

McMaster Review

McMASTER UNIVERSITY'S MONTHLY NEWSMAGAZINE

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inside

- Student leaders win Honour M
- On the front lines: Mark Loeb helps fight SARS
- Medical radiation sciences program fills need
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Donna Findlay and Mary Arnold, both in the Office of the President, are among the many staff at McMaster who are extensively involved in the behind-the-scenes preparations for Convocation. With all the planning and details that is involved, things can sometimes get a little tense, says Findlay. "But really, it's just kind of fun." Above, Findlay and Arnold have some fun of their own.

Behind the scenes at Convocation



Convocation is an annual rite of passage at McMaster. Every spring more than 3,000 graduands don broad smiles and black gowns to walk across the stage to receive their hard-earned and well-deserved degrees.

In this issue of the *Review*, we take a look at some of the behind-the-scenes planning and preparation that goes on for every Convocation. As Liz

McCallum, assistant registrar, calendar and curriculum, puts it: "It's a bit like planning 10 weddings a year for 3,000 total strangers!"

Our cover story also discusses some of the more memorable Convocations and notable honorary degree recipients who have graced our ceremonies.

This spring McMaster will celebrate its 396th-402nd Convocations.

For the full story, see pages 4-5.

PRECAUTIONS FOR SARS

McMaster took rigorous precautionary measures to help prevent the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Hamilton Health Sciences and other Hamilton hospitals implemented the access restrictions and precautions as directed by the provincial government in an effort to avoid further spread of the disease.

McMaster's crisis management team established a SARS subcommittee to closely monitor related information and provide updates and direction to the McMaster community.

BOOST FOR LEARNING

McMaster received \$11.3 million from the newest round of the provincial government's SuperBuild program. The award will be dedicated to new classroom space in the University's Centre for Learning & Discovery, currently under construction. The \$71-million facility will create 1,459 student spaces and 83,000 sq. ft. of research space.

LEVY WILL HELP BUILD COMPLEX

McMaster students have voted in favour of paying a levy that will support the construction of a new multi-sport wellness complex at the north end of the Ivor Wynne Centre. A total of 1,450 students voted yes in the student-run referendum while 984 voted no.

Full-time undergraduate students chose an option that will see them pay \$2 per unit commencing in 2003 followed by \$2.55 per unit commencing in 2006 and increasing to \$4.45 per unit commencing in 2012. (The last increment coincides with the projected retirement of the McMaster University Student Centre levy (\$2.59 per unit to a maximum of 30 units) that students are paying.)

The complex proposal calls for a triple gymnasium, indoor track, a significantly enlarged Pulse fitness centre, new locker rooms, a wellness centre and an expanded sports medicine clinic.

McMaster students will contribute \$20 million through the approved annual building fee per student and the University is contributing \$10 million to this project.

WEST NILE VIRUS STUDY

A team of researchers from McMaster University are approaching up to 1,500 south Oakville residents asking for blood samples, in the first Canadian study to find the prevalence of West Nile virus infection.

The researchers – Susan Elliott and John Eyles, both in the School of Geography & Geology, and Mark Loeb, Departments of Pathology and Molecular Medicine and Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics (see page 3), are looking for antibodies of the West Nile virus in the blood to help them obtain a better understanding of how many were infected with the potentially deadly virus.

Physicians believe that about 150 people are infected for every case that reaches them.

These stories are excerpted from the McMaster Daily News Web site.

For additional details or to read other McMaster news, visit <http://dailynews.mcmaster.ca>



Adam Spence and Joanna Ranieri

Photo credit: Marmor

HONOUR M WINNERS

Joanna Ranieri and Adam Spence are the 2003 recipients of McMaster's prestigious Honour M Awards. Together they make McMaster a better place for students.

Joanna Ranieri

Joanna's success comes from more than her energy and ability to seemingly manage 10 tasks at once. It is her fierce commitment to the environment that has gained her respect and recognition and inspired others to get involved with environmental issues.

An honours student in biology, with an environmental studies minor, she joined the MSU Environment Committee in her second year and immediately became a leader not just in promoting the environment but also in performing the difficult, and often little recognized work that goes into making significant changes that benefit all. Her work on the MSU Ethics Committee included the drafting of environmental screens for ethical investing and the co-authoring of a Green Procurement Policy for the MSU, and earned her the Volunteer of the Year Award.

She organized the Spring

Cootes Paradise Clean-Up, and co-chaired the Tupperware Challenge. She was also an active member of the committee that produced the environmental policy for McMaster's Campus Plan.

Adam Spence

Honours social sciences student Adam Spence held an executive position with the McMaster Social Sciences Society (MSSS) and a seat on the Student Representative Assembly. It was primarily through his efforts that the MSSS hosted the first-ever Symposium on Social Sciences Education. He founded the Social Sciences Spirit Crew, rewrote the Social Sciences Society constitution and by-laws, was an active Welcome Week planner, and initiated the Ad-Hoc Committee on Parking and Transit.

As vice-president, education for the McMaster Students Union, he developed the first Horizons-Future Leaders Conference; organized a blue box distribution program; co-created the MSU's First Year Council; developing myweb, a one-stop Web information portal for students; and participated in the University's strategic planning exercise.

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Fighting SARS and the West Nile virus

McMaster's Mark Loeb leads national SARS group research

BY ANDREW VOWLES

Mark Loeb has been a very busy scientist for the last several weeks. The expert on infectious diseases has been in Toronto during the past few weeks conducting research for the government on the mysterious Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). International media, including the *New York Times*, have contacted him for expert commentary and he, himself, was quarantined in Toronto last month.

He's now heading up a group of experts that will develop a protocol for SARS, including understanding risk factors, how to best treat it and how to develop immunity around it. The group has just submitted a funding proposal to the Canadian Institutes for Health Research to conduct this work.

For Loeb, it marks the second time in a year that the McMaster associate professor (pathology and molecular medicine, and clinical epidemiology & biostatistics) has found himself in the spotlight as an infectious diseases consultant.

Many Hamiltonians will likely recall the country's first-ever suspected case of Ebola hemorrhagic fever in a woman admitted in February 2002 to the Henderson General Hospital. (She made a full recovery.) Loeb spent considerable time then – as he is doing now – providing information and a measure of reassurance through innumerable broadcast clips and newspaper stories in Canada and abroad.

He sees his involvement in these national and international news stories as all a part of doing his job.

He is one of three McMaster researchers who are involved in the first nationwide study of the West Nile virus, a study being conducted in two specific areas in Oakville, Ontario.

Loeb is clearly more comfortable discussing his ongoing research into respiratory infections in older adults, work that attracts far less media attention but that raises important health questions for a group that he says has been largely ignored. At McMaster, he is now the lead investigator in a major research network studying respiratory infections in adults 65 and older. He is also a new recipient of a Premier's Research Excellence Award.

Ironically, it was during his fellowship in infectious diseases while he was studying medical microbiology at McMaster between 1993 and 1996 that he found himself in the middle of his first high-profile case. "My first project was an investigation of the outbreak of Legionella in nursing homes in Hamilton and Toronto."

Why had the illness struck some individuals but not others? What were risk factors for the nursing home residents? As he pondered those questions,

Loeb says, "It made me realize that this is a population that's been ignored in terms of infectious disease research."

Loeb has since studied resistance to infections and use of antibiotics in nursing homes in Canada and the United States, as well as risk factors for

pneumonia among residents of long-term care facilities.

Funded last year by a five-year, \$2.3-million grant from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, the research network links more than 20 co-investigators in Canada, including McMaster researchers from pathology and molecular medicine, clinical epidemiology and biostatistics, sociology, medical anthropology and geography.

Besides serving as the overall program leader, Loeb belongs to six of the seven projects within the study, called "Respiratory Infection in Older Adults: An Interdisciplinary Approach." The groups are exploring such topics as health service utilization among patients with acquired pneumonia, determinants of invasive pneumococcal disease in older adults, influenza hospitalization and death among patients with congestive heart failure, and diagnostic tests for respiratory tract infections in long-term care facilities.

Respiratory infections have been identified as the most important health threat to seniors, says Loeb. Pneumonia and influenza led to more than 44,000 hospital admissions in Canada among people 65 and older in 1997.

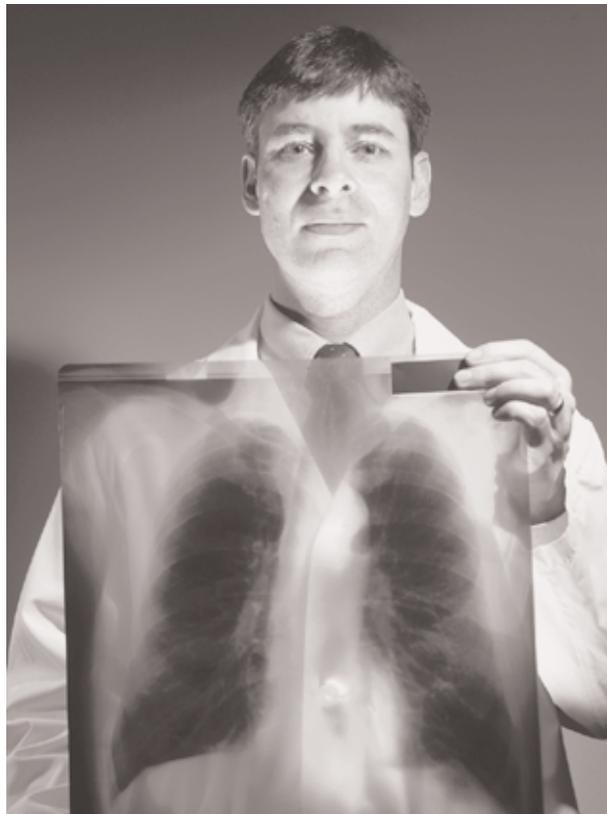
He had planned on pursuing internal medicine when he began his residency at the University of Toronto in 1990. Before that, he had studied medicine at McGill University, after having completed an undergraduate degree at McGill in 1983 and a year with the Faculty of Science at the University of Ottawa.

After finishing his thesis at McMaster on respiratory infections in residents of long-term care facilities, he joined the University in 1997.

All of those studies hadn't necessarily prepared him for another challenge: last year's Ebola case and now SARS and the West Nile virus. He found himself having to balance the public's need for information with the patient's right to confidentiality.

Infectious diseases specialist or not, wasn't Loeb unnerved by being in relatively close contact with a patient possibly carrying a deadly pathogen? Emphasizing that he was involved as a consulting physician, he says that even "the nurses and physicians on the front line were not that nervous."

He recalls phoning his family in Oakville when the news of the Ebola case broke. His wife's reaction? "They weren't horribly concerned," he says in typically understated fashion before adding wryly, "I let her know that I was going to be late."



EBOLA, WEST NILE AND SARS. MCMASTER INFECTIOUS DISEASES EXPERT MARK LOEB IS ON THE FRONT LINES, WORKING WITH RESEARCHERS AT MCMASTER AND AROUND THE GLOBE, IN THE BATTLE TO CONTROL AND OVERCOME THESE NEW AND MYSTERIOUS VIRUSES.

A peek at the *planning and prep* goes into this annual rite of passage

Ritual is one of the ties that binds together a community and in the university community, “the calling together of graduands for the conferral of degrees” is one of the most impressive ceremonies. Full of pomp and circumstance, the time-honoured celebration makes for a rich and splendid pageant. But if everything appears to proceed seamlessly, it is due to months of behind-the-scenes planning by the scores of people who organize the event.

Liz McCallum, for instance, says the planning is definitely a group effort and many people start in on the project right after Christmas. McCallum has worked in the registrar’s office since 1974 and is responsible for the physical set-up on the big day. One of the things that she organizes is “who sits where,” and she says that she always spends the entire day on site at the various Convocations just to make sure that everything is running smoothly.

She laughs, “It’s a bit like planning 10 weddings a year for 3,000 total strangers.”

McCallum notes that she’s worked on so many Convocations that any “remembrances of years past” have just become a blur. But she does recall meeting some of the honorary degree recipients. And the one speech that stands out in her mind is that of Dr. James Orbinski, one of the co-founders of Doctors Without Borders who, along with Dr. Richard Heinzl, received honorary Doctor of Laws degrees in May 2001.

“His words were just so inspirational,” she exclaims.

The point of the



Spring Convocation graduates, 1954. Photo credit: Marmor

whole exercise is, of course, the granting of degrees. At McMaster, graduands are “admitted” to their degree by the Chancellor, after having a hood placed over their head by the registrar or associate registrar. The hood should remind us of the ecclesiastical origins of the university, having evolved from the outdoor clothing of clerics, and, in the early universities, degrees were made recognizable by the material of the hood.

Helen Barton, who retired in September 1999, was senior associate registrar, and it was her job, for many years, to place the hood over the heads of students.

Barton says, “From that perspective, one notices the hairstyle-of-the-year, the degree of sunburn or tan, and that sometimes both male and female students wore shorts or rather inappropriate summer attire under their gowns.”

One of the difficult parts of the organization of the event, Barton recalls, was trying to estimate how many graduands were actually going to attend.

“We had to make sure that there were enough seats and we always had to do it by estimate, since students would say they were not coming, and then, would show up. We were often holding our breath as they filed in. And sometimes we would get students who had partied too hard the night before. Occasionally students who were not eligible to graduate would arrive – sometimes they would just make that assumption. Usually there would be at least one representative from each Faculty and they would take the student aside and talk to them. Everyone would bend over backwards to make sure that the student wasn’t embarrassed in front of their family, but if they’re not qualified, we can’t allow them to walk across the stage.”

A few of the performances at the ceremony left a lasting impression on Barton: the dancing of Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn; the wonderful music of Oscar Peterson; and Harry Belafonte’s speech, which was “like a performance.”

“Mostly,” she says, “the whole thing involves really hard work and detailed planning, just trying to make sure that everything is exactly right.”

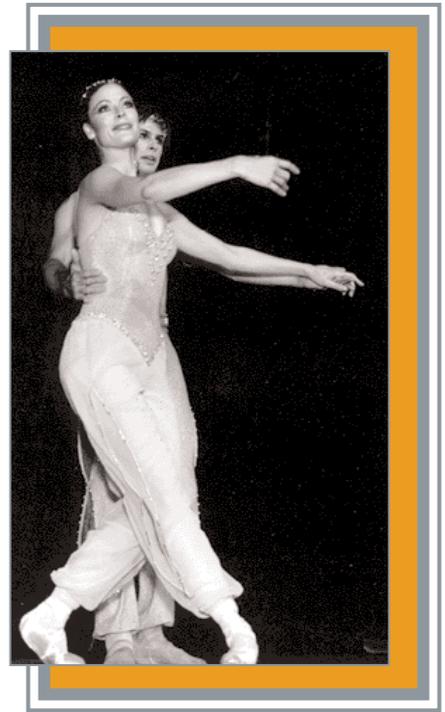
As assistant to the President, a major part of

Donna Findlay’s job is taken up with this sort of detail and a description of her role suggests an enterprise that would require the tact of Miss Manners and the organizational skills of a five-star general.

The President’s administrative secretary, Mary Arnold, has been assisting Findlay with Convocation plans for the last six or so years. She co-ordinates and oversees the formatting and preparation of the Convocation citations, speeches, dinner invitations and menus. Findlay once co-ordinated all of these activities on her own.

At McMaster, honorary degrees are awarded to distinguished individuals in the arts, in the area of public service, to those who have made their marks in certain professions, or to those who have made noteworthy contributions to either the University or the local community. Feted, and often besieged by the press, the “honorary graduands” are the “stars” of the show.

It is Findlay’s task to take care of the honorary graduands, making sure that they have a place to stay if they’re from out of town and finding out how many of their family members will be in attendance. Findlay also helps with writing the citations for these eminent personages, and, in one of the best



Internationally acclaimed ballet dancers Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn performed on stage in 1979 when they received honorary Doctor of Laws degrees from McMaster.

Paration that

BY ELAINE HUJER

perks of her profession, often gets to meet them. It is a part of her job that has left her with many fond memories: recollections of talking to people like Harry Belafonte and his wife, Julie, who received degrees in 1997, not for their musical talent, but for their work for UNICEF; memories of meeting Lech Walesa (1989) and Lincoln Alexander (1987). Cartoonist Lynn Johnston signed Findlay's autograph book and then added a quick caricature. The Canadian Brass (2000) wore running shoes and tuxedos. And Martin Short (2001) is as funny in person as he is on stage.

One of the really special Convocations took place in 1999 when the famous tenor Luciano Pavarotti came to town to perform on stage at Hamilton Place. The stage performance provided an opportunity for McMaster to hold a special ceremony, just for him, to award an honorary degree.

Findlay says, "President George had a very bad cold that day and cancelled his appearance at the ceremony, because he didn't want to pass anything on."

Ironically, the singer cancelled his own performance the next day anyway, pleading a sore throat, and inciting a storm of public and media protest.

The honorary degree that Findlay remembers most vividly was the visit of the Prince Karim Aga Khan in 1987. The demand for tickets was so great that the doors in the corridors of the President's wing had to be locked. The Prince received his honorary degree for his educational and medical work in Asia and major contributions to health care in Pakistan.

Findlay says, "There was lots and lots of security and before the Prince visited the President's office the executive assistant walked through the entire route to make sure that it was absolutely, spotlessly clean. The reception was being held in the Refectory and even the clinging butter pats that students had hurled at the ceiling were cleaned off."

Added to the organization of the actual event is the planning of a Convocation dinner to which all honorary graduands, the deans, the Chancellor and senior administration are invited. According to Findlay, about 110 invitations must be set out. A venue must be chosen – sometimes the Refectory, or



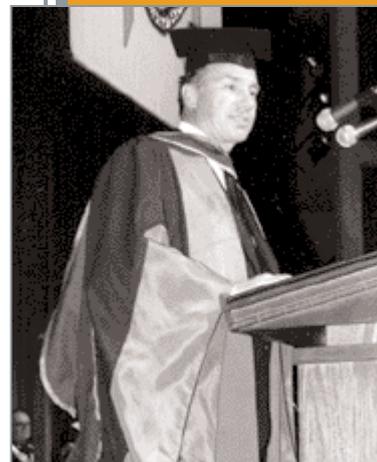
McMaster's graduation ceremonies were held in Convocation Hall for many years. Today only the Divinity College Convocation is held there; the others are at Hamilton Place. Photo credit: Tom Bochsler Photography/Courtesy of Mills Memorial Library

alternatively, the Convention Centre, the Sheraton Hotel, or, perhaps, the Chamber of Commerce. Photographers must be hired and photographs arranged. All of the details must be attended to: seating organized, placecards set in place, menus prepared and flowers chosen for decorating the tables. It doesn't seem like such a huge task, because Findlay, who has been doing this work since 1986, recalls that the preparations used to include a Convocation ball. And all is done with grace and good humour.

Findlay muses, "Well, sometimes things get a little tense – but you're just trying to get people to enjoy themselves. Really, it's just kind of fun."

This spring's Convocation ceremonies will be held between the dates of May 13th and June 5th. Students will slip into their gowns, be lined up in the proper order and walk across the stage to receive their degrees.

Honorary degrees will be awarded to familiar figures such as hockey legend Ken Dryden, jazz musician Jackie Washington and other equally illustrious, but not so easily recognizable, individuals. (See the full list below.) The bedel will carry his mace, the stately procession will file in, photographs will be taken and bouquets presented. All will unfold without a hitch and, once again, dramatic confirmation will be given to students, that certainly something of significance has been achieved.



The demand for tickets to the Convocation with Prince Karim Aga Khan (above) was so great that the doors in the corridor of the President's wing had to be locked.

2003 Spring Convocation Dates and Honorary Degree Recipients

May 13

Divinity College

Trinity Western University president Neil Snider, Doctor of Divinity*; Horticulturalist Leonard Cullen, Doctor of Divinity

May 16

Faculty of Health Sciences

Canadian historian Michael Bliss, Doctor of Letters*; Professor emeritus of surgery Barber Mueller, Doctor of Science

June 3

Faculty of Humanities and the Arts & Science Program

Canadian philosopher of science Michael Ruse, Doctor of Letters*; Legendary jazz and blues musician Jackie Washington, Doctor of Letters

Faculty of Business

President and CEO, Magna International Inc., Belinda Stronach, Doctor of Laws*; Philanthropist Mona Campbell, Doctor of Laws

June 4

Faculty of Social Sciences (a.m.)

Hamilton police chief Kenneth Robertson, Doctor of Laws*; Hamilton conservationist Ben Vanderbrug, Doctor of Laws

Faculty of Social Sciences (p.m.)

Toronto Maple Leafs president Ken Dryden, Doctor of Laws* Superior court judge John VanDuzer, Doctor of Laws

June 5

Faculty of Engineering

Transportation engineering educator Francis Navin, Doctor of Science*; Founder of Zenon Environmental Inc. Andrew Benedek, Doctor of Science

Faculty of Science

Professor emeritus of mathematics James Stewart, Doctor of Science*; Professor emeritus of chemistry Richard Bader, Doctor of Science (*will give Convocation address)

McMaster, Mohawk collaborate on new medical radiation sciences program

McMaster University and Mohawk College are the recipients of a \$2.2-million award from Ontario's Strategic Skills Investment Program to launch a new collaborative health care program in medical radiation sciences.

Beginning in September 2004, the fully integrated Diploma-Degree Program in Medical Radiation Sciences will provide students with the training they need to pursue careers in the field of medical imaging.

Students in the collaborative program will

study in one of two program options to become either medical radiation technologists (radiography), or diagnostic medical sonographers.

The first group of students in September 2004 will graduate in April 2008 with both a Bachelor of Science degree from McMaster University and a diploma in Health Sciences from Mohawk College.

This is the first diploma-degree program offered in Ontario for diagnostic medical sonographers.

The start-up costs for the collaborative project are estimated at \$5.7 million, with \$2,214,000 coming from the Ontario Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation through the Strategic Skills Investment (SSI) Program.

Industry partners are contributing about \$1.4 million to the program.

"A skilled labour force plays a significant role in improving Ontario's economic climate," said Jim Flaherty, minister of enterprise, opportunity and innovation.

McMaster President Peter George said: "This partnership is another example of our focus on students and how best to meet their needs. This innovative program is a model for future successful fully integrated university-college programs in medical radiation sciences. In turn, this collaboration will also address the critical and growing need for medical imaging professionals in Ontario."

"The Mohawk-McMaster Integrated Diploma-Degree in Medical Radiation Sciences was developed because of the need for a new and enhanced form of diagnostic training for medical imaging professionals in Ontario," Mohawk College president Cal Haddad said. "This announcement by the Ontario government is an investment in the quality of diagnostic results and improved health services."

Philips Medical Systems Canada, whose total support for the collaborative project equates to more than \$1 million, says the diploma-degree will provide employers with graduates better prepared to meet the challenges facing diagnostic imaging because of their new and expanded level of skills.

The collaborative medical radiation sciences program is 10 semesters and includes 51 weeks of hospital/clinic work experience. About 120 students are expected to enrol in the program annually.

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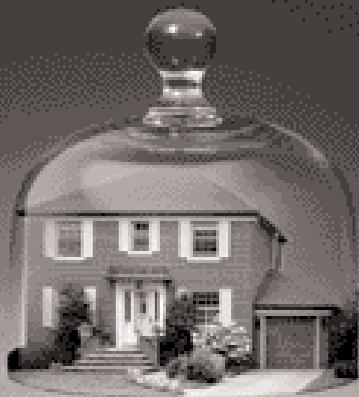
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Honesty is the best policy

Meet McMaster's new academic integrity officer Andrea Thyret-Kidd

BY CHANTALL VAN RAAV

There is something rewarding about submitting a paper that is your own. Spending hours on the computer, deleting words that don't fit, adding paragraphs with more pizzazz. Putting sweat and tears into an assignment worth 20 per cent of the final grade.

But what about the student who logs into a paper mill, searches through a database containing thousands of papers, and pays \$50 for something they have no knowledge about?

Both may get the same mark, but the satisfaction they feel will be poles apart. Indeed, integrity is worth more than the grade itself, feels Andrea Thyret-Kidd, McMaster's new academic integrity officer.

Thyret-Kidd was hired last fall to implement the University's new Academic Integrity Code, which takes effect May 1, with a transition between the old and new policy until September.

The code, which replaces the Academic Dishonesty Policy, is intended to change people's attitudes from dishonesty to valuing integrity, she says. "It's not just about the negative side but it's about the positive side too. Part of the reason we're doing this is to protect the integrity of the entire campus and the integrity of those students who didn't cheat."

When people find out what Thyret-Kidd does for a living, they usually have a story to tell her. They know, have heard of, or they themselves have committed an act of academic dishonesty at least once in their lives.

"It is fascinating to me that when, in my personal life I tell people what I do, they all have stories to tell about times they were tempted to cheat or about the person they knew in their program who cheated. It's not a new thing and you can talk to people who are 50 years old who are reflecting back on what happened when they were in school," she says. "I remember the girl on my residence floor who would sit in the lounge and type out essays for people and make some money doing it."

Thyret-Kidd was hired at McMaster as the residence life manager in 1991. In 2001, prior to accepting her new position, she worked in Student Affairs, where she assisted with first-year transition issues.

In her new position, she wants to educate people about academic dishonesty and look at preventative ways of stopping cheating before it begins. All plagiarism cases will be handled by her office. She reports to the Provost and her office is in MUSC-211.

Stamping out plagiarism at McMaster is not going to be an easy ride, she admits, pointing her finger at the internet and paper mills.

"The internet is very much a part of lives now and students have grown up with computers. That's a big difference compared to someone like myself, when computers were just coming in at the



"WHEN YOU TAKE A LOOK AT PEOPLE WHO ARE BLOWING THE WHISTLE, IT'S OTHER STUDENTS. IT'S SO UNFAIR IF YOU ARE AN HONEST STUDENT AND YOU ARE AWARE THAT OTHER STUDENTS ARE CHEATING."

end of my university career," she says.

"Things that are on the internet now didn't exist 10 years ago. Where some people would have gone to the library for something, today they just jump on the internet. Things have changed with technology and I think it has taken everyone a little bit by surprise."

Paper mills have also made it easier for students to cheat, she says. "Now, you can go onto the internet and pop into a paper mill and some of them are quite astounding. I started looking at a paper mill one day and they had more than 1,400 papers available in the area of history alone, and they had it subcategorized. You get an abstract, how many pages it is and then there's a value and you just pay it on a credit card and they send the paper to you."

She adds that since she looked at this paper mill last fall, more than 100 papers in history had

been added to the database. "And that's just one paper mill," she says.

But technology is also making it easier to catch cheaters, she adds. McMaster has adopted, on a trial basis, the use of Turnitin.com, a Web program that works to deter students from cheating. Professors who use Turnitin.com in their class ask students to submit a hard copy to them and an electronic copy to the program. The program runs papers against everything on the internet in a 24-hour period and it comes back with a report. The faculty member reviews the report and decides whether it is plagiarism, and if so, how they are going to address it. A decision is pending on whether the University will buy an institutional membership to Turnitin.com.

"The biggest thing this does for the University, in my opinion, is that you start to put literature out there that says we're going to ask you to submit your papers electronically and we'll be running it through a program to check these things. So it's a deterrent. It's not so much about catching students as it is on preventing them from cheating in the first place," Thyret-Kidd says.

While cases of plagiarism doubled last year at McMaster, Thyret-Kidd has not lost faith in students. In fact, it is often students who come to her with concerns about their cheating peers. "When I speak to students about this they are quite concerned. When you take a look at people who are blowing the whistle, it's other students. It's so unfair if you're an honest student and you're aware that other students are cheating."

A diamond in the rough

Popular McMaster softball league offers friendship, fun

BY THERESA MACINNIS

After more than 40 years, you might say they've seen it all, except for an independent umpire that is.

And it's likely not for the reasons you may think. Sure, there have been battles over the years, and the Phoenix Cup has taken a beating, but players in the McMaster three-pitch co-ed softball league seem to have managed just fine to last this long.

This summer official umpires will take the place of players behind the plate to allow more playing time each night for 21 teams in two divisions.

"It made the game go smoothly and eliminated rules and it means I can schedule an extra game a night and also start the games a little later," says league commissioner Andy Duncan. "It's a good-natured group and we don't take it too seriously. The umpires who have done our tournaments have told us they enjoy it. It's a very laid-back league."

The league's official name is the McMaster University Graduate Student Association (GSA) Three-Pitch Softball League, but it's not just graduate students who play.

Duncan, a technician in the Department of Physics & Astronomy, began playing in 1981. He started scheduling the games five years ago when he offered to write a program for the Phoenix manager (the Phoenix is the GSA's restaurant in Wentworth House) who organized the schedule at the time. Duncan has been doing the schedule ever since. Others, like Jim Greenlee, have been playing in the league since 1968.

At one time there were 42 teams in the three-pitch league and another 12 to 16 in the men's slow-pitch league, says Duncan. The Time Bandits were always the team to beat for the Phoenix Cup until they split into two teams for this season.

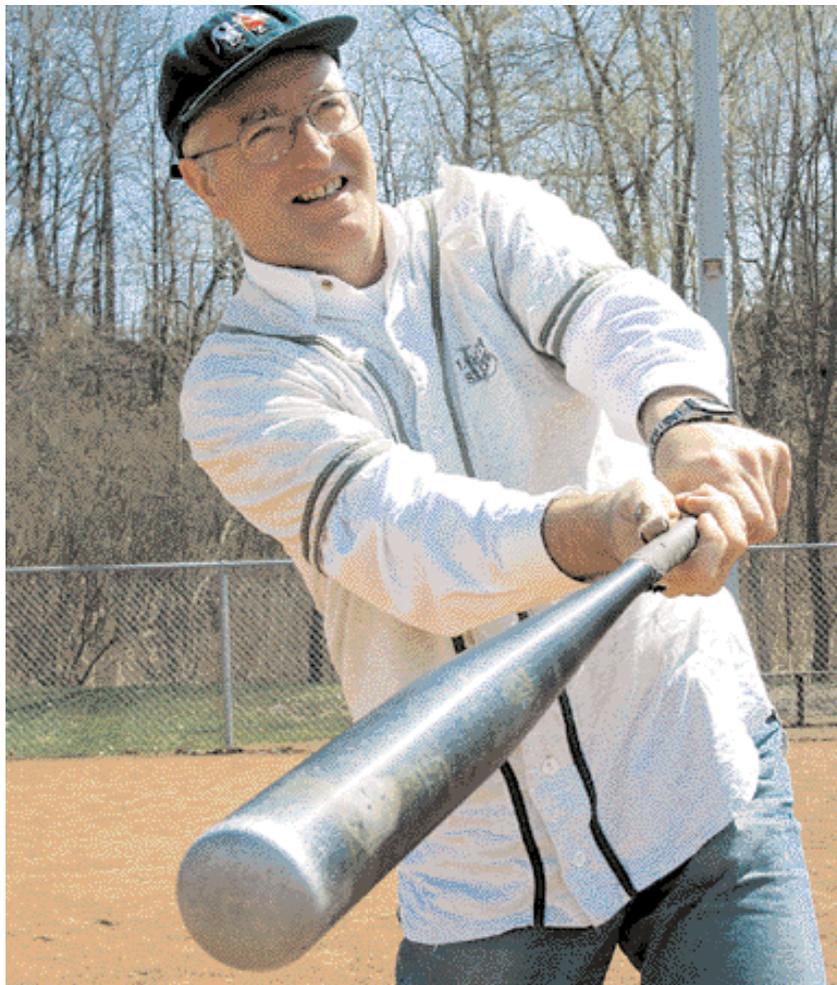
The 17-year-old cup had to be rebuilt last year by one of the carpenters in physical plant because it came apart in one of the post-game celebrations. Celebratory players have even tried to drink beer out of it, but it leaks.

The league is believed to have started informally around 1959 with the chemistry and physics departments playing fastball. Some players remember playing on the site of Wentworth House and the 10-acre field, (northeast of the recreation complex) in the past.

In more recent years, the league has called three fields by Zone 7 Parking home. In the past several years they have worked on the field, adding grass and, most recently, lighting and new fencing.

"I've talked to a lot of former employees, alumni and grad students, who remember it fondly," says Duncan. "It's the social aspect. After the game we get together and kid each other and have a good time. It's people like Jim Greenlee who enjoy it so much."

If you don't recognize the name Andy Duncan, "Weasel" may sound more familiar. A few years back he told his team if they won 10 games in a row or the Phoenix Cup he would buy them all a steak. The first year they had three victories, a loss, and then a string of seven victories. In the loss, he hit a



Batter up! Andy Duncan swings into a new season as commissioner of McMaster's GSA Softball League, now more than 40 years old.

fly ball to the right fielder with the winning run in place.

In the past 35 years Jim Greenlee estimates he has played just over 700 games. He keeps a record of every game he has played. He is a professor and chair of history at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University of Newfoundland and has been returning to Hamilton every summer since 1977.

"The league has been very good for me in several respects. It offers guaranteed respite from the term, gets the juices flowing and seems to give me greater energy to research and write. I guess this is because of the release it affords."

Greenlee says he loved his days as a student at McMaster (1964-1975) and he cherishes every opportunity to renew that connection each year. He says "McBall" makes him feel as though he had

never left.

"There is a romantic comradeship throughout the league that you cannot find elsewhere, let alone replace. I have come to value old opponents as much as long-time teammates."

Dustin Johnson, captain of the Naturals, is one of the newer members of the league. The second-year master's student says it was a great stress relief and a fantastic way to meet new people after helping to form the team last summer.

"This year, we have the majority of our team returning, plus word of mouth has spread and we've had to turn down 10 to 15 extra players that want to play with us. We are looking forward to another exciting summer of baseball, friendship and fun."

For more information about the league, or to read Jim Greenlee's reflections, visit: <http://www.physics.mcmaster.ca/gsasoftball/>.