Welcome to the spring edition of Newsbytes. This issue highlights recent SCARP milestones and events, updates readers on the feasibility study concerning SCARP’s new building, welcomes new adjunct faculty member, Michael Shiffer and interviews the much loved Tony Dorsey after he announced his retirement. Newsbytes would like to congratulate Will Trousdale, Robin Gregory and Tim McDaniels on receiving a 2011 PIBC Excellence in Planning Research Award, Zsuzsi Fodor on her APA Food Systems Award, and all our spring graduates for their achievements. Enjoy!

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Jose Fernandez videotapes student presentations in Chinatown on Apr. 12 as part of his Digital Video & Planning project.

Photo credit: Maysa Phares
Metropolis - Growing Just or Just Growing?

By Chloe Fox

On February 4th, 2011, SCARP hosted its third annual student-led symposium, Metropolis: Growing Just or Just Growing? This year’s daylong symposium examined the complex relationship between growth and justice in the city through the lens of the planning profession. The symposium featured keynote addresses from Susan Fainstein, Professor of Urban Planning at Harvard University and author of The Just City, and SCARP Adjunct Professor and Senior Partner with 42nd Street Consulting, Nathan Edelson, as well as nine panel discussions focusing on topics ranging from mega-event planning to transportation and housing to public health and First Nations planning.

This year’s symposium was an undeniable success. The event registered 190 participants including practicing professionals, faculty and students from SCARP and other UBC departments as well as Simon Fraser University, Portland State University and various other academic institutions. Penny Gurstein, Director of SCARP, congratulated the students on organizing this year’s symposium suggesting that the event has become “the high point of SCARP’s academic year”.

The success of this year’s symposium could not have occurred without the dedication and commitment of the organizing committee: Master’s students Alisha Mody, Chris Gallop and Maggie Wang, and PhD student Victoria Barr; the numerous volunteers who assisted them; as well as the moderators, panel organizers and presenters, including SCARP faculty members John Friedmann, Jinhua Zhao, Larry Frank, William Rees, and Master’s students Theresa Fresco, Yaheli Shtull and Timothy Shah.

"It was a lot of hard work so I was happy it was a success in the end" said organizing committee member Chris Gallop when asked to comment on the success of the symposium.

Gallop also credited the panel organizers for inviting a variety of interesting speakers representing a wide range of opinions.

“I think an important aspect of this symposium was that, while bringing like-minded individuals together, it also brought a diverse set of opinions and backgrounds together around the topics of growth and justice in planning.”

Looking forward to next year’s symposium, Gallop advises striking a balance between over and under programming the day, allowing ample time for discussion and ensuring a wide variety of interests and opinions are represented in each room.

If you are interested in getting involved in the 2012 symposium, please contact SCARP Director, Penny Gurstein at penny.gurstein(at)ubc.ca
SCARP is pleased to offer the following courses for the Summer 2011 Term:

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<td>May 14 - May 15</td>
<td>PLAN 548Z Food Systems Policy</td>
<td>Wendy Mendes</td>
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<td>May 16 - May 27</td>
<td>PLAN 503 Strategic Planning for Sustainable</td>
<td>William Trousdale</td>
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<td>Community Economic Development</td>
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<td>May 3 - June 7</td>
<td>PLAN 548C Urban Mass Transit Planning &amp;</td>
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<td>PLAN 548O Local Assessment for Project Planning</td>
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New Adjunct Professor: Translink’s Michael Shiffer

The SCARP community is pleased to be welcoming its newest adjunct professor, Michael Shiffer, VP of the Planning & Policy Division of TransLink and former VP for Planning and Development at the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). Michael’s exciting new course, Urban Mass Transit Planning and Technologies, filled up quickly and is now underway. I had the pleasure of interviewing our new prof on May 2nd, a couple days before the class started, to find out more about his connection to academia.

First of all, welcome! We have so many students here that are interested in transportation; we’re very excited to have you here. I’m curious, what has brought you to SCARP?

Actually, my passion for transit started when I was a kid. I grew up in a family without a car in Chicago so I developed an early appreciation for mass transportation -so much so, that my career objective was to drive that city’s elevated trains. It was only because the transit authority wasn’t hiring when I graduated high school that I continued my education –all the way to the Ph.D. level! Seriously, as a student, I worked in several transit call centers and that experience reinforced in me the importance of basic mobility for all sectors of the population.

As a graduate student in transportation planning, I was challenged by the gap between the analytical tools that planners tend to use with concepts the average person understands. My academic mission has been to develop mechanisms to bridge that gap using emerging multimedia technologies and public engagement processes. To this end, my nine month post doc at MIT ended up lasting nine years! Actually, the balance of that time was spent on the faculty teaching and running a small research lab there that focused on how emerging information technologies inform the way people discuss the future of their communities.

I was eventually recruited back home to Chicago by both the University of Illinois and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). I was supposed to work 90% at the university and 10% at CTA, but it turned out to be the reverse. It got to the point where I was enjoying myself so much as a practitioner that I gave up a tenured faculty position to lead planning for the CTA indefinitely. However I continued to teach throughout. And yes, I did eventually become certified to operate that city’s elevated trains!

Eventually I was recruited to the Vancouver region by TransLink. But I did not want to lose touch with my academic roots; I personally felt that engagement between the academic world and the professional world was really critical and really paid off in a number of different ways. So when I came to TransLink I said that I would like to keep teaching and that’s what brought me here to SCARP.

That’s the long answer; the short answer to what brought me here today is the number 99 bus!
Your new course starts tomorrow, what inspired you to teach “Urban Mass Transit Planning and Technologies”? 

This is a course that I started teaching at MIT. When I moved to Chicago I offered the same course and really the intent was to give students a deeper appreciation of both the technical and policy issues that so many communities face with respect to public transportation. So basically this is a course I’ve been teaching for almost 20 years. But it’s different every year, with different issues in Boston, Chicago, and now here in the Lower Mainland.

I’ve included a number of field trips in the course, designed to be case studies to help students understand some of the issues faced by the agencies that provide these critical services. We’ll go to the central control centre for Skytrain to better understand how the system runs, we’ll look at the good, the bad, and the ugly in regards to transportation infrastructure, and we’ll also be seeing what goes on behind the scenes at the bus company including maintenance, service monitoring and scheduling. The course brings value to TransLink in the form of the relationships that we build with tomorrow’s transportation professionals and the fresh ideas that are generated from new perspectives.

Are you planning to teach any other courses? 

This is probably all I can do for now. The emphasis of my course’s policy aspects often shifts year-to-year depending on issues of the day. So its flavour might change over time. Beyond the course, there may be opportunities for collaborative research. For example, when I was with the CTA, we had about 6 -7 MIT students every summer who would intern at the transit authority and then do theses that were directly related to issues and areas we worked on. They had both university faculty members and transportation professionals serving as dual advisors and a lot of these theses were very helpful to the overall transit industry. Everyone gained value from these. Perhaps this model could be replicated here, where students would gain a broader understanding of some of the complexities of transportation and, the transportation industry will gain value from fresh insights and as well as gain value from the potential talent pool.

As a person who’s spent a lifetime working on transportation issues, what skills and ideologies do you hope to pass on to our planners of tomorrow? 

Well, I don’t know about ideology, but I would hope to help students who have a passion for transportation to further develop that and to make this a more sustainable region. It helps to be balanced; having interest in both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of this rich topic is really important so people will gain an understanding of these issues. It’s not just theory, its practice and understanding the challenges that we need to overcome —regionally, nationally, in North America, and in the rest of the world. There are plenty of really good and really poor examples of transportation in other parts of the world and it’s important to have an understanding of them. It’s best to have an appreciation of the multiple facets of transportation planning —urban design, logistics, mechanical, labour relations, policy, etc. — to maintain a good perspective. We have tremendous growth worldwide in mass transportation projects and a specialist in mass transportation will have an abundance of career opportunities.

To view the course syllabus for Michael Shiffer’s new course offered at SCARP, please see http://www.scarp.ubc.ca/plan548c.
People Systems in Support of Food Systems: Zsuzsi Fodor Wins the APA Prize for Best Food Systems Planning Paper

By Meredith Seeton

A storm of congratulatory emails on the SCARP listserv followed the announcement in mid-March that Zsuzsi Fodor’s article, “People Systems in Support of Food Systems: The Neighbourhood Food Network Movement in Vancouver, Canada”, had won the American Planning Association’s competition for the best student research paper on food systems planning. The competition was stiff, and we knew Zsuzsi’s work on food systems inside and outside of the university was creating waves, but it is wonderful to have her work recognized internationally. At the recent APA Conference in Boston, Zsuzsi’s work was recognized and she was awarded a prize for her winning paper.

The article, which is now posted on the APA website as well as Zsuzsi’s profile on the SCARP website, is a taste of what’s to come in Zsuzsi’s thesis. It begins to explore the case of Vancouver’s Neighbourhood Food Networks, as ‘people systems’ that support local food systems with various normative traits, such as social justice, equity, and accessibility. Zsuzsi outlines the roles and limitations of Neighbourhood Food Networks, variously celebrating and problematizing the neighbourhood scale and the structure of the food networks, and presenting a “hope for a complex and multifaceted human landscape of food system activity” (page 6). Her paper demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the movement for food systems reform, and sheds light on the human dimension of how this reform work gets done.

Zsuzsi’s writing is informed by her activism in the food world. In addition to her extensive background in food security and food justice work in Ontario, highlights of her Vancouver food work include sitting on the Westside Food Security Collaborative Steering Committee, being active in working groups with the Neighbourhood Food Justice Coordinators and the Vancouver Food Policy Council, doing project support work with the Grandview Woodland Food Connection, volunteering at the UBC Farm, and growing with the Cedar Cottage Community Garden. This deep engagement in food activism will inform her thesis work, which is using experiential and action research methodologies to delve further into Neighbourhood Food Networks in Vancouver. Zsuzsi has now also conducted many interviews to compliment this research, and she will be writing her thesis over the summer months.

Zsuzsi brings passion, strong analysis, comprehensive knowledge of the terrain, and clear writing to the emerging field of food systems planning. We look forward to learning more as her thesis unfolds. Congratulations, Zsuzsi!

(Zsuzsi’s article can be found through http://www.scarp.ubc.ca/profiles/students/Zsuszi%20Fodor)

Congratulations to our Spring 2011 SCARP Masters Graduates!!!

Andrew Beaird  Bronwyn Jarvis
Jennifer Bedore  Julien Landry
Breanna Bishop  Robin Mills
Joanna Clark  Spring Ord
Erica Crawford Boettcher  Naveeda Rizwan
Susan Dean  Matthew Thomson
Christopher Gallop  An Minh Vu
Sarah Gillett
SCARP – Legend and Livability
Original Article: http://pricetags.wordpress.com
By Gordon Price

There may be just over a thousand of you – graduates of UBC’s School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) – but you’ve swung above your weight.

SCARP grads have served not only Vancouver, but also cities all over the world. Some have gone on to be leaders: a premier, a prime minister, mayors and councillors. Some are even developers. For 60 years, SCARP has trained the people who plan and shape the world we build.

Credit for the school goes to Peter Oberlander, the professor who convinced American philanthropist Paul Mellon to write a cheque for a half-million dollars to really get the place going. And it was Oberlander who played a critical role in the Great Freeway Fight in 1971 when he resigned in front of a packed meeting of council as head of the planning commission after delivering his report – and delivered the death blow to the freeway’s credibility. In the end, though, SCARP remains Oberlander’s most important legacy.

Indeed, Vancouver began to take for granted that it was one of the world’s most livable cities. It also began to take for granted that it could accommodate growth without disturbing its cherished quality of life.

During the 1990s and 2000s, it was almost easy. One set of planners could focus on shaping growth in the places where it met little resistance – the north shore of False Creek and Coal Harbour – and all the new neighbourhoods on brownfields and underperforming asphalt – Arbutus, Collingwood, East Fraser Lands – while leaving the developed parts of the city, from the West End to Kensington, more or less alone.

At the same time, another set of planners was charged with traditional neighbourhood processes, particularly in places where the growth rate had slowed to practically zero and people were anxious about any change, except rising property values. Planners were there to help ease these neighbourhoods into the future, but never so fast that it would change their character, which, as growth slowed, became measured in ever-tinier increments. It worked.
Since Expo 86, Vancouver built enough condos, townhouses and apartments to accommodate both the homegrown and the newcomer — perhaps a couple of thousand new units a year — without much complaint. The planners exercised regulatory authority, negotiated agreement and accommodated growth with such skill that they achieved almost mythical status. And then they went on to teach at SCARP, where they could assess their students, hire the best and train them in the culture of the city — in the same way that the engineering department did at another UBC school. SCARP, however, was just not a parochial finishing school for the city on its border. It increasingly emphasized sustainability at an international, almost planetary, scale and broadened its catalogue by attracting a more diverse faculty. But it’s not clear today whether it can accommodate itself and its values to a different set of requirements for its hometown.

In the 2010s it will no longer be easy for Vancouver to accommodate growth. It is essentially built out. And finding space for that additional 1,500 to 2,000 units a year without disruption to existing neighbourhoods is probably impossible. Unfortunately, change that’s acceptable isn’t change that’s sufficient. Even as some communities grow more resistant to visible change — like some West Enders’ reaction to new highrise proposals — the need will grow greater.

SCARP and the Vancouver planning department have always had a mutually supportive relationship. At 60, the school can reflect with pride on its past and decide whether, in the spirit of Peter Oberlander, it can now be the forceful advocate for a different kind of city.

SCARP has been involved both formally and informally. A Project Committee, composed of both faculty and students, was formed in December 2010 with the purpose of providing information advice to the Consultant Team during the feasibility study. The stakeholder engagement component of the study was divided into three event weeks which each had a presentation, public lecture and a workshop. The event weeks were themed “Learning Landscapes”, “Spaces for Learning”, and “Low Energy Landscapes”.

As an additional component, SCARP’s Director Penny Gurnstein had the vision and foresight to have student bodies facilitate a broader engagement. With tremendous faith in her students, Gurnstein created a directed studies course that gave
students the opportunity to engage the broader scarp community in the feasibility study, explore their own related research interests and to document the process for future students to learn from.

The students were given the responsibility to develop their own assignments and engage the public as they chose. The students engaged the community by workshopping visions, discussing ideas in focus groups, asking for input from staff, faculty, students and alumni via survey, conducting private interviews with the faculty members, and researching what businesses and other institutions around the world are doing. Their outputs can be found on their online blog at: https://ipddirectedstudies.wordpress.com/ongoing-student-work/

As the term came to an end, the students presented a summary of their findings on April 13th to representatives of the design team. They highlighted that their efforts reflected SCARP's vision of “sustainability through the democratization of planning” by expanding the outreach and engagement for the proposed facility.

Some main themes that the students gathered through their engagement and felt were important to cycle back to the design team in their final meeting were:

- The design team must understand that students are classified by various “areas of concentration”, but are trained as generalists first, with specializations second.
- SCARP emphasizes different ‘ways of knowing’ and oral histories are valued as much as hard numbers, street experiences as much as formal education.
- SCARP is very social and needs a space that is not only welcoming to the internal SCARP community, but to external communities as well.
- Students want a building that connects them to the environment.
- The building itself should challenge norms; it should be a flexible space that allows experimentation with behaviour change and new experiences.

The students, faculty, and design team all agreed that the feasibility study and the broader engagement was a process of mutual learning. Whether the proposed building and site are feasible or not will be announced over the course of the summer. Whatever the outcome, we can be sure that SCARP will continue to make great strides in encouraging broad engagement practices.

The Design Team will present the final study on July 19th. Please check the website for further details.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to:
Will Trousdale
Robin Gregory and
Tim McDaniels

who have won a 2011 PIBC Excellence in Planning Research Award for their work on evaluation of cultural and other non-market losses due to energy development on Metis settlements in Alberta.
The Craft of Planning has Many Hats

By: Theresa Fresco

This free verse poem was part of an assignment in Larry Beasley’s PLAN 548P class. In each class involving group work, one student is assigned the role of ‘the sage’ where they are responsible for listening to group discussions and capturing the essence of the issues and topics being discussed. This class aimed to explore the many different roles that planners play.

The craft of planning has many hats,
Each hat dependent on a situation or a context,
Each hat assuming a role encompassing different positions,
Some stronger than others, some more uncomfortable than others and some that are more palatable,
But all are necessary,
Presenting us with the challenge to understand and appreciate all the hats we wear.

With each hat comes certain skills for certain situations --
When to speak, when to listen,
When to come forward and give direction and when to step back,
When to be a bridge between different worlds, disciplines, positions and interests,
When to mediate,
When to build relationships,
When to foster dialogue,
When to empower those excluded or disempowered,

Skills that ensure ‘you don’t bite the hand that feeds you’ but also not to choke on the old and crusty bone of irrelevant and unjust practice,
Skills in the realm of the technical, social, environmental and political,
Skills that allow us to stand our ground, not to accept the common denominator and hold to and implement a vision.

Remember that each hat comes from somewhere—
They have a history,
They embed values,
They embrace a language,
They command certain aspects of our training, our personalities and our beliefs,
And,
They are always in a state of flux.

The craft of planning has many hats,
Showing us the challenge and excitement of the multiplicity of a profession that is always evolving, never boring and continually pushing us to be better than we are.

Anthony Dorcey Announces his Retirement after 40 Years at SCARP

Ellen Bird

Professor Tony Dorcey announced that after 40 wonderful years of teaching, he will be retiring in the fall of 2011. Among his many contributions that he has made over the years to SCARP, he has been a primary force in developing the school’s reputation as a leader in sustainability and engagement. As a student lucky enough to gain guidance and insights from such a talented teacher, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to ask him to reflect on his time here at SCARP.

What did you like most about teaching at SCARP?

Working with the exceptional students who come to SCARP, passionate and committed to making a difference in the world. Their excitement and enthusiasm is contagious. Most have had diverse learning and planning related experiences before they come here so they arrive with clearer ideas about why they want to be studying at SCARP. The experiences they bring give you so much to work with as a teacher.

Over the years I’ve also come to feel that if you can help a student to be better prepared to make a difference in the real world, it’s a huge pay off for everyone and deeply satisfying. Helping students in the classroom, with their research, connecting them with internships and jobs, is very gratifying -
especially when I hear back about all that they are doing and achieving. It’s interesting to hear reflections about what they found most useful in practice and how that differs from what they felt was most important to learn when they were in School.

So I would say that it’s engaging with the students that I like the most—the passion and enthusiasm they bring to SCARP and hearing about what they do after they graduate.

**During your 40 years as a professor, have there been any moments or phases that will be particularly memorable?**

There’s 3 significant moments or periods that were really important for me.

First, I never had any expectations I’d have a career in the academic world teaching and doing research, being a professor. My first decade at UBC, when I had a full-time research position in the Westwater Research Centre, was a huge high for me when I began to realize I could have that kind of career and to discover how much I enjoyed it. The teaching opportunities that came with the research, the interdisciplinary work, the policy questions we were asking, the community engagement were all very exciting in the ‘70s. As I started working with students on research related to the Centre’s studies, I was drawn increasingly into related teaching. That decade, culminating in my joint appointment as an Assistant Professor in SCARP, was a memorable beginning for me.

The late ‘80s, early ‘90s were also very memora-

ble; it was a period of great innovation in approaches to negotiation and integrated resource management and sustainability strategies were being evolved. Most importantly, money was around to do innovative things. I had the opportunity to engage much more substantively and widely outside of the university—to both contribute and to learn. Four years on the BC Round Table on the Environment and Economy was a great experience in developing and teaching facilitation, negotiation, and mediation tools; two years as the founding chair of the Fraser Basin Management Board was an opportunity to work with an extraordinary variety of politicians, citizens and professionals on water management and sustainability issues and enabled me to gain a better understanding for what it was most relevant to teach students; to work internationally with the World Bank and IUCN on controversies surrounding large dams and creating a World Commission to seek solutions was also an unforgettable experience. These assignments had huge impacts on me by enabling me to take ideas and techniques that I’d developed at Westwater and SCARP into larger forums, develop them further, all the while learning more about myself, and bringing fresh thoughts back to teaching.

The third and definitely peak experience was the 7 years beginning in 1999 I was director of SCARP. I was able to implement a lot of changes: six new faculty members were attracted to SCARP during this time; the School became a much more collaborative enterprise by involving students in committees and governance of SCARP; we built stronger connections with the profession by extending the numbers of adjunct professors considerably and strengthening ties with the PIBC by my...
joining its Education Committee and a student representative joining its Council; and I attempted to advance the School’s sustainability focus, which resulted in the introduction of my Omnibus course. In 2006 the students organized a once-only international version of the CAPS conference as a lead in to UN Habitat’s World Urban Forum in Vancouver—that was the year I stepped down and an outstandingly memorable way to finish my term as Director.

During my four decades at UBC, the occasional bleak moments were relatively few and far outweighed by the opportunities to do exciting new things and see the encouraging results that came from them. Throughout these experiences I had the privilege of working with inspiring students who made so much possible, helping me develop my teaching, my research, and changes in the School and wider community.

**What are your hopes for the future of the School?**

Firstly, I hope that the school holds to what’s made it distinctive—its breadth and diversity of faculty and students, its commitment to progressive planning, the balance it tries to achieve among the academic-theoretical and the professional practice interests, and the way it emphasizes developing students long-term analytical and problem solving capabilities beyond developing merely the skills required for entry career positions.

Secondly, I also hope SCARP will change, to be stronger in pursuing a vision that is relevant to the opportunities and constraints of the times ahead. The School needs to sharpen its focus on what is the cutting edge of sustainability so it can continue to be a leader in meeting the challenges of global change—it’s time to strongly refresh its focus and let this influence both the teaching and research programs.

I think we need more core/required courses to ensure each student has the foundational capabilities of economic, social and environmental sustainability planning before graduating—this could be an opportunity to offer more 1-credit courses and ensure delivery to each student of a greater diversity of course material. That would mean reshaping the masters program, but the School has once-in-a-generation opportunities beginning right now with faculty retiring and new faculty members being brought in.

I would also like to see a greater integration of the practitioners and the academics in teaching, research and capacity development activities. The balance is there in terms of the numbers of people and breadth of course offerings, but if practitioners and academics became more engaged with each other, they would both offer stronger courses and we would have a much stronger school as a result. Consistent with this I hope that the idea of professional PhDs would be explored as a complement to the traditional doctorate oriented to academic careers and research. They are becoming more rele-

SCARP students demonstrated some school spirit at the longboat races earlier this year.
vant and common as people seek more in-depth and extended research opportunities in preparing for practice careers and such a program could nicely cross fertilize with the masters program and the existing doctoral program.

These ideas all come back to what kind of faculty we want to hire to support the new thrust. Bill [Rees] and my retirement should be seen as a huge opportunity for the School to begin remaking itself. Within a decade it can make significant changes with the further retirements in prospect and that doesn’t happen often. The School needs very active dialogue within and without to see how it can capitalize on that opportunity.

What are your plans for retirement and do they involve SCARP at all?

I have really loved my time at SCARP and am by no means keen to leave all aspects of University life. But I’ve too long traded off my time and energies giving priority to the University while taking from my family. Its payback time now. And the reality is that I will be 67 in the fall -the clock is ticking and there are other things I would like to do with Plu, my wife, before it is too late. We’ve gotten into boating in a substantial way in recent years and you’ve got to take such opportunities while your health permits. The general idea for the immediate future is that Plu and I will spend 6 months of the year on Tempus Fugit cruising the waterways and coasts of Europe and 6 months of the year here on Carpe Diem sailing the inside waters from Washington to Alaska. To be able to do all this, Plu and I need to enhance our skills and qualifications; we are greatly looking forward to going back to school next year and taking courses ashore and afloat.

Part-time I’m particularly interested in dabbling in the ways in which you can use new information and communication technologies to influence debate. This may lead me back into SCARP to stimulate discussions around the future of planning and the relationship between the academy and the profession. Eventually I could see myself perhaps coming back to teach a one-off course upon occasion or I could be on my boat in some delightful spot stimulating interaction across the web, but first I’d like a window of free time and space to look over the horizon before making any commitments.

I really enjoy interacting with Plu as she develops her quilting. In the last two years she’s started creating landscapes seen from our boats and using and developing new techniques. She’s been asked to teach a course next fall, so as I’m coming out of teaching, she’s picking it up once again. Doing this and other things together is what we are looking forward to with great pleasure. We’re extraordinary lucky to be in good health and in a good position (with many thanks to the bank manager at RBC) to do these things.

Best wishes to Tony and Plu in their future adventures!