

perspectives



Features

McMaster Employee Profile: Lori Mesurier

A Spring Tune-up

By Marilyn McIntyre

As this issue of Perspectives is all about getting ready for spring, Lori Mesurier immediately sprang to my mind as the perfect person to profile. I had the opportunity of taking a Beginners Pilates class with Lori in the fall and was taken with her energy, friendliness and her knowledge. Unfortunately, I was unable to continue this time round with Pilates but as spring is just around the corner...

Lori works for the Fun Fit Program here at McMaster University, which offers a wide range of aerobic classes including Pilates and yoga. She also teaches at Phoenix Fitness where she works with both men and women teaching everything from aerobics to Pilates. As if that is not enough, she also teaches at Exclusively Women, where, as the name heavily suggests, it's all women all the time. Putting these three jobs together gives Lori about 15 to 20 hours of fitness classes a week. She did confess that during the Pilates classes she demonstrates the exercise, and walks around instructing while checking to make sure everyone has the proper form.



McMaster University Profile:
Lori Mesurier

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Lori is married and has two children, whom she confides have no interest in fitness at all. She also admits that it took her a number of years to really understand that fitness does make you feel good, it increases your energy and it keeps you healthy. I can understand that, as I too have always had an on-again off-again relationship with my body. However, as it's the only one I've got, I thought I had better investigate Lori's life and fitness outlook a little more in depth.

When I asked Lori how one goes about getting into the business of being a certified aerobic instructor she told me that, strangely enough, it was Tupperware that got her started. Lori exercised at home for ten years and sold Tupperware while her kids were young. She soon realized that with regular exercise and weight training, anyone can change their body. Over the next couple of years, Tupperware helped Lori get the confidence she needed to be able to speak in front of people in an upbeat and friendly manner. Lori had now found her passion, "exercising" and was ready to share her knowledge with others. Now I have to admit that I never would have thought of the public speaking aspect of the fitness trade, but it does make sense.

Lori became certified through the YWCA on a four-week intensive course. It consisted of Anatomy & Physiology, Exercise Design & Nutrition and Leadership. Also required during training was CPR certification, which was another added weekend of training. She then had to train with a certified instructor for another 20 hours before getting tested for her certificate. Whew! I'm exhausted just thinking about it.

I couldn't help but ask Lori, who is 41, if she was ever overweight. She laughed and confessed that she weighed 140 pounds at one time, dropped to 105 pounds on the Scarsdale diet, then found her comfortable weight by eating properly and that is where she is now. Boy, did that make me feel better. I think that sometimes we all believe that fitness trainers just pop out of the soil like the flowers in the spring, born into perfection.

When Lori isn't helping other people get in shape during the warm months, she and her family are out on their 32-foot Thundercraft Cabin Cruiser. They've been boating for quite some time and have toured around the Thousand Islands down the Trent Canal System, but the biggest trip they've taken was down the Erie Canal into the Hudson River and right up to, but not into, New York City.

As boating doesn't last all year all year round, the Mesurier family have taken up skiing over the past two years, and find that they really love it. So, that's how Lori and family get and keep in shape, but how about the rest of us? Here are Lori's top ten tips for getting fit and staying healthy to get us started.

Lori's Top Ten Tips

- 1) Water, Water, Water – Drink at least 8 glasses a day. Your skin will love it.
- 2) Never skip a meal. Eat breakfast no more than one hour after getting up as your body does not start to burn calories until you feed it.
- 3) Eat every 3 to 4 hours – 3 meals, 2 snacks all consisting of carbohydrates, fat and protein.
- 4) Don't eat 3 hours before going to bed. Not even a grape!
- 5) Watch what you drink as there are lots of calories in juice and pop.
- 6) Exercise 3 to 5 times a week and weight train the other days.
- 7) Increase your weights every 6 weeks, starting with 3 lbs and increasing from there.

Remember: CHALLENGE EQUALS CHANGE.

- 8) Don't weigh yourself, muscle weighs more than fat. Use your clothes as a guide.
- 9) Contract your abdominals throughout the day.
- 10) Stand tall with shoulders back and chest out. You WILL look taller and leaner.

Tips on Preparing your Garden for Springtime

By Marilyn McIntyre

Although springtime does bring thoughts of love, it also brings thoughts of gardening. Norm Kamutzki has been running his own landscaping business under the name of Its Your Gardener, for the last two or three years and has been in the landscaping business for many more. Norm does all landscaping work and also brick pathways, rockeries, and as can be seen in my own backyard, stone pathways and terraces. So, when I was looking for tips on how to cleanup for spring, I immediately went to Norman, and this is what he suggests, and, after looking at my own garden I know that these work.

Dormant Pruning

The best time to prune your trees and shrubs is before the leaves and flowers appear. Your gardener should follow these guidelines of which limbs to prune:

Dead – Dead limbs and branches should be removed back to the point where the branch meets the limb of the tree or shrub. Removing dead limbs will make your trees safer as well as healthier, since insects will feed on the dead wood, and they often bring disease with them. **Damaged** – A damaged limb is soon to be a dead limb. Remove it before it becomes unsightly, dangerous, or a potential site of infestation and infection.

Diseased – A diseased limb is also usually soon to be a dead limb. Remove it. Pruning a diseased limb will assist in eradicating the disease. *(Continued on next page)*

Interfering – Most trees and ornamental shrubs can be pruned into something of a layered and neat structure. Any limbs that are crossing each other will cause future problems, so they should be removed. Proper shaping of ornamental shrubs can mostly be achieved through dormant pruning. Removing branches that cross each other or clutter the center of the shrub will increase air flow inside the plant structure, and therefore increase its health.

Shaping – The best time to shape your ornamental trees and shrubs is when they are dormant. Proper shaping will leave you with simple pruning throughout the summer to maintain its shape.

Lawn and Garden Cleanup

Debris that has collected over the winter should be raked from the lawn and garden areas. Dead perennial stocks left over from last year should be cut down.

Garden Preparation

Before the growing season is the most opportune time to add organic amendments to your shrub, flower, and vegetable gardens. Well-rotted compost or manure mixed in around the rooting zones will provide extra health and vigor to all your plantings this summer. A slow release chemical fertilizer can also be mixed in with the compost to provide even more lasting nutrients to your plant material.

Design and Consultation

Plan ahead if you intend to hire a landscape contractor this year. To receive a springtime slot for your construction project, it is best to book early.

A Room Outdoors

- Your lawn and garden can be an extension of your indoor living space. Think of ways that your landscaping concepts can match your own personal style.
- Landscaping your property is not an expense, it is an INVESTMENT with instant returns. Some studies have shown that landscaping can increase the resale value of your property by ten percent!!! (Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association)
- Plants do not depreciate in value; as they grow and mature they INCREASE in value, bringing you a lasting return on your investment.

To book your Spring pruning and cleanup, garden preparation, or design and consultation call NORM at (905)518-1877 or email itsyourgardener@yahoo.com

Some helpful links:

- [More information on Pruning trees and shrubs](#)
- [Composting tips and FAQs](#)
- theweathernetwork.com

Editorial

Is there any season that is yearned for quite as much as spring? As I write this, we are experiencing the tail end of a late winter storm... how disappointing for those of who were lulled into thinking that spring would make an early appearance after those "warm" days we experienced a couple of weeks ago. Mother Nature has played a nasty trick on us, and we didn't even get a snow day to console our winter weary soles!

Saturday, March 20 marks the official spring equinox, and, allegedly, spring weather should be quickly ushered in soon after. Yeah right. We'll see.

If you are as anxious for spring as I am, you'll enjoy this issue of Perspectives. It's chock full of tips on how to get both your body and your garden into shape for the warm months ahead. Marilyn McIntyre's profile of Lori Mesurier will help inspire you to get fit and Rickie Pattenden's Hidden Treasures piece offers tips on hiking through the trails around campus.

If you can't wait for the weather to warm up and there's no tropical vacation booked in your Corporate Time, check out the greenhouses next to Hamilton Hall as Rickie reports on her recent visit with Art Yeas, greenhouse technician.

For those of you who aren't interested in jumping around and getting sweaty for no good reason, you are not alone. Nancy Kolenski gives us a different perspective on fitness in the Health and Wellness column.

While you're reading this issue, why not ponder the thought of joining our editorial board? You don't need to be a published writer, or have any prior writing experience. We're looking for people who have a love for writing, and who are enthusiastic about working at McMaster. Join us!

And don't forget to tell your co-workers about Perspectives!

Victoria Miecznikowski
Chair, Perspectives Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank the Perspectives Editorial Board for providing me with the opportunity to express my thoughts on the topic of Workplace Wellness. As a breast cancer survivor I've realized the importance of personal health and well-being. I've also recognized that the support in my community and workplace played a significant role on my road to recovery. Through relationships with my colleagues and friends at McMaster I felt I was not alone.

Naturally I was overjoyed to be invited to join the McMaster Healthy Workplace Group. Now after less than a year in existence we are actively promoting employee health events. The goal of the Healthy Workplace Group is to build comprehensive workplace wellness programs and to promote the idea of employee wellness within the University community.

For the month of April, the McMaster Healthy Workplace Group will be encouraging all employees to participate in activities that promote Cancer Prevention month. The group has invited several community partners in cancer health to visit campus and speak with us on cancer prevention issues.

I encourage each of you attend a session and learn about cancer prevention and choices for healthier living. If you would like more information on the Healthy Workplace Group or on these events visit www.workingatmcmaster.ca/life

Yours Truly,
Linda Axford
University Planner

Employee Health & Wellness

Tips for Healthy Living

Fitness, Schmitness...

By Nancy Kolenski

The gentle spring rains begin to wash away the last mounds of grungy snow, crusty reminders of another winter gone by. The days are longer, and the need for protective clothing gone; a refreshing reminder that summer is just ahead.

We all feel the itch to have the warmth of the sun against our naked skin – and over the winter we seemed to have acquired a lot MORE of it! We have an extra roll that wasn't there before Jack's Frosty visit. So it's panic mode as we realize another New Year's resolution has gone bad, and that we've come close to being inducted into the "Couch Potato Club". But it's not too late to shift our mind sets, to convince ourselves that we like exercise, (which to me is like saying I love bamboo shoots shoved under my fingernails) and that we want to lose weight. "This will be the year I wear a bikini to the beach," becomes our mantra.

Personally, I think too much emphasis is put on our physical appearance to start with, and if you don't agree with me, try picking up a magazine and finding a cover model with a roll of fat. I believe that as long as you are happy with yourself, it's not necessary to risk falling off the diet wagon and getting hurt. I have tried so many diets; carbs only, no carbs, Atkin's, Scarsdale, Jarrod's method, even the dreaded cabbage soup diet – with embarrassing results.

If you enjoy exercising, I recommend you stop reading now before I transform myself into a sort of ranting Andy Rooney on the subject.

It isn't easy whipping oneself into shape. Fitness isn't for everyone. It's almost sadistic really. I mean why would anyone want to inflict pain on themselves? I don't understand why I should wake up muscles I didn't know I had.

I don't feel there is a good time of year for exercise either. During the winter months, I see any fitness program, be it skiing, snowshoeing, or igloo building, as purely excessive behaviour. There is no pleasure in donning boots, scarf, hat, coat, and gloves, only to resemble a stiff Pillsbury Dough boy. The dressing in itself is enough exercise in an already torturous season. You trudge through the snow, never able to feel the earth securely beneath your insulated boots because your so-called good neighbours have yet to shovel their bit of sidewalk. One block of this misery is equal to a mile of walking on a warm, sandy beach feeling the grains melt away under your feet. I think we deserve kudos for the simple fact we survive such bone-wrenching, cold temperatures and snow shoveling.

As for any physical activity other than lifting a drink to your lips, summer's too hot to do anything. You walk, run, and skate the scalding asphalt all in the name of a body you hope will be admired by others. You perspire without twitching a muscle. I say the only exercise one should partake in is a leisurely walk to and from the backyard sprinkler.

So what if spring is coming? I have decided that my end result may stick out a bit, and I may have the shape of Buddha, but as long as I am happy with that extra roll that appeared over the winter I will continue my daily stroll to the refrigerator and back for a snack. **For those of you who still wish to begin a fitness program but need some helpful hints, see the profile on Lori Mesurier, fitness trainer, for her **Top Ten Tips for getting into shape**.

Original Literature & Poetry

Pen Himalaya

By Marilyn McIntyre

I first heard from Mukul Dukal in late September of 2003. It was actually a rather strange thing to open my emails and find a 'fan note' from Nepal. Not a place I would have thought to find my poetry floating around. As a matter of fact, I'd put nothing on the web for the last couple of years. All writers have their droughts, and mine had lasted long enough to create its own desert.

Mukul had run across some work of mine that I had placed on a friend's website state side. Mukul expressed interest in using some of my poetry on his new ezine that he was designing. I was flattered, of course, and wrote back that he could certainly use some of my work, but that I hadn't written in quite some time. However, I went back into my files and sent him some poetry within the next few days. Now, I have my poetry sitting on a Nepalese web zine. It made me realize why we call it a web. Things certainly have a way of spreading themselves and leading to other places on the net.



A poetry reading in Nepal

I recently heard from Mukul again to tell me that his third issue of Pen Himalaya was now online. I love to see how it has already grown and how he has found his way in such a short time to spread his poetry, and his country's poetry to other websites.

We keep in touch and I have been learning much about Nepal over the last few months. I've been to the website and to the Nepal pages to familiarize myself with his world. He has in turn been to our University website, and also a friend's homepage here in Canada where he is trying as hard to understand our culture as I am his. For instance, I am sure that you are not aware that their calendar is based on the Vikram Era and their current year is 2060. They will celebrate a new year in Baisakh (April).

So if you can find the time, take a little web trip to Nepal, check out Mukul's site, and wish him a Happy New Year from Canada.

For a look at his site go to the [Pen Himalaya website](#)

Spring Time

spring time
fish dancing the merry widow
earth stars twinkle cross the pond
cats breathe in and out the blackness
fire hisses and spits at dawn
and still the music sings
the rhythm of the earth
her song of life
skipping across the universe and time
a flamenco, a square dance, a two step, a waltz
all in time, on time, to time,
time the rhythm
time the reason
time the rhyme
and time the dance.

Mac Facts

Spring Clean-Up

By Victoria Miecznikowski



The grounds in front of the Burke Science Building

Spring is officially here when Physical Plant commences its annual spring clean-up schedule. April is the time of year when the Grounds crew scours the campus landscape picking up wayward winter debris and preparing campus to look fresh and attractive.

To aid in this labour-intensive process, a turf sweeper is utilized, which is a type of landscape maintenance machine that acts like a giant vacuum cleaner. Affectionately known as "The Ladybug" because of its bright orange colour, the turf sweeper removes leaves, twigs and grass by sweeping them up into a large-capacity debris hopper. The mixture is then recycled as compost.

Most major pruning of trees will be done in the next few weeks and campus roadways will be tidied by removing dirt and salt. Flower and plant beds will be tilled around the beginning of May, with expected plantings to occur around the long weekend.

In addition to the 3,000 plants that fill over 20 flower beds, the Grounds crew annually adds new plantings of native perennials, shrubs, and trees to further enhance the campus landscape.

Retrospectives

McMaster Greenhouses—A Tropical Setting on Campus

By Rickie Pattenden

Tucked away between Hamilton Hall and the Old Refectory, on the north side of Scholar's Road, sits the McMaster greenhouses. Comprised of 5,000 square feet of glass and steel, the greenhouses host a touch of the tropics on the McMaster Campus.

Prior to 1968, the greenhouses were situated where the Tandem Accelerator presently stands. Neglected and in bad need of repair, the houses were relocated to their present site. For as long as the greenhouses have been nestled in their new locale on the northwest corner of central campus, Art Yeas has collected, grown and maintained the plant material necessary for teaching and research by the Department of Biology and Faculty of Science.



The northwest corner of the greenhouse

The greenhouses are used to cultivate a variety of tropical and sub-tropical plants from mosses to ferns. The greenhouses have had in cultivation, 91 plant families, 231 plant genera and 367 different species. All the plants in the greenhouse are used for the sole purpose of teaching and/or research.

"We have three ranges of low houses here," Art informed me on my recent tour. "The low houses (low light) are used for student projects. One high-house is used to grow tropical plants. My job is to collect, grow and maintain plant material in a fashion suitable for its eventual use in class or research."

Art guided me through "the link house" where new ferns find their roots, to the tropical "high house" where I was immediately basking in the warm, humid climate of the tropics. Art speaks of each specimen in the high house as one would speak of his own children. He points out the origins, the age, the characteristics of each sample of angiosperm, gymnosperm and cycad.

"This Araucaria is a fine example of a gymnosperm," Art explains, "plants there were numerous in the Mesozoic era." He points to an araucaria fern, a tropical conifer native to Australia. Its fronds scrape the roof panels of glass, and fiddleheads the size of dinner plates unfurl within its branches. "These plants provide excellent opportunity to study the plant life of that era." He points out plants that are over thirty years old, shows me examples of flowering and non-flowering plants, a hibiscus here, there a chocolate tree. Beyond the humid warmth of the high-house, on the other side of the panes of glass, winter seems little more than a Tricia Romance painting.



A view of the greenhouse's garden path

As well as professors and research projects using the facilities, students have many projects on the grow and Art estimates that some 1,300 students come and go through the greenhouses each year.

The greenhouses are open to the public and all are welcome to stroll in and chat with the staff. Art Yeas welcomes your questions about plant diseases, growing conditions, and will even offer you advice on local nurseries and greenhouses.

What's growing in the McMaster Greenhouses?

ANGIOSPERM

Angiosperms are flowering plants that produce seeds enclosed in fruit. They are the dominant type of plant today; there are over 250,000 species. Their flowers are used in reproduction. Angiosperms evolved 125 million years ago and became the dominant plants about 100 million years ago. Angiosperms are divided into monocots (like corn) and dicots (like beans).

GYMNOSPERM

Gymnosperms are seed-bearing plants that don't produce flowers. They release pollen into the air to the female ovule, causing fertilization. Their seeds develop without a protective covering. The earliest gymnosperms were seed ferns from the Devonian period (408-360 million years ago). Conifers (like pines, redwoods, and ginkgos), and cycads are gymnosperms.

CYCAD

Cycads are primitive seed plants that dominated the Jurassic period (cycads comprised 20% of the world flora). Cycads are palm-like trees that live in warm climates. Separate male and female plants exist. These gymnosperms have long, divided leaves and produce large cones.

LIVERWORT

Hidden Treasures

Happy Trails to You—Nature's Urban Sanctuary

By Rickie Pattenden



A view from the trails

Tired of looking at pavement and construction on campus? Need a quiet getaway in the middle of your work day? With the Spring, comes the longing to re-acquaint our-

There is a quiet corner of the campus that offers a midday getaway opportunity for some exercise and a commune with nature in the most tranquil of settings.

Follow Michel Crescent, northward, to the Zone 1 parking lot, and just behind Heddon Hall, step off the pavement into an Urban Sanctuary. A bright yellow sign marks the beginning of 30 kilometers of natural trails maintained by the Royal Botanical Gardens. The paths offer a comfortable workout of hills and valleys, and eventually wend down to Cootes Paradise, where one can observe a variety of waterfowl.

The trails provide a myriad of interests to please all the senses - from the tranquil quiet and the visual beauty to the study of botanical and natural wonders unique to the Niagara escarpment and golden horseshoe.

Take advantage of the seasons and experience nature as it unfolds before you. Spring is a flurry of nesting birds, budding trees and blossoming trilliums; Summer provides a canopy of green trees that gives a cool shelter from the hot sun. And of course, Fall puts on an unabashed and ostentatious show of colour.

If the winter blahs left you with a fever to get outdoors and add some activity to your day, pack a brown-bag lunch, throw in a comfortable pair of shoes and hit the trails at the north end of the campus. At a comfortable pace, walking downward, toward Cootes Paradise and back again, takes about one hour.