

SAFAGRAM

President's Message *by Doug Spurgeon*



Soon it's time for the holiday vacation exodus. Marks are in or soon to be. Now you just need time to relax, unwind, and prepare for the next intake.

Since I know you will all have copious amounts of time to donate to Association business over the holidays (okay, you can stop laughing now), here is some food for thought.

We need to update our Association Constitution. Any feedback from the membership would be greatly appreciated as this task unfolds. Please take some time over the next couple of months to browse through the Constitution and identify sections that you feel seem to be outdated or need to be revamped. We all have to vote on the changes. The more individuals who look through the Constitution the better chance we have of generating a Constitution that reflects the membership's view of present and future working conditions, thereby allowing the Association to keep current with changing times.

Other areas we need people to think about are positions that are vacant on committees. We still need representation from all sections. To have input on the affairs of the Institute, we need your help and your voice on issues that concern you. If there are any outstanding issues, please drop by the office or e-mail us your concern so that we can try to resolve the minor things. The larger issues may take some time, but the sooner we can get started on them the sooner we can resolve them.

To start 2008, let's all work on putting the fears of "being close to the Association" away. This Association will work effectively only if its members work together. We need to have input from all sections. If we all work together, then the Association will stand stronger in the New Year and for many more years to come.

As the New Year rings in, I hope you and your families are in good health. I wish all of you the best of the holiday season. ❖



*Best wishes for a restful, enjoyable holiday season
from the SAFAGRAM Editorial Board.*

Join your fellow colleagues at the Annual SAFA Christmas Party on
Thursday December 13, 4-7 p.m. at the Four Nines.

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Printed by

First On Colour

SAFAGRAM is published by the SAIT Academic Faculty Association (SAFA) five times a year usually closer to the end of the months of October, December, February, April, and June. Deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month preceding publication. Send submissions to SAFAGRAM, care of the SAFA office, N201 or e-mail submissions to luda.paul@sait.ca. Please keep submissions under 300 words, double-spaced. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length, or content. SAFAGRAM editorial policy, as approved by the SAFA Executive on June 14, 1995, is as follows:

1. The Editorial Board has the final say as to what is included or deleted from the newsletter.
2. Editorial Board decisions about newsletter material must be agreed to by consensus.
3. The newsletter will include a disclaimer stating that the views expressed in its content do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.
4. All material included in the newsletter must
 - be signed by the author when submitted to the editors, but anonymity may be requested and granted for printing.
 - be based on "reasoned argument" if personal criticism is used.
 - not involve name-calling.
 - not include sexist, racist, or homophobic comments.
 - be related to SAIT, although this will be interpreted broadly.

The views expressed in SAFAGRAM do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Board or SAFA.

Library Report



by Dave Weber and Nora Robinson

⇒ SAIT Archives

The SAIT Archives is housed in the Library. For this issue of the SAFAGRAM, we asked Christie Teterenko, our Archivist, to give you an update on the Archives.

Did you know SAIT has an archival collection? A small collection of archival materials was collected and preserved for the past number of years by volunteers from SAIT's Alive. This past May, SAIT hired its first-ever, full-time archivist. At the Archives, we have been working on preparing policies and procedures for the operation of the Archives, preserving and identifying photographs from the George Webber photo collection, and providing reference services to those wishing to obtain information from the Archives. Volunteers from SAIT's Alive are assisting with the work at the Archives, and their contributions are invaluable.

With renovations and clean-up complete in the basement of the Library, the SAIT Archives was able to acquire extra storage space in the Library to hold archival materials. This extra space will be used for current and future growth of the collection and allow the current Archives to be used as a research room for volunteers and researchers.

If you would like to know more about the SAIT Archives, please contact Christie at local 4688, christie.teterenko@sait.ca, or stop by the Library to meet her.

⇒ Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition

We are happy again to be a part of hosting exhibits from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition collection. In September, we featured a collection called "Then and Now: Alberta Communities," which celebrated Alberta's centennial through story and photograph panels.

In November, we received a collection called "Generation Gap." According to the accompanying material, "half the art works in this collection are more 'historical' and convey lifestyles with homesteading connotations. The other art works reference contemporary lifestyles with more urban connotations."

We invite you to stop by to see the display.

⇒ Library Research Instruction

As of November 20, 2006, we have delivered 92 library instruction sessions to over 1900 students. Our instructional program includes basic introductory tours, a library research skills workshop that is integrated into technical and business communications courses, and specialized workshops that are developed on request. Our goal is to show students how to effectively locate and use information by utilizing resources from the Library: books, e-books, the video collection, Library databases, and the web.

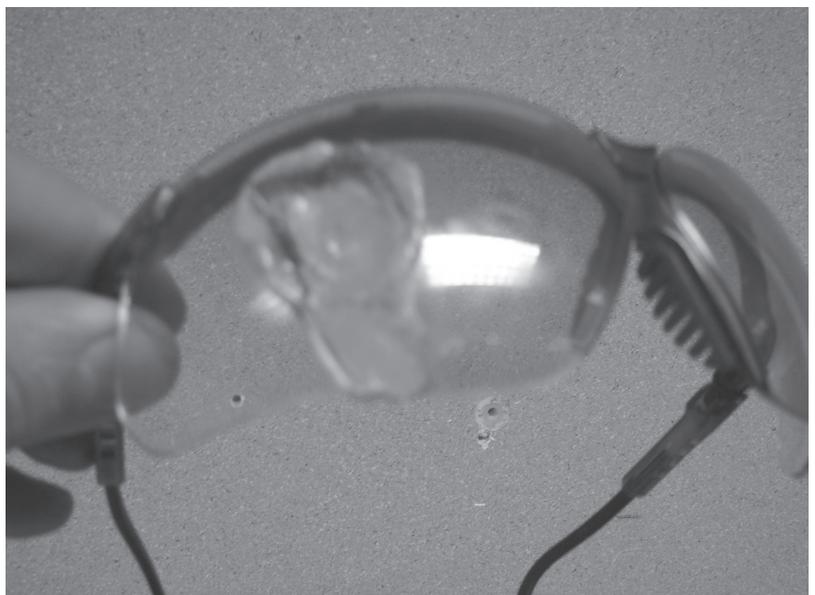
If you would like to book an instructional session, please contact Nora Robinson (4073) or Kat Marlowe (8515). ◆

Near Miss

by Glen Moman, Manufacturing and Automation

During our last pre-employment class, one of our students had a "near miss." Because he was wearing his safety glasses, he averted a red-hot piece of steel from hitting him in the eye. If you look at the photo, you will get an idea of the extent of damage that may have resulted.

I contacted a representative of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety who informed me that there is an award called "The Wise Owl Award." It is given to young people in the trades to promote occupational health and safety. This award, and also awards from SAIT and UVEX, the safety glasses' manufacturer, was presented to our student, Codie Wiens, on November 16. This recognition gives us an opportunity to promote personal protective equipment (P.P.E.) while working in our lab environments as well as teaching the importance of wearing P.P.E. in the industry. ◆



Labour Relations Report



by Matthew Hamilton,
Labour Relations Officer

In this edition of the SAFAGRAM, I would like to point out some changes that have occurred. The header for my articles will change from FAQs to Labour Relations Report and will include updates and discussions on matters of interest.

The Labour Relations Report will periodically include an FAQ, but I would also like to use this new section to update faculty on labour issues, market trends, working conditions, etc.

New Information Pamphlets. SAIT has two new pamphlets available for Faculty, Librarians, and Educational Counsellors: (1) Harassment and Discrimination and (2) Employee Assistance Program (EAP). If you are interested and would like a copy of either one, please contact the Human Resources Department.

Test Anxiety

Marta Edgar, SAIT Student Counselling Services

Test anxiety is experienced to some degree by almost all students. It is desirable to be somewhat anxious, as it mobilizes our resources to face the challenge. The problem starts when the anxiety is so high it reduces performance, preventing students from demonstrating their abilities. The symptoms can be mainly physical (nausea, headache, etc.), or mainly emotional (crying, irritability), or both. The main sign is “blinking out” (difficulty recalling information) and/or racing thoughts.

Test anxiety usually occurs in the following situations:

1. Poor preparation – It is realistic to feel anxious if one does not prepare adequately. If this is the only reason, the student should focus on developing better study skills and time management, and the anxious feelings will most likely decline. Counselling, study skills seminars, tutoring, and learning strategists can all be helpful. Please refer students to the Learning Centre (MC 221) and Counselling Services (MA 205).
2. Disabilities – A learning disability or other disability may prevent a student from succeeding in spite of hard work. It is best to obtain assessment of the disability and appropriate accommodations (e.g. hearing aid, extra time, etc.) through the Disabilities Counsellors (MC 221).
3. Anxiety – True test anxiety occurs in spite of hard work, good preparation, and adequate abilities. It may be difficult to imagine why a smart, well-prepared student should feel so extremely anxious. Yet students who are highly motivated, and/or perfectionistic, and who take responsibility for their performance often put an immense pressure on themselves to excel.

Most of these students can learn to reduce their anxiety. This task is much easier with the help of a counsellor who can work with the student to identify the roots of the problem, practice relaxation skills, and change negative-thought patterns. Instructors can be helpful by providing practice questions similar to those presented on exams. Practicing test-taking with similar questions in a similar environment is one of the most helpful interventions that reduce test anxiety. ♦♦

Grievance Updates. There are currently two new grievances underway: The first one is a policy grievance that pertains to the alteration of instructors’ instructional units class contact hours to a lower instructional units class contact hours and the second grievance deals with a pro-ration of class contact hours for instructors hired after July 1, 2007.

If you have questions about the SAIT/SAFA Collective Agreement, please contact me by e-mail, phone (Ext. 8321), or visit me in the Senator Burns Building, N201. Please remember that all conversations are strictly confidential. ♦♦

Technology: An Educational Bridge for Aboriginals

by Roxanne Wheaton,
School of Information Technology

The evolution and growth of technology is astounding and comes in many different forms, including the internet. Alberta, with its SuperNet and other initiatives, is leading the country in using technology to access rural areas.

Aboriginals’ approach to learning is holistic, encompassing spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. It is extremely important that Aboriginal curriculum be flexible enough to integrate local traditional knowledge, which encompasses values, customs, facts, and experiences, that has been passed on orally by Aboriginal people for generations, typically by mentoring and storytelling.

Can technology fit into holistic learning, allowing Aboriginal students to stay in their communities longer to continue their education? Alberta, with its SuperNet, is in a great position to lead the country in facilitating the education of Aboriginals. Using technology to reach Aboriginal students within their own communities has been a major asset to raising their level of education.

Using technology to address the learning needs of Aboriginals has had mixed support and results. For some, technology is a great resource to connect people to culture, language, and heritage. While others have concerns of traditional knowledge being misused, youth are being alienated from their heritage and inundated with materialism, pop culture, and the English language. Having appropriate protocols and an Aboriginal voice to protect access to traditional knowledge and culture may alleviate some of the concerns.

There are three ways that technology has been successfully used in educating Aboriginal students and allowing them to stay in their communities: (1) First Nations SchoolNet, (2) Career Pathways Program, and (3) In-Motion Trades Trailers. These initiatives ensure that the appropriate use of technology is possible to bridge the educational divide for Aboriginals. Technology is not culturally neutral; after the technology is in use, it’s still about building a student-teacher relationship. ♦♦

Sleep Disorders Conference

Don Leishman, Health and Public Safety

On October 4, SAIT Health and Public Safety, in partnership with the CHR and Alberta Lung Association, put on a one-day conference to address Sleep Disorders. The presentations were by six local world-class researchers. Over 200 people from Alberta were in attendance, and by all reports, it was a complete success.

Topics included Chronic Insomnia, Obstructive Sleep Apnea, Hypopneas in Children, Periodic Leg Movement Disorder, and Sleep Hygiene (not what you may think). Lectures were held in the Orpheus Theatre and lunch (sponsored by HPS) was held in the Symposium Room where exhibitors showed off their latest and greatest equipment.

This is the second time SAIT has hosted this event. In 2004,

the first conference of this type received rave reviews, and there was a call for this educational experience to be repeated. Similar conferences were launched in Edmonton (2005) and Lethbridge (2006).

Sleep apnea is thought to affect perhaps 4 to 5% of the adult population and can lead to life-threatening episodes of low oxygen levels in the brain. Lack of sufficient deep sleep can cause severe long-term heart and lung dysfunction. Excessive daytime somnolence reduces productivity and is thought to be a cause of many vehicle accidents.

Several thousand dollars raised from conference exhibitors and attendees will be used to provide scholarships for Respiratory Therapy students. ♦♦

I'm putting together a 45-minute PowerPoint presentation, but in honour of Christmas, it will seem like twelve days!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS! BJ HAMILTON/07