

SUMMER
2003



Wisdom

Grande Prairie Regional College Magazine

THIS ISSUE

Ending the Silence
An Interview with
Dr. Cora Voyageur

Ars Longa, Vita Brevis
(Art is Long, Life is Short)

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Building Our Future





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THIS ISSUE

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Farrell Archibald was nominated by her faculty, and selected by the Valedictory committee to receive the Paul

Evaskevich Valedictorian Award for 2003. The Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology student delivered the Valedictory address at Convocation on June 14, inspiring her fellow convocants and guests with her message. Excerpts from her speech follow:

"Can I really make a difference, and truly have an effect on our world?"

This is one of the most important things a person can ask him - or herself. A plump fuzzy yellow and honey-loving childhood friend of mine, Winnie the Pooh, once said 'Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the stream slipping away beneath, you will suddenly know everything there is to be known.' Pooh's view can be a valuable metaphor for life. A stream is a life, and I believe that each one of us must construct, feed, and direct our own stream.

The very first step in life is the challenging task of finding oneself - finding your own path, without the fear of being different. I believe that this process is continuous. A stream rarely stays the same, because it is constantly eroding at its edges, and moving around obstructions. We all have the divine ability to change and adapt to any environment while remaining true to ourselves.

Another admirable quality of streams is their persistence. They are constantly moving through new fields, parks or forests, and will eventually find themselves at the top of a waterfall. The stream never pauses where the waterfall begins; instead, it leaps over the cliff with full force, without even knowing what awaits at the bottom. Never knowing what will happen tomorrow

is what makes life interesting, and is what fuels us to reach past our limitations. Nature would lack a significant beauty and wonder if there were no waterfalls. Society is made beautiful and wondrous by those who close their eyes and dive into any event or situation, while continuing to smile and exude confidence.

A stream must be clear and clean in order to nourish the land that it runs through. Pollution is such a vast and international problem today. War is the ultimate form of pollution of human life, because it is rooted in disrespect and hatred. If every single person on earth acted with true dignity towards others, there would be a flow of ultimate humanity throughout the world. Young children would not be ridiculed because of their size or appearance, teenagers would not bring weapons to school, and nations would learn how to cooperate.

If a stream is like a life, the best advice I can give is this: Find your stream, while remaining true to yourself so as to make your stream unique. Find ultimate happiness in all that you do, thereby enabling yourself to roar along with nature's flow. Never fear change and things that are new, that you may dive into any opportunity with full confidence. Find paths around all obstacles as you accept them into your life; this will strengthen your course. Finally, always remember that each person regardless of race, values, abilities and beliefs deserves love and respect.

I enjoy standing on my bridge and watching my stream slip away into the future. I know that the more I see and understand, the more I learn. As we move into the next stage of our lives, we must absorb all of our stream's lessons with the greatest intent and wonderment.

- Farrell Archibald



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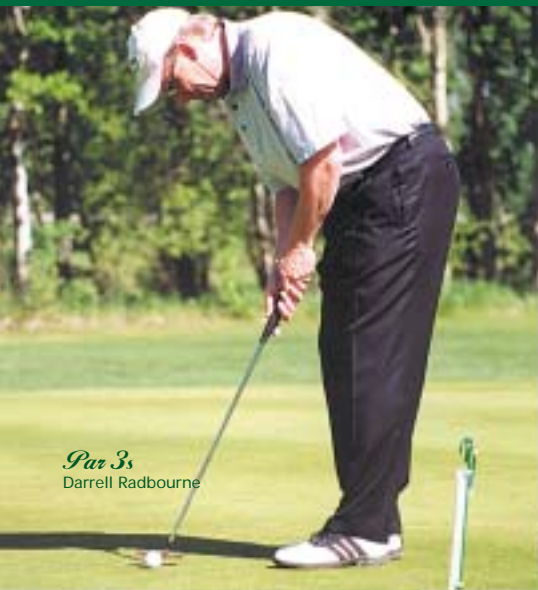
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2003



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16th Annual College Classic was the most successful to date, raising over **\$46,000** for the Henry Anderson Innovation Fund.

Thank you to all our volunteers, participants and sponsors.



Left to right: Darren Kjemhus, Jim Smith and Mark Briand of "The Sand Traps" accepting the winning trophy from Executive Director of Advancement Carmen Haakstad. Missing is Ron Lambrecht.



Jim Henderson
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4th place Wedges
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5th Place Palm Pilots
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 GP Cleaners Fore: Bill Bowes Jr (Capistrano Holdings), Gord Head, Rick Bowes (Capistrano Holdings) and Gordon Bloomfield (Capistrano Holdings)

7th place Golf Bags
 Daily Duffers Jeff McCoshin, Fred Rinne, Tanis Trydal and Melanie Gillis (all from DHT)

16th place Sunglasses
 Four Dicks with Sticks: Peter Merlo (LSM), Al Ulsifer (Northern Vision Centre), Terry Curry, Jim Chrenek (RBC Dominion Securities)



The Golden Girls
 Left to right: Coreen Evaskevich, Liz Henderson, Diane Bootle, Judy Kozak



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In Conversation With Dr. Cora Voyageur

Ending the Silence

Dr. Cora Voyageur began her academic life as a student of GPRC in 1986, in the University Transfer Bachelor of Arts program. GPRC is also the place where sociology became the profession Dr. Voyageur would pursue.

"I fell in love with sociology because of Vince Salvo, who taught me Sociology at GPRC. When I got my PhD I called him and thanked him, and told him he was the one who lit my fire."

Dr. Vince Salvo is an Instructor Emeritus of the Arts, Commerce and Education department of GPRC. He is retired and living in Nelson, BC.

Today, Dr. Cora Voyageur's research explores the Aboriginal experience in Canada which includes economic development, education, women's issues and community development.

Dr. Voyageur is the first First Nations woman to earn a doctorate from the University of Alberta. She is a member of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Fort Chipewyan Alberta.

Dr. Cora Voyageur is a recipient of numerous awards for her work, including the Reverend Dr. Chief John Snow Sr. Award, awarded by the First Nations Student Association and The Native Centre to recognize and honour distinguished academic instruction and support to aboriginal students at the University of Calgary, and the President's Circle of Excellence Award.

Dr. Cora Voyageur
BA University Transfer GPRC 1986-88
BA University of Alberta 1990
MEd (Educational Foundations)
University of Alberta 1993
PhD (Sociology) University of
Alberta 1997



Above:
Dr. Cora Voyageur and
members of her
University of Calgary
research team.

Cora Voyageur and Brian Calliou each contributed essays to the GPRC publication *Lobstick, Treaty 8 Revisited* published in 1999.



There are noticeable holes in the historical portrait of Alberta, as our province prepares to celebrate its hundredth year in 2005. The first settlers are there, as are early businessmen, artists, politicians – all the people who came here to build a new life are represented. However, few Aboriginals are. Their stories, their experiences, and most of all their contributions to the Province as it has emerged over the past century, remain relatively silent.

That is about to change. Dr. Cora Voyageur, a Sociology professor at the University of Calgary, has decided to do something about it. Dr. Voyageur's past research has explored the Aboriginal experience in Canada which includes economic development, education, women's issues and community development. She is working on several books and papers, and regularly presents her findings at national and international conferences.

Now she has assumed the chal-

lenge of writing the Aboriginal experience into the record. "The thing that made me start was looking on the government 2005 website. I noticed a real absence of anything Aboriginal. Rather than complain, I decided to do something about it."

Dr. Voyageur has already spent two years on her 2005 project – gathering and publishing the contributions of Aboriginal People in the first century of Alberta as a Province. This, as well as her other published works, will add significantly to the research material available for students and teachers.

"My vision for this book is that it be used as a resource for schools and libraries. I don't think non-Aboriginal people know what Aboriginal people do. In my course *Sociology of First Nations*, I ask my students to write an essay on a significant Aboriginal Canadian. They go to the library and come back all writing about the same handful of

people – the few who are now part of the record. People don't know what Aboriginal People have done – and also I think some Aboriginal people do not know enough about our own contributions. I hope this book will be used as a resource to help all people understand and acknowledge those contributions."

Dr. Voyageur and her team of researchers are now in the second summer of this project. "We began by going through newspapers, internet sites etc., searching for records of people who had been recognized officially. Also, last summer we sent out information packages with nomination forms to 280 band offices, Metis settlement offices, and Aboriginal agencies and organizations across Alberta. We have now received a number of nominations. Four researchers are working this summer contacting people "in the know" from communities. We



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"They Think They Own The Land": A Media Account Of The Government's Acquisition Of Treaty 8 Lands
By Cora Voyageur

Abstract Land! Everybody wanted it – Europeans, Easterners, and the Government of Canada – but the Indians and Half-breeds had it. The government could not simply take the land. Canadians' sensibilities would be offended. As Canadians, we required affirmation (whether genuine or feigned) that we respected our Indians better and more equitably than the Americans had to be a land surrender and some other thing to do. Treaties were made.

have a list of about 300 people who have made significant contributions, and are now researching with family members and communities to flesh out the information."

Dr. Voyageur began the project "because it needed to be done," and has proceeded without any major funding. She has received small support toward the project, through Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Community Heritage Foundation Grant, and Canadian Heritage. "I am hoping to get enough funding to cover the research costs." Dr. Voyageur now employs four aboriginal women on the project -

undergrads, one a student of Economics, one a History major, one a Canadian Studies major and one in Education. Necessary research includes time travelling to various communities and many days spent at the University of Alberta libraries and the Provincial Museum in Edmonton.

Now that word of the project is getting out, people have been initiating contact with Dr. Voyageur. "Lots of people have been emailing, faxing about this project," she says. "We did an interview on the Native perspective radio station CFWE out of Edmonton. The response has been good, and we're just beavering away.

"I have a sabbatical coming up next year – I will work on completing this volume then. I would like to publish in 2005, in time for the Centennial." The University of Calgary press has expressed interest in publishing this book, but so far it is not officially linked to the Centennial celebrations.

Dr. Voyageur has already added an extraordinary range of research to the available academic study of Canada's First Nations. She is the editor of a book at now at the printers "Hidden in Plain Sight – Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada." She has authored numerous book chapters, essays, and conference presenta-

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tions about issues for Aboriginal students, Aboriginal women, and First Nations communities.

At the moment, Dr. Voyageur is also working on a book about the women chiefs in Canada. A news release issued by the University of Calgary in January of this year calls this a "ground-breaking study – the first detailed portrait of a select group of community leaders."

"One of the most significant findings is that female chiefs apparently have to work a lot harder than their male counterparts in order to earn the respect of government and industry," says Dr. Voyageur, herself a First Nations Woman.

"Women chiefs are also expected to take a greater interest in issues that might be considered more maternal in nature – such as education, day care or substance abuse – while at the same time making progress in areas that male chiefs tend to focus on, such as economic development and employment."

The work of Dr. Cora Voyageur is adding immeasurably to the awareness of the contributions of First Nations people in Alberta, in Canada, and internationally.

The life of Dr. Cora Voyageur is adding immeasurably to the mosaic of her people.

Cora Voyageur is a member of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Fort Chipewyan Alberta. She and her husband, Brian Calliou, were a young married couple when they decided to go back to school. Their determination to change the way their own history would be written kept them in school over the next 11 years, raising their children while they earned their undergraduate and graduate degrees.

"My husband and I went back to school together – we started at GPRC and both went all the way through, raising our family during our time as students, the whole thing. We kind of thought of school as our job. We got into a routine which allowed us to be students and live a life at the same time. In some ways I think it was easier because we were both doing it together and had similar demands on our schedules."

"We were sponsored by our bands since we are Treaty Indians and education is a Treaty Right,"

explains Dr. Voyageur. "When we were in school the education funding program changed - it was important to stay in school once we started so we could stay on the funding list. Brian went into Law School and I went into grad school."

Brian Calliou is from Sucker Creek First Nation at Lesser Slave Lake. He now has a Master of Law and is Director of the Aboriginal Leadership and Management Program at the Banff Centre. Mr. Calliou has an interest in Aboriginal law and legal history.

Now, their work is addressing many of the issues faced by the communities where they grew up. Their professional careers present an example to inspire other Aboriginal students.

As Alberta celebrates its centennial year, Dr. Cora Voyageur will take her place among the hundreds of Aboriginal Albertans whose contributions have built this province and this country.

– Lynne Ness

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CELEBRATING our past

Sense of Community Honour Wall

The Sense of Community sculpture and Honour Wall has been created at Grande Prairie Regional College to honour and recognize the generosity of individuals, groups and businesses that continue to support our College in the pursuit of excellence in advanced education.

This Honour Wall is an enduring tribute to the people of our Community – donors, valedictory scholars, faculty emeriti, distinguished alumni, and others.

Nearly 200 people from the community gathered in September for the official unveiling of the Honour Wall and the sculpture by GPRC alumna Helena Mulligan. The event was held in appreciation of donors, and included the first ever presentation of the Steps to the Greater award.

Building A Bursary

Beginning in January 2003, Wayne Wood and his team from Brenwood Master Builder announced a bursary program for GPRC students. Brenwood has pledged to contribute \$100 from every new home sold in Grande Prairie towards this bursary.



Brenda Anderson and Douglas Cardinal.

Celebrating Cardinal

In February more than 270 special friends of the College attended a formal dinner honouring the late Dr. Henry Anderson, first President of GPRC, and Douglas Cardinal, our first architect. In recognition of the late Dr. Henry Anderson, the College announced the Henry Anderson Innovation fund which is being used to acquire leading edge learning technology for our students.

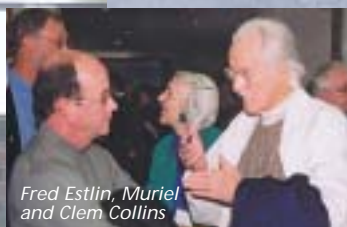
Mae and Kay Trelle



Bill and Margaret Bowes



Fred Estlin, Muriel and Clem Collins



Charter Student Returns as Convocation Speaker

When Russ Mann stepped to the podium to address the graduates of 2003, he brought memories of the very first class of students at our College when it began in 1966. The Convocation audience was told about the question with which the late Dr. Henry Anderson, first president of GPRC, once challenged Russ Mann.

"What will you build?" the young Russ Mann was asked. "How will you build your career? How will you build your family? How will you build your community? How will you build your world?"

These challenges to Russ Mann were the beginning of a new direction for him; he considers Dr. Anderson and the faculty of the College as key to the university education he achieved.

"I consider myself a builder today," Mann says, "although I'm not sure I would have thought so then."

Russ Mann completed two years of university transfer studies at GPRC, eventually achieving his Bachelor of Arts at the University of Alberta. Now he also holds the designation CFP, and is General Manager of CIBC in Edmonton, heading up a financial planning team of 27 people in the Imperial Service Division.

"Perspective often creates value," Mann says. "At the time when I was in College, it was all the college experience should be – making friends, learning, active in college life. Looking back, I realize it contributed more to who I am than I thought at the time."





During the Cardinal dinner, Rick Starkey on behalf of Alliance Pipeline presented their pledge of \$100,000, a great kick start to our campaign.

Alumni Room

As part of the original Cardinal Building, C224 had been used as a Staff Lounge. With original brick and Cardinal's signature curvilinear appeal it is a unique and attractive room which has been underutilized. The idea to create a space that could still be used by Staff and Faculty but also by Alumni and the Grande Prairie community was brought forward to the Alumni/Foundation Board.

During 2002 the "Alumni Room" was renovated to include a small kitchen, updated electrical and plumbing, new carpet and energy efficient tinted windows. As well, with a generous donation from the Lyle Carlstrom/Shannon Nelson family, new tables and chairs were purchased, providing a start toward the furnishings planned for the Alumni Room. This space can now be used as a meeting room, and is the perfect venue for a catered reception.

Industry Equips Learning

In early 2003, Devon Corporation donated a skid shack and equipment worth \$20,000 to our Industrial Training facilities. This equipment provides valuable class room training space.

Official Wolveswear Supplier

The Athletic Department at GPRC has entered into an agreement with Ernie's Sports Experts, authorizing Ernie's to be the official supplier of Wolveswear in Grande Prairie. Owner Darrell Radbourne is generously donating a royalty back to the College for every piece of clothing sold.

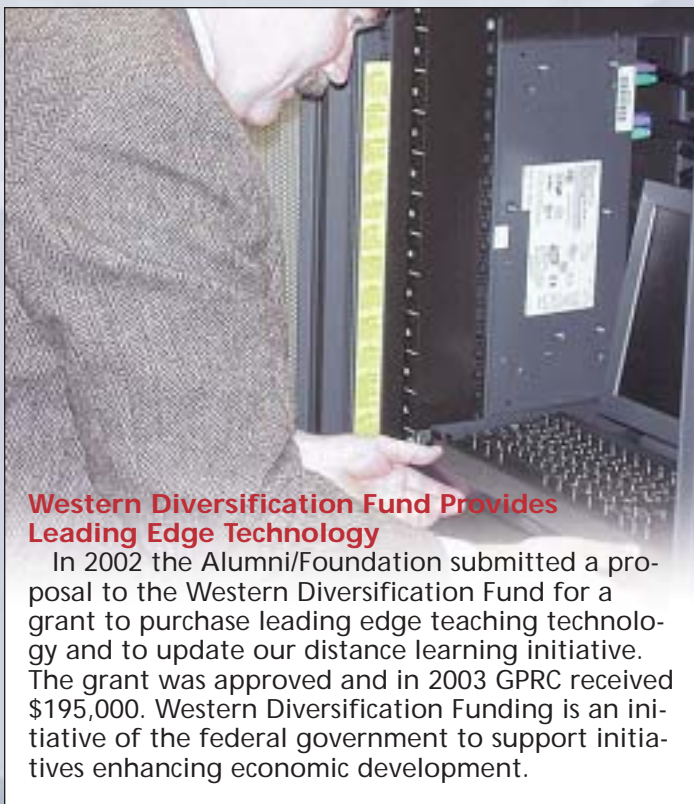


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- Internal Appointments*
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- Troy Glowasky
- *Chair Steven Shavers completed his term of service in November, 2002

Alumni/Foundation Board of Directors 2002-2003

- The Alumni/Foundation collaboration task force recommended merger of the Foundation and the Alumni to a single board. The merger was approved by the Board of Governors in March, 2003.
- Lyle Carlstrom, Chair
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- Doug Morris
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Western Diversification Fund Provides Leading Edge Technology

In 2002 the Alumni/Foundation submitted a proposal to the Western Diversification Fund for a grant to purchase leading edge teaching technology and to update our distance learning initiative. The grant was approved and in 2003 GPRC received \$195,000. Western Diversification Funding is an initiative of the federal government to support initiatives enhancing economic development.

Thank you
for your support

Grande Prairie Regional College is grateful for the \$1.3 Million which was contributed by the private sector during the past fiscal year. The Alumni/Foundation extends a huge thank you to the numerous donors who have helped build our future through higher education by means of individual and corporate support.

Students benefit directly from your support, whether it is a direct donation to our annual appeal, Wolf Pac Booster Club, sponsorship of the President's Ball or College Classic golf tournament, establishment of a scholarship or bursary, or a commitment toward a planned gift. It all makes a huge difference in our ability to offer quality education to the residents of northern Alberta.

A complete list of donors may be viewed on our website:

<http://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/contributors.html>

BUILDING
our future

CELEBRATING our past



One Student's Story: Gurpreet Cheema

Gurpreet Cheema came to Grande Prairie from India to live with his uncle. At 22, his dream was to have a profes-

sional career, but the possibility seemed very distant. Gurpreet's English language skills were low, and he was lacking the prerequisites for the post-secondary programs in which he was interested.

He enrolled in 1996 in Academic Upgrading at GPRC, and began to work on his English, Math and Science. Even when his studies were interrupted by a lengthy illness, Gurpreet did not relinquish his goals, and eventually finished the necessary upgrading and enrolled in the Computer Systems Technology program. Over the next years, he worked part time and studied full time.

In June 2003, Gurpreet Cheema graduated with his GPRC diploma, and is working at a summer job in the Computing and Telecommunications Services department at the College. Now that his education is well under way, he is considering applying his diploma credits toward an Athabasca University degree in Computing and Information Systems.

The achievements of Gurpreet Cheema are warmly celebrated by the GPRC Community.



Grande Prairie Regional College was visited in the spring of 2003 by representatives of the International Education office China-Canada education program of Fenglin College Of Science and Technology. A memorandum of understanding was signed by both parties expressing a commitment to seek educational opportunities of mutual benefit.

Great Achievements

Governor General's Award
Recipient: Rochelle Low

Rochelle Low, who has just completed her second year in Nursing at GPRC, has achieved the highest overall average in her studies at GPRC. Originally from Dawson Creek, Ms. Low moved to Grande Prairie to attend college.

She attributes her academic achievement to "lots of hard work – set your goal and just work until you get it," says Rochelle Low. "One of the reasons I am motivated to work hard at getting good marks is because I am excited and like what I'm learning. Nursing really interests me, especially working with the patients in my clinical placements. That is probably the most important influence behind my marks."

This summer, Ms. Low is working as a nursing aide at McKenzie Place long-term care facility in Grande Prairie. "I really enjoy my summer work, and look forward to the next two years of nursing education as I complete my Bachelor of Science in Nursing at GPRC."

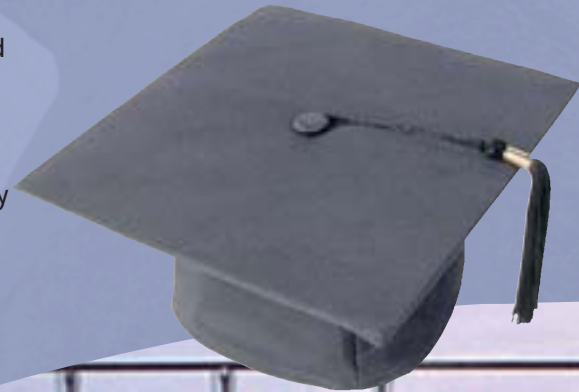
Congratulations

Congratulations Former
Students

The Business Administration accounting faculty are proud to announce that the following former accounting students of GPRC passed the 2002 Chartered Accounting Uniform Final Exam:

Cheryl Deverdenne, Grande Prairie
Tim MacDonald
4th place, Vic Dzurka Honour Roll
Duncan McNabb, Edmonton
Scott Oakford, Grande Prairie
Lydell Torgerson, Grande Prairie
5th Place, Vic Dzurka Honour Roll
Darren Winia, Red Deer

*The Vic Dzurka Honour Roll recognizes the top ten in Alberta





Paul Evaskevich presents the Valedictorian award to Farrell Archibald.

A Convocation Moment

When I go up to accept my diploma tomorrow, I will walk on the stage with my head held high, not only for my accomplishments, but for the fact that I was able to attend this college, the college that treats everyone as an equal. It allowed me to make many new friends, and most importantly it let me reach my dreams.

Thank you for the most memorable years of my life.

– Lyndsey Van Dellen
Graduate of
Administrative
Technology

Four GPRC athletes earned Academic All-Canadian status for 2002-2003 in the Canadian Colleges Athletics Association

CCAA Academic All Canadians:

- Krista Ciura, Women's Basketball
- Nicole Reinhart, Women's Volleyball
- Kerry Hall, Women's Volleyball
- Jeff Serle, Men's Basketball

Only two colleges in the country had more than four athletes who achieved this honour, which was given to a total of 77 student athletes Canada-wide.



GPRC has signed a memorandum of understanding with Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, stating that the College and the Nation agree to work together to provide various programs and training opportunities.

(Above) Chief Clyde Goodswimmer joined President Jim Henderson for an official signing of the memorandum.

Friendship Centre Expansion

The Outreach Location of the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre, located on campus at GPRC is growing this summer. Adjacent rooms have been made available, and some minor renovations will result in double the space for the well-used centre.

A small meeting room, and a quiet work and research centre for students will be added, leaving the original round room for relaxation and socializing. The Outreach Friendship Centre on the GPRC campus was the first of its kind in Canada, and has been a very successful project.

Collaboration Expands Health Care Access – New Walk-in Clinic

A new College Community Health Clinic will open on the GPRC campus this fall.

The concept will provide a College Community Health Clinic for students, staff and the community of Grande Prairie. It will be an extended hour, walk-in clinic providing physicians, nurses, mental health counselors, and other services all on-site at GPRC.



BUILDING

our future

Bill Fletcher

Instructor Business Administration

After a career of more than 30 years as a Business Administration instructor at GPRC, and with scores of students to tell how being in his classes changed their lives, Bill Fletcher is still not sure he was meant to be a teacher.

"I sort of fell into it by a combination of circumstances," he says. Bill Fletcher started University when he was 26, studying for his Bachelor of Commerce. He had held a wide range of jobs by that

time - office manager at Monarch Life, apprentice electrician, cattle buyer, job foreman - good jobs but with limited futures.

As he completed his degree, the future looked bright, and job offers were plentiful. He resisted the temptation to start earning right away, however, and enrolled in an MBA program. "I knew that once I left I'd never go back, so felt it was important to continue."

By the time Bill had completed

his Masters program, his prospects were limited by a recession. Salaries for someone with an MBA were discouraging - less than he had earned as a cattle buyer.

"In 1971, when Leo Dawson (then chair of the Business Administration department) offered me a job at GPRC, I said to my wife, 'we'll ride out the storm in Grande Prairie.' It was our intention to come here for one year expecting there would be more opportunities later," Bill explains. "Indeed, I had some tempting job offers in my first months here, but I had some deep feelings about leaving students in the lurch, and I could not just drop out in the middle of the year."

Bill Fletcher has been at GPRC ever since, teaching Business Administration, and his drawer of notes and business cards and greetings from former students is overflowing. Students have gone on to private enterprise, to degrees in Commerce or Law, to professional acting and recording. "I have had the opportunity to rub shoulders with many students who have gone on to be phenomenally successful. Every year there are a handful of young people you just know are going to be successful - with or without the education."

"I opened the door a little - the students opened the door wide for themselves," he says.

Although Bill has always taught in the same general area of business, there have been huge changes due to the evolution of



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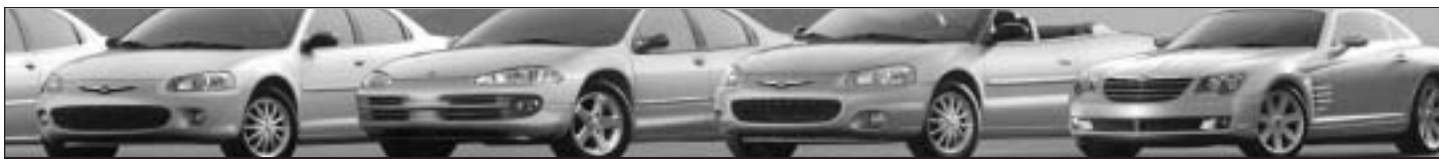


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the computer over the past 30 years. "I have been teaching computers right from the time of the mainframe," he says. "In the BA program, our students began programming Fortran 4 using punch cards. Each week we sent the punch cards to NAIT for processing, and the results would be sent back. Corrections would be made, and the next week another batch of punch cards would be sent out. Basically, students were learning to write programs to solve problems. We would do linear regression problems, payroll problems - many of the problems you use a spreadsheet for today, we had to write programs for.

"Because my career happened to coincide with the birth of the computer to the technology of today, I am one of the few who has seen that whole transformation in the industry."

When Bill Fletcher took sabbatical leave, he worked as general manager of the Golden Inn for a year. During another leave, he was hired by the Chamber of Commerce as a consultant to do a study of airports in our region. "I wrote the report, was paid handsomely for it, and it was part-

ly on the strength of my report that Peace River and Grande Prairie got new airports."

Through the Chamber of Commerce contract and later membership, Bill became involved with businesses in Grande Prairie, making many contacts which have proved helpful to the program and to students. His community involvement has also included the VON Board, Rotary, Kiwanis, and the City Development Appeal Board. He has kept a finger on the pulse of business.

"I believe that everything I teach has a direct application to the work world," Bill says. "I try to give students who take

my courses the information that will allow them to function in the real world. I've tried to put my knowledge of the private sector with my knowledge of the academics. I hope I've helped one or two."

Bill Fletcher the teacher has made such an indelible impression, that one former student has established a scholarship in his honour. The William, Anne and Scott Fletcher Entrance Scholarship has been endowed at Grande Prairie Regional College by the Bob and Maryanne MacLean Family.

"What did I do for MacLean? Nothing special, except encourage him to go on to get a degree."

Bob MacLean was a student who recognized his instructor, Bill Fletcher, as someone who had given of himself to enrich and enable his students, someone who has changed countless lives. There could be no greater honour - and no greater proof that Bill Fletcher is indeed meant to be a Teacher.

- Lynne
Ness

"I opened the door a little - the students opened the door wide for themselves."

Ars Longa, Vita Brevis

Art is Long, Life is Short (Hippocrates 460 B.C.)

Lane Borstad has been teaching art history at GPRC since 1990, and has been chair of the Fine Arts department for several years. One course which his students never forget is the annual trip to Paris - experiencing art and historical places first hand. This year, Lane Borstad was profoundly moved by the sculptor's art of the Canadian War Memorial at Vimy Ridge, and shares his thoughts with Wisdom.

“...at Vimy Ridge the collective experience is given expression through the sculptor’s art...”


Fifty nine years ago, 14,000 Canadians landed on the eight kilometer stretch of Normandy coast known as Juno Beach. Three hundred and forty of those young Canadians died on the opening day of the assault and another 574 were wounded. This year, Canada paid tribute to those men and the one million other Canadians who served in that war with the construction of the 8 million dollar Juno Beach Centre located at Courseulles-sur-Mer.

As part of the opening ceremonies 43,000 Flanders poppies were airdropped over the memorial, a poignant reminder of the number of Canadian dead in the Second World War alone.

At the opening ceremonies French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said “we remember the children of Canada who landed so young on the soil of France in a


flood of fire and steel”. Time has healed or washed away most of the physical wounds of that flood and the youth of 1944 are now greyed and aging.

On a larger scale the numbers become even more difficult to comprehend. In both wars about 110,000 Canadians died. On Easter Monday, April 9, 1917 the Canadian Corps captured the highest point of land called Hill 62 on Vimy Ridge, near the town of Arras in northern France. In that single battle there were a total of 10,602 Canadian casualties, 3,598 dead. (This was considered a great success considering that the French army had suffered 130,000 casualties attempting to take the Ridge.) The casualty numbers become staggering:
Passchendaele : 10,000,
Mount Sorrel: 8,500,
Beaumont Hamel: 740 of the



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Newfoundland regiment (only 61 returned)

Bourlon Wood: 20,000

St. Julien: 2,000

The Somme: 24,000.

The Germans refer to the Battle of the Somme as Blutbad - the Blood bath because of the 600,000 Allied casualties and 236,000 German dead.

1,700,000 men and women of the Commonwealth lost their lives in the two world wars of the last century. How do we remember or more accurately how do we com-

prehend and learn from their sacrifice?

How do you approach the task of remembering without propagandizing or reconstructing the past to suit the needs of present day political agendas or the Hollywood entertainment industry

The answer to this moral question and to a very practical problem what to do with nearly a million dead was found in 1917. This was the establishment, during the height of WW I, of the Commonwealth War Graves

Commission by Sir Fabien Ware. The commission was to become responsible for marking and maintaining the graves of the Commonwealth forces who were killed and to build memorials to those who have no known grave.

The Commission is now responsible for maintaining the graves of 925,000 men and women whose remains were found and memorials where the names of the additional 775,000 missing are recorded. There are graves in 150

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different countries in 2,500 cemeteries constructed and maintained by the Commission.

King George V spoke of the commission in 1922 "We can truly say that the whole circuit of the earth is girdled with the graves of our dead... and in the course of my pilgrimage, I have many times asked myself whether there can be more potent advocates of peace upon the earth though the years to come, than this massed multitude of silent witnesses to the desolation of war."

We speak of Remembrance and yet few Canadians do remember.

How can we? We have lived in the Peace for which so many sacrificed so much to achieve. Indeed we can not understand that sacrifice, having lived in that Peace which has demanded no sacrifice on our part.

I cannot remember an experience that was not my own; I can remember the facts (10.600 casualties, Easter Monday, 340 dead.) I cannot comprehend the personal human sacrifice. It is only here among the thousands of graves that we come face to face with the war.

The numbers of dead are abstract. The reality of the graves is profound. The 110,000 young Canadians become individuals. Walking down row after row of uniform graves they become young men again, strangers but familiar. They are the age of my own sons - or my own age.

It is through this contact with the reality that facts become comprehension. It is through finding the individual human connections with the those silent witness that we can come to understand if not remember.

Connections such as that forged with a young boy named Lester Lennie, one of the 4,144 statistics of the Normandy landings now buried at Bayeux Cemetery. A distant relative and close childhood friend of my own father, he died on Thursday August 17 1944 at the age of 19.

It is also important for a nation to give expression to the collective experience.

Officially Canada has built 13 battlefield memorials commemorating the exploits of Canadian and Newfoundland troops in the First War, and the Juno Beach Centre to honour those of the Second War. These are among the hundreds of memorials erected by individuals, regiments, veterans associations and governments over the years.

Most of these commemorate the achievement of a specific date or objective, the victors of a particular battle, or, far too often, glorify the tragedy of human suffering. Too often they ignore the individuals and speak (preach?) to the common rhetoric of valor, duty, nationalism.

The Canadian Memorial at Vimy Ridge, France is one of the few memorials which escapes the rhetoric and touches a common chord in nearly every visitor.

The Canadian architect and sculptor Walter Allward designed the monument in the 1920s and it has remained one of the most moving and profound monuments to tragedy, loss and suffering. The memorial rises high over the ground that claimed so many Canadian, French and German lives nearly a century ago.

Like the graves that speak to the individual, the monument



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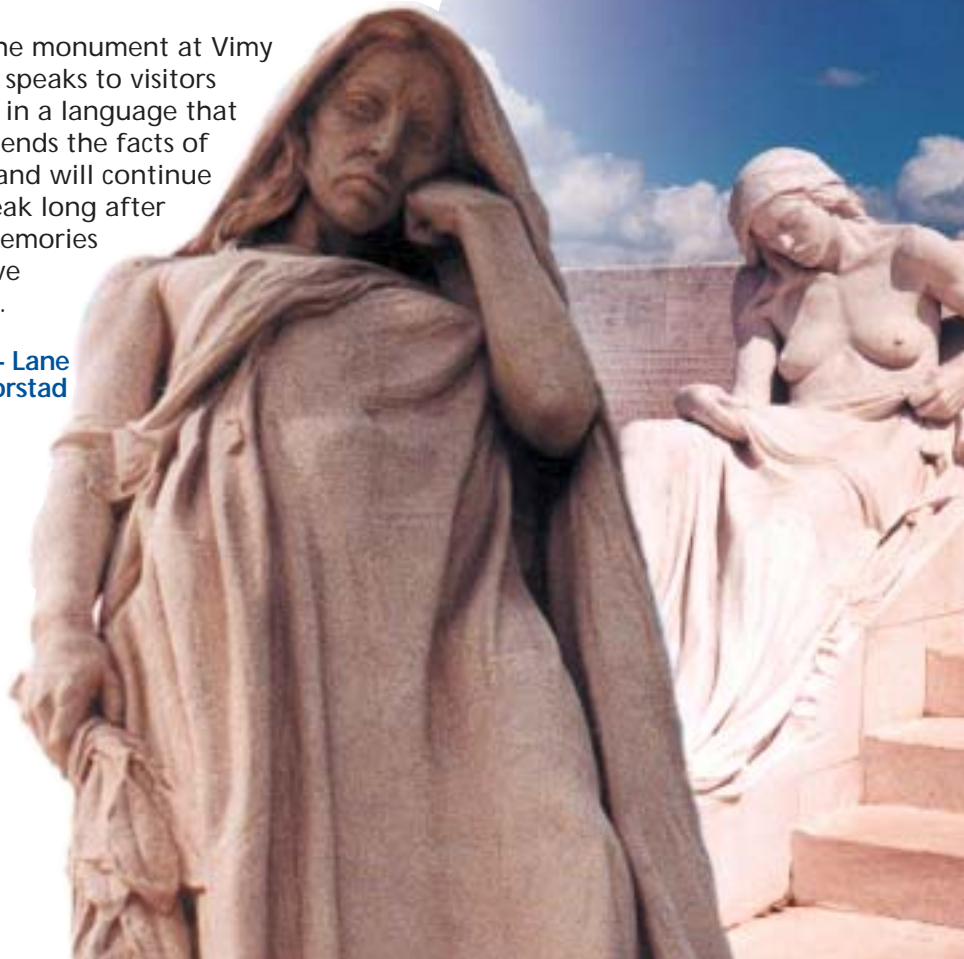
speaks to the universal. It speaks mourning and suffering. The most poignant symbol is the allegorical figure of Canada standing on the battlements, looking out over the fields of dead. The universal image of mother, wife, sister mourning the loss of loved ones.

Unique among all of the monuments erected by allied forces the Canadian memorial does not glorify the war. It contains no symbols of aggression, no soldiers, no cannons, no guns. It proclaims no victors and no vanquished, only the very profound and universal expression of grief. Surmounting the twin columns are figures representing justice, honour and peace. Engraved in the walls are the thousands of names of Canada's dead who have no grave.

Whether at Bayeux, The Somme, Vimy Ridge or any of thousands other cemeteries, we are personally reminded of the brevity of human life. It is at Vimy Ridge that the collective experience is given expression through the sculptor's

art. The monument at Vimy Ridge speaks to visitors today in a language that transcends the facts of 1917 and will continue to speak long after the memories of have faded.

- Lane Borstad



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