



St. John's College

聖約翰學院

summer 2005

newsletter



Human need at home and abroad

SJC fellows reach out to make a difference

By: Donna Dykeman on behalf of the 2004-05 SJC Outreach Committee



Up close and personal with some of the new goats recently united with Southern Sudan families thanks to the SJC Outreach Committee!

The faces of the St. John's College Outreach Committee change from year-to-year, but one central goal remains: to contribute to the lives of those less fortunate in our community—be it Vancouver or on the other side of the world. Since the early days of College life, residents have found ways to be involved through activities such as food, clothing, and makeup donations to local charities, working at soup kitchens, and learning about our communities through guest speakers and documentary films. Two of the Committee's most recent projects invoked residents to learn about the lack of provisions for people in their communities, and to be active participants in fundraising ventures to meet some of these basic human needs here in Vancouver, and as far away as Southern Sudan.

Vancouver Project

It is well known that Vancouver

has a rising epidemic of homelessness, alcohol/drug addiction, and HIV infection, particularly concentrated in the Downtown Eastside. A few of the challenges facing this community include lack of sustainable shelter, nutrition, consistent counseling and support, access to health professionals and programs, and employment.

In October 2004, the Outreach Committee contacted the Lookout Emergency Aid Society in Vancouver, which provides safe housing and counseling support for people recovering from drug addictions, abusive relationships, and mental illness.

"Our experience is that when decent housing is provided for people their lives tend to stabilize, while those who remain in shelters have a tendency to use drugs and alcohol and so forth," said Al Mitchell, Emergency Services Manager at the Lookout Society.

Through the Lookout Society, St. John's College became a housing sponsor for Taylor, a woman who wants to leave a world of drug addiction and depression behind her and start a new life in Vancouver. The sponsorship commitment provides funding to supplement the cost of an apartment for one year in a location where Taylor will have a low probability of exposure to illicit drugs.

College residents raised money through two ventures: an auction of residents' talents at the October Harvest Dinner, and the sale of hand-made packages of candy at the Christmas Dinner. The auction included such items as home-cooked meals of international flavours, sailing and music lessons, a serene, and even a bedtime tuck-in service. Between the two initiatives, we raised \$900 to help Taylor pay her rent. Residents also made contributions to a Christmas Hamper of household items and groceries to assist her as she settled into her new home. Although the duration of our commitment is for one year, we hope Taylor will be able to continue to establish a new life for herself in Vancouver.

Southern Sudan Project

In the same academic year, the Outreach Committee got involved with an international aid initiative

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Human need... *Continued from page 1*

through a non-profit NGO called Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan. Although Sudan has a long history of conflict within its borders, the most recent civil conflicts (1963-1971, and mid 1980s to present) have displaced hundreds of thousands of Southern Sudanese citizens to neighbouring countries.

Fortunately, peace agreements and international interventions as recent as January 2005, have opened the door for some of these people to return to their territories. To help victims rebuild their homes and restore their livelihoods in the Southern Sudanese territory Aweil East, Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan has set up a sponsorship program called Abuk's Herd, wherein sponsors purchase goats at \$30 each to be distributed in mating pairs to returning families. College residents and Senior Fellows raised enough money in a period leading up to and during the annual Spring Dinner to purchase 66 goats in total! The Committee continues to remain in contact with Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan to follow the success of this initiative.

For more information about the Vancouver and Southern Sudan projects, please visit:

www.lookoutsociety.bc.ca/

www.share-international.org/archives/homelessness/hl-ch_Canada.htm

www.web.net/cass/abuk-herd.htm

How to be involved

Members of the Outreach Committee meet monthly to brainstorm ideas and plan events that will connect St. John's College with the opportunities in our extended communities. We benefit greatly from the wealth of enthusiasm and knowledge College members contribute with their diverse educational and life experiences. Junior Fellows can join the Committee at any time. Residents arriving this summer and fall will be introduced to the Committee at the annual SJC Clubs Night in September. Senior Fellows and Alumni are also encouraged to be involved and can be added to an e-mail list to receive information about Committee activities.

Acknowledgements

The Outreach Committee wishes to thank fellow residents, Senior Fellows and the St. John's College office staff for their encouragement and support over the past year. We look forward to continued involvement in our communities with your help next year.

Outreach Committee Members:

Donna Dykeman, Yvonne Gillespie, Stephen Ney, Rami Tabri, Helen Hoang, Timothy Came, Cynthia Xu, Navjot Singh, David Yeager, Grace Wang, Jessica Raposo, Caroline Szram, Tara Barnett, Farshid Agharebparast, Blanca Torres-Olave, Gorsharn Toor, Laura Estrada Alvarez, Ana-Maria Blaranu.

An insider's eye to Tibet

Distinguished Lecturer Tendzin Choegyal shares insights on a world in exile

By: David Luesink, SJC Junior Fellow

Tibetan exile and Buddhist thinker, Tendzin Choegyal, spent three weeks at St. John's College in February and March as part of the ongoing activities of the Centre of Tibetan Studies. Recognized as the 15th Ngari Rinpoche, Tendzin Choegyal is the youngest brother of the Dalai Lama. He enjoyed interacting with St. John's residents over breakfasts, and in other informal situations around the College, and his visit here attracted many scholars and individuals interested in Tibet. And although the closest I've been to Tibet is the Lama Temple in Beijing, I had the pleasure of interviewing Tendzin before he left. What follows is a summation of the insights he shared during that experience as well as vignettes from a number of more informal conversations over the course of his visit at the College.

When I asked TC (as he prefers to be called) what he felt the main message the Tibetan government-in-exile wanted the world to hear was, he answered in his characteristically brief manner, "All is not well in Tibet."

With this kind of simple, yet insightful reply, TC did much to raise awareness about his homeland. Interestingly, the consensus among Tibetans attending his seminar at the College was that the Chinese government is on a campaign to counter what they see as the growing influence of his Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile. TC, however, warned against the distorted message some young people in the West may be taking from popular media figures—counter to popular belief, the message is not anti-China, but anti-suppression. It holds true that if the

Chinese want to claim that Tibetans are brothers, they must learn to treat them that way. TC wants an end to not only oppression for Tibetans, but also for other minorities and even for the majority of Han Chinese who are not free.

TC also elaborated on Tibetan Buddhism, Tibet's legacy to the world. He believes that Buddhism will have a continuing place in the world as our understanding of it shifts from a religion to a spirituality, philosophy, or way of life, and that it will be studied more under the rubric of psychology.

When a seminar participant asked what the legacy of the Dalai Lama will be in ten years, TC again answered simply, "He'll be eighty years old." He added, however, that the Dalai Lama's legacy is subjective,



Tendzin Choegyal addresses guests at the annual SJC International Dinner.

something that we create. In reflecting upon that, I thought of the Lama Temple I visited in Beijing. It was created hundreds of years ago by the Manchu emperors, patrons of Tibetan Buddhism, and has an empty throne clearly labeled for the Dalai Lama. Perhaps it is not only Tibet where all is not well.



Johannean Jack Ling

Making the world a better place

An interview with Johannean Jack Ling

By: Principal Tim Brook

To talk to Jack Ling, as my wife and I did this spring in his New York apartment, you have to conclude that making the world a better place is simply the most natural thing for Johanneans.

Jack is a public health specialist who has devoted his life to addressing global health issues. This is what he most wanted to talk about during our time together, though he was happy to reminisce about his Shanghai school days at St. John's.

Jack attended the high school while Shanghai was under Japanese occupation. His high school memories included cheating on his Japanese tests—but everyone did. Even the teacher turned a blind eye. Jack went on to St. John's University, becoming editor of the school newspaper. He had to leave before he could graduate when his family moved to Hong Kong in 1949.

His experience with the school newspaper led Jack into journalism. Fluent in Mandarin, Cantonese, Shanghaiese, and English, he could talk to

practically everyone. He quickly earned a reputation for getting good stories, and later became the only Hong Kong journalist to cover the Korean War.

As the result of a chance interview with a UNICEF official, however, Jack switched course and joined the Fund, working first in Bangkok and eventually in New York. Jack remained with UNICEF for the next two decades, minus time taken to finish his undergraduate degree at Syracuse University and earn an M.A. from Stanford. He also worked for a time with the World Health Organization, ending up as a clinical professor of public health at Tulane University.

Though impressive, the past was not Jack's focus. What dominated our conversation was his current passion: iodine deficiency. As chair of the International

Council for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD) since 2001, Jack has been at the forefront of educating the public and lobbying governments to deal with the worldwide problem of inadequate diet. He explained that iodine deficiency affects foetal development, particularly foetal intelligence. The solution is simple and inexpensive: add iodine to salt. Yet getting governments to do this has been complex. Jack praised Canada for taking the lead in legislating iodization, but also noted that China has moved the percentage of iodized salt consumers from 30% to 95% in a matter of years.

However, Jack's real concern is with the last five percent—most of whom live in the most backward parts of China. By consuming cheap, non-iodized salt manufactured by small producers, the most compromised five percent are consigning themselves to further marginalization. These are the people who must be reached, but it is not easy.

"Development is a very frustrating experience," Jack admitted.

Success depends on mobilizing those who are in need. "Development means getting people involved, otherwise it cannot succeed."

As he is the first to admit, the world has changed since Jack was a student in Shanghai, but he feels strongly that the direction of change has been positive.

"In my day we still lived under colonialism, but today we no longer even think of colonialism." In the new world that he has had his part in making, Jack is the perfect postcolonial cosmopolitan, as much at home in New York and Geneva as he would be in Shanghai or Hong Kong. He credits St. John's for this adaptability.

"What made St. John's special was that we straddled two cultures," he said. "This means that we are able to cope with changing environments."

Jack Ling has used the advantages St. John's gave him to change the world for the better, and looks to the next generation of Johanneans to do the same.

The world at our doorstep

SJC launches Distinguished Visitors in Residence program

These days, the whole world is watching—and visiting—St. John's College. At least that's what it feels like after the successful inauguration of the College's Distinguished Visitors in Residence program during the 2004/05 academic year.

Our first visitor in October 2004 was Carma Hinton, an independent filmmaker whose films are arguably the best documentaries on China ever made.

The series continued in November with a visit by sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein, the founder of world-systems theory.

Professor Wallerstein gave three lectures, including a Vancouver Institute lecture which was designated as the first "St. John's College Lecture".

Our third visitor was Sharon Butala, Canadian award-winning novelist, memoirist, and environmental activist, who stayed at the College for a week in February. Ms. Butala had several engagements, including a talk at and co-sponsored with the Vancouver Public Library, and a Vancouver Institute lecture.

D.D. Jackson, Canadian-born, New York-based, jazz pianist-composer, resided at the College from February 5-15. Mr. Jackson's

program included a performance at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, a Vancouver Institute lecture, a solo concert at the UBC School of Music, and a workshop at the Kiwanis Music Festival. You can read D.D.'s own account of his visit on his weblog at www.ddjackson.com.

Our final visitor for 2004/05 was Tenzin Choegyal, the youngest brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He was born in Lhasa in 1946, and at the age of four was recognized as the 15th Ngari

Rinpoche. A former member of the Tibetan Administration (Tibetan Government in Exile), he is one of the closest confidantes and advisors to the Dalai Lama and regularly accompanies him on official travels. A longer account of Choegyal's visit is found on page 2.

We thank all of our guests for their time, attention and insights, and we look forward to welcoming additional visitors in residence in the coming year.

Jazz pianist-composer D.D. Jackson resided at St. John's College in early February.





Principal Tim Brook

Message from the Principal

What an extraordinary year this has been. When I moved to St. John's College from Toronto last September, I expected that there would be many duties to take up and many things to learn, but I had no idea how absorbing the work of Principal would be, nor how stimulating the intellectual environment. The transition has been an easy one.

My first initiative was to set up the Distinguished Visitors program, through which we enjoyed five outstanding scholars and artists who brought great excitement to the College. I can think of nothing better than chatting over breakfast with a Buddhist philosopher with Tendzin Choegyal's sense of humour, thinking out loud about writing with a novelist of Sharon Butala's hard-eyed sensitivity, or sitting up late talking about jazz with a brilliant musician like D. D. Jackson. The presence of these individuals has brought the College to the attention of UBC, and communities beyond. The best example I have of their impact comes from my mother, who heard St. John's College mentioned on the CBC in Toronto when Tendzin was interviewed.

When all five visits were over, I sent our Distinguished Visitors

letters appointing them Honorary Fellows of St. John's College. The position brings with it only one benefit, which I hope they will use: an open invitation to come back and stay at the College once a year. Two have already promised to visit us in the coming year.

It must be acknowledged that the Distinguished Visitors program was made possible through the generous financial arrangements put in place upon my arrival by UBC's Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr. Frieda Granot. I appreciate her confidence in what I am doing, and hope that other supporters of the College will come forward in the next year to provide the program with a permanent endowment.

My job as Principal has put me in touch with many of the original Johanneans, the graduates of St. John's University in Shanghai from which we take our name. I had lunch with the New York

chapter in November, visited the Shanghai and Hong Kong chapters in January, and went down to San Francisco in February to have lunch with the Northern California chapter. This spring I had the pleasure of hosting two dozen members of the Vancouver chapter for lunch in the Dining Hall and taking them on a brief tour. I hope to visit other chapters in the coming year.

Somehow, amidst all these activities, I have managed not to neglect my scholarly work as a China historian. Harvard University Press released *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* in January, and Routledge Curzon in London the same month published *The Chinese State in Ming Society*.

Let me close by thanking everyone—Junior and Senior Fellows, Johanneans, my incredible office staff, and my new colleagues at UBC—for all the help I have received during my first year at St. John's. I cannot imagine achieving all that we have without your enthusiastic support.



Sal Ferreras, Instructor in the UBC School of Music, and three of his students present an evening of Puerto Rican bomba music.



About St. John's College

St. John's College has roots that extend back to St. John's University in Shanghai, China. Graduates of the University—known as Johanneseans—are able, through a blending of Chinese and Western approaches to teaching, to be at home anywhere in the world. Continuing in the tradition of excellence and internationalism of its namesake, St. John's College at UBC aims to build links between different parts of the world, and to serve as an intellectually and culturally diverse centre for its members.

For more information about St. John's College at UBC, please contact:

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Visual and Performing Arts Series update

St. John's College has continued to build on its already well-established musical and performing arts activities over the winter and spring terms. Some 35 performances took place in the Fairmont Social Lounge, including a return visit by the critically acclaimed Borealis Quartet.

To our good fortune, a number of students enrolled in graduate music programs called the College home this year and they proved to be enthusiastic per-

formers who graced the community with a series of Wednesday afternoon, pre-dinner recitals.

As well, Dorothy Chang, Assistant Professor of Composition with the UBC School of Music and a St. John's College Faculty Fellow, coordinated a monthly performance series, featuring faculty members and ensembles from the School.

We also were honoured to host a masterclass on behalf of the School of Music. Renowned

cellist Raphael Wallfisch gave a masterclass on February 28, to which all College residents were invited. Mr. Wallfisch also performed as a featured guest artist with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra during his stay in Vancouver.

If you would like to receive notices of upcoming performances, please contact the College Event Coordinator at 604.822.8781, or sjc.events@ubc.ca.

A fond farewell SJC mourns passing of Johannean Thomas Koo

Earlier this year, members of the St. John's College community were saddened to hear of the passing of long time College supporter, Johannean Thomas Koo.

A look back at his life reveals that it was closely interwoven with the College and its culture of adventure, diversity and spirituality. After his graduation from St. John's University, Shanghai in 1945, Mr. Koo's first job was at the American Consulate in Shanghai. After

two years, he was admitted to the University of Colorado, and later went to Columbia University where he obtained his MA in Economics. He came to the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1950s and worked as an economic analyst at Lockheed for more than 30 years, retiring in the early 1990s. He loved playing golf and was once cited in the local newspapers for a hole in one!

Mr. Koo came from a family with many brothers and sisters

and several of his siblings immigrated to the United States. Among them was his sister Theresa, who as a devout Catholic like her brother Thomas, had spent many years in prison in China because of her faith before she finally came to America in the 1990s.

Mr. Koo died in his sleep on February 18, 2005, aged 83. He is survived by his wife Zona and missed by all members of the SJC community.