



ARTS

edition



Faculty of Arts: In the Spotlight

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DEAN'S MESSAGE

Faculty of Arts Newsletter

Spring 2008

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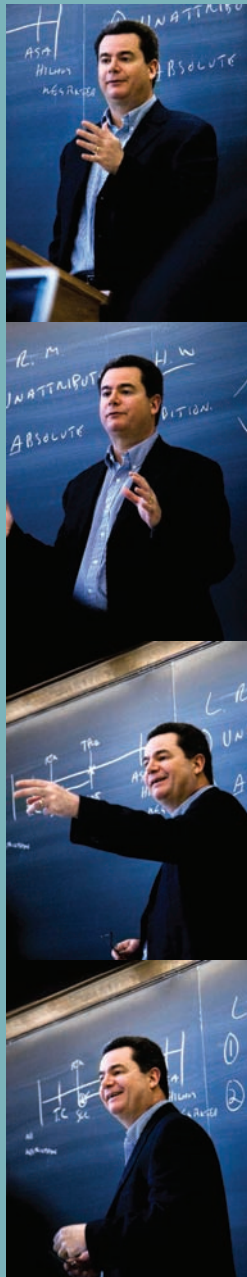
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Cover: Melissa Trottier, U2 Arts,
works on a costume used in a
recent production of *The Taming of
the Shrew*.



Dean Manfredi teaching his political science course "The Canadian Constitution: Rights and Liberties" in the Winter 2008 semester.

Dear Alumni and Friends,

In the Faculty of Arts at McGill University, we are strongly committed to nurturing a learning environment in which students are offered an exceptional educational experience, enabling them to reach their full potential. This is a place in which research and enquiry flourish in a culture of innovation and excellence, and in which diversity and the exchange of ideas are cherished in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding.

We are at a special moment in the life of our great Faculty—a moment full of promise, talent and quality. As you can see from our spring issue of *In Focus*, there is lots to look forward to in 2008!

With the Women and Development Symposium drawing an impressive line-up of noted women politicians and policy-makers, this event is a pioneering and multi-disciplinary initiative that is sure to be a success. Our McGill alum are also making news around the globe and sharing their achievements with the growing Arts community. Most notably, Peter Cundill, BCom'60, has chosen to recognize and promote literary and academic achievement in the area of history by establishing the Cundill International Prize and Lecture in History. This is one of the largest non-fiction prizes in the world and the Faculty of Arts at McGill University will play a profound role in its promotion.

With these and other events taking place at McGill, the coming year promises to support the cultivation of new generations of scholars, citizens and educators committed to driving public engagement and innovation in the Faculty of Arts.

McGill's motto "Grandescunt Aucta Labore"—translates to: "by hard work, all things increase and grow." This vision has been made even more possible with the support of our cherished alumni and friends.

Christopher P. Manfredi
Professor and Dean

Women and Development Symposium Highlights Exciting Changes in Faculty of Arts and Around the World



“ALL OF THE EMPIRICAL studies in the last 20 years have shown that women are essential to successful development work,” says Professor Philip Oxhorn, Director of McGill’s Centre for Developing-Area Studies (CDAS). But he says



jobs and education must be provided strategically, since women and girls who have to travel long distances alone can find themselves in perilous situations. “If you see women as the means towards other ends, and ignore the complexities of their role in society, it may end up being counterproductive.”

These issues are at the heart of the upcoming Women and Development Symposium that is being held by the CDAS in conjunction with the McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women (MCRTW). The one-day symposium held on April 17, 2008, at McGill’s Faculty Club, will bring together academics, professionals, students and politicians for a broad-ranging discussion on the challenges and hopes for women in the developing world. “We are interested not just in how women are affected by development issues, but in how they can take leadership roles,” says Professor Marguerite Deslauriers, Director of the MCRTW. This is reflected in the list of invited speakers, a lineup that includes Clare Beckton, Coordinator at Status of Women Canada, Mari Simonen, the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and a representative from Camfed, an international organization dedicated to eradicating poverty in Africa through the education of girls and the empowerment of young women.

The symposium provides an opportunity for McGill’s Faculty of Arts to celebrate the synergies between the CDAS and the MCRTW, which are both in the process of academic and intellectual transformation. Each Centre hopes to start the transition to a teaching institute by the end of the academic year, to provide a home for the growing student body in international development studies (there are currently 837 students with a major or minor in IDS), and a meeting ground at McGill for feminism, women’s studies, gender studies, sexual diversity studies and queer studies.

Professors Deslauriers and Oxhorn both stress the importance of the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of the symposium. Feminist work is becoming more integrated into various disciplines, explains Deslauriers, and the symposium gives the MCRTW an opportunity to develop an interdisciplinary research axis that can in turn become a model for other areas of collaborative study.

For his part, Oxhorn feels that the symposium reflects the goals of the CDAS. “We are building a bridge between policymakers, the university and the private sector,” he says. “We want to tell the world that this is how we’re doing development studies at McGill.” He pauses and indicates a poster on his office wall that reads: *Breaking Down Walls: new directions in development studies*.

“That’s what we’re doing,” he says, nodding. “Breaking down walls.”



McGill Centre
for Research
and Teaching
on Women

Centre de recherche
et d’enseignement
sur les femmes
de McGill



IN HIS FAMOUS soliloquy, the great playwright William Shakespeare wrote that “all the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.” It is one of Shakespeare’s most oft-quoted passages and one that Corinne Deeley takes to heart.

As theatre production manager at McGill’s Moyses Hall, Deeley insists that all students who walk through these doors are provided with the necessary tools and experience to take on any real-world situation.

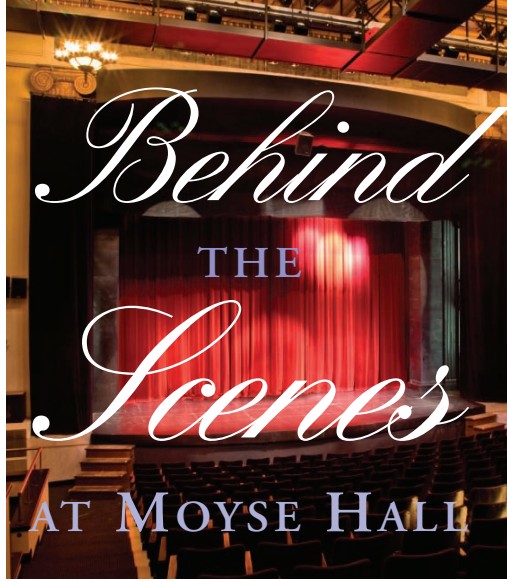
“I always say that anyone who works in theatre can go work at IBM tomorrow,” says Deeley, who graduated from the National Theatre School in Montreal before arriving at McGill in 2002. “Theatre is a business – there are unions, rules, time management, money – all important life skills.”

The lessons learned here can be put to use after graduation, whether the students intend to pursue a career in theatre or not.

“We had one student who went into the Peace Corps and wanted a referral from us,” recalls Deeley. “What she learned here – dealing with people, time and stress management – made her an ideal candidate.”

Situated in the Arts Building, at the very heart of McGill University geographically and symbolically, Moyses Hall is a 306-seat traditional proscenium-stage theatre.

Named a historical site by the Montreal Historical Society, Moyses Hall is indeed a theatre with history. In 1925, when the Arts Building underwent extensive interior renovation and expansion, a gift from Lord Atholstan allowed for the construction of the Hall in honour of the long-time Dean of Arts, Charles E. Moyses. The illustrious theatre features a large stage equipped with a fully-functioning fly house, a sophisticated light and sound system, a backstage set-building workshop and a separate costume shop below it. Adorning the ceilings of the theatre are 10 elegant bronze chandeliers and colourful bas-reliefs, making a dramatic impression on all its visitors.



CLAUDIO CALLIGARIS

The venue’s mix of aesthetics and functionality ensure it is solidly booked with classes, student productions and rentals throughout the year. “Including Saturdays and Sundays,” adds Deeley, confirming that last year the theatre was booked for 320 days. Moyses Hall is both a lecture hall and rental facility, and sees students from the English department’s Drama and Theatre program sharing the space with local companies from Just for Laughs, the Centaur Theatre and the Segal Centre for Performing Arts, who often rent the Hall for stage rehearsals and use its well-equipped workshop to build sets in the

summer months. Over the past year, the Hall has also hosted the CanWest CanSpell National Spelling Bee, numerous film viewings and CBC lectures.

“You can have an intimate theatre production or a huge Broadway play and the next day five-year-olds in tutus,” says Deeley. “A lot of that is due to the staff – it’s not just the space but the people.”

One of those people is Keith Roche, Moyses Hall’s technical director for over a decade. Like Deeley, Roche graduated from the National Theatre School of Canada, and together they teach a course in the Department of English that introduces students to lighting, sound, stage management and set and prop construction.

Roche takes great pride in the popularity of Moyses Hall, but says the theatre is beginning to show some wear and tear. “The seats and carpets are torn,” he says, explaining that the last renovations were done 16 years ago. Like most theatres, Moyses runs on a modest operating budget, which has become increasingly difficult to maintain. “Whenever you do need to fix something here, it’s never cheap.” With new developments in technology, much of the current equipment is woefully out of date and must be replaced.

And as Deeley points out, the people most affected are the students.

“It’s like asking a student to go to class with the same pencil year after year.”

But the students see beyond the imperfections and embrace the program. “It’s been incredible and very hands-on,” says Eric Weiss, a U3 student majoring in Sociology and Drama. “It’s not like anything else here and we have fun doing it. It’s very rewarding.”



OWEN EGAN

Phil Li-Wei Chen in *The Merchant of Venice*.



Maria Forti, U2 Arts, works on a costume used in a recent production of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

CLAUDIO CALLIGARIS



From left: students in the Drama and Theatre program’s Costume Design class learn sewing, draping and tailoring skills; bas reliefs and chandeliers adorn the ceiling of Moyses Hall; a student puts the finishing touches on a costume.

Catch Him If You Can

Michel Shane, BA'80

MICHEL SHANE KNOWS a good story when he reads one; sometimes it just takes others a little while longer. Try twelve years longer.

In 1990, Shane stumbled upon Frank Abagnale Jr.'s book *Catch Me If You Can*, the autobiographical tale of Abagnale's five years as one of the world's most skilled – and wanted – cheque fraud artists. By the tender age of 21, he had cashed \$2.5-million worth of fraudulent cheques in every U.S. state and 27 countries, and successfully posed as an airline pilot, an attorney, a college professor and a pediatrician. Shane, a Montreal native and McGill Arts alumnus, had high hopes the story could be box office gold – if it fell into the right hands. Little did he know, the book's journey to the big screen would take almost as many twists and turns as Abagnale's criminal career.



Michel Shane at Cinecittà, a studio in Rome.

"People just didn't believe the story," recalls Shane, speaking from Malibu, where he now resides with wife Ellen, BCom'80 and children Gerri, 18, Leigh, 15, and Emily, 11. Shane, who at the time was enjoying a very successful career in the Quebec film and television distribution business, approached countless studios. In 2002, his perseverance and patience finally paid off and the film, directed by Steven Spielberg, was nominated for two Academy Awards and received critical acclaim around the globe. Since then, Shane has produced several box office hits including *I, Robot*, starring Will Smith, and has many more films in the works.

So how does Shane know when he's found a script worth fighting for? "You don't," he says matter-of-factly. "It's like when you go to a movie with 10 people and each one has a different opinion. I have to be passionate about the project because everything takes a minimum of three to four years."

Shane credits the development of his instincts and judgment on his experience studying English at McGill. "It really moulded me," he says. "I found the teachers at McGill helped you visualize and encouraged a way of thinking and analyzing that I still use to this day."

In his first year, Shane remembers his determination to get into a third-year class taught by Laurier LaPierre, the celebrated host of CBC's *This Hour Has Seven Days* who went on to be chairman of Telefilm Canada, a Canadian senator and an Officer of the Order of Canada. "I was just a kid, and everyone else was graduating," says Shane. "But it was one of the most amazing classes." LaPierre left a lasting impression on him, and in recent years the producer has forged strong ties with Telefilm Canada. Recently, Shane started a new partnership with the cinema-funding giant, making his visits to its Montreal head offices more frequent – which suits him just fine. "I miss Montreal all the time," he confesses. "It's like Europe, but with North American efficiency." And with his eldest daughter Gerri having applied to McGill for next fall, he'll have even more reason to use his frequent flyer miles.

As Shane explains, his career often sees him juggling several projects at once, and these days he is working on a film that documents the Buddha's life story. "It will be a studio-style Hollywood film and one of the biggest-budgeted films ever made in India," says Shane of the script written by Academy Award-winner David Ward. "We have gotten the blessing of the Dalai Lama, whom I had an opportunity to meet a number of times to discuss the film and his ideas – what an amazing time that was."

When Shane is not working on a new project, he finds time to share his expertise, teaching film financing to students at UCLA and giving lectures at film schools around the world. "Being a producer has opened doors and allowed a small-town boy from Montreal to go places and meet people that I could never have imagined ever knowing."



Ellen Shane, BCom'80 and Michel Shane, BA'80 with the Dalai Lama.

TUESDAY NIGHT CAFÉ CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

In a small room no larger than a broom closet, colourful posters of past theatre productions adorn every inch of wall space. Four students have packed into this tiny office in Morrice Hall on the main campus of McGill University to discuss the rich history behind Tuesday Night Café, the student-run theatre company affiliated with the Department of English.

"Tuesday Night Café began in 1978, so this is our 30-year anniversary," says U3 Communications and English Literature student Vanessa Sherry, who volunteers as the group's external publicity director. For the last three decades, dedicated student volunteers like Sherry have helped showcase plays directed and performed by McGill students. Once a year, the group draws stu-

dents from all disciplines to its pièce de résistance known as ARTifact, a week-long festival honouring "all things artistic."

"ARTifact is a festival celebrating talent," says Katie McMillan, a U3 Drama and Theatre student who is helping coordinate this year's event. "It's art, photography, interpretative dance shows and a 24-hour playwriting competition – it's a great outlet for students."

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

WHEN STEPHEN COUGHLIN sat down at his computer one night last semester, he anticipated a long paper-writing session. But while sifting through his e-mails, he was surprised by something else in his inbox: a letter from the Scholarships and Student Aid Office informing him that he had been awarded the prestigious Charles E. Fremes Memorial Scholarship. Unsurprisingly, Coughlin says, it was “hard to write a paper that night!”

The scholarship was established in 2007 in memory of Charles E. Fremes, BA'69, a former Chief Executive Officer of Edelman Public Relations Canada. Awarded by the Faculty of Arts Scholarships Committee on the recommendation of the Department of English and the Department of Art History and Communication Studies, it is given to an undergraduate student entering the final year of a BA program who has shown leadership and achievement in both English and Communication Studies.

Now in his third year at McGill, Coughlin says he was very flattered by the award. “It was quite an honour,” says the English major. A Montrealer, Coughlin says he was inspired to study English when he read William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* in the 10th grade. “I’ve read it six times,” he adds sheepishly. At the time, Coughlin says he aspired to be a writer and in his spare time wrote poetry – though often “unsuccessfully,” he admits.

Today Coughlin says he is more interested in learning about critical theory in communication studies. After taking a course on this subject taught by Professor Darin Barney, the Canada Research Chair in Technology and Citizenship, he’d like to pursue this field further. “It was the most engaging class,” he says. “He was genuinely interested in what everyone had to say and very excited about the material. If I were a professor, I would hope my students would hold me in the same esteem we hold for him.”



Stephen Coughlin

“Charles was an extraordinary human being, one of those people who could have a conversation about the Middle East one minute, tell you all the Latin names of plants and have a conversation about young people and trends. He was a phenomenal individual and we wanted to commemorate him because the notion of inquiry was a big part of who he was all about. He was a mentor to many people and fortunately, I was one of them.”

FREDA L. COLBOURNE, CEO, EDELMAN CANADA



James Wright

James Wright Memorial Scholarship

Mrs. Mary K. Wemp, BA'68, recently established the James Wright Memorial Scholarship in honour of her brother, Jim Wright, BA'65, who died last year in an accident. Jim had a long and warm relationship with McGill. He wore many hats during his time at the University as a highly dedicated governor of McGill's Board of Governors, a director and officer of the Graduate Society, chair of the *McGill News* advisory board and most notably director of the McGill-affiliated Sauvé Scholars program and governor emeritus of the Board.

The Scholarship, awarded on the basis of academic merit and community involvement, will recognize students entering full-time undergraduate degree programs in the Faculty of Arts while paying tribute to this extraordinary man. For inquiries or to donate, please contact Matthew Goldberg at matthew.goldberg@mcgill.ca or at 514-398-5054.

Gifts can also be made online at www.alumni.mcgill.ca/online-giving

Faculty of Arts by the numbers: Did you know?

270 tenured or tenure-track scholars.

A School of Social Work, **18** academic departments, **20** interdisciplinary programs and **9** centres and institutes, all housed in **25** buildings across campus.

6,232 undergraduates, **889** graduate students and **26** post-doc fellows.

110,000 volumes in the Islamic Studies Library, making it the largest North American collection of Islamic Studies material contained in a single location.

Over **150** new faculty members since 2002.

500 Arts students from **16** departments and programs interned in **153** organizations in **31** countries on **4** continents since the Faculty of Arts Internship Program was established in 2002.

Cundill International Prize and Lecture in History at McGill University

IN A FITTING turn of events, a McGill alum who chose to advance the field of history has ended up making some of his own.

The Cundill Foundation, led by Peter Cundill, BCom'60, will recognize and promote literary and academic achievement in the area of history, by establishing the largest non-fiction historical literature prize in the world, to an author whose work has had a profound literary, social and academic impact on the field.

The Cundill International Prize and Lecture in History stands out from the crowd of literary prizes by its international scope and generous monetary value. Each year, beginning in November 2008 and ending in 2012, McGill University will grant a first prize of \$75,000 and two second prizes of \$10,000 each. The Cundill Foundation announced that the recipients will be selected by an independent jury composed of "at least five internationally distinguished and qualified individuals."

"I was surprised to learn there were no major prizes in history," says Cundill, reached by phone at the London offices of his global investment management firm, the Cundill Group. Cundill explains his affinity to history: "I'm an investment researcher of

finance and I think there's an analogy between the two disciplines – both study the past to understand the present and predict the future."

Cundill says he was particularly inspired by Sir John Templeton, a

fellow financial investor and philanthropist, and creator of the £800,000 (\$1.6-million) Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries About Spiritual Realities. "He was a mentor of mine," he says. Last year, McGill philosophy professor emeritus Charles Taylor, BA'52, was the first Canadian to receive the prize, in recognition of his status as one of the most profound thinkers of our time on spirituality and secularism.

Cundill says Michael Meighen, BA'60 – a Canadian senator, Campaign McGill co-chair and childhood friend of Cundill's – was also instrumental in the prize's creation.

"This shines a spotlight on the field, which is very gratifying," says Senator Meighen, who asserts his friend has always been a "voracious reader and very interested" in history. He also jokes that Cundill may have had another motive. "He took a history course at McGill and from what I recall, he didn't do very well in it – maybe this is his way of coming to terms with it."



Once a year, Cundill challenges himself to try something new and to this end has tried such sports as parachuting, hang-gliding, bungee jumping, fire-walking and trekking in Nepal.

QUICK FACTS ON THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Undergraduate students: **785** MA students: **21** PhD candidates: **35 (5 new)** Courses offered: **126**

DIGGING IN THE DIRT

What do Annual Donations and Elephant Bones have in Common?

“Do not touch nor come anywhere near!”, reads a sign attached to a large horned skull, sitting precariously in the basement of Peterson Hall with one horn immersed in a bucket of water. The skull belongs to a watusi – a breed of cattle common in Africa – and was excavated in the fall of 2007 by a group of McGill anthropology students excavating the grounds of Parc Safari, a zoological theme park near Hemmingford, Quebec.

The students were not looking for a watusi. They were looking for the bones of Majeska, a six-and-a-half ton, 11-foot tall African elephant who also went by the name of Magic. The search for Magic began with a phone call from Parc Safari to McGill anthropology professor André Costopolous. The zoo had the idea of using some of its animal skeletons in educational displays and they wanted Costopolous’s help digging up the bones. Chief on their list were Magic the elephant and a rhinoceros known as Alice. Costopolous agreed, and the 17 undergraduate students enrolled in his archeology field studies course suddenly found themselves wielding shovels and wading through mud in Parc Safari’s burial grounds.

“We started putting in test pits,” says master’s student Chris Ames, who has been mapping out the dig with Dr. Costopolous. “Every time we lifted a shovel or trowel, we found something – but no elephant.” The students eventually did locate Magic, but not before they had stumbled on the watusi’s bones. The watusi, unlike the (still-decomposing) elephant and rhinoceros, was ready to be dug up. The students went to work.

“It’s a really unique opportunity for students,” says Ames. “It opens up doors. Once you have experience it’s easy to get back into the field.” He adds that the project wouldn’t have been possible without the Dean of



Arts Development Fund (DADF), which helped pay for equipment and transportation. In addition to funding conferences, graduate student teaching awards, undergraduate research assistantships and other academic initiatives, the DADF supports singular ventures such as the Parc Safari dig.

This semester, the same undergraduates who dug up the watusi are reconstructing its skeleton under the tutelage of Susan Lofthouse, a PhD student in zooarchaeology and a specialist in bone identification. While the watusi’s horns are soaking, the rest of its bones are spread out on a table in a nearby room, in various stages of the cleaning process. While

not all of the feet are present and accounted for, the students have a pretty complete skeleton – enough for a display model. The reconstructed watusi will be exhibited at McGill’s Redpath Museum before moving to its permanent home at Parc Safari.

As for Magic, the dig is set to continue in the spring and Dr. Costopolous and his students look forward to finally unearthing the elephant’s bones.



To learn more about the excavations at Parc Safari, visit <http://excavationsatparcsafari.googlepages.com/>

To learn more about the DADF, visit www.mcgill.ca/arts/alumni/fund/