

Look Who's TALKING

2005 Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association Newsletter University of Toronto

A FOND FAREWELL

By DR. BERN O'KEEFE

Errol Davis took me to lunch on my first day at the University and my first day in the big city. It was August 1, 1971. I was, at age 28, blissfully oblivious to how unprepared I was for both the University and the big city. As we left for lunch (at a place called



Dr. Bern O'Keefe

Malony's across the street from the Old Church at 88 College), Errol complimented me on my new suit. I asked him how he knew it was a new suit and he answered, "Well, I can tell by the tags on the left sleeve." Now, 34 years later, I can remember to take off the tags; but instead, I've decided to hang up the suit for good.

The hero of my youth, a baseball player named Ted Williams, always encouraged players to "quit while they were on top". I don't know if I've reached the top, but know I've gone as high as I can go, and that it's time to make room for the next generation. While I can, I want to shank golf balls, sip Friday night martinis with my beautiful bride Maureen, and spoil my granddaughter Kennedy Belle O'Keefe. Not letting go completely, I'll remain involved with Speaking Differently, an organization for people who, as we say, communicate in different ways.

I've seen the department grow from three full-time faculty and 26 diploma students to nearly a dozen truly gifted scientists and teachers

preparing close to 100 students at every graduate level. I've watched as we've moved from the dusty (okay, dirty) confines of a converted church through to the luxuries of 500 University Avenue. When we started I knew the students were smarter than me, but I also knew I could (mostly) fool 'em. They're even smarter now, but I've grown

better at fooling too! I was privileged to work with the wonderful Jean Walker who made everything possible, with Marg Stoicheff, the wisest woman I've ever known, with Paula Square, who taught us to think big, and with Luc DeNil, who understands the meaning of kindness and support as well as the meaning of "boss". I was also privileged to supervise Rupal Patel, the first recipient of a Ph.D. from the department. The day Rupal received her degree was the day I knew we'd come all the way – we were a real player.

So that's me that you see walking into the sunset, enjoying memories of my pals from the old days (Sandy Henderson, Jinks Hoffmann, Colin Painter (he loved sports), Mikael and Susan Kimelman), and all the pals that still roam the department. But mostly I'll remember the students who became terrific speech-language pathologists and who go out there every day and make a difference in people's lives. It was an honour to be a part of it all.

The OUTGOING CLASS of 2005

By LINDSAY WHITE, OTS



The count-down has begun! Four more months and we'll be on our own (for better or worse).

Since the last newsletter, we've had three separate placements and we're starting to feel a little better about taking on the world. Some of us went as far as Edmonton and Calgary for placements. I can't help but wonder if people would have volunteered to go if it weren't for the Calgary Stampede coinciding with their time in

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Class of 2005

THE OUTGOING CLASS OF 2005



Riding the mechanical bull in Calgary, Alberta

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Alberta (I'll refer you to the picture of one of my colleagues riding a mechanical bull – need I say more?). Our most recent placement was in January and February and yet again, a couple of

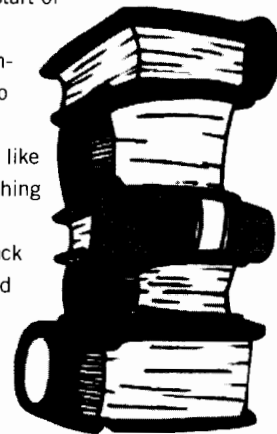
adventurous students thought it might be interesting to head up to Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. On top of working hard in placement, they found the time to venture out into the frigid elements to see what the great North had to offer.

In our last months as students, the race is on to learn it all, to get the jobs, and to get hitched... Since the summer, there have been 7 engagements and a whole lot of diamonds being shown around. So it looks like a lot of us will be planning weddings while studying for the dreaded CASLPA exam.

But as you are all aware, graduate life is not all fun and games. It's back to the books for us now and we certainly have our work cut out for us between now and the start of

our final placement in May. Faculty and alumni are starting to talk to us about resumés and interviewing so it looks like this whole graduation thing is really happening!

Some day we'll look back at grad school with fond memories but for now, the count-down continues...



INTRODUCING ROSEMARY MARTINO - GET READY, this is a lot of information to **SWALLOW!**



Rosemary Martino

By LISA MCQUEEN, 9T9

The Department of S-LP at U of T's "newest" addition is Rosemary Martino. She's not completely new though – Rosemary has been involved with the M.H.Sc. program since 1997. She pioneered the first Canadian University course in dysphagia – a course that is now part of the mandatory curriculum for S-LP training.

Rosemary's professional area of interest centres on Swallowing Disorders. She also recently completed a PhD in Clinical Epidemiology. She credits her PhD with teaching her how to critically appraise literature, develop high quality evidence, run proper randomized clinical trials and develop standardized, yet clinically feasible

scales to measure health outcomes. Partnering with Canadian Institute for Health Research, Rosemary is currently in the process of validating a swallowing screening tool, which she also developed. She acknowledges several U of T alumni for being directly involved with the validation of this tool!

If all that wasn't quite enough, Rosemary is also teaching the 30-hour Dysphagia course in the S-LP program at U of T. The Clinical Swallowing Assignment is always a favourite of the students as it allows them to get some "hands on" experience with a real patient, as well as get valuable feedback from clinical educators. Rosemary sends out a huge "thank-you" to all the CEs who have participated over the years, especially those who have been willing to take on pairs of students to accommodate the ever-growing class size.

So what do the upcoming S-LP students have to look forward to in the Dysphagia course? Rosemary reports that she will add more lectures in pediatric dysphagia as she feels this will be a "hot" area for SLPs in the near future. She would also love to have more opportunity for direct contact with the students, perhaps a seminar format for some classes, which allow for greater interaction and self-directed learn-

ing. With the vast amount of material required to cover, this could be a challenge. However, Rosemary invites suggestions for making this possible.

One would think all the above would easily eat up every hour of the day...not so. Rosemary still finds time to burn off excess energy by going for a good run. When she really wants to wind down though, kayaking is her passion. She hopes to one day run a 7-day dysphagia/sea kayaking conference in Belize (we hear swallowing disorders are particularly prevalent among the sea creatures...) I know my name will be first on the sign-up list!

We would like to welcome Rosemary to her new position in the S-LP Department! We know the students will benefit from her infectious energy and enthusiasm.



**Former graduates
of the Speech-
Language
Pathology program**

are asked to lend a copy of their class composite pictures to the department, to be scanned for display in the department. We are asking for class pictures for the following years: 1974, 1976, 1979, 1981 and 1991 - 2004 inclusive. All pictures will be returned to you. We appreciate any photos you can provide!

Ian Roth, Arbor Award Winner

Alumnus Ian Roth was nominated for an Arbor Award by faculty member Luigi Girolametto this year in recognition of his four years of volunteer service to the Alumni Association, and particularly for his contributions as editor of the annual Alumni newsletter. The Arbor Award is presented to individuals who have contributed significantly to the University of Toronto. The award was presented September 9, 2004 by outgoing University of Toronto President Robert Birgeneau, and Interim U of T President Frank Iacobucci in a ceremony on the lawn of the President's Residence. Congratulations Ian!

Left, Deryk Beal, Alumni Association President; right, Ian Roth, Arbor Award recipient



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

A Few Words From Fern Sussman, Alumni of the Year Award

By FERN SUSSMAN, 7T3

I'd like to thank those of you who are responsible for giving me this award. It is truly an honour to be recognized by your peers. And what a group of peers this is. My husband, Jackie, has met a lot of speech language pathologists in our thirty year marriage and he constantly has told me how lucky I am to work with such talented and caring people. His only negative remark has been regarding the inordinate length of the voice messages that have been left on our answering machine by speech pathologists. I make no apology. We are a verbal group and talk is our business.

When the University of Toronto, Department of Speech Pathology accepted me into the program in 1971 I thought that I couldn't have been happier. I was, however, wrong. I was even happier when I graduated from speech pathology in 1973.

My first job was as an itinerant speech pathologist with the Dufferin Peel Roman Catholic School Board in Mississauga. I was excited – I had my first car, my first apartment, my very own Peabody Picture Vocabulary Set and a very cool speech mirror which could also be used as a felt board. It didn't matter to me that my office was in the school's broom closet or that the children I withdrew from their classroom often hid behind their books when they saw me standing in the doorway. I stayed with that job for six years until my first child, Jillian, was born.

It was at this point in my career, in the midst of raising my children, that I became "Queen of the Locums." If, as Woody Allen says, "ninety per cent of success is just showing up" I was successful. I showed up for short-term contracts at all of the major speech clinics in the Toronto area: at Erin Oak, at Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre, at Adventure Place, at Surrey Place, and for private therapy groups in my own backyard. I even managed to find a job through my friend and old classmate, Barb Wylde, doing assessments in the early 80's for Luigi Girolametto, as

he began to conduct some of his initial research on child language. And it was during this time that I, like so many others before me and after, had a professional identity crisis. I went back to school and studied creative writing and magazine production. I wrote children's books that remain unpublished until this day.

And then one day, I responded to an ad in the OSLA newsletter for a position at the Hanen Centre. Elaine Weitzman, now the Executive Director of the Hanen Centre, offered me the job and fifteen years after I last walked out of the Church on Elizabeth Street, I became a "born-again Speech Pathologist." I discovered what I loved to do – work with families of very young children. I've had so many wonderful opportunities at the Hanen Centre: opportunities to develop programs and resources for children with autism, opportunities to travel and broaden my profes-

sional knowledge by meeting speech pathologists all over the world, opportunities to still be involved all these years later in Luigi's research, and best of all, opportunities to work on a daily basis with people like Elaine and Barb, who I respect and call friends.

To the students in the room, I hope that you'll be encouraged by my personal story. I know that those term papers and exams can be daunting. Some of the clinical placements can be pretty scary too. But it really is worth the Prozac. The field of speech language pathology is so diverse, your colleagues will be wonderful, albeit they will talk a lot. I guarantee you will love it, as I still do today.

Alumni of the Year Award



ALUMNI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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|--|------------|
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THE BIGGEST CLASS EVER AT U OF T!

By GAIL GUMPRICH, OT6

The year has been speeding by and we are already doing our first clinical placements. This class of thirty-eight women is the largest class that U of T has ever had, which means that our placements are spread out across quite a large area. We were all really looking forward to applying the knowledge we had acquired over the

past 6 months of classes, and to having a bit of a break from the classroom setting (though we all miss each other terribly!). The way that the course material taught to this point has prepared us for our clinical work is really quite impressive. Most students I have spoken to feel much more prepared and qualified to do the necessary work than they thought they would.

Through the first semester's heavy course load, the First Years really got to know each other. The class is big but tight! The "girls", as we call ourselves in the absence of even one man, have participated in many extra-curricular activities together. These include social gatherings such as



Class of 2006

potlucks, drinks after school, huge group shopping excursions, dinners out, and even clubbing. Every week or so, someone brings in a huge batch of cookies for the entire class to share (inspired by Jo Deluzio!). Other more formal activities include the frequent IPEs (Inter-Professional Experience) as well as the Run for the Cure way back in September.

The class is composed of women from a wide range of backgrounds, which makes group work particularly interesting because of the broad scope of knowledge in the class. We come from all over the country, from British Columbia to Newfoundland and a few places in between! The sharing nature

ARTICLES SHORT OR LONG, Always Welcome!

Is there anything you would like to see written about, or an experience or thought you wish to share with other alumni?

We welcome your input into your newsletter, alums!

Contact the editor, with an article or with an idea for one, at any time of the year, through the Graduate Department of Speech-Language Pathology, speech.path@utoronto.ca, Attention Janice Waugh Bennett.



of the class makes the out-of-towners feel welcome, and the stressful times that inevitably come with being a student are much easier.

In short, this year's first year class is absolutely fantastic!

Just Something I've Been Wanting To Say . . .

By JANICE WAUGH BENNETT, OT4

Being accepted into the Graduate Department of Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Toronto was the best thing that could have happened to me. The weight of that good fortune and my gratitude for it have sat heavily on me since I graduated because I have not found a means of expressing my profound appreciation. The Admissions Committee of the Department strives to accept qualified students from diverse backgrounds. In my case, I had worked for many years as a day care teacher, and had come to a dead-end some years before in terms of career advancement, intellectual stimulation, and consequently, happiness. At one time confident that I had many transferable skills and much valuable knowledge, I sought a lateral career change, but found every door to related work closed. It became clear that the common conception of my work experience was

diaper changing and singing, "The Wheels On The Bus" all day. It took a toll on my self-esteem. I realized I wanted to re-train, and chose speech-language pathology as a career to pursue.

I applied to four programs, received rejections from two, and was wait-listed for two. It makes me smile now to remember that I fell asleep every night for awhile praying that if there was already another letter on its way saying I was not accepted, that the letters on the page be miraculously moved around to say that I was. When the e-mail with the good news finally arrived, I had to read it slowly three times over to be sure I wasn't missing the one crucial "not" or "regret" or "wish you the best" that I had become so accustomed to seeing. I wasn't, and have been conscious ever since of my great good fortune that somebody in the Department somehow saw something in all those papers I submitted that no one else, anywhere else, had, that suggested

I should be given this opportunity.

I finished the program last summer, and have been working happily in my new field ever since. What a gift it is to wake up every morning looking forward to going to work. I've forgotten what it is to regret that it's Monday and look forward to Friday. Every day is an intellectual treat.

It is my hope that in writing this piece I have not only finally expressed the depth of my appreciation, but also encouraged the Department to cultivate and protect a willingness to accept students from a variety of backgrounds, and to develop a means to support them throughout their training. If it does, it will have an alumni with a different face than that of programs with more traditional admissions practices, but also one with more diversity in its skill-base. To borrow a movie line that I love, "Allah loves wondrous variety"! Thank you, thank you, thank you all!

Thinking About A PhD?

Here's what's happening at U of T these days...

FROM THE *Speech Fluency Lab* of Dr. Luc DeNil

(luc.denil@utoronto.ca):

"My current research interest is focused on the use of behavioural, kinematic and functional neuroimaging techniques to study the neural bases of speech fluency disorders, including developmental stuttering, neurogenic and psychogenic stuttering, and speech disorders in Tourette Syndrome patients."

FROM THE *Child Language Lab* of Dr. Luigi Girolametto

(l.girolametto@utoronto.ca):

"My research interests include: mother-child interaction, educator-child interaction, caregiver-administered language intervention, and investigations of the effectiveness of group language intervention for young children."

FROM THE *Language Development Lab* of Dr. Carla Johnson

(carla.johnson@utoronto.ca):

"I am interested in language and cognitive development, particularly in school-aged children. Other interests include evidence-based practice and outcomes measurement for childhood speech and language disorders."

FROM THE *Swallowing Lab* of Dr. Rosemary Martino

(rosemary.martino@utoronto.ca):

"My research and teaching focuses on understanding swallowing impairment and its impact on the patient. I am interested to assess whether earlier identification of dysphagia will in turn initiate earlier intervention, and thereby reduce the incidence of impairment sequelae such as pneumonia, malnutrition and psychosocial issues."

FROM THE *Oral Dynamics Lab* of Dr. Pascal Van Lieshout

(p.vanlieshout@utoronto.ca):

"As a Canada Research Chair, my area of expertise is oral motor control in speech, in particular regarding the 'interface' between higher order processes (e.g., linguistic functions) and speech motor control. A separate line of research is dedicated to oral motor control in swallowing, in collaboration with Dr. Steele from the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. Studies in the lab include experimental studies on normal adult speakers, adult people who stutter, and people with oral motor disorders due to nervous system damage (apraxia, dysarthria, Parkinson's disease). My main theoretical framework is based on Dynamical Systems Theory and the way it can be applied to normal and disordered oral motor control. The lab is set up to study the physiology and physics of the oral motor system and to that end has many different techniques available to assess oral movements of lips, tongue, and jaw (2D and 3D Electro-magnetic midsagittal Articulography; EMMA), facial motions (3D video; APAS), muscle activity (Electromyography; EMG), voicing (Electrolaryngograph; ELG), respiratory activity (Respirtrace) and acoustics (PRAAT)."

FROM THE *Language Sciences Lab* of Dr. Elizabeth Rochon

(elizabeth.rochon@utoronto.ca):

"My research and teaching interests relate to the theory, assessment and treatment of aphasia, dementia and related disorders. Research interests lie in identifying the nature and components of linguistic and cognitive impairments subsequent to brain damage, and in developing new treatment approaches for aphasic language impairments. In addition, I am interested in language processes in normal aging."

FROM THE *Voice and Resonance Lab* of Dr. Tim Bressmann

(tim.bressmann@utoronto.ca):

"My research interests are in the areas of structurally related speech and voice disorders. The two main foci of my research are head and neck cancer and craniofacial syndromes. A major component of my research is the use of two- and three-dimensional ultrasound imaging for the analysis of tongue function in speech."

FROM THE *Childhood Hearing Loss Lab* of Dr. Alice Eriks-Brophy

(a.eriks.brophy@utoronto.ca):

"My current research focuses on outcomes of auditory oral language intervention for children with hearing loss as well as multicultural issues in assessment and intervention for children from minority culture backgrounds. Research currently in progress in my lab focuses on the impact of hearing loss on the development of speech perception, speech production, language, and reading abilities in children receiving auditory oral rehabilitation."

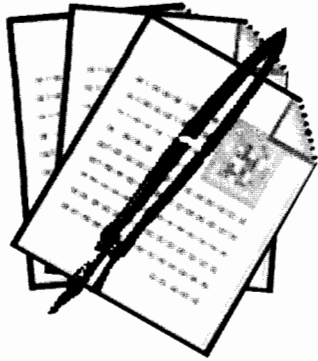
FROM THE *Augmentative and Alternative Communication Lab* of Dr. Bern O'Keefe

(b.okeefe@utoronto.ca):

As Dr. O'Keefe is retiring this year, contact the Department for information regarding future projects in this lab at (416) 978-2770.

CORNER: FOCUS ON STUTTERING

RESEARCH



By **JANICE WAUGH BENNETT, OT4**

It is estimated that 16 to 32% of children who stutter have a phonological or articulation disorder as compared to only 6% of the general population (Blood et al. 2003; Blood & Seider, 1981). Doctoral candidate Jay Sasisekaran cites this statistic as one of the reasons for her interest in the investigation of the phonological encoding skills (defined as cognitive processes involved in the retrieval of speech sounds during speech production) of persons who stutter. It has been theorized that cognitive-linguistic factors play a role in stuttering, which is primarily a speech motor disorder.

Ms. Sasisekaran was this year's winner of the Paula Square Travel Award, which she used to present her work at the ASHA conference in November 2004. In her study, she began by

matching stuttering and non-stuttering adult subjects between 18 and 48 years of age on the skill of lexical decision-making. Subjects sat in front of a monitor on which words and non-words were flashed, and were asked to indicate by pressing a button as fast as possible when they saw a real word. In this way subjects were matched on their ability to recognize words within a particular time frame. Following this, subjects were shown pictures on the screen, and were asked to name the picture silently in their minds, which required them to perform phonological encoding. Two different tasks followed: 1) a phoneme monitoring task, in which the subject pressed a button if a particular speech sound was present in the word, and 2) a rhyme monitoring task, in which they determined if the word rhymed with another. In the first task, only part-word encoding had to be done in order to make the required decision, while in the second task, whole-word encoding was required. These two tasks will allow Ms. Sasisekaran to compare the phonological encoding skills of people who stutter to that of non-stutterers at both the segmental and whole word level.

Ms. Sasisekaran hopes this basic research in stuttering will eventually contribute to clinical practice by creating awareness among clinicians regarding the optimal level of linguistic complexity in therapy materials (e.g., Ryan, 1980). She

also hopes to contribute to a theoretical framework for clinical work, which is crucial, because having a framework that is well-supported by research allows clinicians to explain treatment decisions to parents and adult clients. A theoretical framework is also helpful to clinicians in setting distinct goals, tracking progress, making prognoses, and increasing client motivation.

While this research has focused on adults who stutter, Ms. Sasisekaran is interested in pursuing work that looks at children. Future research endeavors for Ms. Sasisekaran may include conducting a longitudinal study that looks for correlations between performance on standardized tests of stuttering and later development of on-line phonological encoding skills, or investigating the long-term implications of phonological processing deficits in children who stutter as they grow older.

We wish her the best in her future work!

Contact the Speech Fluency Lab of the Graduate Department of Speech-Language Pathology at (416) 946 - 8635 for more information on this and other ongoing projects in stuttering.

Please give generously . . .

Yes, I would like to support the **Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association at the University of Toronto.**

I have inserted a *cheque for \$____.____ in support of the **Margaret Stoicheff Bursary**. The Bursary is presented to a University of Toronto Department of Speech-Language Pathology student in the final year of the clinical Master of Health Science program who demonstrates significant financial need to help offset the expense of completing the program.

I have inserted a *cheque for \$____.____ in support of the **Paula Square Travel Award**. The travel award is bestowed upon a University of Toronto Department of Speech-Language Pathology doctoral student who has had research accepted for presentation at a conference and requires significant travel expenditure to attend.

* Please make cheques payable to the Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association and send them to:

Attn: Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association
Graduate Department of Speech-Language Pathology
Rehabilitation Sciences Building Room #160
500 University Avenue, 10th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 1V7

Thank you!