

CURRENTS

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM COLLEGE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

Fall 2012/Winter 2013, Vol. 13, No. 1



**From the ashes
of tragedy**
Turning fear into action

Runner's High
The tie that binds

On Demand

Extending our reach with targetted programs



Letter from the editor

It's been two years since we redesigned *Currents* by turning it into a magazine format and changing the style of writing we use to bring you stories about the people who work and study at College of the North Atlantic.

We hope you've become familiar with the new look and that you've gotten comfortable within the pages, the way you sink into your favourite armchair.

Within the next few weeks we'll be sending out a survey to find out what you think about the magazine. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts, praise and constructive criticisms, so that we can continue to serve up stories that delight, inform and engage you, our readers.

In the meantime, take a look inside this edition for stories of ingenuity, creativity and inspiration. Learn more about how CNA supports employers across the province by providing contract training for their employees, and how the college contributes to the community through continuing education.

Enjoy the read!

Gina MacArthur

A sad farewell

Two years ago, when I took up my position as editor of *Currents*, one of the first people I interviewed was Connie Street. (*With friends like these*, Winter 2011, Pg. 10)

Connie was facing her second battle with cancer, but remained dedicated to serving the students at the Bonavista campus, in spite of her illness.

I was saddened to hear of her passing on October 10.

Connie knew that her prognosis was terminal, but in spite of that, she maintained a positive attitude. She told me that her diagnosis was a reminder to treasure every day, and to live her life to the fullest.

"Connie was indeed a special person and inspiration to all of us," says Campus Administrator Marilyn Coles-Hayley. "She always put the students first, and such dedication is commendable. She is going to be sadly missed at the Bonavista campus."

Our thoughts and best wishes are with Connie's colleagues and her family.

— G.M.



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Cover photo: Stephanie Cramm (front) is enrolled in College of the North Atlantic's new Disaster and Emergency Management (Post Diploma) program, which was developed by instructor Darren Butt (back, centre)

Currents, Fall 2012/Winter 2013, Vol. 13, No. 1

Currents is produced by College of the North Atlantic's Department of Marketing and Communications

Editor: Gina MacArthur
Contributing writers: Glenda McCarthy
Tanya Alexander
Design: Bridgette Reid
Publisher: Roger Hulan



Thinking outside the box

By Glenda McCarthy

It's a perfectly normal occurrence to hear students belting out songs when you walk past Deidra Strowbridge's classroom. And while you would expect that from Music Industry and Performance students, it's not something you expect from a Business Administration class.

Deidra, who teaches at the Clarendville campus, has been described as someone who thinks outside the box, especially when it comes to her job. Employing alternative methods, like getting her students to sing, helps her take something that's generally dry and turn it into something fun – something her students will have an easier time remembering.

Deidra has been a teacher for 14 years – every single one of them spent teaching at CNA's Clarendville campus. Initially, she intended to pursue a career in the information technology sector, and after graduating from a computer studies program at Cabot College, she worked for a number of companies in that field.

Then in 1998, while she was working in network administration with Health Canada in her hometown of St. John's, all of that changed. Her employer began transferring many of the positions to Halifax so she applied for a position with CNA. She soon got a call from the Clarendville campus, which changed the course of her career.

Deidra says the campus needed someone who was certified in Novell software to teach for a short period.

"After seriously considering this I decided to take the position," she says. "It was only for four months and it would be an interesting path to take. I took the position and I fell in love with teaching."

Deidra says that, as a kid, teaching was one of the many things she briefly thought about pursuing.

"There wasn't really one thing that I was in love with or wanted to pursue until I did my first computer course in high school. I loved computer programming. It was new and different. It allowed you to be creative in a new environment," she continues.

"As with many, I went to Memorial University first but found it very overwhelming. At that time I had a relative who was on the advisory board for the Computer Studies (MIS) Co-op program at the college. He thought that this program would be an excellent option for what I wanted to do. It was the best choice I ever made."

She returned to Memorial University where she gained degrees in education and business.

However, despite her colleagues' assertions that she's an "outside the box thinker", Deidra still doesn't feel her teaching techniques are that unusual.

"Since I have been teaching, the students' backgrounds have changed dramatically. Students want to learn but they also want to be entertained, to a degree, in that environment. They are used to being interactive in their home life and with their friends. Over the past few years I have tried to look at various ways that I could incorporate this into the classroom."

She certainly accomplishes that.

"I don't set out to think outside the box. I look at the material and think 'What is the best way to get this information across to the student? How would they benefit the most?' The style I choose depends on the students and the programs," she says.

"Depending on the group and the type of project I have seen varying degrees of success. I find when I do interactive projects in courses such as Organizational Behaviour, the discussion becomes livelier and students are more at ease in voicing their opinions. It's a great way for students from other programs to feel more at ease with each other in the classroom."

Deidra shows enormous dedication in her job but she also volunteers her time. For the past six years she has been the co-faculty advisor for the Students in Free Enterprise team, now known as Enactus Clarendville.

"Deidra's ability to teach is not limited to the walls of the classroom," says Paul Tilley, Business Marketing instructor at Clarendville campus and the co-faculty advisor for Enactus. He says working with class groups, working with the Enactus team and guiding students through their college experience are other ways she contributes.

"She is a mentor to her students. She expects a lot from them, and she gets it. I am amazed to see how much our students grow in two short years by rising to her challenges." 





LABRADOR

NEWFOUNDLAND

FAR FROM HOME

By Tanya Alexander

It's a family affair for the Penneys when it comes to international work.

Hailing from Glovertown, Jeff Penny, his wife Barb and their adult daughter Nicole all currently live on the opposite side of the globe. Their overseas adventure began when Jeff took a position at College of the North Atlantic-Qatar (CNA-Q), in 2009.

"I'm from Burin but lived for over 30 years in Glovertown. I taught high school for 20 years, and then became vice principal of a K-12 school there until I retired in 2009," says Jeff. "I realized I was ready to move on from Newfoundland but not from teaching."

He and his wife Barb had two sets of friends from Glovertown working at CNA-Q, so they talked to them about their experience at the campus.

"They told us what a good institution it was so we decided to apply," says Jeff. "I was lucky to get a Math position at CNA-Q and Barb got a position at the Qatar Canadian School."

He found what he expected and more at CNA-Q.

Now celebrating its 10-year anniversary, the Qatar Project became a huge success story for Newfoundland and Labrador, when the college was chosen by the State of Qatar to build and administer their first institution of technology in their capital city of Doha. Faculty and support staff from every province in Canada – some 500 Canadians – are working at CNA-Q, and finding an adventure of a lifetime in the beautiful, progressive country.

"I'm a math and science teacher and I have a lot of material I use in my classroom. When I got the job I asked what I should bring. I was told I didn't need to bring anything," Jeff says with amazement. "They have absolutely everything you need here. I couldn't want for anything else."

The Penneys' daughter Nicole began her international career when she was accepted for a master's practicum at CNA-Q. Her folks were already there and it was a unique opportunity for her to visit them, complete her education, and see a part of the world so far from her own.

"I've always heard of CNA-Q because of CNA in Newfoundland," says Nicole. "I went to study languages in Montreal, with French Immersion as my focus, but I had hoped to come to Qatar eventually."

With a Bachelor of Arts in languages, Nicole taught French Immersion for four years in Gander, before deciding to pursue a master's degree in Counselling Psychology at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN). That decision led to the opportunity to work in Qatar.

"I was finishing my master's at MUN with the option for an intern practicum. I proposed to do mine at CNA-Q and I was thrilled that both sides agreed," says Nicole.

She arrived in Qatar in January 2010 for a 12-week placement and enjoyed it so much she didn't want to leave when the practicum ended. She stayed to volunteer at the Qatar Canadian School, an English-speaking secondary school in Doha for Canadian students, grades Kindergarten to 11. The school follows curriculum developed in Alberta – widely known to have one of the best school systems in the world.

Nicole returned to Canada briefly to find work, but it wasn't long before she ended up back in Doha.

"I began work at the Qatar Canadian School as a student counsellor in August 2010, but my heart has always been with CNA-Q. When a position opened up at the campus, I took it," she says. "And I'm extremely happy to be here!"

Nicole works with a group of nine other counsellors who cater to the needs of some 2,500 CNA-Q students. She has found wonderful camaraderie with her colleagues, as well as plenty of professional opportunities.

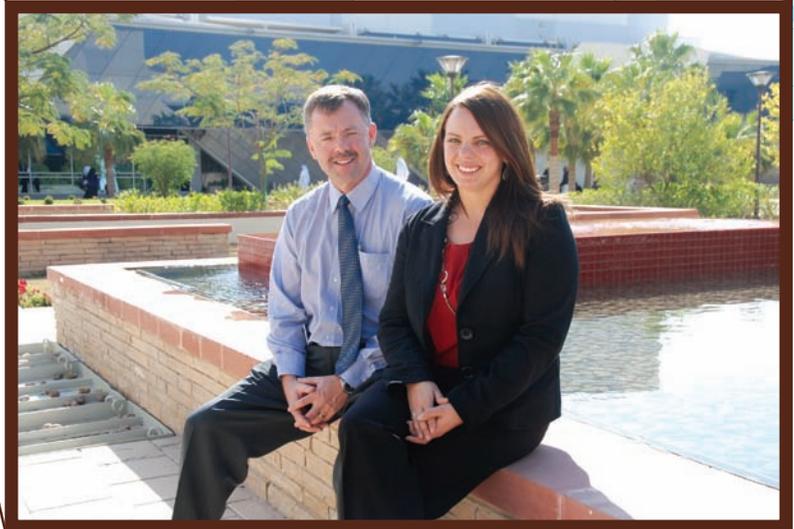
"We all work really well together," says Nicole, "and we have many opportunities for further professional development at CNA-Q. For example, I attend the Counseling Arabia conference in the UAE each year. I also attended the annual Canadian Association of College and University Student Services conference in Niagara Falls last June with a group of five students. These are things I likely would not have been able to experience if I weren't an employee of CNA-Q."

And in terms of what a young working professional can do with leisure time, there is no shortage of activities to get involved with in Doha, says Nicole. There are theatre groups, cooking classes, sports leagues, language

Newfoundland family finds a rewarding life in the Middle East

Qatar

“I absolutely recommend it – CNA-Q is an excellent place to work and Doha is an amazing place to live.” – Jeff Penney



Jeff Penney and his daughter Nicole both enjoy the many benefits of working at CNA-Q.

classes, aerobics and book clubs, just to name a few.

“I spend time with friends and family and go to socials, movies and the beach. I’m also part of the steering committee of a group called Canadians in Qatar. This group aims to bring together Canadians living in Doha through different events.”

There are people from many countries currently living and working in Doha, not the least of which are Canadians. Nicole says she’s noticed that they find ways to get together and celebrate Canadian culture while embracing other cultures in Qatar.

“You can be as busy as you like or as laid back as you like,” says Nicole. “Many of the things I loved to do in Canada, I still do here in Doha – I kayak regularly with a local eco-tourism company, I play sports and keep active with volleyball, softball and the gym. I also travel as much as I can within the Gulf region and outside. Life is good!”

Jeff and his wife Barb feel the same about working and living in Qatar. At the end of their respective contracts last spring, they both decided to stay on awhile longer.

He explains that there are things he misses from home but there is so much to experience in Doha and beyond that the time away is worth it.

“I love the woods, hunting and fishing. But I’m also a sports fanatic, and here they have some of the top professional sporting events in the world – tennis, golf, soccer, and more,” he says. “And my wife has instilled a love of travel in me. We’ve been to Thailand, Jordan, Oman, UAE, Spain, France and Italy since living here in Doha.

“I absolutely recommend it – CNA-Q is an excellent place to work and Doha is an amazing place to live.” 

It's not about competing – it's about connecting

Institutions join together to strengthen student experience

By Glenda McCarthy

Post-secondary institutions in Corner Brook have come together with a common goal: to make Corner Brook the city of choice for students looking for higher education.

The initiative began in the fall of 2010, when representatives from College of the North Atlantic, Academy Canada and Grenfell Campus-Memorial University of Newfoundland joined forces with the City of Corner Brook to discuss where their agendas intersect. They discovered there were many parallels and decided it was time to work together to draw students into the city.

“What we realized is that we were all trying to accomplish very similar things for students and we all wanted the best possible programming,” says Bernard Stratton, a CNA campus administrator in Corner Brook.

That same year, an independent study looked at the collective financial impact of the three post-secondary institutions on the local economy.

“The study showed that 52 per cent of students attending the three post-secondary institutions come from outside the immediate Corner Brook area — which is a significant number,” says Stratton.

“The city has a significant amount of quality amenities and offers quality programming, so the question became, ‘How can we work together to maximize the benefits to these students, provide them with a quality experience, and keep them in the region once they complete their programs?’”

The result was a series of orientation events called Campus City Connect, which is sponsored by all three institutions and the City of Corner Brook.

Stratton says the committee wanted to go beyond the institutions by involving the community — businesses in particular. To get them excited and supportive about the initiative, they presented information from the

economic impact study at a business luncheon where they described how students and the institutions contribute to the local economy.

That contribution is significant. The three institutions enroll nearly 3,000 students annually and those students spend approximately \$900,000 per month, or \$10.7 million a year within the City of Corner Brook. Family and friends who visit the students contribute an additional \$2 million annually.

“That excludes goods and services acquired outside the local area, and tuition,” says Stratton. “If you factor in the salaries and operating costs of the institutions, the post-secondary institutions and their students have a direct economic impact in excess of \$50 million annually.”

Stratton says the business community was aware that the post-secondary institutions and the students contributed to the local economy, but until now they were not aware of the extent of that impact.

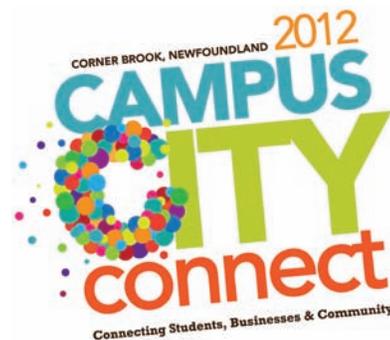
“With this information, and the kickoff for Campus City Connect, it became immediately evident that the business community wanted to be involved in sharing our vision of making Corner Brook a post-secondary city of choice.”

Some businesses made financial contributions while others provided in-kind support. All together it totaled about \$85,000.

“We were truly well on our way to connecting the institutions, the city, the businesses, and the students. Raising that kind of money in a three-month period is evidence that people see post-secondary education in Corner Brook as a valuable contributor to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the city.”

They planned to hold three events. The first was City Connections, which allowed students to learn about the city's vibrant business community and not-for-profit organizations.

“A lot of students that come to Corner Brook want to work in part-time jobs



while they're here. Some don't know how to go about getting jobs so we provided a venue where they could connect with the business community. It gave businesses an opportunity to, set up booths, meet students, provide information and possibly discuss employment opportunities."

They had about 30 booths and more than 400 students turned out to learn more about what local businesses have to offer.

"We had a band playing and a barbecue, so it was a great day. We went there not knowing if anyone would show, but we were pleasantly surprised."

The events also included a drive-in movie, which was postponed due to severe weather but will be rescheduled for later in the year. The final event, A Rockin' Time concert, featured some of the province's best entertainers.

"We were, again, pleasantly surprised at the number of individuals that participated and by all accounts it was a very successful evening. The event was free but we did ask attendees if they would bring a food donation for the local food bank, again, connecting with the community."

About 1,500 students, faculty and staff came out to the concert, donating more than 1,300 food items and \$300 in cash.

The high participation rate prompted organizers to add a job fair in October.

"It wasn't initially a part of Campus City Connect but it brought major employers together with students. It was very successful. Exhibitors were very pleased with the response and so were we - 35 per cent of students who attended were CNA students."

Stratton says there is no doubt Campus City Connect will be going ahead next year and they're already looking towards next year's events. In fact, additional events will be planned throughout the current year, including something to coincide with the Corner Brook winter carnival in February.

"We're definitely moving ahead. We pulled this together in three months over the summer, which is a narrow window. We learned from this first experience and will build on it to do a bigger and better job for 2013-14." *MA*



Photo by Tom Cochrane



Photo by Tom Cochrane



RUNNER'S HIGH

Team spirit is the tie that binds

By Gina MacArthur

John Stanton, the founder of The Running Room, is often quoted as saying "True success is never knowing if you're working or playing."

Stanton was referring to his experience as an entrepreneur, but for a group of CNA employees in Stephenville it's a philosophy that also applies to running itself.

Deborah Jennings and Todd White are two founding members of a team of 11 runners who came together five years ago to compete in the Race to the Sea. The annual 120-kilometre relay race from the Cape Anguille lighthouse in the Codroy Valley to the Rose Blanche lighthouse on Newfoundland's southwest coast consists of 11 legs of hilly terrain.

The group meets with other CNA employees after work three times a week in the spring and summer to train, and Todd says the experience has created a bond between the team members.

"The social side of it is amazing," he says. "This year I had to have run over 400 kilometres, and if it wasn't for the group after work, I never would have done it."

Deborah says it's convenient to run after work, and being part of a group helps her commit to her training schedule.

Race to the Sea team members included (L-R) Michelle O'Quinn, Todd White, Madonna Warren, Rhonda Collier, Jeff Boardman, Mary Vaughan, Deborah Jennings, Glenn Dolomount, Kevin Deveau, Aubrey Pinsent. Missing from photo: Louis MacDonald

"Running with the group has made me the best runner I've ever been," she says. "They're all there waiting for you and you're accountable to them. You can't really bail because you'd feel bad if you did. But then if you can't make it and all your friends are gone running you're like 'Oh, I wonder how their run was today?' Then you feel bad because you didn't get there."

Todd says while most members joined the team for fitness purposes, they've stuck with it for other reasons.

"One member who has been on the team since the beginning is just excelling now at running, but she always liked to run by herself – didn't want to run with a group, and never on a Friday," he says. "Now she looks forward to running in the group on Friday afternoons. I always say, 'until you actually try something you don't know how it's going to affect you.' If you enjoy it you'll come back."

"That's what's kept us going back to the Race to the Sea, is the fun level," says Deborah. "We've met so many people."

The team's focus on fun got them noticed at last year's race. A team from Nova Scotia was impressed by their team spirit and extended an invitation. "They saw us having fun and invited us to the Rum Runners Relay,"



says Todd, explaining that it's a 110-kilometre relay race from Halifax to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.

While logistics prevented the CNA team from attending this year, they do have it on their to-do list for next year.

In the meantime, they've participated in the Run to Remember in Corner Brook a few times, and this year they also competed as a team in the Tely 10 road race in St. John's.

"A couple of times people had individually done the Tely 10, but this year almost the whole team went and ran the whole 16-kilometre race," says Deborah.

Todd did the math and figures they finished among the top 10 teams.

Deborah says one thing she's learned through her participation in the group is that you have to set your own personal goals and not measure your success against other people's accomplishments.

"People say 'What's your goal?' Their intent is 'What's your personal best going to be?' I say 'I'm 45 and running. I want to be 46 and running.' That's my goal. It's inspiring when you've been training for months and you've done about a hundred training runs and you go to a race like the Tely 10, and you're three kilometres to the finish line and an 80-year-old woman passes you," she chuckles.

For both Deborah and Todd, running was something they did for fun when they were younger, and before joining the team neither of them considered themselves to be runners in a true sense of the word. Deborah says that's true of other team members as well.

For new runners, she recommends John Stanton's book *Running: The Complete Guide to Building Your Running Program*.

"There are several programs in that, and we intermixed it with the Tely 10 training program. It was actually really nice to finally have a plan, and have a science to go with the activity."

Todd found the interval training program helpful, not just for building up stamina, but also for building group confidence.

"At the four minute mark, the person who was in front would turn around and run back toward the people who were behind. So after five minutes everyone was together and they'd stop and walk. We'd chat for a minute while we were walking and then we'd start running again and just keep repeating until the run was over."

Deborah says the team members share in each other's successes. "It's exhilarating because they're an extension of you. As a team we're like, all one person."

"We have one runner on our team and she couldn't run one minute, let alone one kilometre," she explains. "She has successfully run 20 kilometres, faster than almost all of us."

In the end, Todd says, the team's greatest success is the bond it's created between the members.

"The people that were there from the beginning are my inspiration. If I didn't find them nice people to be around I wouldn't have continued running," he says. "I enjoyed the time I was with these people so I continued to go back." *na*

"People say 'What's your goal?' I say 'I'm 45 and running. I want to be 46 and running.' – Deborah Jennings



Life after retirement

Counsellor Ruth Doyle continues to serve CNA - as a volunteer.

By Gina MacArthur

There's a quiet presence that glides through the halls at the L. A. Bown building of the Bay St. George campus.

Small in stature, and unassuming by nature, this presence often goes unnoticed by the students, as they pause to read something that caught their eye on the bulletin board.

While the students might not be aware of the presence, the staff certainly are. She brings them muffins.

Ruth Doyle is well known to many who work at the college's Bay St. George campus. As an instructor and later a guidance counsellor, she touched a lot of people's lives, both professionally and personally. Now, more than 16 years after retiring, she's continuing to have an influence on the students and staff, although some might not realize it.

Ruth came to Stephenville in the early 1970s to teach at the Adult Upgrading Centre, which eventually became part of the District Vocational School system, and then CNA. She had already taken nurse's training in Nova Scotia and completed an Education degree at Memorial University. Her brother-in-law had worked at the Adult Upgrading Centre and spoke highly of his experience, so when she heard they were recruiting teachers, she applied.

"There was a core of very interesting people," says Ruth. "It was a good place to be and I was very lucky to come here."

Ruth taught English to adults who wanted to get their high school diplomas, and later set her sights on becoming a guidance counsellor.

"Funding was reduced in the 1980s and I didn't have a lot of seniority," she recalls. "It looked like they would need another guidance counsellor so that's when I did a Masters in Counselling at the University of Toronto."

While she was doing that she continued to teach part time - using her nurse's training to teach medical terminology to Medical Stenography students. She followed up with a Masters in Administration at UNB before retiring from the college in 1996.

After retirement she travelled for a while, then worked as a security screener at the airport, and then retired again. Finding herself with some spare time on her hands, she ended up back at the college, visiting two or



three times a week to update bulletin boards in the hallway and the staff room.

"As a guidance counsellor I did a little bit of it (maintaining the bulletin boards), but nobody asked me. I just sort of fell into it, I guess. Nobody told me not to, so I stayed and did it," she says, matter-of-factly. "For the staff, I try to do something in regards to education or if there's something political they might be interested in. If there's anything going on at the Arts and Culture centre I try and promote that. With the students you try and focus on different community events - awards, school trips, sports."

Maude Benoit started working at L. A. Bown a few years ago and was surprised to see her former guidance counsellor there.

"She comes up every day it seems - it doesn't matter what the weather is. She's always posting articles - anything of interest - she always takes our dishcloths, she brings them home and washes them for us and brings them back. If there's anything going on she's the first one to lend her support. She's always bringing plants in - her glass is always half full."

Instructor Tom Rose is also appreciative of Ruth's efforts. "Ruth continues to be a part of our campus at L.A. Bown, but most importantly her personality shines with enthusiasm and friendliness," he says.

"We are blessed to have a dedicated volunteer at our campus, and she also makes great desserts!"

For Ruth, there's also a personal side to her volunteer work, as she enjoys visiting with the staff and students.

"Hopefully they find it interesting sometimes to talk to an old broad who went through things that they didn't experience," she says. "I find it stimulating. It's nice to be in touch with some of the people I worked with. Maybe it keeps me a little in touch with what's going on because at (age) 69 there are so many things I'm not engaged in every day."

The staff at the L.A. Bown building recently surprised Ruth by holding a special coffee break in her honour. When Maude called to invite her, she asked if she should bring anything. Maude said "No, that's okay. We have it covered."

Ruth brought muffins. 

ON DEMAND

College of the North Atlantic provides customized training for companies and individuals

By Gina MacArthur



College of the North Atlantic is well known as a place where students look for hands-on training to set them on their chosen career paths. As a core business of the college, grant-in-aid programs appeal to a significant portion of the market for post-secondary education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

However, there is another line of business at Newfoundland and Labrador's public college that serves learners of an entirely different stripe.

Through CNA's Office of Contract Training & Continuing Education, employers can gain additional or specialized training for their employees, and individuals can find opportunities to expand their horizons, both professionally and personally.

A place for excellence

Contract training at CNA offers various opportunities for organizations and companies to take advantage of the services provided by the college's program and curriculum development experts.

The chair of the Office of Contract Training & Continuing Education, Joanne O'Leary, says CNA is a natural fit for most organizations' training needs.

"Sometimes an organization will sponsor a whole offering of a program for their employees or for potential employees," she says. "We also partner with community-based organizations that have received funding as the main proponent, listing CNA as their partner, because our existing programs suit their needs."

In other instances, companies will come to CNA for programs that meet their unique training needs, and which fit into their established corporate culture.

"Our customized corporate training can range from a half-day workshop to a program of several days, weeks or months," says O'Leary. "Much of our training in recent months for individual companies centres around training that is relevant to their current professional development needs such as Cisco certification training, leadership and management development, and safety certifications required by legislation. "

"We are also working with many companies in the mining and energy sectors to meet their human resource development needs," she says. "In addition to individual companies we also respond to sector needs by

developing relevant programming based on labour market needs or those of our industry partners."

For example, one offering in the mining sector was a contract training program for employees at the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) which was offered at the college's Labrador West campus.

Using simulators located at the campus, IOC employees learned the basics of how to drive the massive haul trucks that are used at the mine site.

O'Leary says this type of training adds value for companies because it

reduces wear and tear on their own heavy equipment by having employees hone their skills in a safe environment before handling the company equipment.

When it comes to continuing education programs, O'Leary says there are few limits to the courses that CNA can offer.

"Our main focus is professional development for individuals and partnering with associations, both provincial and national, to offer

certification or professional designation training."

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador (RecNL) is one such association. They approached CNA looking for help in establishing a professional development program for their members.

"One of the very positive things about the relationship we've had with College of the North Atlantic is they were able to see and understand our need and from our engagement we found them to be the best fit for us," says RecNL Executive Director Gary Milley.

"Our main focus is professional development for individuals and partnering with associations, both provincial and national, to offer certification or professional designation training." — Joanne O'Leary

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High seas sustenance

Marine cooks know the way to a sailor's heart

By Gina MacArthur

When Dean Thompson goes to work he doesn't pack a briefcase and spend the day at a desk. Instead, he packs a suitcase and spends up to six weeks on the ocean.

It was a winding road that led Dean to his career as a marine cook with the Canadian Coast Guard.

After finishing high school in Point Leamington in 1986, he chose to work with his father on the family farm. For 25 years he learned about meat processing and butchering, then moved into catering and bought a hot dog stand, which he took to festivals and events.

"I always enjoyed cooking for my family and trying new things in the kitchen," he says. "I've always had a love for good and new food dishes, so I decided that I wanted to pursue a career in this field."

Dean talked to some people who were working as cooks in hotels and restaurants and many of them said that they found their jobs routine.

"I didn't want that," says Dean, who enrolled in the Marine Cooking program at the Gander campus in 2010 and graduated with a President's Medal of Excellence. "Plus I loved being on the water and travelling around - not to mention that the money is a lot better."

Marine Cooking is a 42-week contract training program, offered at the Gander and Prince Philip Drive campuses.

It differs from other commercial cooking programs because students are also required to complete the Marine Emergency Duties certificate and receive a number of certifications from Transport Canada that are required for working on a ship. Ninety-five per cent of graduates find employment in their field.

Instructor Elizabeth Moss says while a lot of her students come to the program shortly after high school, others are older learners who are changing careers.

"For some of them, their careers have disappeared," she says. "They might have been involved with the fishery or doing basic labour work, or their positions were replaced by technology."

Elizabeth says while some industries are reducing their workforce, there are jobs opening up for marine cooks.

"All the ships out there, whether they are off the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador or anywhere in the world, have a high demand for cooks and other galley positions because a lot of the crew members are baby boomer age and they're retiring."

She says the salaries for marine cooks are also a big draw. "The money is great and even though we don't like to admit it, I think money is our greatest motivator. Job satisfaction is part of it, but for most people, the money is a draw."

There's plenty of room for advancement in the field as well, according to Elizabeth.

"They can start as a steward or a second cook, and when they feel comfortable they can move up the ladder to become the lead chef."

Elizabeth says the program is designed to create a versatile cook who can create everything from scratch.

"That does come in handy when you're kept at sea longer than expected, or if you have a problem where some of your supplies get ruined. Things happen at sea so if you can think on your feet and make things from scratch you can still keep your crew fed, and keeping them fed is the way to keep them happy."

Dean says his role in maintaining morale on the ship is a heavy responsibility, but it's also very rewarding, and comes with a lot of respect.

"Never mess with the cook," is the motto on the ship, he explains. "He is the one person who provides the crew with food and when the crew is well fed, then for the most part everyone is good to get along with, and morale is, overall, pretty good."

Dean worked on an offshore oil platform for a year and a half after finishing the program, but his love of ships eventually won out.

"I always wanted to work on ships and loved travelling, so I left the offshore career and joined the Coast Guard," he says. "I've been working on different ships in different positions. I'm enjoying this change very much and I'm going to continue to pursue this career to the fullest."

Dean's career as a marine cook can take him away from his family for weeks at a time, but he also gets to stay home for extended periods between rotations.

"Being away is very hard, especially when you are gone for up to six weeks. But when you get home you usually have that much time off also, so it balances out pretty good." 



Dean Thompson in the galley on a Canadian Coast Guard Ship.

Editor's Note: Check out this month's featured recipe on page 27 to see one of the dishes Marine Cooking students learn to prepare.



Look up.
Look *WAY up.*

Training partnership helps drivers adjust to the challenges of driving a giant dump truck

By Gina MacArthur



Instructor Nazaire Simon demonstrates the Komatsu 930E simulator.

Anyone who's had to maneuver a full-size pickup into a tight parking space when they're used to driving a compact coupe can tell you that not all vehicles are built the same. Now imagine switching from a Toyota Camry to a 280-tonne Komatsu haul truck that's carrying its weight in iron ore.

As David Harris can tell you, the difference is not only one of size.

Harris is the superintendent of performance support at the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) in Labrador City. He's in charge of getting new hires trained in operating the haul trucks that carry iron ore from the open face pits to the loading pockets and crushers.

"They're not like your car. They're a little bit different," he explains. "The Komatsu haul trucks have a diesel engine but what powers the truck and actually moves it is electric wheel motors. Because of that they have a dynamic braking system. You have that option on a foot pedal and you also have that option with a dial on the console."

Learning to drive these trucks can be dangerous and intimidating for new employees, so Harris turned to College of the North Atlantic for help.

With financial support from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the provincial Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, the college had purchased a pair of simulators for the Labrador West campus that could recreate the experience of driving the huge trucks.

Campus Administrator Richard Sawyer says the Caterpillar and Komatsu simulators were purchased to enhance the Mining Technician program, with a view to making them available to industry as well.

"The students in the program study mostly trades-related courses, and when they go out to IOC they often have to drive a truck. We didn't have anything in the program that taught them how to drive those trucks, so we went to the mines and asked them what kinds of haul trucks they had the most of. We decided on these two because that's what they needed. They simulate very accurately the kind of motor skills that are required to drive one of these trucks."

Harris says a trainer from IOC helped develop a training program for their new hires.

"We worked with a technician from the company that provided the simulators and the instructors at the college to set up certain scenarios," he says. "We wanted the truck to go into a slide and to go into a spin going up a

ramp. We also wanted to simulate low visibility, with snow, fog or darkness and prepare them for what to do if their truck catches on fire."

The simulators were also used to replicate winter driving, for drivers who had never driven in Labrador's quickly changing weather conditions.

"During the winter in Labrador City it can turn from excellent driving conditions to just like glass in the matter of a few minutes if the temperatures are right, and it happens frequently," he says.

"The instructor could set up the simulator so that they're driving along, going down a ramp with a load on and the next thing you know you can hear your dynamic brakes kicking in and they're not holding the truck back. Your speed is increasing and you're into a slide and you have to try and bring that truck back under control. For the brand new drivers it was great because it gave them a sense of what it feels like to be behind the wheel."

Sawyer says there are mutual benefits to the relationship.

"The benefit for IOC is that we can simulate driving in dangerous conditions for them. Obviously you don't want them to practise driving in those kinds of conditions in real life because the vehicles could be damaged or people could be hurt," he says.

"Ideally, what we'd like to do is get the companies involved in the training, establish a standard for the area and show the companies that they can use these simulators, not just to teach their own people how to drive in hazardous conditions, but also how to drive in such a way that they can reduce maintenance on the trucks."

The college also benefits by maintaining a strong relationship with industry.

"That's always been the case with IOC. We've always had a close relationship with them."

Building on the success of providing the training for IOC, Sawyer says the college is working on a deal with another mining company for a similar partnership.

"Reaching out into the community and into industry and making learners out of the people who come to the college brings in a lot of money for the college and also brings in a lot of learners," says Sawyer. "We're trying to set a standard by partnering with them and other mine operators to establish a standard of training for the area." *na*

Ripple Effect

Learning with and from each other

By Gina MacArthur

When Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador (RecNL) identified a need for professional development for their members, College of the North Atlantic was the natural choice for an educational partnership.

RecNL Executive Director Gary Milley says the organization, which was formed in 1971 to promote recreation throughout the province, has always seen education and training as part of their mandate.

“During the summer and fall of 2007 we got together with our recreation leaders out in the field and did a survey on the professional development needs of our members. The survey identified a couple of things. Number one, our recreation leaders in the field were aging, and secondly it had been quite a while since a number of them had done any significant professional development,” he says.

“They may come with certain credentials, diplomas, and degrees in recreation and related fields, but it would be helpful if we looked at providing professional development opportunities for them as a refresher in current trends and practices in the field.”

Once the need had been identified, the organization considered doing the training themselves, but then realized there was a team of professionals at the college who already had the expertise and skills to design and deliver

the program.

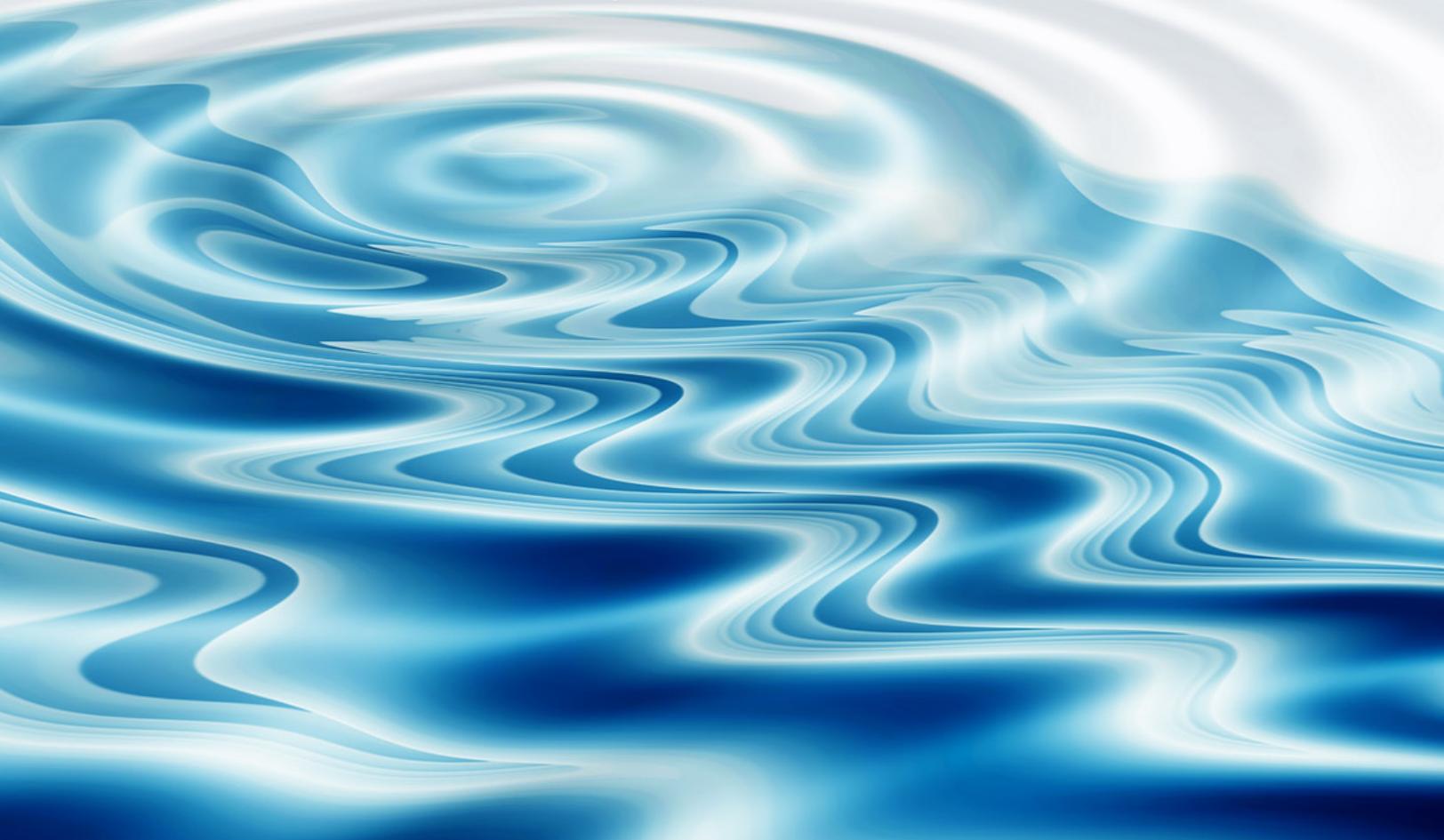
“Doing it in partnership with the college, we were able to use their expertise and their skill set. If we did it on our own it would be more expensive. The other big thing for us was the fact that the college could assist us in making this a recognized certificate program,” he says.

“It was our hope that municipalities would see this as an investment in the professional development of their staff. That was an important consideration.”

Over the next year, Milley and his colleagues worked closely with Clara McCue and Ros Hong in the college’s Department of Community Corporate and International Services, holding focus groups and consultation sessions with RecNL members to identify the core subjects that would be covered in the training.

The result was a 10-module program that, when completed, would result in a Recreation Management Professional certificate. The sessions are held in conjunction with the association’s annual meeting, and the last two modules will be delivered in 2013.

Wanda Merrigan is in the process of completing the program, and she says it’s been invaluable.



"I haven't walked away from one course without learning something new. I'm learning from the written material, from the knowledge of the instructors and from the people I'm doing the course with."

Merrigan says the opportunity to network with her peers from across the province is one of the greatest benefits of the program.

"There are four of us who are on the board of RecNL, so we had a connection to each other, but since I started this program I have another 15 people in the recreation field that I have no concerns with emailing or calling if there's something I need to know, that I know they are particularly talented at. I think that side of it is just as important as the course side."

"I haven't walked away from one course without learning something new. I'm learning from the written material, from the knowledge of the instructors and from the people I'm doing the course with." — Wanda Merrigan

Merrigan, who manages the swimming pool at the Bruce II Sports Centre in Port aux Basques, is a person who learns by doing.

"I was working here less than a year when our facilities manager asked for an educational leave of absence," she explains. "The town granted it to her with the understanding that I would look after the facility while she was gone. At the time we didn't have an administrative assistant so I did the facility manager's job, the pool manager's job and administrative assistant's job by myself for what turned into eight months."

Merrigan quickly realized that she needed more training if she wanted to be prepared to manage the arena, which includes an ice rink, a curling club, a bowling alley, a fitness centre and meeting rooms in addition to the pool.

"When the opportunity came to do this program I jumped at it. I've ended up going back to managing the facility twice in seven years. So I kind of thought, 'if you're really going to do that stuff you need to know more about it.'"

Merrigan says the training is not just making her a better manager, it also helps her provide better service to her community.



Wanda Merrigan is completing the Recreation Management Professional certificate, a professional development program designed and delivered with help from College of the North Atlantic. Photo by Carol Ingram

"I've found simpler ways to do my programming. I've learned different ways to deal with human resource issues," she says. "If you asked me if I learned those things from the course or from the other people in the course I couldn't tell you. But there are things I definitely wouldn't have learned without being involved in these courses."

As for the value that RecNL and her community receive from the program, Merrigan says it's hard to quantify. "I don't think you can measure the value of programs like this. What I'm learning from it I'm passing on to my coworkers. Some of them are my age, but almost all of my lifeguards are high school students. The things that I'm learning in this course, they are learning through me and it's very much a ripple effect." 

“We had relatively few resources going in, and the college was able to assist us in the content development. They were able to build on our raw data and structured it into a 10-module certificate program.”

The college also offers credit and non-credit courses geared to personal interests, like painting and other forms of arts and crafts, software training, and the very popular hunter education and firearms safety, which is offered at every CNA campus.

There are also professional development opportunities through CNA’s certificate programs – which were developed for people who want to enhance their management supervisory skills or learn more about the requirements for occupational health and safety in the workplace, for example.

For the future, O’Leary says it’s important for the division to anticipate the needs of industry.

“We do a lot of primary research in the form of face-to-face meetings with clients but we also complete secondary research and assess provincial

“The mandate of a community college is to provide outreach services to the community, whether it’s a company with specific human resource needs or an individual who wants to complete skills development or general interest courses. I think there’s an expectation and there’s a responsibility as a community college to respond to everyone in the community.” — Joanne O’Leary

and national labour market information with respect to current labour market needs. We also access internal institutional research resources as well as the latest research performed by various government levels.”

She says that forward-looking approach ensures that programs are available when industry needs them.

Whether it is customized contract training designed for a certain company or industry, or individual continuing education programs that are targeted toward personal and professional development, O’Leary says all the programs in the division help to enrich communities on a local level.

Going forward, O’Leary says the key to the college’s continued success in the fields of contract training and continuing education is staying connected to our partners within the community.

“Where our team sees ourselves in the future is continuing to partner with industry, with more provincial and national professional associations, and with individuals in the community to offer the most relevant and responsive training to suit their learning and development needs.” *~*

For more information about Contract Training & Continuing Education opportunities, contact a business development officer at a campus near you or email corporatetraining@cna.nl.ca.

St. John’s area:

Prince Philip Drive (Contract Training)	758-7640
(Continuing Education)	758-7135
Ridge Road	758-7554
Seal Cove	744-6845

Baie Verte 532-8066

Bay St. George 643-7825

Bonavista 468-1700

Burin 891-5606

Carbonear 596-8957

Clareville 466-6988

Corner Brook 637-8570

Gander 651-4804

Grand Falls-Windsor 292-5642

Labrador City 944-6908

Labrador- North Coast/
North West River/Sheshatshiu 497-8595

Happy Valley-Goose Bay 896-6316/896-6365

Placentia 227-6281

Port aux Basques 695-3582

St. Anthony 454-3559 (ext. 234)



Seal of APPROVAL

Program accreditation gives CNA graduates an edge with employers

By Glenda McCarthy

As College of the North Atlantic strives to 'build a better graduate' there's one tool in the toolbox that's becoming more valuable in its efforts to recruit potential students.

CNA has always viewed accreditation as an important indicator of a program's quality, and students are starting to pay closer attention to whether or not a program is accredited by an external agency or professional society.

According to Provincial Accreditation Coordinator Pamela Davis, receiving accreditation is confirmation that a CNA program is meeting industry standards, has quality programs and is producing graduates with the skills needed to find sustainable employment.

"Today, educational institutions are being held more and more accountable for producing top quality graduates and the accreditation process is an effective method of measuring and demonstrating the quality of programs and graduates," Davis says.

"In addition to ensuring our graduates are entering the workplace with the skill set required by industry, it also aids the college in pursuing transfer agreements with other institutions."

Davis says the process also gives the college valuable feedback for self-improvement.

"The process of preparing for accreditation provides the college with an additional means to measure our programs and ensures a commitment to quality programs and continuous improvement."

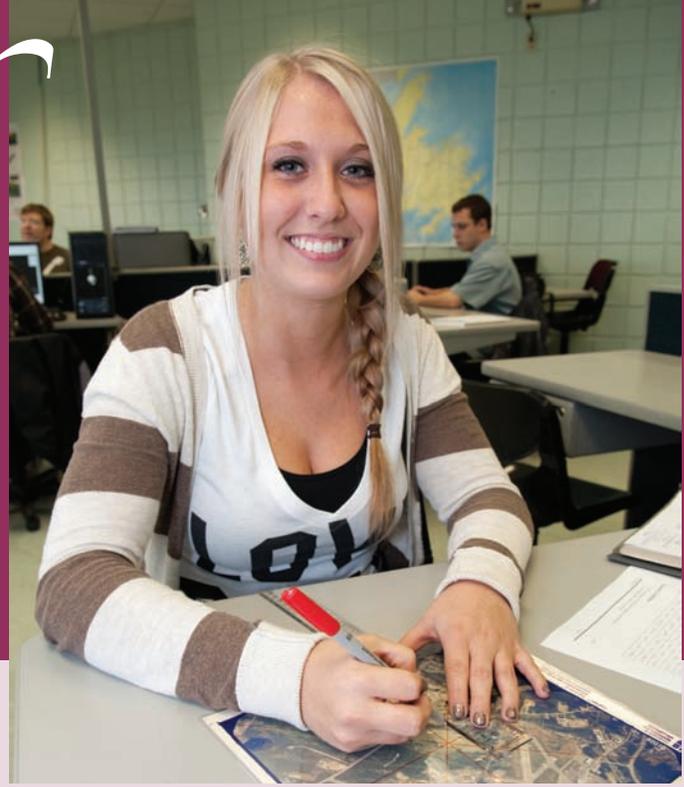
It takes at least two years to obtain an initial accreditation, and periodic reviews ensure the program continues to meet industry standards. In some cases, the program must have at least one graduating class, which means the process is even longer for three-year programs.

"The accreditation process requires a tremendous amount of work," says Davis. "It begins with a review to ensure we are meeting certain standards before documentation begins."

The college then submits a report to the accrediting body, and a review team consisting of industry professionals is assigned to visit the college.

"This team validates the information in the reports, and meets with students, faculty and industry. After the review, the team provides the accrediting body's board with their recommendation, and the board reviews all documentation and the team recommendation to determine if the college receives accreditation," she explains.

"Even after the review process is complete, there are processes and standards in place that require continuous review and maintenance to



maintain an accredited status. It is an on-going, continuous cycle."

Davis says while the process is work intensive, the benefits are wide-ranging because accreditation helps the college pursue transfer agreements. Showing other institutions that CNA programs have been evaluated through Canadian or international standards, and that they meet industry requirements, is a contributing factor in establishing those partnerships.

"Everyone benefits from accreditation – the college, faculty, the public and most importantly, the students. Graduates leave with the knowledge that their chosen program of study has been reviewed to ensure it is meeting industry standards. It says the college is giving students the skills required by industry and that they have the ability to incorporate these skills into the workplace."

Provincial Accreditation Coordinator Linda AbdulRehmanNoorAkbar, who has been with the college since 1989, has been a supporter in the process of ensuring many programs achieve accreditation. CNA's engineering technology programs, at the Burin, Corner Brook and St. John's campuses are a prime example. All 17 of them are accredited.

"Upon approval from CNA's Board of Governors and Academic Council, the dean incorporates new programs," AbdulRehmanNoorAkbar says.

"After the graduates complete the program, we apply for national accreditation from the Canadian Technology Accreditation Board. Processing the data required for submission is quite comprehensive and concentrated and is only accomplished with faculty's input and expertise. Over the past 15 years, the national accreditation process has evolved from a biennial to a triennial review, with site audits from professional peers across Canada."

Accreditation for nine of the college's engineering technology programs is scheduled for renewal during the 2012-2013 academic year, with the other eight programs seeking renewal in 2013-2014.

"Upon attaining successful accreditation, the benefits are enormous for the graduates who enter the workplace, as accredited programs are recognized by potential industry employers," AbdulRehmanNoorAkbar says. "Accreditation ensures consistency and total quality by following the benchmarks laid out by the accrediting body."

CNA currently has 131 accredited programs in Newfoundland and Labrador and 11 at the Qatar campus. 

FROM THE ASHES OF TRAGEDY

Darren Butt's 9/11 experience fuels his passion for emergency preparedness

By Glenda McCarthy

Many people can tell you where they were on September 11, 2011 with startling clarity – it is an event that remains seared into the hearts and souls of many, even here in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The tragedy of that day also led Darren Butt on a journey which brought him to College of the North Atlantic, steering him from the communications field toward the discipline of disaster and emergency management and his current position as instructor of the Emergency Management (Post Diploma) program at Bay St. George campus.

Darren was on his way to British Columbia on one of the last airplanes to land at Pearson International Airport in Toronto on 9/11. He entered the terminal and looked up at a television to see the second plane hit the World Trade Centre.

"I remember being one of the last people to leave Pearson that day. I was approached by an Air Canada employee and a City of Toronto SWAT officer, who was holding a submachine-gun, and they told me to get in a cab and leave," he recalls. "I remember sitting in a hotel in Mississauga and I looked up at the sky, and not one plane was moving – not one plane – nothing was flying. I turned on the television and the news was just full of the day's events and I asked myself 'How did this happen?'"

Four days later, when he left Toronto, he noticed that there was a different tone in the world – at the airport, the airline company, even when he arrived in British Columbia. He admits he was angry at the people who created the cataclysmic event.

"I said to myself, 'Why couldn't we have been ready – more ready – to deal with that?' Nobody had thought about such an event occurring and we should have thought about that. That's where I started thinking 'What can I do?' That's what began my process."

Now, Darren is one of only seven people in Canada who holds both a master's degree in Disaster and Emergency Management and a Certified Emergency Manager designation from the International Association of Emergency Managers in the United States.



He went on to gain experience through his work with the Yukon government, as their Critical Infrastructure Resiliency Coordinator, where he developed key disaster and emergency management strategies, including those that were used across the North during the H1N1 crisis in 2009.

Darren has also been the Deputy Minister's Senior Advisor for Emergency Management and an instructor with the Canadian Emergency Management College in Ottawa. He gained front-line experience as a soldier, an RCMP auxiliary officer and a Level 2 firefighter.

His work has earned him recognition in the form of two ministerial decorations from the Yukon government and he is also a recipient of the Yukon Government's Premier's Award of Excellence.

Now he's passing his extensive knowledge on to students through a program he feels confident will meet a high demand for graduates who are expected to address everything from natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes and biological outbreaks to man-made threats such as terrorism.

"College of the North Atlantic allowed me the opportunity to come in on a ground floor program and develop it according to what my experience has been as a practitioner," Darren says. "I know what industry wants, I know what the federal government needs, I know what the provincial government should have and I know what municipal governments demand."

He says governments and industry need expertly trained disaster and emergency management practitioners who can not only handle the pressures and unique challenges of an emergency event, but also develop capacities for prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery and, most importantly, demonstrate unwavering leadership in the face of adversity.

"My colleagues and I agree that, if we could create one program within a post-secondary institution, this is what it would look like."

Darren says the program will appeal to people who have a thirst for disaster and emergency management and want to make a true difference within people's lives by engaging in the protection of their community, their province, and their country.

He says while 9/11 was the epitome of a human-induced terrorist event, people are also becoming more aware of natural events that create havoc and mayhem.

"We're dealing with the realization that people have to be more aware of where they are living and what they are actually going to be exposed to. Governments have to recognize that they have a responsibility to their citizens to ensure that they are prepared for a natural or human-induced disaster or emergency event."

He says the simple question "What can I do?" is the most important one for emergency management practitioners.

"That's really where it all starts. 'What can I do to make my world better for your kids, my kids, my family, your family, and to ensure at your deepest and darkest moment that there is a shining light at the other end?' I know that sounds somewhat philosophical but it's truly what I think," he says.

"It is often stated that practitioners of disaster and emergency management walk into situations where angels fear to tread. We do this because we swear an oath to protect the members of our community at all costs, so I guess we do have a choice. I have already made my decision, now we need to ask the question of prospective students 'Are you ready to make your decision?'"



Instructor Darren Butt briefs members of the Bay St. George disaster and emergency management community on their roles in an upcoming aircraft disaster simulation.

"That's really where it all starts. 'What can I do to make my world better for your kids, my kids, my family, your family, and to ensure at your deepest and darkest moment that there is a shining light at the other end?' I know that sounds somewhat philosophical but it's truly what I think." — Darren Butt



Disaster & Emergency Management candidate Stephanie Cramm directs and controls the flow of emergency vehicles at a simulated disaster zone.

Master of his destiny

Charles Foote follows his heart down to the river

By Glenda McCarthy

The current of the Humber River may be intimidating for some to tackle but for Charles Foote it's all about the challenge. Charles has been an instructor for CNA's Heavy Equipment and Commercial Transport programs in Stephenville Crossing since 2006, but what many people at the college don't know is that he is also a Master Sailor – a certification he achieved so he could start his own seasonal business.

Before joining the CNA team, Charles was employed at the Abitibi Consolidated mill in Stephenville for more than a decade. But when the future of the paper industry started to look bleak, he began formulating a back-up plan.

"I was very observant to what was going on with global markets and watching how their stocks were dropping rapidly. Seeing how the paper industry was going, to me it was the writing on the wall that the place wouldn't last. So I figured I would prepare myself because a closure was inevitable – I had to figure out what to do."

He knew he wanted to stay in the province and the answer he came up with was to start his own business.

"I always had an interest with starting my own business but working with Abitibi didn't provide that opportunity because of the schedule I had."

That changed when he became an instructor at the college, a position where he had the summers off. That's when he started considering various ideas and began drafting a business plan.

"I got really lucky when Abitibi shut down," he says. "I applied for funding and partnerships with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and Industry, Trade and Rural Development and got a grant which helped me open the business."

It was a lengthy process. To protect himself he wanted to find something that would be difficult to duplicate as he was worried about competition springing up.

"At that point I decided I would put a boat tour into operation on the Humber River in Corner Brook. I had time to sit back and look at the type of business I wanted to start – with all businesses you want something where it's very hard to duplicate."

His thoughts kept returning to one thing — sailing.

"My father lived on the water. He was born back in 1914 and he was on the water all his life and ran boats. He didn't have a lot of education but he was able to navigate boats, read charts and set navigation on boats. I found it interesting that he could do that technical information. Today's instruments change that a lot, but back in the old days, you used rulers and markers. I was never involved in that – he had long given it up but he would



Left: Charles Foote pilots his boat on the Humber River.

talk to me about it and that grew my interest," he says.

"I found myself drawn to boating and some of the more challenging things about boating. I watched programs about river boating for years and I found it so interesting to see how they navigated through the narrow channels. The other part that encouraged me is there is no other operation within Newfoundland that has a commercial river boat tour."

Starting the business wasn't without its challenges - especially when designing a boat for the low water levels and heavy currents of the Humber River.

"The business required a specific type of craft. That's where the concept of the catamaran came into play. I got the idea from other places abroad."

A company from Bay Bulls won the tender for the 40-passenger craft that can operate in as little as one foot of water. Once the craft was fabricated, Charles was finally able to open his seasonal business in 2007.

It took two years for him to receive his Master Sailor certification through Transport Canada and his training required spending a number of hours running an empty boat on the river before he was permitted to take on passengers.

"A large group might want to do a barbeque, for example and I had the boat designed so that we can land on a beach, lower a ramp and walk off. We'll have a BBQ and have a fire on the beach. It's more than just a boat tour - it's a nice outing." — Charlie Foote

"The riverboat operation was really attractive to me because it's not like you just get in the boat, set your course and go. It's more of a challenge. I have a specific course that I follow but I'm in a different track all the time depending on the conditions of the day, so you really have to know your stuff and that's what I was interested in - the challenge."

He also has two seasonal employees - a tour guide who explains the history of the area, and a deckhand.

"I have a retired person who used to work for Parks Canada as a biologist who talks about the river, the fish in the river and the history of the area. There is quite a bit of history like the legend of the Old Man in the Mountain and how it got its name. We have a really good vantage point since we pass right under it. His job is to keep the passengers informed."

The average tour takes about two and a half hours. Five hour trips are also available, where the boat stops at an island for a snack.

"A large group might want to do a barbeque, for example and I had the boat designed so that we can land on a beach, lower a ramp and walk off. We'll have a BBQ and have a fire on the beach. It's more than just a boat tour - it's a nice outing." *~*

For more information about Humber River Cruise visit www.humberrivercruise.com



Right, top to bottom: Employees at Bay St. George Campus enjoyed a Humber River Cruise for their year end social.

Reaching out

Aboriginal Initiatives Team eases the transition to college life

By Gina MacArthur

At the Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus this year, more than 70 percent of students identify as Inuit, Innu or Metis. It's that demographic that prompted the campus to form an Aboriginal Initiatives Team.

The team consists of a campus administrator, five faculty members and four support staff, including Aboriginal Resource Specialist Bobbi McLean.

"Everyone brings something to the table in the way of experience in aboriginal education," says Bobbi. "We meet monthly to discuss and work on aboriginal initiatives."

One of the ideas that the team helped bring to fruition at the campus was the Aboriginal Resource Centre. "That was something we heard loud and clear from students that they would like to have. It's like a student lounge, but it also has resources for the students that support and promote their aboriginal culture. It also has information that they need to be successful at the college and in the community. It's open to everyone, but it focuses on aboriginal culture."

Other initiatives at the campus are more specifically focused on helping students succeed academically.

The Aboriginal Bridging program is one of those initiatives. The one-year program focuses on helping students acquire and practice the skills they'll need to be successful in a mainstream college program.

"It's much like leaving a trail of breadcrumbs to keep you on track in the forest, to help keep students on their academic path," says Bobbi. "Free will being what it is, there are many opportunities for learners to 'leave the woods' altogether or find alternate routes to get where they wish to go."

Initially co-funded by the Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative and the Atlantic Policy Congress, Aboriginal Bridging is now a regular offering at the campus.

Chelsea Sheppard is one very good example of the success of the program.

She graduated from high school with a general diploma, and then completed Aboriginal Bridging. From there she did the Comprehensive Arts & Sciences (CAS) College Transition program and now she's about to graduate from Licensed Practical Nursing.

"It gave me more time to think about what I really wanted to do," says Chelsea. "We did a lot of assignments on searching for what you would like to do."

Chelsea hadn't spent much time away from her own community, so she was anxious about being away from her friends and family. The year that she spent in the Aboriginal Bridging program allowed her time to get used to the college atmosphere while staying close to home.

"The staff are really nice and the instructors are really good at helping you," she says. "It's a good program if you're not sure what you want to do."

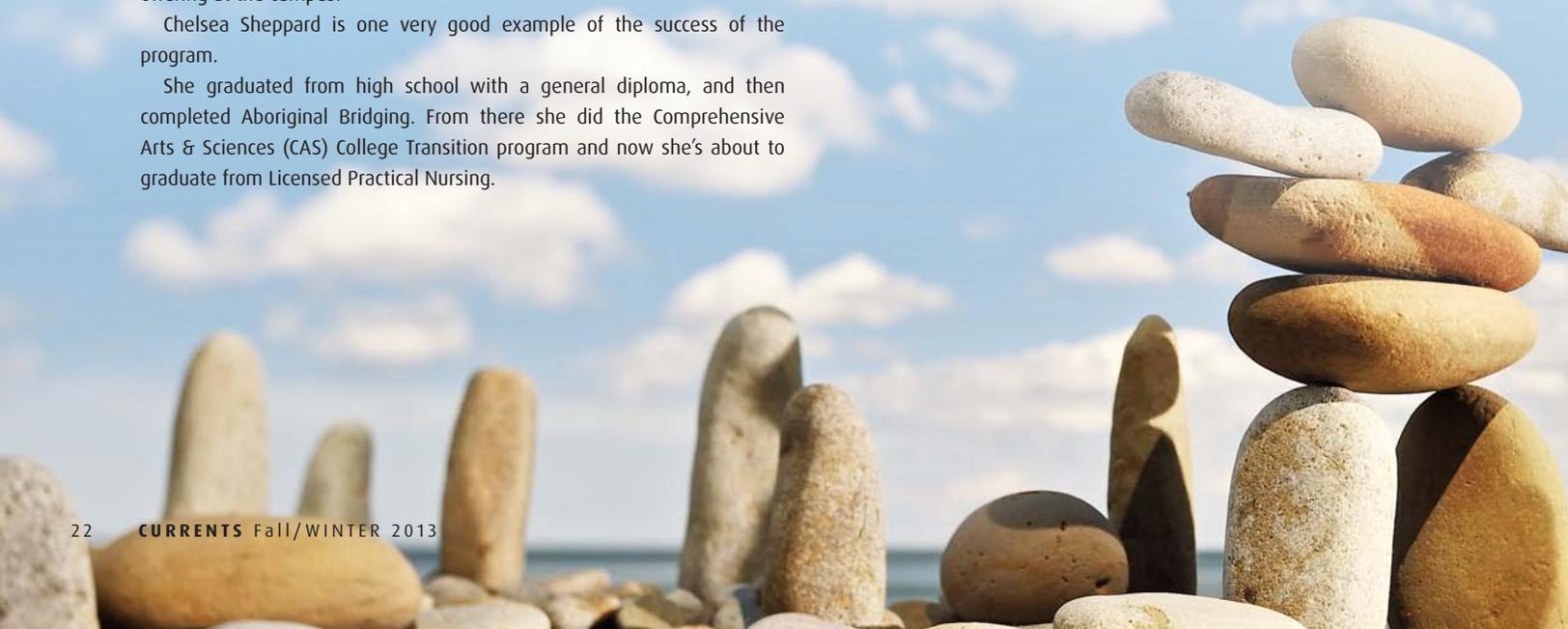
When she graduates in December 2012 she's hoping to find work at home in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but she feels confident enough to look elsewhere if necessary.

Roberta Baikie-Andersen, Inuit Pathways Program Director with the Government of Nunatsiavut, says the Aboriginal Bridging program helps smooth the transition for students as they start college.

"One of the big ones is that a lot of the students don't have the courses that they need coming out of high school to get into further college or university programs. They have enough credits to graduate, but not necessarily the right ones."

She says many aboriginal learners are at a social disadvantage as well.

"They're going into a college program after coming out of isolated communities and they haven't been exposed to college life or life in larger centres in general. That leads to homesickness and culture shock," she explains. "Further challenging to them, they know they want to do something beyond high school, but they don't have any idea what it is they really want to do and they don't know where to go to find good information."



Partnering for Future Generations

The Aboriginal Bridging program at College of the North Atlantic's Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus was recently featured in the Association of Canadian Community Colleges' *Partnering for Future Generations: Case Studies on Aboriginal Programs and Services at Canadian Colleges and Institutes*.

The association was following up on a 2009-10 survey, which found that most colleges and institutes across the country offer programming that is targeted toward aboriginal learners.

This might not be surprising, since according to the 2006 census, 62 per cent of post-secondary aboriginal learners are enrolled at colleges and institutes, and Aboriginal people have been identified as the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population.

To read the entire Association of Canadian Community Colleges report, visit www.accc.ca and look under 'Advocacy.'



Chelsea Sheppard is on her way to a career as an LPN after completing the Aboriginal Bridging program

Roberta says the Aboriginal Bridging program serves as a good transition into college life and life outside the community in general.

"Through the personal development and career counselling portions the students are able to grow and explore the options they have for their future, after they've moved beyond high school," she says. "It allows them to enter college life in a setting that's more comfortable for them, with smaller class sizes, where everything is done as a group. This allows them to develop, not only as individuals, but it also allows them to explore possibilities through the career development portion."

Roberta says there are also benefits for the community when aboriginal learners are supported in these ways.

"It's not something that you can specifically pinpoint. But it gives them the skills and training they need to become active members of the workforce in their communities or outside their communities. Their success also influences others so they can be seen as role models, as active members of society and of their community."

With a smoother transition they're more likely to have success which will then be reflected by them once they're back in the community. *u*

In case you missed it...

Research grant awarded

May 15 – CNA was selected by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) as the only Atlantic Canadian college to receive a new Industrial Research Chairs for Colleges (IRCC) grant.

Training opportunities expand

May 23 – A \$1.03 million investment by Hibernia Management and Development Company Ltd. (HMDC) will establish two initiatives at CNA to expand access to training opportunities for women, individuals with Aboriginal status, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities.

Philanthropist honoured

May 25 – Darryl Fry, co-founder of the Fry Family Foundation, was honoured for his achievements in business and his philanthropic efforts when he was inducted into the Junior Achievement of Newfoundland and Labrador Business Hall of Fame. Born and educated in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Fry has gone on to become successful on the international business stage, but still maintains a strong commitment to the people of his home province and is a long-time supporter of students at CNA.

Research infrastructure funded

May 28 – The provincial government contributed \$175,000 to College of the North Atlantic for the development of key infrastructure, which will house nationally recognized research and development. The project could lead to the commercial development of a shore-based aquaculture industry in areas where traditional aquaculture is not an option.

Students win four medals

May 30 – CNA students led the way to the medals for Team Newfoundland and Labrador at the national Skills Canada competition, held May 14-16 in Edmonton, AB. CNA students won four of the nine medals awarded to the provincial team,

including the only gold medal, which went to Brian Forward, a Computer Systems and Networking student at the Prince Philip Drive campus.

Inaugural awards presented

June 19 – Six CNA students have been selected as the first recipients of the James Sellars Apprenticeship Awards. The awards are funded by the Fry Family Foundation, and will be awarded annually to three Welder students and three Construction/Industrial Electrician students.

CNA partners with Greenland school

June 21 – CNA and the Building and Construction School of Greenland signed a memorandum of understanding, which will see the institutions explore various oil and gas training possibilities over the next five years.

Students work on NFB film

August 8 – The National Film Board (NFB) of Canada has teamed up with College of the North Atlantic for the 3D animated short Impromptu. Digital Animation instructor James Grace is supervising two graduates, Zachary Green and Kyle Sharpe, while they work on animating scenes for the production from Stephenville.

OTT hits program milestone

August 16 – College of the North Atlantic and Women in Resource Development Corporation (WRDC) celebrated the milestone of 50 offerings of the Orientation to Trades and Technology (OTT) program in St. John's. Developed by WRDC, the first OTT Program was delivered at the Bay St. George campus in October 1999 and has since produced more than 600 graduates.

College partners with Guyana

September 20 – College of the North Atlantic was one of two Canadian educational institutions to sign a letter of intent and a memorandum of understanding with

the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment to build capacity in the local oil and gas and mining sectors in Guyana through the Guyana Mining School and Training Centre Inc.

Students take part in conference

September 26 – Students and graduates of College of the North Atlantic's Video Game Design program took part in a game development jam as part of Atlanti-con in Corner Brook. Atlanti-con is the newest convention in Atlantic Canada which focuses on sci-fi, fantasy, comics, gaming and anime.

CT/CE tops leadership list

October 25 – CNA's Office of Contract Training and Continuing Education was recognized as a leader in corporate training activities when it was selected by TrainingIndustry.com for their first annual Top Workforce Development Providers list.

Bronze medal for chef instructor

November 9 – Roger Andrews, a chef instructor at CNA's Prince Philip Drive campus took home a bronze medal from the Culinary Olympics in Germany in October to join the ranks of those deemed the best in the world.

Students win trip to Qatar

November 27 – Three students from College of the North Atlantic's Grand Falls-Windsor campus came out on top of the 10th annual Business Case Competition. The students will travel to the Middle East in February 2013, to compete against teams from colleges and universities in Qatar.

Cabinetmaker grad wins bronze

November 28 – Justin Bennett took a bronze medal in cabinetmaking at the WorldSkills Americas Competition in São Paulo, Brazil. The 20-year-old Corner Brook native is a graduate of the Cabinetmaker program at the Port Aux Basques campus.

More CNA news at www.cna.nl.ca/news



Cooking for a crowd

Students in the Marine Cooking program quickly learn how to be efficient in the kitchen. After all, when you're preparing meals for hundreds of people at a time, every moment counts.

Instructor Elizabeth Moss says some of what she teaches her students about cooking for a crowd could also apply to your holiday dinner party.

She says the key is to do as much of the prep work as you can in advance, and never try out a new recipe for the first time when you've invited guests to dinner.

"Whatever you can make ahead, if you've got room to refrigerate it or freeze it, do so," she says. "Then when it comes to the crunch of the really busy day you have a lot less to do so you'll feel more relaxed and more capable of getting the whole thing brought together."

Elizabeth says it's also a good idea to seek out crowd-size recipes, but be careful with modifying recipes designed for fewer people.

"If you prefer to use a double version of one of your favourites, don't automatically double the spices and seasonings, because they could overwhelm your dish."

David Ralph, who recently graduated from Marine Cooking in Gander, says he's always had a passion for cooking, and learned a lot from his dad. Here, he presents the Chicken Breasts Doria he prepared for *Currents*, along with some other dishes prepared by his classmates. For more recipes, visit *Currents Extra* at www.cna.nl.ca/news

Stuffed Chicken Breasts Doria

Ingredients

3-4 medium shallots, chopped
1/4 cup butter
1 lb chicken leg meat
2 egg whites
3 tbsp mixed fresh herbs

3/4 cup crème fraîche (may substitute sour cream or plain yogurt)
(parsley, thyme, cilantro, basil)
1/3 cup fresh white breadcrumbs
12 boneless chicken breasts

Directions

To make the stuffing, sauté the shallots in the butter until soft. Allow to cool. Process the chicken leg meat in a food processor for a few seconds. Add the cooled shallots, egg whites, crème fraîche, herbs and bread crumbs. Process briefly to combine. Season and chill.

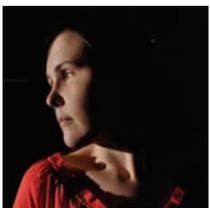
Flatten the chicken breasts and the smaller fillets that come with them. Cut a pocket in each breast and stuff with the filling using a small spoon or by piping the stuffing in with a pastry bag. Place the smaller fillet over the top and roll each breast, securing with toothpicks.

Cover with chicken stock and poach gently for 20-25 minutes.

To serve, slice each breast diagonally and place on a plate garnished with julienned bell peppers and chives.



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CURRENTS



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Marketing and Communications
College of the North Atlantic
432 Massachusetts Drive
P.O. Box 5400, Stephenville, NL A2N 2Z6, Canada

709 643 7928
currents@cna.nl.ca
www.cna.nl.ca/news