

Newsletter



McMaster University Faculty Association
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Ian Bruce, EDITOR

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Bullying and Intimidation on Campus?

Aggressive, intimidating, demeaning and degrading behaviour — could this be happening on our campus? Who are the aggressors and who the victims? Our own colleagues!

According to McMaster's Code of Conduct for Faculty, "Each faculty member is responsible for conducting himself or herself in a professional and ethical manner towards colleagues, students, staff, and other members of the University community." A similar statement appears in the Code of Conduct for Librarians. Some of our colleagues seem to have forgotten these Codes of Conduct in their interactions with others. Vigorous debate and disagreement about academic issues are necessary to test ideas and maintain academic rigour, but when they sour into personal attacks, any intellectual value is lost. Apparently a few departments on campus are plagued by the dysfunction that results from discourteous and unprofessional behaviour. We are informed that some departments are broken into camps, with no interaction between them, even in matters related to departmental decision making. Hiring, tenure and promotions, and curriculum discussion are all brought to a standstill. The department cannot function. A group of department members may become so aggressive that others refuse to work on campus; they resort to working at home to avoid being bullied by colleagues. We understand that there are individuals who attempt to demean a colleague or colleagues at every opportunity. The variations go on, and incidents seem to be increasing. Sometimes these situations have long histories and new colleagues hired into such a charged atmosphere unwittingly step into a political minefield, not of their own making. Too often, aggressive or discourteous behaviour is allowed to continue, and the victims feel they have nowhere to turn for help.

Rather than ignoring and thereby sanctioning such behaviour, we would like to start a conversation on campus about what is appropriate and inappropriate in interactions between colleagues. If you recognize any of these behaviours in your own academic interactions, now is the time to speak up. Let's publicly address this situation; let's not sweep it under a carpet of 'academic freedom'. We encourage those who feel they are being mistreated to speak out, to report behavioural problems to their Deans, the Faculty Association, and McMaster's Human Rights and Equity Office. Everyone will gain if we create a climate at

McMaster in which all members can live, work, and research, secure in the knowledge that bullying and intimidation will not be tolerated. It is time to put the sanctions against such behaviour, as they are outlined in the Faculty and Librarian Codes of Conduct, into practice. We call on our faculty and librarian colleagues to ensure the elimination of any form of unprofessional behaviour that knowingly makes another feel intimidated, threatened, or demeaned.

*MUFA Executive Meeting
November 10, 2005*



Sylvia Bowerbank

**Professor
English & Cultural Studies
August 5, 2005**

*"We die. That may
be the meaning of
life. But we do
language. That may
be the measure of
our lives."*

*Toni Morrison,
Nobel Acceptance Lecture, 1993*

Sylvia Bowerbank passed away on Friday, August 5, 2005 at her home in Lynden after a year-long struggle with cancer. A friend, a mentor, a colleague, she touched so many with her intelligence, humour and wisdom and she will be sorely missed.

Sylvia was born July 10, 1947 in Hamilton, Ontario and spent her early years at Baptiste Lake where she gained an appreciation of nature that influenced her throughout her life. Educated at Carleton, the University of Toronto and Simon Fraser University, Sylvia received her BA and her PhD in English from McMaster University.

Cross-appointed to the Department of English and Cultural Studies and to the Arts and Science Program, Dr. Bowerbank was one of the founders of the Women's Studies Program. She was also a Co-Chair of the President's Committee on Indigenous Issues. Sylvia sat on international editorial boards for journals and executive committees for international associations. She was also the vice-president and then the President of the Canadian Women's Studies Association. She was nominated for teaching awards six times and, besides winning teaching awards, she received the McMaster Student Environmental Recognition Award and a Special Recognition Award from the President's Committee on Indigenous Issues and Indigenous Studies Program. She supervised numerous undergraduate, MA and PhD students. One of her

doctoral students, Gary Kuchar, received the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies Distinguished Dissertation Award for the best dissertation in Canada.

Sylvia's scholarship has been foundational in a number of fields: early modern cultural studies, especially women's texts and history; ecocriticism; literature and science studies; and indigenous knowledges and cultures. Her early essay on Margaret Cavendish ("Spider's Delight" English Literary Renaissance, 1984) has been reprinted many times, as has her essay "Telling Stories about Places" (Alternatives Journal, 1997). Her essay on Frankenstein (English Literary History, 1979) changed the way we looked at the "creature" (not "monster") in that novel. Her "Towards the Greening of Literary Studies" (Canadian Review of Comparative Literature, 1995) introduced scholars to a new ecocritical way of reading literature. Her profound book on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women's writing and ecologies appeared with John Hopkins Press in 2004. It too will change the way we read the Early Modern period — its women writers, and its writing about science, about nature, and about place.

In *Combining Two Cultures*, the book published lately about the Arts & Science Programme, Sylvia writes: "From the first day, I say to the students that I will not emphasize finding faults in their writing, but I will strive to get to know them and to help them to develop as individual writers and young intellectuals.... [T]hey are to take the risk to do research on topics that matter to them, to write courageously about their ideas, and to be accountable for what they choose to write." This legacy lives on. Karen Bakker, a Rhodes Scholar and now a professor herself, calls Sylvia "one of the most intelligent and perceptive teachers I've ever had." Another student, Sachi Gibson, reminds us of the generations of students whom Sylvia "has taught to be active and

attentive readers, listeners, writers, and citizens.” Sylvia Bowerbank’s teaching, her scholarship and her friendship will inspire us all for many years.

*Mary O’Connor
Professor, English & Cultural Studies*

*Robert Johnston was a member of the University community for thirty years. Born in Toronto in 1937, Bob graduated with a BA from the University of Toronto in 1959. He continued his work at Yale University, where he graduated with a PhD in 1966. Appointed an Assistant Professor at McMaster University in 1969, Bob retired in 1999, after serving as Chair of the Department, and as Acting Dean of the Faculty of Humanities. Bob Johnston’s *New Mecca, New Babylon*, published in 1988, on Russian emigres in France received the McMaster University Humanities prize in 1989. He also served as President of the Faculty [University] Club. He was an admired teacher, exemplary citizen, vivacious and entertaining companion, whose wit will be treasured by all who know him. His gallant struggle during the final illness was a lasting gift to his many friends.*

The following remembrance was delivered at a memorial service on October 27, 2005

**Robert H.
Johnston**
Professor Emeritus
History
October 19, 2005

I was invited to say a few words about Bob’s contributions to the History Department. But I took it upon myself to ignore this assignment, having discovered that I don’t remember enough of the facts and lack the time to look them up. Anyway, I would likely have ended up with a bland tribute to my good friend and colleague who was many things in his time, but never bland. So here goes, very briefly, with something entirely different.

Bob was a special person because he was such fun to be around. He enjoyed

telling stories, many against himself, often involving narrow escapes from the consequences of some moderately embarrassing behaviour. In one instance he was busy pouring a bottle of a colleague's undrinkable homemade wine down the sink in the men's washroom on the sixth floor, when who should put in an appearance but the winemaker himself. "Oh," said Bob, quick as ever on the draw, "I left it too long in the sun and it has turned vinegary."

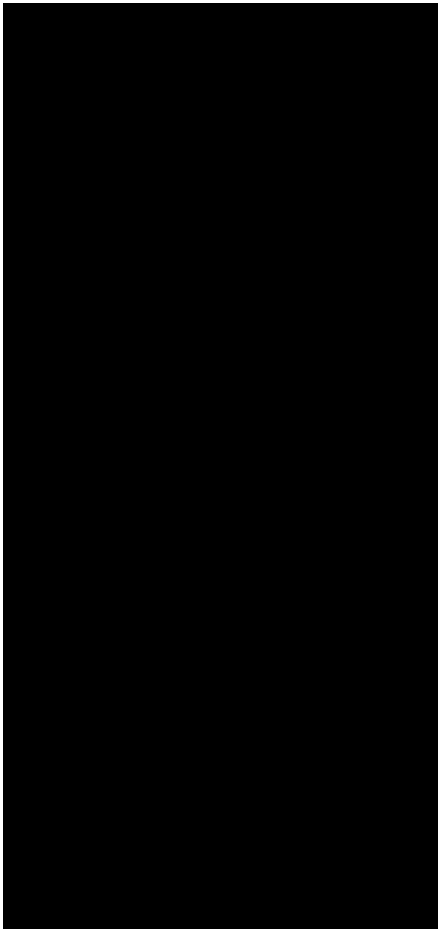
Bob was not a data man, but rather a masterly exponent of the written and spoken word. A true humanist. He had one of those jackdaw minds that pick up languages effortlessly but have trouble with simple arithmetic. A slightly idiosyncratic offshoot of this was the importance he attached to correct grammar and syntax and accurate translation. When we visited him in his apartment in Paris during his first sabbatical, I asked him what the previous tenant — a Japanese gentleman — had been like. He replied that the man had an imperfect command of the French subjunctive and left it at that. Of course the happy hunting ground for any collector of linguistic atrocities was eastern Europe before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many examples were to be found in menus or in notices on the back of hotel room doors. Bob carefully filed away the best of them, including the instruction by a stewardess on Air Bulgaria: "Eat grappa. Plovdiv says go away."

As a fellow-traveller, so to speak, he was a fund of endless recondite information. We could scarcely pass a signpost without learning that this was the village where Joan of Arc was born or the church where the heart of James I and VI (or was it James II?) was buried. But this kind of guidebook omniscience was combined with professorial absent-mindedness. Take the case of the overnight train from Paris to Lisbon. As they pulled into the terminus Bob commented to a fellow passenger, "Ah! Lisboa." "No, no señor — Madrid!" He

had boarded the wrong section of the train. Bob liked this story, partly I think because it gave him the chance at a full-blooded Spanish pronunciation of Madrid. Upon his return from another trip to Europe, his occasional impulse to indulge in mimicry backfired. When asked by the Immigration officer at Pearson where he lived, he replied: ““amilton”. This so infuriated the man, a French Canadian, that Bob landed on the first bounce in the room where they do strip searches.

Bob went to school in England, an experience he seldom mentioned except to deplore the food and the weather. But surely those grim years of postwar austerity and adolescence must have had some lasting impact. I think myself that his schooldays gave him his fondness for wicked satire, incisive writing and public schoolboy tomfoolery. Those were the very qualities that characterized the British magazine, *Private Eye*, in its heyday in the 1970s. There was nothing remotely Canadian about the *Private Eye* mentality, yet Bob devoured every issue, especially the letters purporting to have been sent by Denis Thatcher to his old friend Bill at the *Daily Telegraph*. His enthusiasm was reflected in, of all places, our departmental minutes, which he had unexpectedly volunteered to take. Members, apparently, did not adopt proposals — instead “a low ululation was taken by the chairman to signify consent”. A female dog, Charlotte, was reported present at one meeting, though not identified in quite those words. And so on. All very sophomoric, no doubt, or, in today’s jargon, inappropriate. I had a queasy feeling that the Dean might not be amused but I was prepared to argue that the minutes simply reflected the department’s well-known reputation for tolerance and congeniality. Better that than being at each other’s throats, as was reported to be the case in other departments not unadjacent to our own.

Finally, I hope you will forgive the



random nature of my remarks. Everyone in this room already knows that Bob was a man of cosmopolitan tastes, a dedicated teacher and scholar, and a great companion. He was also very generous, though sometimes hesitant to spend money on himself. He found a home in 'amilton and I never heard him hanker for Toronto or anywhere else. I like to think that Hamilton repaid him when the time came with excellent medical care. He had kind words even for the Hamilton Street Railway. I will always remember his last visit to us only a few weeks ago when he sat in a comfortable chair after dinner and sang along to our recording of *The Magic Flute* — in impeccable German, naturally.

Dr. John P. Campbell

Dr. Johnston served on six MUFA Executives between 1984 and 1997.]

Security of Exams

As December approaches, the campus experiences an increase in break and enters into departmental offices. The main motivation for this crime appears to be the acquisition of exams. Here are some suggestions to help prevent these types of crimes:

- **Remove all exams or drafts of exams from your office daily.**
- **Save a copy of the exam on a disk which is safely secured.**
- **Password your computer and then password or encrypt all exams or grade files.**
- **Double check that your office door is secure before leaving your office.**
- **Report lost or missing keys or access cards immediately to Security (Ext. 24281).**
- **Know the whereabouts of your keys and access cards at all time, and do not loan them out.**
- **Report any suspicious persons or activity immediately to Security (Ext. 24281). Please note their description.**

- If people appear to be loitering around your office door, watch that they are not tampering with your lock or door.
- Inspect your lock nightly looking for signs of tampering.

Security can be contacted in the following ways:

905-525-9140, ext. 24281

905-522-4135

“88” from any University telephone

“Security button” on all campus pay phones

all campus elevator phones

red poled emergency phones



New Members

Patricia Caldwell

David Lozinski

Prashant Mhaskar

Anneke Olthof

Ghani Razaqpur

Renee Sgroi

Hatem Zurob

Nursing

Mathematics & Statistics

Chemical Engineering

Psychology, Neuroscience

& Behavior

Civil Engineering

Communication Studies

Material Science &

Engineering



MUFA Council Appointments

Many thanks to Antoine Deza (Computing & Software), Martin Dooley (Economics), Michelle George (Classics), Neil McLaughlin (Sociology), and Anders Runesson (Religious Studies) for agreeing to represent their departments on the MUFA Council.

33rd Annual OCUFA

Teaching Awards/Academic Librarianship Award for 2005

Program

Each year OCUFA recognizes outstanding teachers and an academic librarian in Ontario universities through its Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards.

Nominations

Nominations are invited from individuals, informal groups of faculty or students, or both, and such organizations as local faculty associations, faculty

or college councils, university committees concerned with teaching and learning, librarians, local student councils, departments, alumni, etc.

Guidelines to assist in organizing a nomination should be consulted by prospective nominators and are available from your Faculty Association Office, the Provincial Office of OCUFA, or the OCUFA web site: www.ocufa.on.ca/awards

Procedure

Deadline for receipt of nominations: February 24, 2006.

The original and six copies of the submission should be sent to:

**OCUFA Teaching & Academic Librarianship
Awards Committee
83 Yonge Street, Suite 300
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1S8**



McMaster Faculty lead Alumni trips in 2006!

Join McMaster faculty as they lead unique travel opportunities crafted for McMaster alumni and friends.

Many Faces of China

Dr. Luke Chan, Associate Vice-President International Affairs will lead a group, as guest host through an itinerary that he personally crafted to highlight some of the best of China, from its modern cities to its ancient villages, learning along the way about its fabled past and its emerging future. This exclusive itinerary will take you to Beijing, Dunhuang, Tong Li, Shanghai, Kunming, Lijiang and Hong Kong where you will explore beyond the 'must see' highlights to more intimate locales and hidden gems, all the while staying in superb accommodations. Most meals and all excursions included. To view the detailed itinerary, and for a look at the first class accommodations you'll be enjoying, visit www.toureastholidays.com/group — Many Faces of China

**May 14 - 29, 2006 Tour East Holidays Canada
From \$3980 + air**

To request a brochure or for more information, please contact:

**Anne-Marie Middel '90
Alumni Officer, Services & Benefits
middel@mcmaster.ca
905.525.9140, ext. 27255**

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For Your

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Information

Vision Care

The Plan pays teaching staff, librarians, and their dependents up to \$250 towards the purchase of contact lenses or lenses and frames for eyeglasses, on a rolling 24-month basis. The 24 months are counted from the date of purchase.

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Housing

House for sale

Custom bungalow on ½ acre, private lot in Grand Vista Gardens, Greenville. Gas fireplace in living room, large deck, new roof (2004), 2 bathrooms, 2+ bedrooms, double attached garage. Large partially finished rooms in basement. 1 owner. Further information/appointment to view — call Carol @ 905-628-5732 and leave message.

MUFA GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, January 5, 2006 at 2:30 pm

Council Chambers (Gilmour Hall 111)

The salary brief will be discussed and approved at this meeting



November 23, 2005

pdk