FOCUS TRENT



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in the NEWS

On Thursday, April 6 Professor John Topic was featured on CBC Radio's As it Happens in a piece Documentary examining the impact of the Red Green Show on Canadian culture.



Professor Paul Healy appeared on the Thursday, March 30 edition of CBC News Morning.

As a Mayan archaeologist, he was featured providing colour commentary from a Toronto studio as Prime Minister Steven Harper, Mexican President Vicente Fox, and U.S. President George Bush toured the ancient Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza during the recent Cancun summit.

Trent University's Water Quality Centre was profiled in the March-April 2006 issue of the Canada Foundation for Innovation's Online Magazine. A copy of the article is available at: http://www.innovation canada.ca/21/en/articles/dirty.

"Think Globally, Go Locally" was the name of an article in April's University Affairs magazine in which Trent's International Program was featured. The article highlights the various program and study abroad options available to students interested in International Development at Trent.

this year's winner of the Symons Award for Excellence in Teaching, was profiled in a frontpage article in the Peterborough Examiner on

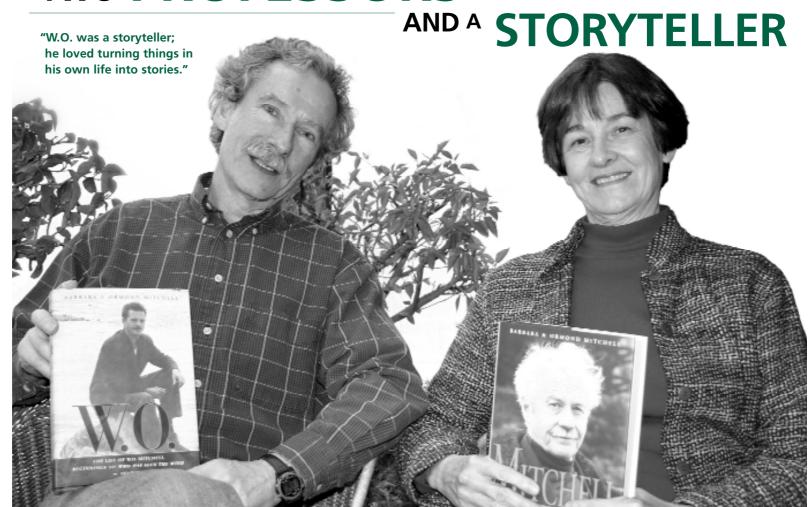
Thursday, March 30.

Professor Geoffrey Eathorne,

As a winner of the prestigious Killam Fellowship, Professor Joan Sangster and herresearch project on women and work after the Second World War were featured in the March 8 editions of both the Peterborough Examiner and Peterborough This Week.

On Friday, March 31 Professor Miriam Smith of the Political Studies department was interviewed by Country 105 FM with regard to the Cancun meeting between Bush and Harper. Professor Smith also commented on Canadian politics in general and how Harper is doing so far. 👻

TWO PROFESSORS The Life of W.O. Mitchell, Volume II



hen Orm and Barb Mitchell set out to write a tribute to W.O. Mitchell that straddled the lines between academic biography and personal memoir, critics said they were attempting the impossible. According to the Mitchells, however, the fact that such a biography had never been written was just the challenge they were looking for; and, as accomplished academics as well as the son and daughterin-law of the great Canadian writer, no one was better suited to take up the task.

In November 2005, Mr. Mitchell, an English Professor at Trent, and his wife, Barb, a former professor of English at the University, released the second part of their two volume biography. Entitled Mitchell: The Life of W.O. Mitchell: The Years of Fame, 1948-1998, this second volume picks up where the first volume, W.O.: The Life of W.O. Mitchell: Beginnings to Who Has Seen the Wind, 1914-1947, left off and delves into the life of the Canadian writer after the release of his most acclaimed

Throughout the two volumes, the Mitchells weave together three "voices" - the voices of the subjects themselves, including W.O., his wife Merna, and the people they

encountered throughout their lives, as well as the voice of the academic, more objective biographer, and the personal voice of the authors, gleaned from a lifetime of memories.

"We tried to combine all sorts of biographical elements into the same work," explained Professor Barb Mitchell during a recent interview at their home just outside of Peterborough. "We used our academic training and approached the biography on that level but we also wanted the personal voices to come through."

Professor Orm Mitchell quickly interjected: "And we also wanted to tell an interesting story...W.O.'s work is much loved by a wide audience – from the guy on the street to the academic. We wanted our biography to do the same thing... He didn't write for just one audience, so neither did we."

In addition to writing for a wide audience, the Mitchells' attempt to capture so many different elements of W.O.'s life is also a means of showing the reader the "whole story" – the goal of any good biography.

"W.O.'s work is much loved by a wide audience – from the guy on the street to the academic. We wanted our biography to do the same thing...He didn't write for just one audience, so neither did we."

With over 14 years of taped interviews and approximately 80 hours with W.O. himself, it was the personal voices that were hard to ignore. In fact, the broad range of stories, facts, and anecdotes was the reason why the biography had to be split into two volumes – a decision that was made only after eight chapters of the first volume were written.

"We were collecting such raw material that no one else had access to," Professor Barb Mitchell recalled, pointing out that this is the first biography to be written on W.O. Mitchell. "We wanted to put it all out there for other researchers."

And, in spite of the authors' close relationship to their subject, or perhaps because of it, they don't hold back any punches; from discussing W.O.'s fight with depression during the 1960s to exploring Merna's dependence on alcohol, the Mitchells felt it was important to highlight it all.

"We wanted to put the reader inside as much as possible," Professor Orm Mitchell said. "W.O. was full of high-octane energy and it sometimes took a toll on him and her (Merna) and the other people around."

Professors Orm and Barb Mitchell were also granted the inside look into the life of W.O. Mitchell through their research for this biography - some stories were already known but others provided interesting revelations for the family members as well. Professor Barb Mitchell, for example, remembers discovering that there were in fact two editions of Who Has Seen the Wind – the Canadian version and a little known American version in which 7,000 words were cut. Even W.O. Mitchell himself had forgotten about this edition, only remembering later his fights with an American editor to keep certain elements of the book intact - including many of the metaphorical references to the wind.

Overall, the goal of the complete biography is to commemorate the life of W.O. Mitchell, who died in 1998. In addition to commemorating a life, however, Professors Orm and Barb Mitchell are also successful in piecing together a work that combines many different styles and voices in such a way that it ultimately tells a story – a goal W.O. Mitchell himself would appreciate, especially since, according to Professor Orm Mitchell, "W.O. was a storyteller; he loved turning things in his own life into stories." ♥



n the fall of 2005, Sara
Swerdlyk started her third year
as an International
Development Studies and Native
Studies major with a new outlook
on herself and a new, more complex and complete view of the
world. This new perspective was
not as a result of a summer experience in her hometown of
Thunder Bay, but rather through
a federally-funded program that
allowed this Trent student to live
and work for three months in

Ms. Swerdlyk was selected as one of 66 Canadian university students who were given the chance to take part in a new program offered by Canada Corps, which is designed to help students increase their global knowledge and share Canadian values and expertise in building democracy. The Canadian Corps

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDENT_ ENGAGES DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN GHANA

University Partnership Program (CCUPP) provided full funding (approximately \$10,000) for one student from each participating Canadian university to undertake a summer placement within the government, a higher education institution, or a civil society organization in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, or Latin America.

"The experience was really great," said Ms. Swerdlyk.
"Ghana is a really phenomenal place for a student studying International Development."

Placed in the northern capital city of Tamale, Ms. Swerdlyk spent three months working with the Institute for Policy Alternatives, a non-profit think-tank that undertakes research, training, and develop-

ment advocacy with a core principle of citizen engagement. One of

the main goals of the organization is to emphasize the voices and perspectives of the poor, especially those in rural communities.

During her placement Ms. Swerdlyk was a research assistant

on a project exploring how women's rights in Northern Ghana have been affected by government decentralization. The project utilized active participatoryresearch, which moves away from the typical scientific observation-type research and allows the research subjects to become researchers themselves; it is a research method in which Ms. Swerdlyk now firmly believes.

"Ghanaian people have to be on the forefront of change in their own country," she said. "(The work we were doing) was like bringing a voice to the voiceless."

Trent's contribution to the CCUPP extended beyond Ms. Swerdlyk's placement and participation. Because of connections already formed by Trent's

"Going away really helped me. It was an opportunity

to couple what I was learning in my classes with

real experiences." — Sara Swerdlyk

International Development Studies program, through the Year in Ghana Program, Trent proposed utilizing part of the grant funding to support a Ghanaian

counterpart to Ms. Swerdlyk at

the Institute for Policy

Alternatives. As a result, Ms. Swerdlyk was able to work sideby-side with a Ghanaian woman of equivalent age for the duration of her intemship.

"There was a lot of cross-cultural learning from each other," Ms. Swerdlyk recalled, adding that learning took place both inside and outside the office.



With three months to spend in a new country, Ms. Swerdlyk took every opportunity to explore Ghana and to get to know people. In spite of her adventurous attitude, however, there were several things that were a little hard to get used to. From the hot weather and the roaming animals, to the limited number of functioning toilets and having to learn to do everything with your right hand, as per the custom there (especially when you are lefthanded) - it was a unique and, at times, challenging experience.

"You can't really fathom just how different it is," she said. "Nothing could have prepared me – I was on my own and learning this completely different way of living."

It was the challenges, however, that made the experience that much more memorable. According to Ms. Swerdlyk, her time in Ghana challenged her assumptions as "a white, western university student" and made her look at all things, including what she was learning in her International Development classes at Trent, with a more critical eye.

"Going away really helped me. It was an opportunity to couple what I was learning in my classes with real experiences," said Ms. Swerdlyk. "I definitely learned a lot about myself and about the way I understand the world."

And for an International Development Studies student, having the opportunity to explore and learn in a developing country is an experience that cannot easily be matched. For Ms. Swerdlyk it is also an experience that will help shape her plans for the future, solidifying her interest in pursuing a career in International Development. **

Author and alumnus Yann Martel returns to Trent and discusses new book

ann Martel looks very much at home as he sits on a Traill College railing overlooking the City of Peterborough. It is his first visit back to the University since winning the Mann Booker Prize for his novel *Life of Pi* in 2002 but in spite of the time passed and all of the success he has been afforded, Mr. Martel still feels like he belongs here.

"Trent is a very personable place," Mr. Martel said during an informal discussion before his public appearance at the Peterborough Public Library on March 31. "I had a great university experience at Trent. I spent five years here and I found it a wonderfully flexible place. I never felt boxed in here."

Taking ideas and writing stories that challenge convention and reach outside the box is something for which Mr. Martel is becoming increasingly well known. In *Life of Pi*, his most successful novel to date, which is currently being made into a major motion picture by FOX, Mr. Martel challenges the reader's assumptions and weaves a tale of two possible stories – one involving talking animals, and one without.

"If you read the novel well, the argument in the novel is that life is an interpretation – you don't just derive life from fact...Life is a story; it's a story you weave together using many, many things," Mr. Martel said.

With a degree in Philosophy from Trent, Mr. Martel is in a good position to question interpretation and to ask "the big questions" about life. These are questions that he also likes to address and explore in each of his novels, starting with his first book, *Self*, which is set, in part, in Peterborough and draws on his undergraduate days at Trent University, to *Life of Pi*, and even into his next novel, entitled *A Twentieth Century Shirt*.

"Each of the books I write is an attempt to understand something," Mr. Martel said.

Mr. Martel's next novel will be an effort to explore the Holocaust, an event that he has always found fascinating, especially from his perspective as a writer since it is a topic rarely addressed in fiction. According to Mr. Martel this is because there is such an intense fear of disrespecting the event.

Like *Pi, A Twentieth Century Shirt* will use the literary technique of anthropomorphism by assigning voices and human characteristics to animals. In his new novel, however, a talking monkey and a talking donkey will not be on a life raft but



rather they will be confronted with a holocaust-type event while living on the landscape of a shirt.

"I'm trying a different approach," Mr. Martel explained, likening his attempt to George Orwell's dealings with Stalinism in *Animal Farm*. "There are no Germans and no Jews, but it is all about the Holocaust."

According to Mr. Martel, the key sentence in his new novel revolves around the question of how the characters will speak of the "horrors" when they are over – how are we going to talk about this? The exploration of the answer, which could

involve stories or memorials, provides an insight into Mr. Martel's own approach to writing about the topic and his feeling that we need to write about and discuss these events or they will just get lost in history.

Mr. Martel picked up on discussing this new novel during his talk to over 200 people at the Peterborough Public Library. For over an hour, he described his writing approach and read from the first chapter, after which he took questions from the audience and then stayed to sign autographs.

Asked for his thoughts on why Trent seems to produce a relatively large number of successful writers, he returned to the flexibility that he associates with this time at Trent. "It seemed to me like a place that would not put you in a mould," he said, then referring to the popular writer-in-residence position at Champlain College, added, "I'd love to come back and do something at Trent."

Overall, Mr. Martel's return to Peterborough, and to Trent, was a triumphant one which enriched both the University and the wider community. It was also an opportunity for Mr. Martel to return to his alma mater and experience once again the sense of belonging he was first introduced to during his undergrad days at Trent.



s the first post-secondary stop on a long academic road, Trent University holds a lot of special memories for Bill Roberts, the President and CEO of VisionTV. From hanging out at the various pubs and playing road hockey, to meeting his future wife and forging long-lasting relationships with fellow students and professors, Mr. Roberts will always look back at his time at Trent with a sense of nostalgia.

"I had a lot of fun at Trent," Mr. Roberts remarked during a

recent visit to his alma mater his first "formal visit" since graduating in 1973 with a BA in Political Studies. "This is where I developed a real penchant for learning about the media and about politics."

After graduation Mr. Roberts built upon his interests in media and politics and went on to complete an array of other degrees, including an MBA from St. Mary's University and an MA in Film Theory from the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, France.

"Trent was very much an open environment and as I went through less open environments in my academic career, I really appreciated what Trent allowed me to do," Mr. Roberts said when asked what

impact his time at Trent had on his further studies. "The biggest take-away for me

was the tutorial system, the smaller classes, and the individual attention – it all gave me a great leg up in my grad work."

Since completing his academics, Mr. Roberts has since gone on to enjoy an impressive career in television.

As the current President and CEO of VisionTV, the only multi-faith and multicultural television network in the world, Mr. Roberts spends his days overseeing the work of 80 employees, dealing with a Board of Directors, and travelling regularly to New York, L.A. and Europe.

"VisionTV is an entity which tries to use television to create a sense of celebration, playfulness and dialogue between different faith groups," Mr. Roberts explained.

Prior to his appointment at VisionTV, Mr. Roberts was the Secretary General of the North American Broadcasters

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> Association (NABA), a non-profit organization that serves as the voice of North American broadcasters on global issues. In this

role, he managed the secretariat of the World Broadcasting Unions, and played an active part in organizing the United Nations World Television Forum on the Impact of Television on Peace and Development.

The move to NABA followed eight years with TVOntario, first as Senior Managing Director of External Relations, and then as Senior Director-General of International Affairs. Mr. Roberts has also worked with the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) as Senior Vice-President, Television, and with the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) as a Senior Policy Analyst.

As for advice for others wishing to follow in the footsteps of this successful Trent alumnus, Mr.

> Roberts insists there is no special "trick".

"I have been very fortunate but also opportunistic in

taking chances and risks," Mr. Roberts said. "You just have to have passion."

TRENT PROFESSORS RECEIVE CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION INVESTMENT

project examining the presence of chemicals in arctic polar bears – a project that Professor David Ellis has been a part of for the better part of the last decade – is one of two Trent University research proposals that recently received a significant financial boost of over \$277,000 from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI).

Professor Ellis' project, entitled "The Synthesis, Characterization, and Identification of Atmospheric Pollutants and Degradation Products in the Canadian Troposphere", represents a partnership between researchers, Dupont Chemicals, and Environment Canada.

"This research is an excellent example of the bringing together of various faculty and groups at the University," said Professor Ellis who is both a Chemistry Professor and adjunct professor with the Environmental Monitoring Centre.

The team will use the CFI funds to purchase equipment that will be used to analyze pollutants in an artificial atmosphere chamber to be



Professor David Ellis is investigating presence of pollutants in polar bears.

created at Trent University.

This testing will be a key component of the larger research project which looks to examine how and why perfluorinated pollutants are being found in polar bears in the Canadian High Arctic.

"This is a big emerging environmental issue," said Professor Ellis. "It is a number one priority for Environment Canada to find out how these pollutants are being transported to the Arctic."

The second Trent project awarded CFI funding is entitled "Laboratory for Coherent Control of Novel Molecular States" and will be led by Physics Professor Ralph Shiell. The project's goal is to examine unusual molecules with extreme properties, such as massive size and/or a significantly enhanced sensitivity to electric and magnetic fields. These molecules will be used to study both fundamental and applied physics.

"As everyday objects, such as computer chips and memory cards, get smaller and smaller, they approach the quantum limit and, therefore, this understanding becomes of greater importance for technological applications," Professor Shiell said. "The funds from CFI will enable a high-specification turntable and pulsed laser, together with advanced test and



Professor Ralph Shiell is studying unusual molecules with extreme properties.

measurement equipment, to be situated at Trent."

CFI's funding support announcement came at the end of March and signifies the inauguration of a new Leaders Opportunity Fund (LOF), which granted a total of \$19.7 million

in new funds for 35 institutions a cross the country, including Trent. This new program, created to reflect Canada's fast-evolving research environment, was designed to give Canadian universities the added flexibility they need to both attract and retain the very best of today's and tomorrow's researchers at a time of intense international competition for leading faculty. An additional \$3.9 million was granted under the Infrastructure Operating Fund, an accompanying program which assists universities with the incremental operating and maintenance costs associated with new infrastructure projects.

Asked to comment on the significance of this funding announcement for Trent University, Professor James D.A. Parker, Trent's Associate Vice President (Research) said, "This vital investment from CFI helps Trent achieve the goal of attracting talented researchers to our university, like Professor Ellis and Professor Shiell, as well as helping to ensure that they have the necessary tools to conduct leading edge research." 👻

Graduating Student Najim Dost Receives Top Award at TIP Annual Formal

On April 1 the Trent International Program (TIP) formal and banquet was held to recognize international students and outstanding accomplishments in



Trent's international community.

Among those honoured at this year's event was Najim Dost, who received the prestigious Jack Matthews Award, named in honour of the founding director of the Trent International Program. This top award is given to a graduating student in recognition of their outstanding commitment and contributions to internationalization, both on a local and global scale.

Other winners included:
Ricardo Tranjan (Karanja
Nioroge Community Service
Award); Salma Yarjani (David
Morrison Award); Erin Chreptyk
(Leonard Conolly Award); CT
Chen (Hulcoop Prize); Adam
Feather and Christine Wender
(Exchange Award); Patrick Clark
(Deb Gelderland Award); Chris
Allen (Continuing International
Student Award); Desmond Liang
Uyn Tao (ESL Award); Professor
David Page (Robert Campbell
Friends of TIP Award).

Women's Studies Research Day

According to Professor Molly Blyth, "anyone has the right to tell stories about anyone else as long as they have humility." This statement was made during Professor Blyth's presentation at the second annual Women's Studies Research Day, held on March 10. Her presentation, entitled "What is a White Girl Like Me Doing in a Place Like This?" highlighted her experiences teaching Native Literature to Cree students in Moose Factory.

Professor Blyth's presentation was the first of six made by professors associated with the Women's Studies Program at Trent. The presentations captured everything from the work of Professor Sally Chivers on caregiving and euthanasia in the Canadian context, to an exploration of women, energy, and climate change by Professor Wendy Milne.

Senior VP of CARE Canada Discusses International Experiences with Students

According to Nancy Gordon, the Senior Vice-President of CARE Canada, a humanitarian organization fighting global poverty, the hands-on international experience that Trent students have, in combination with their determination to make a difference, makes them ideal candidates for employment with her organization.

Ms. Gordon, who will retire from CARE in June, was at Trent on March 7 to talk to students, faculty, and the general public about her career with CARE Canada as well as to address what working for an NGO is really like both in Canada and in developing countries, and to share her experiences being involved in major crises around the world over the past 12 years. During her hour-long talk, Ms. Gordon shared stories of working in refugee camps in Rwanda, providing humanitarian relief in Afghanistan, and being involved in preventing the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa.

Bridges Forum a Success

The Bridges Forum, hosted by the Workforce Development Board, was held at Trent University on Thursday, February 23rd, 2006. The event brought educators, employers and government personnel together to identify and discuss workplace development issues, while also addressing the need for partnerships amongst these groups.

Topics surrounding curriculum development, experiential education opportunities for students, skills shortages, school to work transitions, and employer expectations were some of the round table discussions that took place between conference participants.

The FBI Comes to Trent

Although *CSI* has done wonders for drawing attention to fore nsics, according to Heather Seubert, a Forensic Examiner with the FBI, the television show is not entirely accurate. This was a

statement Ms. Seubert made during a talk delivered to a crowded lecture hall at Trent on March 9 throughout which she talked about her career in Forensic Science and shared some of her most interesting experiences working for the FBI.

Ms. Seubert, who joined the FBI in 1998 and now works in the Nuclear DNA Analysis Unit, held the interest of the crowd by discussing some of the more high profile cases she has worked on as well as sharing stories from her days in the office, including her work on the Disaster Squad after 9/11.

Trent University's Emergency First Response Team Performs CPR for 36-Hours Straight

The Trent University Emergency First Response Team's (TUEFRT) second annual 36-Hours of CPR Campaign took place on March 15 and 16 in the Atrium at Gzowski College. The event, which was designed to increase awareness about the importance of CPR, was also held to raise money for the Peterborough Public Access Defibrillation Program.



Throughout the course of the event, several University dignitaries, including President Bonnie Patterson, came by to learn how to deliver CPR from certified members of TUEFRT. Peterborough EMS and the Peterborough Fire Department also participated.

Biology Professor Awarded Aldo Leopold Leadership Fellowship

Professor James Schaefer has recently been awarded one of 18 Aldo Leopold Leadership Fellowships for 2006. Chosen for his outstanding scientific qualifications, demonstrated leadership ability, and a strong interest in communicating science beyond traditional audiences, Professor Schaefer was selected from a wide-range of academic enviro nmental scientists from across the United States and Canada.

Top Athletes Honoured at Annual Athletic Awards

Fourth-year Trent University student Elspeth Arkell earned distinctive honours at Trent's annual Athletic Awards Ceremony held on Wednesday, March 22. In addition to receiving the Excalibur Award of Distinction and the



award for the top female participant in intramural programs for Lady Eaton College, Ms. Arkell, who will graduate this spring with a B.Sc. in Biology, was also named the sole winner of the Arthur Cup, the University's most prestigious award.

At the ceremony many other students were honoured with the University Athletic Award, which is presented to third and fourth year students who have demonstrated a significant contribution to the varsity and campus recreation programs. Winners included: Amy Bambury; Josh Connor; Stephan Donald; John Epping; Thomas Gibson; Lisa Lahey; Nora Livingstone; Laura Lynch; Laura McAlpine; Michael Moores; Rebecca Rodin; and Tamar Walsh. Further honours were granted to many varsity athletes who were celebrated for outstanding commitment and dedication to their respective sports.

Writer-in-Residence wins Lawrence Jackson Writing Award

Michael Johansen, a Trent alumnus and the current writer-in-residence at Champlain College, has recently been awarded the Lawrence Jackson Writing Award, administered by the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. The award is given annually and is designed to encourage and promote original and creative thought in all genres of writing.

For over a decade Mr. Johansen was a print and radio journalist, reporting news and writing columns for newspapers across Canada and abroad. He was born in Toronto and now calls Labrador home. As Trent's writer-in-residence, Mr. Johansen has been living on campus at Champlain College since the fall of 2005. He is the author of Confession in Moscow and is currently working on his second novel, entitled Separation Point, the first draft of which has been completed during his time at Trent.

UPCOMING events

www.trentu.ca/events

April 12: Examinations Begin

April 14: Good Friday – Statutory Holiday

April 20: Trent University Faculty Association Annual General Meeting, Champlain College Lecture Hall, 7-9 p.m.

April 22: Earth Day

April 28: Global Youth Day, Market Hall, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., film screenings begin at 3 p.m. Contact KWIC at 748.1680.

April 29: Examinations End

April 29: Special Alumni of Distinction Gala, Gzowski College. By invitation only.

April 29: Memorial service for John Syrett, Professor Emeritus to be held at Scott House, Traill College, 2:30 p.m. All are welcome. A reception will follow.

June 1 and 2: Convocation 👻

Omission

The Office of the Dean of Arts and Science reports that the following faculty publications were omitted from the list published in the March edition of Focus Trent.

PICKEL, Andreas

Coeditor with E. Helleiner, Economic Nationalism in a Globalizing World. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Editor, Systems and Mechanisms: A Symposium on Mario Bunge's *Philosophy of Social Science*, Part 2, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 34 (3), September 2004.

"Homo nationis: The Psychosocial Infrastructure of the Nation-State Order," Global Society 18 (4), 2004: 324-346.

Contribution to "'Die Entdeckung der Kultur' und die Zukunft der Transformations-forschung," Berliner Debatte Initial 15 (5/6), 2004: 68-70.

"Systems and Mechanisms: Introduction to the second issue," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 34 (3), September 2004: 325-327.

"Introduction: False Oppositions: Reconceptualizing Economic Nationalism." In E. Helleiner and A. Pickel, eds. *Economic Nationalism in a Globalizing World*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005: 1-17.



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