

MINERVA

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LAC Students in Germany!

By Virginia Nixon



From left to right: Menachem Freedman, Robyn Dickson, Sarah Sullivan, Katie Brothers, Laura Fraticelli.

Last May fifteen, Liberal Arts College (LAC) students along with Professors Jarrett Carty and Virginia Nixon, and Virginia's daughter Anna, boarded an Air France plane for Munich, our home base for the first week of LAC's Germany trip. We explored the Cathedral, enjoyed the medieval sculptures and great cafeteria in the Bavarian National Museum and the old masters in the Alte Pinakothek where the Daughters of Leucippus greeted us in the flesh, and were bowled over by the Greek sculptures in the Glyptothek.

(Cont'd on p. 3)

Letter from the Principal

By Ariela Freedman

This year, Loyola International College (LAC) student Didier Morelli walked from NDG to LAC's downtown campus on Mackay Street, carrying a large tree branch and reading *Waiting for Godot* out loud. He was accompanied by a few other students, and was followed at various points by curious dogs, intrigued onlookers, and an entire gaggle of high school girls. Upon arriving at the LAC, he planted the tree in a snowbank at the entrance--it was the size of a small sapling--and climbed the three flights of stairs to the upstairs classroom to give his presentation. His talk was about *Waiting for Godot* as staged in a theatre and as he had just experienced it, on the road. Didier said he had been doing that same walk for many years, from home to school. Though the walk was dynamic it was also static; he had been tracing the same route, like Didi and Gogo, moving in the same place. Now it was time for him to move on. He is graduating this year, and will be leaving Montreal to go to graduate school. The walk was a kind of farewell.



I'm moving on this year as well, not from the LAC but from the post of Principal. Though it's been a tempestuous year at Concordia, the LAC has managed to steer its little boat through the storm. Jarrett Carty and Virginia Nixon led a very successful trip to Germany last Spring. Our former student, Badr El Fekkak, stepped in to teach a new version of our History of Science class; fellow alumni Martine Gosselin joined our faculty again, with her usual learned enthusiasm. We are very sorry to see them go, and are grateful for their contribution. Virginia Nixon returned to the classroom after a semester of sick leave, with indomitable grace.

LAC students hosted the full roster of usual events, including a Theme Weekend on "Heroes and Antiheroes" and a very successful staging of Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. They also had tremendous impact outside the College, serving on student government, taking leadership roles in the *Five Days for the Homeless* campaign and in STAND, the student anti-genocide group, and editing and publishing *The Void*, the bilingual Concordia magazine of art and literature.

And yes, we finally edited our website! You can like our facebook page - and more importantly, send the link to interested prospective students (see the back page for more information). You should also definitely take a look at the student-directed and produced video on our homepage. Julia, Telly and Collin braved recalcitrant bureaucracy, difficult-to-obtain equipment, and overly loquacious professors to produce this five-minute document of the College. We are enormously grateful and proud.

I have two requests of you, our alumni, before I finish. We have begun a collection of alumni work for our library. The idea is to have a shelf of material--books, CD's, perhaps folders of articles or artwork--in order to inspire our students and to show to visitors who are interested in the many directions our graduates have taken. Submissions are beginning to trickle in, so please--send us your work, and help encourage the next generation of LAC alumni. Second, we'd like to start a mentorship program that connects students with alumni. Please let us know if you are willing to be contacted by students interested in your road to a career in education/academia/law/the arts/business etc. Oh, and one last request. Your donations help students stay in school. Consider it. Have a wonderful Spring and Summer. We look forward to hearing from you.

LAC Students in Germany!

(Cont'd from p.1)

In the English Gardens we watched surfers and drank beer and ate pretzels in the Chinese Pagoda beer garden, and we experienced an audience-participation opera which was, well, very very new. From Munich we made day trips to Augsburg (where we ate in a restaurant patronized by Mozart and Goethe), Salzburg, and Dachau, with several people going to the Alps on their free day.

From Munich we took overnight train berths to Berlin where the super-efficient transport system brought us from our hostel (which had moved from downtown to the suburbs) to the masterpieces in the Gemaeldegalerie, the Pergamom and other museums on Museum Island, not to mention the Lutheran Cathedral, the Jewish Museum, and walks in the Alexanderplatz, the Nikolaiviertel, and Unter den Linden in East Berlin and a boat ride on the Spree. In Frederick the Great's 18th c. Staatsoper we saw a fine Carmen and watched Berliners eat champagne and pretzels at intermission. Julia, our LAC German student who met us in Berlin, brought us to night life.

From Berlin we made day trips to Wittenberg where Jarrett took us through the career of Luther, Frederick the Great's Potsdam which is beautiful but not set up for serious visitors like LACers (too much herding, no opportunity for profs to expound), Dresden for more amazing art works, the beautiful, if rainy, promenade above the Elbe. Repeatedly we found ourselves in front of the famous art works we had seen in class or in art history textbooks. We inadvertently got to experience a bit of Leipzig as well when we got onto a train car heading not for Berlin but for Zurich. Fortunately there was a welcoming A & O hostel a couple of blocks from the Station, and next morning the Station people accepted our argument that the train was not clearly labelled and gave us free tickets back to Berlin.

Other highlights include the low cost and high quality of food in traditional style restaurants, and the super low-cost of sausages on the street, Turkish food, the all-you-can eat soup restaurant in Wittenberg, and the very good value provided by hostels where the students shared quads, and finally, the transportation bargains both within and between cities, with deals like five for the price of one.



5 Days for the Homeless: Students Helping the Homeless

By Collin Potter-Bonar

Extreme poverty exists all around us and in forms most of us can see, but cannot really imagine. In our cities, the extreme measure of poverty is represented by homelessness. While homelessness in Canada may not seem as hopeless as poverty elsewhere, it is just as real and, indeed, just as desperate. Homelessness in Canada is as complex an issue as it is widespread. Aside from the more apparent concerns facing the homeless, simply determining the number of homeless people and working to address their basic and individual concerns is no small challenge. According to a 2007 report issued by the Calgary-based Sheldon Chumir Foundation, Canada's homeless population rests at somewhere between 200,000 and 300,000 people. More

"And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food."

- William Wordsworth, *Guilt and Sorrow; or
Incidents on the Salisbury Plain*

disconcerting still, 700,602 Canadians were considered

at risk of becoming homeless according to the 2001 census by virtue of the fact that they spent over fifty percent of their household income on shelter.



5 Days for the Homeless was organized to help Canada's homeless, a cause singled-out by the student organizers as an issue of growing concern. Founded at the University of Alberta in 2005, *5 Days for the Homeless* is an annual fundraising campaign for organizations that combat homelessness. Campaign participants forfeit creature comforts – such as beds, food, money, showers, etc. – and live on the streets surrounding their campus for five days to raise funds and awareness about poverty and homelessness. After three years of continued growth, work began to realize a national level expansion. In 2008, the *5 Days for the Homeless* national campaign was launched at ten universities across the country, including Concordia University,

and has since been embraced at an additional thirteen universities. In the four years, over a cumulative 20 days, since the *5 Days for the Homeless* was launched in Montréal, Concordia has raised over \$150,000.00 for *Dans la Rue*, a Montréal charity devoted to helping homeless youth. The strength of the campaign rests in its capacity to bring together students with the common goal of raising funds, helping to educate the public about the issues surrounding homelessness and supporting outstanding organizations like *Dans la Rue*. Founded in 1988, *Dans la Rue* offers frontline services, such as food, shelter and 'meals on wheels'; intervention programs, such as counselling, healthcare and vocational training; and basic services to Montréal's homeless youth. *Dans la Rue* provides homeless youth not only with a place to go but, with its educational and other resources, a place to grow.

In reflecting upon my experience, I am reminded that throughout our daily lives we encounter the homeless, often the same individuals time and again. Often, we take parabolic detours around them to avoid even the slightest contact. However, doing so only worsens the problem. Support for homelessness does not need to be material; even the smallest gestures can enhance lives.

5 Days for the Homeless takes place annually in the third week of March. For more information, please visit: www.5days.ca.

On Teaching Proust

By Katharine Streip

Teaching a work that I love fills me with trepidation. What if students don't like it? What if I cannot do justice to the brilliance of the author? In the case of preparing Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* for an LAC honors seminar, I felt full-on butterflies. Students read sections of the *Recherche* very rapidly in LBCL 490, and they either like Proust or they do not. How much of that response is due to personal taste, how much is caused by reading too quickly, or even reading for the first time, I wondered. Perhaps a class on Proust would be self selecting, but I also knew that if I attempted to teach the entire *Recherche* I would be contributing to speed reading, which is no way to settle into Proust's intricate syntax and appreciate the musical echoes that shape his work. So I decided to only present the first two volumes of the *Recherche*, and indeed, a student warned me that when she first saw the syllabus and learned that only 50 to 80 pages were assigned per class, she worried that the pace would be too slow. Happily, once we started, she decided the readings were just right.

Proust needs to be read slowly and savored in order to feel the full effect of his involved semantic texture. But then, I also worried about a long engagement. At the College, if you do not like one author, you quickly move on to the next in a version of intellectual speed dating. What if students found the narrator of the *Recherche* to be impossible to accept over time – anxious, neurotic, indolent, indecisive and demanding – what if I walked into class one day and encountered a revolt of readers exclaiming, we are tired of this writer and his incessant caviling. So I decided that the goal of the class would be to not only read slowly, but to trust that students would discover their personal ways into the *Recherche*.

Proust's writing is capacious, hospitable to experience, creates opportunities for new perceptions and offers a sense of mental largeness and potential. And so we talked and talked, looked at the actual art he describes, listened to possible candidates for the Vinteuil sonata, and the miracle happened. I heard those magic words, I love Proust. Some students mentioned that reading about Marcel's struggle to become a writer, with such unpromising psychological beginnings, helped to free their own creativity and changed how they looked at the world. The variety of wonderful research papers I received testifies to this liberating effect: the influence of Japanese art on Proust's project; the village of Combray as a foundation for Proust's work; Marcel's magic lantern illuminating the dialectic between habit and imagination that informs creativity; the social consequences of hygiene and medical practices in Proust's work; Proust's aesthetics and John Ruskin; phenomenology and the aesthetics of sadism; the creative implications of dreams; Proust as a public intellectual during the Dreyfus Affair; the relation between aesthetics and love; Proustian optics; "love sickness" within Proust's writing; Françoise the cook as artist and the aestheticization of food; dreaming and memory in Proust and Freud. This proliferation of original and insightful readings is a tribute to Marcel Proust and our talented students.

Please visit the Rita Mary Tucker Library at 2040 rue Mackay, 2nd Floor, if you'd like to see some LAC Honours theses written by former students of the College.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof: Presented by the Liberal Arts Theatre Society

By Zara Ahmed

This past fall, feeling the pressure of graduate school applications, my undergraduate thesis and the urge to record a really good sophomore folk/rock album, I decided to procrastinate by directing the LAS annual theatre production. Best decision ever! Now, I had written and directed for community theatres before, but not since high school and was worried that I wouldn't know where to begin on such a large production with so many talented student actors. Thankfully, in large part due to the not-so-subtle campaigning by Anthony Kennedy, the choice of play was almost unanimous and after three rounds of auditions our wonderful cast received their scripts (or should have - sorry Rosamunde, but at least I spelt your name right this time!) in December. For those of you who were able to join us during our show's run in late March, let it be known that our actors memorized Tennessee Williams' brilliant but lengthy script and pulled it all together in less than two months of rehearsals! They amazed me.



Of course, it wasn't all smooth sailing. Far from it. But what great project ever begins on exactly the right footing or in the precise form that it will appear at its culmination? (As I write this it is spring-turning-summer, I'm one month away from convocation and feeling sentimental, so forgive me my Jeanette Winterson):

There's no such thing as effortless beauty - you should know that. There's no effort which is not beautiful - lifting a heavy stone or loving you. Loving you is like lifting a heavy stone. It would be easier not to do it and I'm not quite sure why I am doing it. It takes all my strength and determination. (JW, the Powerbook)

This play drove me crazy. I dreamt about it. I mouthed dialogue to myself during classes and I spent a great deal of time analyzing whether I was in love with Paul Newman or whether I wanted to be him. I still don't know. Co-producers

Sophie Lacoste and Marie-Eve Reid (also Stage Manager) and Costume Assistant Rebecca Ugolini kept me sane by taking on much of the set design, set production and costume work. Actors Devon Bate, Zachary Sokoloff and Anthony Kennedy shared a great deal in the directing work and every one else not mentioned by name was probably juggling two or three play-related tasks alongside learning their lines and decrypting my often-abstract directions: "Less plaintive. More cowbell." We practiced until too-late-o'clock frequently, never started on time, should have showered more often, and sometimes despised each other. We also laughed until delirious, coached each other through insecurities, prompted one another on stage when panic struck, and built an entire, functioning room (walls, doors, set) on little budget and even less experience.

I honestly can't think of a better way to have ended my undergraduate experience at the Liberal Arts College. I am so proud of what we accomplished and seeing as how much of our cast and crew were composed of first or other returning-year students, I am very excited to see what they come up with next year. If this year's sold-out run is any indication, there is greatness on the horizon. **(So buy your tickets for next February's production early!)**

Alumni Updates

Niaz Ahmad (2005) completed research in Fez, Morocco and plans to embark on a 4-month trip into the Saharan Desert, to explore some of the ancient library towns of the desert, as well as some of the tent-universities that still teach lengthy curricula of study based on the trivium and quadrivium deep in the desert.

Casey Alexander (2010) produces and tours burlesque variety shows.

Daniel Anderson (2009) is off to Cambridge next year for the MPhil in Classics. He was awarded scholarships from the Cambridge Trusts, St. John's College and the Faculty of Classics.

Colin Burnett (2000) will begin a tenure-track position at Washington University in St. Louis this coming September.

Uri Carnat (2001) was married in 2003 to Kelly Wood, and the couple lives in Montreal with their three children: Sarah, b. 2005; Benjamin, b. 2007; and Jacob, b. October, 2010. Uri is the North American Regional Director for GEOS Language Corporation, with 11 international language schools in Canada and the US. Last year, GEOS welcomed more than 8000 students for more than 60,000 weeks of studies.

Chris Chung (2003) has been working in the film industry in Toronto as a freelance camera assistant with the International Cinematographers Guild. Notable credits include: The Incredible Hulk, The Border and Murdoch Mysteries. Recently he has developed a specialization as 3D rig technician / convergence puller. 3D credits include: SAW 3D, A Park for all Seasons (Gwaii Haanas episode filming ancient Haida village sites and totem poles on the coast of British Columbia), Queen Elizabeth in 3D (Queen's Plate at the Woodbine Racetrack for CBC), Hell on Hooves (3D bull riding, Strathmore AB), and Dali Lama in 3D (Inauguration of the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre).

Carolyn Clare (2008) lives in Toronto, where she recently received her MA with the Faculty of Information at the UofT. She was also recently awarded a Metcalf Foundation award, which will allow her to work full-time for a performing arts organization next year, and will present her MA research at the Congress for Research on Dance plenary in Seattle in November.

Owen Clegg (1996) lives in London, UK where he works as a Senior Broadcast Journalist for the BBC World Service and hopes to begin graduate study at the LSE in their Theory and History of International Relations program.

Steven Courchesne (2003) lives in Massachusetts and designs online courses for human rights professionals. He has worked with Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) since 2008. Before that, he completed a Masters in Sustainable International Development at Brandeis University, which included working with the Ministry of Education in the Marshall Islands.

Loren Edizel's (1982) novel, "Adrift" will be published by TSAR Publications in October 2011. Loren currently lives in Toronto.

Merav Fima (2006) works as an editor in the Publications Department of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Two catalogues that she worked on have recently been published, and Merav has been busy with readings of her own poetry as well as preparing a presentation for an upcoming conference on artistic representations in Israeli literature.

Alumni Updates cont'd

Alexandra Guité (2007) completed the Institut National de l'Image et du Son's rigorous film direction program in 2006. She holds Master's degrees both in Philosophy and Political Science. In 2010, she wrote, researched, directed and coproduced the 12 films of the NFB's award winning Web Documentary Sound Ecology. She then roamed the Arctic and Canada's West Coast directing short documentaries for Canada's National Broadcaster (CBC/Radio-Canada). She now works for CBC/Radio-Canada in Vancouver.

Jeremy Lakoff (2011) is heading to the University of Toronto this fall to begin his MA in English Literature.

Amelia Garretson Persans (2008) is married and living in Nashville, TN. She is launching her new book, "House Stories" this August and it is available on Etsy.

Andrew Matheson (1994) has been working as an editor for the Colbert Report In NYC since the show began in the Fall of 2005. A job in comedy - hmmm - who'd have thought it?

Carol McQueen (1995) is currently posted to Tanzania as the Political Counsellor in the Canadian High Commission. Previously with the Department of Foreign Affairs, she was Deputy Director in the Democracy and Governance Division (2008-10), a Senior Policy Analyst on the responsibility to protect (2007-2008), and a Policy Analyst within the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (2005-2007) where she worked to advance the northern Ugandan peace process.

Michèle Mendelssohn (1998) was recently appointed University Lecturer and Tutorial Fellow in English and American Literature at Oxford University. In 2009, she was Obert C. and Grace A. Tanner Visiting Fellow at the Humanities Center of the University of Utah. In 2010, she was awarded a research fellowship from the Leverhulme Trust for her research on Oscar Wilde. She is currently writing her second book.

Oliver Mercier-Pare (2010) currently studies at the European Institute of the LSE in the MA in "European Studies: Ideas and Identities".

Robert Meynell (1995) is the author of "Canadian Idealism and the Philosophy of Freedom: C.B. Macpherson, George Grant, and Charles Taylor", published by McGill-Queen's University Press in May 2011.

A special congratulations to Spring 2011 graduate Menachem Freedman for being named Valedictorian of his graduating class. Menachem's speech issued a poignant reminder to the Concordia community to appreciate and participate in the University's unique history of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Menachem performed very well and received a standing ovation. He will begin law school at McGill in the fall.