

CULTURE & TRADITION'S NEWSLETTER
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TRANSMISSION

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

EMILY URQUHART

LAYING DOWN THE INK IN THESIS-LAND

ANDREA KITTA

WHO REALLY RUNS THE OFFICE AND THE
KIND OF FILES THEY HAVE ON YOU

Q&A WITH CINDY TURPIN AND SHARON COCHRANE

FOLKLORE SOCIETY UPDATE

FOLKLORE SOCIETY

WHAT (IS) THE FRECKER?

LYNNE MATTE

THE LAST WORD

DR. DIANE TYE

THE LAST PAGE

MEMORIAL ALUMNI NIGHT AT FSAC

Letter from the Editor: My Advice? Get a Snowblower.



At first glance, I thought someone had stolen my car. However, the reality of the situation was far worse.

While doing research for something entirely different, I came across an essay by MUN English professor Ronald Rompkey, written for the back page of the *Globe and Mail* in 1989. The topic was snow removal in St. John's and the description and sentiment have changed little in the last 20 years.

“Attitudes to the clearing of snow, like attitudes to municipal taxation or the preservation of architecture, tell us something about the character of Canadian cities. In St. John's, for example, snow removal, especially in the busy downtown residential neighbourhoods, has developed into an art form, a mixture of light opera and theatre of the absurd that rivals the saturnalia of Christmas. Downtown, if you have the patience to wait until the

silent hours and the willingness to awake the next day as if emerging from a bad dream, you are in for a memorable demonstration of urban folklife.”

Snow clearing is my most loathed task. In fact, I'll hand over my last \$20 to any skeety teenager with a shovel and live on ramen noodles for the rest of the week just to avoid digging myself out. And the plows, however necessary, are simply one more wintery burden—thundering past my bedroom window and waking me from sleep, packing my car into an ice cage and backing up all through the night, like hundreds of citywide radio alarm clocks being set off at random.

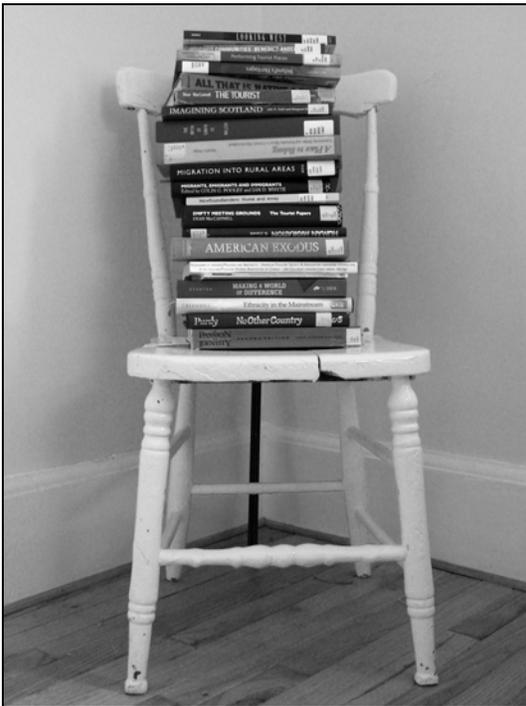
Perhaps to save myself the cash and foreboding I should simply shovel first thing every morning and in this way get it over with. (i.e. Accomplish my hardest task first.) This is the advice that administration guru Cindy Turpin gives to students and it's been ringing in my ears ever since my interview with Cindy and Sharon (see page TK) that took place before the holidays.

Actually, there's a lot of good advice in this issue of *Transmission*, from Andrea Kitta's thesis writing tips () to Lynn Matte's report on an innovative way to acquire your PhD language component (page tk). And be sure to follow Department Head Dr. Diane Tye's advice and stay out of her 'problems' folder (page Tk).

So, thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue—from writing articles to generating ideas to letting me steal photos from your Facebook page. If you have any ideas for the next issue, please get in touch. If you have a used snowblower for a decent price, please also get in touch.

--Emily Urquhart

As PhD Candidate ANDREA KITTA tackles her thesis, she's got some advice for the rest of us on overcoming the "Three P's" – Perfectionism, Procrastination, Paralysis¹



Are you one of those people who feel the need to turn in a perfect paper? Do you spend senseless minutes agonizing over just the right word? Are you going to turn it in after you read it “Just one more time?” Wait, of course you do these things. You’re an academic.

Let’s face it, we didn’t get this far by being careless. Our obsessive behaviour up to this point has been

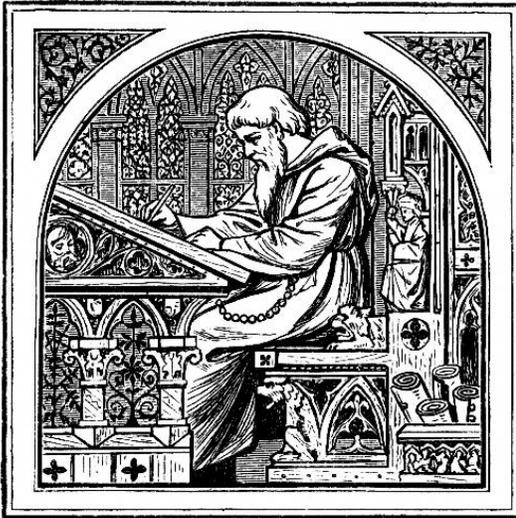
¹ A lot of the information and inspiration for this article came from AcademicLadder.com, where Gina Hiatt discusses these same three P’s. I’ve adapted them in a way that it useful for me, but you can check out the original article here: <http://www.academicladder.com/2005/the-3-ps-perfectionism-procrastination-and-.-.-.-april-13-2005.html>

rewarded so much that we barely know how to function otherwise. Normally we only turn something in once we get so sick of looking at it that we give up. It works fine for papers, but it isn’t going to work for your thesis. Trust me on this one. What ends up happening is that we obsess over every word, say of a chapter which is about paper length, without the deadline hanging over our heads we just keep going back to it. When we get sick of it, we find something else to do until guilt takes over and we read it “one more time” over and over again. This, my friends, is perfectionism – our first P. And it quickly leads to our second P – Procrastination. You can read that chapter as many times as you want and make every word golden, but by the time it’s done you’ll be so tired, you’ll never start the next one. This is a marathon, not a sprint and at some point you just have to be done.

Of course, sometimes these P’s take an even nastier turn and we start to worry that if it isn’t perfect, then it isn’t worth doing. And we sit in front of the computer, either writing nothing or writing and immediately deleting what we’ve just written. Some of you may have already experienced this next P – Paralysis – before. It happens sometimes when we start a big project and we don’t know what to do first or when we know exactly what we want to say, but don’t know how to even start when it comes to saying it. Or we start to think that it’s not even worth saying at all. Doubt, along with guilt, will accompany you through this journey. Think of them as the fire that’s on that ring you have to jump through.

See the next page for Andrea’s tips on what works best for her....

Some Tips to get you Inking across the Great White Divide.



Note: Monk-like dedication required

1. Writing a zero draft. I like calling it that because my expectations of a first draft are too high. A zero draft can be an outline or whatever you want it to be. Just get it on paper.
2. Write for at least 15 minutes EVERY DAY. And I mean write. Not stare at your computer. Write, even if you don't think you have anything to say.
3. Forgive yourself. Realize that you can get the right word later. There were weeks in between me writing "This research is dodgy" and "This research lacks a theoretical framework". Dodgy was a great placeholder until I came up with the right words. I could have spent time getting those words on that day, instead I chose to write two pages after those words. That's how you get things done.
4. Set realistic goals and realize that everything takes longer than you think it will. You are not going to write 10 pages today and even if you do, you're not going to want to do it again tomorrow. Again, it's a marathon, not a sprint!
5. Get help. There are great coaching sites out there like PHiniseD and Academic Ladder. They have good articles and offer things like coaching and discussion boards. Sometimes it's just nice to know there are others out there.

—*Andrea Kitta*

Notes from the Inner Sanctum of the Office...

Cindy Turpin and Sharon Cochrane are the maternal core of this department—they not only nurture, they also run a tight ship. These administrative dynamos allowed Transmission in to the back room of the office for a chat, albeit, most of it was off the record.

T: Where are you guys from?

C: I'm a Bayman.

S: I'm a Townie.

T: How long have you worked in the folklore department?

C: 33 years

S: 34 years

T: Do people ever get you guys mixed up?

C: On the phone, (laughs) always! Everyone says we sound just alike on the phone. And every now and again we have this uncanny knack of coming in dressed in the same colours.

T: We all think you live here in the department, and we're your kids, but you both have your own children don't you?

C: Two girls, 29 and 26

S: Two girls, 29 and 26



Cindy and Sharon approved this photo.

T: Did I hear that right? Your kids are exactly the same age?

C: We got married the same year, were pregnant together, had our kids together, and now we're going through hot flashes together.

S: Laughs

C: You were a little ahead of me with the pregnancies, a couple of months. Then I got pregnant right after so we always said there's something on the chair.

S: It was called the hot chair! Even the woman who filled in for me during my maternity leave got pregnant.

C: It's true!

T: Is working in the Folklore Department a good gig?

S: I love this department.

C: Me too. There couldn't be a better place to work.

S: Or a better bunch of people to work with.

T: Any wild departmental shenanigans you'd like to tell us about?

C: They all have their own individual personalities and sometimes they can get themselves in to trouble.

S: That's a nice way of putting it—some of them are prone to getting in to trouble.

C: They were. Not so much now.

S: No, it's good now, but years ago...

C: It was like that all over the university back then. It was a product of the time.

S: We've seen everything. We've heard everything. There's nothing that can shock us anymore.

C: And when both of us retire we're going to be up at Chapters for the book signing.

S: We're going sell our memoir!

T: So, what you're saying is that to get the real dirt we're going to have to read the memoir? How long do we have to wait?

C: I'll retire in two, maybe three years.

S: Seven for me.

T: Ok, can you at least tell us who the wildest department head was?

S: Screams

C: Oh we've got to say. Everybody knows.

S: Ok, the wildest, in his day, was Gerald Thomas.

C: Hands down.

T: Who was the most organized?

S: Diane Tye

C: Absolutely.

T: Do you ever play tricks on faculty members?

S: All the time! I love playing tricks on them!

C: Some of them are so gullible.

S: The best person to play tricks on is Paul Smith.

C: He doesn't take it too seriously.

T: Can you give us an example?

S: We had a bad bout of weather, with lots of rain and the power went out. Paul calls me up because he thought he might have left his window open and asked us to check it. So Cindy went down to check and the office was fine. But I called Paul and told him that his office was in shambles, he'd left the window open, there was water everywhere, and his books were ruined. He was so gullible, he totally believed me.

C: Not everybody would appreciate a trick like this. But we're always tormenting Paul.

T: You two clearly run this place and you're really busy. But you always have time for the students. Is that a priority?

S: We wouldn't have a job if it wasn't for the students.

C: That's why we're here.

S: I feel that the students are a very important part of this place.

C: That's the whole purpose of the university, the students.

S: We would drop anything that we're at to make sure that the students are well taken care of.

C: Now sometimes we feel like choking a couple of them.

S: Yes, there's a few we feel like choking! But they're very few and far between! We want to make the students as comfortable as possible. A lot of our students are away from home and they can get lonely. A lot of them like that motherly nurturing and we've said this, and we've been quite open about it, that anyone can come by the office anytime and come in to the inner sanctuary back here and have a cup of tea, a biscuit...

C: Have a cry

S: Yes we've had many in here crying, sipping tea.

T: What would a typical day be for you guys?

S: Every day is a different day in the naked city. I can't even give you an example. Some days are quieter than other.

C: You can't make this stuff up. Some days everyone and his cousin comes through here.

S: We run this department together. We completely share responsibilities.

C: If one is off the other covers for them.

S: This is the way we keep the ship a sailin'. Because the office is always busy. Right now we're inputting all the grades.

T: Um, so you guys know all of our grades?

C: Oh yes, we know everything! We know everything about everybody.

T: Everything?

S: I have a document on every student in this department. It's a quick glance of all the courses that they've done, their marks, extensions to their programs, leaves of absence. Anything that's been done is in the quick glance document. I always update it. So, if a faculty member has to write a reference letter, I've got all the information updated and ready for them.

T: I bet you guys see students making the same mistakes year after year. What overall advice would you offer current students?

S: They get themselves worked up and then get really panicky. So you need to relax, focus on what you're working on, and make sure to take breaks.

C: My philosophy has always been to do the hardest thing first. Don't think about it, just get in to it and do it first. Once the hardest thing is finished the rest isn't insurmountable.

GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS, EVENTS

Call for Papers

**Annual Meeting of the Folklore
Studies Association of Canada
/ L'Association canadienne
d'ethnologie et de folklore
Cape Breton University, Sydney, Nova
Scotia
May 22-25, 2008**

Themes: The context of Cape Breton suggests a number of themes: Cultural tourism; Post-industrialism; Out-migration and Diaspora; Romantic nationalism; Multiculturalism outside the metropolis.

Please send your 100 word abstract for your formal presentation in English and French (or enclose a translation fee of \$20), along with the completed registration form, to:

Ian Brodie
Cape Breton University
Box 5300
Sydney, NS B1P 6L2 or by e-mail to
acef2008@cbu.ca

Your abstract will not be considered until the Secretary-Treasurer has received your registration fee and your membership fee

Deadline: February 15, 2008

Awards

Congratulations to Maureen Power who won the The Luc Lacouricière Memorial Scholarship, presented at the joint AFS/FSAC meeting in Quebec City.



Power celebrates her win with a Kir Royale at Le Château Frontenac.

Announcements

Kristin Harris Walsh and husband Kieran welcome their first child. Declan Michael Walsh was born on January 5 at 11:17am.



Harris Walsh and Baby Declan.



MUN Folklore Society News*

Melissa Long, President
Natalie Austin, Vice President
Elizabeth Burstler, Treasurer
Mary Betts, Secretary
Tom Power, Public Relations

The MUN Folklore Society had an especially productive fall semester, thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of its members.

For those who are unfamiliar with the MUN Folklore Society, we are a student society dedicated to the community of the department and its students of various academic levels. We organize social events and fundraisers, some new and some reoccurring.

Some exciting happenings of the fall semester include:

Bonfire Night: Someone had the crazy idea of going out to Middle Cove on

Guy Fawkes night for a Folklore Society bonfire. We collected some branches, had a boil up, roasted marshmallows and wieners and sang a few songs.

Christmas Party: Good times were had at the Quidi Vidi brewery for our end of semester holiday celebration, despite the power failure. Natalie's Christmas carols and Keagan's eggnog made the night particularly memorable.

Coffee Club: These gatherings at various coffee joints provide an opportunity to chat informally with fellow students, talk about papers ideas, laugh about our crazy professors, and use our academic jargon to create bad folklore puns.

Clothing: After many semesters of delay, we have created some beautiful t-shirts and hoodies, thanks to the decision making abilities of our President, Melissa Long.

Halloween Mixer: An annual event, the Halloween mixer was attended by many frightening creatures and interesting characters. For those who are unfamiliar with them our mixers are three hour evening events where everyone is invited to party in the seminar room.

Penny Drive: We raised money in small change from classes to go towards the Mary Griffiths Bursary fund. Thanks to all who participated.

Some events to look forward to;

Anti-Valentines Day Mixer: An annual mixer hosted by the Folklore Society, please come and brood with us.



Sarah and Melissa dolling out (witches) brew at the Halloween mixer.

More Coffee Club: To feed our addictions of coffee, gossip, and academia.

Mary Griffiths' Night: This is the most significant and exciting event of the winter semester. In March, the Folklore Society hosts a night of live music at one of our local pubs. We raise money though cover that goes towards the Mary Griffiths bursary fund for folklore research in Newfoundland and Labrador. Over the next few months we will be looking for musicians and dedicated organizers to help make this event successful. If you are a musician or performer of any kind, please consider playing at Mary Griffiths Night, and contact one of us accordingly.

If you wish to be added to the MUN Folklore Society E-mail list, or for any other general comments or questions, contact:
MUNFolkloreSociety@gmail.com



Brant and Mary sipping Quidi Vidi's new cranberry beer at the Christmas Party.



Holiday Cheer-y ladies: Jillian and Holly.



Extra points for guessing the costume.

***Check out the Facebook page, "MUN Folklorists do it in the field..."**

PhD Candidate LYNN MATTE writes (in English) about mastering La Langue Française (in France)



PhD students in the department of Folklore at MUN have to jump through several academic hoops before they are entitled to get down to the nitty gritty of thesis research and writing. One of those hoops is a language requirement. Being a fan of excess, this PhD student decided to go for broke and enrolled in the Frecker Programme. The Frecker Programme is three months of government subsidized immersion on the French island of St. Pierre. This slice of European life, where they do indeed use the euro, is

located just a little more than 20 kilometers off of Newfoundland's Burin Peninsula. Who knew?

The Frecker Programme has a prerequisite of French 1502 and demands that students enroll in 5 undergraduate French courses, which are all taught at the Francoforum. These courses include grammar, culture, literature and phonetics. Add to that numerous cultural outings and events such as hikes, French cuisine and wine, a day trip to Ile aux Marins and Miquelon (some of the other islands in the archipelago), theatre and song components, and being billeted with a local family and you have yourself one intense experience! Although the programme is mostly comprised of second-year undergraduate students, my group of 26 included a 50-something grandmother, a woman in her 40s, and several students who had already completed their undergraduate degrees but were working towards an extra teachable. Yes ladies and gentlemen, completing the Frecker programme could earn you the equivalent of a minor in French (if you qualify to take French 3100). There are, of course, other opportunities to get involved in the



community and meet the locals. One cannot overlook the Centre Culturel et Sportif which has a theatre, a gymnasium and a swimming pool. There are two gyms in town as well as two playing fields for petanque (similar to lawn-bowling or bocce), a wall for pelote basque (think outdoor squash), the opportunity to row around the barachois in a dory, volleyball, hockey, indoor and outdoor soccer, sailing, SCUBA diving, choirs, and volunteering opportunities. The French like a good party and

there is always something happening out on the town on weekends. Saturday nights the Rustique, the Baratin and the Joinville are guaranteed to be packed with people. And with

cruise ships and fishing vessels docking in Saint Pierre, you never know who you might meet.

Did I enjoy the experience? I have to say that not being in control of what I ate, what times of the day I ate, nor having any control over my laundry was a bit odd. The three months pass very quickly and although things seemed a bit slow in the beginning, the pace picked up almost immediately and the time flew. I enjoyed my time in St. Pierre so much that I applied for and accepted a position at the lycee (highschool) as the English Assistant from January until June. The position is well-paid and only demands 12 hours of work per week. As a result, I continue to live la vie quotidienne (daily life) in French, while having a very valid excuse for speaking English.

The professors at the Francoforum want to see their students succeed, and the majority of students who attempt the programme do quite well. The staff members are friendly and approachable and go out of their way to make the students feel welcome in Saint Pierre. Students of all levels, including former highschool immersion students, as well as those who had only begun to study French in first-year university, were enrolled in the programme and all saw vast improvements in their competence and confidence in the use of French language, both written and oral.



For those who are not willing to dedicate three months to the pursuit of a second language, there are shorter programmes available during the summer months. For those who are not interested in studying the language at all, I would still highly recommend a visit, even if it's just a daytrip. 45 minute flights depart to and from Saint-Pierre via St. John's three days per week and during the summer months a daily ferry service runs to Fortune. If you'd like more information on the island and its services please visit the following websites and don't hesitate to ask me any questions you might have: autumn_overseas@hotmail.com

Travel info: [http://www.st-pierre-et-](http://www.st-pierre-et-miquelon.com/english/comment.php)

[miquelon.com/english/comment.php](http://www.st-pierre-et-miquelon.com/english/comment.php)

St-Pierre website: <http://www.st-pierre-et-miquelon.com/>

Francoforum: <http://www.francoforumspm.net/>

Frecker Programmeme: <http://arts-srv.arts.mun.ca/frecker/general.php# francoforum>

DR. DIANE TYE Reflects on Her First Semester as Department Head

I'm taking it as a positive sign that when Emily asked me to report on my first semester as Head of Department, my mind went blank. I think it's an indication that nothing really awful happened but I do feel a new affinity for those mothers who go through hours of agonizing labour only later to say that it wasn't too bad. I'm sure that Martin is the one who can best tell us about that dynamic though; his six year term is over and my watch is just starting. In large part because Martin left things in such good shape, the first semester has been remarkably stress-free (and here's the secret that everyone already knows: Sharon and Cindy really run things anyway). In fact, there's lots to feel good about. Jillian Gould's arrival has brought new energy to the department. Her appointment, on the heels of the Public Sector Folklore students' successful exhibit on the Battery at the Rooms, and coupled with Jerry Pocius's continued work with the province on intangible heritage initiatives, has prompted us to explore the development of a public folklore graduate stream. Thanks to Jerry and Maureen Power some of the panels that were part of the Battery exhibit have been installed in the department bringing colour and new life to our institutional walls.

We also have a wonderful group of graduate and undergraduate students in the program at the moment. The Folklore Society is as active as I think it's ever been, hosting a great Halloween mixer as well as several other social and fundraising events over the semester and now we'll all be sporting new t-shirts thanks to the society.

If anyone had any doubts about the calibre and energy of our students, they just needed to be at the FSAC/AFS meeting this fall in Quebec. We took the place by storm. Without exception Memorial students gave fantastic papers and they even transformed what could have been a boring Memorial reception into a social event that reportedly surpassed all other alumni receptions held during the meeting. Part of the fun was an auction, organized at the suggestion of an alumnus who generously donated \$200 towards a student's travel expenses for this year's meeting. We learned that if Ian Brodie ever wants a career change, auctioneering is clearly an option and by the end of the evening we raised around \$450 to go towards student travel for next year's AFS meeting.

Some of my time as Head this first semester has been spent spreading the word. Mostly due to Cindy's skills as a webmaster, we have one of the best departmental websites at Memorial. She's been updating aspects of the website over the fall, adding more information as well as links. With the help of Leslie Vryenhoek, of the Dean of Art's office, we put together a much needed and long talked about graduate brochure. Apparently there is some truth to the old adage that everything comes to s/he who waits because we're thrilled with the results. I'll admit my bias here, but when I made a point of checking out other graduate program brochures at AFS, ours was by the far the most attractive and informative. I'd come here!

So the winter term looms ahead but after the first semester, it's all good. I do now have an email mailbox titled "Problems" that I'd ask each of you to do your best not to be transferred into but at this point most of its contents are about small, and better yet, already fixed problems...like the distance student in Ottawa whose contact number for writing the course exam turned out to be the Honduran Embassy. As I say, small, fixable problems....just about what an incoming Head of Department can handle.

Memorial Reception at AFS/FSAC



The auctioneer and his lovely assistant (Ian Brodie and Jodi McDavid)...



...and the frenzied crowd.

Photos courtesy of Leslie Pierce

Transmission is an occasional publication. Submissions may be sent at any time and will be included in the next issue. We welcome short essays, reviews, notes & queries, as well as news from folklore societies and departments across Canada.

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