

# University of Alberta

By Joanne Homik, MD, MSc, FRCPC

There have been many new changes within the University of Alberta Rheumatic Disease Unit (RDU) over the past two years and we are preparing for even more. We are happy to report that the longstanding testosterone/estrogen imbalance in the division has been corrected, and no one is happier than Dr. Paul Davis and Dr. Tony Russell. Dr. Elaine Yacyshyn and Dr. Stephanie Keeling have joined the RDU and are back at work after respective maternity leaves. We are welcoming the addition of Dr. Anna Oswald to the RDU in January 2007 after she completes her maternity leave. There has been a suggestion that “growing our own” may be the best way of recruiting new rheumatologists for the future! Current excitement is provided by our visiting Australian fellow, Dr. Anne Powell. She is determined to experience everything “Canadian,” so has been mountain-climbing, curling and even hit a deer while driving to Fort McMurray.

Within the division, we are finally entering the 21st century by incorporating an electronic medical record, an urgent patient clinic and a central triage system for new referrals using the “in house” tool ERASE. We are in the early stages and hopefully will have more to report at a later date. Dr. Walter Maksymowych and the other members of the Spondyloarthritis Research Consortium of Canada were the recipients of the first National Research Initiative award from the Arthritis Society. Dr. Maksymowych also continues to nurture our biologics registry which is now in its sixth year of data collecting and planning to go online. Dr. Elaine Yacyshyn will be taking over the reins from Dr. Stephen Aaron as Program Director for the RDU training program. She realizes she has big shoes to fill, but is looking forward to the challenge.

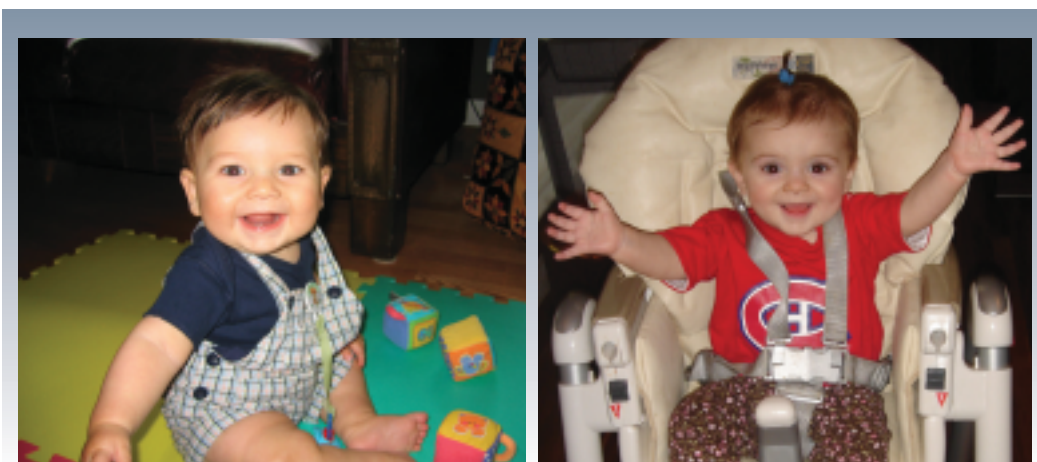
The “group north of the river” (Drs. H. Niall Jones, Dalton Sholter, and Alexander Yan) continue to be busy in the clinic and consulting at the Royal Alexandra Hospital and Glenrose Rehabilitation

Hospital. They are conducting clinical trials with their research company: Rheumatology Research Associates Ltd., which is part of the Canadian Rheumatology Research Consortium (CRRC). Dr. Sholter took off nearly two months of parental leave this summer. One more potential trainee! Dr. Jones and Dr. Sholter are continuing to travel to ever-expanding Fort McMurray while Dr. Jones, along with Dr. Joanne Homik and Dr. Russell, continue to serve Red Deer one Saturday a month. Dr. Sholter will be celebrating his 10-year anniversary of traveling to the Northwest Territories next year. Dr. Yan has been in a community rheumatology practice for more than 17 years (surpassed in Edmonton only by Dr. Peter Chiu and Dr. Savitri Senaratne) and continues to enjoy the variety and variability of a general rheumatology practice.

Dr. Sharon Le Clercq has left Edmonton to pursue an academic appointment in Calgary. Dr. Sophia Kahn has opened her new rheumatology clinic deep in Edmonton’s south side. Dr. Ken Skeith continues his busy clinical practice but still finds time to salmon fish and care for his orchard. Dr. Senaratne practices rheumatology and geriatrics in the community and Dr. Chiu single-handedly deals with the rheumatology needs in the west end of the city.

Once a year, all four corners of Edmonton are united at the Edmonton Rheumatology Retreat in Jasper, Alberta. Collegiality abounds and it is possible that the occasional elk has watched in fascination as the toga party goes outside for a conga line!

*Joanne Homik, MD, MSc, FRCPC*



Growing our own rheumatologists: Wren Oswald and Sophia Keeling.

# Université de Montréal

By Eric Rich, MD, FRCPC

As Québec awaits (some with fear) for snow, and after a long summer in sandals, I have started sleeping with my ski boots just to get reacquainted with them...in order to beat the crap out of John Thomson in the Lake Louise moguls(!). My wife says my boots pose a serious challenge to our relationship. I'll have to pull my winning recipe: offer jewels to my wife while serving her many mellow cognacs by the fire with Barry White songs in the background.

While waiting for the "winter wonderland," there is another reason to rejoice at the *Université de Montréal* (UdM). In July 2007, our rheumatology program will have four residents, all raised as doctors in "la belle province." In the past four years (2004-2007), we will have trained nine residents, approximately the same number we've had from 1991 to 2003; 100% of the trainees are women: sign of the times?

With the likes of Jean-Luc Sénécal, Paul Haraoui, Jean-Pierre Pelletier, Tamara Grodzicky, Jean-Pierre Raynauld, Denis Choquette, Jean-Richard Goulet, Dominique Bourrelle, Carol Yeadon, Anne St-Pierre and support from Michel Zimmer's group (Jean-Pierre Mathieu, Sophie Ligier, Carole Bertrand, Suzanne Mercille, François Couture), we have a unique mix of expertise that offers a very solid training experience.

This year's crop of graduates will repopulate our university hospitals before they go on to repopulate the province's daycares: Edith Villeneuve at *Hôpital Notre-Dame*, Evelyne Vinet at *Hôpital du Sacré-Coeur* and Sai Yan Yuen at *Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont*.



Our group remains active on many research fronts. We try softening hardness: Dr. Sénécal has demonstrated entrepreneurial talents in setting up the UdM Scleroderma Chair. His lab moves ahead in clarifying the pathogenic role of autoantibodies and we are starting our first autologous bone marrow (no osso bucco here) transplant in scleroderma patients. The "JJs" (Pelletier and Raynauld) are tenaciously climbing Mount "OA-verest" with limping dogs and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology; they found "cox-lox" bad for cartilage (no, it's not a kind of smoked salmon). Dr. Haraoui

is more often in the air than on the ground (no, he does not inhale), sharing, learning, expanding and teaching new knowledge on rheumatoid arthritis (RA) worldwide.

But it's not always "la vie en rose" in Québecistan: on June 13, 2006, our government passed special legislation imposing specialist's compensation up to 2010 (8% total for six years). This shameful legislation was passed only to avoid any turmoil during the upcoming elections. As stiff fines will be applied if we attempt any concerted pressure tactics involving patient care, we are now turning to our universities and considering boycotting all teaching activities as a way to have our Health Minister (Dr. Philippe Couillard, neurosurgeon at Sherbrooke) reopen negotiations. Will we, academics, save the day? I think the answer is that we should all move to Alberta and make it an independent country.

Eric Rich, MD, FRCPC

## CRAJ Photo Contest

**Locate your Leica, nab your Nikon and load your Canon for the CRAJ Photo Contest. Submit your best candid and scenic photos from the CRA Annual Meeting at Lake Louise and win a fabulous CRA backpack. Details will be in your handouts at Lake Louise!**