

# Look who's *Talking*

2014 Speech-Language Pathology  
University of Toronto Alumni Association Newsletter

## Where are they now?

The story of how one U of T S-LP alumnus was lost...then found!



John Scott with his wife and fellow S-LP, Marija Kronic

We are thrilled to reconnect with John Scott, 7T9, just in time for this year's U of T's Spring Reunion which celebrates alumni who graduated in years ending in 4 and 9! We learn that no matter how much time has passed or how near or far we have travelled or landed, the network of U of T S-LP alumni remains stronger than ever. Read on to see what this alumnus has been up to!

### Dear U of T S-LP Alumni Association,

I was surprised to find myself listed as lost on a recent Google search, which turned up my name on the 2007 50th anniversary missing list. I am still in Nanaimo, BC, where I have worked since 1989. My wife Marija and I encouraged local legend Sonja Molfenter (0T7) to attend U of T. I have been a member of Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (formerly CASLPA) since I graduated in 1979. Apart from 3 years in Alberta, I have always lived in BC and been on the BC Association of Speech/Language Pathologists and Audiologists (BCASLPA) list as well. Not missing at all.

I just returned from a long trip to Croatia and Bosnia, where my wife and I spoke at the Croatian Association for Early Childhood Inter-

vention's (HURID) international conference on early intervention. I spoke on S-LPs and autism screening in BC. I also spoke at Zagreb University to several of their S-LP first year and final year students. My area of interest has always been children with special needs, especially autism. Last June I officially retired from the all-inclusive BC school system - inclusion is why I moved west on graduation in the first place. It has been an interesting and engaging 35 years. However, I continue looking for opportunities in the Balkans to volunteer and/or consult, to continue to promote inclusion in the changing Croatian and Bosnian education systems, where my wife Marija Kronic, another passionate S-LP, originally hails from. My Croatian is slowly improving.

The 1979 graduating year, the last class of Diploma in Speech Pathology (DSP) postgraduates, is missing two great souls: Barbara Meissner-Fishbein and Marie Poulos. My fellow classmates must be nearly 60 or older. I 'retired' now at 61, to work where I choose, remaining registered with BCASLPA, SAC and our new College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC - that took us over 25 years! I did keep the faith, spending these years as a front-line children's S-LP, just as Margaret Stoicheff, Jean Walker and Bernie O'Keefe hoped I would when they admitted me into the program. My last guest lecture in Zagreb in December shared experiences using the Lidcombe Program for fluency, another personal 'upgrade' to help all children. Bob Kroll started my fascination for fluency.

Thank you, U of T, for a life in motion, as I continue my efforts to make a difference for all children and their families as a team member in public education. DSPs share diversity, sense and passion. I am proud to write DSP and U of T after my title and my Oxford degree. I believe DSP also stands for 'darn stubborn professionals'. My 26 year old son Chris, an engineer, lives by 'do stuff properly'.

**Best wishes for 2014 to you all,**

John R. Scott,  
U of T class of '79, RSLP, S-LP(C)



ON NOVEMBER 6, 2013 the Distinguished Service Award was presented to Frances Ezerzer (6T2) at the Annual Awards Breakfast. Frances is currently employed in the Assistive Technology Clinic at the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and Baycrest Centres sites. The Alumni Association is pleased to share highlights from Frances' acceptance speech with our readers:

It is such an honour for me to stand before you today to accept the Distinguished Service Award. I am deeply indebted to the individuals who nominated me and to the alumni who chose me for this prestigious award.

I have travelled a long, inspiring and life fulfilling journey through my 51 years as a speech-language pathologist. Today as I near the end of my career path, I feel overwhelmed with this recognition by my professional colleagues.

As a pioneer in the field of speech pathology in Ontario, I look in awe at how far we have come as a profession. I graduated from the program in Speech Pathology and Audiology in 1962, 1 of 8 students. The program had only 1 full time faculty member, Jean Ward Walker, whose office was located at the Toronto Psychiatric Hospital, which served as a student home base. We walked from hospital to hospital to learn from an amazingly gifted group of hospital clinicians, of special note Ernest Douglass, Donald McGeachy, Margaret Stoicheff, the Bowies, Margaret Hamlen, and the one person known to most of you in the audience, Jean Walker. All were so dedicated to the students and to contributing to the growth and recognition of the profession, along with a passionate dedication to their patients. Many of the hospital clinicians were also engaged in clinical research activities and instilled in the students the critical importance of research to our growth as a profession.

I have always felt privileged for the unique opportunity to be on the ground floor of a profession and was committed to working for the recognition of speech pathology by the medical community. That was the passion that impelled me to develop the Swallowing Centre and a Speech Science Lab for motor speech disorders at the Toronto Western Hospital where I worked as Director of Speech-Language Pathology for 27 years. While I spent most of

my energies on promoting the profession, I always maintained an active role in patient care and education. I have been fortunate to work in all areas and phases of medical speech pathology from acute care to palliative care, in teaching hospitals, community hospitals and community care. I am grateful to my current employer, Pearl Gryfe, Director of the Assistive Technology Clinic, for affording me the opportunity to experience yet another amazing development in our profession – augmentative and alternative communication.

I owe thanks to so many people. I thank the University of Toronto Department of Speech-Language Pathology for the many opportunities they have provided me to contribute to student education and to program developments through the years, most recently the Events and History Committee for the 50 year celebration of the Department. To reminisce for more than one year with Professor Emerita Jean Walker in compiling the history was a treasured gift. I thank the medical community for the multitude of clinical and learning experiences. I thank my patients for what they have taught me about speech, language and swallowing pathologies, and even more importantly, about life. I thank the many students that I have mentored throughout the years, for their curiosity further leading to my personal growth. To witness their successes is truly gratifying. I thank all my work colleagues for their sharing of knowledge and their friendship. And I thank my husband and daughter who are here with me today, for putting up with me when I was so focused on speech pathology.



**Yes!** I would like to support the Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association at the University of Toronto.

The Speech-Language Pathology Alumni Association is constantly striving to improve student life at the Graduate Department of Speech-Language Pathology, University of Toronto. Your financial assistance is invaluable in helping us reach our goals.

**If you wish to participate in improving the student experience you can do so by contacting:**

Donations Management  
J. Robert S. Prichard Alumni House

21 King's College Circle  
Toronto, ON M5S 3J3

**1-800-463-6048 1-416-978-0811**

or visit

<https://donate.utoronto.ca/give/show/41>

**The Alumni Association is going green!**

If you would prefer to receive your annual newsletter electronically, send an email with the subject 'SLP alum e-newsletter' to [address.update@utoronto.ca](mailto:address.update@utoronto.ca). Help us make a difference!

Today I especially thank the Alumni Association for this prestigious award. I am so honoured to join my esteemed colleagues on the Leadership Wall.

**Know someone deserving of a Distinguished Service Award?**

Consider nominating your peers! For more information about this award please visit: <http://www.slp.utoronto.ca/alumni/alumni-association/>

# Year One Report

By Jaspal Brar, 1T5 and Heather Jurchuk, 1T5

**S**eptember 3rd, 2013 marked the greatly anticipated first day for 50 students.

**P**retty soon, 500 University Ave. felt like our second home.

**E**ven though we were nervous strangers in the beginning, awkward silences quickly subsided.

**E**xcitement, enthusiasm and curiosity were all that remained in room 420.

**C**lasses were a time for learning, exploring, questioning and integrating the vast amount of knowledge we had acquired thus far.

**H**elpful professors made our numerous readings and lecture notes come to life.

**L**ife as busy student clinicians did not stop us from showcasing our singing talents at the Awards Breakfast and learning American Sign Language over lunch.

**A**mong our potlucks, Foodie Fridays and Munchie Mondays, there was always enough brain food to fuel our ideas.

**N**aturally outgoing and sociable personalities did not make us any less jittery when working with our first ever preschool clients.

**G**rape-flavoured tongue depressors, goodies and great books are our S-LP essentials!

**U**sing International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for transcription has become a way of writing that makes most sense to us!

**A**natomy, Acoustics & Physiology, Audiology, Child Language 1 & 2, Principles of Clinical Practice, Articulation & Phonology and Fluency are very clear in our minds, thanks to Units 1 and 2.

**G**etting dressed up as twins, in pajamas, or in red, white and pink, were some of our ways of displaying S-LP spirit.

**E**liciting the 'quiet lady sound' makes articulation therapy fun!

**P**assing out in the Resource Room for a quick nap is completely acceptable.. and helpful!

**A**ssigned placements were altogether an exciting, nerve-racking and slightly stressful process, though all was well by the end.

**T**he midterms, papers, case studies and independent learning experiences have challenged us to stay on top of everything... at all times!

**H**aving diverse backgrounds and experiences make for a unique collaboration among the 2015 speechies-in-training.

**O**ngoing 2014 Olympic games in Sochi, specifically the Canadian Women's Hockey Gold medal win, made it extremely difficult to conceal our excitement during class!

**L**ifelong learning is pivotal for our diverse profession.

**O**ur S.M.A.R.T. acronyms will help us along the way.

**G**iving back to our community through volunteer work, donating to food drives, and gifting our "secret buddies," are a few examples of how we have and will continue to spread cheer.

**Y**es, we have learned a lot, we've had a great deal of fun, and we've met inspiring people... yet we're excited, nervous and curious for what is ahead of us!



# Year Two Report

By Lynsey Endicott, 1T4 and Adrienne Miranda, 1T4



## S-LP Life Lessons: Words of wisdom from the class of 2014

GOING INTO THESE LAST FEW MONTHS before becoming full-fledged SLPs, we would like to share some valuable lessons we have learned. These thoughts do not only encompass our student years, but also extend beyond them into life after graduation.

### 1) Nobody is perfect

No matter how many lectures you attend or clients you attend to, you can never know everything there is to know as an S-LP. We are bound to make mistakes throughout our careers. The key is to embrace these moments to help us grow as clinicians. As the saying goes, you never stop learning. And why would we want to? We chose a dynamic, innovative and inspiring profession. No matter how many years we accumulate as an S-LP, we will always be learning from our clients and colleagues.

### 2) Change is good

It is the end, at least the end of coffee-fueled mornings and lesson plan writing evenings. In only a few months we'll be taking the tentative steps out of our comforting academic lives and into the scary world of employment. At least we hope. And even though it's terrifying, we get to share the insights and clinical experience we gained through this program with the world. Whether that means leaving the comfort of a classroom or moving to a new city (because let's be honest, the word is that we're going to have to geographically widen our job search), it's a huge change. Regardless, we know it's going to be incredible!

### 3) Find a balance

School and clinical placements have been stressful, however on this journey we found ways to relieve stress and make time for the things we love. Our wonderful group of ladies and gents have been known to indulge in scrumptious afternoon potlucks, competitive volleyball games, secret buddy exchanges and community outreach. In doing so, as a class, we discovered an ideal life balance. And even though school is ending, it will be as important to keep a healthy balance between work, life and everything in between when we start practicing as S-LPs.

### 4) Celebrate your successes

Remember that rollercoaster of ups and downs over the past two years? The ringing cries of frustration as exams drew near, followed by the bouts of celebratory laughter after writing the final one. Those times you felt utterly lost in a clinical placement, and then the sudden moment of a breakthrough. It has all gone by so quickly, so it is critical to reflect on the incredible accomplishment of completing this challenging program.

These past two years have been some of the best of our lives.

**Good luck class of 2014; can't wait to see all the wonderful places we'll go!**

# Travelling Abroad

## S-LP Alum Reflects on her Final Clinical Practicum in Chennai, India

By Ashwini Namasivayam, 1T3

WHEN ASHWINI NAMASIVAYAM LEARNED SHE WOULD be completing the final placement of her master's program at Sri Ramachandra Medical College in India, she initially felt mixed emotions. She was excited at the prospect of broadening her views and being immersed in a new cultural experience, but was also nervous about how she would absorb all that the placement site had to offer. Looking back, Ashwini realizes she had nothing to be nervous about.

*"My clinical educators, as well as many other clinicians working at the site, willingly taught me all that they know and took the time to also act as translators. They started with the basics, ensuring my understanding every step of the way. They also ensured that my clinical experiences were varied, in order to guarantee a deeper understanding of how the Indian medical system operates, specifically in terms of the services available to those in need of speech and language therapy".*

Ashwini, now a Ph.D. candidate in speech-language pathology at U of T, was able to take this unique opportunity through the support of the Chris Gandy International Outreach Award. While in India she worked within free out-patient clinics at the Medical College, contributed to various community outreach projects in rural areas, and visited the National Institute of Empowerment for Persons with Multiple Disabilities.

Ashwini was perhaps most struck by the speed of processing in the Indian system. While there are month-long waitlists in Canada, in India patients are easily able to

self-refer, make and obtain an appointment within one week and start receiving treatment that same day. Ashwini was also surprised to learn that there were so many free services in place, allowing a multitude of people, all equally deserving, to receive any type of therapy they require, at the same urgency and frequency as paying patients. At the National Institute of Empowerment for Persons with Multiple Disabilities, Ashwini was impressed by the comprehensive services provided, whereby healthcare specialists guide their patients and families from birth through adulthood.

*"Overall, my time at the Sri Ramachandra Medical College Department of Speech, Hearing and Language Sciences left me enlightened, and broadened my views as a budding speech-language pathologist. The way I will practice for years to come has been greatly impacted by the clinicians I have*



*had the honour to learn from. The variety of experiences that they have provided me with allowed me to appreciate the Indian medical system for all that it has to offer, and better understand why the Canadian system is set up the way it is. I hope one day I may be able to pay this gift forward so that future clinicians can also see the global impact of speech-language pathology".*



Like us on Facebook! The Alumni Association is on Facebook! Find and join us by searching for the "U of T SLP Alumni" group, and clicking "join". It's that easy to stay in touch!

# A Reflection on the 2013 J.F. Walker Lecture

## Mental Health and Communication Disorders

By Ruth Levin, 1T1 and Anna Rupert, 1T0



ON JUNE 14, 2013 THE S-LP ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PROUDLY hosted the J.F. Walker Lecture in a room filled with students and S-LPs who work with children or adults. This year's topic was Mental Health and Communication Disorders, and took place at the William Doo Auditorium on the University of Toronto Campus. The event featured two keynote speakers who provided clinical perspectives on paediatric and adult populations. This was the first year that the format of the event was expanded from a single lecture to a half-day event. Attendees were greeted with a delicious hot breakfast, and students and clinicians were seated together at round tables for case-based discussions facilitated by the presenters. It was an honour to have Professor Jean Walker, herself, in attendance.

The morning began with a presentation from Dr. Jeff St. Pierre, the Psychology Professional Practice Lead at the Child and Parent Institute (CPRI) in London, Ontario. Dr. St. Pierre delivered an insightful lecture focusing on possible pathways linking language deficits to risk- or protective factors in mental health outcomes for children and youth. His content and humorous approach was well received by the audience.

**"Extremely entertaining, excellent, pertinent information that I can apply in my daily work with students and the school team"** – School Board S-LP

The second speaker was Dr. Abe Sniderman, the Director of Neuropsychiatry at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute (TRI) in Toronto. Dr. Sniderman's presentation focused on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of mental health disorders in relation to communication disorders in adults. His multi-media presentation combined dynamic visuals and music

with clinically relevant content that engaged and inspired the audience.

**"Extremely entertaining speaker. Very enjoyable and informative. One of the best presentations I've ever been to. Loved the music!"** – S-LP

Overall, it was a delightful and informative morning that provided valuable insights for S-LPs to use with individuals who have communication- and mental health disorders. The Alumni Association is grateful to Professor Walker and all of the attendees who made that morning so memorable. We are looking forward to the 2015 J.F. Walker Lecture event. Stay tuned for more details in future newsletters. Hope to see you all there!



## Spring Reunion Comedy Event

### A Bonspiel! Extravaganza

By Amanda Indovina, 1T3

At this year's annual Spring Reunion, the University of Toronto celebrated alumni who graduated in years ending in 4 or 9. To coincide with the Spring Reunion, the S-LP Alumni Association launched its first ever spring social mixer for U of T S-LP alumni and guests.



The event took place on a warm spring evening on Thursday May 29th at the Black Swan Comedy Club. Drinks and delicious food were provided. We kicked off the night with a cocktail hour followed by a lively comedy performance starring **Bonspiel!**, an improv comedy troupe. They provided SLP-themed entertainment with a show consisting of on the spot improv comedy for speech-language pathologists with content informed by speech-language pathologists. The performers took suggestions from the audience and created scenes about the life of a speech-language pathologist, including all the things you wish you could say at work! The evening proved to be most enjoyable. It was a night filled with good entertainment and the opportunity to mingle with friends and colleagues - old and new.

The S-LP Alumni Association celebrated our –T4 and –T9 graduates and also welcomed all other previous alumni to the comedy event. The Alumni Association looks forward to making the event a regular occurrence so stay tuned for more information about next year's social mixer!

For more information on Bonspiel! Check out [www.bonspieltheatre.com](http://www.bonspieltheatre.com).

Our social committee would love to hear from you! If you have feedback about our first social mixer event or have ideas for next year's event, please contact us at [slp.alumni@utoronto.ca](mailto:slp.alumni@utoronto.ca).



### ALUMNI EXECUTIVE 2013–14

Joy Clubine,  
President, 0T8  
Stefanie Haws,  
Treasurer, 1T0  
Kelly Wark,  
Secretary, 0T9  
Angela Fong,  
Newsletter Editor, 0T9  
Alice Eriks-Brophy,  
Faculty Liaison

Hillary Ganek, 1T6  
Jaspal Brar, 1T5  
Heather Jurchuk, 1T5  
Lynsey Endicott, 1T4

Adrienne Miranda, 1T4  
Amanda Indovina, 1T3  
Ashwini Namisivayam, 1T3  
Lindsay Alter, 1T3  
Shauna Stokely, 1T2  
Ruth Levin, 1T1  
Rachel Bryan, 1T1  
Nicole Richard, 1T1  
Leah Craig, 1T1  
Jessica Davenport, 1T1  
Anna Rupert, 1T0  
Emily Begley, 0T9  
Ayla Alcorn, 0T9  
Ian Roth, 0T0

## Research Corner

# Using the Language Environment Analysis (LENA) System to Broaden Research on Child Language, Child Hearing Loss and Cultural Diversity

By Hillary Ganek, IT6

ON A CHILLY DAY IN EARLY MARCH THIS YEAR, the members of the Childhood Hearing Loss Lab gathered to discuss their research and the exciting new method their team is taking to studying language socialization. They are using the Language Environment Analysis (LENA) System, a technology that is changing the way researchers collect data on child language learning by allowing them to observe interactions in the home over the entire day with minimal interference.

This groundbreaking device is revolutionizing how the field of speech-language pathology understands language development and has huge implications for personalized therapy strategies. The conversation between Dr. Alice Eriks-Brophy, Associate Professor in the Department and the lab's graduate coordinator, Hillary Ganek, Alice's PhD student who is a speech-language pathologist and a certified auditory-verbal therapist, and Leah Radziwon, coordinator of the Childhood Hearing Loss Lab was recorded using the LENA System, which counted 1,235 adult words. Enjoy the abridged transcript of their conversation below to learn more about their exciting research and how it could impact your approach to intervention:

**Leah:** Hillary, can you tell us a little bit about your research?

**Hillary:** For the past few years I've been volunteering in Vietnam with children with hearing loss. I wanted to use this experience and bring these kids into my research so I am looking at how parents and children interact with each other here and in Vietnam.



Left to right: Leah, Alice and Hillary

**Leah:** This ties into Alice's work. Can you tell us what you're working on?

**Alice:** I've done a few projects through the Childhood Hearing Loss Lab looking at children who have hearing loss and are learning to listen and speak. I did a study looking at outcomes in terms of speech and language development. Now I'm interested in multiculturalism and how it might affect parent-child interaction and language socialization and what the implications of that might be for the ways that we organize our intervention. We don't want our therapy to inadvertently negatively impact the ways that children and their parents are encour-

aged to interact according to their own cultural backgrounds. I have seen occasions where parents who came from language backgrounds other than English were considered to be less involved or inappropriately involved with their child's therapy. It's important to respect that families from different cultures have different ways of interacting. If we don't pay attention to that in the way that we organize our therapy, the repercussions can be significant.

**Leah:** Both Alice and Hillary are using the LENA System in their research. Hillary, what's the LENA System about?

**Hillary:** The LENA System is a novel technology that allows us to capture information about a child's natural language environment easily and analyze it automatically. It provides more information about how a child communicates in the home than we have previously ever been able to obtain. I was lucky enough to be able to use it clinically in my last job and it was a great tool for coaching parents in a way that was individual and specific to their lives.

**Leah:** Alice, can you elaborate on some of the gaps in the research related to language socialization practices and the field of speech-language pathology?

**Alice:** Most speech-language pathologists in North America still represent the majority culture. They may not have extensive backgrounds in understanding cultural differences and realizing why they might have an impact on therapy. I think this knowledge has important implications for the training that we give students in S-LP programs. We all need to be more aware and more respectful of cultural diversity.

**Leah:** What further research is required and how can the current research being done be strengthened?

**Leah:** What further research is required and how can the current research being done be strengthened?

**Hillary:** There's still a lot of research to be done to show the LENA System's reliability with non-English speaking populations. Right now, only English and Spanish are considered to be reliable. Using the LENA with these more non-English speaking populations will give us more information about what typical parent-child interactions look like for families who are not from western cultures.



The LENA System in the flesh

**Alice:** It would be useful to have several families who represented the same language background to see if there are commonalities that might be explained in terms of language socialization differences rather than just individual family differences. Also, relating the LENA results to the interviews that we're conducting with the families that look at things like parental perceptions of their involvement in intervention and their understanding of disability in general, and hearing loss in particular, can give us some insights about how we can be more culturally sensitive in our intervention approaches.

The Childhood Hearing Loss Lab is using the LENA System to investigate the language socialization practices of minority language-speaking preschool children with and without hearing loss. The LENA System is an innovative technology that allows therapists and researchers to collect information about a child's natural language environment. The child wears a digital language processor, the size of an iPod, in the pocket of a specially designed t-shirt. It audio records for up to 16 hours and, when it's done, it can be uploaded to a computer for automatic analysis. The software will count the number of adult words, child vocalizations, and conversational turns the child is exposed to during the day. It will also identify the type and amount of background noise in his/her environment, including TV. This information can help S-LPs coach families to improve their communication at home.

If you would like to learn more, check out [www.lenafoundation.org](http://www.lenafoundation.org) or [www.lenababy.com](http://www.lenababy.com). To read more about the Childhood Hearing Loss Lab at the University of Toronto: [www.slp.utoronto.ca/research-news/1-2-3-talk-to-me/](http://www.slp.utoronto.ca/research-news/1-2-3-talk-to-me/).

If you have ideas for stories you'd like to see in the newsletter or just want to let us know what you think of it, email us at [slp.alumni@utoronto.ca](mailto:slp.alumni@utoronto.ca) We'd love to hear from you!

Newsletter layout by Steven Janovsky