

# UNIVERSITY NEWSBEAT

Prepared and paid for by the Communications Department, S802 Ross, 667-3441

Meeting On Campus Tuesday, January 22

## CUSO RECRUITING FOR AFRICA, ASIA

CUSO (Canadian University Services Overseas) is now looking for teachers, business specialists, and environmentalists for work in Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific. Cam Bowes, CUSO recruiter for Toronto, will host a general information meeting at York on Tuesday, January 22 at 5 p.m. in the faculty lounge in S869 Ross. At the same time, Alan Waters, who taught for CUSO from 1975-77, will be showing his slides of Tanzania. Anyone interested in becoming involved with CUSO either abroad or as an on-campus representative, but is unable to attend this meeting, can contact Mr. Bowes at 978-4022.

CUSO, a private, non-profit organization, was formed in 1961 to coordinate the overseas volunteer programs of various Canadian universities. Since then some 6,000 CUSO volunteers have been recruited to fill manpower gaps in developing countries.

Its basic requirements are that applicants be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants, and have the good health and personality characteristics required by the job. Single people or childless couples are placed most easily, although couples with pre-school children will also be considered.

Upcoming graduates of York's Faculties of Education (particularly those with English as a Second Language training), Environmental Studies, and Administrative Studies, are invited to apply, as are those from the Faculties of Arts and Science who have concentrations in English, Mathematics, Physics or Chemistry. It is not necessary to have a teaching certificate to teach in secondary schools in most of these countries. It is only necessary if the volunteer will be teaching teachers.

Describing the "ideal candidate," Mr. Bowes suggested "he or she would be thoughtful and not prone to jump to conclusions; patient, understanding, and sensitive; very definitely flexible and

adaptable to different situations; interested in people; a good sense of humour is also a great asset."

He said that many employers are favourably impressed with the flexibility proven by CUSO experience. This appears particularly true of teaching, where someone who can understand a multicultural situation and who has lived in a different culture is in great demand. Reactions varied across the spectrum in other areas of the job market, with the response in the engineering field being the poorest.

Readjustment back to living in Canada apparently varies "inversely with the candidates' experience in the foreign country." Mr. Bowes, who had himself worked in Africa as a teacher and field officer for seven years, explained: "If you've enjoyed the assignment, gotten a lot out of it, and identified with the aspirations of the country, then the readjustment can be difficult. Spending years with people who cherished life and enjoyed every day to the full, yet had to work so hard as subsistence farmers just to feed themselves and their families,

can make you really upset hearing complaints about how tough things are from people with three cars in the driveway. Some people just don't know what reality is.

He says that salary, offered by CUSO will be comparable to that of a similarly qualified teacher in the host country. This may be

very low compared to Canadian salaries, but adequate to maintain a modest, comfortable lifestyle.

Among the benefits are:

- a pre-departure orientation programme
- airfare overseas and back
- complete medical and dental coverage

• life insurance arranged by CUSO

• housing varies but a rent-free furnished bungalow or apartment is provided in most cases

• at least one month paid vacation per annum

• interest on Canada Student Loans is paid by CUSO while overseas

## Volunteer Recalls Years In Nigeria



Photo: Don McLean

York Graduate Al Dunford with Nigerian children

If you're looking for travel, responsibility, challenge, and adventure, consider CUSO, says York alumnus Al Dunford. Al, now 25 and working as a statistician and video analyst for the Buffalo Sabres, found all of these plus a great deal of "social satisfaction" when he taught for CUSO in Nigeria from 1976 to 1978.

Al was not a trained teacher. He qualified for CUSO because he had a number of university mathematics courses, as well as qualities of adaptability and perseverance.

Teaching Grade 11 mathematics in Nigeria, he discovered there were no established guidelines or structure. "I had to schedule the course myself, do the lesson plans, and for someone without teaching experience, this was a terrific challenge," he says.

The frustrations inherent in the education system demand that teachers be realistic about how much they can expect to accomplish. Al explains, "Because of the automatic promotion system in secondary schools, many kids couldn't read or add." The problems of learning English are compounded because much of the curriculum appears to be copied from an old British manual, which requires these Nigerian students who sometimes of necessity slip into pidgin to communicate, to study Shakespeare in traditional Old English.

"You just have to accept these limiting things, and concentrate on working with imagination and self-expression," grinned Al. "You need to be able to change to the way things are when they aren't as you feel they should be." He commented that the volunteers who tend to have a disappointing experience abroad are those with high expectations for changing the system.

How does Al feel about his own

experience? In the beginning, he had some serious doubts, but then decided perhaps he'd been underestimating the students and worked on building up their confidence. His reward at the end of two years was that a full 15 out of 90 students he taught could qualify to go on to university studies.

However, the real highlights of his time there occurred with students outside the classroom, where they worked side by side on needed community projects. As Al tells it, "a village five miles from the school were I worked had water problems from November through May when the village well would dry up. Women, who do all the work, would have to walk four to five miles to get water. The government had drilled a new well a half mile from the village on the opposite side of a major highway, but because of bureaucratic red tape or corruption, had not opened the well for village use.

One Friday night, Al and his fellow CUSO worker Don McLean and their students trekked down to the village and camped out together. Early the next morning, they started digging the trench that would conduct water directly from the well to the village. Next Al sent the school stone mason to lay the concrete reservoir and install the pipeline purchased by funds collected by the students. "It became such a good deal, the government had to hand over the well," says Al. "It was the most thoroughly satisfying experience I've ever been involved with...just a few months before I finished my contract, the water was running."

He reported that under the hot sun of that day's digging, there were more than a few puzzled Nigerian faces, students who weren't sure who they were doing it for or why, but by the end of the project they understood "the motive of doing something

for the community."

Al's Canadian construction experience proved handy a second time: by his second year, he and Don had built up quite a games program in the school and needed a second football field. When Al brought in and drove dumptrucks and a front-end loader to level rubble left from the excavation of new dormitories, he found his students quite surprised that their teacher could apply abilities other than teaching.

While prepared by a CUSO orientation session in Ottawa for culture shock, Al recalls his mind reeling with the novelties of scenes during the first few days in Nigeria. "You couldn't have been dropped into a more completely different world. To walk through the marketplace was like being in a time machine."

He adjusted easily to life in Africa. "Working at a boarding school, I had a comfortable stone house to myself, with running water, and electricity at night, though this was a little irregular the second year." With his salary, he was able to buy a new Volkswagen and travel on the regular school holidays, which included four weeks at Christmas, three at Easter, and two months during the summer. "Without feeling a financial pinch," he was able to see much of Nigeria and West Africa along the Atlantic coast.

Asked if there was advice he might give to volunteers, Al said, "It's challenging employment. You'll almost certainly be placed in a job situation where you'll be given more responsibility than you would have had at home. And, it's a job with some social benefit: I believed in why I was doing it. It was an effort in the right direction; a cross cultural experience; a chance to understand a complete different culture and to compare it with my own."

## ARTS STUDENTS HONOURED

Harold Kaplan, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, has established a Dean's Honour Roll to "give greater recognition to outstanding academic performance."

Beginning this year the following students will be honoured:

• All those students taking two or more courses in a given session who have attained a sessional grade point average of 7.5 or higher, with no failing grades.

• All those students taking fewer than two courses in a given session who are completing their fifth, tenth, fifteenth, or twentieth course during the current academic session and who have attained a cumulative grade point average of 7.5 or higher, with no failing grades in the current block of five courses.

## Ask Your Friends to "Drop-In" February 4 to 9

York Drop-in-Days, scheduled from Monday, February 4 through Saturday, February 9, will give York people the chance to show relatives, friends, and the neighbouring community what the University is all about.

Called "an open house with a difference," Drop-In-Days allows visitors to attend a wide variety of lectures, laboratories, and seminars in arts, environmental studies, education, science, business, fine arts, and law. At Glendon College, guest students can sit in on classes in either English or French. For those who cannot come during the day, regular evening classes will be available on both campuses through Atkinson College and the Centre for Continuing Education.

In addition to the usual roster of performances, exhibitions, and college activities that visitors can enjoy, a number of events have been specially planned for that open house week. These include an All Comers Track

Meet; the Mature Women's Conference; and Glendon College's Careers Day. Further information concerning social and cultural events, such as the Theatre Department's production of *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* and Stong College's conference on "Vandalism and the Schools," will be released in the January 31 *Newsbeat*.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

• Both volunteers and paid workers are needed to conduct tours; taxi visitors from parking lots and peripheral buildings; and man the Information York booth in Central Square and the Drop-In-Days Reception Desk on the second floor north foyer of the Ross Building. If you can help during that week, please contact The Communications Department in S802 Ross (667-3441).

• If someone you know might be interested in investigating York, ask them to call the Pre-Registration Desk at 667-2200 for further information.