

CUPARUC

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



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GREETINGS FROM YOUR NEW PRESIDENT

I am pleased and honoured to have been elected President of the Concordia University Pension Association at last spring's CUPA meeting. Let us all make a grateful acknowledgement of the tremendous service rendered to the Association by our past President, Graham Martin, over his seven year term. And a grateful thank you to Margaret Martin also for all the work she has done in support of CUPA. It is a great comfort to me to know that Graham will have a continuing role on the CUPA Executive as Past-President. For those of you who don't know me already, here is a short history of my time at Concordia.

I joined Concordia University in 1974 as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education. During my career at the University, I held positions on numerous councils and committees, and served two terms as chair of the Department of Education (from 1986 to 1988 and again from 1989 to 1992). I was President of the Concordia University Faculty Association from 1994 to 1996 and a member of the university senate for nine years. I was Vice-Dean of Administrative Affairs for the Faculty of Arts and Science from 1997 to 2003. I also served on the Board of Governors for six years. Outside the University, I served as President of the Canadian Association of Deans of Education for two years. Since retiring in June of 2008, I have particularly enjoyed having time to spend with my granddaughter, Ella, who lives only a few blocks away. And I have taken up guitar playing again, focusing on old country songs and big band standards.

Bill Knitter



MESSAGE DU PRÉSIDENT

Il me fut un honneur et un privilège d'être élu comme Président de l'Association des Retraités de l'Université Concordia à sa réunion du printemps passé. Nous devons tous être reconnaissants des services énormes rendus à l'Association par mon prédécesseur à la présidence, Graham Martin, au cours de ses sept ans au volant de l'Association. Nous devons aussi nos sincères remerciements à Margaret Martin pour tout son travail au soutien de l'Association. Je suis très soulagé à savoir que Graham continuera de jouer un rôle important sur l'exécutif de l'Association comme Président-Précédent. Pour ceux qui ne me connaissent pas déjà, je vous présente un court compte-rendu de mon séjour à Concordia.

J'ai fait mes débuts à Concordia en 1974 comme professeur adjoint au Département d'Éducation. Au cours de mes 34 ans à Concordia j'ai siégé sur plusieurs conseils et comités en plus d'avoir passé deux termes à la présidence du Département de l'Éducation (de 1986 à 1988 et encore de 1989 à 1992). Je fus Président de l'Association de Professeurs de Concordia (CUFA) de 1994 à 1996 et membre du Sénat pendant neuf ans. De 1997 à 2003, j'étais Vice Doyen des Affaires Administrative de la Faculté des Arts et Sciences. Pour une durée de six ans j'étais membre du Conseil de l'Université. À l'extérieur de Concordia, je fus Président de l'Association Canadienne des Doyens d'Éducation pendant deux ans. Depuis ma retraite en 2008, je passes des heures agréables avec ma petit-fille de 8 ans, Ella, qui demeure à quelques coins de rue de chez nous. Je

recommence de nouveau à jouer le guitare, me concentrant sur la musique country traditionnelle et la musique des Big Bands.

Bill Knitter



THREAT TO REPRESENTATION AT THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Bill Knitter

The Board of Governors is currently in the process of revising its structure. The chief features of current proposals are a reduction in size from about 40 members to around 25 and insuring that the Board majority is composed of those external to the University. There is also a proposal to abolish the position of Observer, a category that included positions for one representative from non-active members of the pension plan, one from the permanent and professional support staff, and one from CUPFA. Evidently, the Part-time Faculty Association will have a regular voting position in the new structure, so will the permanent and professional support staff have a regular voting position, but there is currently no plan to allow continued representation for the pensioners with or without vote. As far as I can tell, we would be the lone constituency to lose representation in the new Board.

Graham Martin wrote to President Lowy to ask for reconsideration of the issue; Dr. Lowy's brief, negative reply was short on reasons and long on "it's been decided." Though Dr. Lowy places the discontinuance of the Observer position in the context of a smaller and more streamlined Board, it is not at all clear that a smaller or more streamlined Board will make for a more effective Board, or that it will address the crisis of confidence in the Board brought about by the ousting of a second President, or that the position of Observer constituted a problem that needed to be solved by any such solution. Certainly, as pensioners, as retired employees of Concordia who devoted our working lives to the betterment of Concordia, our position as Observer has been both strategically important in keeping us abreast of what is going on at the Board and what may be brewing for the future, and symbolically important in indicating that our loyal Concordia community constituency is important to the University.

We are an important constituency. We are goodwill ambassadors for Concordia in the wider community. Many retirees do volunteer work of one kind or another for the University. As an Association, we maintain a scholarship program for Concordia students; and, we are contributors to the annual Concordia campaign. As Concordians of long institutional experience and memory, we want to maintain a strong sense of connection to Concordia; we still feel we have a stake in Concordia's success. Abolishing our Observer status implies that our presence at the Board constituted a problem and that our connection to the Board and the University is not important to the University. It will also reinforce an image of a Board that is out of touch with the broader constituencies of the University and that it wants to make its decisions in private. We will continue to urge the Board to reconsider its stance on our Observer position.



RÉPRÉSENTATION AU CONSEIL DE LA UNIVERSITÉ MENACÉE

Bill Knitter

Le Conseil de l'Université est en train de modifier sa structure. Le changement majeur proposé est celle de la réduction de 40 à 25 membres et celle d'assurer que la majorité des membres arrivent de l'extérieur de l'Université. Il y a aussi une proposition d'abolir le poste d'Observateur, une catégorie qui comprenait un représentant parmi les membres non-actifs du régime de retraite, un observateur des employés professionnels de soutien ainsi qu'un troisième de l'Association de Professeurs à temps partiel (CUPFA). Un représentant de CUPFA ainsi qu'un représentant de l'Association des Employés Professionnelles de Soutien auront chacun le droit de vote dans la nouvelle structure, cependant il n'y a aucune proposition de permettre la représentation des retraités, avec ou sans droit de vote. Pour autant que je puisse dire, nous sommes seules à perdre notre représentation au sein du Conseil.

Graham Martin a écrit au Président Lowy en insistant que le sujet soit reconsidéré; la réponse négative de Dr. Lowy fut avare des raisons et forte sur "il fut décidé." Quoique Dr. Lowy explique la discontinuité du poste dans le contexte d'un Conseil réduit à l'essentiel, il me semble moins clair qu'un tel Conseil sera plus efficace, ou qu'il adressera la crise de confiance engendrée par le renvoi du

deuxième Président, ou que ce poste d'observateur créa un problème nécessitant son annulation. Assurément, comme retraités, comme employés à la retraite de Concordia ayant consacré une grande partie de nos vies à l'amélioration de l'Université, notre poste d'observateur a été d'une grande importance afin de nous tenir au courant de ce qui se passe au Conseil en plus de démontrer l'importance symbolique de notre groupe à l'Université.

Nous formons un groupe important, nous sommes des ambassadeurs de bonne volonté représentant Concordia pour la communauté au large. Plusieurs d'entre nous font du bénévolat au sein de l'Université. Comme Association, nous entretenons un programme de bourses destiné aux étudiants de Concordia; nous contribuons à la campagne annuelle de Concordia. Comme communauté de Concordia depuis des décennies, nous désirons conserver un sens fort de connexion avec Concordia; nous sommes important au succès de Concordia. Abolir notre poste au Conseil semble indiquer que notre présence constituait un problème et que notre lien avec le Conseil n'avait pas d'importance. Cette décision renforcera l'image du Conseil d'être coupé des communautés au large et désireux de rendre ces décisions derrière des portes closes. Nous allons continuer à insister au Conseil de repenser sa position en ce qui concerne notre poste d'observateur.



LONDON AND ITS FIRES (VARIATIONS ON A THEME)

Mair Verthuy

London's burning, London's burning.

Fetch the engines, fetch the engines.

Fire fire, Fire fire!

Pour on water, pour on water.

London's burning, London's burning.

Many many moons ago when I was starting school in Britain, in our earliest years we learned all sorts of children's songs, including the one above, which was developed after what is known now as The Great Fire of London in 1666. This particular fire started in the king's bakery on Pudding Lane (please note that I did not invent this nor the fact that it all ended in Pye Lane!!!), swept through the city and razed 430 acres of houses, churches and land on the north side of the Thames and, to all intents and purposes, completely wiped out the mediæval city with its narrow streets and wooden structures, like the Tudor houses where the upper floors on either side of the street almost met in the middle and where the roofs were thatched.

Many believed that it was responsible for putting an end to the Plague, which was still spreading death across London when the fire occurred. The face of London was forever after completely changed. The fire also produced the same xenophobia and religious intolerance that we see today after any disaster. Plus ça change.

In the riots that occurred in August, we have just seen the latest example of London burning. These were deliberately set fires that again consumed old and new buildings, shops, warehouses, dwellings, once more changing the face of certain districts. If this time almost all of London didn't burn, it's because the Great Fire encouraged the creation of the London Fire Brigade (known under different names and changing structures), currently the third largest in the world. The firefighters fought hard. A great deal of damage naturally resulted from the rioting, but these fires did not engulf the whole city. Cf preceding paragraph re xenophobia and religious intolerance.

Editors Note: This is the beginning of the an article by Mair Verthuy. See the online section for the complete text.



Social Committee Events

While some of us are still pondering summer, our trusty Social Convener Geoff Adams is planning far ahead and announces that this year's annual Christmas Lunch will be held on Wednesday, December 7 from 11am to 2pm. Mark it on your calendars right now.....

Also, the following events are coming up very soon:

- Wed, 21 September 2 p.m.. A Stroll Through Saint-Henri. A guided walk exploring the rich past of the area.
- Thurs, 13 October, 1:30 p.m. Pointe-à-Callières Museum. To Your Health, Caesar! Wine and the Gauls. An exhibit celebrating wine's splendid history, especially the birth of wine-making in Gaul.
- Wed, 16 November, 2 p.m. Dawson Theatre, Atwater St. above de Maisonneuve. Members of the graduating class of Dawson's Theatre program perform one of Shakespeare's classics.

For more information on any of these, see the website at : <http://cupa.concordia.ca>, or email Geoff at: jada2@videotron.ca



Social Outing from days gone by.....

The CUPARUC Newsletter

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NEW AND DECEASED MEMBERS SINCE OCTOBER 2010

Deceased

- John Udy
- Sharron Reynolds
- Frieda Morris
- Joseph Tascone
- Jacques Loustau
- Gary McIntyre Boyd
- Viola Soles
- Helen Gallagher
- John Doyle
- Bill Cozens
- Claude Belanger
- Marcel Chabot
- Clair Fischer
- William Gardiner
- Louyse Lussier

New

- Elaine Arsenault
- Marlis Hubbard
- Larry English
- Ellen Jacobs
- Laurie Zack
- Mia Lobel
- A. Gyasi Nimarko



NEXT MEETING:

November 4, H-763

Guest Speaker: TBA



GUEST SPEAKER DOUGLAS LIGHTFOOT

The April 28 CUPARUC general meeting featured Douglas Lightfoot as the guest speaker. A retired Mechanical



Engineer, H. Douglas Lightfoot graduated from the University of British Columbia, in Applied Science in 1952, and received an MBA from Concordia University in 1976. He spent eighteen years with Domtar Inc. at the Research Centre in Senneville, Quebec, working on research, engineering and economic studies of alternate energies as well as a wide variety of

projects for the pulp and paper, chemicals and construction materials businesses. He continues to have an active interest in energy and energy related subjects and is a member of the Global Environmental and Climate Change Centre (GEC3), McGill University branch in Montreal, and has been associated there since 1992. He has published technical papers, contributed to published works and has written reports for the Centre on various subjects related to energy.

His topic was "Energy supply is more important than climate change" - definitely a contentious subject these days.

Mr. Lightfoot pointed out how important energy is to human welfare. With 85% of world energy currently supplied by fossil fuels, it is clear that a replacement must both mitigate carbon dioxide emissions and secure a stable and affordable fuel supply. He has produced a video (DVD) that explains that:

- * tar sands cannot cure "peak oil"
- * world energy consumption could triple by 2100
- * history and technical limitations show renewable energy cannot ever provide more than 10% of world energy

- * energy efficiency and conservation marginally reduce carbon dioxide emissions
- * tree planting is not reliable for storing carbon dioxide permanently
- * the hydrogen economy is currently impractical

His video recommends the widespread adoption of nuclear fission energy. Using modern fast breeder reactors, nuclear fuel is the only energy that is large enough to replace fossil fuels and mitigate atmospheric carbon dioxide.

He also pointed out that for all the common concern of nuclear accidents, far fewer people have directly died from nuclear accidents than accidents in coal mining, oil drilling and refining or gas recovery. Equally, even including the Chernobyl incident, far fewer people have suffered ill effects of nuclear accidents than have been affected by explosion, fire, air pollution, and acid rain associated with carbon based fuels.

Mr. Lightfoot proved to be an interesting and persuasive speaker for the CUPARUC attendees. More information regarding Mr. Lightfoot and his topic can be found at: <http://www.nobodysfuel.com/>

The very first "senior moment."



And **that's** what happened to the dinosaurs!



Behind the Pomp and Circumstance

Graeme Decarie

Sir George Williams College, into the 1950's was the first step (alas, just the first step) toward the future of universities. They had been largely finishing schools for rich kids, the sort who took Latin but would never use it for anything except as punch lines for dirty jokes. To a lesser degree, they trained professionals like lawyers and, to a much lesser degree, scholars just like their professors.

Learning consisted pretty much of information taught by rote, and most of it instantly forgotten. For most students, it was quite adequate to "pass through" university. That, with no encumbrance of intellect, was sufficient to establish one as a "McGill man", or whatever.

Sir George was the first to make it affordable and possible for working class - and many middle class - students to go to university. It did it by maintaining pretty basic services. (The library was barely larger than a medium size apartment.) It made it possible to go to school at night while holding on to that indispensable job. It was a good, first step. But there would never be a second one.

Professors never understood that they were teaching to a socially and culturally more diverse population for whom a finishing school education had little value. The new professors, like the old ones still saw the university in terms of snob appeal, self-glorification, and imagined esteem. The curriculum and the methodology remained much as they had been for centuries. The only significant change was the prominence given to ideologies - first Marxism and now neo-conservatism as business comes to dominate the agenda.

The competition for students and the lust for status led to the waste of money on journals, unread, to become

retirement homes for articles, unreadable. Then the universities fell victim to the judgement of magazine editors who rated universities both vaguely and unscientifically. They got away with it because ratings were based on the same, self-serving criteria that professors used to set standards - publication, grants, NEW research methodologies with a NEWER one to satisfy Maclean's demand for INNOVATION. When I began teaching at Concordia, the flavour of the month in history was quantitative research... And with all the fuss and cost, none of it has had any measurable impact on politics or daily life..

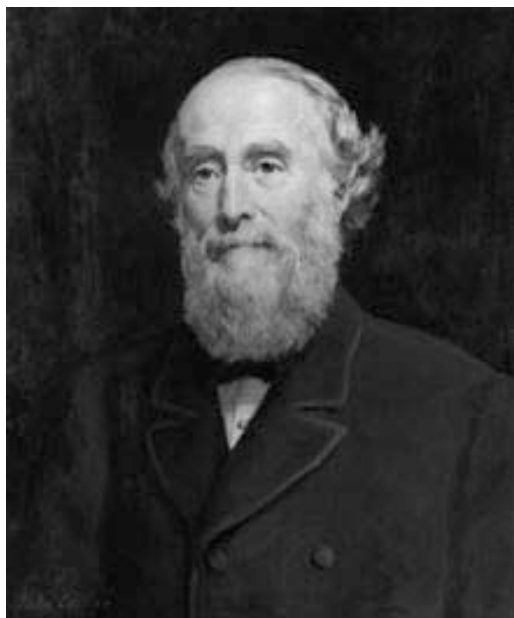
The lust for prestige rather than value, for research rather than teaching, has proven an expensive way to run a university. That is what Queen's is learning. Like other universities, it has priced itself out of the market; and so it relies heavily on support from big business. But CEO's are not tooth fairies. In exchange for their money and influence, they want a curriculum and research that is designed largely for their their own bottom line.

Here, in the Atlantic region, the power of the regional barons is so great that they can attack public education with no comment from education faculties. They can insist on more emphasis on ideology, and get it. When the Great Baron's newspapers want a favourable comment on whatever self-serving interest the great one currently has, they can always go to a local professor to offer his view. (The topic doesn't matter. He's eminent.)

The local barons recently set up a council to plan the future of the economy. (One would have thought that was a function of government in a democracy.) University presidents were "invited" to sit on the council. As you can bet, they all scampered forward like bunnies. They knew their role - to lend dignity and legitimacy to an illegitimate exercise. And so there they all sit, like potted palms in a brothel.

In the near future the most obvious victims will be in the arts. But the sciences, too, will feel the loss of independence.

What can be done about it? Probably nothing. unless some school will show the understanding and integrity to start again from where Sir George was in the 1950s.



Sir George Williams



THE TOUR DE FRANCE



AlexS.

Y'all know about this tour, right? The bicycle race! Yes I know it's so proletarian, but then, riding a bicycle seems to have its advantages. There was not one obese rider in the group of about two hundred competitors. It's a long haul; it takes about three weeks and extends over more than 3500 km. I just finished the tour myself. Believe it or not, but I am hurting. It's not my legs or my arms but my hand. I did

France has long realized that this is a great opportunity to showcase herself with all the scenic sites along the route of the tour. That includes many ancient and beautiful castles, churches, villages and villas, along with a narrative of their history. Very informative, and, of course, you get the visual, almost better than being there. So that's the part of the tour you can really enjoy, even if you are not into cycling.

In 2010 there were twenty teams with ten riders each, at least at the start. The tour goes on for twenty days. That's ninety hours of cycling. Not all finish. Each daily run or stage is a mini race, with points gained by winning the stage and being the fastest for specific sections for that



the tour in my media room, in front of the high definition widescreen TV. My injury? Remote controleritis.

Time well spent to see France! Forget about the bicycles for a moment and look at the route. You can see over 3500

day. Rewards are yellow, white, green and polka dot jerseys for best overall, best youngest rider, leader in points and for the best mountain rider. Overall winner take-home pay is about \$600,000.



km of French roads from the street level and even more important, from the helicopters that cover all angles. This is the biggest and most prestigious bicycle race in the world and it is covered for TV by 35 cars and trucks, four helicopters, two aircraft and numerous motorcycles.

This means that you can travel across France, view the landscape from all angles and see all there is to see about the race and all of the attractions along the way.

How about the logistics? There is a parade with advertising etc that is 20 km long, directed by 12 national police guards and four traffic police followed by three medics, all on motorcycles.

For the race portion, there are over 250 TV cameramen, most of them on motorcycles, others on the sidelines and there are another 27 motorcycles with various functions such as: to regulate position of service vehicles behind the riders; to take timings for race control; to inform breakaway groups of their timing; to drive the arrival judges for sprints during daily stage; to look out for illegal activities; to carry the drinks, if a rider missed a roadside distribution; for medical help; for breakaway groups; for official photographers; for official journalists and to regulate traffic behind the race. Now that those details out of the way, we can concentrate some more on the scenic aspects of the tour. Not many countries have such a diverse geography as France, from the flat lands in the north to the Alps in the west, across the plains in the south to the Pyrenees in the southwest and finally the coastal home stretch from Bordeaux to Paris. Some of the roads are modern, others are ancient, and some are very ancient.

Take a closer look at the places where the 2010 tour passed through. Stage 11 started in a small town called “Sisteron”. Sounds familiar? Probably not. Yet, this road-way was a path created in 218 BC by none other than Hannibal, on his way to try and sack Rome, thus starting the Second Punic War.

Just imagine seeing 38,000 foot soldiers, 8,000 cavalry and 38 war elephants making their way through Sisteron, all the way from Spain. Hannibal then crossed the river Rhone and made his way across the Alps to Italy.

One hundred years later, in 118 BC, this path was paved by the Romans and called the Via Domitia, after their Pro-consul, at the time when the first Roman colony “Narbonne” was founded in Gaul. Little did Hannibal know that two thousand years later, there would be a race on a contraption called a ‘bicycle’, on the very same route. Today you can still follow this route all the way to Spain.

Sacre bleu! Or like Hannibal liked to say: “Viam inveniam aut faciam” (I’ll either find a way or make one).



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Mair Verthuy

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ery on Pudding Lane (please note that I did not invent this nor the fact that it all ended in Pye Lane!!!), swept through the city and razed 430 acres of houses, churches and land on the north side of the Thames and, to all intents and purposes, completely wiped out the mediæval city with its narrow streets and wooden structures, like

the Tudor houses where the upper floors on either side of the street almost met in the middle and where the roofs were thatched.

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aged the creation of the London Fire Brigade (known under different names and changing structures), currently the third largest in the world. The firefighters fought hard. A great deal of damage naturally resulted from the rioting, but these fires did not engulf the whole city. Cf preceding paragraph re xenophobia and religious intolerance.

But this is certainly not the whole story of London and its fires. Indeed

the expression The Great Fire of London was already in use before 1666 to describe an earlier deflagration the Fire of 1212. It was Queen Boudicca (or Boadicea) attempting to keep the Romans at bay who appears, as early as AD60, to have started the fashion for setting the

capital city ablaze. Alas she failed to bar the Romans, although only ashes seem to have survived her efforts, ashes which have been very useful to archaeologists. Next in line came the Roman emperor Hadrian (best known for his Wall); after his visit to London in AD120, a major fire once more almost totally wiped out the city. Then, of course, came the Norman invasion(1066) which in 1087 picked up the challenge of erasing London. There are more dates for major fires: In 1135 a huge conflagration started on London Bridge, leaving much destruction and many deaths in its wake; in 1212, the infamous Southwark fire also resulted in death and destruction.

Then we skip to 1834. **Burning of Parliament** is the popular name for the fire which destroyed the [Palace of Westminster](#), the home of the [Parliament of the United Kingdom](#), on 16 October 1834. The blaze, which started from overheated chimney flues, spread rapidly throughout the mediæval complex and developed into the biggest conflagration to occur in London since the [Great Fire of 1666](#), attracting massive crowds. The fire lasted for many hours and gutted most of the Palace, including the converted [St Stephen's Chapel](#) (the meeting place of the House of Commons), the Lords Chamber, the Painted Chamber and the official residences of the [Speaker](#) and the [Clerk of the House of Commons](#). Westminster Hall and a few other parts of the old Houses of Parliament survived the blaze and were incorporated into the New Palace of Westminster, which was built in the Gothic style over the following decades. (Thank you, Wikipedia)

In 1915, Germany dropped the first ever bomb on London; Hitler's Blitzkrieg started in 1941, brought on by his desire to raze London (and perhaps a few other cities) to the ground to punish Britain for not just giving in as so many other European countries had done in the presence of the Nazi troops. The Blitz killed over 41,000 Londoners, injured over 49,000, and destroyed 46,000 dwellings. Buckingham Palace and the House of Commons were hit. Many incendiary bombs were used over London and a significant number of other cities. Flames were a too familiar sight; homelessness was rampant; London was burning.

Of course, Britons wouldn't be Britons without unexpected variations on the use of this latter expression. One need only think of The Clash! At the very beginning of the

punk scene, they developed their own version of the song and performed it in 1976 in London's Victoria Park before 80,000 people. The crowd went mad! With hindsight, we can see how seriously predictive the Clash were.

London's burning! London's burning!

All across the town, all across the night

Everybody's driving with full headlights

Black or white turn it on, face the new religion

Everybody's sitting 'round watching television!

London's burning with boredom now

London's burning dial 99999

I'm up and down the Westway, in an' out the lights

What a great traffic system - it's so bright

I can't think of a better way to spend the night

Then speeding around underneath the yellow lights

London's burning with boredom now

London's burning dial 99999

Now I'm in the subway and I'm looking for the flat

This one leads to this block, this one leads to that

The wind howls through the empty blocks looking for a home

I run through the empty stone because I'm all alone

London's burning with boredom now...

London's burning dial 99999

(Joe Strummer)

And let's not forget that London's Burning is still one of the hippest clubs in London!

Other major cities have known fires (Tripoli comes to mind...) but only in London, it seems, are fire and the city so closely associated that it is difficult to think of one without the other, as a metaphor, as a club or as a tragic reality. Fetch the engines...