

*Our monthly e-Bulletin provides quick updates on activities of THEN/HiER and its partners.*



## What's new with THEN/HiER?

\* **Viviane Gosselin**, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member, and Curator of Contemporary Issues at the Museum of Vancouver, has begun work on the upcoming exhibition co-produced by Options for Sexual Health and the MOV, *Sex Talk in the City*, scheduled to open in February 2013. The exhibition will explore the evolution of "sex talk" in Vancouver by addressing issues of sexual expression, diversity, and education, and investigating how sexuality has been discussed in the public sphere. The exhibition also examines how conceptions of sexuality materialize in ubiquitous ways in our lives in the form of public events, laws, objects, and images. The project involves the participation of Vancouver Queer Film Festival, Vancouver School Board, public health experts, sexologists, education scholars, historians, artists, activists, and youth. Read about the work of one of these participants, Christabelle Sethna, in this month's *Research Snapshot*.



\* **Approaching the Past**. The third *Approaching the Past* event, *Places and their Stories: Recognizing the History Around Us*, was a great success! Dr. Geoffrey Reaume and Jay Young, both from York University, connected history to places around Toronto, such as the historic wall around the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and Toronto Transit Commission stations such as Davisville and Eglinton West. Participants also were fortunate to get a tour of the historic Wychwood Barns and learn about their history as a streetcar maintenance facility. All were provided with a folder of resources and contact information for community members. The final event of the year will be *A Spring Walk: Connecting Architecture and Land with the Canadian and World Studies Curriculum* at the University of Toronto on May 9.



## Visiting Doctoral Student Program

THEN/HiER has awarded grants to four doctoral students to participate in this program this year, which will allow them to interact on a daily basis with students and faculty members at another university.

- *Vincent Boutonnet*, Université de Montréal, is observing and analyzing teaching practices related to the use of instructional resources in history education. He will be working with Dr. Penney Clark at the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia.
- *Sean Carleton*, Trent University, is looking at ways to generate new approaches to teaching and learning about British Columbia's history of education in order to create innovative possibilities for curricular and social change. He will be working with Dr. Chris Minns at the Economic History Department, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK.
- *Lindsay Gibson*, University of British Columbia, aims to enhance his understanding and conceptualization of historical thinking as applied to the methodology of designing a research study that assesses students' and teachers' ethical judgments. He will be working with Dr. Per Eliasson at the Department of Science, Environment, and Society, Malmö University, Sweden.
- *Eric Poitras*, McGill University, wants to expand the design of the MetaHistoReasoning Tool by building augmented reality applications as part of the existing interface. He will be working with Dr. Kevin Kee at the Department of History, Brock University.

## Bursaries for the Historical Thinking Project Summer Institute 2012

The following people have been awarded bursaries of up to \$750 each towards airfare to attend this year's Historical Thinking Project Summer Institute, which will take place July 9 to 14 at OISE/University of Toronto:

- *Kelsey Beaudry*, Education Programmer, North Vancouver Museum and Archives
- *Kenneth Favrholdt*, Executive Director/Curator, Osoyoos Museum Society
- *Karla Ferrario*, Teacher, Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School, Vancouver
- *Denise Hansen*, Education Specialist, Parks Canada Atlantic, Halifax
- *Michelle Jensen*, School Program Coordinator, Lougheed House Historical Site, Calgary
- *Heather McGregor*, Doctoral Student, UBC Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Vancouver
- *Elizabeth Tower*, Education Manager, Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, Halifax
- *Tatsiane Vaitulevich*, Doctoral Student, Department of History, University of Goettingen, Germany
- *Stacey Wood*, Teacher, Saint John High School, New Brunswick



THE  
Historical Thinking  
PROJECT

Congratulations to all our grant and bursary recipients!

## What's new with our partners?

\* **The British Columbia Historical Federation** has initiated British Columbia History Online, a project aimed at creating a comprehensive database of British Columbia history in a "Wikipedia" style format that is free to the public. The BCHF is looking for contributions of articles of any length about any aspect of BC history. Submissions can be made on the website, and will be vetted for accuracy.



\* **Parks Canada**, in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and the Historica-Dominion Institute, has created the War of 1812 website resource that includes Learning Resources for teachers and a topic search for student research.



\* **Canada's History** has extended the deadline for the Governor General's History Awards for Excellence in Teaching to April 10. Nominations can be made for educators who excel in the teaching of Canadian History or Social Studies. Self nominations are also encouraged.

## Graduate Student Committees

The Anglophone Graduate Student Committee has begun its Book Reading/Responding Club with *New Possibilities for the Past* (2011), edited by Penney Clark. Conversations have begun on our blog *Teaching the Past*.



Rose Fine-Meyer

Remember to visit the blog to read about issues and topics that graduate students interested in history education are talking about. Comment or contribute, participate in the discussion!

Also, committee members Rose Fine-Meyer, Samantha Cutrara, Laurence Abbott and Cynthia Wallace-Casey are pleased to have had their panel accepted for the upcoming Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) conference in Waterloo on May 27. In "What Ought to Predominate in History Education? Perceptions, Challenges, and Possibilities to Make the Past Present in Classrooms," panelists will speak about innovative scholarship taking place in history education across the country. Visit our Graduate Student Committee page for further updates.



Samantha Cutrara

Contact Samantha Cutrara or Rose Fine-Meyer.

The Francophone Graduate Student Committee has been very busy this past month. In spite of a severe snowstorm that forced us to postpone our meeting in Trois-Rivières, which will be rescheduled for a later date, we had a teleconference where we brainstormed about the theme of our Regional Annual Conference which will take place on October 25 in conjunction with the International Didactics of History, Geography, and Citizenship Education Symposium in Québec City. We have also updated our web page with the biography of a new committee member, Michel Trudeau, a student at Université Laval. Several new articles on our blog *Enseigner l'histoire* make worthwhile reading. For example, Marc-André Lauzon muses about young students' non-reflective historical consciousness and what needs to be put in place to allow them to achieve a more reflective historical consciousness. Michel Trudeau addresses an issue that recently has been making headlines in Québec media: a thematic approach in History and Citizenship Education courses for 4<sup>th</sup> year secondary students. And Vincent Boutonnet wonders if it isn't time to reflect differently on textbook use by teachers; rather than systematically condemning the use of textbooks, shouldn't we be asking how they are actually being used in classrooms? Contact Marie-Hélène Brunet.



Marie-Hélène Brunet

## Research Snapshots

This section of our monthly e-Bulletin highlights our members' research projects.

**Christabelle Sethna, Associate Professor**  
**Institute of Women's Studies/Faculty of Health Sciences**  
**University of Ottawa**



### Contraception: Much More than Preventing the Meeting of Ova and Sperm

My research interests include sex education, contraception and abortion history. I was mulling over how I could make my research more available to general audiences when Viviane Gosselin, Curator of Contemporary Issues at the Museum of Vancouver (MOV), asked me to participate in the exhibition project, *Sex Talk in the City*. Most academics are familiar only with the idea-to-research-to-print trajectory. My participation is, therefore, an opportunity to advance what is trendily termed "knowledge translation." I am delighted to work with a team of creative individuals who want to introduce museum audiences to the work of Canadian historians. It's a dream come true!

The history of contraception in Canada is deeply intertwined with the law, the secularization of society and women's changing status. According to Canada's Criminal Code, contraception and abortion were illegal from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onward. A small public birth control movement arose in the 1920s. It was supported by feminists and socialists, but was increasingly dominated by eugenicists. Intent on promoting contraception to curtail the fertility of the working classes, the handicapped, immigrants and nonwhites, eugenicists agreed on the need for contraception. They also insisted on sterilizing individuals they deemed unfit to procreate. Abortion remained a clandestine practice.

Contraceptives can be male- or female-dependent, or require the cooperation of both sexes. The birth control pill is entirely female-dependent. It was developed in the 1950s as a family planning aid for married women in the developed world and as a eugenically tinged population control mechanism in the developing world. The introduction of the pill into Canada in the early 1960s led many to lobby for Criminal Code reform. Due to the breakdown of religious authority, contraception, like abortion and homosexuality, came to be regarded as a matter of individual conscience. In 1969 Parliament decriminalized contraception and homosexuality. Abortion was legalized, albeit under very restrictive circumstances. The Supreme Court of Canada struck down this abortion law in 1988.



The pill is misunderstood as the catalyst for the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Yet young, single women were engaging in premarital heterosexual relations long before the pill was widely available to them. In fact, doctors were reluctant to prescribe it to this population because they feared promoting sexual immorality or were unsure about its side effects. Doctors did prescribe the pill to young, single women for menstrual irregularities or shortly before a marriage.

Some of my research is specific to Vancouver. My favourite artefact is *The Ubyyssey*, the University of British Columbia (UBC) student newspaper. I used headlines, articles, editorials, letters to the editor, cartoons, captions, advertisements and photographs from issues published in the 1960s to examine student experiences of the sexual revolution in regard to young, single women's sexual autonomy. My happiest find is an article about the bold exploits of Ann Ratel, a student reporter whose undercover sting operation in 1965 deigned to test the stated reluctance of the UBC Student Health Services (SHS) at Wesbrook Hospital to prescribe the pill to single female students. Ratel borrowed a wedding ring, assumed a false last name, and presented herself to the SHS as a newlywed. She was given a two-year prescription for *Ortho-Novum*. Under the pun-filled front-page headline, "Unortho-dox: Our bachelor girl perforates leaky Wesbrook pill policy," *The Ubyyssey* printed Ratel's prescription with the physician's signature mercifully blacked out.

Ratel's stunt ignited a firestorm. One student blamed the SHS for forcing single students to gamble on an unwanted pregnancy. Others denounced Ratel, reasoning that the SHS would now require women to produce marriage certificates for prescriptions. Still others accused the newspaper of sensationalism. The bluntest insisted that Ratel merely confirmed that the SHS would provide the pill only to married students.

The pill is now most widely used by young, single women for contraceptive purposes although some brands are designed to eliminate acne or reduce the number of menstrual cycles. Thanks to the popularity of the pill, contraception is viewed as a woman's duty. On the one hand, this responsibility allows a woman control over her fertility; on the other hand, she is often held culpable for an unwanted pregnancy. Today, renewed opposition to abortion may place even more emphasis on the importance of using contraception effectively. Or, it may signal that female-dependent contraception itself will come under fire because it is a profound symbol of women's sexual autonomy.

**\* MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**