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# Epilogue

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## Editor's note

That episode of -30 C daytime temperatures in mid-January now seems like a distant memory, as the last days have been warm, the period of daylight is longer, and my amaryllis is sending up a bud. APE activities will soon be winding down, with only one more Lunch With ... event. In this issue I summarize the previous two Lunch With ... presentations; and there is an opinion piece by Gordon Rostoker, based on discussion at a meeting of the Current Affairs group. I should not have remarked upon only four names in the last In Memoriam box; in this issue, the box contains thirteen names. Lastly, the reprint of Keith Smillie's Mousing Around #70, concerning the disappearance over time of various University buildings, I deemed most timely, considering the demolition of parts of the old Dentistry-Pharmacy building, not to mention Alumni House at the northwest edge of campus.

*Ruth Gruhn*

## Notices

### **Last Winter term Lunch With... event**

#### **25 March:**

Martin Sharp, an Arctic specialist in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, will speak on observed modern changes in glaciers and ice caps, sea ice reduction, and general changes in climate and ocean systems in the Arctic.

All Lunch With ... events are held in the Papaschase Room upstairs at the University Club at 12 noon on a Wednesday. If you plan to attend, notify Emeritus House by phone or e-mail before the preceding Monday.

## Reports

### **Winter Term Lunch With ... presentations**

#### Lunch With... presentation on 22 January 2020

Stephanie Chamberland, of Family Medicine, spoke on a research project funded by the Alzheimer Society, to examine the circumstances of “unbefriended” lone old adults in long-term care institutions. These “elder orphans” have no family or friends to look after their interests. There is a provincial system of public guardians who are supposed to manage the affairs of incapable individuals, but all too often they have too heavy caseloads to be fully knowledgeable about the needs of each client. In interviews, Chamberland’s research team found that unbefriended old individuals in long-term care homes were often extremely socially isolated, with mental health issues, and limited financial resources, creating problems for the caregivers. There is an urgent necessity for more funding for complete long-term care of vulnerable individuals.

#### Lunch With.... presentation on 26 February 2020

Anne Bissonnette, Curator of the Clothing and Textile Collection, demonstrated how colour in fashion related to an individual’s social rank with a series of contemporary painting dated over the period extending from 1704 to 1820. Before chemical dyes were developed, dyes were obtained from plants (e.g., woad, indigo), animals (e.g., red from cochineal insects, purple from a Mediterranean mollusk), and minerals. The most expensive colours – red and purple – distinguished the rich and powerful. Chemical dyes became common by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Opinion Piece**

In early January, the Current Events Salon met at Emeritus House to discuss the problem of homelessness, which has had the attention of political leaders, particularly at the municipal level. Pretty well every proposed solution involves the creation of “affordable” housing, which is thought to be the only way to move people off the streets. However, there are reasons why the provision of affordable housing might only serve to make the problem worse. The introduction to the discussion in the Current Events Salon focused on why that might be.

The provision of more affordable housing has been the solution proposed by good-hearted people in the past, but it has not succeeded in solving the problem. Back in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this solution was tried in large U.S. cities, as those cities tried to revitalize their cores. The result was that, when the “affordable” housing was created, it was immediately filled. At the same time, every poor person in the region heard that “affordable” housing was available; and so they flooded into the city core, hoping to find a job and affordable accommodations. The result was more homeless people.

Jay Forrester, one of the most influential thinkers of our time, pointed out that this result was to be expected, based in the **Principle of Attractiveness**. In the context of present days cities, Forrester's argument was as follows. Let us suppose that we create the perfect city. Everyone has a home, and they have access to clean air and clean water. Everyone has a job that provides him or her with adequate income to live a pleasant life. That is the situation at time  $t = 0$ . Now start the clock. Everyone for miles around hears of this beautiful city, and decides they want to live there. So, they arrive in numbers, outpacing the number of available jobs and number of residences in which to live. Many end up on the streets, making the lives of the original inhabitants uncomfortable. Word does not travel fast to inform people that they may end up homeless in this famously beautiful city. They continue to arrive until the city is no longer beautiful; and people start to move away, looking for a more attractive place in which to live.

This development can happen on a larger scale. Take the state of California. In the 1960s, that state had a reputation for being a wonderful place to live. Americans flocked to the state until the wide-open spaces between Los Angeles and San Diego became cluttered with new cities (Anaheim, Irvine), and connected by freeways with several lanes in either direction. Eventually, some Californians gave up on their dream, sold their homes for a "pretty penny," and moved to the next most beautiful place – Colorado; and, specifically, Boulder, Colorado. With the substantial resources from the sale of their California homes, they bought up homes in Boulder to the point that the original Boulder inhabitants couldn't afford to live in Boulder. California license plates were not welcome in Boulder around the time of the backwash from California. Boulder, in effect, became less attractive.

With this in mind, how does one address the problem of homelessness? There are basically two classes of solutions:

Class 1: Don't let homeless people stay in the city.

This was the USSR solution, as it played out in Moscow and Leningrad. In Moscow, there was no shortage of policemen (with little red stars on their headgear). If they decided to stop you on the street, you had to show your permit to live in Moscow. If you did not have that permit, you were on a train out to the gulags before you could breathe! This solution works. We could walk around on the streets of Moscow in 1971 at any time of day and feel quite safe. On the other hand, you might say that people did not have the freedom of choice as to where they wanted to live. Quite true, but life is a trade off.

Class 2: Find homes for the homeless

This appears to be the solution aspired to in Canadian cities. However, it runs into two problems. Firstly, it costs money to erect low-cost housing. However, municipal budgets are already stretched; and it is hard to set aside money for what might be viewed as nonessentials. Secondly, where do you construct low-cost housing? Creating a "ghetto" doesn't work well, as one can see from the experience in North Toronto (Jane & Finch). Lots of crime and insecurity – because if the people who are provided with low cost housing still can't find jobs, and must live with financial insecurity day to day...well, you know what will happen.

If one doesn't build "ghettos", then one has to distribute the "affordable" units amongst the more affluent population. Well, we have seen how that works in Edmonton. As soon as an "affordable" housing development is proposed in an otherwise affluent neighbourhood, those affluent neighbours bond together to oppose the development – a perception that the safety of their families is at risk, and an anticipated decline of property values, represent their points of view. As often as not, the proposal fails. It would only succeed if it were forced on the neighbourhood by some form of re-zoning. Any politician who wants to be re-elected will be unlikely to take that kind of action.

Jay Forrester foresaw all those issues, and his solution was counterintuitive. Surely, the solution to homelessness is to build low-cost accommodations for those who are homeless! Forrester's approach was to accept that there will always be homeless people; and to make policy decisions at the municipal level that would optimize the quality of living in the city for its citizens. It works on the principle that, when it becomes unattractive for individuals who can't support themselves to move to your city because it is no more attractive than where they are, they won't come. Further, if the city in which they are homeless provides living conditions that are worse than other places to which they could go, they will move to one of those more attractive locations. In that way, the system is self-regulating. Although it may appear heartless to leave homeless people out on the streets, any alternative is likely to have poorer outcomes. The bottom line is that one shouldn't make one's city too attractive. This is the essence of the belief of Jay Forrester in his studies of the counterintuitive behaviour of social systems.

Looking at the scope of the problem, Edmonton has been home to an average of about 2000 people from 1999 to the present. [As a matter of interest, Vancouver – a much larger city – has had, on the average over the past 20 years, a homeless population about the same size as that of Edmonton.] The present Edmonton City Council is considering building up to 900 units of "affordable" housing, although they still struggle with the question of where to locate the units and who should pay for it. Jay Forrester would have advised against that approach, with the suggestion that, if they are built, many more people with limited resources will arrive in the city, hoping to get into some of those "affordable" units.

In the discussions that went on in the Current Events Salon, the main issue was our lack of knowledge about the individual circumstances of the homeless people. How many are from Edmonton, who have, for various reasons, found themselves without the resources to put a roof over their heads? How many have come from outside Edmonton, hoping to find a job and a home? How long has the individual been homeless in Edmonton? Because the homeless have found themselves in that position for a plethora of different reasons, no single solution is likely to get rid of the problem of homelessness. Human empathy, enabled by many volunteers and significant donations, can provide temporary assistance for the homeless in terms of food banks and shelter from dangerous weather. However, one should not count on ever being able to live in a city without homeless people (unless one takes the USSR solution of restricting where one is permitted to live).

*Gordon Rostoker*

## In Memoriam

<b>Doug Craig</b>	Biological Sciences
<b>Brian Dunford</b>	Chemistry
<b>Rod Gooding</b>	Biological Sciences
<b>Bruce Hettinger</b>	Music
<b>Edward Jackson</b>	Earth and Atmospheric Sciences
<b>Jean MacIntyre</b>	English
<b>Marvin Nyborg</b>	Soil Science
<b>Jim Pearson</b>	Medicine
<b>Milton Petruk</b>	Education
<b>Bill Preshing</b>	Business
<b>Wally Samiroden</b>	Secondary Education
<b>Reg Trollope</b>	Mathematics
<b>Noel Williams</b>	Medicine

## Mousing Around

*Keith Smillie*

### 70. Some U of A Buildings

This column of Mousing Around was suggested by a two-page article "Touring U Alberta" in the *Gateway* a year or so ago, giving very brief descriptions of some of the buildings on the North Campus set against a background of stylized depictions of the buildings.

I think any discussion of University of Alberta buildings should have some mention of Athabasca Hall, Assiniboia Hall, and Pembina Hall, which were opened in 1911, 1912, and 1914, respectively, (The present St. Stephen's College was opened in 1910 as Alberta College South, making Athabasca Hall the first *university* building on the campus.) Plans in the mid-1970s to demolish all three buildings and replace them with a graduate residence and social centre fortunately met with such fierce opposition that the

plans were abandoned. Now the buildings are occupied by several academic departments; and Athabasca Hall has a Computing Science Centre completed in 2001, which has been very tastefully adjoined to the older building.

The Universiade Pavilion was built for the World University Games which the University hosted in 1983. The exterior was supposed to be covered with green and gold tiles; but unfortunately there were no green tiles in the shipment of tiles; and since there was not time to order them, only yellow tiles could be used; and the building became known as the Butterdome.

When the Civil Engineering Building, now the South Academic Building, was first opened, there were no women's washrooms, since it was assumed that women would not be enrolling in Engineering. Of course women did enroll, and men's and women's washrooms were designated on alternate floors. An even worse situation arose when the Earth Sciences Building was being renovated in stages. At one stage, it was found out too late that the section then being renovated contained the only washrooms in the building; and portable washrooms had to be set up near the building.

For many years the Tory Building was the tallest building on campus. Now this honour goes to the recently opened Innovative Centre for Engineering Facility (ICEF), which is 65 metres (approximately 213 feet) high. This building occupies the space between the Chemical and Materials Engineering Building and the Windsor Parkade – it has been referred to as an “infill building” – and at times casts an unwelcome shadow on some of the properties on the west side of 116 Street.

The Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Science (CCIS) was opened in 2011 at the north end of the Quad, replacing the Physical Sciences Centre. It houses the Department of Physics, several interdisciplinary research groups, specialized research groups, lecture rooms, and the offices of the Faculty of Science. The West Atrium has a scale model of the solar system that depicts the relative positions of the planets on September 20, 1908. The cost of CCIS was 250 million dollars, while the cost of the Physical Sciences Centre that was opened in 1961 was 7.6 million dollars, with just under another million for equipment. The opening of CCIS was marked with some ceremony, and the presence of several dignitaries including the Premier of Alberta. Even the demolition of the Physical Sciences Centre (except for the Department of Chemistry) did not go unnoticed. On a lovely summer's day the Dean of Science hosted a noon-hour barbecue in the Quad. It was attended by faculty, staff, and students, many of whom were undoubtedly celebrating the end of the V-Wing and its lecture rooms.

Unlike the Physical Sciences Centre, buildings on the campus may be torn down without any fanfare. We shall conclude this column with a brief discussion of one such building, the Arts Building Annex.

During the first two years of the Second World War, the Alberta Research Council had been using the laboratories in the Department of Mining to perform the testing of aviation fuel. When this space was required for student use in 1941, the provincial government received permission to build at their expense a testing facility on the campus. Construction began immediately on a two-story brick building approximately eighteen feet by forty feet to the immediate north and west of the Arts Building. Minutes of the Board of Governors give a cost of \$12 671.24, with an additional \$3987.17 for equipment. The building was known informally as the "Gas Lab," and was used for testing purposes until the Alberta Research Council laboratories were built on the campus in 1954. After this time the building became known as the Arts Building Annex, and was used for a variety of purposes. One day in the summer of 1986 a colleague noticed that the building was being demolished. We were able to reuse a few of the bricks, one of which I have in my study at home. Apart from the Board of Governors minutes, no record of the Arts Building Annex appears to exist even in the University Archives.