

# Look Who's TALKING

2002 Speech-Language Pathology  
Alumni Association Newsletter University of Toronto

## BRATISLAVA or BUST....

by ALLISON DINGMAN, OT2

**P**icture it: Bratislava, Slovakia. A weary group of eight Year II students, and one department faculty member arrive. Tired from their long journey across the ocean but ready to share information and learn from their colleagues, they begin the educational adventure of a lifetime.

What began as an idea proposed by second year M.H.Sc. student, Katarina Hornakova, quickly developed into reality with her hard work and dedication to making the project a success. Having grown up and trained as an S-LP in Slovakia, Katarina felt that both the Canadian and Slovak participants would benefit from meeting each other and exchanging information, so she began to plan and prepare. Seven other second-year students, as well as faculty member, Susan Wagner, expressed interest in the project, and so together, we began our adventure.

**OUR AGENDA WAS PACKED,  
AND OUR PROJECT INCLUDED:**

• Making presentations at a conference to students, faculty

members and practising professionals to share information about current North American practices. Working with interpreters we were able to successfully deliver our information.

• **A material contribution:** books and other materials were generously donated by local Canadian S-LPs and U of T faculty members. And with more than 20 extra kilograms in each of our suitcases, we were able to help enhance the Department of Speech-Language Pathology's library at Comenius University.

• **A meeting with Mr. Tomas Simko,** a remarkable man who began the very

first self-help group for people who stutter in Slovakia. He provided us with insights about speech-language pathology services, and what it is like to be a person who stutters in Slovakia.

• **A social event:** where we mingled and spoke with S-LPs, students and faculty members.

Our time in Europe, which also included some side trips to Prague, Vienna and Budapest, flew by, but will certainly have a lasting impact on each of our lives. This project has been rewarding to all those involved in so many different ways. Not only were we

able to share information and resources with our colleagues, we also learned about our profession and ourselves. Gaining international perspectives about the profession of speech-language pathology, overcoming language barriers, experiencing different cultures, building partnerships and making friends were just some of the highlights of this exciting adventure – an adventure that will not soon be forgotten!



**TEAM CANADA OVERSEAS:** Members of the Year II class (l-r) Katarina Hornakova, Christie Rodier-Trigg, Helen Papakyriacos, Angela Blaind, Salma Syed, Marlene Ecker, Allison Dingman, and Melissa Taylor, pose in Bratislava, Slovakia.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

**G**reetings to all! As I start my five-year term as the new chair in the Department of Speech-Language Pathology, I look forward to meeting many of you and to working with you through your executive board in supporting and fostering our wonderful and dynamic Alumni Association. As Paula's Square's second term as chair came to an end in June of 2001, we can all look back at the wonderful contributions she made to the growth of our department. Under Paula's term, our department realized so much: moving out of the beloved (but not really missed) Old Church, recruiting most of the current faculty members, securing necessary additional administrative resources, and much more.

Perhaps two of her most impressive achievements were the start of our M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs and the initiation of a major curriculum renewal exercise in the M.H.Sc. program. At a time when many other sectors at the university were reducing or amalgamating their educational programs, our Department grew and flourished under Paula's leadership. I will work hard to keep the momentum going. These advances make the coming years extremely promising for our department. We are finally moving into a new, permanent home, which we will share with the Departments of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Rehabilitation Sciences. Our new home will be located at 500 University Avenue, just south of the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. The university purchased this ten-story building, currently undergoing renovations after a long and very careful planning process. The new facility will provide us with state-of-the-art teaching and laboratory facilities, and will allow us to realize our imminent expansion.

Indeed, in the next few years we will increase the enrolment in our M.H.Sc. program to a total of 40 students in each of the two years of the program. This increase will allow us to help meet the great societal need for clinical speech-language pathologists. This will undoubtedly challenge all of our capacities to continue to provide the necessary academic and

top-notch clinicians. The expansion, however, will provide a wonderful opportunity to increase our faculty in areas that are of great significance to the clinical community. I am sure that we will look back at this process with pride.

It is both a great honour and also a humbling task to become chair of such a dynamic department. I am looking forward to working with each of you to continue to ensure the quality of the education of our students, your future colleagues. I know that each of you share the same commitment. By working together we will achieve great accomplishments in the years to come. Many of you have contributed so much already to our department – do not hesitate to let me know how I can help you!

**Luc De Nil**

## STAY IN TOUCH

Make sure the Speech Pathology Alumni Association has your up-to-date information! Submit any changes in name, address, or email to [slp.alumni@utoronto.ca](mailto:slp.alumni@utoronto.ca)



## History of the Department

**T**he discipline of Speech-Language Pathology began at the University of Toronto in 1958 through the establishment of a two-year postgraduate diploma program, the first English-speaking program in Canada. This program was developed because of an acute shortage of speech-language pathologists in Ontario and other provinces. Its planning and implementation were the result of collaboration between faculty members in several basic and clinical science departments within the Faculty of Medicine, in association with speech-language pathologists from several teaching hospitals. Major support for the program's development was provided by the Department of Psychiatry and the Division of Rehabilitation Medicine, the latter which administered the program for two decades until 1978, when a Master of Health Science (M.H.Sc.) degree program was established within the School of Graduate Studies, to replace the diploma program.

The development of this degree, the establishment of an independent Department of Speech-Language Pathology in 1992, and the subsequent introduction of M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs (in 1995 and 1996 respectively), have made this University a leader in professional education and research in the discipline of Speech-Language Pathology.

**Jean F. Walker**

Professor emeritus and former Chair Graduate Department of Speech-Language Pathology

*This article was originally written for the U of T Department of Speech-Language Pathology website [www.slp.utoronto.ca](http://www.slp.utoronto.ca)*



# S-IP Community Well Supported by J.F. Walker Lecturers

by DARIEN HEATHCOTE, OT1

The annual JF Walker Lecture had an excellent turnout and was well received by the students, faculty and speech-language pathologists in attendance. The topic of counselling in speech-language pathology was addressed again this year, following the success of David Luterman's lecture last year. The speakers this year were Rochelle Cohen-Schneider, a speech-language pathologist, and Bea Bindman, a social worker. Both employed at the Aphasia Institute, the clinicians brought with them a wealth of experience in dealing with individuals affected by aphasia. Their lecture, entitled "From Crisis to Chronicity: Counselling with Aphasia," described the emotional effects that aphasia can wreak on clients and their families, and provided strategies for therapists to deal with such difficulties.

Using examples from her experiences at the Aphasia Institute, Ms. Cohen-Schneider presented

an enlightening account of how the loss of language not only creates emotional turmoil, but also disrupts the mechanism by which individuals adapt to major life changes. Unable to have "healing conversations" with others, individuals with aphasia have greater difficulty making sense of and adjusting to their new life situations.

Individuals with aphasia are more successful when communicating with people trained in Supported Conversation techniques, which provides an environment where these individuals are able to express their thoughts and feelings. Supported Conversation includes the use of different modalities (writing, gestures, and/or pictures) to aid an individual's ability to understand and express him/herself.

Speech-language pathologists can use Supported Conversation to allow access to the "healing conversation." An effective counsellor, according to Ms. Cohen-Schneider, uses humour, knows his/her limits and boundaries, and can admit his/her own mistakes – and can learn from them as well. Counselling should be done from a listening, understanding, and empathic perspective. Although counselling with individuals affected by aphasia is usually a lengthy and effortful process, it is essential to include it as part of the therapy.

Ms. Bindman spoke from a social work perspective, outlining some essential principles that should be used in counselling situations. Her role at the Aphasia Institute requires her to use Supported Conversation techniques extensively to conduct counselling sessions with individuals affected by aphasia and their families. She emphasized the importance of perceiving individuals in the context of their entire lives, taking into account their position in the life cycle. When counselling, Ms. Bindman suggested it is important that a counsellor knows him/herself and is aware of his/her own skills and shortcomings. Counsellors should always use careful, attentive and non-judgmental listening. In adhering to these principles, the counsellor should attempt to build a relationship with the individual that fosters growth and resolution of problems.

The lecture provided an interesting and touching look at the need for counselling when working with individuals with aphasia. Clearly, counselling is necessary not only at the acute stage of illness but at the chronic stage when individuals with aphasia are learning how to live with their language disorder. By using counselling techniques, speech-language pathologists can help empower individuals and their families to re-engage in their lives.

## WHAT'S UP, DOC?

By IAN ROTH, OTO

Rupal Patel, the Department of Speech-Language Pathology's first PhD graduate, has been out of school for almost two years now. *Look Who's Talking* caught up with her to find out how this distinguished achievement has affected her life. Apparently she hasn't had any trouble finding things to do...

Without skipping a beat, Rupal went to Cambridge, Massachusetts following her thesis defence, where she started her post-doctoral research in acoustics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and joined her husband, who is a professor of computer science at MIT. Rupal's research is continuing where her thesis left off, examining acoustic features of prosody in dysarthric speakers and applying this toward building multi-modal augmentative communication aids. The papers from her thesis are in the process of being published in the *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research* and *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*.

In January 2001, Dr. Patel began a tenure track faculty position at Teachers' College Columbia



**MUST'VE USED A FAST SHUTTER SPEED:** Dr. Rupal Patel stops long enough to have a photograph taken.

University in Manhattan, working in the Department of Biobehavioral Sciences, Program in Speech-Language Pathology. Thus far she has taught Speech Science, Anatomy and Physiology, Neuroscience of Speech and Language, Seminar in Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and Neurogenetics to SLP students in the master's program.

While at Columbia, she has learned to fill the time between preparing for and teaching these classes by starting a research lab, called the Adaptive Communication Technologies Lab (ACT lab). Here she supervises several graduate students and a doctoral student whose research interests vary from graphical design of picture communication symbols to acoustics of dysarthric speech. The long-term mission for the ACT lab is to construct situationally aware communication aids that can be accessed by multiple modalities, including voice.

Success at prestigious Canadian and American universities has also given her the experience to take on projects overseas. For example, she has begun collaborations with a research lab in India affiliated with MIT (Media Lab Asia), where she is developing low-cost electronic AAC systems. And in an entirely separate project, Rupal is spearheading a campaign to teach literacy skills to underprivileged children in India using a picture-based electronic communication system.

In her personal life (almost unimaginable given her busy professional life), Rupal has moved four times in the last two years (Toronto to Boston, Boston to Arlington MA, and twice in Manhattan – while maintaining a home in Arlington). In between all of that she got married in Calgary in traditional Indian style. In less-than-traditional style, Rupal was carried to the ceremony in a robotic carriage her husband made.

Since the technology for human cloning is not yet at the point where there could be a Rupal in every city, Patel and her husband have made a ritual out of meeting up in either Boston or New York every weekend, racking up 500 air miles each time. One might think that those air miles are re-invested into Logan-Laguardia commutes, but in fact they have been put toward visits to far more exotic airports. Rupal and her husband have taken vacations to Turkey, Greece, Mexico, Jamaica and India in the last couple years. In their spare time (I), Rupal and her husband have been renovating parts of their home and gardening in Arlington, and exploring New York City.

A hard act to follow for other PhD candidates, Rupal is certainly representing the Department of Speech-Language Pathology very well.

Information on Rupal's Research and the Adaptive Communication Technologies Lab can be found at [www.tc.columbia.edu/centers/actlab/actlab\\_home.htm](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/centers/actlab/actlab_home.htm)



# What Goes Around Comes Around

by KIM BRADLEY, PhD, 8T5

When first asked to write a few words about teaching in a program where I was a student, I was uncertain whether it was meant to be a piece of treachery, where one of "us" becomes one of "them" or whether, in fact, this was seen as a laudable progression.

I am still not sure which one it is.

There is no question that teaching where once you were taught leaves a sense that someone is eventually going to realise that it is just you and is going to rumble that you are not really a grown-up after all. My students refer to Dr. Square as "Paula" but I still refer to her as "Dr. Square." Paula was Dr. Square in the olden days. And although she has never treated me as anything

but a colleague, still in my heart I know that she is the grown up.

I did feel a certain sense of completing a circle when Dr. S. approached me about teaching the Motor Speech course after I returned from a decade of being in England. So I sat down and pulled together a structure and a curriculum, which she laughed at when she saw. A bit offended, I summoned my squiffiest British accent, and asked why. She pulled out an old course description of hers. OK – so I was teaching the same course with the addition of a few dysarthrias they didn't know about in the olden days. Further confirmation of something I had already realised after the decade of working in England: that in fact your education provides you not just with information – but with a far more subtle structure or attitude to the information. You can call it a "medical model" or a "linguistic model" but the bottom line is that everything you do reflects an organizing principle or philosophy that you are not even aware you are picking up. Working in a

different country, in a different medical and education system, these underlying assumptions become apparent in a way they don't if you've never experience an alternative. So the structure of my course, the structure of the way I think about speech pathology and the structure of my therapy I gained as a student. What the rest of the world has to offer has been heaped on that.

Having found the pervasiveness of the effect of good teaching on every aspect of my career, it leaves me humbled and fearful that I could ever be that to anyone else. It really matters that students know the types and neuropathology of the dysarthrias but it matters much more to know why it matters, to have a "structure" that is solid and to have respect and an appetite for the work they do. I got all of that out of my time as a student – but it is a really daunting prospect as a teacher. Even more so, perhaps, when you know exactly whose high heels you are standing in, and it seems only yesterday that you were on the other side of the desk!

## "Win the sunloit stroiks rinedrops in the ayah..."

by GWEN MERRICK, 9T8

Have you ever considered working abroad? Consider London, England! Europe's largest city is home to many exciting work, travel, and cultural opportunities.

I moved to London in January 2001 with just over two years of work experience.

Due to the city's enormous size (population: 10 million), it provides numerous work opportunities in both permanent and contract positions. I chose to work for limited term contracts to gain diverse experiences. Initially, my position was split between elderly mental health and stroke rehabilitation. More recently, I joined the medical unit in an acute care hospital. These three jobs have been great experiences and they allowed me to learn about different perspectives of Britain's National Health Service.

While Britain and Canada share a common language, there are subtle differences in pronunciation that can significantly impact on speech and language therapy. For example, one of my most memorable experiences occurred while assessing individuals with dementia. Although I did not believe that my accent would be a problem, this population quickly taught me otherwise. During a comprehension test, clients constantly looked puzzled and were unable to answer when I asked them to point to the picture of the "dart." After the third patient failed the task, I realized the problem. I then rephrased the question, and asked the client



**OKAY WE BELIEVE YOU:** Gwen Merrick proves she really did move to London as she poses in front of Big Ben with an English bobby.

to point out the "daht." Instant success! Since then I have learned to mimic a number of British pronunciations in hopes that clients will have a fighting chance to score "within normal limits."

Life outside of work is very exciting and enriching. London is the biggest city in Europe, and subsequently, is bustling with people, culture, and entertainment. The city hosts a plethora of world-class museums and galleries, such as the British Museum, the National Gallery, and the new Tate Modern. Popular evening pastimes, include enjoying dinner at ethnic restaurants, attending the theatre, watching live music, or enjoying a pint of ale in the local pub. When the weather is nice, it is lovely to take a walking tour to see the Tower Bridge, Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, the Houses of Parliament, and Big Ben.

Perhaps one of the best attributes of London is its proximity to the continent. London is the perfect springboard for short or extended getaways to experience diverse cultures, languages, flavours, aromas, and sights. Touring castles in Scotland, strolling along the French Riviera, or hiking the mountains of Tuscany in northern Italy make great weekend adventures. In addition, a standard four weeks paid vacation allows for many longer holidays. Cycling through the wine regions of France or experiencing Russian culture in St. Petersburg and Moscow are but two suggestions.

The past fifteen months living overseas have been thoroughly enjoyable. For speech pathologists who wish to benefit from international exposure, and have a genuine passion for travel, I highly recommend London as a unique and culturally enriching experience.

## DID YOU KNOW

...U of T now has a credit card available in which a donation is made to U of T every time you use it (at no cost to you).

Donations can be directed to the Department of Speech-Language Pathology. For more information please contact

[slp\\_alumni@utoronto.ca](mailto:slp_alumni@utoronto.ca)

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# U of T S-LP Alumni Association: WHAT DO WE DO?

By DANA PRUTSCHI, OTI

## • What do we do for U of T students?

The fall **STRESSBUSTER** is designed for first year students to meet second year students and Alumni Association professionals in a social setting. Students can ask questions and "pick the brains" of current and former students, and learn more about the working life of an S-LP.

The Alumni Association also organizes a **GRADUATION RECEPTION** for the graduating students of the Department. Here, awards for academic and clinical excellence are given. This event is sponsored by both the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and the Harmonize for Speech organization. Refreshments and live music, courtesy of the Barbershoppers, are annual highlights.

In the spring, the Alumni Association hosts an **INFO-SOCIAL** workshop for second year students as they begin to look for jobs. Here, students participate in mock interviews and can bring in their resumes to receive feedback from other S-LPs.

We also present two **AWARDS**: the Margaret Stoicheff Spirit Award, for the second year student who managed to show incomprehensible amounts of spirit in spite of the grueling two-year M.H.Sc. program, and the Margaret Stoicheff Bursary for the one

student with the greatest financial need.

## • What do we do for the S-LP community?

The **J.F. WALKER LECTURE SERIES** is open to all S-LPs. Last year, David Luterman lectured on counseling in communication disorders, and this spring Rochelle Cohen-Schneider and Bea Bindman presented on counseling individuals affected by aphasia.

We write and publish the annual **NEWSLETTER**, *Look Who's Talking*, which keeps former students up-to-date on the goings on in the Department.

This year we are trying to **RAISE MONEY** for the department in honour of Dr. Paula Square, the previous chair of the S-LP department.



**FOOLED YOU!** Don't be fooled by the first-year students, Amanda Morrison, Amber Lee, Mark Pagan, and Elizabeth Conway, who posed with the S-LP staff at the Stressbuster event in the October 2001 Stressbuster event.



**IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE!** Second year students Michelle Ficker (right), Jennifer Van der Wal (middle), and Alyson Bingham (left) discuss their work with a former S-LP staff member, David Dwyer, at the Stressbuster.



**EXCELLENT!** Melissa Sze's 10 received the 2001 Spirit Award by clinical excellence from the Alumni Association.



**STRESS FREE!** The former students, Kristina Bailey, and Megan Bergin show the effective Stressbuster event can be when there are beverages involved.



**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...** Alumni Association representative, Beate Best, addresses the Graduate of Speech-Language Pathology's "look who's" at the annual Angus Coleman.

## • What do we want from you?

We need suggestions on how to make our group even better! We are

looking for ideas for other activities we can support or organize.

If there are any particular speakers or topics you would like to see for next year's J.F. Walker Lecture, please let us know!

We are always looking for new members for the Alumni Association and new recipes for our potluck meetings!



**DISCHARGED!** The class of 2001 assembled at the Graduation Reception in November 2001.

To get in touch with a member of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association, please email us at [slp.alumni@utoronto.ca](mailto:slp.alumni@utoronto.ca) or visit us at our website <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/speech-language-pathology/People/Contents/alumni.htm>

# Personal reflections ON YEAR ONE

by AMANDA FRUMKIN, OT3

As the sole Year 1 student to reap the benefits of the Alumni Association meetings (i.e., haute cuisine, scintillating conversation, great atmosphere, etc.), I take full responsibility for these "collective" thoughts.

## UNIT 1 (September to December)

In spite of the warning from my appointed "Buddy" in second year, I was surprised at just how much information would be covered in the first unit of the program. After reviewing my textbooks for the term, I found that I was discouraged. I recall a hopeful yet fleeting moment that I had picked up the wrong books. Nope. Right books; wrong brain. (Some of the texts, although extremely useful, read like the ingredients on a box of crackers.) The term proved to be challenging but crucial in laying the foundation for all that was to come.

Well before midterms, we learned the importance of integrating information; subways became tubes where we calculated fundamental frequencies, maps of the U.S. appeared as thyroid cartilages, door stops WERE cricoid cartilages. Sleep deprivation, caffeine overdoses, and lucid dreams influenced our every thought. We discussed hockey in the student lounge in order to prevent anyone in the photocopy room from thinking we were SLP prodigies. (I think it worked.)

## UNIT 2 (January and February)

Three courses in two months seemed more reasonable. And it was...until the beginning of the second month when suddenly everything was due. Midterms, AAC demos, child language interventions, AND the massive articulation disorder assignment (which had many of us dreaming of phonological processes). School seemed chaotic during the veritable swim through the sea of assignments; however, in retrospect, it was actually a neat and logical combination of courses. The second year students were busy with their placements but we saw them on occasion during their teaching clinics held at the university.

## Unit 3 (March and April)

We now find ourselves in the first placement of the program. Thanks to the New Curriculum, the experiences and assignments we have completed (fortunately, not a distant memory) have well prepared us for our clinical practicums. The faculty has been accommodating, attempting to find just the right methods for testing our knowledge while providing us with the most enhanced opportunities to learn. We have also been fortunate in that our colleagues in second year have paved the way for us by offering their suggestions on how to refine the New Curriculum to provide the students with the best opportunity for academic success.

As I look back at first year, I realize that amidst the chaos and the stress, I was actually extracting useful academic and clinical information that I can apply in my current placement, future practicums, and eventually in my first job.

# THE KING OF THE CASTLE

by BESY KARANTZOULIS, OT2

It was the spring of 2042. I had just returned home from taking my six-year-old grandson and some of his friends out for ice cream. As soon as we settled into the kitchen, my grandson exclaimed, "Grandma, Grandma! Tell my friends the story about how you became a speech-language pathogen."

"You mean a speech-language PATHOLOGIST dear."

"Yeah."

"Very well children, gather round. Many many years ago, when I was almost finished school and ready to become a speech-language pathologist, I wanted to find a job. But in order to get a job I needed to enter the Castle Poe."

"What is Castle Poe, Grandma?"

"Oh, this was a very special place where the jobs for speech-language pathologists were plentiful. But in order to get into this Castle, we needed to report to the King. The King of Castle Poe was a strong and very powerful man who wanted to hear stories about how much we learned in school. If he liked our stories, then he would let us enter his Castle. One by one, we lined up to tell the King what we had learned.

One of my classmates, Anibra, went first. She told the king about an experience she had teaching a boy plural /z/ and pronouns. In fact, he wasn't much younger than you. While playing a game, the boy was making little progress achieving his targets so Anibra decided to try something different. As she reached over to grab some picture cards, the boy shouted, 'I can see your boobies!' The King was not amused. He asked Anibra what she had learned from this experience and she replied, 'I learned that language targets are best elicited in motivating contexts.'

"Then the next girl in line, Alegna, slowly approached the King as he gestured for her to come closer. She spoke of an experience she had working with a group of people with aphasia."

"What's that grandma?"

"It's a problem with language dear."

"Oh."

"During one session, Alegna asked the group to think about different ways they could communicate their feelings to a doctor if they had trouble talking. One person suggested writing things down. When the group was encouraged to think of additional ways to communicate, writing was all they could think of. Becoming flustered and in a last attempt to save her activity, Alegna blurted out, 'well what if...what if...your doctor couldn't read?' To which one of her clients replied, 'I'd shoot him.' Again, the

King was not amused and asked Alegna what she learned from this experience. She told him she learned how important it is to substep your activity goals appropriately.

"Then kids, it was my turn. I remember that I was so nervous that I could hear my heart beating in my ears! I eventually blurted out that during one of my placements, as I was reporting the results of an articulation assessment to a parent, I said that I noticed some 'groping behaviours,' to which the parent replied, 'I don't think so. His hands were on the table the whole time.' At that point I realized I should have said 'articulatory groping behaviours' and provided some clear examples of what I meant. Again there was silence, so I remarked, 'I learned that it is important to be clear when you are reporting information to parents because they are not familiar with our professional jargon.'"

"Did the King let all of you into Castle Poe Grandma?"

"I will leave that to your imagination children. Now go wash up and help me set the table for dinner."

"But grandma you never told us the name of the King."

"You're right, I didn't. We didn't like to talk about him much."

"Tell us please, please!"

"His name children ... was King Portfolio."