



Newsletter

Number Six January 1987

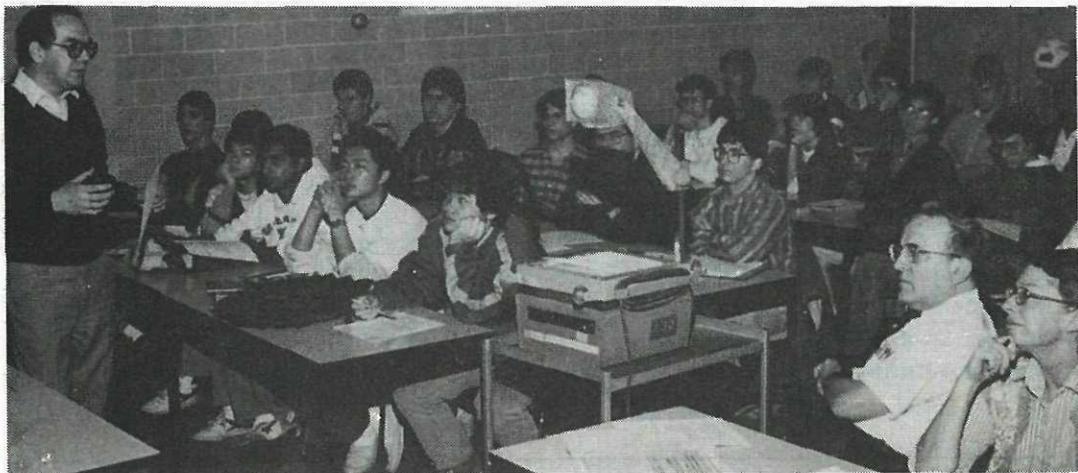
NEW STV COURSE NOW UP AND RUNNING

Over 60 students filled PHY 208 on Tuesday evening, 6 January for the first meeting of STV 100 (An Introduction to Society, Technology and Values), the lead-off course in the new STV Option.

George Atkinson (Chem), one of the members of the teaching team, acted as emcee, introducing the team and giving an illustrated overview of the course. Course co-ordinator Sally Lerner (ERS) explained that the university-wide course seeks to raise issues rather than "provide truth" and aims to produce questioning, evaluating individuals who will be professionals in the fullest sense. Team member Russel Legge (RS) suggested that STV 100 is directed to the future--the world 15 years from now when current UW students will occupy administrative and decision-making roles in their respective fields. Barry Wills (Sys De), another team member, told students he regards himself as "still a student in this area" and promised the course would deliver "some heat as well as light".

Students were asked to provide short definitions of the terms society, technology, values and work as well as to list 3 personal expectations for the course and to identify issues they felt should be raised in it. (They identified many possibilities, including environmental awareness, privacy, personal identity, war, increased standardization, the distancing of technological control, and the need to re-align social priorities.)

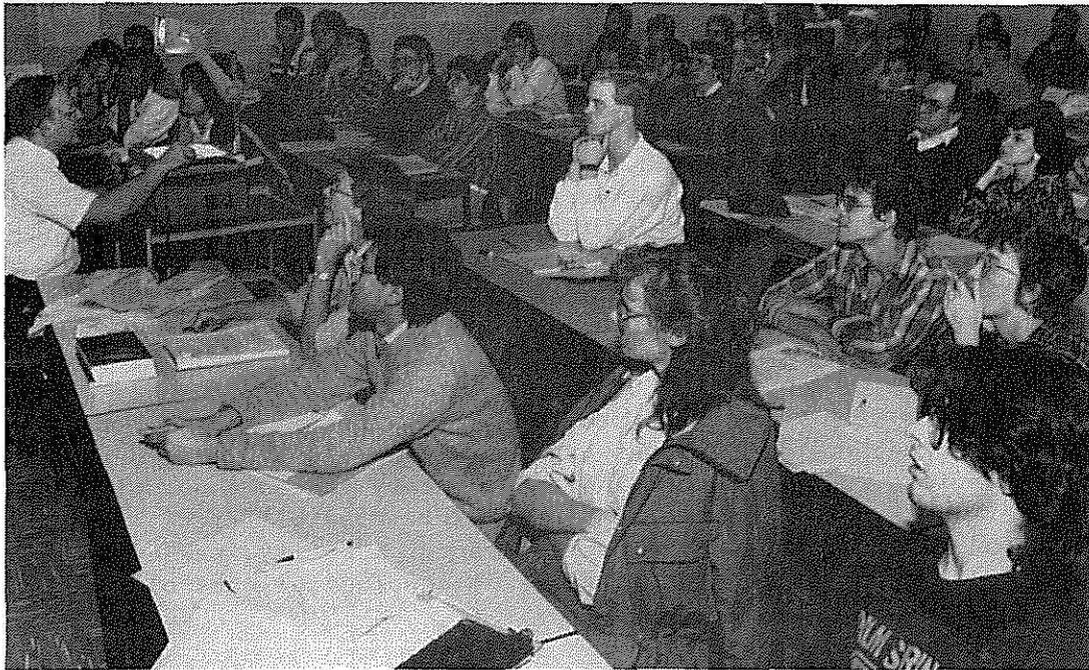
Atkinson's overview employed a series of visuals touching on such matters as automation and jobs, innovation, nuclear winter, the forces at work in technological society, and examples of how



STV 100: Wills, Atkinson, Lerner and students

students might organize the myriad concepts to be examined each week. A BBC film, "New Technology: Whose Progress?" was screened after these preliminaries and then discussed, along with much else, after the coffee break. TAs Eric Higgs and Tim Topper were also on hand to meet students.

"All of us on the team felt it was a good session" said Legge after the first evening. Now that introductory matters are out of the way, future sessions will be highly interactive and participatory, as crucial issues come into sharp and focused discussion.



ATKINSON'S VISUALS: Ways to deal with STV 100 topics

UW RESEARCH OFFICE BULLETIN GIVES DEADLINES

The latest Bulletin (Dec. 1986) provides a helpful list of research grant deadlines for the Jan. - April 1987 period. Of special interest to CSTV members are the SSHRC "Human Context of Science and Technology" and "Women and Work" categories, both of which have (UW) deadlines of 19 March. Also note the Supply and Service Canada "Public Awareness Program for Science and Technology". For more details, contact Joan Hadley, ext.3433.

FEBRUARY CSTV WORKSHOP ON TECHNOLOGY AND WORK

Professors Mieke Kesik and Sally Lerner of Environmental Studies are putting the final touches on a Workshop called "Strategies for Addressing Technology-Linked Changes in Concepts and Patterns of Work" to be held at UW (18 - 20 Feb.). The invitation-only event will consider a range of research and policy strategies for dealing with and anticipating such changes in Canada over the next 20 - 30 years. The organizers contend that "work" is usually defined too narrowly by policy makers and the general public as merely an economic concept (work equals paid employment). This leads to policy remedies being economic in nature as well (more efforts to create jobs, to increase productivity, etc.). But "work" needs to be construed more broadly in order to take in both paid and unpaid activity, say Kesik and Lerner. The challenge now is to design strategies for change that address "such work-related concerns as security, self-worth and quality of life," issues that cannot be handled successfully in purely economic terms.

Mieke Kesik will direct the Workshop. Participants include Arthur Cordell (Science Council); Elaine Bernard (Simon Fraser); Jo Surich (Ontario Federation of Labour); and UW's Terry Downey (Political Science), Kelly Gotlieb (CSTV consultant), and Barry Wills (Systems Design). Resource persons include representatives from UW, StatsCan, and private and public agencies. For more details, call Sally Lerner (UW ext. 3060) or Mieke Kesik (UW ext. 3740).

PLANNING TRENDS SUBJECT OF UW CONFERENCE

"Planning Trends and Issues of the Future" is the theme of an 11th annual student conference to be held at UW on Friday, 27 Feb. Participants will explore current trends that suggest ways in which planners can develop their careers in non-traditional directions. Topics include housing in the future and resource exploitation. The daylong event will take place in Siegfried Hall at St. Jerome's College. Registration fee: \$25/\$12 students (pre-registering saves \$5/\$2), includes lunch and refreshments. Details: Eliza Coblentz at the School of Urban and Regional Planning--UW ext. 2789.

VANDERBURG HEADS U OF T CENTRE

Dr. Willem Vanderburg, well-known to CSTV members, is now Director of the Centre for Technology and Social Development at U of T. His term continues to 30 June 1989. The Centre's main purpose is "to enable the creators and doers of technology to examine critically

and reflect upon the social influences that their work brings about." Vanderburg hopes that collaboration between the Centre and other U of T sectors will "promote a better understanding of the transforming role that modern technology plays in society," and he expects this to lead to the study of technology "as a major phenomenon in a number of disciplines." The Centre's office is Room 210E of the Rosebrugh Building, telephone number (416)978-8661. Dr. Vanderburg's office number is (416)978-2924.



BERTELL: Bring the public into research decisions

LARGE TURNOUT FOR BERTELL ADDRESS

UW's Arts Lecture Hall Room 116 was well-filled for the "Humanity at Risk" address given on 5 November by Dr. Rosalie Bertell, Director of the International Institute of Concern for Public Health. The event was co-sponsored by CSTV, WPIRG, Science for Peace, Women's Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies and the Institute for Risk Research.

Bertell identified two main types of risk--the catastrophic, colossal type (nuclear war, for instance) and the "death-by-slow-poison" type (toxic waste dumps, etc.). She traced out a "process of awareness" that must be undertaken if people are going to face the present situation seriously. Bertell argued that we need to reach the final stage of accepting "our present illness" ("what we are doing to ourselves and our planet") before we can begin taking

appropriate action to stop the "death process". The speaker described militarism and war as a social addiction that determines society's economic priorities. "Everything goes in the direction of the money", she observed. We must learn to say "War is no more," that "Winning your way by physical power is no more," that "might is not right."

Bertell took up two questions submitted in advance: How can we expect the public to assess dangers and enter into decision-making? and What is the responsibility of professionals engaged in the creation of new technologies? To the first she indicated that the public has a rightful place because technology impinges on community and public health. Like industrial workers in the past, the public needs to organize, to identify "illnesses of concern," to demand independent audits of industry's predictive risk statistics, and to set up independent monitoring of pre-determined health effects. To the second, the speaker cited the case of a Swiss scientist who lost his position due to his raising questions about the ethical implications of his research; his colleagues rallied round him, tithing their own salaries to keep him afloat and productive. Researchers must "stop designing projects according to what can be funded," and the general public must be brought into the choice of research activity.

A lively open discussion period followed. At the end, Bertell said she saw no serious problem in a plethora of citizen groups emerging over various risk issues, contending that this pattern was paralleled in the labour movement at one time until finally a unifying issue arose that brought all the groups together. She believes one large, inclusive survival issue will emerge in a similar fashion.

For more information on Bertell's organization, write or call: International Institute of Concern for Public Health, 67 Mowat St., Suite 343, Toronto, Ont. M6K 3E3. Phone: (416) 533-7351.

GSTV FALL 1986 EVENTS

Along with activities described elsewhere in this issue, the Centre's fall schedule also included 3 jointly sponsored events: a workshop on cognitive science (8 Nov.), co-sponsored with Independent Studies, Philosophy, and Liberal Science; a colloquium on "The Illusion of Technique" with David Holdsworth of Ontario Hydro/U of T Philosophy (12 Nov.), co-sponsored with Philosophy and the Institute for Risk Research; and a presentation on Exploracom with founder Abe Schwartz (19 Nov.), co-sponsored with UTUWCIT. Good attendance and a high level of interest was reported at all events.

CENTRE DIRECTOR PUBLISHES BOOK ON AUTONOMY

Centre Director Larry Haworth, on sabbatical this year, brought out in October a new book entitled Autonomy: an Essay in Philosophical Psychology and Ethics. Published by Yale University Press, the 248 page monograph outlines philosophical and psychological components of human autonomy and discusses the ethical importance of this fundamental human value, which the author distinguishes from the perhaps more familiar concepts of freedom, liberty, pleasure, and preference satisfaction.

CSTV FILM FESTIVAL A MODEST SUCCESS, GLITCHES AND ALL

The CSTV film festival on Technology and Work, held 21 - 23 October, was a modest success, report organizers Sally Lerner (Environmental and Resource Studies) and Steve Jones (CSTV). Attendance was high for some events (notably the opening night, featuring 3 films and Arthur Cordell's keynote address), decent for most others, and sparse for several. A highlight was the repeated screening of the 1926 classic "Metropolis" in a specially contrived theatre in the ES courtyard, which was rigged from stage draperies expertly hung by UW Theatre personnel Peter Carette and Alex Kordics. Other screenings and discussion sessions took place in Humanities and in the Arts and Engineering lecture halls.

It's a truism that no film festival can exist without a couple of technical foul-ups (preferably in rapid succession and both at the worst possible time). On Wednesday night in EL 101, the CSTV event followed this time-honoured tradition to perfection: a large video unit, functioning admirably in the afternoon, became temperamental, necessitating ingenious troubleshooting by A-V's Ron Russell; standard TV monitors were then substituted to run "Quel Numero," expected to be one of the Festival's biggest hits; the film came on, the mainly unilingual (anglais) audience waited patiently, then nervously, finally quite restlessly, for at least some of the dialogue to come up in English subtitles; the dialogue remained en francais; we deduced that what we had here was the French-only version of the film; the audience discreetly disappeared. (Rumour has it that an English version of this award winning film--it really is very good--may surface this winter; call Sally Lerner (UW ext. 3060) for details).

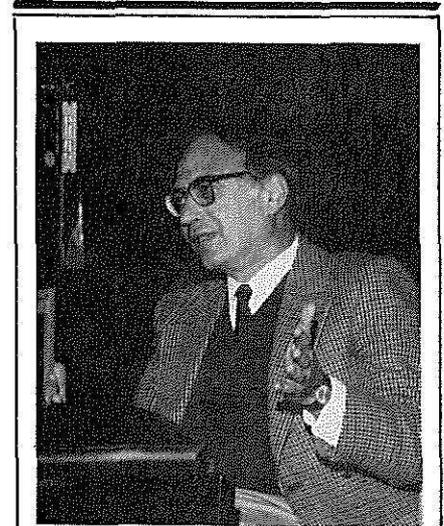
ALTERNATIVES LOOKS NORTHWARDS IN JANUARY ISSUE

Against a background of bad news and apparently bleak prospects, many communities in Northern Canada are seeking new and better ways to achieve "sustainable" development. These communities are now looking for diversified economic activities that can be subject to local control and that use, as well as protect, renewable resources. Efforts are also underway to preserve the cultural heritage and

rights of native Northerners and to involve women in development decision-making. This is the scene examined in the January 1987 issue of Alternatives, available at selected newsstands and from the UW Faculty of Environmental Studies for \$4.50. For more details: Bob Gibson, UW ext. 3407.

CORDELL ON THE TRANSITION TO AN INFORMATION SOCIETY

In his keynote address at the Technology and Work Film Festival, Arthur Cordell of the Science Council of Canada posed a Year 2000 scenario where "the future has already occurred." By 2001, on this view, the "Privacy Scandal of 1987" will be only a dim memory; information will have become a commodity; hotels and conference centres, overbuilt in an earlier era, will have fallen into disuse; a 1990 Royal Commission "From Hardware to Software" will have outlined an "information theory of value"; the obsession with jobs will have given way; "post-scarcity economics" and artificial intelligence will be understood and accepted; and information technology will have contributed to unifying the Canadian nation. The question now is how to ease the transition to an information society, said the speaker. Cordell was challenged on numerous points but maintained that the information society has great potential for providing abundance, leisure, and longer, healthier lives for all. Newsletter readers may wish to consult Cordell's 1985 book, The Uneasy Eighties: The Transition to an Information Society (Science Council), which is also a textbook for STV 100.



ARTHUR CORDELL:

"The question is how to ease the transition to an information society ... "

"RESEARCH CHALLENGES" WORKSHOP A SUCCESS

A workshop held in Toronto by the U of T/UW Co-operative on Information Technology on 5 December was a successful and timely event, report the organizers. The subject was "personalized information systems" and the daylong workshop focused on computer approaches to organizing the data typical of such systems. Speakers and panel discussions considered such topics as available programs, design limitations, user needs, and input problems. According to a report on the event, one speaker's micro-based system introduced him to "the joys of 3 x 5 cards, demonstrating that the ideal system for any one person may be a hybrid one, an appropriate balance between hard and soft copy." Humble traditions live on! More details: Bonnie Kent, UW ext. 3055.

ST. PAUL'S SPEAKERS SERIES

St. Paul's College, where CSTV Acting Director Russel Legge and the Newsletter Editor are based, is jointly sponsoring a Speakers Series this winter with other campus organizations. On 12 Feb. Fran Fields of the Louis Riel Teacher's Brigade presents "A Visit to the War Zone in Northern Nicaragua." On 23 Feb. Anne Lederman of York University speaks on Native and Metis dance music in Manitoba. Both events run from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and are free of charge. More details: Pauline Greenhill, Canadian Studies--885-1460.

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News items are eagerly solicited for the next issue.
Call Ann Dunnet, CSTV office--UW ext. 6215.

LAST WORD: Rosalie Bertell and Russel Legge chat and others check out WPIRG table at 5 Nov. event

