



MacTron: A MacEyesore?

Last fall an outdoor "message board" was installed at the north end of the campus. Since then, it has created much controversy, but the University administration has done little about it.

Before installation, the University community knew it would receive a new scoreboard, for sporting events in the Les Prince Field to the west of the Ivor Wynne Centre. The board was not, however, requested by campus sports teams and discussed in appropriate campus committees. It was a "gift" from an alumnus and from Coca-Cola Bottling Ltd. The board, anonymously named the MacTron, has reportedly been used as a scoreboard once or twice. But its main purpose was not released before its arrival. It is to broadcast commercial advertising to everyone who drives, cycles, or walks onto campus to the east of the Arts buildings. A contract the administration signed is said to require bombarding passersby with these unwanted "messages" throughout the day and night. Relevant details of the contract have not been released.

Compare this situation with other projects that significantly alter the University landscape: they are determined publicly, reviewed by committees, commented on by the community. The decision to install this board was not based on input from the University community. The board's typical advertising is for a wide variety of consumer products and services. It also occasionally contains notices about campus events. But no one, apart from a very few administrators, agreed to a constant, day-in, day-out barrage of distracting computer-driven graphics. The board has struck many as a gigantic, garish eyesore, a hazard to driving, and an insult to the University. Recently in the Silhouette, yet another letter appeared against it, calling it "shallow, degrading, and dangerous...visual pollution." What impression might it make on prospective students or their parents looking for a calm environment conducive to learning and study? It has been cited in near accidents in the parking area in front of it. It is also in violation of various ordinances or permits and is a nuisance to nearby residents in the Mayfair area, whose enjoyment of their property has been seriously affected by it. Shortly after the second term began, the board mysteriously turned a few degrees away from the Mayfair area. Understandably, that satisfied no one.

In December, I asked Mary Keyes to look into this problem. Her reply was that there had been almost no negative comments about the board. Almost no one, however, knew where to bring those comments. I then asked the Vice-President (Academic), who referred me to the President's Office, which referred me back to Dr. Keyes. The reported financial benefit of this board to the University is so low that it could be tacked onto the current fundraising campaign without being noticed. The administration should admit its mistake and look for a correction acceptable to the communities it has so far ignored.

Paul Rapoport



Drug Plan?

What Drug Plan?

McMaster may have a Chair in Breast Cancer Research, but what it does not do is pay the breast cancer treatment costs of its own employees. I had/have breast cancer. As treatment to prevent its recurrence I take a drug called tamoxifen; ironically it was prescribed by the physician who holds the Chair in Breast Cancer Research. I was on research leave when the cancer was diagnosed and went on research leave as soon as my active treatment ended. This was in January of 1999. Except for a brief trip back to Canada for medical purposes, I spent most of 1999 outside of Canada.

Before leaving I filled a prescription for enough tamoxifen to last the length of my trip. Our McMaster-funded/Sun Life-administered drug plan would not pay the costs. They only pay for three-month prescriptions, nothing longer. The rationale for this rule is, according to Sun Life, that the employee might leave their job and the Plan would be out of pocket. Apparently McMaster Human Resources has never told Sun Life that as a condition of their leave, faculty members are obliged to return to the University. I paid for the drugs. The same situation recurred when I was back in July. I am told by our Benefits Office that there is a policy to deal with prescription drugs when on leave. No one I have talked to, including people at the Faculty Association, was aware of such a policy.

When I returned from my research leave at the beginning of this term, I filed to have my self-paid drug costs reimbursed. The drug plan has declined to provide the reimbursement. They have paid \$14.20 which represented less than 20 percent of the cost of the generic drug. I might point out that the two forms they sent me, one saying it would deal with this claim as a separate issue, and the other form which arrived with the cheque, had different dollar amounts on each of them than the amount originally claimed. (This underlines to me, at least, their administrative incompetence.) The rationale for rejection of the claim was an ungrammatical computer generated semi-sentence which I found incomprehensible.

As I write, the Faculty Association is trying to find out why the claim was not paid. Based upon previous experience with Sun Life and McMaster Human Resources - Benefits, they are not optimistic about my getting any money, but hope that it will be possible to at least receive an explanation. I face the same situation this summer when I go away to do research, and again for my next sabbatical.

In my case, the drugs will be paid for. My husband teaches at Brock. They also have a university-funded, separately administered benefits plan. He pays \$10 deductible per year and the plan covers all of his drugs. It has also always covered my dispensing costs which our plan does not cover. Now it seems, it will also have to pay the costs of my drugs. Brock does not have a Chair in Breast Cancer Research, but Brock does have a unionized faculty.

*Barbara W. Carroll, Professor
Department of Political Science*

[After intervention by the Faculty Association, this claim was paid. But it is an example of the ongoing problems we have with the drug plan and particularly the three month rule. BWC]

World's Easiest Exam



In the spirit of the season, here's a quiz for YOU to take.

1. How long did the Hundred Years War last?
2. Which country makes Panama hats?
3. From which animal do we get catgut?
4. What colour is a purple finch?
5. What is a camel's hair brush made of?
6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
7. What was King George VI's first name?
8. In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
9. Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
10. How long did the Thirty Years War last?

Answers



Maqbool Aziz

Professor of English

(1935-2000)



McMaster University has lost a distinguished teacher and scholar with the death of Dr. Maqbool Aziz, Professor of English. He died on March 9th, following a series of heart attacks. He was 65 years old, and barely two months from retirement.

He earned his BA and MA at Punjab University. After lecturing there for several years, he went on to Oxford University for further graduate study. There he was granted the DPhil in 1969. In that same year he came to McMaster as an Assistant Professor of English.

Over the years Dr. Aziz became well known as a superb classroom teacher. He received nominations for the McMaster Student Teacher Awards in no less than five different years, but he mostly declined them all. He was especially admired by graduate students, and he supervised a very large number of MA and PhD theses.

He published many articles and reviews as well as some translations. But his principal research, which occupied him for some years, was the preparation of three volumes of the definitive scholarly edition of the short fiction of Henry James. This was a particularly challenging task, since James frequently revised his stories between their periodical publication and their appearance in book collections, and then again when late in his life he revised and rewrote extensively for the famous New York Edition of his work.

Dr. Aziz was an accomplished artist in watercolours, and a very fine photographer. He had a very

extensive knowledge of history, especially of India and Pakistan and Persia. He was a gentle man, but he could have very strong opinions, especially on education, which he would express with great rhetorical power. He was widely loved as a man of great warmth and understanding. Students might sometimes find him very demanding, but they flocked to his classes, and to his constantly busy office where they found a welcoming and sympathetic mentor with whom they could speak freely of their problems, whether these were academic or involved such personal issues as difficult parents, or floundering romances, or merely the ever-painful angst of the young. He was a man of great personal dignity, which never disguised his genuine warmth and generosity.

Members of the McMaster community cherish the image of a well-dressed Maqbool riding with great aplomb along Sterling Street on his bicycle, at a speed so slow as to defy balance. Someone suggested that he could easily have won a place in the Guinness Book of Records. But I believe his name merits instead inscription in the roster of McMaster's most distinguished professors.

A memorial scholarship is being established in Dr. Aziz's name. Contributions can be made to the Department of English.

*Alwyn Berland
Professor Emeritus, English*

For Rent

Spacious, comfortable home, Aberdeen/Queen, 6 bedrooms, 4 baths, central air, fully furnished, parking. \$1500/month plus utilities; 12 month lease starting July 2000. Exact dates flexible. For more information, call 525-9140, ext. 24239 or 572-6254.



Professors welcomed. Spacious main floor, 1 bedroom apartment for rent. Located in Greensville on Escarpment overlooking Dundas Valley. Just renovated with new carpet, ceramic tile, 3pc bath. Lots of parking, trees and birds. Semi-furnished. Asking \$600/month, utilities incl. "The view is free." Call 905-628-9191.

Welcome New MUFA Members

Joe Blimkie	Kinesiology
Peter Boey	Management Science
Deb Stewart	Rehabilitation Science

Know Your Benefits

[Submitting a Claim](#)

Submission for dental claims can be done by completing a Sun Life Dental Claim Form, Standard Dental Claim Form or by having your dentist submit a form electronically from his office. If using a claim form, send to Sun Life (address is on the back of the form). You will receive a cheque in the mail to reimburse you for all eligible expenses. You are required to pay your dentist directly for services rendered.

Drug claims should be processed wherever possible using the Pay-Direct Card. The Card is usable throughout Ontario and in many locations across Canada. If the card is not accepted, you will have to submit a paper claim (available from Human Resources). Any reimbursements are mailed directly to your home address.

Claims should be submitted as soon as possible after treatment. **All claims must be received at Sun Life prior to September 30 following the end of the benefit year in which they are incurred. The benefit year runs from July 1 to June 30.**

World's Easiest Exam - Answers

1. 116 years, from 1337 to 1453
2. Ecuador
3. From sheep and horses
4. Distinctively crimson
5. Squirrel fir
6. The Latin name was Insularia Canaria: Island of the Dogs.
7. Albert. When he came to the throne in 1936, he respected the wish of Queen Victoria that no future king should ever be called Albert.
8. November. The Russian calendar was 13 days behind ours.
9. New Zealand
10. Thirty years, of course, from 1618 to 1648 (you expected something else?)