

CUPARUC

newsletter of the concordia university pensioners' association
bulletin de l'association des retraité-e-s de l'université Concordia



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RESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another summer - at least in terms of the calendar - has come and gone. More rain, less sun, at least unless you live in BC! Lets hope fall is better!

Our primary recent concern has been the University's decision to change our Benefits program in response to a possible future financial crisis. A Subcommittee of the Benefits Committee has been studying proposals for various alternative benefits systems, including a "flex plan". But our retiree representative on the Subcommittee (Howard Fink), in consultation with your Executive Committee, expressed our written opposition both to these proposals, which threaten a serious reduction in the University's subsidy to our health plan, and to the Subcommittee's procedures, which have not included the necessary full review of benefits. Both the employee reps on the Subcommittee also signed this letter to the Chair of the Subcommittee. In addition, all the unions in the Inter Union Council sent a letter to the Chair, in opposition to the recent benefits questionnaire, which lacked essential information relating to the questions. As a result of this united opposition, the Chair has halted the process for further administrative study. We now hope for a comprehensive review of the benefits scheme, including financial in-



Message du Président

Si vous en croyez le calendrier, nous avons vécu un été de plus, avec des pluies nombreuses et très peu de soleil, sauf pour les heureux qui habitent la Colombie-Britannique. Espérons que nous connaîtrons un plus bel automne.

Notre préoccupation essentielle par les temps qui courent concerne la décision prise par l'Université d'apporter des changements à notre programme d'avantages sociaux, en prévision d'une éventuelle crise financière. Un sous-comité du Comité des avantages sociaux étudie depuis un moment les différentes propositions qui ont été faites en vue de ces transformations, y compris la possibilité du fameux plan «flexible.» MAIS notre représentant retraité qui siège sur le sous-comité, Howard Fink, après consultation avec votre Exécutif, a exprimé par écrit notre refus absolu non seulement de ces propositions qui menacent d'aboutir à une sérieuse réduction dans les subsides que reçoit notre Plan de santé, mais aussi aux procédures adoptées par ce sous-comité qui ont eu pour résultat d'éviter tout examen approfondi des Bénéfices. Les deux représentants des Employé-e-s qui siègent à ce sous-comité ont également signé cette lettre adressée au président du sous-comité. De plus, tous les syndicats dans le Conseil intersyndical ont adressé une lettre à ce même président protestant contre le récent

formation, before decisions are taken. We shall keep you informed of developments.

We also have our own budgetary concerns as reflected by this newsletter. We are going to try a smaller newsletter (such as this one) in the fall and spring but plan to have a full newsletter with all your contributions at around Christmas. PLEASE send your contributions to our newsletter editor, John Woodrow at johnw@alcor.concordia.ca.

We would like to use electronic communications if possible so please check the web site at cupa.concordia.ca frequently and send us your e-mail address so we can add it to our database and notify you of events and news. Only about a third of our members have provided us with this information, which limits us greatly. Please also keep it up to date by letting Colin Waters colin.waters@videotron.ca and Peter Paquet ppaquet@vax2.concordia.ca know when you change it. The Pension department lets us know if you move but there is no provision for a change of e-mail address.

Our fiscal year is from June to June so if you haven't sent in your \$20 dues for 2009-2010 please do so. Thanks.

I hope to see as many as possible at our fall meeting October 29. More details to come.

Graham Martin

I think I've discovered the secret of life - you just hang around until you get used to it.
Charles M. Schulz

questionnaire auquel il manquait des renseignements importants qui auraient éclairé les questions posées. Cette opposition généralisée a poussé le Président à arrêter les débats en attendant les résultats d'une nouvelle étude administrative. Nous espérons maintenant qu'une analyse complète et approfondie du système des bénéfiques, y compris des conditions financières, précèdera toute décision à ce sujet. Nous vous tiendrons au courant.

Nous avons par ailleurs nos propres inquiétudes budgétaires comme en témoigne ce Bulletin. Nous allons essayer de publier un bulletin assez mince à l'automne et au printemps mais comptons vous en offrir un plus complet vers Noël, avec toutes les contributions que vous nous ferez parvenir. Veuillez communiquer avec notre nouveau rédacteur en chef, John Woodrow (johnw@alcor.concordia.ca)

Dans la mesure du possible, nous souhaitons utiliser les moyens électroniques ; vous serez aimables de vérifier régulièrement notre site Web (cupa.concordia.ca) et de nous adresser votre adresse courriel pour que nous puissions la rajouter notre base de données et vous tenir mieux informé-e-s au sujet de nos activités. Pour l'instant, seul un tiers de nos membres a répondu à notre appel, ce qui nous pose problème. Veuillez aussi prévenir Colin Waters (colin.waters@videotron.ca) et Peter Paquet (ppaquet@vax2.concordia.ca) si vous en changez ; inutile d'espérer recevoir ces renseignements par le biais du Bureau des pensions.

Notre année financière va de juin en juin ; si vous n'avez pas encore réglé votre adhésion (20\$) pour l'année 2009-2010, nous vous encourageons à vous en occuper tout de suite. Merci.

Au plaisir de vous retrouver le 29 octobre prochain à notre réunion générale. Détails à venir.

Graham Martin



LARRY, MOE, CURLY and TWO FRIENDS SOLVE THE UNIVERSITY BUDGET PROBLEM

The presidents of Canada's five most self-congratulatory universities have pronounced their wisdom on university costs. They need more money to do "world class" research. (They did not mention it should also be "cutting edge", though one can be sure they had such in mind, and possibly even "of excellence".) So they ask that most research money be funneled to them. Other universities would then skip research, and devote their resources to teaching.

Forty years of university teaching have dulled any amusement I once felt at this mixture of buzz words, arrogance and crashing ignorance. But the implications of their recommendation are interesting.

If the lesser universities are to devote themselves to teaching, that must mean there is something to know about teaching. And it is nice to hear that recognized. But –

If the lesser universities are to devote themselves to teaching and the "great" ones are not, that must mean the great ones will continue to do the inferior undergraduate teaching they have always done. After all, they can't shut down their undergraduate schools. They need those undergrads going into debt to pay for all those researchers who can't teach.

How could the five presidents have missed this implication? Easy. People who talk in buzz words rarely have any idea of what they are saying. These are the same people who model their universities on the hopelessly incompetent criteria publicized yearly by Maclean's Magazine. They don't know what their buzz words mean, and they haven't the vaguest idea what teaching means.

There's another (if somewhat contradictory) implication. Among university buzz terms, and right up there with "world class", "cutting edge", and "excellence", is "good researchers make good teachers." It's a crock, of course. Some researchers make good teachers. Some don't. But consider this in the context of the lesser universities.

The big five assign the specialty of teaching to smaller schools which would have little to no research. In other words, the presidents of the big five agree that it's a crock that good researchers make good teachers. Well, that's a breakthrough of sorts.

As our universities face their greatest crisis in at least a century and more, this is the leadership they are meeting it with. 'Twas ever thus, with the result that universities have changed so little since their origins that at a scholarly hermit of a millennium ago would find much difference in a classroom of today. But it's time to get real.

1. Universities, like hospitals, roads, bridges and even weapons manufacturers, do not have a right to make unlimited demands for money.
2. In very practical terms, the public (yes, I know. The public is not enlightened. It does not appreciate the terribly, terribly important value of all research), but the public just will not continue to fork over where it does not see value for money.
3. Students will not forever go into debt to study under people whose courses don't seem to pay off, and who regard decent teaching as "spoon feeding".

Universities are in a financial crisis that arises from a purpose crisis. They need to seriously rethink their purposes, to rethink the distinctions between graduates and undergraduates; between education and training; they need to change their whole concept of undergraduate education accordingly. They need to get rid of the arrogance and pomposity that get in the way of any serious examination of their challenges.

That's what they need.

But look at what they're getting from their leaders, an utterly bozo statement that shows no understanding of anything but arrogance and pomposity.

Graeme Decarie

CUPARUC SOCIAL EVENTS

Two CUPARUC social events have been held since the last newsletter.

In April, Doreen Hutton organized a trip to the Upper Canada Playhouse, in Morrisburg, ON. for a performance of "Sweet Dreams: A Tribute to Patsy Cline". Tickets were limited but the group who attended thoroughly enjoyed the day.

In June Maïr Verthuy organized a pleasant lunch followed by a visit to the Le Musée de Maîtres et Artisans du Québec which celebrates Quebec's French-Canadian heritage as well as traditional and modern craftsmanship from various cultures. An Easter exhibit featured Ukranian Easter eggs. It was an educational and enjoyable event.



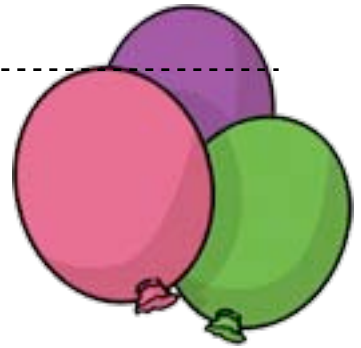
Next General Meeting: October 29, 10-12
Guest Speaker: To Be Announced
SGW campus, H-763

Awards and Honours

Frequently members of CUPARUC receive awards or honours because of their ongoing academic or social achievements. This is the column where we show them off. If you know of any, first or second hand, please let us know so that we may add our own congratulatory wishes.

NEW MEMBERS

- Garry Milton
- Joel Hillel
- Anna Beth Doyle
- Sheila Lanthier O'Connor
- Carole Martyn
- Dennis T. O'Connor
- Judith Appleby
- Jane Hackett
- Lina Lipscombe
- Francis Whyte



The CUPARUC Newsletter

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The electronic version of the newsletter continues with great articles from Alex Sengbush and Pat Negin Berger. You can see these by opting to receive the electronic version, or by referring to <http://CUPA.CONCORDIA.CA> and following the links to the newsletter.

This did not start out as a quest. I don't do quests. I just do what I do. Today I have the luxury of looking back to see what I did – and voila, the perfect beach emerges. The challenge now is, to define 'perfect', use that in conjunction with 'beach' and then sell you on that idea.

Before you turn around and say: 'Honey, this time he wrote about beaches, probably Acapulco or Varadero', stop and think again. Unless you are a first time reader of my contributions to the CUPA newsletter, you should expect more than that, some even say, the unexpected.

The beach. No other words that can get me more excited, like in 'let's go to the beach'. There is something about a beach that is so different, so unpredictable, so unlike any other place. It does have a special meaning for some of us: The call of the tide cannot be denied!



To understand a beach takes more than a toothbrush and seven days worth of suntan lotion, it can take years. Trust me, I know. I was fortunate enough to spend some of my teenage years right here, on this fabulous sandy coastal stretch, see Figure 1, the south coast of the Baltic Sea. Notice the lounges, locally known as 'beach baskets', with plenty of room for two people to stretch out in and soak up the sun, adjust it any way you like, to be protected from the wind, sand or sun.

It is said that the Vikings gathered here to plan their raids and conquests and after just two days in this awesome sun, Leif Ericsson, henceforth known as Eric the Red, took off to find Vinland.

There is something else that's unique about this beach, something few people know. After each storm, this salt water sea gives up a precious material called Bernstein (amber), a fossil tree resin, which can be found right on the beach in the sand, if you know what to look for. Over 90% of all amber in the world originates here and is used to for jewelry. As for the storms, I'm talking about waves pounding the sandy stretch right to the grassy dunes, and a howling wind, surf is up dudes and dudettes, but the undertow is so strong that you have to float on the surface of the water, to survive.

But then, during those lazy, hazy summer days, with the calm, green water and the white caps in the distance, it is almost like any tropical beach. An awesome beach that rewards you after each storm.

Seen one, seen them all? Not true for a beach, they all have their own personality, color, and intensity. You can look at a beach every day and see something different. What could we compare this one to? Cote d'Azur, Florida, the Caribbean, Hawaii, Georgian Bay...

France, Cote d'Azur, Bandol. Allons-y let's take a look. Ah, Bandol, a small (red) wine producing village, with some of the oldest vineyards in France dating back to the Romans about 2,500 years ago, just east of Marseille. I came here for a weekend and stayed for a few years, the 'call of the tide'!



Figure 2 Bandol, Provence, Cote d'Azur

The main beach is small, just a few hundred meters from end to end and bound at each end with rocky hills typical for the Mediterranean area. The color of course, azure blue. There are other well hidden beaches, like the one in St. Tropez, where we guys used to check out Brigitte Bardot, who was the authority on bikinis back then or the one at the end of my street in Marseille, but that was just enough for a quick dip. By far my favourite beach was Bandol, with the fine sand and all the tourists who thought that this was a de facto topless beach, which it was not, but none of us saw the need to tell them. A sexy beach at that time!

Florida, West Palm Beach, Singer Island, named after the 23rd child of the sewing machine magnate. No secluded beach here, but jam packed with high rise hotels on the Atlantic ocean front and bungalows on the inside facing the mainland.



Figure 3 Florida, Singer Island

This stretch of beach is actually quite nice but subject to much erosion. Many of the hotels are condos for rent and the resident owners share their space reluctantly. There is always a shortage of deck chairs but for \$10/day the staff will magically find some. The mandatory \$20 valet parking is not included in the over \$300/day rooms.

Hawaii, Honolulu, Waikiki Beach, mostly visited by newlyweds. One exception, moi! Had to go there on business, in the middle of February. Waikiki Beach, see Figure 4, who would not want to spend big bucks to see tall buildings. Beach gets washed away from time to time and is then refilled. During my stay, the beach was very stony, right into the water and the double sandals from Tobago came in handy. Toured the whole island with a rental car, loved it.



Figure 4 Hawaii, Honolulu, Waikiki Beach

Trinidad, Macaripe Bay. Anyone else crazy enough to go there? Didn't think so. Our three car convoy drove at high speed from Port of Spain to this remote bay, on narrow roads. Suddenly turning off to the beach, a deserted beach, some of our guards stayed with the cars, and the rest kept an eye on our stuff at the beach. Nice waves and warm water, but too creepy, convoy back to the airport and off to Tobago. From the Travel advisory:

"Visitors to Trinidad and Tobago are also advised to be cautious when visiting isolated beaches or scenic overlooks where robberies can occur. Visitors should not walk alone. Valuables left unattended on beaches and in other public places are vulnerable to theft. Visitors should avoid neighborhoods known for high crime rates »

Tobago, Store Bay Beach, it's hot, so hot, you need two pairs of sandals to walk around the pool, oh what the heck jump in and swim to the other side, ten steps later and you're dry. On that day, the surf was up, the waves were six feet high and heavy, full of sand. In fact, the waves hit you like a ton of bricks, and for the ladies, it's an all out struggle to keep their tops in place.

Barbados, Rockley Beach, pleasant beach, pesky vendors. Thanks to the mini-jeep car rentals, it's easy to get around. Be prepared to buy a visitor driver's license for each driver. It's good for a year, so "y'all come back soon!"

Jamaica, Montego Bay, Negril, enough said. There are still secluded beaches waiting to be discovered I've seen many of them, many times, and one day I just may rip up my return ticket and stay. Yeah mon!

Wasaga Beach, Ontario, Canada. Come again? Wasaga Beach, pristine 14 km of white sand on a wide beach, the world's longest freshwater beach, on Georgian Bay, just 90 km north of Toronto.



Figure 5 Wasaga Beach, Georgian Bay, Ontario, 14 km of white sand – weekend action

Surprisingly warm, long walkout into the deeper water, low surf, nice sand, the works! Could that be the perfect beach? Let's take a closer look and apply some criteria to properly qualify it:

No vendors, no fees, no unlicensed taxis, English spoken everywhere, Canadian money accepted at par, no dope, no airport line up, no tips, no bribes and best of all, when you had enough, you get in your car and drive home. No musty bathroom, no lizards on the walls, no damage from the last hurricane, no electrical blackout, no gas rationing, no water shortage, no valet parking and if you live in the Toronto area, in ninety minutes you can be back in your own all inclusive mini-resort, cook your own food, mix your own drinks, listen to your music and finally, rest in your own sleep-number bed, and get away from it all. Eureka!

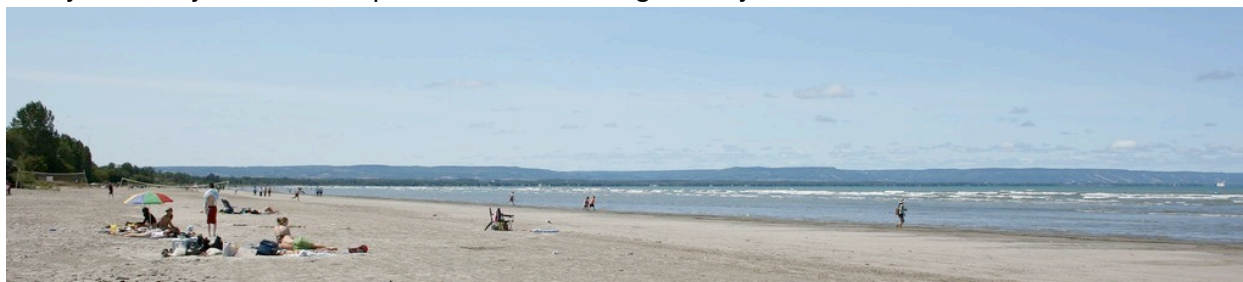


Figure 6 Wasaga Beach - Monday morning - the perfect beach!

The Italian prisoner Mario Ferlito

by Pat Negin Berger

I'm writing to add to your article "More To See In Wales."

At the age of 8, I was sent to boarding school near the village of Henllan to get away from the blitz and I remember the Italian soldiers very well. I also remember being in the village and thought the Germans had invaded when I saw them marching through the street. For the duration of the war these prisoners were the only people who seemed to know how lonely I was. They always seemed to be singing and my brother remembers one of them teaching him how to play tennis.

In 1994, my brother sent me an article referring to them and to the chapel, the sole remaining barrack of the camp located on a camp site owned by Mr. Thompson and Mario Ferlito's name was mentioned. I wrote to Mr. Thompson telling him about my bittersweet memories of those times and a few weeks later I received a letter from Mario.

We corresponded and in 1996 I was invited to Ferrara for the last reunion of the camp. I went with Pat Hardt, also from Concordia. We then went to the site of the school in Wales and visited the chapel which, although showing its age, was still very beautiful and remarkable.

Mario and I corresponded until December 2008 and I've kept every letter as well as the photo taken when captured in Tripoli on his 21st birthday "without", he said "even to shoot a bird," and other interesting reminiscences about his life at the camp and after. He was a sad man who said the happiest days of his life were those in Wales. He was also very romantic...

I stopped writing because he was getting extremely confused and there was no point in continuing. Although he was reticent about his talent, he was an artist and I have photos of much of his work as well as an oil painting of a house in Port Meirion, a water colour of my old school and another copied from a photo I sent him of a winter scene on Mount Royal from The Montreal Gazette. Pat Hardt has a lovely etching of his.

Anyway, seeing your article brought back many memories and I wanted to share them with you.