



St. John's College  
聖約翰學院

spring 2003

# newsletter



## Everybody salsa!

Students inspire salsa movement at  
St. John's College

Everybody salsa! Throughout the world, that familiar refrain calls up images of colour, passion, and pulsating music. Thanks to the enthusiasm and efforts of College residents Marcelo Garcia, Kenji Okuma, Anthony Waldron, Rebecca Simpson and Yoko Namita, the salsa movement has taken root at UBC.

Since the start of the fall semester, Marcelo and Kenji, with the help of Anthony, have been hosting Friday night salsa lessons where about 15 regular participants have been learning the basic moves and occasionally taking their skills to the dance floor of a local Latin dance club in Vancouver. In the spirit of St. John's College, the atmosphere at the lessons fosters fun and cross-cultural friendship.

Participating students come from countries as diverse as China, Greece, Japan, Canada and Turkey. Marcelo believes that teaching the classes with Kenji, a non-Latin salsa instructor, "is proof that dance and music can surpass cultural barriers and bring people together under the banner of diversity."

Teaching people how to dance and have fun together has been the inspiration for Kenji's involvement, but for both him and Anthony, the highlight was watching students in action at a local dance club.

"The club night was a real highlight," enthused Anthony.

"Everybody was so psyched to go to a club and actually know how to dance to this music. For many this was a personal first."

The group is still laying plans for the current semester, but Marcelo hopes to collaborate on a new learning approach to encourage more beginners. Anthony would love to see the current group reach a standard where they could give a show.

Marcelo also has a personal interest in the cultural origins of salsa and would like to incorporate some elements of this into the next round of lessons, perhaps by inviting students to screen a few movies or documentaries about salsa.



St. John's salseros Marcelo Garcia and his partner, Ayuchi Goto, demonstrate the power and appeal of salsa dancing.

All of the instructors agree that whatever direction they take, bringing salsa to St. John's College has been a great way to get to know fellow College residents and, as Marcelo articulated, "to connect on a personal level through, feeling, movement and emotion." This, they concur, is what will inspire the next generation of St. John's "salseros" who they hope will continue the movement after they leave the College.

# Workshop tackles globalization in mountain environments

Olav Slaymaker, South-North Workshop Chair and Faculty Fellow

On June 24–25, 2002, St. John's College was home to the Second Annual South-North Workshop on "Globalization in the Mountain Environments: Conflicts and Opportunities," which tied in perfectly with celebrations to mark the United Nations Year of the Mountains, 2002.

The doyen of Canadian mountain geo-ecologists, Jack Ives, opened the proceedings with an overview of mountain natural hazards. Distinguished visiting speakers addressed problems in the Himalayas (Vic Galay), the Andes and Central America

(Simon Cook), Bolivia (Juan Carlos Alluralde) and South-East Asia (John Graham).

Other highlights included a presentation by Hans Schreier and five of his current and former graduate students (Sandra Brown, Stephanie von Westarp, Jamie Ross, Yeshey and Regina Bestbier), who provided outstanding Himalayan-Andean comparisons, focusing on watershed management opportunities and conflicts. Olav Slaymaker outlined a methodology for dealing with the contested relationship between environmental vulnerability and social

resilience in Ecuador, Taiwan, British Columbia and Austria.

The most energetic contribution came from Janice Billy, a member of the Secwepemc People, the First Nations people occupying the south-central part of British Columbia. She spoke movingly on behalf of Chief George Manuel about the alienation of traditional lands by modern resource development interests and illustrated the central conflict issue of indigenous land claims. Finally, College Principal Grant Ingram chaired a panel discussion, which brought some of the major



2002 South-North Workshop speaker Jack Ives.

issues back for reconsideration and future action before the close of the workshop.

The Third Annual South-North Workshop will be held in April 2003, in collaboration with a Peter Wall Exploratory Workshop, and will have a water security emphasis to tie in with the United Nations declaration of a Year of Water in 2003.

## principal's message



Grant Ingram, Principal

St. John's College is a community of graduate students and scholars committed to furthering international, intercultural and interdisciplinary relationships. With this goal in mind, the College has continued to grow in the diversity of its academic and social programming. Since our last newsletter, we have hosted a number of distinguished lecturers, an International Telehealth Workshop, a European Union–Canada bilateral meeting on the northern dimensions of science and technology, the second annual South-North Workshop, and the first Learning to Lead weekend conference.

Academic programming this past year also included a series of lectures on China, a series on international refugee issues, and the Resident Speaker series. We also had visits and talks by a number of Johannians during this period. These are important as they help maintain our links with St. John's University Shanghai and its graduates, who were instrumental in the creation of our College.

Performing arts is another way in which residents share their talents with the community and contribute to understanding different cultures. The College has an International Choir, which sings at most of our special banquets. Music reflects the international composition of the community and the group is not afraid to sing in many languages unfamiliar to them.

The College has, during the past year, spent some time considering future directions both in terms of membership and academic programs. The advice of both Faculty and Junior Fellows is that the College must maintain an international focus, both in its membership and in its academic programs. It is our intention to focus on a few academic areas, international in nature, which will interest a broad cross-section of Junior Fellows and span a number of different disciplines.

# From the “Land of the Thunder Dragon” to St. John’s College

Reprinted, in part, from Grad Tidings, Fall 2002

It’s a long way from the Kingdom of Bhutan, “The Land of the Thunder Dragon,” to St. John’s College and the University of British Columbia, but Yeshey, one of only a few women to be sponsored by the Royal Government of Bhutan to study abroad, has been reveling in the opportunity of studying at UBC.

A research scientist in the Ministry of Agriculture in Bhutan, Yeshey (the Bhutanese have only one name) is engaged in a special one-year program designed by Professor Hans Schreier of the Institute for Resources and Environment. Yeshey’s area of expertise is soil fertility, management, and conservation, a critical area for Bhutan, and her eyes light up when she describes what she hopes to bring back to Bhutan from her year at UBC.

“It will be challenging, but I have a strong aim to ensure that Bhutan’s soil resources remain sustainable,” she said. “Our dependency on soil is going to increase in the future as demand for food is increasing due to population growth. Our farmers need to be educated about the importance of our soil resources, and how those resources must remain sustainable for future generations.”

Bhutan has maintained a policy of controlled development in order to preserve its national identity, customs and culture, and, as Yeshey pointed out in her application to reside at the College, the Bhutanese have not had many opportunities to experience new cultures, customs or western educational approaches. While urban settlements have sprung up with the process of modernization, as recently as the 1960’s telecommunication was non-existent in Bhutan and travel within the Kingdom could only be made by horseback or on foot... there were no roads.

At St. John’s College, with its international membership, Yeshey has learned from and exchanged ideas with graduate students from a wide range of disciplines, backgrounds and origins. She has enthusiastically contributed to the College community, sharing her own interests and experience as a speaker in the College’s 2002 South-North Workshop, which this year focused on Globalization in the Mountain Environments.

St. John’s College is proud to have made a contribution to Yeshey’s educational experience at UBC. We wish her well upon her return to Bhutan!

## Mentoring program helps forge life-long friendships

Last fall, “networking” reached new heights of success when resident Oana Branzei helped launch the College’s first official mentoring program for students new to the St. John’s community.

Oana decided the program should meet two goals: First, she wanted participants to form relationships based on professional interests, hopefully promoting long term friendships; and second, she sought to create stronger links between College alumni and current residents through the sharing of College culture and history. The latter was very timely because just as the mentoring program was getting underway, the College was celebrating five years of operation. The mentoring program provided our more senior residents with an official channel for sharing their experiences.

“The program is an effective way to quickly introduce new residents to College life, help them form lasting friendships, and get them involved with social activities and events,” explained Oana. “Each newcomer was paired with an existing resident who, in most cases, was the same age and gender and shared similar professional interests.”

Oana was impressed by the level of participation. Almost everyone volunteered whole-heartedly—either as individual mentors, floor representatives, event planners, or in some cases, as “adoptive mothers” where the need arose. Oana credits these volunteers for making the program such a success and she is grateful for their support and enthusiasm.

“The real highlight was seeing residents take genuine interest in each other’s lives and watching friendships take hold,” she emphasized.

Even though this is her last year at the College, Oana hopes the mentoring program will continue. She sees it as an ideal way to help the St. John’s College culture evolve through a mix of new ideas and invaluable history.

## Discovering strength

### Minerva conference inspires leadership in women

“Learning to Lead” was the theme of a conference hosted by the Minerva Foundation for BC Women and the College at St. John’s last June. Organizers included College resident Donna Dykeman and other women of influence who are committed to volunteering and sharing their life and leadership experience with young women.

All participants were women and included 30 grade 11 students from across the province, 30 graduate students from BC universities and 30 women from the professional community. They came together to benefit from Minerva’s mandate to promote successful living for women of all ages and walks of life.

“The Learning to Lead conference is an excellent example of how Minerva lifts up BC women, engages us in conversation, provides encouragement, and empowers us to seek success in our professional and personal lives,” explained Donna.

“Personally, I found the conference inspiring and rejuvenating,” she added. “Even more important was the effect on the high school students. The conference gave them an opportunity to express their life dreams and learn of the many avenues through which women of integrity have found success.”

The 2002 conference was so well received by participants and sponsors that organizers anticipate strong support for a repeat performance in June 2003. College resident Carolyn Beeson will be one of the organizers and believes the highlight will be learning and growing through interaction with other strong and aspiring women.

“I see myself as a strong woman with much to learn about leading,” she reflected. “By getting involved in this conference, I would benefit personally and be part of the process that helps other women find their inner strength, a quality I see as essential to leadership. I think this inner strength is something that can be learned over time and the more women who find it, the better our community will be as a whole.”

# Preserving a way of life

## College calls on residents to think early about alumni support

For many of the world's leaders in government, business and academia, the name "St. John's" evokes strong memories. It is this powerful and collective memory that led to the creation of St. John's College at UBC.

"We are grateful for the support of Johanneans who worked for almost a decade to build a new home for St. John's College at UBC, and who today continue to support us with gifts for programming and scholarships," said College Principal Grant Ingram.

Clearly, giving is a part of the history and culture at St. John's College—but it need not always be on a grand scale. Once they complete their education and return to their home countries, many residents express interest in helping to preserve the way of life at their "home away from home" at UBC. They want to help, but may underestimate the power of a smaller gift.

"Support of any kind is appreciated—both for its value and its intent. Small gifts given by residents just getting started in their careers add up over time and can make a big difference to the College,

and to all of the residents that follow in their footsteps," emphasized Principal Ingram.

"We never want to be seen as overly aggressive about fund-raising, but at the same time we don't want to discourage anyone from playing a role in our continued success."

One of the major initiatives that can benefit from support is the Academic Endowment Fund, which is used to develop a self-sustaining academic and cultural program, intended to enrich the learning of graduate students and prepare them for citizenship in the global community.

The Fund focuses on the development of a diverse academic program that encompasses these main areas of interest:

- Understanding Cultural Diversity
- Global Change Issues
- Science and Communication
- Shanghai Visiting Program

- Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program
- Community Understanding and Building
- Performing Arts Program

"Anyone who has spent time at the College knows that our vibrant academic programming attracts not only high caliber lecturers, but also talented students from around the world," enthused Principal Ingram.

"With the help of all of our supporters—great and small—St. John's College at UBC will continue to serve as a training ground for the leaders and thinkers of tomorrow."

There are many ways to get involved—through donations of cash, real estate, life insurance, securities or shares, or through gifts by will. For more information about supporting the College and to learn about tax benefits, please contact Principal Ingram.

### 2002-03 Lecture Series

The St. John's College lecture series plays a central role in the vibrant social and intellectual life at the College, drawing speakers and participants from all over the world. With 21 engagements completed from September to December, the 2002-03 series is off to a terrific start! If you're interested in taking in any of the 14 sessions remaining, please see our online schedule at [www.stjohns.ubc.ca/LectureSeries.stm](http://www.stjohns.ubc.ca/LectureSeries.stm)



## 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 Johanneans—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.

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