

What'SUP? Fall 2010

News of the School of Urban Planning at McGill University

Bonjour,

We thought it would be good to stay in touch with alumni and friends and to share news. So here's the first number of our new newsletter.

The past year has brought changes to the school, one of them a change for the worst. Since Jeanne Wolfe's death, we find ourselves asking very often, "What would Jeanne think? What would Jeanne say?" We miss her a lot, as many people do. To commemorate our teacher, colleague and friend, we have started to hold **Jeanne Wolfe Day** on December 3rd, her birthday.

The first Jeanne Wolfe Day brought together colleagues, former students and current students in the first-year studio space where Jeanne initiated young people to the joys and terrors of studio projects. Raphaël Fischler, whose dress followed the requirements spelled out in point 3 of the Jeanne Wolfe Day code of conduct (see sidebar), welcomed everyone; then David Brown reminisced about Jeanne's southern voyages with a large number of colour slides from his personal archive; finally, Sylvie Paré gave a talk about a current research project which started many years ago when she wrote a paper in Jeanne's History and Theory class, on the Cité Jardin du Tricentenaire. We were also treated to a little food and quite a bit of wine.

Another change involves the position that Jeanne once held. After a reign of eleven years, King David II abdicated his throne in favour of Prince Raphaël. The former ruler is said to enjoy his new status tremendously, especially for the freedom it afford him to pursue his interests in planning for urban sustainability and for climate-change mitigation and adaptation. Meanwhile, the new Head has been welcomed to his job by the announcement of a major budget cut and by the news of a full review of the school by the university, this winter. The new Director takes his job seriously as an enforcer of rules: on Jeanne Wolfe Day, he applied rule no. 2 in reply to a student who thought he looked better in his regular clothes than in Jeanne Wolfe garb.

STUDENTS & STUDIO PROJECTS

Another change is the significant increase in the number of **Ph.D. students**. Admitted under the current "Ad-hoc Doctoral Program in Urban Planning, Policy & Design," five new students brought the total number of Ph.D. candidates to twelve. The doctoral programme is a work in progress (which should lead to the creation of a formal Ph.D. programme in due course), but the arrival of so many smart young people has already had a good impact on the intellectual life of the school.

Other things have remained the same, and rightly so. Our **first-year Master's** students are, once again, a wonderful group of smart, committed and hard-working individuals. Their first studio project, in Émard/Côte-St-Paul, yielded five neighbourhood plans for use by the planning department of the Arrondissement Sud-Ouest. Their second studio project, this winter, will take them to Saint-Laurent, where the borough hopes to receive interesting ideas for the development of several sites whose future seems uncertain now.

On Jeanne Wolfe Day...

1. On Jeanne Wolfe Day, it will be OK to call "Lovey" anyone who makes the day more rich, more stimulating, more interesting or more enjoyable. This rule applies to colleagues, to students and even to senior administrators.
2. On Jeanne Wolfe Day, it will be acceptable to say "f... off" to anyone who takes away from the beauty of life or who makes it harder for us to enjoy our work. There will, however, be a limit of one "f... off" per person. Discretion is advised when applying this rule to senior administrators.
3. On Jeanne Wolfe Day, both men and women will adopt the following dress code:
 - cotton T-shirts will be worn over cotton trousers; both will be loose-fitting
 - a cardigan, in cotton for the summer, in wool for the winter, will be worn over the T-shirt but will be kept open; one button maximum will be closed
 - coats will be allowed but, like cardigans, will never be buttoned or zippered up
 - in all seasons, one will wear open sandals, preferably Birkenstocks, when indoors; sandals will be worn outdoors as well, except on major snow or slush days in the winter
 - hats, gloves, scarves and other items for sissies will be left at home
 - a simple purse or shopping bag will be allowed for carrying personal items, books & papers;
 - make-up & jewelry will be forbidden
 - there will, however, be no limit on the brightness of colours in T-shirts and cardigans
4. On Jeanne Wolfe Day, it will not be acceptable to pout, sulk, kvetch, dither or procrastinate. Anyone engaging in such behaviour will be subject to rule number 2 concerning the use of "f... off".
5. On Jeanne Wolfe Day, it will not only be allowed but even be encouraged to read material that has nothing to do with the course or project of the day. Contemporary fiction, molecular biology, arctic geomorphology, ceramic art or any other topic will be deemed relevant & important.
6. On Jeanne Wolfe Day, will be considered healthy any drink and food that increases one's happiness. Gin and tonic, french fries--if eaten with vinegar--, exotic foods with strange names, smells and colours--all will be considered good for you. "Mm...mm..." will be the expression of choice to express one's appreciation.
7. On Jeanne Wolfe Day, we will remember that McGill is not only a high-ranking research university but also a community-oriented, value-driven institution whose mission is to improve human well-being, promote the public interest and foster critical debate.

FUNDRAISINGFUNDRAISINGFUND

Here's how Jeanne would have put it: the School needs money!

With declining funds available for all types of teaching and learning activities, the school will have to rely increasingly on funds from other sources than the university budget. Research grants will of course be a major target; they will help us hire students as assistants and thereby give them interesting learning experiences, both on and off campus.

But learning is much more than taking classes and doing research. It must also involve interactions with professionals, visits to interesting places, lectures by leaders in the field, etc. To make such activities possible, the school is seeking funding from alumni, firms and other parties. Every donation will help.

Unless they are specifically earmarked by the donor for a fellowship, gifts to the school will be used to enrich teaching and learning in one of the following ways:

urban.studies@mcgill

This new seminar series, created in collaboration with the Department of Geography, will bring together scholars, students and professionals who work on various aspects of urban change and urban life. To keep costs low, most speakers will be from McGill or from Montréal.

SUP in the field

In addition to site visits for studio projects and the end-of-the-year trip that first-students organise on their own, several field trips in the region of Montreal will serve to increase students' awareness of new practices and to meet professionals on the ground.

Housing matters

Housing policy was a topic dear to Jeanne. We want to make sure that, at least every other year, we can offer a short course in that area (while awaiting the possibility of hiring a housing specialist...). This activity (and the new position, if it materialises) would help to establish links also to the domains of real-estate development and urban economics, in which activity is sorely lacking at McGill.

Donations should be made out to **McGill University** and be sent to Anand Sood, School of Urban Planning, McGill University, 815 Sherbrooke Street West, #400 Montréal (Québec) H3A 2K6

THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

FUNDRAISINGFUNDRAISINGFUND

Equally interesting and interested, our **second-year students** used their third studio projects to give advice to the Agence métropolitaine de transport on a *concept de réaménagement du Terminus Brossard/Panama* on the South Shore, to the town of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue on a draft *plan particulier d'urbanisme* for the northern sector of the town and its "eco-territory," to the Société de développement du boulevard Saint-Laurent on revitalisation strategies for the Main, and to the Preston Street Business Improvement Association (in Ottawa) on a concept plan for the Marco Polo Mixed Use Urban Village, a transit-oriented development for a vacant federal property (another studio project made possible thanks to alumnus Michel Frojmovic).

STAFF & RESEARCH

Meanwhile, professors have not remained idle either, quite the contrary. The number of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the school's courses has continued to go up, a reflection of interest in urban issues.

Scholarly research and service to the community have kept us very busy, too. **Madhav Badami**, who is jointly appointed with the McGill School of Environment, aims through his research and writing to bring wisdom to urban transport policy in low-income countries, and has helped to forge McGill's links to Indian universities. **Lisa Bornstein** has been leading a University-Community Research Alliance (CURA) to maximise the public benefits and minimize the public costs of megaprojects in Montréal. In a recent review by SSHRC, hers was declared to be "a model CURA" in its integration of university and community partners. **David Brown** has been at the forefront of nation-wide activities to address the issue of climate change in planning (with the Canadian Institute of Planners). He is currently helping to organise the World Ecocity Forum, which will take place in Montréal in August 2011.

Ahmed El-Geneidy has continued to amass an impressive number of grants and publications on various aspects of transportation planning. His Transportation Research at McGill (TRAM) team has become a key player in the field in Québec and his TRAM seminars have become a weekly rendez-vous for all people interested in the field. Aside from applying important rules and managing a declining budget, **Raphaël Fischler** has been involved in national and international efforts to improve planning education. He was just appointed co-chair of the joint committee of the Association of Canadian Urban Planning Programmes and the Canadian Institute of Planners to revise the country's accreditation criteria. **Jane Glenn**, now a Professor Emeritus, remains an *eminence grise* of the school and is currently pursuing her legal research in the Netherlands. Last but not least, **Nik Luka** has been in a whirlwind of research and conference travel, connecting the school with Europe, establishing links between urban design and transportation planning and exploring the relationship of information technology to citizen participation.

Anand Sood and **Gladys Chan** are doing well but are facing growing workloads. With more students in the school, with new concentrations in Urban Design and in Transportation Planning, and with more research going on, our administrative staff is much in demand. Send them your encouragements!

That's the news for now. There remains just enough space in this first newsletter to send all of you our very best wishes for the holiday season and for the coming year. May 2011 be a year of good health and various satisfactions. *A tous et à toutes, nos meilleurs vœux pour l'année à venir. Au plaisir de vous revoir en personne ou, au moins, de recevoir de vos nouvelles!*