of
the fine,
And as I drove slowly on, I noticed in the rear view mirror,
A small grove of oaks straining through the windows of
his patrol car.
He must have seen your picture,
which I left as bribe,
Sandwiched in his most official papers.
Now he'll know what it's like to drive down the highway
with a flock of chirruping sparrows
Hopping from branch to twig.



Outside

Brian Llewellyn-ap-Dafydd

A grey day.
Outside a soft drizzle falls.

Within,
Sheltering under a twisted soul,
The writer tortures the page hoping,
Somehow by use of magic,
to avert the final catastrophe.

A thousand times a day
I read the notice printed inside my eyelids,
"She does not love me"
I open my lids wide and try to find evidence to refute this
truth,
Like a man in a petrol refinery glaring,
Without understanding,
At the "no smoking" sign,
As he lights his next cigarette.

Brian Llewellyn-ap-Dafydd: Born and educated mostly in South West Wales. Lived for three years in Paris, from 9 to 11. University in England (Nottingham and Exeter). Keen rugby player and climbing guide. Began working life as a butcher. Became disenchanted with the big money offered by exploration drilling because one was never at home. Main poetic idols (after Shakespeare and Donne) Edward Thomas, R.S. Thomas, and Brian Patten.

Montreal Language

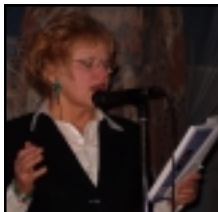
Marcia Goldberg

This downpour shakes and splashes Your name
across the polished umbrella over the picnic table
in rivulet-streamers, chases down the winding staircase
and splotches my page written in thunder, pulls me back
to the fresh hills of Lyndonville, where,
as no other word rhymes with *month*, I found no language
for mud puddles overrunning the concrete slabs
like the ones on our sixplex walkway. The steady drizzle
today
while I'm dragging in the mundane chaise lounge, soaked
flatout,
carries me back, asks for the name of the way my kitten
prowls,
for the model of how this work began in the first place,
whether I am ready to begin this day speaking
behind pink impatiens, blood red geraniums
on the empty summer balcony
since no place at all is ever really empty.

In Mud Season

Marcia Goldberg

If you are out there where it happens,
everything slides, holds
to your soles, a kind of batter
that cannot nourish. You say to yourself,
"It's spring!" and "This heavy sticking into
will go by; this muck under dead grass
is thick with roots and seed;
sun *will* cut through. You will get out of it,
and under the cold leaves matted by snow
housing centipedes, sow bugs and ants
the loam is richer for another year
fed by these black stirrings."
Black and its dizziness
will be just another word
mixed as it *will* be with crocus
and poppy color. Wait until you see
the patterns sun makes! Taste
the fresh radish and find
in the continuous dark and light of waiting
the real reason: after the flood,
things catch and start. The work
is always in motion.



Marcia Goldberg teaches English, coordinates Jewish Studies and participates in the Women's Studies Program. The cover of her book of poetry, *In Mud Season*, describes her as "Environmentalist. Lover. Passionate seeker and shaper of textures, colours, reasons and desires...a poet who relishes all aspect of the human experience."

Wonder

Devon Trautwein

I ride the bus alone
With no music in my ears
No paper in my hands
Only thoughts

Listening to the noises
The sounds of life

The laughing, the words
The sirens, the sighs
Music to my ears

There are Faces all around me
They say no words, yet still
Their eyes tell stories

Some are happy some are sad
Some are not so clear
I do not judge only wonder

Why do I feel their pain, their joy
Why do I understand their boredom
Like a mirror reflecting life
I see their stories in mine

The words are different
The plot has changed
The chapters are similar
Morals remain

I do not know the people
They sit and stand around me
In them I see decisions
Decisions I have not made
I do not envy, only wonder
If I should do the same

No one speaks today
The bus is silent and still
We are thinking, pondering,
Waiting for our stop to restart our lives
A bus ride, a pause, a transition between chapters

I wonder if I should stand
Should I speak, sing or dance
Should I start a conversation
Make a friend
Say hi

Or will I sit, wondering
What would happen if I did

My stop has come
The pause is over
My life shall start again
Thank you for your time



Devon Trautwein, a student in the Communications Program, offered this poem in true poetry slam spirit—*unscheduled, unexpected and much appreciated—at the end of the program.*

Échelles salariales avec l'adoption de la loi spéciale

Échelons ⁽¹⁾	Échelle 2005/06 ⁽⁴⁾	Échelle 2006/07 ⁽⁴⁾	Échelle 2007/08 ⁽⁵⁾	Échelle 2008/09 ⁽⁵⁾	Échelle 2009/10 ⁽⁵⁾
1	33 695	34 369	35 056	35 757	36 473
2	34 945	35 644	36 357	37 084	37 826
3	36 196	36 920	37 658	38 411	39 180
4	37 635	38 388	39 155	39 939	40 737
5	39 131	39 914	40 712	41 526	42 357
6	40 687	41 501	42 331	43 177	44 041
7	42 338	43 185	44 048	44 929	45 828
8	44 090	44 972	45 871	46 789	47 724
9	45 914	46 832	47 769	48 724	49 699
10	47 813	48 769	49 745	50 740	51 754
11	49 792	50 788	51 804	52 840	53 896
12	51 854	52 891	53 949	55 028	56 128
13	54 000	55 080	56 182	57 305	58 451
14	56 229	57 354	58 501	59 671	60 864
15	58 557	59 728	60 923	62 141	63 384
16	60 982	62 202	63 446	64 715	66 009
17	63 527	64 798	66 093	67 415	68 764
18 ⁽²⁻³⁾	65 053	66 354	67 681	69 035	70 415
19 ⁽³⁾	66 616	67 948	69 307	70 693	72 107
20 ⁽³⁾	68 216	69 580	70 972	72 391	73 839

⁽¹⁾ L'enseignante ou l'enseignant se voit attribuer l'échelon correspondant à son expérience, augmenté de :

- 2 échelons dans le cas de celle ou celui dont la scolarité est évaluée à 17 ans ;
- 4 échelons dans le cas de celle ou celui dont la scolarité est évaluée à 18 ans ;
- 6 échelons dans le cas de celle ou celui dont la scolarité est évaluée à 19 ans ;
- 8 échelons dans le cas de celle ou celui dont la scolarité est évaluée à 19 ans et plus
ET qui possède un doctorat du 3^e cycle.

⁽²⁾ L'échelon 18 est accessible aux détenteurs d'un diplôme de maîtrise acquis dans la discipline enseignée ou acquis dans une discipline apparentée et utile à l'enseignement de la discipline au contrat.

⁽³⁾ Les échelons 18,19 et 20 sont accessibles aux enseignantes et aux enseignants possédant une scolarité de 19 ans ou plus ET un doctorat du 3^e cycle.

⁽⁴⁾ Il n'y a aucune augmentation salariale pour l'année en cours et conséquemment aucune rétroaction.

⁽⁵⁾ Les augmentations salariales sont applicables à compter du 1^{er} décembre de l'année d'enseignement où elles s'appliquent.

Big Thanks to all the Contributors to Volume 23

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