

perspectives



Inside this issue:

Features

- McMaster Employee Profile—Doreen Dixon
- The Dawning of the Age of SOLAR

Editorial

Letters to the Editor

Employee Health & Wellness

Original Literature & Poetry

Mac Facts

Retrospectives

Hidden Treasures

Features

McMaster Employee Profile—Doreen Dixon

By Nancy Kolenski

Ba ba black sheep have you any wool, no sir...but Doreen Dixon has a bagful of hobbies & interests in her life. I originally set up an informal chat with Doreen over the lunch hour to discuss her interesting hobby of spinning her own wool. What I got, was Doreen Dixon, woman extraordinaire, with talents, interests and a zest for life that is indeed infectious. I could have spent hours chatting with this feisty lady. ([See Photo Slide Show](#))

Doreen's career has spanned 20 years at McMaster, with the bulk of those years spent in Humanities before she moved to her current position in the OKATT Research Group in CE&B (Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics) three years ago. She may be an efficient, mild-mannered Administrative Secretary by day, but in her free time she is involved in everything from: canoeing and singing to website design, jewelry-making, weaving, knitting, stained glass, hiking, gardening, teaching recorder and music at Mohawk College, graphic design, rescuing unwanted animals and teaching herself to play the native Spirit flute and the bagpipes. Whew!

When I asked her which was her first love out of all the interests she has, she said it was her music. She sings with The John Laing Singers out of Hamilton and the MUSA Minstrels. The Laing Singers were founded in 1982, and since then the choir has represented Canada at international choral festivals in France and Switzerland, as well as having singing invitations to perform at special occasions in the US and Canada. They have produced a CD, which Doreen not only sings on - she also designed its cover. She has also designed other promotional materials for this group - everything from pamphlets to posters.

However, I sensed there was an equivalent love for canoeing. Not only because of the joy she expressed when she told me about her husband and her packing up the canoeing gear and heading to Temagami to enjoy the wonder and beauty of nature, but because she is very proud of her website on canoeing. You can be sure while they're canoeing, either Grant or Doreen can be found toting a camera to capture images of these outdoor adventures.

Talent seems to run in the family, as sister Marni and brother-in-law Mark restore old homes in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. Last year they received the Best Restored Home Award for the entire province. She also cherishes the friend/relationship she has with her parents Gordon and Evelyn Gent.

Doreen and Grant, her husband of 35 years, live in a small home in Dundas with Emma, a Cardigan Welsh Corgi. They have one son Christopher, who is a nuclear physicist and a daughter-in-law Krista Scott-Dixon, an instructor in the Women's Studies department at York University. Krista also maintains a web page in weight training. The web site can be found at <http://www.stumptuous.com/dorkdiva.html>



McMaster University Employee Profile: Doreen Dixon



Doreen Dixon on her Spinning Wheel

Doreen's bubbly personality and genuine happiness of who she is and what she does, shines through so brightly, I didn't want the chat to end, but we both had jobs to return to. I thought Temagami might be a bit far to travel to see Doreen in action, but I have included the website that she constructed and maintains, and if you wish to hear Doreen, The John Laing Singers perform at Christ's Church Cathedral, 252 James Street N in Hamilton on April 12th at 8pm. Tickets are \$20 (\$17 Senior/Student).

Doreen's web page: <http://home.cogeco.ca/~doreen.dixon/doreen.htm>

There are over 5000 employees on campus, and Doreen's just one story. Do you know of someone else that we should meet? Please write us and tell us how to contact this person so we can profile them in an upcoming issue.

Nancy Kolenski works in the Faculty of Health Sciences Advancement Office.

The Dawning of the Age of SOLAR

By Elizabeth Templeton

McMaster Becomes a New Planet in the SOLAR System

One thing that academic institutions are known for is paper and lots of it. During the 2002 registration period for undergraduate students (including the medical program) over 14,000 registrations were received and processed by the Office of the Registrar. The drop and add period in September added another several thousand pieces of paper to the piles that needed to be filed and processed. The system was rapidly filling up with paper and the paper was taking up valuable storage space and precious time away from interacting with students. SOLAR, or the Student Online Academic Registration system was launched on December 16th, 2002 allowing students to drop & add courses through their own (McMaster University General Student Information) MUGSI account.

Trudy Sykes, Senior Associate Registrar traces the history of the current online registration plan back to 1985, when an ambitious telephone registration project had been researched at length and was subsequently shelved due to budgetary considerations. One of the main goals behind student self registration, then as now, was to provide better service to students by allowing McMaster staff more time for counselling instead of completing paperwork.



The core team of Helen Barton, Chris Bernacki, Heather Grigg, Wayne Gowan, Brian McEntegart, Sue Pennington and Trudy Sykes have shepherded the concept from drawing board to reality. But, the SOLAR project continues to be an ambitious undertaking with almost sixty people working directly in its development. A core team of enthusiasts offer ideas, guidance and troubleshooting with a team from CIS completing all of the system's work.

The Drop & Add portion was then tested by selected students and records team processing staff. Core team members however, are always looking for input into SOLAR performance.

Rather than the "Big Bang" approach to SOLAR that would have launched the entire system once completely finished, the idea of portioned deliverables was chosen. As subsequent portions become available, they will be introduced to users. By choosing this approach, the SOLAR project teams aim to achieve such visible goals as:

- Diminish stress on all users by keeping the learning curve of each portion as manageable as possible.
- Listen to current users' concerns and needs and then modify both current and subsequent portions under development to suit the growing number of users.
- Allow students to become more responsible for their educational choices.

- Decrease the paperwork done by staff and create more time for student counselling and interaction.
- Create positive interest in SOLAR in the University community from both users and senior administration.
- Make the cultural change from a paper-based registration system to an electronic system as smoothly as possible and therefore be flexible and achievable.

Many staff members reported that the process of drop and adds went much more smoothly than in previous years. There is an audit trail produced by each individual student that can be viewed by student advisors in the Faculties as well as by Office of the Registrar staff. This feature allows staff to view each time that the student has logged into the SOLAR system.

The SOLAR project development continues with excitement and anticipation. Plans call for students in Year/Level 1 to choose Level 2 programmes in mid-March as first year/level students did last year on MUGSI. Work is also underway to allow undergraduate students to enter their initial course registration requests as of mid-June for the Fall/Winter 2003 session. It will include an electronic page to be submitted by the student outlining their financial payment plan for the academic session 2003/09. Undergraduate course drop and add will again be available before the start of classes in September 2003.

The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) is also scheduled to join SOLAR. Within three years, SOLAR will allow any currently registered Undergraduate, Graduate or MBA student to complete "what if scenarios" on their degree audits. An example question might be, "If I am in Honours Anthropology and wish to change to a pass or 3-year degree in Labour Studies, what will my year look like?" They will also be able to search the calendar from within SOLAR and make arrangements to pay accounts electronically.

The SOLAR system provides another tool in the accessible and use of innovation at McMaster Campus. The future is now and it is here at McMaster University.

Elizabeth Templeton has worked in the Undergraduate Office of the Registrar since January 2001.

Editorial

Now That I'm All Grown Up...

By Nancy Kolenski (Guest Editor)

The morning silence is broken by the sudden shrill honking of the dreaded alarm clock. It 's the 6 a.m. wake up call, telling me it's that time again. Another Monday morning has reared its ugly head. Another weekend passed by in a blink. I can't even remember the weekend! Did I even sleep in? What happened to the time I was going to spend lazing in bed as a lady of leisure until I couldn't stand it any longer? What happened to the book I planned to finish reading in the peace and tranquil sanctuary of my apartment? Was it really two days without phones ringing, the photocopier shuffling and spitting out pages continuously, the annoying habits of co-workers, faxes pouring in, people asking for directions and the constant blip of I've got mail on my computer adding to my workload?

Personally I think Mondays should be banned from all calendars. I think that we collectively should force the government to make this day illegal. Anyone caught out or at work on this day should be fined, maybe that would make people stay home. The only problem with this dream idea of mine is Mondays would be replaced by Tuesday as the start of a new week and, well, I would want it banned too. The vicious cycle would never end.

I throw the covers back and begin to shuffle to the shower. The coffee smell wafts out from the kitchen, thank goodness for Juan Valdez's hand-picked beans and for that little pick-me-up caffeine boost. As I fumble with the shower curtain, I wonder if my lottery numbers have come up and make a mental note to check them.

As I step into the shower, I realize I have forgotten to make my lunch and curse myself for forgetting something that I have been doing every weekday for 20 odd years. I try to force my mind to do a refrigerator inventory to see what culinary delights I can quickly disguise as lunch, but all menu ideas are jolted from my thoughts as with my mind elsewhere, I have turned on the taps without adjusting the water temperature. As the cold water blasts out of the shower head onto my skin I begin flailing

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

my arms like some Banshee in a ritual dance. The cold water has brought back a childhood memory of snowball fights and how it felt to get those slushy, cold ones in the face. My mood slips from that of a wicked step sister to the Wicked Witch. "I hate my job!", I bark out loud to no one.

With the water adjusted to a proper temperature, I begin to re-group. I realize I don't hate my job, I'm just not fond of the routine that comes with getting up and going to it. As I fight to control the hair dryer, I wonder if I am the only one that does not do their best makeover work at this ungodly hour. I bet those other women around the office have hired their own personal hair stylist and make-up artists to get that perfection. They probably have a personal aid that dresses them too. Then I stand half naked in front of the clothes closet waiting for that perfect outfit to jump off the hanger, which will probably only land me on Mr. Black's list anyway.

I hope that I am not the only one that doesn't sip my morning coffee over the early edition newspaper. Tell me it is normal to slurp it in-between the shower, hair drying, make up and dressing! Tell me it is commonplace that the morning coffee ritual comes to an abrupt, down-the-drain ending when you hear the radio weather forecast. You are cold before even entering the outdoors: even Eskimos wouldn't be out on a day like today. You immediately realize this forecast has just extended your driving time to work, because for some strange reason, at the mention and sight of snow, most competent drivers send their licenses south, thus causing a high danger alert. You fear for your life long before what is considered to be the rush hour. It is rare, but on these days, I am happy to actually make it to work.



Baby Photo of Nancy Kolenski's

When I finally make it to the office, I decide to start the new week with a coffee. The plan is to sit down and drink the entire cup. As I begin to walk away from my desk, my phone rings. It's like it has eyes, or maybe some homing device, that it knows when I am about to move in another direction and calls me back. My mother used to play a similar sick game with me. I could have been in the room for hours with not a word said between us, but then as I would exit the room and be halfway down or upstairs she would call me back. I would go back, disgruntled but silent, only for her to give me this mischievous grin and ask, "How far would you have been if I hadn't called you back?" It's just sick. I would storm off, but only because I fell for the same joke too many times. I was always thinking this would be the one time she would seriously want me.

I quickly decide to let my voice mail answer the call. Voice mail is the one piece of technology that I find most useful in this supposedly technologically advanced society. I don't know how many people are guilty of putting their phone on voice mail when they are sitting right there and could answer it. I figure it this way, if it goes into my voice mail it's a phone call that needs to be returned, although sometimes it can be answered and dealt with right then and there. I also try not to abuse this service because I myself hate the new automated phone systems that most companies and businesses are using today. I especially don't like it when you call some big corporation and you cannot get a live person with which to discuss your needs. If I don't need a human, I will gladly press 1 for English, 2 for accounts and so on, but I really hate when there is no button to push to get me back to where you were before I pressed the wrong option and have to start all over again. Arrgh!

At the café, I decide to treat myself to a large cappuccino. Back at my desk I listen to the voice mail and fantasize that perhaps my boss is calling to tell me they're not feeling well and will be staying home today. Or perhaps it is the Dean telling me to take the day off. The lottery corporation? No, it is none of the above, just a message from a pal who works across campus inviting me to lunch to commiserate that it's Monday.

It's nice 'now that I am all grown up' that I can say what is on my mind, and I am sure I can say that I am not the only employee here who hopes to win a lottery, or wishes that Mondays were banned from the calendar. Come on, admit it, you've even considered running for your local government using 'ban Mondays' as your platform! I'd vote for you. But I am just one perspective on one issue. There's thousands of other stories out there on campus, other perspectives, which we are looking to showcase in this newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Nancy began working at Mac in 1990. She is now an Administrative Assistant in the Faculty of Health Sciences Advancement Office.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Just wanted to take a moment to share my perspective on the latest Working at McMaster initiative - the Inspiring From Within conference:

"Inspiring From Within", an apt title for a well-planned day. I'd like to walk you through the day with me, but without times and speakers and homilies and superlatives, and I'm not sure I can completely steer clear of those. Can't be helped; but what I'd really rather do is to give you my own reflections.

A paid day to refresh, schmooze, be entertained and eat like kings and queens is a truly wonderful thing. To share something of yourself, know that you're not alone, and come away laughing and having learned something as well, is truly inspiring. It was an "as above, so below" beginning - a bright blue sky, and the sun shining madly, something we haven't seen enough of this winter. Even the drive, as my co-worker Linda and I learned a bit about each other, without workday interruptions was a treat.

Lucky for us the Burlington Art Centre was our destination. Luckier still, the wall-to-wall picture window overlooking the Bay where we had our home base room for much of the day. Entering, we found the room abuzz with chatter and our workmates had saved us a space at the white-clothed tables. A quick snack of freshly-squeezed juice and a delicious pastry and then on with the show - a speaker from CBC Radio with a quick wit and plenty of funny taped interviews. There's nothing, and I mean nothing, like a few good belly laughs first thing in the morning to set a day on a high note.

Next, for me, the session titled "The Caregivers' Circus", led by two delightful ladies, ringmasters if you will, led the way and after a bit of a slow start it went so well that we ran overtime and still hated to leave our group for lunch. Who says learning has to be painful!



Sandra Singh (right) in conversation with Keynote Speaker Jane Farrow (left) and Cate Walker-Hammond

Back to the main room and although the schedule, without a doubt, showed a buffet lunch, it was a sit down, have-someone-serve-and-clean-up-after-you-affair! Unbelievable for well in excess of a hundred people to be served by uniformed, gracious, well-trained waiters and waitresses and have it done so well. What a treat! How could I not be inspired?

Tables cleared, coffee and dessert well devoured, we were held in rapt attention by the keynote speaker. Suffice to say there was more laughter, a break, and off to the "Work/Life Balance" session, although I'm not totally convinced there really is such a thing. A wee bit of talk, a short meditation, and perhaps 18 to 20 ladies went upstairs to walk an indoor labyrinth. I was humbled by how all of those ladies, including myself, took the walk as intended, reverently, quietly and contemplatively. It could have been meaningless. It was anything but. Every-

one seemed to come away with a new respect for this ancient ritual, and perhaps more for one another too.

And again, back to the main room for a wrap-up, door prizes, and I kid you not, a visit from a very kindly fairy godmother and her dapper sidekick. Sparkle and Dazzle was who they were, and what they did. So if you spot a woman with a huge red blinking heart on her chest, giggling like a school girl, stop and say hello and I'll tell you all about my visit with the fairy. See, good things do happen when you're inspired from within.

Marilyn McIntyre
Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Tips for Healthy Living

By Dr. Joanne Kehoe



Can you usually be found hunched over your desktop from early morning and not look up until well into the afternoon? This position places great strain on your back, neck and shoulders and does not allow you to take full breaths. Desktop exercises to the rescue!

Assuming your desk, chair and computer are properly aligned, the next step is to learn different exercises you can easily incorporate into your day to help stretch and strengthen overworked body areas. Stretches for backs, shoulders, necks, wrists and hands will help realign a slouching spine and relieve the muscle tension of repetitive computer work. Much better than a trip to the vending machine, these short bouts of exercise throughout the day will help alleviate stress so you can easily smile at your boss when he or she piles more work on you.

Log onto the following sites and let the animated examples take you through a few stretches you can do at your desk:

- http://www.mydailyyoga.com/yoga/everyday_yoga.html
- <http://web.mit.edu/atic/www/rsi/RSIMIT/exercise.html>
- <http://backhealth.net/backhealth/fitness/workexercise.htm>
- <http://www.lib.msu.edu/ergomsu/stretch.htm>
- <http://keats.admin.virginia.edu/ergo/stretch.html>
- http://www.shelterpub.com/fitness_desk_stretches/stretches_graphic.html - download a free pdf file Stretch poster

Remember - it is important to take breaks often - in addition to the above exercises, make sure you stand up and move

Original Literature & Poetry

Sonnet for Madeline

By RoseAnne Prevec

When we are waterlogged with sleep, she springs
And dances with abandon down the hall.
A solar-powered child who laughs at kings,
A sprite enchanting kin and strangers all.
Wellspring of mirth and wonder, packaged small,
She questions every answer with a "why?"
A tiny goddess holding us in thrall,
Demands with earnest eyes that do not cry.
She knows that mermaids sing and horses fly,
That beauty's spread by moon and summer dew.
While she believes in magic so shall I
The weary, worldly bite of life eschew.
White marble face, in sleep, so strange and still
By moonlight she restores her mighty will.

RoseAnne Prevec is the Communications Officer in the McMaster Museum of Art and a student in McMaster's Certificate in Writing Program.

Mac Facts

Fast Facts About the McMaster Museum of Art

By Joanne Kehoe and RoseAnne Prevec

Home to a significant collection of close to 6,000 works of art, the Museum also presents exhibitions of works from the permanent collection, special exhibitions, and offers a regular schedule of public programs.

Permanent collection highlights:

- the Herman H. Levy Collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art including Courbet, Monet, Pissarro, van Gogh, Utrillo and Braque
- the Denner Wallace Collection of early 20th century German prints, a nationally and internationally recognized specialist collection of German Expressionist art
- a nucleus of European Old Master paintings and European prints from the 16th to 20th centuries
- a survey collection of Canadian historical and contemporary art
- Inuit art with emphasis on Cape Dorset prints and sculpture
- 20th century European modernist and contemporary art from the Fauves, Nicholson and Rodchenko to Beuys, Kiefer, Kapoor and Gormley

Current Exhibit - Faculty Artists at the McMaster Museum March 2 - April 13, 2003

It has been said that great teachers never strive to explain their visions, they simply invite you to stand beside them and see for yourself. The newest exhibition at the McMaster Museum of Art is an opportunity to do just that. It is a presentation of recent work by seven accomplished artists who are also faculty in McMaster University's School of the Arts. They are:

- Don Carr
- Judy Major-Girardin
- Alan Flint
- Robert Hamilton
- Liss Platt
- Graham Todd
- Maria Whiteman

This is the largest exhibition of Faculty work that the Museum has held to date and the first since the creation of the Multimedia Programme in McMaster's the School of the Arts.

The works address a variety of themes using a wide range of practices including painting, printmaking, mixed media sculpture, photography, video and multimedia. According to Dr. Alison McQueen, Assistant Professor of Art History at McMaster University, "The works in this exhibition attest to the on-going and powerful role of contemporary art works as vehicles for social change and creative communication."

The McMaster Museum of Art is located on the campus of McMaster University at the corner of Sterling Street and University Avenue.

Museum Hours

Tuesday- Friday 11 - 6 pm

Thursday evening 7-9 pm

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Sunday 12-5 pm

Closed Mondays, Saturdays, statutory holidays, and for one week between Christmas and New Years.

Phone: (905)525-9140 ext. 23081

Fax: (905)527-4548

E-mail: museum@mcmaster.ca

Admission

Pay what you can, if you can with a suggested donation of \$2.00. Students and seniors are always free.

For complete information, visit the McMaster Museum of Art Website at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/museum>

Joanne Kehoe is a Program Coordinator in the Centre for Continuing Education. RoseAnne Prevec is Communications Coordinator in the McMaster —Museum of Art.

Retrospectives

Double Cohort: The Prequel

By Donna Millard

Not enough rooms! Not enough faculty! Where are they all going to stay! HELP! The Double Cohort blues? No, actually...while we're all waiting in breathless anticipation for the impending Double Cohort arrivals this fall, it's interesting to see that history truly does repeat itself. In this situation, turn the pages of time back to 1945. The war has just ended, the world is happy again and McMaster is in the throes of preparing for the onslaught of returning veterans--the post-war double cohort, so to speak. As Johnston so aptly puts it in *McMaster University, The Early Years in Hamilton, 1930-1957*:

Meanwhile, a 'short-term emergency' had been brought on by the influx of education-hungry military veterans to the campus. The challenge their arrival posed was to consume much of the university's time, resources, and energies during the academic sessions of the immediate post-war period. (Johnston, p. 139)

By September of 1945, 853 students had registered at McMaster; about 150 more than the university could 'conveniently handle.' This was a dramatic increase from a wartime low of 546 students registered in the 1940-1941 school year.

So how did the university cope so long ago with this influx of keen minded students? The strategies were startlingly familiar:

- To ease the strain put on teaching, faculty numbers were increased to 45 full-time and 25 part-time faculty (an increase from the pre-war numbers of 38 and 8 respectively). This was a huge increase in sessional appointments and was deplored by many administrators on campus.
- To ease the financial strain on the campus, the federal government granted the university a subsidy of \$150 for each qualified veteran. This amount, however, was not seen as enough to alleviate the strain on resources on campus. One big difference from our current situation is that these subsidies did not include any monies to cover capital outlays for buildings. No SuperBuild campaign in those days!
- The influx of students did result in a flurry of building activity which lasted for several years. Hamilton Hall, Mills Memorial Library, Divinity College and Alumni Memorial Hall all came from this post-war planning without the assistance of the various governments. McMaster's own personal 'SuperBuild.'

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

- To ease the strain on buildings, temporary buildings or 'H-huts' were constructed. The 'starkly functional' buildings had about as much appeal as our current temporary classrooms erected on the tennis courts. The last 'temporary' H-hut lasted until 1972. Will our new temporary classrooms be around that long?
- One of these temporary H-huts was used as the very popular 'Rec Hut' providing 'additional outlets for student social life under present crowded conditions.' The Rec Hut included a plethora of services including a snack bar, dining area, student affairs, reading rooms, and a bowling alley, services to rival our new McMaster University Student Centre. Move over Tim Horton's.



Then: Rec Hall

So did the McMaster of the past survive their double cohort? Well, we're still here today and as Johnston and Weaver state:



Now: McMaster University Student Centre

But all--student, faculty, and administration alike--were agreed that the so-called emergency brought on by the advent of the veteran had done much to rejuvenate and stimulate the campus. And in the process, they were convinced, it had helped to prepare the campus for the important changes that everyone, either with confidence or trepidation, expected would arrive in the new decade. (Johnston and Weaver, p. 77)

Only the future will show us if we too will be rejuvenated and stimulated by our 'Double Cohort.'

Source:

Johnston, Charles M. McMaster University: Volume 2: The Early Years in Hamilton 1930-1957. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981.

Johnston, Charles M. and John C. Weaver. Student Days: Student Life at McMaster from the 1890s to the 1980s. Hamilton, Ont.: McMaster University Alumni Association, 1986.

Donna M. Millard is the Reference Librarian at Mills Memorial Library. She has been at McMaster since 1988.

Hidden Treasures

McMaster Hair Design and Esthetics

By Victoria Miecznikowski

If you are having trouble seeing your computer screen because your hair keeps falling in your eyes, you might consider taking a walk over to the Health Sciences building to get a lunch-hour haircut.

McMaster Hair Design and Esthetics is a full service salon and is conveniently located in the red area of the hospital, right next to the cafeteria (so you can grab a bite to eat on your way back to the office!).

Rates are fairly reasonable, a cut and style costs \$35, and cut and colour starts at \$50. The salon offers a range of services, including highlights and up-dos, as well as body waxing, manicures and pedicures, lash tints and massages. If you've had a rough morning, you might consider taking the afternoon off and booking a four-hour spa package which includes a full body massage, manicure and pedicure. Pamper yourself!

McMaster Hair Design and Esthetics is operated by the Hamilton Health Sciences Volunteer Association, a non-profit organization which raises funds to enhance the comfort of patients. To book an appointment, call extension 75345.

Victoria Miecznikowski, is Communications Coordinator for External Relations Department in the Michael G. DeGroot School of Business. She has been employed at McMaster since 2000.

