



St. John's College

聖約翰學院

Spring 2007

newsletter



Reaching out

Residents seek to better themselves & their communities

By: Chantal Beauregard,
Mathabo Tsepa & Dave Freeman

Each year, the St. John's College Outreach Committee supports charitable projects around the world and in our local community to help those in need. To do so, the members of the Committee give generously of their time, helping local organizations and raising money for a variety of projects. Over the past two years, the Committee has been involved with a chicken project in Lesotho, Africa, and with the now famous Holiday Dinner for Homeless at the Lookout Society's Living Room Drop-in Centre on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

The Chicken Project

In 2006, Junior Fellow Mathabo Tsepa gave a talk about her PhD research project based on the community of Ha Mpiti, Qacha's Nek district in southern Lesotho. After her talk, some residents asked her how they could help this community. Their desire to be involved was the prelude to this wonderful project!

Ha Mpiti is an area severely affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has negatively affected agricultural labour and the food production. In 2004, Mathabo founded a community-

based organization called Mohoma Temeng to help improve the well-being of the community and promote food security. The group consists of 19 women and one 13 year old girl, who took her mother's place in the group after she died of AIDS. Mohoma Temeng's first concern was to find a way to inexpensively provide the community with food in a sustainable fashion.

To help meet the needs identified by this group of women, the St. John's Outreach Committee decided to raise money, which their organization could use to buy chickens. The eggs produced by the chickens will provide food for children, money to buy additional food and supplies, and resources necessary to sustain the project.

A services auction held during the March 2006 International formal dinner raised over \$2,100—four times more than expected. Mohoma Temeng has purchased the first group of 100 chickens and will use leftover money to buy chicken feed or replace chickens as necessary. Due to the worldwide bird flu crisis, delivery of the chickens took longer than originally anticipated, but finally, on January 4th 2007, the birds arrived in Ha Mpiti. The help provided by the Outreach Committee has revitalized the life of this community.

Holiday Dinner for the Homeless

This past December, for the second consecutive year, the Outreach Committee held

Continued on Page 5



Members of Mohoma Temeng tend their new flock of chickens.

Making note of what makes our country—and our College—memorable

Faculty Fellow Michael Byers shares his passion for Canada

“Canada is an extremely important and exciting country.”

This is the belief of St. John’s College Fellow Dr. Michael Byers and it is, perhaps, the most significant reason for his return to Canada three years ago, after spending close to 12 years working in the US and the United Kingdom.

“I see how potentially influential and remarkable this country is, and I want to communicate that,” explained Dr. Byers.

“UBC seemed like a good place to do that. This environment is giving me the opportunity to develop public policy and educate the next generation of leaders,

instilling in them a sense of what makes Canada different.”

Being a Fellow of SJC is itself an opportunity to help educate the next generation, and Dr. Byers has maximized this by serving as moderator of our new Public Issues Forum. This joint initiative between SJC and Green College recognizes the value of greater public reflection on the pressing issues engulfing the contemporary world, such as Iran’s Nuclear Program, which was the topic of the inaugural forum.

In addition to his role with St. John’s College, Dr. Byers holds a Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Global Politics

and International Law and serves as the Academic Director of UBC’s Liu Institute for Global Issues, which pursues interdisciplinary and policy-related research on global public policy issues related to human security. The role is a perfect fit with Dr. Byers’ research passion, which delves into the interaction of international law and politics, and the implications of their interaction on international organizations, the use of military force, the law of the sea, and human rights.

Holding a Canada Research Chair has allowed Dr. Byers to devote more time than many of his colleagues to research and writing, and for this he is grateful. The first significant result of his work under the Chair will appear this month (May 2007) with the release of his new book, *Intent for a Nation: A relentlessly optimistic manifesto for Canada’s role in the world*.

Historians will note that the book’s title is a play on George Grant’s infamous, “Lament for a Nation,” published 40 years ago. Dr. Byers hope is that all Canadians reading his work will recognize that “despite the tendency over the last decade to

be pessimistic, we have become an important nation. We should see the glass as half full.”

The downside to devoting so much time to his writing is that Dr. Byers has not been on the university campus as much as he would like—and that means missing out on many of the College’s multicultural activities. Having said that, it’s clear he has his priorities straight because he does try to make it to the dinner events!

“I’m very excited to be part of St. John’s College,” enthused Dr. Byers. “The dinners are absolutely wonderful because they bring people together from around the world. To see these individuals celebrate the friendships they have made and learn they have more in common than they have differences is stunning.

“St. John’s College itself is a mini example of what Canada is and what makes it truly different than the rest of the world. We exist here in remarkable harmony, despite religious, cultural, political, and linguistic differences, and this is parallel to what our country and its ongoing openness to immigration is all about.”



Faculty Fellow Michael Byers



Principal Tim Brook

Message from the Principal

The big news story this academic year has been environmental sustainability. Hardly a day goes by without another alarming report about the ever-growing threat to our sustainability as a species. We have become dangerously parasitic on other species, and our voracious hunger for resources is degrading the entire biosphere. Al Gore's Oscar-winning documentary, An Inconvenient Truth, has had something to do with putting the environment at the forefront of popular consciousness, but so too has the unseasonable winter we have just been through: temperatures warmer than they should be, snow falling where it is least expected (like Vancouver!), and the daffodils in the College quadrangle declining to bloom until April.

Perched on the cliffs overlooking the ocean at the westernmost edge of Vancouver, we at St. John's College find ourselves living on one of the most beautiful campuses in the world. It is easy for us to forget the ecological fragility of our enterprise—or it would have been, were it not for the Environmental Committee. There are many student-organized committees in the College, but I want to single out the Environmental Committee for special praise this year. Whether by performing skits at mealtimes, sending out messages on our list-serve, or showing films on environmental issues in the Fairmont Social Lounge, the committee has

prodded us all year to think about what we consume and what we waste, both as an institution and as individuals. I can no longer approach a waste bin in the College without looking over my shoulder to see whether someone on the committee is watching.

A concept I have taken to heart this year, thanks to the committee's persistence, is the "ecological footprint," pioneered by UBC's own Bill Rees. An ecological footprint refers to the amount of the earth's surface that is needed to produce the energy and resources we consume and absorb the waste we produce. Each of us has an ecological footprint by virtue of being alive. Naturally, the smaller the footprint, the better for the environment we tramp

across. It turns out that Canadians have very large feet. Average the global consumption and waste across the world's population and the ecological footprint for a single person is 2.23 hectares (7 acres). Do the same calculation for people living in Canada, and the average footprint is 7.6 hectares—over three times the world's average. I am not an ecopessimist, but I have enough pessimistic friends telling me that it is high time the College take sustainability more seriously.

I asked Junior Fellow Laura Estrada, who has been cheerfully persistent in her efforts to "green" the College, how big St. John's footprint is. Laura talked to Professor Rees about this question earlier in the year, and was a bit disappointed to discover that the calculation turns out to be quite complex. It would be easy enough to compile an inventory of the College's resource use and waste production, but a full accounting would require that we track the ecological burden each and every one of

Distinguished Visitor in Residence

College welcomes Professor Li Tiangang

By: Tim Sedo, Junior Fellow

Last fall, St. John's College opened its doors to the first Johannean Visiting Scholar, Professor Li Tiangang. From September 17 to December 1, 2006, Professor Li lived in residence, generously sharing his time and insights.

The professor's erudition and passion for broad learning never failed to draw a crowd of interested residents for informal breakfast and dinner conversations. The many students at SJC who study China-related topics were especially lucky to have such an approachable and learned expert on hand. I count myself in this circle and as such, Professor Li's kind mentorship will remain one of the highlights of my many experiences at SJC.

Capping off Professor Li's visit was a talk entitled, "The End of East and West," when he spoke with Dr. Tim Brook about the history and doubtful value of the bipolar portioning of the world into 'east' and 'west' categories. Their conversation explored the historic origins of this division and questioned its 'naturalness,' concluding with a provocative and timely question about the relevance of east and west distinctions in our increasingly globalizing world.

us creates by virtue of all the little decisions we make through the day about what to buy, what to consume, what to reuse, and what to throw away.

What matters is not so much how big the footprint is, but how quickly we can shrink it. And this is where the Environmental Committee is making a difference. They have introduced composting in the common kitchens and in the Dining Hall. They have set up recycling programs for batteries, CDs, and electronic equipment. They have introduced cloth shopping bags in the communal kitchens to cut down on the consumption of plastic bags. They have installed experimental water-reduction showerheads and sink aerators, proving that water consumption could fall by a third, and even half in some cases. These excellent initiatives have raised awareness in the College, encouraging me to think that eventually I won't see windows left open in the winter, hear of thermostats being cranked up to summer temperatures when

a sweater would do most of the thermal work electricity does, discover lights left on when no-one is in the room, and find recyclable materials tossed into the wrong bins.

The best thing about seeing this change in the environmental culture of the College, besides the change itself, is that it has happened without my having done a thing! The initiative has come entirely from the Junior Fellows: Laura to begin with, but also Chantal Beauregard, Maxime Foucault, Veronica Lo, Gregory Biniowsky, and Danielys Coz—and by naming this half-dozen I do not mean to exclude the many others who have helped push the College forward on the path to a smaller footprint. What each of us does as individuals matters, but the best way to shoulder this burden is to do it together. And as Laura assures me, nurturing environmental responsibility around the College is no burden at all. "It's been fun!"



Professor Li Tiangang at lunch with Johanneans.

Professor Li, a former student of Fudan University (PhD 1994), now serves there as Professor in the Institute of Religion and the Department of Philosophy. Previously, he was at the Institute of History in the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. His 1998 publication, *Chinese Rites Controversy: History, Documents, and Significance*, earned the prestigious Xu Guangqi Prize from the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies in Hong Kong. Most noted for his work on the history of Sino-Western Contact, the Jesuits in China, and Western Learning in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, he is also a celebrated expert on the history of Shanghai and an active public intellectual in China.

Professor Li's visit was made possible by the generous support of St. John's University Alumni Association. We are grateful for their commitment.

SJC resident Jobb Arnold blends intellect with international friendships

A profile of our Quo-Wei Lee Fellowship winner

The lure of living in an international environment and making friends with people from new countries and cultures that he could one day visit firsthand, was what attracted Canadian-born SJC resident and Quo-Wei Lee Fellowship winner Jobb Arnold to St. John's College at UBC.

One of the highest ranked winners in the University-wide Graduate Fellowship competition, Jobb's academic interest is social psychology with an emphasis on the political and cultural aspects of group interactions, and this has presented him with the opportunity to work collaboratively with individuals at the University of Kibungu in Rwanda, Africa. Together they are developing a social psychological understanding of the strengths and potential obstacles to the reconciliation process that was put in place following Rwanda's genocide of 1994.

"I'm interested in the way thinking styles perpetuate and how these relate to culture, social

organization and the capacity for dissent," explained Jobb.

"I studied psychology and political science for my undergraduate degree," he continued. "I felt each discipline had a lot to learn from the other in terms of blending political/cultural theories and quantitative behavioural measures. I hoped to find a blend of the two in social/political psychology."

Jobb conducted research in Rwanda for several months before beginning his Masters degree and the experience deepened his interest in the country and his commitment

to seeking, "a trans-disciplinary approach to deal with real life issues".

Academically, the next step is to pursue his PhD in interdisciplinary studies while continuing his research on reconciliation in post-conflict areas of the world. Through this work, Jobb hopes to better understand, "the changing nature of *what* we think and *how* we think and its implication for social organization and political influence."

In the mean time, he is focused on enjoying his time at St. John's College and reveling in the new perspectives and insights to be gained from such a diverse group of intelligent people, adding



SJC resident and Quo-Wei Lee Fellowship winner Jobb Arnold.

that, "hookahs, mojitos and Asian cuisine all in the same evening" at the College's frequent social functions are also added bonuses!

Once his time at the College is complete, Jobb plans to pay visits to as many SJC alumni as possible as he "wanders around their respective countries". Based on that, we think it's safe to say that we haven't seen the last of this promising SJC scholar.

"Reaching"... Continued from page 1

a dinner for Vancouver's homeless community. From preparing and selling candygrams to raise money, to serving food and helping SJC chefs with its preparation, a lot of Johanneans helped us. Over 150 people appreciated the four-course dinner and shared conversation. We hope to repeat this experience next year!

Acknowledgements

The Outreach Committee extends thanks to everyone who has generously offered their help, including fellow residents, Senior Fellows and St. John's College office and kitchen staff. You have made these projects possible.

Members of the SJC Outreach Committee celebrate a job well done at the Holiday Dinner for the Homeless.



Footballers unite!

By: Professor Stefan Gänzle

College camaraderie celebrated during world cup event

Last June, more than 150 soccer aficionados came together at St. John's College at UBC to celebrate the start of the world's most watched sporting event, the FIFA World Cup.

Ian Lindsay/The Vancouver Sun



One in four people on the entire planet watched live coverage of the Final between France and Italy. It was a pairing no one would have predicted after the opening match, in which the FIFA host nation Germany, defeated Costa Rica 3 to 1 in a game counted amongst the best of the tournament. The German Consul General, Hans-Michael Schwandt, and his colleague from Costa Rica, Antonio Arreaga-Valdes, attended the screening and were by no means alone in their enthusiasm!

Organized by SJC Principal Tim Brook, CIR post-doc Kai Kenkel,

Enthusiastic fans take in the drama of the World Cup!

and the DAAD Visiting Assistant Professor Stefan Gänzle, the College's viewing event received attention well beyond the campus and generated significant sponsorship support that allowed the serving of a lavish Bavarian breakfast at the end of the match. Our generous sponsors included Black Forest Delikatessen, Park Royal, Lothar Heinrich Agencies, Ltd., Werner Schoenberger, and Select Wine. We are grateful for their support.

And in order to prove that this was an event truly in the spirit of SJC's environment of academic rigor, Kai Kenkel concluded the festivities by offering his analysis of the geopolitics of soccer!



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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Rock 'n' Resistance Lecture Series

The influence of popular music extends far beyond, "It has a good beat and you can dance to it". Music is a soundtrack for a call to action and change, a cry for justice, social protest and empowerment, and it serves as an anthem for each new generation. The fact that music *also* entertains has given popular music an ability to deliver a message and inspire emotion, which can unite people of all cultures.

These are just a few themes and insights that were explored in this year's Rock 'n' Resistance Lecture Series, hosted by St. John's College, in collaboration with the UBC School of Music. The series featured an

impressive group of presenters and performers who examined the influence of rock, folk, blues, pop, and punk music on social movements of our time. The series also looked at the influences that inspired musicians, such as the 18th century revolutionary poet William Blake who inspired such 20th century icons as Patti Smith and Jim Morrison.

Many thanks to series organizer Ingo Schmidt, a faculty member at the University of Northern British Columbia, and SJC Junior Fellow Yvonne Gillespie. Together they were "instrumental" in the presentation of the Rock 'n' Resistance series.

SJC celebrates 10 years

St. John's College will be marking its 10th anniversary of operation on the weekend of September 14-16, 2007. We invite you to join us for three days of celebration with friends new and old.

Planning is just getting underway. To stay on top of the latest information, bookmark our web site at www.stjohns.ubc.ca/anniversary.htm or contact Stacy Barber at sjc.events@ubc.ca to be put on our email list for this milestone event.

We hope to see you in September!