



Meet (from left to right) Carol Acton, Maureen Drysdale, Danine Farquharson, and Sue Brubacher.

Photo: Ron Hewson

Four new faces at St. Jerome's

Carol Acton

Carol Acton joined St. Jerome's as an assistant professor of English this September, but she's no stranger to either side of Laurel Creek. For the last 11 years she's been lecturing in English, researching the literature of war, and developing and teaching courses on communications for the Mathematics faculty.

Born and raised in Ireland, Acton received her first degree from Trinity College, Dublin. Her PhD thesis (Queen's) was on Wilfred Owen and First World War poets, an interest since age 18, when she discovered Owen in a classmate's poetry book. Later she began exploring the "life-writing" and poetry of women in the First World War as well as the neglected area of the writings of women in the Vietnam War.

This year she'll teach courses in Canadian children's literature and in communications in mathematics and computer science. As a full-time faculty member she'll also serve on committees, a prospect she welcomes. "It will give me a much better sense of being a part of the SJU community," she says. "I also hope that being permanent will mean I can see students throughout their time at St. Jerome's."

Maureen Drysdale

The route from geochemist to educational psychologist may not seem obvious, but it was a natural progression for Maureen Drysdale. Raised in the Maritimes, she moved west in the late '70s, completed a BSc in geology and became involved in professional development while working in the oil industry. There she discovered her real interests.

"I want to understand how people learn," she says. "That's a very wide field, when you realize that almost everything has an impact on learning. My particular focus has been on the differences in cognitive learning styles."

After completing a PhD in educational research at the University of Calgary, Drysdale came to St. Jerome's this July as an assistant professor. She will teach courses in developmental, adolescent, and educational psychology, and on the emotionally disturbed child.

Her interest extends to adult learners and post-secondary students as well. In Calgary she worked

with teachers and teachers-in-training, and conducted workshops on learning and assessment for the City of Calgary Fire Department and the city's Emergency Medical Services Department. She plans to establish similar links with school boards and first-response services in the Waterloo area. At St. Jerome's she would also like to develop workshops on testing methods and skills for academic success.

Danine Farquharson

Danine Farquharson's grandmother emigrated from Northern Ireland and she herself grew up in a family that loves to argue politics over the dinner table. That's the only personal history the Alberta native brings to her special research interest in the Irish Troubles. It was a "phenomenal" University of Alberta course in Irish drama that really ignited her love of Irish literature. She pursued it at Memorial University in Newfoundland before coming to St. Jerome's as an assistant professor of English this July.

Conflict is at the heart of Irish literature, Farquharson says. (Her PhD thesis dealt with the gunman in Irish fiction and film.) "There's an intoxicating paradox at work between the dangerous, violent propensities and the other side, the romance and beauty."

Among the courses she will teach—Women in Literature, Criticism, British Literature 1885-1918—she's nettled but not surprised to find Joyce (one of her favourites) and Yeats listed as British. "In future I'd like to develop courses on Irish literature. At St. Jerome's, there should be plenty of interest."

Beyond academics, "my great love is film." She was delighted to find a repertory theatre in Waterloo. Plans for an Irish film weekend at St. Jerome's are already brewing.

Sue Brubacher

Sue Brubacher's first day on the job as Assistant to the St. Jerome's Registrar and Coordinator of Recruitment was August 13, 2001. It was also Student Life 101, and thousands of prospective students and their parents were swarming across the campus.

When the dust had settled she could still say how much she was looking forward to the new term, when students would bring the campus back to life. "I love working at the University, and I love the students," she says.

She fills the position vacated by Barb Weber, who is pursuing a degree in education at the University of Western Ontario. Brubacher came to St. Jerome's from Conrad Grebel College, where she spent five years as Administrative Assistant to the Academic Dean. At St. Jerome's, she oversees recruitment: working with two liaison travellers, coordinating their schedules, and speaking in local schools herself. In matters related to admissions she works with professors and staff and is the front-line contact for students and parents.

It helps that she's also been a student at St. Jerome's. While working towards a BA in psychology, she found a great source of help in Andrea Charette, a former assistant to the registrar and now Director of Student Services at St. Jerome's. Which means Brubacher can say that when it comes to student relations, she's seen both sides now. 🍀