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**| Publisher: [Marianne van Toor](#) | Editor: [Bob Lane](#) |
| Researcher/Writer: Brian Schmidt |**

The Early History of Malaspina College

Today, Malaspina College is characterized by the abundance of arbutus trees and green canopies found on its beautiful campus nestled in the hills above the city of Nanaimo - and by its new name: Malaspina University-College. But, by whatever name, it is an institution which routinely interacts with and contributes to many communities on and around Vancouver Island.

Twenty years ago, this beautiful campus did not exist. Twenty-five years ago, the College was in its humble beginning stages at the old Nanaimo Hospital on Kennedy Street. Thirty years ago, having a college on Vancouver Island was only a great vision in the minds of a few dedicated and hard-working people. Before there was a campus, before there were teachers, before there was a name, "Malaspina College" was just an idea. It was an idea that began flowering in the early 1960's and came to its fruition in 1969 after seven years of strenuous work by a group of ambitious individuals in the areas of central and northern Vancouver Island.

At the outset of the 1960's, the community college was becoming a real possibility for meeting the post-secondary needs of British Columbia. Community colleges were in abundance down in California and other states, but the concept was quite new to B.C. At the time, the province was growing at a much higher rate than other areas of Canada. As a result, the number of post-secondary institutions would have to be increased. The government could see that in a very short time its only degree granting institution, the University of British Columbia, would not be able to fully meet the educational needs of the rising population. Were community colleges the answer to the province's educational difficulties? It was a question that sparked interest and controversy all across British Columbia. To answer this question, the government appointed Dr. John B. MacDonald, the new president of the University of British Columbia, to write a report indicating the direction education must take to meet the needs of the future.

Many people did not think that community colleges were the answer. In fact, Dr. John Dennison, who is now a professor of higher education at UBC, says that many people were:

expressing the most peculiar reasons why British Columbia did not need colleges. For example, "We already have a fine university and any other academic institution would be second class," or

"We could never find enough qualified faculty," or "Formal education is not needed for most jobs; it only makes people dissatisfied," or "We could never afford it," or "It would be a haven for educational bums," and believe it or not, the most incredible argument of all, "The community college is an American idea, and therefore, cannot be any good."

Dr. MacDonald was not of this opinion. In 1962, he submitted the report, "Higher Education In British Columbia and A Plan for the Future", which became widely known as the MacDonald Report. He suggested that the government create new universities in heavily populated areas as well as beginning a number of community colleges across the province. He gave two reasons for building regional colleges. These colleges would: (1) take the pressure off the universities which were certain to grow, and (2) create post-secondary educational opportunities for people in more remote areas of British Columbia.

This second point was an important one. Much earlier, in a thesis entitled, "The Junior College In British Columbia", that dates back to 1932, W.W.D. Knott argued that more students dropped out of high school in the remote areas of British Columbia because they did not have easy access to post-secondary educational opportunities. In California, where colleges existed in abundance, high school drop-out rates were only a fraction of the rates in B.C. He suggested that having colleges in the immediate vicinity gave the students incentive to continue their education.

The MacDonald Report had a great impact on higher education in the province. MacDonald's argument, coming from a known and respected professional, was enough to calm many skeptics of the college concept. However, as Dr. Dennison said, "there was a great movement at the time that said, 'sure, let's have colleges, but put them under the controls of the universities, so that nothing can go wrong; so that we can protect standards.' Dr. MacDonald said that these new institutions must have freedom. The colleges were given freedom and I think this has been their strongest point." Dr. MacDonald did make this point very clear in his report. He said:

Two requirements are fundamental to the promotion of excellence in British Columbia's higher education. These are: first, diversification of opportunity, both in the respect of the kinds of educational experience available, and the places where it can be obtained; the second requirement is self-government of individual institutions in respect to setting objectives, standards, admissions, selection of staff, curricula, personnel policies, and all the things that go to make up the operation of the college.

It was this report that signaled the beginning of community colleges in British Columbia. In essence, this report was the first step that led to the realization of Malaspina College. There was a real need; there was now a method of meeting the need. To get from idea to reality required action.

The government was quick to respond to the suggestions made in the MacDonald Report. Simon Fraser University was built on Burnaby Mountain and Victoria College, which was a junior college of UBC, was made into a degree granting institution, becoming the University of

Victoria. The first college in B.C. was created in 1965, when King Edward Center combined with the Vancouver Vocational School and the Vancouver School of Art to form Vancouver City College. The next came in 1966 with Selkirk College in Castlegar. In 1968 two more colleges were created in the lower mainland: Capilano College in North Vancouver and Okanagan College in Kelowna. In 1969 the College of New Caledonia became the fifth regional college in B.C.

Contrary to the suggestion of Knott thirty years earlier, these colleges were not to be junior colleges under the control of the universities. Instead, they would be community colleges. They would come into existence through local demand, not by government implementation. They would be funded both provincially and locally -- 50/50. Local funding would ensure greater local interest and active participation. This would lead to colleges that would be community oriented and would reflect the needs of the surrounding areas. Community Colleges would belong to communities and provide post-secondary opportunities of various sorts for the citizens in those communities. No longer would students seeking post-secondary opportunities be required to move to Vancouver for study at UBC.

During this time, no colleges had been created to serve the citizens of Vancouver Island. However, there was a college in the making. It was a plan that had been brewing as far back as 1962, right around the time when the MacDonald Report came out. The planners involved even had a name picked out. The new community college would be called Malaspina College.

Pioneering Malaspina College, 1962-1969

Once government approval was given for community colleges, it was not long before a group of people on Vancouver Island became interested. The prospect of having a college on the Island brought together some very dedicated people. This was a group who believed that all the people of Vancouver Island should have accessibility to an education. This group of visionaries was diverse, ranging from civilians, to school board trustees, to government officials, to educators. In fact, in the final stages of the college formation, all the people of the five participating regions played a role in making the college a reality when they voted for it through a plebiscite on September 30, 1967.

On Vancouver Island, the story starts in Nanaimo on October 24, 1962 when a request to the School Board by the local council on education results in the formation of a community college coordinating committee. A month later, on November 28th, School District #68 in Nanaimo, under Trustee Joe Shook, holds a panel discussion on community colleges. They propose that a college study be done. They think a college can be formed either through the already existing Vocational Training School, or by way of a survey carried out in liaison with UBC. The Community Colleges' Committee holds some informal meetings in the following months.

On May 31, 1963, only six months after the initial panel discussion, a meeting with the Minister of Education takes place. The Minister, Les Peterson, has a number of suggestions for the

Committee's plans. He says that community colleges are for post-high school education only and will not include adult basic education. He says that they may be able to use the facilities of the Vocational Training School (VTS) and the secondary schools until permanent facilities were built. He also mentions that there is an unused 10-20 acre area next to the VTS which eventually may be a suitable location for a permanent college campus. Lastly, he says that the Committee must wait to see how regional colleges perform in other areas before they can go ahead on Vancouver Island. According to the MacDonald Report, this performance evaluation and recommendation for additional institutions might not be anticipated until 1971.

In the following month the Community College Committee had a meeting to plan their next moves. Their first move was to change the term "community college" to "regional college." This was an important step because it would let people know that the college was intended to serve a number of communities in the larger region of Central Vancouver Island and not just Nanaimo. The province later came to think that the idea of a regional college was indeed a good one. The committee had taken the first step.

The next step was a defining principle that would play an important role in constituting the unique aspect of the regional college. The principle of equal access led the Committee to affirm that the college was to have an open door policy to best serve all students of participating communities. As their next step, the Committee had to arouse interest in surrounding school districts. For a college to be created, it was necessary to have the support of at least one other school district.

As it turned out, there are seven other school districts interested. These are: Cowichan (65), Lake Cowichan (66), Ladysmith (67), Parksville-Qualicum (69), Port Alberni (70), Courtney (71), and Campbell River (72). On July 27, 1964, the Central Vancouver Island Higher Education Coordinating Committee is formed with all nine of the districts represented except for Vancouver Island North. Dr. Roy MacMillan, a Nanaimo dentist and a trustee with district #68 is elected Chairman of the Committee.

Previous to these events, in October of 1962, the districts of Courtenay and Campbell River were talking about a community college in the North Island area. They thought that it would be the next step in education in that area. They had planned to form a joint committee for the Upper Island area but this step was never taken. Instead, they joined forces with the Nanaimo committee, to try to form a college in the region north of the Malahat. As it turns out, these efforts were in vain. In the end, both of these districts declined to participate in the regional district being formed on central Vancouver Island.

Early in the following year, the Committee invites the School Districts 85 (Vancouver Island North), 84 (Vancouver Island West), and 79 (Ucluelet-Tofino) to participate in their work on the same basis as the other school districts. The only one to respond is the Island North District

which sends A. Hennigar from Woss Lake as their representative. Roy MacMillan recalls the amount of work this woman put into trying to get her district to participate:

She traveled more than anybody to come to these meetings. She never missed one. She was up at Woss Lake and she had to fly out sometimes. If the weather was bad she would come down in a truck, but she was always there. She was 100% for the college and so was Woss Lake, but they were just too far away and it didn't work out.

With the addition of A. Hennigar as the Vancouver Island North representative, the Committee now has fourteen members from nine different districts:

Dr. Roy MacMillan Chair, non-voting member, Nanaimo 68

Will Dobson Cowichan, 65

Don Hammond Lake Cowichan 66

Ray Chamberlayne Ladysmith 67

J.E. Whitlam Nanaimo 68

Gordon Chamberlayne Qualicum 69

Pauline Touzeau Qualicum 69

Carl Anshelm Alberni 70

Brian Walker Courtney 71

A. Wilkinson Campbell River 72 (office manager)

Dr. Leonard Marsh UBC sociologist

Bruce Saunders Campbell River 72

A. Hennigar Island North SD 85

J.W.McPherrin Nanaimo 68 (Secretary)

Prior to the Committee's formation, it is agreed that it is necessary to undertake a comprehensive survey to determine the needs and specifications for a regional college that will serve Vancouver Island. The Faculty of Education at University of British Columbia say they will sponsor the survey and provide some personnel to help carry out the study. As a result, a UBC sociologist, Dr. Leonard Marsh, is appointed to make a report of this survey. By 1965, Part I of the Marsh Report has been completed and is sent to the Minister of Education, the three universities, and to the B.C. School Trustees' Association. In 1966, Part II is finished and is sent off with Part I to the Academic Board.

In his report, Dr. Marsh suggests that, "the focal centre which comes nearest to equalizing accessibility for the Qualicum-Alberni-Nanaimo-Duncan constellation is approximately 5-10 miles north of Nanaimo." To accommodate the North Island Region, he suggests that a branch campus be built somewhere between Courtenay and Campbell River. In having a branch campus, the college will be attempting to follow their 'open-door' policy, which would ensure that students from all districts in the region have equal access to the college. It is suggested that the college could also conform to this policy by offering travel and living subsidies to students who have to commute to the college or live away from home while attending classes. In an attempt to emphasize their 'open door' policy, the Committee invites Powell River District to participate at the meetings. Powell River responds with interest.

At this point, the Committee feels that it would be valuable to have a field representative who would help in disseminating information on the regional college to the participating communities. Committee member J.E. Whitlam is the lucky candidate and is to occupy the position for three months until June 30, 1966. Dr. MacMillan recalls that, "Jack was what I called my 'field officer'. George McKnight in Port Alberni would get up and say some statement against the college and I would shoot Jack up there to counteract it. The same thing would happen in Parksville." There are similar troubles in Duncan. Soon, Jack becomes known as the Committee's 'trouble-shooter' and travels extensively throughout the participating districts to rally support for the proposed regional college. In these early stages of development, Whitlam shows great enthusiasm for the college idea and is instrumental in getting the survey initiated and into the hands of Dr. Marsh. In June, he asks Frank Sloat, a Nanaimo vice-principal, to begin a survey in the participating communities to find out what kind of courses will be useful and desired in the region. Many proposals are sent in from citizens and Island businesses.

Finally, in February of the following year, the nine districts involved adopt a by-law asking for a plebiscite date. Two months later, the Council of Public Instruction of the Department of Education sets September 30, 1967 as the official plebiscite date. On that date, the following question was asked of all the voters of the nine regions:

Are you in favour of your school district participating in the establishment and operation of a regional college to serve residents of Vancouver Island, North of the Malahat: the main campus to be located adjacent to , but north of Nanaimo, and branch campuses to be located as soon as they become educationally and economically feasible?

The plebiscite is held and six of the nine districts vote yes! The College region will include Cowichan, Lake Cowichan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo, Parksville-Qualicum, and Campbell River. The districts of Port Alberni, Courtenay, and Island North will not participate. Initially, because of a clause in the Public Schools Act, there is some difficulty with the fact that Campbell River is not an 'adjoining' district. Two months after the plebiscite, the Department of Education gives Campbell River special permission to participate in the college region.

The in-region districts had some advantages over the out-of-region districts. Students in the participating districts eventually receive travel subsidies of \$10 a month if they live more than 25 miles away from the campus. A boarding subsidy of \$40 a month is offered to in-region students who have to live away from home while going to the college. In addition, to this, the first year of classes will only cost \$200 for in-region students whereas out-of-region students pay double that amount.

At this time, Grade 13 still exists in some school districts in B.C. and is thought of as a preparatory year for university. For all in-region districts, Grade 13 will be dropped from the high schools. With college courses to supplement their education, high school students will no longer need Grade 13.

Although the plebiscite has been successful, the Committee waits until some time in 1968 for the Department of Education to take further action to get the College under way. Dr. MacMillan recalls the situation:

We had that hiatus for about a year in about 1968 where nothing was happening. The plebiscite had been passed and we were just waiting for the government to make the college an entity... We phoned and we went down to Victoria for interviews and sessions and finally Jack Whitlam and I got together and we dreamt up a telegram. We sent this to Les Petersen and it said: 'We can no longer justify the inaction of the government in the formation of a college in this area. The natives are getting restless. Cannot uphold the government's point of view much longer.' That did it. Right after that, he phoned me in my office and said, 'Listen to this.' He was in the legislative chamber and he held the phone up and I could hear them proclaiming the formation of Nanaimo's Regional College. They passed it right there.

On July 26, 1968, the Vancouver Island College Coordinating Committee holds their thirtieth and last meeting. On this day, the first College Council is formed (later to be called the College Board) and Jack Whitlam is named as the first Chairman. Roy Macmillan becomes College Councilor. These appointments are fitting, as it is apparent by the words Dr. Marsh bestows on the original Coordinating Committee members in the introduction to his report:

I feel that it is entirely proper that their names should be included on the title pages; and I believe they will agree with me in tendering special thanks to Dr. W. Roy MacMillan for his services as chairman, to Mr. Jack Whitlam for his energy and enthusiasm in initiating the Survey, and to Mr. J. W. McPherrin for his efficient secretaryship.

J.W. McPherrin, the Secretary-Treasurer for the Nanaimo school board, acted in the same capacity for the coordinating committee. When the College Council is formed Oliver E. Neaves, who is from Burns Lake, is brought in to relieve McPherrin of his duties. Neaves is the first employee of the College, beginning his appointment on January 1, 1969. He moves into the College's temporary office at 460 Wallace Street to start preparing for opening day in the following September.

According to the Public Schools Act, in addition to these three positions the Council must have representatives from: each of the participating districts; the government (2), and a district superintendent. Two other members from the original Coordinating Committee, Bruce Saunders and Don Hammond, are on the Council. So, the first College Council for Malaspina was comprised of the following members:

J.L. Whitlam Chair, Government Representative

Dick Christmas Cowichan 65

Bill Sutherland Lake Cowichan 66

Beatty Davis Ladysmith 67

Dr. MacMillan Nanaimo 68

Peter Mason Qualicum 69

Bruce Saunders Campbell River 72 (withdrew Jan,1969)

Don Hammond L Cowichan, 2nd Government Representative

Harley Abbott Nanaimo, Official District Superintendent

O.E. Neaves Secretary-Treasurer

At the first meeting of the College Council it is decided that the name of the college will be Malaspina College. This name had been decided upon informally by the previous Coordinating Committee at the recommendation of Bruce Saunders.

A Brief History of Commodore Malaspina

The name of the College comes from the explorer Commodore Alejandro Malaspina. He was an Italian explorer working as a naval officer for the King of Spain in the late eighteenth century. Malaspina's exploits are many, but the most famous was the scientific expedition which he planned, organized, and carried out with two corvettes under his command -- *Descubierta* (Discovery) and *Atrevida* (Daring). This project was called the "Plan of a Scientific and Political Voyage Around the World". The expedition brought him to the Pacific Ocean and the west coast of Canada during the five year period, 1789-1794. His name, Malaspina, for the new college seemed appropriate since in a real sense the founding of the college required a scientific and political voyage which was equally creative and audacious, and which charted unknown territory.

During in this period, Malaspina was to search for the Northwest Passage. Using a Spanish outpost at Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island as a home base, he searched for

the Northwest Passage along the coast of Alaska as high as Prince William Sound. Of course, he never found it.

He- returned to Spain in 1794 with 14,000 plant specimens, 70 artifacts for the Royal Museum, and extensive documentation on political, economic, and social issues in the Pacific Rim. Surely he was justified in believing that his expedition had been a success, but the Spanish authorities did not share his belief and summarily threw him into jail. While on his journey, he urged Spain to abandon their conquest of natives in far-off nations. He also suggested that a Pacific Rim trading bloc be formed by the Spaniards and run from Alcapulco, Mexico all the way up to the upper parts of what is now British Columbia (thus becoming the first proponent of NAFTA!). It was for these unpopular political and economic observations, for his failure to find the Northwest Passage, and for his dealings with the English (he met with Captain Vancouver off Point Grey), that he was thrown in jail. He was imprisoned for eight years without trial and his name was erased from official record. He died on April 9, 1810. His discoveries went relatively unknown until 1885 when Pedro de Novo y Colson published his journal.

In addition to being attributed to Alejandro Malaspina, the Malaspina name had been recognized for hundreds of years as a family which generously supported art and education, as Education Minister, the Hon. D. L. Brothers later notes at the opening ceremonies of the College:

In 1302 after Dante had been exiled from Florence he found little hospitality in other parts of Italy because at that time there were feudal land lords in Italy. They were arrogant and they were ignorant and they cared little for poets, with the exception of the Malaspina family in Italy, whose hospitality was so well known in Italy even in those days that it was noted in troubadour poetry.

"Malaspina" was an appropriate name for this new institution: it suggested daring, hospitality, uniqueness, independence, courage, vision, and discovery.

Smoothing Out the Edges -- College Formation, 1968-1969

One month after the first College Council is formed, the first College Citizens' Committee is also formed. This committee is to convey the needs of the community to the College. The members will also have a stand-by role, ready to become active whenever necessary. The first Citizens Committee is as follows:

P.F. Owen Cowichan

Leonard Antoine Cowichan

G. Carpenter Lake Cowichan

Clifford McCulloch Lake Cowichan

J.A. MacNaughton Ladysmith

Mrs. V.McMahon Ladysmith

A.A. Brown Ladysmith

C.W. Ramsden Nanaimo

Jack Parker Nanaimo

Frank O.E. Murphy Nanaimo

Mrs. Touzeau Qualicum

Peter Mason Qualicum

Peter Mason is initially on the College Council representing Qualicum. When his term runs out in January, 1969, he is replaced by Avis Mitchell and is appointed to the Citizens' Committee.

In the original plan, the plebiscite is to be followed by a financial referendum so that the districts can decide where the money for the College will be raised. However, shortly after the plebiscite, the provincial government makes what is to become a significant change in this procedure. They decree that the College should be in temporary quarters in the first years of operation before holding the referendum. So, at the August 9th meeting, the Council decides that the College should begin to look for temporary quarters. Dr. MacMillan says, "at Selkirk, where they built the college first and then tried to make the curriculum fit the campus, they had serious problems." At the temporary quarters, the College will be able to see what its physical needs at the permanent campus will be. This will be determined by the first few years of curriculum development. The temporary quarters are to be found and ready for September of the following year. This will be in 1969, two years earlier than the Education Minister had predicted in 1962. The College idea is quickly becoming a reality.

Many events that give shape to the College unfold in the following months. By December of 1968, the Council is already planning the curriculum. They ask local businesses and citizens for suggestions and input regarding possible courses.

Within the region the first signs of trouble erupt. In early December, in an opinion poll taken in Campbell River, the people voted against having the College housed in temporary quarters. Bruce Saunders, the Campbell River representative on the Council, said the vote was put to the people because of the changes made with the original plebiscite agreement. In late December, there is a rumour that Campbell River will indeed opt out of the agreement.

In the same month the Council is looking for a president for their new College. The position is posted in papers and at universities across Canada, in the States and in some places in the Europe. In all, the Council receives 76 applications for the position. They eventually decide on a man who has experience in an infant college such as this one. He is in Edmonds, Washington where he works as the Dean of Instruction and Acting President at the community college. He

has his Ph.D. in education with emphasis on administration and curricula. He is the perfect man for the job. This man who is chosen as the first president of Malaspina College is Dr. Carl Opgaard. He formally accepts the position on January 20, 1969 and he is to begin in February. In his first months as the president of Vancouver Island's first Regional College, he will be planning curricula, making faculty appointments, preparing for operation in the fall, and helping to choose the temporary quarters.

Don Hammond is the Chairman of the Sites Committee. This Committee considered many possibilities for the temporary site:

The Committee even looked into the possibility of using converted railway cars, barges and ships as well as various unoccupied buildings which showed some possibility of suitability for classroom use.

The Nanaimo school board also offers the College use of its facilities in the afternoons and evenings. However, this would mean adjusting the adult education classes that are already taking place in the schools. By January, the number of possibilities is narrowed to three: the old Indian hospital; the old Nanaimo Hospital, or leasing some land (possibly the DND land next to the VTS) and using portables. Hammond says, "it would be awkward to make any decision before the new president had an opportunity to express his views." So, they wait for the president.

While they wait, the Region receives a slight shock. On January 24, 1969, Campbell River writes the College informing them of their intention to withdraw. Bruce Saunders says that their problem with the college plan centers around the legality of a decision to open the college in temporary quarters before the region has had a financial referendum. In addition to the withdrawal, Saunders, the Campbell River representative and vice-chairman of the College Council, hands in his resignation. The defection of Campbell River means that the other five school boards will have to pay about one-third more for operations.

On February 13th, Dr. Carl Opgaard arrives and begins his duties as president. His primary aim is to stretch the \$570,000 budget for 1969 operations to bring a number of basic courses to the region. He starts on a positive note, saying that he wants to create an institution that offers a "balanced and comprehensive program." He mentions other advantages that the College will have:

I hope the college will provide as good or better university standard courses in the first two years. We can do this because unlike universities we do not have a divided responsibility -- such as research or graduate schools and will be able to concentrate on providing both academic and technical programs which will fit the needs of industry and of the people who want training.

He extends an invitation for the region to have public discussions to determine the educational needs of the communities involved.

New Hospitality on Kennedy Street

With the president in Nanaimo, Don Hammond's committee can make a final decision on the temporary site. With only months before the opening, the Council cannot afford to waste any time. By February 28th, the deed is done. The president and the Council sign a four-year contract to lease the old Nanaimo hospital.

Oliver Neaves recalls: "we were searching for a building and then we hit on the hospital. On our first entry into the hospital we saw about a quarter of an inch of ice on all of the walls. There was no heating in the place and there was condensation. It looked a real mess, but it had potential." Indeed it is a real mess. There are holes in the inner walls, dirt all over the outer walls, and plumbing fixtures scattered around the property. But it has potential.

The 44-year-old building is a four story masonry structure which was originally opened as a hospital in August, 1925 by the Lieutenant-Governor, Walter C. Nichol. When it could no longer meet the demands of a rising population and technological advances in medicine, a new building was needed. No contractor would venture to buy the building because the zoning restricted the building's possible uses. It deteriorated, sitting empty and unused until it was bought in 1967 by Kendrick C. Wall. He proposed that the building be converted into a low-cost apartment complex but, once again, the zoning regulations would not allow it in a residential area.

Schools were allowed in residential areas and this is what the old hospital became when Wall signed the 4-year lease with Malaspina College. Wall bought the building less than two years earlier for \$32,000. It sounds like he makes an incredible deal when he signs the lease with Malaspina College, but this isn't the case. The old building is in a state of great disrepair. In fact, there are rumours that it is condemned. As a part of the lease agreement, Wall puts \$175,000 into renovations on the building. The College will pay \$62,000 per year for the lease -- this includes heat (although some students were later reported to ask, "What heat?"). Wall says it amounts to \$1.52 per square foot for the 40,000 square foot structure.

After the temporary site is finally found, another problem arises. The Cowichan school trustees (65) decide that they will not allow Campbell River to withdraw from their agreement to participate in the college. According to the Public Schools Act, Campbell River cannot be released until the rest of the participating districts vote on the issue. The vote is held and Cowichan was the only district that will not allow the withdrawal. Phillip Sampson, the secretary for Campbell River's school board, responds to Cowichan's plea: "We are not *asking* to be released and Cowichan's views are irrelevant."

Despite this attitude from Campbell River, Duncan (Cowichan) still objects. Since the action of Campbell River will increase the monetary commitment of the people in Duncan, the district refuses to give consent. Although it is not clear at this point, this also means that their school board will not pay their assessment for the college operations. For the time, the problem is manageable. It is not until a year later that Duncan's shouts are heard again.

In January, Avis Mitchell had replaced Peter Mason as the Qualicum representative on the College Council. Since then she became the Chair of the Housing Committee. In May she and Jack Whitlam make a public appeal, asking the residents of Nanaimo to make rooms or room and board available to the students who will be coming from other destinations to study at the College.

Rendezvous at the Hub

The hiring process for the faculty and staff must begin immediately to meet the deadline for the college opening in September. Advertisements are placed in numerous newspapers and sent to universities in Canada and the U.S. Most of the positions are to begin on August 1, 1969, but some will begin sooner. Many applicants respond and Carl Opgaard begins a long series of job interviews over the following months.

The first administration and faculty members come from a variety of places across the continent. Some of them come from the East and some from the West. Some come from towns similar to Nanaimo and others from big cities like Montreal or Vancouver. Moving to the Island, they have to settle into a new environment and a new job. When they arrive, each of them has her or his own varying impressions of both the city and its new college.

By March a Dean of Administration is chosen to work with Carl Opgaard. Harold Macbeth Brown, who acts in the same capacity at Vancouver City College, is chosen for the position. He has experience in teaching, counseling, and administration at the college level. Hal Brown is to begin his appointment as Dean of Administration on May 1st.

Many more positions are filled by April. Appointed as director of technical programs is Dr. A.B.L. Whittles. From the University of Victoria, Elizabeth Forrester is chosen to be Malaspina's first geography instructor. Ralph E. Vernon will come from VCC to instruct math and Gael Tower, from Mt. Royal College in Calgary to teach art.

In June, Bart Sorensen is chosen to be the Humanities Chairman. He has international teaching experience with a focus on communications, speech and drama. He had moved from Oregon to Victoria in 1968.

Another one of the first instructors to be chosen is Ed Hong, who will teach Chemistry at Malaspina. Ed Hong is coming from the Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology where he started a one-person Chemistry Department and then later became the chairman of the Technology Department. Because of his experience, Carl Opgaard also assigns him to be the Area Chairman for Math and Sciences.

Today, Hong remembers his first trip to Nanaimo as a pleasurable experience. He says, "Nanaimo was quite nice. I was delighted on the ferry ride over here. Now it is a common thing -

- I'm used to it. But my first ferry ride was a fantastic experience. It was a nice bright sunny day and I stayed out on the deck area taking pictures almost the entire trip."

It seems that Bob Lane, who is hired to coordinate the English Department, has a similar first reaction to Nanaimo. Lane had just been granted tenure early in 1969 in the English Department at Southwestern Oregon Community College down the coast in Coos Bay, Oregon when he receives a phone call from Bart Sorensen. Sorensen is a former professor and friend who taught Lane at Santa Barbara Junior College and who later worked at the same college in Oregon. He suggests that Lane come up and work at an infant college in Nanaimo. Today, Lane recalls that day: "I wasn't at all that happy with what was going on in the States in terms of the military and the politics at that time. I remember when the call came and he asked me, 'How would you like to come and teach at a new college in Nanaimo?' I thought, 'where's Nanaimo?'"

Lane does end up taking the position which Bart Sorensen suggests. When he finishes teaching the summer courses at the college in Oregon, he heads up to Nanaimo. He recalls, "we were coming from Oregon and came across the strait from Vancouver and I was absolutely astounded. It was so incredibly beautiful coming from that direction. A friend of mine who came to Nanaimo drove up from Victoria and said it was the worst looking town he had ever seen in his life. So it all depended on how you entered."

And so it does. In the late summer of 1969, Geri Evans (now Geri Reamer) comes into Nanaimo for her first time on the Island Highway from the South. Today, she remembers her first impressions: "When I came to Nanaimo, I found it very disappointing. I came up from Victoria and coming through the south part of town on that first day made a very bad impression on me. I was expecting a nice small town but it was pretty grungy."

In the spring of 1969, Evans is working as a teacher and part-time secretary in Labrador City Newfoundland. She is interested in working in B.C., so she writes to a number of school boards asking them if they run any secretarial diploma programs. Roy MacMillan responds to her letter, saying that he is interested in interviewing her for a position at a new college. She informs him that she intends to go to Oregon for the summer to work on her Master's, so he arranges to meet her at the Vancouver airport for an interview. She recalls, "the interview went well and I'm still here today." She is hired to teach Secretarial Arts at the college.

Other faculty come across the job in yet another way. Diane Einblau finishes her Masters Degree at SFU and comes over to Vancouver Island with a friend for a brief holiday at a cabin in Lantzville. She remembers the year: "This was at a time when Dot's Coffee Shop was still owned by the original Dot. People would come from other parts of the world to have a Dot's pie." Einblau's holiday is suddenly interrupted when she runs across an ad in a local newspaper. A new regional college is looking for a sociology instructor and she decides to apply. She gets the job and her short jaunt to Vancouver Island is suddenly extended.

Lou Neering is finishing his Ph.D in chemistry at UBC in the spring of 1969. He remembers:

There was an ad, and I responded to the ad. Then there were interviews; first by Brice Whittles, and then by Carl Opgaard. I was not surprised to get the job, but I was lucky. In '69, there were jobs. In '70, there weren't very many jobs. By '71, the crunch hit. So people who I was in graduate school with, at UBC for instance, who came out a year or two later, ended up doing all sorts of strange things...I met someone who came out a year later than me driving a bus in Vancouver. So, I was lucky. At the time, you don't realize how lucky you are.

Neering also remembers coming to Nanaimo and starting work in August:

The very, very, very first day, we had no college. The building was still condemned at this stage...We had an office on Wallace Street across from the Rendezvous. That's where everything was happening at the time (at the office). So this is my first day of work, I'm fresh out of grad school, and I'm early. I'm there at eight-thirty. Apparently, nothing opened until nine. This other guy walks up and we kind of looked at each other. It turned out to be Gael Tower who was the first coordinator of the Arts Department. So we introduced ourselves and then we saw the Rendezvous across the street. So we went for coffee. The first thing I did on the job was to go for coffee. This is highly significant. I think that the coffee break is one of the great adventures of civilization.

Doug Bridges, who becomes the head of the Learning Resources Center at the college, doesn't hear about the job through another person or a newspaper. He recalls: "Carl Opgaard taught at the same high school where I was in Edmonds. He was the vice-principal, I think. He went on to another job at a new community college in Edmonds. I didn't hear about the job at Malaspina through him. I saw a posting at the University of Washington."

When he comes up to Nanaimo, Bridges has a big job ahead of him. He has to essentially create a library. Looking back on the situation, he says, "when I started the library, I had some help from a group called University Microfilm. They had a number of books that they considered 'essential' for a college." This is not to say it isn't hard work. At the time, there is no space available for Bridges to work in, since the old hospital is still being renovated. To make ends meet, he assembles the library in his new Nanaimo home.

In the Physics Department Ernie Jerome is hired. He will come from UBC where he has been teaching for the last four years while holding a National Research Council Fellowship. Although he is not the youngest of the first staff members, he certainly looks it. Doug Bridges remembers, "Ernie Jerome came in for his first day down at the office on Wallace Street. I remember Anne Patti, the secretary then, asked him to step behind the counter because she thought he was one of the students. Ernie was looking pretty young in those days."

Jeanette Matson and Marc Martin are the first counsellors for Malaspina students. Matson graduated at UBC and spent a year working in the area of social work in Powell River and Burnaby before coming to Malaspina. Martin has two graduate degrees from the University of

Ottawa. He is also a sports enthusiast who says he takes pride in the fact that at one time he had coached the NHL's Serge Savard.

Dave Kerridge comes up from UVic to teach Biology. Kevin Roberts, Dave Harrison, and Dale Lovick come to make up the rest of the English Department. Terry Avery will teach electronics. Ernst Poschenreider makes up the first Economics Department. Janet Fisher will be teaching languages. Jim Cooling is Malaspina's first History instructor. Lelia Morey takes on the position as the Psychology instructor and the Chairman for the Social Sciences Department. Cornelius J. Swart comes with teaching experience from VCC and BCIT to teach developmental reading courses at Malaspina. Joe McPeck will join Ralph Vernon in teaching Math.

John Buckingham comes from the East where he participated in the development of St. Lawrence College, a three-year college in Ontario. He first heard of Malaspina College shortly after the Marsh Report was published and kept his eye on its development ever since. He comes to Malaspina to be its first registrar.

Additional staff members are appointed. Alan Field from San Francisco is appointed as the Staff Assistant to the President. He is replacing Will Dobson, a university student from Duncan who filled the position temporarily in the summer months (Dobson was also on the College Coordinating Committee). Field will be in charge of public relations. This position later falls under the title of Information Director until it finally becomes Director of Communications. E. T. Armstrong is appointed as the admissions and records secretary. Andy Sullivan comes on board as a business assistant on the office staff. Some of the original support staff at the College are Maxine Zurbrigg (said to be the first employee at the College), Anne Patti, Shirley MacMillan, and Margaret Hawco. By the time all the appointments have been made, there are about 35 employees at the College.

Around the month of June, Carl Opgaard and some of these new staff members tour the schools of the region asking the Grade 11 and 12 students pertinent questions to see what they think the value of the college is. There is a positive response. However, because the college did not announce the lease of the hospital until so late in the school year, many students had already planned ahead and applied to the universities. As a result of this, only about 400 students are expected in the first year of enrollment.

By the time August rolls around, aside from one or two exceptions, most of the staff for the college are in town. Ed Hong says, "when we first came, the college was just an office right across from the Diner's Rendez-Vous. It was just a little office building where we set up. A lot of meetings were held in basements of churches in the downtown area and some of them were held at the Diner's Rendezvous." The first faculty meeting, to be held on August 5, 1969, is in fact at the Diner's Rendezvous. In an article which later appears in "The Navigator", the College's student newspaper, Dave Harrison recalls this first faculty meeting:

As there were no rooms at the College ready to hold a meeting of 20 faculty with their president, that first faculty meeting on the sunny August afternoon took place at the Rendezvous. We shook hands a little formally with one another, and stood or sat around drinking coffee. Carl Opgaard welcomed us and in his typical low-key style of those days, announced that there was no agenda, no decisions to be made and in fact no meeting; there was enough for all that tomorrow. We toddled off to the steps of city hall to be welcomed by Mayor-and MLA-Frank Ney to the "Hub-Tub-and-Pub capital of the World". Culture had arrived in Nanaimo.

Lou Neering, to the surprise of some, came to this first meeting wearing a suit and tie. Neering was not known for his formal wear. He had decided that since they were going to meet the mayor, he would wear his suit. To everyone's surprise, Frank Ney greeted them wearing a pair of shorts and welcomed them with his "Hub-Tub-Pub" comment. Some say that is the last time Lou Neering ever wore a suit.

Meet the President!

So the staff have now met each other and the Mayor of the city in which they are going to live and work. They have also met their president, Carl Opgaard, who will be providing leadership in shaping the new college. What impressions do the faculty have of Carl Opgaard? What are his qualities? What are his plans? Overall, the impressions the staff give of Opgaard are very favourable. Dave Harrison gives his first impressions of the new president:

Opgaard, I think, struck most of us as open to suggestions, flexible to new approaches, and more than that -- almost fiercely challenging us to make of this college a place where students could learn and grow, in ways quite distinctively different from universities and high schools. What kind of a college did this man plan to lead? The question was too much for at least one faculty member to keep for even a day. I vividly remember Bart Sorensen, leaning across to the President at that first lunch (and saying), "And what IS your philosophy of a college?"

It was what you'd probably call a mind-blowing question. Opgaard's answer was more or a mind-expander: "I suppose," he mused, "you could say it's reflected in the people around this table." It wasn't just that Opgaard had chosen a bunch of people who reflected his own viewpoints, about the way a college should run and the way its members would teach and learn. I think he felt that the college idea -- call it a philosophy or an ethos if you like -- would grow from the people in it, rather than from a list of aims and objectives that somebody or some group on high had decreed to be "put into effect as of..."

Diane Einblau seems to agree that the president was flexible but remembers a more humorous angle. She recalls that "he was really interested in getting the music department going and he really wanted a marching band. He was from Washington State and they are big on marching bands there. Our idea of a music department was to have classical and maybe jazz and his idea was -- whatever it takes to get a marching band. But he never tried to push things on us. He

would have liked to have a marching band but we said, 'Don't be silly, we'll have classical and jazz.' He'd understand, he was adaptable."

Bob Lane remembers Opgaard's positive approach to education: "He had a good strong sense that he wanted students who came to the college to have a positive educational experience and that's why we had the struggle with the NCG." The NCG is a mark that means "No Credit Granted". Instead of giving F's, Hal Brown and Carl Opgaard think the students should be assigned NCG's to make their time at Malaspina a more positive learning experience. Inevitably, there is much debate about this but the NCG isn't dropped until about 1985.

There probably isn't anyone who would deny that Carl Opgaard was exemplary as Malaspina's first president. Oliver Neaves says, "I think the driving force behind the college was Carl Opgaard. He was the right man at that particular place and time. He was an excellent chief executive officer and he almost had a passion for community colleges. He always emphasized that it should be a community college and that we should have dialog with the community." In his first years in Nanaimo, Dr. Opgaard's face and name is often found in the local papers, tending to make him synonymous with the new college. In every article his words reflect a positive attitude and a primary concern that the college reflect the needs of the community.

Perhaps the best way to understand what kind of man Carl Opgaard is, one needs to see his words. His positive nature and overwhelming enthusiasm towards Malaspina become evident through the words of a speech he gives to the Chamber of Commerce in 1970:

These institutions, the colleges, have come, have risen from the people and they are there to serve the people...The college is an example of something that has come into existence because of people seeking ways to help themselves to a better life. I don't say that just because a student drops out at Malaspina College, that we have necessarily failed; not if we have helped him look at himself as he really is, not if we have helped him develop a positive self-concept...Our objective is instruction...We should be the best teaching institution there is in the province...We must put our resources to bear on, somehow or another, having a positive influence on the attitudes and behavior of the total communities which we serve and make this community better for the fact that we exist here...Every year that goes by that the community does not have this kind of an institution, there are individuals within that community who are suffering.

The idea had form and shape; it had a voice, and a place to be heard. The foundation was in place: philosophy, people and place.

In the Hospital

Seven years after the idea comes into existence, the college is a reality. Although the building isn't completely renovated, classes will begin on September 8th and the official opening ceremonies for Malaspina College will be on October 18, 1969.

On August 29th, the faculty and administration move into the rented building with the rented furniture at 375 Kennedy Street, the new home of the College. Earlier in the year, the College Council decided that the furniture for the College would be rented. This is in accordance with the Public Schools Act which says that they have to have temporary facilities for the first few years before having a financial referendum to determine their permanent needs.

With the renovations continuing through the summer and into the fall after classes start, it makes for an interesting beginning. In fact Dave Harrison remembers the state of the hospital when they moved in: "the college building itself, until recently an old hospital with morgues and delivery rooms, and emergency receiving and urinalysis, was but a plumber's-carpenter's-builder's nightmare of half-finished tubes and wires and corridors in disarray."

This disarray set the stage for adventure in the first couple of months at the College. Bob Lane recalls some funny things happening to him as a result of this initial environment:

On the first day of classes, I was running up to meet with my first class. I was slightly nervous so I had to go to the bathroom. I look around and I see a place that looks like it's the right kind of place. I burst in through the door and there's a second door. I pushed on through there and open a third door to get to the commode and there, indeed, is a young woman sitting on the pot who also needed to go to the bathroom before class. When I opened that door I was terribly embarrassed, but she was more embarrassed and she turned red. I apologized and left and found the other place. All of this happened because there were no signs on the doors yet. I find the correct place and then I go to class. I open my briefcase and get my books out and all that stuff. I look up and in the front row is this young woman. We both turned brilliantly red simultaneously. It seemed the only thing to do was to tell the story to explain it to the class why it was that we were sitting there in this strange colour. So I explained that and everything was going quite well for awhile until we hear this God-awful noise. This big drill bit comes through the wall about three feet from my head. The students start laughing. I jump back and the bit protrudes several inches into the space where my head had been. They were putting in the pipes for the sprinkler system.

It was exciting teaching in that place - you didn't know what was going to happen.

Although the College is not quite ready, it does not deter students from coming. This is not all that surprising, considering the advantages of the Island's new college. The cost of taking courses at a college is much less than the equivalent courses would be at a university. Students with less than a 60% average are accepted at the college and they don't need all of the credits necessary to go to a university. These are some of the factors that attract so many students in the first year of operation.

Enrolment for the first semester reaches a total of 653 students, which adds up to 253 more than the predicted amount. There are actually 829 students who apply to the college but 176 of them are withdrawn or found to be inadmissible. On August 27th, the total amount of registered students is 623. This means that 206 (25%) of the 829 students apply during the last 3 1/2 weeks.

This surge of applications in the last few weeks is thought to be due to the addition of evening and extension programs. The extension programs are courses that will be held at off-campus locations. Two of the areas that will get these courses are Duncan and Parksville. The night courses that are added are in the areas of humanities and the social sciences. These night classes will make the college more accessible to people in the community who are working during the day.

The students come from quite a wide area. Of the total amount, 387 are from Nanaimo and 208 come from the other communities within the college region. Of the 58 out-of-region students, 46 are from Vancouver Island, 6 are from the BC Mainland, 1 is from New York City, and 5 are from Hong Kong. Diane Enblau remembers some of these students who were in her first sociology classes: "It was absolutely wild; there were loggers coming in, there were fishermen coming in and there were people who just hadn't had any exposure to that sort of cultural environment. They were completely open in the kinds of questions they were asking. Women would be coming in with curlers in their hair, knitting and chatting with each other. It was like the wild west!"

These were exciting times for the new instructors at the college and all of them became completely absorbed in their pioneering efforts. In fact, at the end of the year Diane Einblau did a study showing that the staff members at the college worked an average of seventy hours each week. It seems that the staff are filled with enthusiasm and a sense of building something. Einblau remembers the scene of the College as it was: "We were making the department; we ordered the library and decided what the courses would be, and we weren't under anyone's governance...In the first couple of years we took for granted that if we weren't teaching, then we should be doing something in the community."

The College regards the community with the utmost importance and makes a great effort to make continuous contact with it. Joy Leach, later to be the mayor of Nanaimo, used to work at the College and recalls the importance that the community had right from the beginning:

Malaspina was quite committed to the community and that's what made it a unique institution. In fact, the instructors used to be given credit hours. It was called the C-Factor (Community Factor). They were given about the same as a course load as a C-factor and they used that to engage in community activity. Of course, Carl Opgaard was very committed to this new concept of a community college and having an institution like that act as a catalyst for change within a community. It was very exciting to be associated with it.

Things are particularly exciting in this first year since so many things were being created. Although the college operation was up and running, many other committees, clubs and societies had yet to be organized. Considering the students were so new to this sort of institution, they organized themselves quite quickly. Of course, they did have some help as Dave Harrison recalls:

In the first year of the college you could almost make an innovation a day. There was trust in the air, and a spirit of community in the heart. One day, for instance, I dropped into the president's office and suggested we get a college newspaper going. Marc Martin had just been thinking similarly about a students' association. Opgaard said 'go ahead -- see if you can find some students that are interested.' Within a week we had a dozen students together to talk about both.

They talk about it with the students and both of their ideas quickly come to fruition.

Roy Wright, one of the students that Marc Martin and Dave Harrison talk to, does much of the organizing for the student elections which are eventually held on October 2nd. The elected members for Malaspina's first student council are: Dave Kemp, president; Dave Lawford, vice-president; Kevin Storrie, social representative; Ray Windecker, sports representative; Joan Reite, secretary; and Roy Clark, treasurer. The Student Council's first meeting is held on October 6. They plan a dance for October 18 and a trip to the Donovan (remember him?) concert in Vancouver on November 1.

Also at this meeting, one of the newly formed student societies asks for a grant of \$500. The group calls themselves the Malaspina College Navigator Society and is headed by Roy Wright, the student who organized the elections. The "Navigator" is to be the College's first student newspaper. The grant is approved and the first issue of the Navigator comes out on October 16, with Roy Wright as the editor.

The first issue makes quite a favourable impression as is apparent when *The Daily Colonist* publisher, R. J. Bower, writes and gives the society congratulations for the high quality of their first publication. He also offers them the age-old advice: "when in doubt, leave it out."

It must be remembered that the year is 1969. The legal drinking age is still 21 in B.C. and seat belts aren't mandatory yet. A Nanaimo newspaper ad for Harvey Murphey's Men's Wear reads, "Leather shirts, acid pants, and beer hats... What a combination!" The musical, "Hair" is playing in Seattle. In July, the Americans landed on the moon for the first time. Trudeau is the prime minister and W.A.C. Bennett is the premier. Nanaimo is relatively undeveloped and has yet to become amalgamated with the surrounding districts.

In reading a front page article in this first issue of *The Navigator*, it becomes quite evident that the year is 1969. The article describes a protest which begins at the College on October 8th. It says, "approximately 150 students and staff rallied in the cafeteria to hear Kevin Storrie present an Amchitka press release." They are protesting the American nuclear test at Amchitka Island in

the Aleutians. After the speech the group files out of the College towards city hall, some of them chanting "love's gonna live here again" or singing "We Shall Overcome".

The year is also apparent when we look at the album review in the first issue of *The Navigator*. The reviewer, Rod Horner (of "Horner's Music Corner"), writes, "'Abbey Road', the Beatles new release, has by no means fallen short of their last album. In fact, they continue to outdo themselves." In this year, the Beatles are still together and outdoing themselves.

Some sports clubs also begin in this inaugural year. A basketball team is being managed by Art Sanderson. Malaspina College also has soccer and hockey teams to represent it. A rugby team called the Malaspina Tubmen, is being coached by Ian MacLain. There are many athletic activities in the first year, in part, due to the efforts of Ernie Jerome, the physics instructor with a great fondness for sports. For example, in December *The Navigator* reports that Ernie Jerome's physics class "clobbers" Ernst Poschenrider's economics class 23-0 in a football match.

At Bob Lane's house, on Wednesday nights, he and Bart Sorensen meet with a drama reading club. The first play they tackle is "The Bald Suprano" a play by Ionesco. The play was indeed produced in the old Room 108 and was reviewed in the *Vancouver Sun*.

Lane's Imaginative Writing class in Parksville stages four plays written by students in the Parksville-Qualicum area. The *Parksville-Qualicum Progress* carried a review by Ernie Troubridge: (June 1971)

A full house was treated to an evening of theatre on Friday at the Errington War Memorial Hall. The four plays presented were written as part of Malaspina College's Creative Writing Class in Parksville...and were staged with the help of the Little Mountain Theatre Group. "Act One" written by Lloyd Rollo was a taped reading with visual effects and portrayed a slice of domestic life...

"And Rested the Seventh Day" by Val Urie was a comedy of our times which also high lighted what may well be the root of much of the troubles of our youth today. Fast paced, uproariously funny, and with a message for us all.

"I have heard that story" by George Hutchinson invloved audience participation...A successful attempt at a very difficult form of theatre.

"The Coffee Party" by Nyra Groves was sheer farce and kept the audience laughing from the opening lines to final curtain. ...[In the large cast were Anne Horsfield, Val Urie, Harriet Morfey, Marj Leffler, Dorothy Simmons, Rita Caley, Gretta haworth, Terry Balla, Pat Smith, Gay Cafferata, Mike Davenport, Terry Machan, Bart Sorensen and Mike Matthews. Bart Sorensen directed the play.]

The overall impression was one of amazement that in members of our community whom we see daily there lies so much latent talent which can be brought to the light of day by some competent instruction.

Other events of the time gleaned from various newspaper files give a flavour to those early days of the college and remind us that some flavours are constant:

- Kevin Storrie, Social Convenor of Student Council, resigns because of lack of student support. Sharyn Pilotte, in charge of student employment also resigned, saying that the Student Council is a farce. Norm Webb, in charge of the constitution committee, resigned because he was the only one on the committee.

- a contest for a Malaspina College Logo is announced. The logo must have the letters MC or MRC in it. Entries submitted to Gael Tower; winner to get \$15, 2nd place gets \$10, and 3rd place gets \$5.

- study skills center, headed by Dave Harrison and Neil Swart, opens on January 19, 1970.

- committee to choose winning logo for College is comprised of Hal Brown, Gael Tower, and Dave Kemp.

- councellors from secondary schools all over the Island come to Malaspina College to learn what a college was and what it had to offer for high school students. Many Malaspina instructors or coordinators speak. The meeting is called "Dialogue '70". It is planned that Malaspina Faculty will make visits to the secondary schools in the future.

- from interview with Doug Bridges "I remember some of the old bus rides that we took out to some of the surrounding communities. The idea was to get to know the communities we were serving. We would do some slide shows and that sort of thing. I remember how dusty all of the equipment would get."

Moving Right Along

The atmosphere at the new college was electric and there was little division between administration, faculty, staff, and students. Everyone knew everyone in those early days and a real sense of collegiality pervaded the coffee room and moved out over the campus. Ideas, policies, procedures, ways of teaching - all of these topics could be heard discussed in the lounge which was right across the hall from the president's office. The cooperative spirit manifested itself in many ways. Diane Einblau, for example, remembers, "The access to other departments was great. I took a ceramics course, which I wouldn't have done in a city environment, because I would have had to take time to get to and from the course. There was also tremendous contact between the disciplines because there was one sociologist and one historian; there were very few people in each discipline. Virtually every day was professional development."

Teaching that ceramics course was John Charnetski, who in an interview recalled:

I could start this interview with my interview for the job. That was hilarious. When I was asked to come for an interview, I came up and Carl Opgaard and Gael Tower met me at the old Hospital. An interview should be about an hour long, but they talked to me for four hours. I kept saying, 'I'd like to see the space,' or 'what's the budget like?' I was supposed to set up a three-dimensional program. They kept evading the question and then I remember Carl finally saying, 'Gael, I think I've said everything, so you can show him the space.' So he took me down to the basement and opened the door and here was this grungy old furnace of to one side of the room and it was piled high with furniture. He said, 'this is the studio.' It was in the bowels of the building and at one time, when the place was a hospital, it had been a morgue. So we finally got it all cleaned out. We had an incredible budget of \$800 to set up a sculpture and ceramics department, so that was interesting. It was totally inadequate, but that's what we had.

It was really interesting in that building...Every time I lectured (and we were teaching a lot of night classes at that time), for some reason, that furnace would let out this awful sigh. So immediately I would tell them a story that this was the morgue and it was obviously haunted. This scared the hell out of some people.

The nice thing about the old place is that it was small and we had one staff room. Across the hall was the president's office and there was very little in the way of administrative staff. There was real excitement because we were just building the College. Because the hallways were small, everybody was always bumping into each other.

Crowding at the Old Campus

Doug Bridges, the first librarian at the college, remembers, "I guess one of the high points was coming up to the new campus. It was nice to see everything come together. Down at the old Hospital, things were getting a little cramped. My office was starting to get crowded. I remember in the back of my old office there were these two big marble urinals. They were beautiful old things. At the old hospital, the elevator didn't work. We had some wheel-chair patients, so often they had to be carried up four flights of stairs." The library had grown quickly and the books, periodicals and other materials were a part of an expanding inventory which had to be housed in a small area. Trying to fit everything into the small space available took all the design skills of Gwen Bailey (then Gwen Harding), and by the time of the move there really wasn't room anymore for all the holdings.

There are other indications of crowding in the larger neighborhood as indicated by complaints from residents in the college area that students are parking in their driveways; it is suggested that students might park elsewhere and be bused to the college. An article published in the *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, Sept. 8, 1984, says, "Life was often inconvenient at Kennedy Street. Staff were compelled to put up with poor illumination and, because of limited space, to hold exams in the

hallways and to use elevators for storage." Crowding had become a problem for everyone at the temporary college. Finally on October 9, 1974 two mobile units (portables) are placed on the front lawn of Kennedy St. Campus; there is a serious shortage of classroom space, and faculty are two and three in an office.

Housing Problems in Nanaimo

The college population is steadily rising: 1969 -- 638; 1970-- 1,168; 1971 --1,294; 1972 --1,478; 1973 --1,618; and 1974 -- 1,934; a study done by B. King's student government finds that one student is living in his van in a parking lot and others live in older houses in the Kennedy Street area to keep transportation costs down. Discussions are held to address housing concerns for the new site. At the new campus, transportation may be a problem for some students; some suggestions are made to anticipate future housing problems: the old college could be turned into student housing or local motel could rent out to students during the off-season; Dr. Bob Young, Dean of Student Services, says, "I don't think Harewood district is equipped to handle the flood of students when the new campus is opened."

On October 30, 1974, a meeting is held with the community to consider the housing problem. A report from the *Nanaimo Daily Free Press* (June 17, 1975) quotes Dr. Opgaard predicting a definite problem of housing shortage when the College moves up to the new campus. "After over 1000 students passed through the one-day registration last year, an appeal was made to the community to rent out their houses and spare rooms; it is suspected that some landlords are reluctant to rent to students because of their short term occupancy."

A report in the *Nanaimo Daily Free Press* on August 25, 1975 has Dr. Bob Young, Dean of Student Services, saying that the housing situation is worse than last year; and he makes another appeal to Nanaimo residents to make available housing in any shape or form.

Malaspina College is bursting at the seams.

A Site to See

After the official opening of the College the Council had moved on to new matters. One of the first steps they take is to initiate the search for a permanent site for Malaspina. The current lease is for four years at the old hospital building with an option to lease for a fifth year at the same price. At the end of the fifth year it will be 1974. The College Council sets itself these tasks: to try to find a site; to consult widely with all members of the college community; to review design suggestions; to secure building plans; to have the new campus built; and to move to the new campus by the fall of 1974. This is an enormous undertaking.

The council names Beattie Davis as the Chair of the sites committee. In the fall of 1969 he invites proposals for the permanent college site. It is specified that the site should be at least 100 acres in size. In considering the site, Davis says, "it is most important that every site be given full consideration and that each member of the council representing the five participating school districts be fully satisfied that the site finally selected is the one best suited to the present and future needs of Malaspina College."

The closing date for site proposals is set as November 21, 1969. In the following December it is announced that 16 sites proposals have been submitted. One of these sites is a gravel pit at the intersection of Hammond Bay Road and the Island Highway. Later the Department of Education writes the council, informing them that this site is needed by the Department of Highways. Apparently it still has a 40-50 year supply of gravel and in the event that the department lost ownership, they would have to go as far as Cassidy or Ladysmith to get gravel for roads at the north end of Nanaimo. This site and many others are thrown out for various reasons and by March, 1970, the number of sites has been narrowed to four.

These 4 sites are kept secret to preclude any land speculation. Each of them is "in a ten mile radius of a point six miles north of Nanaimo", thus conforming to the stipulation laid out four years earlier in the Marsh Report. Dr. Opgaard invites staff, students, and community members to submit criteria which they think will be important in determining the site. Opgaard's weekly column in the local newspapers plays an important part in opening communications between the college and the larger community. Malaspina College will be a community college in more than just name as all the stakeholders are invited to participate by contributing ideas and suggestions. It is around this time that D.L. Brothers announces the plan to meld regional colleges and adjacent vocational schools. This announcement becomes a key factor in determining the new campus site. The council plans to bring a consultant in to help decide on the final site.

Around the summer of 1970 a rumour sprouts up in Nanaimo. It is being said that the Nanaimo Military Camp will be declaring half of its properties as surplus and will put it up for disposal. This rumour quickly catches the attention of the College Council as this land is directly adjacent to the B.C. Vocational School and could be a prime factor in facilitating the proposed melding of Malaspina and VTS.

When Oliver Neaves writes to the Commanding Officer of Esquimalt, Major P.M. Sandham, to verify the rumour, he finds that it is true. He then writes to the Department of Education to solicit their support in attaining the surplus land for the campus. The Deputy Minister, Niel Perry, complies to this request on August 19, 1970 by sending a letter to Esquimalt saying that, at the Department of Education, they "concur with the intent of the College Council that it would be in the best interests of the educational community that this land be made available."

This is only the beginning of a long attempt to secure this land as the site of the permanent campus of the College. The College Council and the Province are unknowingly about to partake in an

extended bureaucratic fiasco with Ottawa which lasts for more than two years. There are rules and procedures to be followed - rules and procedures which seem to be multiplied at each level of government.

Major Sandham informs Perry that decisions concerning military property disposal are carried out by the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation in Ottawa. He says Malaspina will be added to the list of interested parties when the land goes up for tender. Usually this is what happens, but there are certain preliminary procedures that will prove to be advantageous to the College. The land must first be offered to government departments before it is handed over for tender to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation. The land is first offered to any Federal Agencies that may be interested. Next, the Provincial government is given an opportunity to purchase the land. Lastly, municipalities are given a chance to get the land before it goes up for public tender.

When Neaves finds out that the decision will be made in Ottawa, he immediately informs Nanaimo's MP, Tommy Douglas, of their attempts to get the military land. On September 3rd Douglas replies: "I am in wholehearted support of your efforts in this regard, and am presently conducting inquiries with the Minister of National Defence on the possibility of making this land available to the College."

At this point the search for the permanent college site has been narrowed down to one, but the the considerable task of securing this much-sought-after property still looms in front of the Council. In the local community, there is great interest in the military property. The Vancouver Island Exhibition Association wants the site to hold agricultural fairs, B.C. Tel wants some of the property, the Nanaimo Theatre Group shows some interest and all of the real estate companies in Nanaimo want the site to be turned into a housing development.

This site will have a number of advantages for the new college. Being located near to the largest population center in the region, it will: encourage more part-time enrolment; encourage more involvement with the community (e.g., evening courses will be well attended); create less need for housing to be built at taxpayers' expense; allow more people to commute shorter distances; and will provide some commercial transportation for students. With 165 acres, the site also meets and indeed exceeds the size requirements for the College. The location allows for easy access to utilities so extra costs would not be necessary in the development process. Its vicinity to the vocational school will allow for a smooth melding of administration, facilities and student groups of both institutions.

Although it is not a necessary consideration, the site also offers an incredible view of Georgia Strait, Gabriola Island and the coastal mountains on the Main

land. It is a real beauty spot on Vancouver Island which would be a magnificent location for a community college.

Tommy Douglas is not the only one in Ottawa who supports Malaspina College in its quest to attain this excellent site. Nancy Heath, a senator from Nanaimo also supports the College throughout in its attempt to attain the military land. Another supporter is found in the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry, Jack Davis, who writes to Donald Macdonald (the Minister of National Defence) saying, "I hope that your officials will do everything they can do to ensure that the Malaspina College does end up owning this property."

Another important person who supports the College is Arthur Laing, the Minister of Public Works. He comes to know about the College through Roy MacMillan. MacMillan recalls their first meeting:

I went and met with him at the Malaspina Hotel. He sat down and said, 'you know, I'm not without some influence in the Parliament'. He told me that if there was anything he could do to help me along, he wanted to do it. I didn't know what to do then, but I wanted to take advantage of any opportunity we could get so I told him that we would contact him soon.

When the contest to get the military property begins, MacMillan thinks it is a good time to get in touch with the Minister. He and Don Hammond fly to Ottawa to have an interview with him. Laing tells them that he will support them in the matter but he is not in control of property disposal for the Department of National Defence (DND). He directs them to Crown Assets Disposal Corporation (CADDC). Unfortunately, when they get in contact with this department, they are informed that CADDC doesn't know anything about the property yet. Somewhat disappointed, the two councilors head back to Nanaimo.

Although the trip didn't get any immediate results, Hammond and MacMillan succeeded in circulating their request around Ottawa. In a letter from Arthur Laing, Jean Miquelon (President of Crown Assets Disposal Corporation) is informed of Malaspina's interest in leasing the surplus property. The College has to lease the land because they do not have adequate fund-raising power. Since 40% of capital costs must come from the school districts of participating communities, the College cannot afford to purchase the land but wants to rent it instead. However, in a letter to Beattie Davis dated October 29, 1970, Jean Miquelon says, "if the property is declared surplus, the Corporation is obliged to dispose of it by sale at its market value, rather than by long-term lease."

By the time Beattie Davis gets this letter, the property has officially been declared surplus and is ready to be handed over to CADDC for disposal.

In late November Alan Field, the staff assistant to the president of Malaspina, goes to Ottawa to find out more information on the disposal of the property. In a summary of his excursion, Field reports:

After several days...I finally met with the civil servant who seemed to have the real responsibility of advising the Minister of National Defence on disposal of the property. He is Mr. Frank D. Millar, Director-General, Properties and Utilities, DND.

He informs Field that it has been decided that the land will go up for public sale. Before the sale is held however, the land had to be offered to the three levels of government. At present, they were seeing if any Federal Agencies wanted the land. Millar then tells Field that "if something near the fair market value was offered by either the province or the City Council of Nanaimo, for the purpose of building a college, Crown Assets would have to accept it."

Although the land has been declared surplus, there is a certain amount of processing which must go on before it is available (a survey and the adjustment of property lines). Donald Macdonald (the Minister of National Defence) writes to Tommy Douglas on February 15, 1971 telling him that this processing is "unlikely to be completed until about next April." The words "next April" cause temporary confusion for everyone involved. They are all uncertain whether the Minister means April, 1971 or April, 1972. In a flurry of letter writing, it is finally confirmed that the date the procedures will be completed will be around April 1972.

Early in June, 1971, there is some alarm amongst the College Council when speculators are seen on the property with representatives from CADC. Malaspina begins to fear that they may be outbid if the land goes up for public tender. In response to this, J.S. White, the Superintendent of Technical-Vocational Services at the Department of Education, writes to Ottawa:

Our approach to D.N.D. is to acquire additional land for the Provincial Vocational School at Nanaimo. As you know, the Province has first choice refusal, next to Federal Government department requirements, on all surplus D.N.D. properties and therefore we negotiate for the land in the name of our B.C. Vocational School Nanaimo -- a Provincially operated institution.

In doing this, the College will not have to compete for the land in a public sale. In a real sense then the Vocational School provides a birth place for the community college.

Late in the summer of 1971, Roy MacMillan gets a personal letter from Ottawa. It is from F.D. Millar the Director-General, Properties and Utilities, D.N.D. (Alan Field had talked to him earlier in the year). He says that he is aware of the Council's desire to attain the surplus property and wants to help them. In September, Don Hammond and Roy MacMillan pack their bags and make their second trip out to Ottawa to see Millar. In the interview, Millar assures the councilors that they are taking the safest route by trying to get the land through the Provincial Government. Dr. MacMillan recalls the interview:

The general [Millar] smiled and said, 'I'll tell you what I'll do'. He said 'here's the whole file on the camp in Nanaimo and I'm going to freeze it. When I freeze a file, it's frozen and it stays frozen until I unfreeze it.' Don asked him how he could be sure about that. He said, 'that's easy', and he reached down and pulled out a drawer at the bottom of his desk. Then he put the file in

there, shut the drawer, and locked it. He said 'that's it. It stays there until you tell me you're ready to take on the property.' We said 'what do you want for it?' He said 'I haven't got a clue. Make me an offer.' We told him that we would go home and work on it and then make him an offer.

But this isn't going to be an offer to buy the property outright. At this point, Millar says that the possibility of a long-term lease is becoming more feasible. At the time, this is not a common practice. Millar later writes, "the long-term lease, while not at all new in land management, might, at this point in time, be construed as a deviation from accepted and approved government practice of land disposition." He suggests that the College might lease the land by making annual payments based on a percentage of the property's current value.

On this trip to Ottawa, the two councilors also meet with A.B. Hamilton, who is the Manager of the Lands and Buildings Division of CADC. Among other things, MacMillan reports that Hamilton tells them "that the Malaspina College name [is] well known on Parliament Hill due to our previous efforts politically." Hamilton also asks them if they have done an assessment of the property. The College has had an assessment done by H.J.W. Evans of Vancouver Island Appraisals. Evans suggests that the property is valued at \$108,000. Hamilton says that his department will record this and that they intend to do an assessment of their own in the near future.

In January, 1972 Roy MacMillan retires from the College Council and Beattie Davis is elected as the new Chairman. In the following month, F.D. Millar finishes a draft letter proposing to lease 165 acres of the surplus property. Alan Field reports that, "he said that the draft letter will propose a long-term lease of the property -- 50 years -- with provision for a rental adjustment review every five years. The rate would be the prime interest rate based on the assessed value of the land." The conditions of the rental are set forth in the letter. One of these conditions is that the College must hand over the facilities at any time in the event of an 'emergency' as defined in the National Defence Act.

The leasing conditions are negotiated in the months of February and March, 1972. By March 24th, a tentative agreement is reached and Millar requests that the College have a survey of the land done so that it can be registered at the local Land Titles Office. When this survey is complete, the lease conditions will be forwarded to the Council for approval.

Late in the month of May, another obstacle looms. John D. Bosdet of the Boorman Investment Company does the assessment for the Department of National Defence and comes up with a figure of \$224,000 as the value of the property. The assessment that the College had done was \$108,000. The discrepancy between these two figures lies in the fact that Evans assessed the land based on its use for non-profit purposes whereas Bosdet assessed the land based on its commercial development potential.

When Tommy Douglas is informed of the \$224,000 figure, he writes to the college bursar, Oliver Neaves, saying, "I am taking up the matter with the Honourable Edgar Benson, [the new] Minister of National Defence, in the hope that his department will revise its appraisal to a more realistic figure." With the land valued at \$224,000 the College would have to pay annual rental of \$12,320. With the assessment the College had commissioned, they were only expecting to pay \$5,940 each year (both of these figures are based on a rate of 5.5% which both parties agreed to). The difference between these two rental rates is \$7,480.

In July, Don Hammond makes a third trip to Ottawa; this time with Beattie Davis and Alan Field. They went with the hopes of negotiating the lease with F.D. Millar. When they arrived however, Davis reports that they found that Millar and his assistant Mr. Wild were "adamant on the point of the college accepting the higher evaluation, and consequently paying more than double the annual rent." Millar and his assistant suggest that the College Council reconsider trying to buy the property even though they are aware that this is not possible for the Council.

When the three of them return from this disappointing journey, Davis decides to make an appeal to a number of B.C. members of the federal cabinet. These members include: John Turner, the Minister of Finance; Ray Perrault, the Minister of Labour; and David Thompson, the Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. He writes, "I am asking you to intervene on behalf of Malaspina with the Minister of National Defence, urging him to direct the departmental officials to lease the land at the fair appraisal value offered by the College."

In the following year things take a turn for the College Council. In September, 1972 an NDP government takes over in B.C. with Dave Barrett as the leader. The Council hopes that this change in government will bring a favourable outcome to their on-going dispute with Ottawa. In fact, the new provincial government proves to be extremely helpful in attaining the surplus military land for the College.

In the end, Barrett's government decides to buy the property from D.N.D. The property is bought by the Department of Public Works for \$230,000. As it turns out, Ottawa didn't negotiate their price at all. The College can now lease the land from the provincial government for a more reasonable price.

Before this sale can be finalized, an Order In Council has to be passed by the federal government to approve the action. On June 28, 1973, Beattie Davis sends a telegram to Prime Minister Trudeau, urging him to pass the Order In Council. Davis emphasizes, "negotiations with the federal government have been in process for more than two years." Over two years of negotiating, committee meetings, personal trips on behalf of the council, letter writing, telegrams, pleas, telephone calls, more letters, and finally the end is in sight.

On July 10, 1973 the Order In Council is passed. Malaspina now has a definite site for the new College. Now that the hard part is over, all that is left to do is to build a college.

All Planned Out

By the time the College finally secures land for the permanent site of the campus on July 10, 1973, planning for the buildings is already well under way. In fact, the first step is taken back on April 30, 1971 when the College Council chooses Thompson, Berwick, Pratt, and Partners of Vancouver to be the College architects. The design team includes: Ron Nelson, partner in charge; Clive Grout, architect in charge; Paul Merrick, principal designer; and Allen Price, project designer. They go to work immediately with the hope that construction will begin in the fall of 1973. If all goes well, the college will be occupied by the fall of 1974.

The College Council gives the architects a number of clearly defined goals which keep them occupied in the first few months. The architects must first assess the needs of the students, the faculty and administration to ensure that the shape of the new campus reflects the current and projected demands of the staff and students at the college. The Council wants the new campus to "complement academic aims and relate to all the people of the region" as well being "adaptable to growth and change". In addition, it must be constructed at a reasonable cost since the rate-payers of the college region must foot 40% of the bill. During May of 1971 the architects hold extensive meetings with administration, faculty and students at the college. Community groups are also interviewed and invited to make suggestions in these early planning stages.

In June, the Area Chairmen submit their specifications, which outline their philosophies and physical facility requirements. The architects compile all of this information and make a document which describes what the new facility is going to be like. This is reviewed and revised by the faculty. This document later becomes a basis for design work which comes some time later.

More information is gathered in the following months to establish a "direction" in the planning of the new campus. In September and October, 1971, the information is compiled and presented in a report entitled, "Malaspina '74 -- The Case for a New College Campus". In a summary of this paper, prepared by the architects, the direction of the college is described:

The "Direction" expresses the unique character of Malaspina College; its variety, its desire to involve itself with the whole community, its desire to be "inviting" and create a socially meaningful environment for the socially conscious student of today. We believe the design concept expresses this direction by proposing a collection of simple buildings, properly related, exposing to common view the exciting and outward looking activities of the college.

In addition to this description of the character that the new campus will take on, the report includes projected costs, proposed scheduling and arguments substantiating the need for a new campus.

This report is sent to the Department of Education for review in November. The department asks the architects to revise some of the area requirements of the college. In January, 1972 the

department also requests a physical proposal from the architects. They want to know more specifically what the area of the college will look like. It is at this time that the architects begin working on their rough designs for floor plans and site layout. An article which later appears in *The Navigator* gives a brief description of this design:

The basic concept of the campus is that of a pedestrian street dominated by a central square. The more exciting, social oriented buildings will face the street, functioning as windows to reflect the academic life of the buildings behind.

By this time, almost a year has passed since the college architects were appointed. During this period, they have done extensive planning, surveys, reviews and revisions. W.A.C. Bennett's government obviously wants more reviewing and revising to take place as is apparent when in the first months of 1972, the Department of Education creates the 4C Committee (the Consultative Committee on College Construction). This committee is responsible for ensuring that all colleges across B.C. have equitable educational standards and capital cost expenditures. It is this committee that will be reviewing the proposal made by Malaspina architects, Thompson, Berwick, Pratt and Partners.

Andy Soles, assistant superintendant of college and university affairs is on this committee. The Malaspina architects meet with him in the months of April and May at which time they present him with rough plans for all the proposed facilities and the methods and site plans that will be used in construction. Taking his suggestions into account, the architects further revise their plans. One of the issues that comes up is "flexibility". The department wants to be sure that the college plan will leave room to adapt to future needs without high expense. The architects take this into account as can be seen by their final concept of the college:

In essence, the concept is one of a series of small scale, low cost buildings, adaptable to known and unknown change. Any of the buildings may be altered within or expanded in a variety of ways to satisfy future needs without disrupting activities in other buildings.

In June, the 4C Committee meets and compiles a report on Malaspina to submit to the Deputy Minister of Education. Neither the architects or the college officials see this report but it is apparently quite favourable. The College Council has only to wait for approval from the government before they can go ahead with their financial referendum.

While they wait, a provincial election takes place and the Bennett government that they are working with loses to Dave Barrett's NDP government in September, 1972. Although the change in government delays the construction of the college further, it also brings some obvious benefits for Malaspina. In December the new Education Minister, Eileen Dailly, says that Victoria will soon assume total responsibility for capital funding of community colleges. This means that a financial referendum does not have to take place before construction can begin.

Building Blocks

During the first months of 1973 the college council is still trying to secure the surplus property at the Nanaimo Army Camp for the campus site. On July 10, 1973, the land is finally secured when the new NDP government decides to buy it and lease to the college. The next step comes in September when the Ground Breaking Ceremony takes place.

Present at this ceremony on September 7th as platform guests are:

Eileen Daily Minister of Education

Tommy Douglas Nanaimo MP

Don Hammond Chairman of Building Committee

Nancy Heath Local Senator

Dr. Roy MacMillan former Council Chairman

Frank Ney Mayor of Nanaimo

Dr. Opgaard President of College

Dave Stupich Minister of Finance and Agriculture

Jack Whitlam former Council Chairman

Beattie Davis, the Chairman of the College Council, acts as the MC for the event. The stage is a large flatbed trailer sitting in the middle of a grassy field. A backhoe is on hand to dig out the first mound of earth from the site. Eileen Dailly climbs on the machine and takes a symbolic first step in the construction of the campus.

After watching this event, a number of speeches are made. One man who never misses an opportunity to make a speech is Carl Opgaard. In his address to the crowd of some 300 people he says that in light of all the delays that they have faced, the presence of the Minister of Education clearly shows the government's commitment to the college:

Sometimes we begin to wonder if it's not like the boy who shouts 'wolf', because we say it so much and nothing really seems to happen that we can see. But here we have seen something happen and now we are confident that the Minister of Education will see to it, along with the members of the Treasury Board and others, that we do in fact have a campus which will serve the needs of this community.

In this case, Dr. Opgaard's optimism is not unfounded. Just over three months later, on December 20th, Order in Council No. 4367 is approved. This provides a maximum of \$9,042,690 in funds for the construction of certain core facilities for Malaspina College.

Phase I of college construction will consist of three separate packages. The first package includes the cafeteria/administration building and the Learning Resources Centre. The second and third packages each consist of three buildings. The second package includes the physics, math-chemistry and environmental sciences buildings. The music, drama and art buildings make up the third package. In January of 1974 the architects have completed the working drawings for the first package and begin working on the second group of buildings. College officials are now hoping to have the first of these buildings completed by the fall of 1975.

In January, the architects meet with college officials and representatives concerned about accessibility for physically challenged persons. It is decided that the college campus should be designed with these concerns in mind. Mr. Douglas Wilson, the director of rehabilitation services for the Canadian Paraplegic Association of B.C., is at the meeting. He calls this step a "real breakthrough":

Vancouver is the only city in Canada with legislation requiring public buildings to make provision for accessibility to handicapped people. We are pleased that Malaspina is voluntarily accepting these principles.

The architects make plans to have wider doorways, ramps, level parking areas, and elevators to make the campus fully accessible.

In February the college applies to the provincial government for permission to go to bid on the first two buildings. The site preparations for these buildings had been completed earlier in the year. The plans for the second package are well under way. At the same time discussions are being held to plan the music, drama and art buildings. The college invites community groups, students, faculty and staff to participate in these discussions. Mike Matthews is the drama instructor at the college during this time and takes part in these planning sessions. Today, he recalls the situation:

It was a big deal to plan for the new campus and that absorbed a lot of energy. I liked the college at the old campus. It was a solid building with nice high ceilings. It was OK. But for doing theatre at the old campus, we just had this one big room. Someone said it was the laundry room for the old hospital. It was a separate little building outside. It had a flat floor, so in no sense adequate for theatre, but because it was a large space we used it. I think it was called room 101. We were all really excited with the prospect of a new campus that would have a real theatre, real labs and a real library. So it wasn't just a matter of developing courses and hiring people. We were also getting ready to move to a place that would accommodate us. I had a lot of input because I was one of the only theatre people around at that time.

It is hoped that all of these planning stages will be complete by the time summer arrives.

On March 5, 1974 the college council is excited to announce that approval to go to tender for construction of the first two buildings has been given by the Province. Don Hammond, the new

Chairman of the council says, "full credit for getting Treasury Board approval must go to Dave Stupich...[he] pressed hard on behalf of the college and we are grateful for his help." The amount approved for the construction of the cafeteria/administration building and Learning Resources Centre is \$2,826,086. The tenders will be opened on April 25th and it is hoped that construction will begin on May 1st.

A week later, Malaspina has also received approval of a \$1,121,366 expenditure for sitework and services at the new campus. This will include drainage, grading, roads and parking, exterior lights, etc. This means a total expenditure of \$3,947,452 has now been approved. Tenders for sitework and services will also open on April 25th.

Just when things seem to be going extremely well, another obstacle presents itself. When tenders are opened on April 25th, only one bid is submitted and it is more than \$1 million higher than the Department of Education's estimate. The bid, of \$5,311,258, is submitted by Dawson & Hill Limited. This bid includes all site work and services but is still much too high to consider. Don Hammond suggests that the situation "can be blamed on the uncertainty about skilled labour and price of materials." He says the "contracting firms are uncertain about rapidly increasing prices."

As a result of this single bid, the council turns to the government to look for possible alternatives. In May, the government and the college council have decided to re-tender the contracts for the new campus after hiring a construction manager. The college must find a company that will provide services which include scheduling, estimating and tendering and carrying out all management duties on the construction site. The council makes May 30, 1974 the closing date for construction management proposals.

In late June the task is done. Concordia Management Company, Vancouver, takes on the job with the lowest bid entered. Their bid is \$265,000 whereas the highest bid of the eight submissions is \$622,000. This company has much experience in similar ventures and the council has great confidence in the choice they have made. One of the first duties of the company is to negotiate contracts with the trades involved in building the new campus in conjunction with the architects.

Concordia Management appoints Charles Muir as their manager of the project and in August, 1974, he moves to Nanaimo. The Council appoints Ab Fast as the owner's representative. He will be housed on the site to keep careful watch over the progress of campus construction.

By mid-August, almost \$2 million in contracts for site work and services have been awarded and all of them have come within the budget set by the Department of Education. At the end of August, the contract for excavation and foundation work on the cafeteria and Learning Resources Centre (LRC) is put up for tender. On September 6, 1974, D. Robinson Construction Ltd. of Nanaimo is awarded the \$554,480 contract.

After more than three years of planning and preparation, site work for the first buildings begins on September 12, 1974. At this point, the council is not sure what to expect, but they hope that the college can occupy its new campus early in 1976.

When construction begins, the combined cost for the cafeteria and the LRC is set at \$4,559,751. In the fall the fair weather conditions allow for quick progress in the construction of the first two buildings. By November 15th the foundation walls of the LRC are 60% complete and the walls for the cafeteria/administration building are 25% complete.

With the first package underway, the Council turns their attention to the next step. At the end of 1974 they submit a cost-saving budget to the government for the next group of buildings. This group now includes physics, math-chemistry, humanities, environmental sciences and lecture seminar buildings. On January 22, 1975, the council's building committee meets with Nanaimo MLA's, Bob Strachan and Dave Stupich, to press for further building funds. The committee is asking for an amount in excess of \$6 million for construction of the next group of buildings. This will put them over their allotted amount of \$9,042,690 provided by the Order in Council. All planning is complete for this package and the Council only needs approval of funding from the government before going to tender.

On Valentine's Day in the following month, the Council receives an unexpected shock. The government makes a \$1.6 million cutback to Malaspina's proposed building fund. Capital funds after the cutback will be \$10.25 million. Education Minister, Eileen Dailly, says she will try to get a new Order in Council for this amount.

Although this proposed sum is more than the original amount that the College was allowed, it calls for some drastic restructuring in the building plans. Two of the proposed buildings (lecture-seminar and humanities-social sciences) will be eliminated from the plan. Two other buildings will be reduced in size (art building and gymnasium). The two-floor art building will now be a one-floor building and the gymnasium facility faces huge cuts in funding.

In addition to the \$10.25 million, \$2.1 million more is needed to furnish and equip the new buildings, to pay the architect and management fees, and to pay moving costs. This will bring the amount needed to \$12.34 million. As always, Dr. Carl Opgaard is optimistic about the funding cutbacks. He says, "some day funds will be available. It will depend on our enrolment, on planning for new programs and on financial ability of the province."

Eileen Dailly is successful in getting the new Order in Council passed and on April 30, 1975, construction work is begun for the second group of college facilities. The estimated cost for the math-chemistry, physics and environmental sciences buildings is about \$2.5 million.

By late August, the first two buildings are almost completed. On September 11, 1975, there is an informal preview of the new facilities with members of the College Council and Malaspina faculty on hand to answer questions. After seeing the new campus, a Daily Free Press reporter

seems to be impressed: "the campus buildings are all low profile and have been designed to make the best use of the spectacular views and to harmonize with their hillside location."

On October 18, exactly 6 years after the college officially opened on Kennedy Street, the new campus has its official opening. Many guests attend this ceremony held in the new cafeteria, including Eileen Dailly and Tommy Douglas. In a short moving speech, Douglas takes the opportunity to give credit to all the people who worked so hard to make the college a reality:

This is undoubtedly a milestone in the educational development of this area...This project, when it is completed, will stand as a monument to men and women who had the capacity to dream dreams and see visions. The human race advances because there are people who can see beyond the lean horizon of their years, people who dare to believe that things can be done...Humanity has always benefitted from people who believe that certain things are not impossible...George Bernard Shaw has one of his characters say, "Some people see things as they are and ask 'why?' I see things as they ought to be, and ask, 'why not?'" We are grateful today for the people who saw things here as they ought to be and said, 'why not?'

After the speeches are finished Charles Muir, the project manager, turns over the keys for the administration building to Eileen Dailly. She then proceeds to open the doors and officially open the new college.

By November 21, the second package of buildings is well under way and the third package has been started. Also by this time, 75% of the roads and parking lots have been paved. Construction on all of these buildings continues throughout the spring and summer of 1976.

In the summer, however, a construction workers' dispute arises and construction halts for some time. History repeats itself when classes begin and the buildings aren't quite finished yet, just as it was in 1969 when the college opened amidst the disarray of renovations at the old hospital. In fact, in the first weeks, the board room was being used as an impromptu classroom as a result of the unfinished construction. In the fall of 1976, after five and a half years of planning and building, the Kennedy Street group moves into the promised land of the new campus. Now begins a new era in the history of Malaspina College.

Under One Umbrella.

Just over a year after Malaspina College officially opens there is news that it may undergo a major expansion. To be more exact, they may partake in a "melding". In the fall of 1970 at the B.C. Trustees Convention, the Minister of Education, D.L. Brothers says, "At the present time, we are studying the feasibility of combining the vocational school at Nanaimo with Malaspina College. If this can be done successfully, this program will be extended to other colleges which are in close proximity to vocational schools." The council at Malaspina gives their approval of

this proposed melding with the Vocational Training School. However, some of the faculty and students at the College are at odds with the suggestion. The administration from both institutions have already begun to attend joint meetings so that they will be able to familiarize their respective faculties with the other institution's programs.

Early in the following year, Brothers specifies that the proposed amalgamation of the two post-secondary institutions in Nanaimo is scheduled to take place on April 1, 1971. Of course, Nanaimo will not be the only place affected by the proposal. Brothers announces that it will be government policy "to combine where possible, the provincially-operated vocational schools with adjacent regional colleges." The meld is intended to produce the following benefits: it will give students a wider choice of programs, it will reduce the burden of the tax payers; and it will eliminate any duplication of courses between the two institutions.

The meld taking place in Nanaimo is viewed by the Department of Education as a "pilot-project" to see if such an action can succeed. It is to be viewed as a "limited amalgamation" and can break at any time in the next three years. Andy Soles, the newly appointed assistant superintendant of college and university affairs, is to watch over the project. He says, "since I will be in Victoria, it means that I will be able to keep in closer contact with developments that occur here (in Nanaimo)." In the event that a full amalgamation does take place, Carl Opgaard will preside as the administrative head of the two institutions.

Some of the students at Malaspina feel that the two schools are only very loosely related, so an ad hoc student committee is formed. They plan to circulate a petition around the college, the VTS, and the community to oppose the meld. Some of the faculty also feel doubtful about the joining the two institutions. However, at this time, the meld is not extremely salient in everyone's mind since the two campuses are still miles apart.

How do the people at VTS feel about the situation? Do they welcome it or do they feel a little bit threatened as some of the college staff do? Oliver Neaves, the Secretary-Treasurer of the College at the time, recalls how he saw it:

I had some sympathy for vocational and technical training because in Whitehorse, I was working at a vocational and technical institute. So personally this amalgamation didn't have any impact on me. The vocational staff were concerned about being overwhelmed by the academics and the academics were concerned that the vocational school would be favoured too much. So, there was that kind of friction.

Although these seem to be the general feelings floating in the air, not all of the staff are thinking this way. Donna Pearce comes from Victoria to start teaching at VTS in September, 1969. She is about to begin the first dental assistant program on Vancouver Island and is quite excited. When she hears about the meld, she has quite a different reaction:

There was great fear and trepidation amongst all of the vocational instructors when I came. I couldn't understand it; I was new and I didn't know what was going on. The first or second week I was here, there was a big party and it was called "The Melding Party". The party was meant to bring the academic and vocational faculties together with Dr. Opgaard. We were going to celebrate and I thought it was wonderful. I didn't know about all of the undercurrents, so I was just really pleased with what was happening. It wasn't until a few months later that I got to know how some people felt here...They didn't feel any connection (with Malaspina) and of course then, there was no physical connection because the academic faculty were still on Kennedy Street and we were here.

VTS did not have a president or a dean at the time. Instead, they had a principal -- Mr. Ray Hindle. Pearce recalls how he felt about the meld: "He was very protective and possessive of his vocational training programs. I think when he heard that there would be a meld with the academic and technical programs, it was rather upsetting to him."

However, some of the staff do feel that there is a connection between the two institutions. One such person is Ed Higgins. Ed was in the first commercial accounting class at VTS in 1964. When he began work in 1969 he formed one of the first bonds between the two institutions. He remembers his first days:

I began work when Malaspina College started down at the old Hospital in 1969. I was only working on a part-time basis...I was working for the vocational school but I was being paid and was hired by Malaspina College in the very first year they opened. It was for a five or six month period to teach bookkeeping to commercial secretaries. I taught over here for the vocational division, but I was on contract with Malaspina College. Then I left for six months and when I came back I was hired by the provincial government through the B.C. Vocational School. That was in October of 1970. I've been here ever since.

In the melding of the two institutions, some saw their similarities and thought it could work. One of these people was Dr. Carl Opgaard. Others were skeptical about the proposal because of the different approaches to education. Donna Pearce explains:

I don't know whether you can ever take a pre-employment philosophy and integrate it with an academic philosophy, which is to perpetuate learning. We are preparing people with skills for a job and that is where they go when they leave here. It's a different philosophy, but I'm not saying that this doesn't mean that we're one faculty. Why can't we have different philosophies and still live under one umbrella?

Indeed, why not? Today the academic, technical, and vocational divisions fall under the same banner of Malaspina College, making it a truly comprehensive institution. And, of course, with the addition of upper division academic courses there is one more layer of philosophy added to the mix.

Bob Lane, as an academic instructor at the College, thinks that having vocational classes makes it a more well-rounded institution. Although the meld is, as he calls it, a "shotgun marriage", he believes that the situation has potential:

From the very beginning, the word "comprehensive" has been a part of our definition. A comprehensive community college which included vocational, academic, technical, and continuing education; the whole gamut of stuff. There are a number of positive things about the comprehensive community college that need to be remembered. There has always been this ideal in my mind of the academic student who takes vocational classes and vice versa. There really ought not to be a barrier between the two faculties. Art students taking welding, welding students taking philosophy - that sort of approach.

Bob Riddell is not aware of any barrier. At the time, he is working at VTS as an instructor in the Basic Logging Program which he helped to create some years earlier in 1965. To him the amalgamation is not at all threatening. Today he recalls, "the melding didn't affect us at all because the B.C. Vocational School was already in place. This is one of the oldest schools of its type." And so it is. When the meld takes place, Malaspina College gains 500 students and 35 years of educational history. Today, over 20 years later, the Vocational Division of Malaspina College is almost 60 years old.

History of the B.C. Vocational School.

The first vocational school in Nanaimo is started in 1936 and is called the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training School. This is also the first vocational training school to be opened in British Columbia. The venture is a joint effort by the Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce and a Nanaimo garage operator, Jack Macready. The school is opened in an old stable donated by the city, on the site of what is now the Franklyn Street Gymnasium. The converted shop has neither heat nor plumbing. An oil drum with donated wood is the only source of warmth.

For the first three years, Automotive Mechanics and Building Construction are taught for 11 month periods. Students who show proficiency in either of these trades are allowed to leave early to enter into the work force. There are 3 employees at the school at this time: Jack Macready teaches Automotive Mechanics; Mr. D. Egdell teaches carpentry; and Mr. N. Bilton maintains the tools and the facilities. The instructors are started at \$125 per month.

When WWII starts, the school is closed down and Jack Macready goes to King's Road School in Victoria to teach mechanics for the Armed Forces. He does this until the end of the war in 1945. When he returns to Nanaimo, the school re-opens with the shop and offices in an old army garage on the west end of town.

Although the school's finances are provided by the federal and provincial governments, the courses are in large part dictated by the logging industry. The courses offered at the second

opening are: Automotive Mechanics; Two-Cycle Engine Repair and Maintenance; and Chain Saw Repair and Maintenance. Some students are operators being trained or upgraded in diesel power to work for General Motors.

In 1948, the government invests money in the school and creates an administration, with Jack Macready as the Principal. About \$23,000 is spent on equipment to set up an experimental program with 50 students who have graduated from Island high schools. They will learn Heavy Duty Mechanics, Diesel, and Mechanical Logging methods. The students will be taught in realistic work settings so that they will be well prepared for employment when they graduate. Although this program doesn't generate much interest locally, its success is evident by the national and international attention that it attracts. Educational authorities from the U.S., London, and Nigeria come to Nanaimo to observe the facilities and the methods used at the school.

In 1956 the school introduces more new courses. The Heavy Equipment Operator's Course is one of these. Mrs. K. Brodie, who wrote a brief history of VTS, mentions how the students of this course directly contributed to the community:

To utilize labour and equipment, they became builders of logging roads, and over the years they have relieved local government of heavy expense by levelling land and building roads at Exhibiton Park, Westwood Lake Resort, Nanaimo Golf Course, the grounds for local elementary and secondary schools, Nanaimo Regional District Hospital, baseball and football fields, as well as clearing forest fire lanes.

In the same year, a Welding School was another addition to the Nanaimo Vocational Training School. This course attracted many students, as it was necessary for all welders who worked on the Peace River Gas Pipeline to pass their test at the school in Nanaimo. By this time, the school has grown substantially from its humble beginnings in 1936. There are now 7 instructors and 115 students.

In 1959, Mr. J. Hindle is appointed as the new Principal of the school. Under his leadership, the school continues to grow in both enrolment and courses. These included: Basic Accounting; Beauty Culture; Diamond Drilling; and Cook Training. These and many other courses make Nanaimo's Vocational Training School a very respectable and diversified educational institution.

When it is mentioned in 1970 that VTS may meld with Malaspina College, VTS has about 75 staff members and an annual enrolment of over 1,500 students. The "marriage" has been beneficial to the community and to the institution.

Other changes, other challenges

On September 9, 1974 faculty at Malaspina vote for certification under the Labor Relations Act. The Malaspina College Faculty Association is certified by a vote of 66 to 2 out of 84 members who were eligible to vote including instructors, librarians, counsellors, technicians, and the

registrar. Jim Slater, chair of the certification committee, says, "our relationship with the college council has always been excellent but as the pattern of collective bargaining in the colleges became more formal, certification was needed to protect the integrity of our bargaining unit against intrusion by other provincial unions; the result of the vote will be forwarded for approval to the Labour Relations Board."

There were also changes in administration. Gary Bauslaugh comes from the College of New Caledonia to Malaspina College in May, 1974, to take up the position of Dean of Instruction. There are three deans at this time: Pat Wapple, the Dean of the Vocational Division, Bob Young, Dean of Students, and Gary Bauslaugh, Dean of Instruction. He attends meetings, conducts interviews, determines faculty workloads, works on program development, and is responsible for Adult Education programs in Duncan, Nanaimo, and Powell River. In an article for *The Navigator* he writes: "...I play music in my office. At least I do when I can get my hands on College tape recorders. The College A-V man is always giving me trouble over that; he keeps saying something about using them for teaching. I explained to him that I need something to take my mind off the I. W. (Isolation Ward), but he seems a stubborn man. I tried recording my tapes on the dictaphone but even Dylan came out sounding like dictation." He also says, "It may be difficult to define, but I know that I do something, because they pay me a living wage, and I work pretty long hours, and I don't have time to do many other things I would like to do. So I must be doing something."

New faces, new functions, and new challenges:

1. Fran Tait is appointed Native Student Educational Counsellor on August 1, 1974.
2. John Rostron, the Student Activities coordinator for the past three years (since 1970) becomes the college registrar, replacing John Buckingham on August 1, 1974; John Buckingham becomes the Continuing Education Director; George Mapson replaces John as Student Activities Coordinator.
3. Bob Young came from Selkirk College in 1971 to be Malaspina's first Dean of Student Services.
4. Cliff Hinton is the financial aid and placement officer beginning in 1973.
5. (73/74) Bill Holdom coaches the debating team.
6. (73/74) Ernie Jerome coaches badminton.
7. (73/74) Elizabeth Forfester coaches grass hockey.
8. (73/74) Yves Troendle is Foreign Students Advisor.
9. Ken Rumsby is the Head of the AV Department in Sept 1974.

10. Rob van de Wetering is the AV Technician in Sept 1974.
11. Di Littlewood is a Library Assistant in the AV Dept. in 1974.
12. Joanne Kelly is a Library Assistant in the AV Dept in 1974.
13. at the Annual General Meeting of the MCFA held on April 24, 1974, new officers are elected: Bert Kampers, President; Yves Troendle, Vice-President; Joe McPeek, Treasurer; Jeannette Matson, Secretary; others are Ken Lyall, Kevin Roberts, Bill Holdom, Ross Fraser, and Jim Slater.
14. Bob Young coaches golf (1974)
15. Alf McGuire coaches badminton (1974)
16. Bob DeBuysscher coaches volleyball (1974)
17. Dick Catton coaches soccer (1974)
18. George Mapson coaches rugby (1974)
19. Ron Apland coaches curling (1974)
20. Peter McMullan joins the staff coming to the college from the position of managing editor for *The Nanaimo Daily Free Press*; he begins on August 19, 1974 as Staff Assistant to the President (Information).
21. January, 1975 -- Ken Naylor, the chief instructor of automotive and heavy duty mechanics plans to work in the Yemen Arab Republic; he began working at VTS in Sept, 1962.
22. In Feb. 1975 there are 510 staff members (including vocational) at Malaspina College.
23. June 1975; Jim Slater is elected president of the College Faculty Federation; Ethel Nordvoll (Nursing) is elected president of the Society of Vocational Instructors of British Columbia.
24. Sept 22, 1975; provincial cabinet has approved an order-in-council transferring all department of education employees working at the college to the staff of the college, effective Sept. 30; they will no longer be public service employees; this is another step towards full amalgamation between the two institutions; a decision to transfer buildings and other assets over to the College has not yet been made.
25. November, 1975 the college council plans to meet with Deans of instruction (Bauslaugh), vocational studies (Pat Wapple) and student services (Bob Young); they want to set new

priorities to facilitate the budget guidelines imposed by Minister Dailly; in turn, the Deans will be looking for input from faculty.

26. November 21, 1975; faculty are angry at the College Council for accepting Dailly's guidelines so readily; Dale Lovick is the MCFA representative involved; a written summary is given to the press before a council meeting that says, "The college council is apparently prepared to accept the direct attack on the autonomy and integrity of the college that these guidelines represent."; the faculty wants to know if the council is willing to accept the "breaking of a negotiated collective agreement" by the provincial government; at a faculty meeting it was passed that a budget review committee with faculty representatives should be formed immediately.
27. On November 25, 1975, the College Council holds a closed-door meeting to discuss the faculty attack that was launched against them; Oliver Neaves says, "we are not prepared to comment at this time"; Carl Opgaard is on vacation and was not here when Eileen Dailly imposed her new guidelines for B.C. colleges; by Nov. 27, the Council is still silent about the issue. On November 29, 1975, the Council responds to faculty accusations when Oliver Neaves sends out letters to MCFA, CUPE, and BCGEU; the letter says, "we recognize the concerns of our faculty association with the college council. We have made a detailed examination of the brief, point by point, and cannot concur with the overall point of view expressed."; Dale Lovick says this is not an adequate response and that the response can be interpreted as the council "telling us to mind our own business and we'll talk to you when we're ready."
28. January 16, 1976; Jim Slater, president of College Faculties Federation of BC states his concern at the political intervention into college governance at Northwest Community College; he says, "the department indicated to the college council members that it was prepared to recongnize only two candidates for principal, although each council member had prepared a private list, and a final short list had been assembled from these. We question whether this procedure reflects the interests of the northern communities involved and whether the department has a right to impose personnel on the new college. If the recent decisions suggest expansion af departmental powers in this bery important area of academic decision making, the future of community colleges will be taken from the hands of locally elected members of the college councils."
29. In Feb. 1976, College Council joins Mid Island Public Employees Association (MIPEA) for contract negotiations with college employees; MIPEA was formed in the summer of 1975 to co-ordinate contract talks between six civic bodies and the respective unions; both MCFA and CUPE worry about the adverse effects of this joining; MCFA is concerned that the Association will not necessarily consider educational philosophy in negotiations.

30. October 1976, 3 people retire from Malaspina's vocational division; they are: Jack Brodie, assistant to the dean; Bill Murphy, head of the logging division; and Dorothy Patterson, nursing instructor.
31. Rich Johnston is the new assistant dean of vocational programs on October 12, 1976; he comes to the college from Nanaimo Manpower where he held the position of assistant manager.
32. Oct. 1976 Bill Holdom is MCFA president.
33. June 1981, Elizabeth Forrester is the head of the MCFA, Larry Stone is the head of BCGEU and Maxine Zurbrigg is head of CUPE; Rich Johnston is head of the vocational division.
34. Oliver Neaves retires as bursar on January 31, 1982; he was the first hired at the college; when talking about the old hospital, he says the first thing discovered was "a quarter-inch-thick layer of ice on the outside walls and floor of the building." He continues, "nevertheless we could see the building had potential and the board negotiated a lease."
35. In 1984, Jeanette Matson is associate dean of community education and student services; Maxine Zurbrigg is in the registration office.
36. In 1985 the faculty signed a contract agreeing to a 25% workload increase and a 2.7% pay reduction due to financial restraint.
37. In September 1986, Steve Lane is the head of the MCFA.

College and Community

Change, growth, and involvement in the community are three key features in the personality of Malaspina College since the beginning. Change resulted from a changing community with changing needs, growth seemed inevitable and constant, and since the communities served by the college were growing and changing it was certain that the changes would reflect inward and outward. In the fine and performing arts, for example, many community groups were alive and active long before the college arrived. But the arrival of the college had an impact on the cultural life of the region, and although not without some disruptions and difficulties, the cooperation developed between "town and gown" was quickly evident in co-productions and creative cooperations in the arts. An exchange of ideas and talent between The Nanaimo Theater Group and the College's Theater Department has over the years proved beneficial for all members of the community with improved productions, sharing of facilities, and joint efforts throughout the years.

One of the first performances on record is a reading theater production of Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* on Sunday afternoon, December 14, 1969, in old room 108 at the old hospital. The cast for the modified reading theater production was:

Jerry Maedel Mr. Martin

Peggy Mathias Mrs. Martin

John Wardel the Fire Chief

Ron Mumford Mr. Smith

Sharyn Pilotte Mrs. Smith

Suzanne Van den Heuvel Mary the Maid

The Sun (Vancouver, December 18, 1969) reviewed the production:

All of the readers did a good job. Their timing, volume, vocal quality, and ability to project were excellent, allowing for a smooth and polished performance.... John Wardill, as The Fire Chief, and Peggy Mathias, as Mrs. Martin, delivered standout performances. Each is blessed with an excellent voice (Peggy's is more feminine) and each used his voice to portray the parts of those two Ionesco characters.

A young Steve Lane was the lighting technician for the performance which was seen by just over fifty people.

It was a long way from those humble beginnings in a classroom, with a floor lamp providing all of the lighting, to the opening of the College Theater with a lavish production of Jean Anouilh's *Ring Around the Moon* on Friday, October 29, 1976, at 8:00 p.m. in the 298 seat, fully lighted, professional and instructional theater.

In those early years faculty were involved in night classes, off-campus classes, special events, faculty lectures and countless innovative projects. English instructor Ron Smith took a group of students to Europe for a semester of study in a project called Global Village. One of those students was poet John Marshall, who recalls the experience as "an important part of education for young people from Vancouver Island." Kevin Roberts taught a course in Native Studies, and a series of lectures entitled "Indians and Contemporary History", emphasizing local bands, begins at the end of September and carries on into October on Monday and Wednesday from 7-9:00. The lectures are taught by the Cowichan Band, introduced by the Chief Dennis Alphonse and his wife. Assistance is given by Kevin Roberts.

Bill Holdom drove a college car almost to Lake Cowichan to teach an English class. Morris Donaldson taught an evening course in Utopian Literature for community interest. Dale Lovick was involved in organizing many special events for college and community. Room 108 was the

location for many different events. Pulp Press poets came there to chant their poems, musicians, politicians, and business leaders came to share their experience and expertise. Friday nights were often the time for lively events either in Room 108 or in a local hotel auditorium. Lovick could be seen on most Friday nights carrying a large coffee pot off to the location for the night's event. Here are just a few items from various sources which give a flavour of the times:

- *Wednesday, September 11, 1974, Jacob Bronowski's much sought after "The Ascent of Man" is to be begin; free of charge at Rm. 108;*

- *between Sept and Dec 1974 Malaspina will run a number of seminars in varying communities: Hugh Ney "Management of Time" in Qualicum and Duncan; Dave Harrison "Readable Writing for Engineers" in Campbell River; Investors Clinic to be held in Nanaimo; Public Relations seminar in Nanaimo;*

- *Provincial Liberal leader and MLA for Victoria, David Anderson visits Malaspina College on Thursday, Sept. 3, 1974.*

- *Gary Geddes, Canadian Poet and anthologizer, visits Malaspina on October 24, 1974 to give a reading;*

- *Nov. 9, 1974, the 4th annual ceramics seminar is being held by the Malaspina art department; between 350 and 400 people are expected to attend.*

- *July 22, 1974: a series of archeology lectures is to begin at Malaspina in Room 108; the series was arranged by Anthropology instructor Ken Baxter and was done in association with the BC provincial museum.*

- *on October 12, 1976, the first performance in the new college theater is by a new Vancouver Quintet called "A Touch of Brass".*

- *a series of noon hour concerts begins in the music building on October 13, 1976, with college faculty member and singer Mariko Van Campen;*

- *the first play to be held at the new 298 seat Malaspina College Theater is to be Jean Anouilh's "Ring Around the Moon"; it opens on Friday, October 29, 1976 at 8:00 PM.*

A 1973 news release reports that "one of the most significant achievements has been the growth of the college's community service programs. Over the past year some 5000 people have participated in seminars, lectures, workshops, readings, clinics and other kinds of educational and self-improvement opportunities. The list of these offerings runs from seminars on the last federal election, buying and selling a house, theater company performances, musicians' workshops, to science and art seminars and many others including a series of eight

discussion/lectures on nuclear energy. This last series was related to the current controversy on Vancouver Island as to utilizing nuclear energy as a power source for developing needs."

In September of 1974, after a trial year of joint sponsorship, the Nanaimo Symphony Society votes to continue with the cooperative sponsorship of the symphony programs. The Symphony plus the Community Music School are closely linked with the College's Music Department and enrich the opportunities for music faculty and students.

"We had some terrific projects that sprang from joining the community initiative and the talents that were in the College - both within the student body and the faculty," remembers Joy Leach. We did a project under the umbrella of something called the Cole Tyee Society. It was a woman from the community coming forward to the college saying that the coal miners of Nanaimo were dying and we had not captured their stories. She urged us to work with the community to do that. We did this by enlisting the Old Age Pension Association to join with us to raise some funds. The end product was a very significant oral history collection of tapes of the old miners. It also produced the transcripts which led to Lynn Bowen's book called *Boss Whistle*. This in turn led to a second event which was the creation of a play, *Cole Tyee*, put on by the Malaspina College Theatre Department to full houses for an extended run. But it led to more than that. It led to the involvement of the miners and people from within the community to the extent that one of the individuals, Nicholas Plecas, who had been involved all the way along and had enjoyed so much the association with the college students and instructors that when he died he made the college the residual beneficiary of his estate. The Nicholas Plecas Scholarships are still given out."

The Navigator and Opportunities For Youth

Student government in the early years depends upon volunteers from the student body and from the faculty. From the beginning there is a tension between Student government and the student newspaper as can be seen in these excerpts from stories in the issues of the early 1970's:

- the Nav knocks poor student government; out of \$4,000 budget, \$3,000 went to clubs and sports groups, leaving very little other activities; two poorly attended dances were held; Lance Farrel, Social director turned some students away who were not dressed properly; Farrel suggests that student council members have their fees paid for them; most student government members have quit, there are only two remaining: Bert King, president, and Chris Calverly, vice-president.

- poor turn-out at student general meeting on February 3, 1972; only 58 out of a possible six or seven hundred show up.

- Memo Wars: newly appointed Dean of Student Services Bob Young sends a letter to the Navigator: "...support will continue only as long as the Navigator practices the ethics, duties and responsibilities of the regular press. This practice must also apply to the Omniverse [a literary supplement to the paper] if it is to receive financial and circulation support through the Navigator.

If you are unable to practice the ethics, duties and responsibilities of the regular press, then financial support will be discontinued."

- a memo from Bob Lane to Dean Young reads as follows: "As faculty advisor for the "Omniverse" I must protest your threatening letter to the student editors on these grounds: 1) The tone of the letter is demeaning and reactionary; 2) There are no facts given. What, specifically, are you objecting to?; 3) Before writing to the students, why didn't you talk with Dave and me?; 4) I thought Dr. Opgaard was directly responsible to the College Council. Has there been an organizational change that the faculty does not know of?; 5) What guidelines of taste are you alluding to? Remember Mr. Trudeau's famous "manger la merde" and his other expletive both made the papers and "MacLeans". To which century do your "guidelines" belong? 6) I saw a job opening in the AAJC for a dean of students."

- a response from Dr. B. Whittles who sends a letter to D. Harrison and R. Lane (CC: Navigator Staff, Dean Young, Dr. Opgaard, and Mr. Neaves); he also sends a letter to the Navigator telling them that he does not give them permission to print the letter; they print it: "...You seem to indicate that you are amazed that anyone would dare object to the style of the College newspaper. Well, stand by to be amazed again -- speaking strictly as a private member of the College Faculty -- I find this issue objectionable on several accounts. There are many who agree with me (both students and faculty) so perhaps your 'style' reflects the thinking of a smaller group than you would have us believe."; he objects to the personal attack against Dean Young on a resolved issue; he finds the poems by A. Mitchell objectionable; he overtly threatens to go to the College Council if the Navigator does not clean up its standards; he objects to the drawing on page 3 of the February issue; he objects to Bob Lane's items (1) and (6) of the previous memo; he does not believe that public funds should support this kind of newspaper.

It was an active and formative time for the student government and for the publications of the students. Problems of ethics, taste, autonomy, standards, censorship, and challenges to the new institution were all over the place. The responses were almost always rational.

Government programs intended to provide work experience for young people, under the name "opportunities for youth," were a part of the Liberal government's initiative to get students working and gaining useful experience for their future. Many college students were involved in the projects of the time and several of the projects were writing oriented. In 1972 a small magazine of poetry and fiction is first published with assistance from Opportunities for Youth. The editors, John Marshall and Steve Guppy, have gone on to writing and teaching careers. *Island #1* has works by Ken Cathers, Robert Kroetsch, Ron Smith, Lloyd Rollo, and others, with a cover drawing by Gretta Haworth of Parksville. The magazine, now a valuable piece of Canadiana, sells for \$1.00. It lives another seventeen years and becomes a respected West Coast publication, publishing a number of well known Canadian writers.

In the summer of 1974 Sharon Venne and Laurie Caron, both of whom worked on *The Navigator*, started a paper called *Path* (Public Action Towards Honesty). With the assistance of Marilyn Jeffrey, Mary Kolic, and Andrew Leone, the two young editors and activists created a tabloid size paper which reached over 3000 Island people urging honesty and accountability in public affairs. Often the students could be seen on the highways and back roads of the Island hitchhiking from place to place to deliver their papers.

Other Community Projects

Many projects are initiated by citizens who bring their ideas to the college and often get surprisingly quick responses. Here, in list form, are some of the joint projects or community links that are a part of the College's history:

- By December of 1974 mounting unemployment in the forest industry has prompted Dr. Opgaard and other Malaspina officials to talk to Manpower about starting a logging upgrading course to improve the situation.
- (Dec. 13, 1974) when the college moves to the Wakesiah campus, it has agreed to pay for one third of the water services supplied to the Harewood Area; the estimated cost was \$150,000.
- on July 1, 1974 Malaspina took over the duty of continuing education in Nanaimo, following trends in Cowichan and Parksville Qualicum.
- March 5, 1975 -- \$7,000 in bursaries and scholarships to be given out at Malaspina's first award ceremony, to be held at the Malaspina Hotel.
- September 15, 1975: Downtown Study Centre is opened through a cooperative effort by Community Employment Strategy group and Malaspina College; (the Centre first opened on a two day a week basis in October of 1974 to see if there was a need for it); the centre is opened for 12 months with the aid of a government grant of \$29,650 from Community Employment Strategy; the grant will end in August of 1976; there are 2 instructors and 1 advisor; Dave Harrison heads the centre; they operate out of Sunset Square on Victoria Road, offering adult tutoring (math, English, science, and general education), and basic skills training.
- September 25, 1975 - the Nanaimo branch of the Council of Women wrote Malaspina College in April requesting that they set up a course in law; the College responds and has the course set up by September.
- Sept. 1975 a course on digital electronic circuits is initiated as a result of a request by BCFP, Crofton Pulp and Paper Division; Can Manpower provides the bulk of the funding; BC Tel and Madill also interested in the course; in Feb. 1975 the first 3 courses have full enrollment.

- May, 1976; the college sponsors a ward vote discussion; a panel will discuss the current ward system used in Nanaimo; participating are: Ken Smith, Clarence Karr, John Buckingham, and Frank Ney.

- The Compass is put out at the 2nd Annual Vancouver Island Business Trade Show; it is a publication relating Malaspina College to the business community (before 1989).

- "For some time, Malaspina College has been assisting local economic development by working with small business through the Nanaimo Enterprise Development Centre. The NEDC confined its activities to small business counseling and did not operate outside of the Nanaimo region. Recently, the College decided to change the focus of the centre and to make it regional in scope. The Malaspina Centre for Economic Development is the result

"The Centre will concentrate on education and training. This will require close liaison with local business and industry to assure that programs are relevant to current needs. We are interested in hearing from all businesses that have training requirements. The centre will survey businesses in the region to establish a list of current requirements."

Full of Hot Air

In 1976 the gymnasium is scheduled to be built as part of phase 3 in the construction of Malaspina College. Also to be a part of this third phase in development, is the social sciences/humanities buildings. Unfortunately, this is a time of budget cutbacks and college development suffers as a result. The construction of the social sciences and humanities buildings is postponed until further funding is available. A lecture-seminar building cannot be constructed and the second floor of the art building will have to wait. Although the gymnasium is still going to be built, it absorbs much of the blow that the budget cuts make on the College. The gymnasium's original budget of \$1.3 million was to be used to build a conventional structure. After the cuts however, they are left with a mere \$394,000.

Since the College has articulated quite clearly that they plan to create a comprehensive community recreation and fitness program, it seems necessary to go ahead and build a physical recreation facility, despite the budget restraints that they are facing. The only viable alternative at the time is to go ahead with a less expensive but experimental technology. The answer comes to Malaspina in the form of a bubble. Before the decision is made to construct an air-support gymnasium, architect Allen Price and college physical education instructor Bob DeBuysscher visit a number of manufacturers and similar facilities in Eastern Canada and the US. Instead of griping about their economic situation, Malaspina proudly announces that they would build the largest air support structure west of the Rockies.

In an article from *Recreation Canada*, Alan Price says that "air structures are made from a flexible membrane suspended on a constantly moving volume of air." The only real advantage of this bubble-gymnasium will be its price. During this time of budget cuts, it is the only advantage that it needs to get the go-ahead. The final cost of the 2,600 square meter gym was about \$630,000. This is reasonable considering that a conventional structure of about the same size would have cost about \$1.5 million in 1976. Ultimately, it is this economic advantage that leads to the bubble being built.

Construction on the air support gymnasium is plagued by design difficulties and labor disputes. After a lengthy construction workers strike in the summer, work resumes on the gymnasium on Sept. 27, 1976. Due to these delays, students in Physical Education must hold their classes at many gyms and playing fields throughout Nanaimo. During this time, physical education schedules are chaotic and students have transportation difficulties. Fortunately, these inconveniences end when the gymnasium is completed in the spring of 1977.

All things considered, this gymnasium serves the College pretty well. However, there are a few minor problems. The first of the problems involves the mechanical backup system. This is the system that is supposed to work during power failures. Unfortunately, the system is not foolproof. Some years later, in 1979, BC Hydro reports 19 power failures in the area. With these circumstances, it is not surprising that many people regard this gymnasium only as a temporary structure.

The second problem with the bubble, is the high energy costs which result from its everyday operations. In an average year, the gym costs approximately \$50,000 for heating and maintenance. In the winter months there is much heat lost through the bubble's fabric. In the summer months, the bubble becomes a greenhouse. It gets so hot on the inside that it has to be temporarily closed down.

The last problem has to do with what is thought to be an underwater spring beneath the floors. The water will not drain away properly and the floor bulges in places where moisture accumulated.

Of course, there was one other small problem with the air supported structure. It collapses. In the same article in *Recreation Canada*, Alan Price says, "air structures can, in effect, be regarded as live buildings. They have a heart -- the inflation equipment that keeps the membrane floating on air; and a central nervous system -- the controls that modulate the internal building pressure." Well perhaps we would have to say that, in the violent storm of January 11, 1980, the gymnasium has a heart attack. Or is it just a nervous breakdown? The combination of snow piling up on the fabric-covering and a power failure, causes the gym to both collapse and get soaked.

The first time Peter McMullan (information director and public relations) hears of the incident is when the local radio station phones him up to ask questions. Needless to say, he is beyond

embarrassment when he has to tell them he knows nothing about it. He later sends a memo to the people at the physical plant entitled, "Re: Bursting of Bubbles", asking them to inform him of such things before the press does.

When he learns the details of the incident, he finds that the College is left with three options. One option is to simply repair the interior damage of the bubble and continue on as normal. Another option is to replace the entire bubble, since the fabric had a limited life span anyway. The last option, and the one which everyone is in favor of, is to build a conventional structure around the existing foundation and floor.

Eventually, it is this last option that is followed through. On November 19, 1982, the new gymnasium is officially opened. With the floor and end walls already completed, the remaining part of the new gym only comes to \$1.2 million. This gym has better luck than its "live" predecessor and is still with us today.

The History of the Madrona Exhibition Center (now the Nanaimo Art Gallery and Exhibition Center)

As Nanaimo grows in population, its need for culture also grows. This can be seen as early as December 4, 1969, when a symposium is held to determine the cultural needs of Vancouver Island with particular attention being paid to Nanaimo. At the meeting, there are representatives from the city, the press, and Malaspina College. The panel includes: Diane Einblau, Malaspina's sociologist; Dave Harrison of the MCFA; Frank Ney, the city mayor; Harry Moffat of the Daily Free Press; Roy Wright of the Navigator and others. Dave Lawford, the vice president of the Student's Association is noted as saying, "I don't want to see Nanaimo one big hamburger stand. Nanaimo has the potential of being a very cultural town. Instead, we have colored sidewalks and bathtub races. People think it's a clown town and it's corn."

Albeit not quite in these words, this opinion is shared by many people of the community. When the construction of Malaspina's new campus is approved in 1971, the plan is to have a gallery in the Fine Arts Complex. It is hoped that this will fill part of the cultural void that is said to exist in Nanaimo. However, as time goes on, it becomes clear that only one floor of the Art building will be completed and the gallery will not be included due to budget cuts. Initially, Gael Tower and John Charnetski in the Art Department are not pleased at all with this situation. Charnetski, a senior art instructor at Malaspina, wants to and does do something about the problem. He and some others begin to talk about what they think is a great idea. In fact, they make great efforts to arouse as much interest and support that they can gather for their idea.

Charnetski hears of some funding available through the Council On National Museum Policy. This federal organization, under a current program, will give grants to groups that want to build National Exhibition Centers. The timing seems perfect for Nanaimo and hope is not lost for the proposed gallery at Malaspina. Charnetski immediately goes to Dr. Carl Opgaard to suggest that Malaspina College send in a proposal for funding. The president gives him the go ahead.

They want to have a National Exhibition Center built on the campus when the College is going to be built. Charnetski believes that the mid-island is in dire need of this proposed cultural outpost. His argument is infallible, or so it seems:

The entire region of Vancouver Island north of Victoria suffers from what can only be described as cultural deprivation. In terms of facilities, Nanaimo, for instance, presently has no art gallery, no theater for live performances, no auditorium for events attracting large audiences and no civic center for public gatherings of any kind. Despite this, however, community groups, often in conjunction with the College, are making continuous efforts to sponsor and support cultural events such as theater production (now held in school gymnasias), symphony and choral concerts (in churches), art shows (in department store windows), and, not least, the annual West Coast Ceramics Seminar (in a church basement with the jury show set up in the local Credit Union offices!). The demand is here, the facilities are not.

In the early 1970's, no exhibition center exists on the Island north of Victoria. Charnetski feels that a facility is needed for the display of art, science, historical and Canadiana shows. Some of the organizations that can offer displays for Nanaimo are the Provincial Museum, the National Gallery of Canada, and the American Space Agency. The center will provide proper lighting, environmental control and security so exhibits that would otherwise bypass Nanaimo, can be here for people to enjoy.

In the proposal, it is argued that the college campus is the right place to build such a center. There were a number of reasons for this: first, the president and the College Council offer to pay the salaries of a number of part-time employees and a full-time curator; second, the College agrees to pay the operating costs of the center (this includes the janitorial and security services that will already exist at the college); third, there will be ample parking space; fourth, there will be qualified and experienced faculty in close proximity to give lectures and have evening discussions; and last, it is suggested that the exhibition center be adjoining the Fine Arts Complex of the College. In this way, the center could share the bathroom facilities and heating and ventilation costs with the complex. It is estimated that adjoining the center to the Fine Arts Complex could result in saving approximately \$38,000 in construction and landscaping costs for the center.

The building is to be built by the College architects, Thompson, Berwick, Pratt, and Partners, who estimate construction costs at \$35 per square foot. The center will be 3,600 square feet, making the costs about \$126,000. This is the amount that the College applies for from the National Exhibition Center Program in Ottawa. The application is made in January 1974. A few people put great amounts of work into the proposal. Mike Ridding represents them by making the final presentation to a committee out in Ottawa.

In March, 1974, the first application is officially rejected by the Consultative Committee for National Museum Policy. However, the Committee makes what they think is a promising suggestion:

The Board indicated, however, that a subsequent proposal for an Exhibition Center in Nanaimo would be entertained. Such a proposal would require the Exhibition Center to be autonomous to the administration of Malaspina College and located closer to the Center of the Nanaimo community.

If the Exhibition Center is not connected to Malaspina College, the cost for building and maintenance will be considerably higher. It is not likely that the extra money needed for such a venture would be easily found.

Tommy Douglas, Nanaimo's Member of Parliament at the time is extremely helpful in eventually securing the Exhibition Center at the College. He writes to the Committee two months after they had sent out their rejection to Malaspina College. He explains to them the reasons why their suggestion is not feasible. The Committee makes this response to his letter:

The present unavailability of a site for the Exhibition Center in the City itself and the fact that parking facilities are virtually unobtainable in the downtown center could justifiably be put to the Board so that they can decide if they wish to reconsider their decision.

And so it goes in the beginning stages. It takes three tries and some years of persistence, but they finally get a grant for the Exhibition Center on December 2, 1975. The grant comes from the Museum Assistance Program of the National Museums of Canada and it is directly approved by the Secretary of State. Charnetski recalls that it took "a lot of help from Tommy Douglas...[and] a lot of help from the Victoria Art Gallery and the Vancouver Art Gallery, who sent in letters of support." Letters of support were also sent in by BC universities.

The grant that they finally get is for \$125,000. This is definitely good news, but it is only a start. By the time they get the grant, the cost of instruction has increased. In addition, it is decided that the center will be a separate entity from the Fine Arts Complex. Taking these factors into account, there isn't enough money to build the center. The amount that will be needed now is about \$225,000. Now that the grant has been approved, John Charnetski is appointed acting curator and project coordinator in addition to his teaching duties.

More money for the center can be obtained through a grant from the Province. The College will apply for further assistance from the provincial government's recreational facilities fund. This fund will provide up to one-third of the money that the College raises for the construction of building. In effect, the amount that they apply for is contingent on the amount that they have already raised.

A board is formed to determine how to go about raising more money for the center. This is a community group that includes representatives from city council, school board, parks and recreation commission, college council, Chamber of Commerce, region district art councils, as well as some faculty and students from the College. This group will meet for the first time on December 13, 1975. Towards the end of December they find out that the College must make its application to the Province by February 1st in the following year. This leaves them about one month come up with additional funds and to put the application together.

Further to these two grants, the representative board intends to make a public appeal for donations from the community. On January 11, Charnetski says, "we have to raise \$25,000 from interested people within the community. And the big headache is that we have to have the money or equivalent pledges by the end of the month." By this time they have already sent out 200 letters to professional people and businesses to explain the position that they are in an to request support for their cause.

The board has also introduced a patronage and life membership scale to raise money. By January 11, \$1000 has been raised through these means. The patronage scale entitles donors to lifetime membership benefits. The charter membership is cheaper, but the benefits will expire on January 31, 1980. Four days later, on January 15, 350 personal letters have been mailed out describing membership opportunities. At this time, \$3000 has been raised. On January 20, 28,561 copies of a pamphlet outlining the plans for the center and soliciting funds, are mailed to residents from Qualicum to Chemainus.

Generous donations from the Bank of British Columbia (\$2000), the City of Nanaimo (\$1000), and Robinson Construction (\$1000) help bring the amount up to \$9000 by January 21. The board is very excited and encouraged by the immediate response of the public. If the \$25,000 is raised in time, the board will be able to apply for up to \$75,000 from the Recreational Facilities Fund. This will bring them up to the proposed total of \$225,000.

One member of the community contributes to the fund-raising in his own way. Maurice McEndree, project sponsor of the new Nanaimo Video Programming Group, volunteers to organize a 24-hour telethon to be screened on Channel 10 from 5 p.m. January 30 to 5 p.m. January 31. Mirror Productions of Nanaimo, Malaspina College, and Nanaimo Communications Society offer McEndree assistance in setting up the telethon.

By this time, more than \$1,000 a day is coming into the fund from the community. On January 24, the half way mark is passed when the Departure Bay Recreation Center Society donates \$1,001. At this rate, the goal of \$25,000 will be reached in time to make the February 1st application.

Sure enough, on January 30, the funds have reached \$29,006. The representative board is ecstatic at having raised \$4,000 over their proposed amount. With the telethon still to come, the board sets a new goal of \$40,000. With more money from the public, they can apply for more money from the Recreational Facilities Fund. The extra money will allow for more and better facilities at the new exposition center.

Peter MacMillan, the staff assistant to the president at Malaspina College, is on the representative board and is very pleased with the response to the appeal. He says, "it's almost representative of a cultural backlash in this community...The general feeling is 'this is what is we need in Nanaimo.'"

That night the telethon is held and is very successful. Today, Charnetski recalls the excitement:

Shaw Cable had just started, so we did an all-night telethon. They had never done anything like it and we had never done anything like it, but people came out of the woodwork just to perform. It was marvelous. We had kids come in, going on television saying, 'this is my pay for my paper route for the last month. Would you take this?' It was really just incredible. There were service organizations getting on the bandwagon just overnight! We didn't know what the hell we were doing, so maybe that's why it worked.

After the night is over, \$39,573 has been raised for the Center. This will bring the present total to \$164,573, allowing the board to apply for up to \$82,286 from the Recreational Facilities Fund. Peter MacMillan and John Charnetski head down to Victoria in the beginning of February to submit a budget for a proposed center costing \$246,859.

They find out that this funding can only support non-profit societies. So, to nobody's surprise, a non-profit society is formed. The money is applied for through the Madrona Exhibition Center Society. The society is largely composed of the same members who were on the representative board.

The funding is approved on August 19th in a letter from Grace McCarthy, the Minister of Recreation and Travel. Everyone at the college and in the community is extremely pleased to hear this. Dr. Opgaard comments:

Obviously, the government saw the per capita contribution of almost \$1 per person to our appeal as a very direct emphasis of this need, and we are naturally delighted at the response from Victoria.

The contracts for the building are put out in November and construction begins in December of 1976. The building is completed late in 1977. The building is initially called the Madrona Center but the name is later changed to the Nanaimo Art Gallery and Exhibition Center.

For almost twenty years now, this building has been serving Malaspina College and the surrounding communities in a number of ways. The banners which decorate the streets of

Nanaimo every summer are sponsored by the Center and local merchants. The Autumn Showcase at held at the Center is a juried competition organized by the Nanaimo Arts Council. Artists sponsored by the Center visit more than 50 schools in central Vancouver Island districts. "Progressions" is an art show which uses the Center to display the work of students in the Visual and Applied Arts Program at Malaspina. Faculty from this program also have frequent exhibitions to show their work. The Center sponsors another program whereby the public can rent art by the month.

The Nanaimo Art Gallery and Exhibition Center has been serving thousands of people each year since it opened and continues to do so today. Perhaps the building hasn't made Nanaimo the cultural hub of the Island, but it certainly has made exhibits of art, science, and history more accessible to residents in the surrounding communities.