

Annual Report 2005-6

OVERVIEW

This report covers the period from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006, during which the Alexandro Malaspina Research Centre at Malaspina University College has seen a significant increase in activity. The physical location mentioned in the last annual report has been opened and is in use; a number of research projects are approaching completion; the website has been upgraded again; a project of cataloguing resources is under way; and many initiatives to enhance local and international collaboration have been undertaken.

PERSONNEL

DEPARTMENT

Director:	John Black	Liberal Studies and Philosophy
Researchers:	Oscar Clemotte	Philosophy
	Bill Weller	Physics and Engineering
	Lisa MacLean	Liberal Studies
Collaborators:	Ana-María Donat	Modern Languages
	Melody Martin	First Nations Studies
	Laurie Meijer-Drees	First Nations Studies and History
Honorary Associate:	Russell McNeil	Liberal Studies and Physics (retd.)
Student Assistants:	Tonja Henigman	
	Josh Bachynski	

We would particularly like to acknowledge the contributions over the years of founding Director Russell McNeil, who retired from the University College at the end of 2005. We are pleased that Dr. McNeil has accepted a three-year appointment as Honorary Research Associate, and so will remain involved in the Centre's activities for some years to come.

INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Centre continues to operate independently of yet in collaboration with other research groupings at Malaspina University College. Although it had been proposed that the Centre be subsumed under the newly-formed Institute for Coastal Research, it has now been decided that this would lead to unnecessary complication in decision-making. However, the Director of the Centre sits on the ICR Steering Committee, and this engagement has resulted and will result in a number of useful collaborations. The relationship with the Liberal Studies Department has been strengthened by the appointment of Lisa MacLean as Researcher. Members of the Centre were particularly gratified by the participation of the University College Administration and Board in the official opening of the Centre in June 2005.

PHYSICAL LOCATION

After many years in preparation, and through the vision, care and commitment of Library Director Bob Foley, the Centre's dedicated space on the fifth floor of the extended Library was officially opened by Alex and Doris Malaspina on June 23, 2005. In attendance were the University College Board and Executive, many members of staff, faculty and administration, and guests including Mme. Danielle and her son Alexandre Giuntini-Malaspina, Paul, Mark, Aman and Sophia Malaspina, Dario Manfredi, Robin Inglis, John Crosse, Nick Doe and Barry Gough. The occasion was opened with a prayer from Ellen White, Elder of the Snuneymux w First Nation, and marked by speeches from University College President Rich Johnston, Board Chair Don Hubbard, Alex Malaspina and John

Black. The event, and the week-long series of activities for guests which surrounded it, were most capably managed by Student Assistant Tonja Henigman.

The research suite as a whole provides offices, workrooms and a meeting room for the personnel of the Centre and other researchers in the humanities and social sciences. The Centre's own office now houses three computers, along with its collection of books and lithographs (the last generously donated by M. Alexandre Giuntini-Malaspina). The facility has proved invaluable in supporting the progress of the Centre's activity in innumerable ways.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Essay on Beauty

Oscar Clemotte and John Black's translation of Malaspina's *Essay on Beauty in Nature* is now complete, along with the editorial notes, bibliography and references. The philosophical analysis and the translation of the historical introduction by Dario Manfredi will be finished in the Spring, before the publishing deadline (with Edwin Mellen Press) of August 2006.

General Theses on Physics

Bill Weller has produced the Latin text of this, the only work published by Malaspina in his lifetime, which consist of an axiomatization of Newtonian physics. He and Russell McNeil have begun the project of translating this from Latin into English.

Oral Histories

Although it has now been decided that this will be an autonomous entity, the Centre continues its moral support for the Tribal Trails Institute, led by Melody Martin and Laurie Meijer-Drees. The first group of faculty and students, under the auspices of the Tribal Trails Institute and in collaboration with the University of Alaska, visited Alaska in early 2006 to initiate research related to the oral histories of northern indigenous peoples

Pictures of an Expedition

Lisa MacLean, a printmaker and art historian in the Liberal Studies Department, joined the Centre in January 2006 to pursue a project involving the critical analysis of images made by the artists of the Malaspina expedition. Of interest are the ways in which European documentary artists depicted First Peoples, their artefacts and their customs, and the possibility that these involved distortions in the service of various political, economic or ideological ends. This project may be expanded in the future to include a comparative study of the images generated by the Malaspina and Cook expeditions

Biography

The English translation (by Don and Teresa Kirschner, edited by John Black and Russell McNeil) of Dario Manfredi's biography of Alexandro Malaspina – available on the Centre's website for some years – will shortly be published in book form in Italy

OTHER PROJECTS

Website Development

This year has seen the completion of a further project, undertaken by Student Assistant Josh Bachynski, to upgrade the Centre's website. The site was converted to a frames format, to facilitate future global amendments to its many hundred pages. At the same time, all of the pages were converted to the new graphic format, with greater consistency in layout and presentation.

Collaboration with the Maritime Museum of British Columbia

The Centre has participated in a consulting capacity in a website development project with the Maritime Museum of British Columbia in Victoria. The project, which deals with early European exploration of the Pacific Northwest, is now approaching completion

Further, the MMBC is hosting a symposium on George Vancouver, organised by Barry Gough, in April 2006, with the Centre, the ICR and the University College as co-sponsors. The Director of the Centre will chair one of the panels, and the Centre will finance and arrange the printing of programmes for the symposium. Negotiations are under way with the ICR with the goal of publishing the proceedings of the symposium.

Resource Catalogue

Tonja Henigman has rejoined the Centre as Student Research Assistant to work on the cataloguing of the Centre's resources, and that part of the Library's Special Collection which pertains to the Centre's mandate. Work is in progress.

INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH WITH TEACHING

Liberal Studies 411

In Fall 2005, John Black again taught the fourth-year Liberal Studies companion course (*Special Topics in Western Culture: the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*) with a focus on the life and works of Malaspina, and using the biographies by Dario Manfredi and Jack Kendrick. For the first time, students were introduced to the translation-in-progress of Malaspina's *Essay on Beauty*, and contributed helpful suggestions as to the meaning of some obscure passages.

PUBLIC EVENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITY

Public Guest Lecture

The annual guest lecture was given by Dr. Juan Pimentel, of the History of Science Department of the History Institute of the Spanish Interministerial Commission for Science and Technology, on the topic *Alexandro Malaspina: in Search of the Nature of Empire*. The lecture was well-attended, and a lively question-period followed the talk itself. During his time in Nanaimo, Dr. Pimentel fulfilled a lifelong dream when he was accompanied by John Black and Gabriola historian Nick Doe on a visit to the Malaspina Galleries.

International Collaboration

The visit of Juan Pimentel resulted in plans for a number of future projects involving his collaboration with the Centre, including the translation into English of Malaspina's *Axiomas políticos sobre la América*, of which he edited the definitive Spanish text, and of his own *La Física de la Monarchía*.

In May 2005 John Black and about thirty students and faculty from the University College attended the reopening (after substantial and effective renovation) of the Centro di Studi Malaspiniani in Mulazzo , Italy . An impromptu thank-you speech from student Mary Shakespeare was extremely well received by those in attendance, who included the Marquises Giacomo Malaspina and Vieri Torrigiani-Malaspina. A few days later, in Florence , the latter accompanied a number of faculty from Malaspina on a tour of his family's 19-acre walled garden in the centre of the city.

Local Outreach

John Black gave his talk and slide-show on the Life and Times of Alexandro Malaspina to the Nanaimo Historical Society in the autumn of 2005.

Newsletter

The Centre continues to produce a short electronic newsletter, usually once per month during the year. Its archive is at: web.mala.bc.ca/black/amrc/Newsletter/newsarchive.htm.

FUNDING

During 2005-6 the Centre received a private donation of \$20,000 as well as a portion (amounting to approximately \$6000) of the University College's grant in aid to small universities. This funding has been crucial in supporting the official opening and its surrounding events, as well as release time for two of its researchers to allow for the timely completion of their projects.