

SPECTRUM

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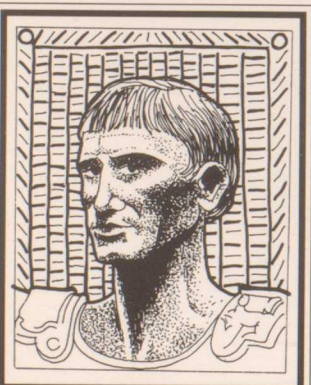


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SPECTRUM FEATURE



Report on the disabled

You'll recognize many of the faces you see on the previous page.

But what you won't know about most of these celebrated people until you turn through these pages is that they all achieved extraordinary heights—even though each one had to overcome a disability.

There are over 700 disabled students and employees at VCC. Their disabilities range from blindness and deafness to those who aren't able to hold a pencil. VCC has led the way in advanced education in B.C. when it comes to serving the disabled. As one instructor at the college puts it: "The disabled like VCC."

There are more doors yet to be opened for the disabled and as you'll learn through the following articles, VCC has just the people to open them.

—Chuck Poulsen

For disabled, walls come tumbling down

While most of us see disabilities as problems, VCC's Special Needs Department looks beyond, to the solutions.

"In the six years I've been here, I can't think of any problems facing students with disabilities which we would have been unable to solve given appropriate resources," said Terry Reid, VCC's Special Needs Co-ordinator.

Things are changing for disabled people. Fast.

Ten years ago it was not unusual to find a majority of people in wheelchairs living in institutions or homes for the elderly. The blind and deaf were often shut out of the mainstream, often including advanced education. Then along came Terry Fox, Steve Fonyo and—perhaps most significantly—Rick Hansen. The grey walls started to crumble.

"The value of what Terry Fox and Rick Hansen did went far beyond the money that was raised," said Reid. "A lot of the barriers that the disabled always thought would stop them suddenly appeared surmountable. They began saying, 'If Rick Hansen can wheel himself around the world, then I can wheel myself down the block to the college.' The disabled no longer accept being shunted off."

There are some obvious barriers to employment for the disabled: a blind person will never be a surgeon—although a visually impaired student in Winnipeg is now studying medicine and will likely end up working in medical



Special Needs Co-ordinator Terry Reid.

to come up with an accommodation which allowed that person to do it."

"You never know what a person is capable of doing with the education he or she receives...we're finding out all the time now that the disabled can do much more than we had thought."

New passages to success are being pioneered...by an auto mechanic in the U.S. who is blind, by a blind woman who graduated with a BA in nursing even though she initially had been refused entry into the program, and by a blind student at KEC who will be studying massage therapy. In fact, VCC had been a leader in breaking ground for the handicapped. What resistance there has been toward the handicapped at VCC, says Reid, has been surpris-

ingly minimal and well meaning, if not legitimate.

A case in point is a blind student who wanted to attend the Social Services Worker Program at Langara, only to stumble over the requirement that she have a driver's licence.

Says Reid: "She was able to enter the program because we were able to convince those involved that she could do the job just as well simply by taking the bus or cabs. Opposition to the disabled in a program usually exists because people don't realize how much the disabled student is able to accomplish, and also because of a fear that it



Ernest Hemingway
Writer
Learning Disability

IEPA often last chance for education

For students with learning disabilities, coping with the school system can be a hopeless struggle that ends in surrender.

No data is available on the exact number of students who are unable to complete high school due to learning disabilities. But every year, an average of 60 students go through the Individualized Education Program for Adults (IEPA) at KEC, with an average of 20 on a wait-list.

IEPA is a service for "persons with deficits in areas of memory, reasoning, writing, reading and spelling, severely inhibiting performance expected in classroom situations". Introduced in 1978, the program was the first in Canada and remains the only one of its kind in the Lower Mainland.

To be accepted, students must have been assessed as learning disabled by the school board, a psychiatrist, a learning specialist or referred for testing by the campus special needs counsellor or instructors. The majority of KEC instructors, by virtue of their training and experience working with learning disabled students, are adept at recognizing the telling traits. If an instructor observes that a student cannot achieve average skills, or appears to have higher potential than performance, a referral for testing will be considered.

A committee of representatives from IEPA, ESL, the humanities, basic education, mathematics, counselling and basic training for skills development, assesses the individual and makes recommendations for testing of his/her hearing and visual comprehension, memory, intelligence, and academic and perceptual processes.

Malcolm Cant, Learning Diagnostician and Co-ordinator of the program

says, "Assessments are in-depth because we feel this is the student's last chance for educational upgrading. From the assessment, we are able to work out remedial tutoring, as well as recommend to instructors the best way to teach and adapt to the student in a classroom setting".

Students are grouped into three categories - mild, moderate and severe.



IEPA Co-ordinator Malcolm Cant...individualized help given by Tutors Nancy Barr (right) and Anne Parsons

study skills to complement the procedure.

The program looks at the total person.

"Learning disabled persons have low self-esteem, low confidence levels and are easily frustrated," says Cant. "We work closely with counsellors on the personal and vocational aspects of students' lives and help build their self-esteem. Students learn strategies to utilize their strengths to further their education in vocational or post-secondary programs and leave with tools to use the rest of their lives."

Cant has been with IEPA for thirteen years and operates the program with tutors Nancy Barr and Anne Parsons.

Fifty percent of graduates from IEPA enter the workforce and some go on to University.

Social stigmas attached to people with learning disabilities are slowly changing through public education. For instance, it is becoming widely recognized that people with learning disabilities are often of average or above average intelligence.

Then why do they find learning so difficult? They have problems transferring information from one situation to another, distinguishing what is important in what they hear and read, or identifying the association between sounds and letters.

Their problems are unique, but by no means insurmountable. Shift your eyes just two inches to the left and you'll see what we mean.



Alexander Graham Bell
Inventor
Learning disability

Hume probes for the possibilities

In a quiet corner of a quiet hallway in City Centre's Dunsmuir Tower sits the Vocational Assessment Centre. It's a relatively new addition to the college and few people know either where or what it is.

"What I do," explains Don Hume, the centre's coordinator, "is to assess a person and then determine whether there are courses in this college or other community colleges which that person could access."

Hume, and part-time centre instructor Leslie Williams, are the only staff at the centre. Both conduct tests that measure the vocational and educational aptitudes of current and would-be students.

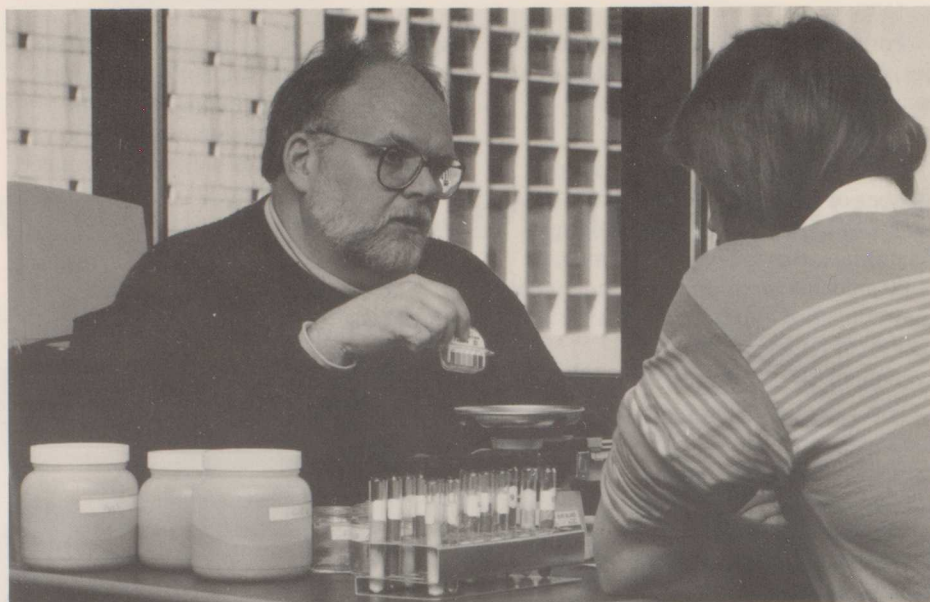
VCC and Selkirk College are the only two colleges in the province with such facilities. The VCC centre has come a long way in one year of operation, says Hume, but admits he hopes to make people both inside and outside the college more aware of who he is and what he does.

Hume is a jovial sort, and instantly likeable. He has the background and skills for this job. He knows sign language, having previously worked eight years with the hearing impaired. He followed that by working with the disabled in a provincial government job.

In a cabinet at the back of the classroom, are his toys. There are test sheets, questionnaires and numerous boxes containing tools for manual dexterity tasks, such as sorting matchbooks or piecing together a lock.

Through these seemingly simple, but revealing tests, Hume pinpoints the capabilities of the people who are referred to the centre. These people have at least one thing in common: their place in the educational system and work world is not easily found. Some have physical disabilities; injured people who are looking for a new, suitable means of employment. Many have mental health problems that necessitate finding a new job with a lesser degree of stress. Some are people whose mental and physical abilities are simply unknown.

"We don't do psychological assessments," stresses Hume. "We don't



Assessment Centre Co-ordinator Don Hume measures up the students' total potential.

define a learning disability or a neurological or psychiatric problem. All we look at are their functional abilities."

Hume works closely with the college's counselling department, particularly with Special Needs Counsellor Wayne Avery, who directs would-be students to Hume for assessment.

The centre also gets referrals from various outside organizations.

A complete vocational assessment takes four days. The results reveal much more than might be expected. "It's more than just putting a lock together," explains Hume. "It's how you attend to a task. Although people think they are just putting a lock together, they are being tested on a series of different aptitudes."

He also looks at other considerations, such as interest and temperament. Says Hume: "If someone didn't enjoy doing

things that were mundane, I would automatically exclude that person from repetitious work, even though he or she might have scored very high."

Hume says that assessing temperament—such as a bad temper—is done purely by observation. However, he is careful not to include value judgements in his assessment. Ideally he hopes to strike a balance between what the person wants to do and what they can do.

Often just the testing itself serves as an impetus. Hume tells of testing a woman with a psychiatric disability. "She's a very bright woman and she did well on everything. She was very surprised and excited by how well she did. The test results motivated her to go back to work."

However, sometimes the report shuts the doors to VCC for some who would like to get in. "There has been a number of people for whom programs here were not possible," says Hume. "What we attempt to do is find alternatives."

For the centre, victories come in small steps. Says Hume: "You don't have major success stories; you're training for entry level work for the most part. But when you see somebody who is succeeding and proud of what they are doing—that's the good news."



Katharine Hepburn
Actress
Parkinson's Disease

During our first few weeks at KEC West, a few bewildered folk insisted on coming in "just ta git a cuppa coffee an' a burger". Little did these 'locals' realize that the Food Affair, their favourite burger and pizza joint, had closed its doors on fine dining at 691 East Broadway, the corner of Fraser and Broadway, just four short blocks west of the KEC MAIN campus.

After all, the old signs were still up on the building and people had been going in and out throughout the days prior to the change in tenants.

But now our signs are up and 691 East Broadway is fully occupied by King Edward Campus as KEC-West, your friendly local satellite.

Through the corner doors of the centre, and replacing the former pizzeria, is the Continuing Education nursing nerve centre; a pulsing office of friendly folk who've moved over to this corner from City Centre.

By way of the Fraser Street entrance you can find the Department of Sign Language Studies, Interpreter Development Program... formerly the home of the Lucky Value Food Market. The way we see it, we're still a lucky value and we are happy with the new location. We share some space with the ESL Seniors Learning Centre as well.

Sign Language Studies moved from the main campus last fall with the capable assistance and co-operation of Al Boyd and company. And thanks go out to Wendy Lannard for her assistance in scheduling the "delicate" operation.

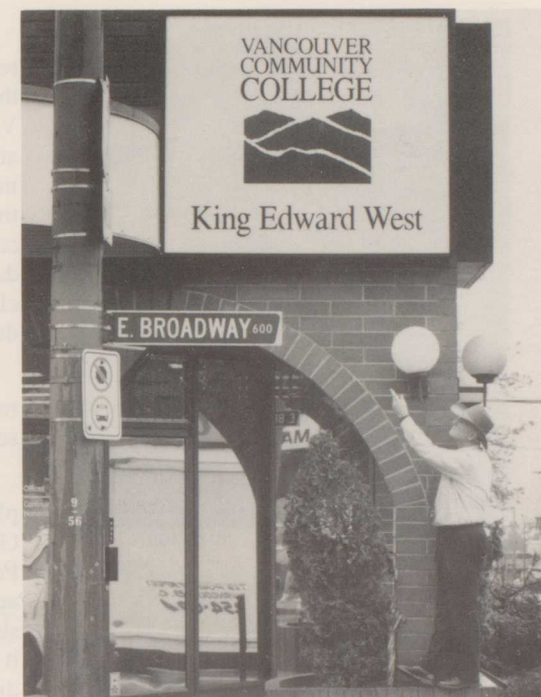
In addition, sincere appreciation must be expressed for the part that Buildings and Grounds played in installing the required classroom amenities.



Winston Churchill
British Statesman
Learning Disability

No doubt now, KEC West has arrived

By Roger Ofield, Co-ordinator,
Sign Language Studies



Ofield and KEC West . . . you can't miss it!

Sam Lewindon, division chair of our program, first realized the potential for the Sign Language Studies Department, which was sorely in need of a dedicated language lab and appropriate office space. Full support was given for the move by the campus administration and was regularly monitored by Principal Lawrence Fast and Dean Patricia Groves. Their personal visits and attention have been appreciated.

And what have we been doing since the move? First and foremost, we have been continuing the quality training of hearing persons seeking a career in working with deaf persons. Sign

language (American Sign Language of the Deaf...ASL) acquisition and basic interpreter skills training continue apace.

Almost 200 part-time (evening) students are acquiring basic functional sign language at the centre and 51 full-time students have blazed the air daily with their sign skills and developing communication talents in ASL.

In addition to this regularized departmental agenda, we have just completed a joint project with Douglas College; an Interpreter Training Analysis. This has been a locally initiated curriculum proposal funded by the ministry.

The project sought to establish the collaborative approach to Interpreter Training in B.C. Specifically, we examined existing program competencies at VCC and Douglas College (our Interpreter Development Program, their Visual Language Interpreter Training). Further, possible levels of transferability were identified as well as bridging requirements and recommendations for future direction.

The priority recommendation of the joint report is that a Centre of Excellence providing provincial leadership in the field be expeditiously established by merging and further developing the two existing programs into a Regional Centre of American Sign Language Studies—Research, Development, Training and Public Information.

The 'locals' won't likely be trying to come in for a 'cuppa' any longer. The KEC-West signage with its VCC identity is mounted and lighted; a nice final flourish to our move. Please drop in to visit. We're easy to find.



James Joyce
Writer
Visually Impaired

SPECTRUM PROFILE: Betty Nobel

By Doreen Chui-Chai

"My life has not been easy," says Betty Nobel. "It has been a series of challenges, some not too different from challenges that others face. But I've always enjoyed a challenge and I do not recall any I could not handle."

Nobel, who is blind, has come a long way from being restricted to plasticine in kindergarten or requiring an I.Q. Test to qualify for university funding. She believes the way to succeed is to work harder, a belief instilled in her from a young age. So Nobel worked hard at everything—including her first job in the dark room of a photo-finishing studio. She accumulated experience, leadership and credibility on the way to her current position as Chair of the Adult Basic Education Division at KEC.

Nobel was born prematurely, at two pounds, eight ounces. An excess of oxygen in her incubator damaged her vision. At 15, her hearing in one ear started to deteriorate. She could not write her name with a pen until she was eighteen. Yet she overcame her disabilities to become the only member in her family to attend university and to carve out a successful niche in the world of education.

Nobel credits the support of people—her family, peers and friends—with being the major factor in her success. "The fact that people believed in me and had confidence in me did a lot to build my self-esteem."

As a young child, Nobel's parents motivated her to do everything other children did. She learned life-long survival skills "like a normal kid". Her cooking lessons started with French



Betty Nobel

toast, just like other children in the family. She climbed trees, played hopscotch, roller-skated with her sister and her friends.

Early association with sighted children contributed significantly to her personal development. "I was in on every game they played. I remember playing baseball. A child would stand with me, hold my hand over the bat, hit the ball, and we'd run!"



Nelson Rockefeller
U.S. Vice President
Learning Disability

After Nobel lived two years in residence at the Jericho Hill School for the Blind, her family moved to Vancouver so she could live with them at home. Ten years later, she transferred into a regular school and, for the first time, Nobel had to compete academically with regular students. Her academic success and acceptance by classmates further boosted her confidence.

She developed an assertiveness that revealed itself in a tussle with her school's drama instructor.

It was the time of year for school plays and Nobel's class was to stage Gilbert and Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance". Nobel, by then well-appreciated for her singing ability, showed interest in a choral part. Because it involved moving about on stage, the director limited Nobel's participation to the band. Nobel resisted, with unyielding support from her student friends. "If other people have confidence in you, then you gain confidence in yourself," said Nobel. She eventually was given the part she wanted.

A milestone in Nobel's life was being accepted for an evening job teaching French in the CE Division at Langara. "When I went back to university for the diploma program in education, I did my practicum at Langara where I met Dr. (Lawrence) Fast. On completing the program, I went to him for a job. Because he was confident enough in me to instruct a class, my confidence just grew even more."

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Low-hassle adjustments for classroom

An art history instructor wonders how a deaf student will be able to see her interpreter, who must "sign" in the dark while films are being shown. (Solution: The interpreter uses a small lamp that shines on the interpreter's hands).

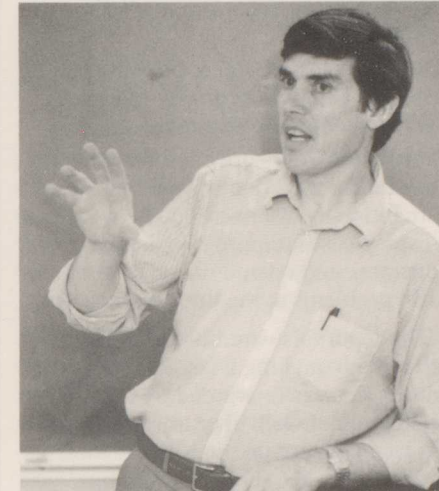
Another instructor worries that he's not liked by a deaf student because the student never makes eye contact when they're talking. (Explanation: The student must watch only the interpreter when the instructor is speaking).

And a third instructor asks how a student who has impaired hearing is going to be able to hear the lectures. (Solution: The instructor clips on a microphone that sends an FM signal to the student's hearing aid).

These are typical concerns expressed regularly by those teaching or otherwise working with the disabled. And just as typically, these are examples of solutions that are easily and readily available.

"VCC is seen as an institution that likes the disabled, so the faculty here gets quite a bit of experience teaching them," said KEC Physics Instructor Peter Hopkinson. "There can be some problems...really big ones...but they always seem to work out."

Hopkinson recalls one student suffering from MS who was profoundly



Peter Hopkinson . . . teaching problems are all solvable.

handicapped, including a severe speech impairment. But science was where the student wanted to be and she was determined to "go for it." Says Hopkinson: "Eventually she was able to write her lab reports on a computer using a mouthpiece that she would tap on the keys. She had a tremendous attitude. I think I learned as much from her as she did in my classroom."

Hopkinson says finding the extra time to help the disabled is the biggest problem. For instance, physics is a subject best learned with visual aids, even if it's something simple like a student being able to write out an equation a few times on scrap paper before getting it right. That's a luxury a blind student doesn't have and often extra time is required with that student after class. As well, tests for the blind must be worked through orally.

"I'm never sure if I'm giving students an unfair advantage in an oral test...like

tipping them off to the right answer in the way I might ask the question," said Hopkinson. "But the amount of extra time the instructor puts in is nothing compared to the effort the handicapped student needs to make."

KEC Math Instructor Jean MacLeod explains that an instructor may need to use more visual aids when teaching a deaf student. "I'll put more up on the blackboard during a lecture," says MacLeod. "And you have to be careful not to talk to the blackboard if the deaf student is trying to read lips."

Yet, with all the adaptation that may be necessary, many instructors may not even be aware that they have a disabled student in their class, or that in general, they're teaching more of them all the time.

Says VCC Special Needs Coordinator Terry Reid: "A lot of instructors who think they've never had a student with a disability may be surprised to learn that they have had several go through their class without recognizing it."

"For instance, learning disabled students may not be that obvious because they are receiving tutoring to help them keep pace; someone who is visually impaired, but not blind, may have someone else taking the notes and the instructor never catches on."



Helen Keller
Teacher
Deaf and blind



Stevie Wonder
Singer
Blind

Improved access urged

VCC has been a pacesetter in providing services for the disabled in B.C. But there are still numerous adjustments that are required to the physical features of all three campuses, according to an evaluation done by the Educational Association of Disabled Students.

The disabled face problems that most of us wouldn't recognize if we walked right into them. For instance, the VCC-wide report noted that:

- * An entrance to one cafeteria is through a turnstile, which people in a wheelchair can not pass through.
- * One cafeteria menu is in print too small for the visually impaired to read.
- * Elevator doors close too quickly for a person in a wheelchair to enter or exit.
- * Shadows created by a skylight are confusing for the visually impaired.

- * There are no tactile maps for the blind.
- * Wheelchair users must pass behind parked cars to get from the parking lot to the building.
- * Elevator dimensions are too small for wheelchair maneuverability.
- * The cafeteria tray slides are not continuous, a problem for those who have difficulty lifting.
- * The bookstore aisles are not wide enough.
- * Door handles are round and difficult to operate without the ability to grasp. Wing handles are recommended.
- * Classroom doors open into hallways, a hazard for the blind; towel dispensers are too high, doors are too heavy, food display cases require two hands to operate...and on and on—a total of 138 problems at the three campuses.

The report also credits the college with already making a large number of changes. It was forwarded by then President Paul Gallagher to campus officials, who are taking a closer look at implementing the recommendations.



Langara Campus students such as Tony Ross have to wheel behind parked cars, where they are not easily visible. Just after this photo was taken, another car (inset) zipped dangerously past a van for the handicapped which was unloading at the time.

High tech help for the disabled

Technology is having an immense impact on the lives of the disabled. Here are a few of the latest advances, and approximations of the hefty price tags that go with some of them:

VISUAL TEK — A print enlarger for the visually impaired. The cost is \$3,000; each campus has at least one. A student places material to be enlarged on a slate and the enlarged print appears on the screen in front of him/her.

KURZWEILLER — A computerized scanner. This is a print reading device for blind and print impaired persons (eg. those with dyslexia). The machine's "voice" reads typed material to the student, stores it on disk for future use and prints a braille copy. The cost is \$15,000. KEC has a similar system (Arkenstone reader) in the library.

VOICE SYNTHESIZERS — These machines read from computer screens to the blind and visually impaired or print impaired individuals. The cost is \$200.

TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION DEVICE FOR THE DEAF — A print screen that allows the deaf to use regular telephones to communicate with others. Users must have the device attached to their phone. The cost is \$800.

FM SYSTEM — A transmitter/receiver system for individuals with low hearing. The instructor wears the transmitter and the student wears the receiver, which plugs into a hearing aid. The cost: \$1,800 per set.

LOOPED CLASSROOM — This device transmits an instructor's voice through an FM signal which individuals with hearing aids can use. The cost - \$5,000 per classroom.

COMPUTER ADAPTIVE DEVICES — A variety of types of equipment which attach to computers to allow physically disabled individuals to access the computer. This category includes expanded keyboards (large letters on keyboard), sip and puff devices for mouth access using morse code, and head - operated coding devices.

PERSONAL BRAILLER — A lap top computer for blind students which translates classroom notes into braille.

VCC
PRESS

Write on!

proposals. Each is interesting, and each has merit. In my heart, I want us to publish them all."

Helping to keep Bendall's enthusiasm in check, though, is the VCC Press Advisory Committee, with members from each major centre of the college. The committee plays a role in the all-important decision-to-publish (or not-to-publish). Bendall analyses proposals from an editorial, production and marketing viewpoint, and runs the analysis past the committee or individual committee members. "Their input is valuable and their support is invaluable," he says.



Raymond Bendall

Publishing in Canada is a tough row to hoe. Recent challenges faced by publishers in this country include the steady erosion of federal postal subsidies and the unprecedented tax on reading, the Goods and Services Tax. Traditionally, Canadian publishers have faced a small domestic market and a continuing, massive flow of competing material from the U.S., Britain and France. But we keep on publishing because Canadian material is special and Canadian words are important.

All things considered, it's no wonder that VCC chose to take a conservative approach to the development of its Press. After all, it would be exceedingly bad form, especially in these unending tough economic times, to take a "bath" on an ill-conceived publishing initiative. But if education is the college's central mission, then publishing surely has a role to play.

Now into its second year of full-time operation, VCC Press has some successes under its belt and a lot of work yet to do. According to Managing Editor Raymond Bendall, the college represents a motherlode of publishing possibilities. "We're looking for viable proposals in the educational and instructional genre. If they don't exist at VCC, then they don't exist anywhere."

The trick, however, is to find publishing projects which exhibit positive long term and bottom-line prospects. "On most levels, we're not even trying to compete with the major educational publishers. We must be able to identify a market for a project, and it has to be a market we can reach. We're looking for niches to fill. Probably the toughest part of the job is rejecting

The Professional Bakers' Manual: Authored by a quartet of City Centre baking instructors and first published in 1987, a revised second edition rolled off the press last October. Adoptions include VCC, Nova Scotia Community College, Malaspina College and others. Special sales have been made to Robin Hood Multi-Foods and the Ontario Pastry Chefs' Guild.

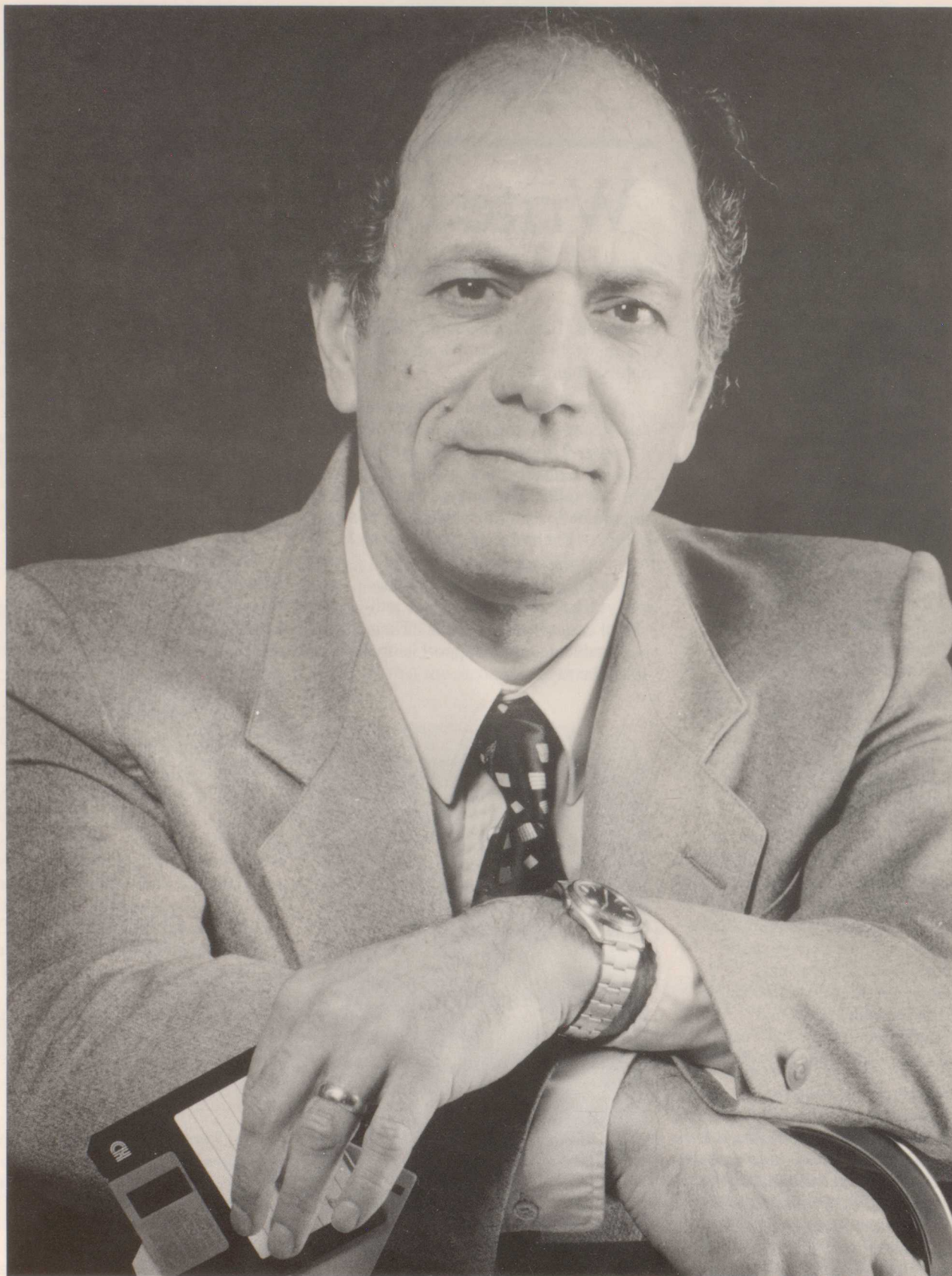
English as a Second Language Bibliography: Compiled by KEC librarians Aphrodite Harris and Phyllis Butler. This project was seriously downgraded when it was learned that a similar book was to be published elsewhere and distributed free-of-charge to the primary market. Nevertheless, our Bibliography sold out its first run and was reprinted this spring.

A Casebook of Ideologies: Written by Langara campus "godfather" Don Burbidge, this book outlines the most common political philosophies. "We took an extremely cautious approach to this one," says Bendall, "but with two almost immediate adoptions in B.C. and another pending, we've had to scramble to reformat, reprint and roll out the marketing effort in a nation-wide promotion. It's also been great getting to know Don, and his support of the Press is tangible. He was kind enough to waive royalties until we recover production costs, which we will."

The Foodsafe Handbook: A "bread and butter" title if there ever was one. First print run: 15,000. Sales after one year: 11,000.

One goal of the Press is to achieve full self-sufficiency within three years. After 15 months, the outlook is very encouraging. Here's a synopsis of what's happening:

cont'd pg 23



Habib Kashani . . . Winner of the 1991 Leadership Award from the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

Teaching selling skills for the real world

By Keith Murray

The old business axiom, "Nothing happens until something is sold", is even more relevant today. Professional salespeople are the catalysts for everything that happens in the marketplace.

Recognizing the importance of personal selling skills, the Marketing & Sales Program at Langara Campus has devised an innovative approach for teaching these skills.

Here is how almost all educational institutions teach personal selling skills. Although varying in degree of emphasis, a personal selling course typically covers: 1) an overview of the profession, 2) the psychology of selling, 3) communication skills, 4) prospecting, 5) the approach and presentation, 6) how to overcome objections, 7) how to close and 8) how to service an account.

Traditional teaching methods generally include the use of role-playing throughout the term, ending in an oral personal sales presentation by each

student. These presentations tend to be retail sales oriented, thus leaving the students with little or no exposure to industrial or organizational selling.

Furthermore, when the selling course is limited to retail sales situations, students gain no training in how to conduct an industry analysis, a company analysis, nor exposure to the sources of information available for such analyses.

More importantly they learn little about the significance of the telephone in selling, time management and self-motivation, dealing with the dread of 'cold-canvassing' and the very real exaltation and depression associated with signing and losing real orders.

That is why at Langara Campus we give the students a real world sales assignment selling advertising in the college's Pacific Rim Magazine.

In addition to receiving training in the personal sales process, they are organized into sales teams and assigned a number of potential accounts and

advertising agencies.

Through their own research and planning, they expand their list of prospects. They are then responsible for arranging sales appointments and following these up with formal face-to-face sales presentations with potential advertisers. They are taught to stress benefits to the potential advertisers and ask for orders ranging from \$300 to \$2,400. To assist in motivation they compete for sales plaques, scholarships and receive a commission on all sales. They learn the dangers of procrastination and the need for perseverance in following up on prospects. They learn what it takes to really sell as opposed to role-playing.

What students take away from the Langara Sales Workshop is not just the techniques for personal selling, but more importantly they are able to determine whether a career in industrial or organizational sales will be part of their future.

Sinclair from page 9

Her teachers agree. According to Joanna Brockley, lab manager in the science department, Sinclair's example is a good one for everyone. "Jacquie has served as a role model for regular students," she explains, "because she is a regular student. We don't make too many exceptions and we don't give her too much slack. She wouldn't want it any other way."

For the most part, Sinclair has encountered few barriers at VCC, either physical or in attitudes. Brockley feels the relationship has been mutually beneficial.

"I don't think that if this were a university, or a more closed environment, that Jacquie would have done as

"I have a note taker in all my classes. I photocopy their notes and just give them to Holly or Elly, who do the brailling. It works great."

well because there is a little more time for us to spend enhancing everybody's

education, not just her's. And, I think that if we hadn't had that opportunity to have her in our classes, we probably wouldn't have come as far as we have."

While Jacquie attends to lectures and science labs, her own Lab, Megg, occasionally gets to sleep in class. Jacquie offers an interesting insight into the life of a guide dog: "They have a pretty hard life, but then again, if I were a dog, I'd rather be a seeing-eye dog. You get to go everywhere your owner goes. I think it's a pretty good life for a dog. And, there is a certain amount of pride."

"She's a really special, special friend."

Megg would no doubt say the same.

Alumni mentors the next initiative



Barbara Aldritt

By Barbara Aldritt

In the last Alumni Notes, the focus was on the number and diversity of VCC alumni in our community through the theme: "Chances are every day your life is touched in some way by a VCC alumnus."

Of the estimated 180,000 former students, the Alumni Association is in touch with approximately 5,000. While the association's mandate includes re-establishing contact with "lost" alumni, much energy has recently gone into raising our profile with future alumni, the current students, as well as improving the association's ability to get in touch with graduates as they leave the college. We are working to systematically transfer current graduates' names and addresses from Student Records into

the association's major operating tool, our computerized database.

Through the alumni anniversary magazine project launched earlier this year and now nearing completion, many successful past graduates previously unknown to the Alumni Association were "found." As well as being the focus of the magazine, these graduates are now part of the Alumni Association's database.

While the database is still in an early stage of development, it is important to clearly articulate how we want to use this tool. With a very broad mandate, but limited resources in a large and complex institution, the Alumni Association has to set priorities for the most meaningful ways of serving alumni and the college.

The established basic services for alumni are the ALUMNEWS, a tri-annual newsletter keeping alumni in touch with the college, a program of discounts on college services such as continuing education and library access, and reunions or other special events.

From discussions with students, help with job placement was identified as a significant need. The Langara and City Centre Career Fairs, in which corporate and community service recruiting departments came to the college to discuss career options and recruit students and alumni for available positions, were planned as one contribution to meeting this need. The career fairs have also raised the profile of the Alumni Association with future members, the students.

While the Alumni Association Board of Directors and staff are proud of these initiatives, we can't rest on these laurels.

Among other means of serving the college, using the database for direct mail and telephone fundraising with alumni is only the most obvious. The association has already established a program of annual scholarships on each campus.

But alumni have something else that is equally as valuable as their money—their time and experience. Alumni mentor programs tap their knowledge and experience with the college. Sharing this with current students re-establishes alumni ties with the college in a positive way. This type of program has already been implemented in most major colleges south of the border; in Canada it's in development at several educational institutions.

Alumni mentors meet or talk with prospective students to discuss career opportunities and the benefits of a particular program, adding significantly to the college counselling and admissions services by helping students make better informed decisions.

As finding a job becomes a top priority, alumni mentors help interested students with information on the mentor's current employer. Information on employment conditions and the right person to contact is vital in tapping into that "hidden job market" that holds 80 % of available jobs.

With their tremendous diversity, VCC alumni could be a significant resource not only for students but also for one another. As the campuses of VCC organize for the 1990s, the Alumni Association stands ready to work with anyone who is interested in exploring the possibilities of alumni mentoring or other potential services the association can provide.

Five easy ways to say 'I care' about education

There are a variety of ways in which you can help the students and programs of VCC. Important forms of support are volunteering your time and expertise, establishing a scholarship or bursary fund or making a financial contribution. The VCC Educational Foundation welcomes enquiries from all potential donors.

ENDOWMENT FUND

A donor may create an endowment fund bearing his or her name or any other name to be associated in perpetuity with the fund.

The endowment fund preserves the capital amount while distributing the interest income each year for a particular purpose, such as a student bursary.

To establish an endowment, the Foundation recommends an initial gift of \$5,000 to allow the generation of sufficient interest income. A gift of any amount may be made or pledged to an already existing endowment fund.

UNDESIGNATED GIFTS

Gifts in cash also may be made or pledged for an undesignated purpose to meet high priority needs. This is the Foundation's broadest form of support and is the way it directs donors wishing to support VCC in general.

BEQUESTS

The Foundation may be named as the primary or secondary beneficiary under

the terms of a donor's will. This legacy may be a gift of a specific amount or a gift of estate residue.

The donor may also name the Foundation as the primary or secondary beneficiary of an annuity, RRSP or other financial instruments of the donor's estate.

LIFE INSURANCE

A gift of a life insurance policy to the Foundation permits a donor to arrange a substantial gift by making modest monthly or annual payments while living. The full proceeds are not tied up in the will, but are immediately payable to the Foundation when the insured person dies. Unlike a will, life insurance is not a matter of public record.

GIFTS-IN-KIND

The donation of gifts-in-kind such as real estate, stocks, equipment, art, gems or books may be made to the Foundation. These gifts may be designated for use in a specific program or for discretionary use by the Foundation.

Details regarding large gifts vary according to each donor's circumstance and the relevant legislation. The Foundation encourages donors to make use of their own professional counsel when planning their charitable giving. The VCC Educational Foundation is registered as a Public Charitable Foundation and is authorized to issue receipts for income tax purposes.

Letters to the editor

Readers respond to the January issue of Spectrum.

I don't like to find fault with a commendable issue on environmental matters, but on page 22 you are mixing your metaphors - your clichés, actually - in the headline. Surely that should be "hurdle", not "hurtle". A runner clears a jump, not a throw. Improve your proof reading? Avoid clichés?

- M.B. Knechtel

Excellent! The theme works well - broad coverage so that no-one is left out.

Raises the spirit of the Instruction. Very positive, encouraging and informative.

I am happy with the direction of Spectrum. It does cover the Spectrum!

- Patricia Groves

SPECTRUM

Spectrum is published by the Public Relations and Development Department of Vancouver Community College for our 1500 part-time and full-time employees. Information for news, features and coming events should be directed to: Chuck Poulsen, 324-5475; Constance Brissenden, 875-5433; Gayle Thody, 875-8200; Doreen Chui Chai, 875-6111 or David Wiebe, 681-8111.

**Graphics, Design and Photography
by Instructional Media Services.**

Page 4 illustrations by Lynda Hurst.

What do you think of this edition of
Spectrum?

What would you like to see in future
editions?

Please clip and send to Chuck Poulsen - Langara

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Students in our program will receive
a comprehensive education in the
field of community development
and social work. Our program
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