This may be the season of “mists and mellow fruitfulness” but in the present volatile economic climate it seems more like the “end of days”. Those on campus in the early eighties remember a similar time when government grants to universities were severely curtailed. Faculties faced deep (really deep) budget cuts, whole departments were in jeopardy, and the fledgling Engineering Faculty wondered whether it would get off the ground. Many thanks to Prof Andreas Antoniou for his article on the anniversary of the Faculty of Engineering and for reminding us that the more things change, the more things stay the same!! (See “Starting from Scratch” in this newsletter.) Look around – we survived and how!! So it is not good for the blood pressure or anything else to dwell on the daily doses of doom and gloom: go for a walk or read a good book instead. And, as this will be the last newsletter of 2008 – on behalf of the Board may I wish you a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year, celebrate the upcoming festive season according to your own beliefs and inclination, and enjoy family and friends.

Bits from the Board:

From time to time we inform you of volunteer positions both on and off campus. Bear in mind that these positions are neither sponsored nor formally endorsed by the Association. We simply pass them on as, to the best of our knowledge, we believe them to be of interest to our membership.

Overnight Tour to Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, June 2009

In September members were asked whether there would be any interest in an overnight visit to Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre. This would involve a bus journey from the UVic campus to Bamfield, an overnight stay at the Centre, and on the following day a sail on the SS Frances Barkley to Port Alberni, and return by bus to UVic. By the end of October, 64 people had indicated that they might be interested, so clearly the trip is viable.

It now seems likely that it will take place in June 2009, which is a quiet time at the Centre, rather than April as originally
Upcoming Events:
Just a reminder – please use the appropriate registration form when signing up for an event. If you do not use the form then identify the event on your cheque. Makes things so much easier for the treasurer and organizers.

Christmas Buffet and Presentation, December 12

A reminder that the annual Christmas Buffet is approaching. Trevor Matthews will regale us with memories, some hilarious and some tragic, of events during his years in the UVic Administration. Sure to be an entertaining occasion! Make sure to register by the deadline of December 5 (charge $32 per person)

propose. For reasons of space, it will need to be limited to 40 participants. Registration will be offered in January, when exact dates and costs will be known. Priority will be given for a limited period to the 64 who originally expressed an interest. It will be "first come first served", based on the date when registration forms (and accompanying cheques!) are received in the UVRA Office, and a waiting list will be kept.

Please bear in mind that the Centre’s facilities are spread over three floors, with no elevators, and that there is no wheelchair access.

John Fitch (Chair), UVRA Events Committee: Feedback / Suggestions: UVRA Office (250-472-4749, uvra@uvic.ca), or Committee.

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Starting from Scratch: 25 Years of Engineering (submitted by Andreas Antoniou)

July 1 of 2008 marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Faculty of Engineering. As the founding Chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, I have been asked by Helen Kempster, editor of Grey Matters, to stretch my memory and say a few words about my recollections about the establishment of the Faculty to celebrate the occasion. Here it goes ...

Several months before the Faculty was established, there was an advertisement somewhere, most probably in University Affairs. I was in Montreal at that time working at Concordia University, previously known as Sir George Williams University and named after the founder of YMCA. The political situation in Quebec was not getting any better so my wife and I thought that Victoria would be a nice place to relocate. I called an old friend, Dr. Len Bruton, about this and said to him, "they are setting up a new Faculty of Engineering in Victoria, did you know?" and before you knew it, he was a candidate for the position of Dean of Engineering and I for the position of Chair of Electrical Engineering!

The task ahead was daunting. How does one go about designing a new program of study and set up a new department in a nonexistent Faculty? When it comes to an engineering program, it is quite easy in certain respects and quite difficult in others. The regulations of the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board specify in considerable detail the components of an engineering program, e.g., a minimum of mathematics and basic sciences of 420 accreditation units where each of the two components must not be less than 195 AUs; a minimum of engineering sciences and engineering design of 900 AUs where each of the two components must not be less than 225 AUs; a minimum of 225 AUs for complementary studies which should include communication skills, a certain amount of engineering economics, professional ethics, and what not. In addition, the entire program must contain a minimum of 1800 AUs. (In the CEAB’s formal definitions, 1 AU is one hour of lecture corresponding to 50 minutes of activity or two hours of lab or tutorial.)

Here, I am quoting the current regulations but things have not changed that much over the past 25 years. Engineers are a conservative bunch. In short, there was then and there is now only one way to satisfy the CEAB specifications! Sure, you could add a few months to the program but when every other university in the land is offering a 4-year engineering degree, you do not want to push your luck. The second major difficulty had to do with the absence of academic regulations. As the person responsible for the nascent department, I had to propose regulations that would assure the quality of our programs as well as our product: the graduates.

At UVic, Len Bruton and I occupied a couple of offices next to each other in Sedgewick and we began the great task. He had to get the money, the spaces, attract the students and, above all, pro-
mote engineering not only to Victoria as a whole but also to the UVic community! There were many Victorians who thought that the chimney-stacks and factories would soon follow whereas some of our colleagues thought that the new faculty would devour a huge chunk of the available resources. I, on the other hand, was the ‘housewife’ of the couple minding the home dealing with the nitty-gritty of setting up the first engineering department. As luck would have it, we acquired adjacent homes as well on Jason Place in Gordon Head and that helped a great deal because we could have ad hoc meetings over the common fence, even during the weekends!

Our blueprint was “A Proposal for the Establishment of a Faculty of Engineering at the University of Victoria” dated June 1980 and authored by Dr. A. Sherbourne of the University of Waterloo. Dr. Howard Petch, UVic’s President, who was also the dynamo behind the entire enterprise, commissioned the report. The Sherbourne report called for four departments: electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, system design, and chemical engineering. Like now, the economics of the world began to falter and as it usually happens, ‘luxuries’, like education, are the first victims. The decision was soon made to start two departments immediately and put the other two on the back burner. Soon after, it was down to one department, electrical engineering with mechanical engineering to follow.

Through a careful choice of curriculum and on the basis of our past experiences in Montreal and Calgary, Len and I were able to propose two programs instead of one at no extra cost, i.e., electrical engineering and computer engineering, and before the year was out we also drafted master’s and doctoral programs.

By the end of the first academic year, things got worse on the economic front, we had to make do with temporary accommodation, like the L-Hut, the Petch-McGeer war (aka UVic vs the Govt) was in full swing, and Len resigned in frustration to return to his university. As for me, sitting in the eye of the storm, oblivious of the situation, I soldiered on. I was too busy setting up the first engineering department to notice that I was actually putting my family and myself in harm’s way!

In due course, things worked out. Our two programs were accredited on the first shot and the Senate approved our graduate programs. The rest, as they say, speaks for itself.

2009 Masterminds
With generous support from the University the UVic Retirees Association and the Centre on Aging will co-host the fourth Masterminds lecture series. Speakers, dates, and topics will be:

April 15, Dr. Edward Ishiguro—Food-borne Infectious Pathogens, Food Safety
April 22, Dr. Michael Hadley—Restorative Justice
April 29, Dr. Erica Dodd—Understanding Islamic Art
May 6, Dr. Ralph Huenemann—China’s Role in the Global Economy

Mark your calendars and watch for details in the January Newsletter.

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People in the News
Professor Jessie Mantle, professor emerita with the School of Nursing, has been awarded one of the Canadian Nurses Association Centennial Awards. The awards are a one-time honour created to celebrate 100 exceptional Canadian registered nurses whose personal and professional contributions have made an outstanding and significant impact on the nursing profession. Professor Mantle will receive the award in Ottawa in November.

Places in the News
Closure of Dunsmuir Lodge. Dunsmuir Lodge is closing as of the end of March 2009. We will be sorry to lose such a facility - wonderful food, excellent service, great surroundings - so make sure you enjoy the Lodge’s hospitality before it closes for good. Individuals might wish to send their comments to the Vice-President Finance and Operations.

Piers Island: For those wishing to know more of our local history Trevor Mathews has extra copies of the history of Piers Island available for sale for $10.00. He can be contacted at trevorm@uvic.ca

UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN REPORT

In today’s economic climate the various agencies supported by the United Way need our help more than ever. The UVic Campaign, under Campaign Chair Mark Roman, is close to meeting its target of $265,000.00. As of November 21 the total stood at $217,447, 82% of the goal, with 500 donors, 77 of whom are new donors. To those of you still planning to contribute, the sooner you send in your donation the sooner we will know that we have once again reached our target.

If you wish to print off a pledge form, complete it and return it to United Way of Greater Victoria, 1144 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 3K8
OR
If you wish to donate online click the link below and follow the links under “Donations”. Please ensure that
you note under “Department” that you are a member of the UVic Retirees Association so that United Way can credit UVic towards its total for this year.

http://unitedway.uvic.ca/Quickinfo.htm

Many thanks to all who have donated. Your support will be greatly appreciated by those less fortunate who receive help from an agency supported by United Way.

Victor Neufeldt
UVRA Representative United Way Campus Campaign Committee

Volunteers:

Opportunities in Africa: those wanting a bit of adventure might be interested in volunteer positions at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Tanzania. Positions include Computer Scientist, Information Technologist, Biochemist/Microbiologist, Clinical Pharmacist and Instructional designer. For fuller details and information check out the Academics for Higher Education and Development website at www.ahed-upesed.org.

Survey participants wanted: A third-year Ph.D. student at the University of Toronto needs “volunteers” to help with her research into volunteer activities and pre-retirement paid work. The research hopes to assist non-profit organizations with the recruitment, placement and retention of older volunteers and be insightful for volunteers themselves. It also hopes to create greater societal awareness of the contribution retirees make through their volunteer work. The on-line survey will be conducted from November 1, 2008 until December 8, 2008. The respondents must be 55 to 75 years of age (inclusive). They must have retired within the last 10 years and volunteer approx 3 hours per week on average. The survey will take 15 to 25 minutes to complete. A paper copy of the survey can be requested by contacting Ms Cook directly at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto scook@oise.utoronto.ca

On Campus volunteers: Conversation and Tutoring at the UVic English Language Centre Drop In Centre. Meet international students and gain rewarding intercultural experience. For more information on a variety of opportunities contact Robbie, rwnewton@uvic.ca or telephone 250-721-8469.

If you have items of interest to our members for inclusion in the newsletter send them along to Helen Kempster at 250 592-4748 or drop them off at the office.

Some pictures of interest of last year’s UVRA Christmas Buffet and Presentation.