

Agora Online

Susan C. Wright
Alumni/Advancement

A Newsletter for Faculty,
Staff, and Friends of Lakehead University
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Take Your Child to Work Day: Nov. 3

Kaitlyn Kelly, a grade 9 student at St. Ignatius High School, began her day in the Office of Financial Services where her mother, Rita Blais, is Controller. Later, she teamed up with others her age – Erinn Zachary, Nicole Gvora, Rebecca Gillies, Laura Husiak, Alex Stevenson, Tonya Koski, Nelson Poole, and Darren Cizmar – for a tour of the campus.

***"No man needs sympathy because he has to work
... Far and away the best prize that life offers is
the chance to work hard at work worth doing."***

Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)

***Stories you may read
online at
agora.lakeheadu.ca***

1. Nanotechnology: The Science of the Infinitesimally Small

Dr. Aicheng Chen of the Department of Chemistry is opening a whole new world of possibilities through his research into nanotechnology.

2. Faculty and Staff Profiles:

Irfan Khan
Senior Systems
Programmer/Analyst,
Technology Services Centre



Dr. Jill Konkin
Dean of Admissions
and Student Affairs,
Northern Ontario School
of Medicine

3. "Turning Points" Aid in the Treatment of Eating Disorders

Dr. Ron Davis of the Department of Psychology is building on the success of a therapy program called Turning Points to prevent teens from developing eating disorders.

4. Campus News

Dr. Mark Howe, Dr. Jean-Yves Bernard,
Mun Tran

Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

Guest Editorial

Six Degrees of Dignity: Emancipation for Canadians with Disabilities

by David Shannon

The following is an excerpt of a keynote address given at the North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity Symposium held in Thunder Bay, October 29-30.

Western society is founded on a classical liberal understanding of the self. This perspective regards human dignity as the primary social and personal value. Dignity is realized through an individual freedom that is brought to bear in the course of the self's participation in meaningful decision making and exercise of individual responsibility.

The right to dignity for all is explicitly recognized in Canadian law. In practice, however, socio-economic and historical circumstance has conspired to debar a variety of individuals and groups from the concern and respect their nature as persons demands.

Prominent among these excluded groups are members of the disabled community who are marginalized by a society that regularly neglects to recognize their needs, capacities, and merits as individuals.

I posit that there are Six Degrees of Dignity needed to reverse social and attitudinal exclusion, currently articulated in Canadian society's construction of the disabled self. These are:

1. Dignity in Law
2. Dignity of Self
3. Dignity in Public Perception
4. Dignity in the Community
5. Dignity in Public Policy
6. Dignity in Future

Public consciousness and discourse on disability is suffused with the

dominant assumption that societal resources can only be effectively employed through investment in curative research programs. This supposition has become so compelling that it is now commonly regarded as a matter of "common sense," and alternative agendas of intervention are routinely discarded as undeserving of serious consideration.

There are a number of problems with this approach. First, there is the purely practical difficulty of discovering a remedial solution to many categories of disability.

While the benefits of medical research cannot be discounted, an exclusive emphasis on providing a cure essentially discounts the immediate, day-to-day reality of the people with disabilities. The tangible and concrete problems of everyday life cannot be deferred in anticipation of a practicable cure in the undetermined future.

Second, the needs and objectives of economically driven medical research programs may not coincide with the needs and objectives of members of the disabled community. No matter how well intentioned research programs are, they frequently fail to recognize the practical priorities of disabled individuals. This state of affairs is exacerbated by the fact that the goals of research programs are, as a rule, controlled and directed by the non-disabled. To date, however, little attention has been given to the absence of the disabled from the kinds of medical decision-making processes that most immediately affect their own lives.

But people with disabilities are not only excluded from the realm of medical decision making. The problem, in reality, is more insidious and reaches deep into the domain of Canadian society itself. Briefly stated, Canadian society is infused with an insidious "ableism" that sustains and accentuates a view of the disabled as individuals inherently incapable of applying themselves to either the practical tasks of everyday life or, more generally, of adhering to the standards and principles that define social worth and cultural significance in Canadian society. Physical disability is not considered for what it is: a difference in the state of the body. Rather it is viewed as a sign that the individual is not a fully functioning, autonomous self, not completely a character capable of exercising freedom of choice in the pursuit of personal responsibility and self-determination. In other words, a body meant to be the object of either pity or fear.

The refusal to recognize the integrity of the disabled self finds concomitant expression in condescending attitudes of "pity" and "sympathy" and the belief that (like the very young and the very old) the disabled must be "looked after for their own good." This fundamental lack of respect for the self not only engenders forms of marginalization for the disabled but, moreover, in a cruel reversal, serves to internalize the message of exclusion to the disabled themselves. By minimizing its own expectations for equality and dignity, contemporary society effectively underscores the inequity and discrimination people with disabilities are trying to overcome. ■

David Shannon is a graduate of Lakehead and an activist for the rights of people with disabilities. He practices law in Thunder Bay.



Department Feature

Office of Graduate and International Studies

By Frances Harding, Publications Officer



Staff in the Office of Graduate and International Studies (l-r) Cindy Campanotto, Wendy Bons, Dr. Gary Boire, Susan Burton, Tracy Al-idrissi, and Lynn Gollat, help to meet the needs of more than 530 graduate, international and exchange students.

On a Wednesday afternoon in mid-October, Lori Bradford is teaching survival skills to five new graduate students in the School of Outdoor Recreation, Parks & Tourism. She is halfway through a Master's program in Environmental Studies at Lakehead, and she is teaching her junior classmates how to navigate life as a graduate student.

Bradford's PowerPoint presentation is loaded with tips on how to choose a thesis topic, when to source funding for conferences, what to expect as a Teaching Assistant, and where to find help on everything from bursaries to ethics boards.

"Get to know Lynn Gollat," she tells the group. "Her help is invaluable."

Lynn Gollat is the Graduate Studies Officer and one of six staff who works in the Office of Graduate and International Studies. She is responsible for administering graduate scholarships and grants,

liaising with federal funding agencies, counselling students, and working with graduate coordinators to track the progress of graduate students as they complete their programs.

Along with the Dean of Graduate and International Studies, Dr. Gary Boire, Gollat liaises with the regulating body that governs graduate studies in Ontario, the Ontario Council for Graduate Studies (OCGS).

"Graduate and international studies are essential if Lakehead University is to flourish in the 21st century," says Boire. "Graduate studies is where innovation happens. Without graduate work, we wouldn't have insulin, or biotechnology, or new theories of culture, history, or languages."

The Office is responsible for the Senate Graduate Studies Committee and the Senate Graduate Scholarships and Bursaries Committee, says Gollat. "We

prepare the agenda, keep the minutes and the historic records, and make recommendations. As well, we look after all of the academic regulations, and provide financial aid services -- the type of service the Financial Aid Office does for undergraduate students."

Tracy Al-idrissi, Admissions Officer, prescreens all applications to Graduate Studies, and she makes the admissions decisions for International undergraduate students.

Wendy Bons, the International Recruitment Officer, looks after International student recruitment and liaises with international agents charged with recruiting students to Lakehead. As well, she oversees all of the exchange agreements with partner institutions in Australia, Finland, France, Germany, Mexico, and Sweden. Exchange agreements, like the recently signed trilateral initiative linking Canada, Mexico, and the United States, are drafted by Bons.

Susan Burton, the International Student Coordinator, counsels the International students on academic and non-academic matters, plans social and academic activities, greets the students when they arrive in Thunder Bay, and generally helps them to adjust to life in Canada.

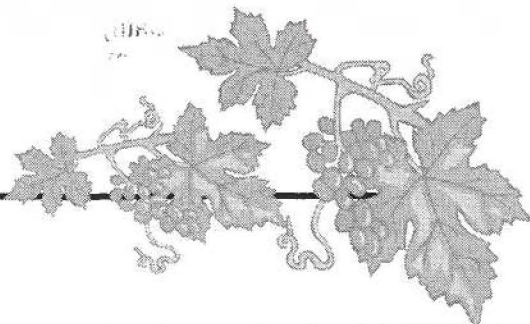
Cindy Campanotto, Administrative Assistant, performs many different roles including reception.

Together, the six staff members make a formidable team. ■

For more information on Graduate and International Studies, visit the website: www.ogis.lakeheadu.ca

The Grapevine

by Lori Fleming and Karen Stecky



Welcome to The Grapevine, a new column about people at Lakehead and their interests and activities beyond the campus. If you have news you would like to share, send it by email: grapevine@lakeheadu.ca or call Lori Fleming 343-8589 or Karen Stecky 343-8961

Thunder Bay Party in Toronto

Former LUSU President Glendon Tremblay was one of about 100 people attending the 8th Annual Thunder Bay Party in Toronto on Friday, October 15, 2004. Alumni from Lakehead and Confederation College joined with other former residents of Thunder Bay at Montana, a downtown bar. Canadian Olympian and Thunder Bay native Curt Harnett was on hand to take part in the festivities. The atmosphere was friendly and welcoming and the party went on until 2 a.m.

There was much talk about the upcoming Lakehead alumni event on November 10 when the Thunderwolves Men's Hockey Team takes on the team from York University. There was also much excitement about the 40th Anniversary Celebration taking place at Lakehead University next year.

Plans for next year's party are already in the works. The event will

take place on October 14, 2005, at Montana. For more information, contact Rob Zuback at the Office of Alumni Relations (807) 343-8155.

Leadership Thunder Bay

Lisa Beckwick, Public Knowledge Transformation Coordinator in the Department of Lifelong Learning, is one of 22 graduates of the inaugural year of Leadership Thunder Bay. Beckwick is a graduate of Lakehead University and a lifelong resident of Thunder Bay. Leadership Thunder Bay creates networks of diverse leaders who explore issues facing Thunder Bay. For more information visit www.leadershiptb.com

In Memoriam

Marianne Arvelin passed away on Friday, October 22, 2004, after a brief but courageous battle with cancer. She worked in the Registrar's Office and in the Financial Aid Office of the former Student Services for 20 years and will be missed by a large network of friends and colleagues. "Marianne was a pleasure to work with," says Financial Aid Administrator Phyllis Bosnick. "She always put the students first and would go 'to bat' for them if she had to. Although she had left Financial Aid, she had remained a member of the Financial Aid family, attending as many of our social gatherings as she could, most recently at the end of August." ■

Agora Online

The Agora Online is produced by the Office of Communications and distributed to staff, faculty, and friends of Lakehead University. We welcome your contributions. Please send them to:

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