



## IDEAS FOR FUTURE ARTICLES

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Institute fast adapting to the new world of health and social care

At its 2006 annual general meeting held in a House of Commons committee room, IoW national chair Austin Griffiths explained how the Institute was seeking to adapt to the changing world of health and social care.

This, he said, meant broadening the membership base into new professional groups and into a broader

range of organisations.

Measures were also being taken to reduce expenditure, he said.

As well as a new and more economical format for *Welfare World*, cost-cutting steps included selling the lease of the Birmingham office. An interested party is already in negotiations.

Austin also told members

that the Board were actively exploring opportunities for attracting additional income from the accreditation of welfare-related training courses.

The meeting was informed that two new members had joined the Institute's board - Lisa Davies and Keith Osborne (for full details, see page 2).

## C&G outlines proposals for a new bridging award to open door to higher education

How City & Guilds is proposing to transform the Institute of Welfare's former diploma qualification into a 'bridging award' for candidates aiming to make the transition into higher education was a key theme discussed at this year's annual general meeting.

Jackie Richards, from C&G, outlined how it was planned to meet the challenge of preparing students for the practical and cognitive skills required at the higher level.

The intention, she explained, was for the new award to be jointly badged by both C&G and ILM. Three units would cover:

**1. Research, Analysis and Study Skills:** This unit would develop candidates' ability to undertake self-directed study and research, evaluate sources and organise information to inform a structured and logical argument.

**2. Communication and Presentation Skills:** This



unit would develop their ability to work collectively with others, engage actively with and lead others in debate and discussion of events, ideas and practices, record and present information, and use ICT to record, analyse and present information.

**3. Personal Development and Reflective Learning Skills:** This unit would develop their ability to recognise how their own beliefs, values and attitudes affect their experiences of the world, and to use logical reasoning and reflection to

make sense of their experiences.

The award will be designed to fit at new NQF level 4, and might be expanded to a certificate with three further units, probably sector-based (e.g., Management of Welfare).

Importantly, in accrediting new awards the QCA expects that they will be able to offer opportunities for progression to further learning, qualifications and work.

Members of the Institute with any comments on these ideas are invited to write to *Welfare World*.

## New faces on the Institute of Welfare Board

### Keith Osborne: occupational health welfare adviser and counsellor for Metropolitan Police

**Keith Osborne is an occupational health welfare counsellor for the Metropolitan Police, which he describes as 'a demanding and yet enjoyable job'.**

Keith told *Welfare World*: "The work is very varied, as we provide a one to one counselling service and a trauma debriefing programme. In addition, we offer stress awareness training. I have a further specialism as a skilled level

money adviser."

Previously, Keith was a welfare officer for the Central Office of Information and manager of an occupational health unit for the London Borough of Havering.

As far as his joining the Board of the Institute is concerned, he said: "I was honoured to be approached and look forward to contributing to the ongoing development of the Institute."

He is happy to hear the views and

comments of the Institute's members. Anyone wishing to follow up this invitation can contact him on 020 8358 1883 or at keithossie@aol.com.

Keith, who is married with a 13-year son, is mad about sport, especially supporting QPR (as a WBA supporter, the editor won't hold this against him). He (Keith, that is) is also a qualified pond warden.

### Lisa Davies: freelance consultant with a wealth of experience in the welfare sector and a long association with the Institute

**Lisa Davies is a Fellow of the Institute of Welfare, with which she enjoyed a long and fruitful association.**

She originally gained admittance to membership as a student on the diploma course in Salford.

Today, she works as a freelance consultant and volunteer in the welfare field and hopes to put her vast practical experience to work in helping to develop the future role of the Institute.

Interestingly, her husband Martin - a chartered engineer by profession - has already fulfilled a welfare role over the past 12 years as a specialist money adviser for the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Lisa herself started off in the business world. Before launching her long career in the welfare field, she had been a manager in an airline business where, she says, she recognised the importance



and value of 'being accountable'.

Lisa became the first member of the Institute to practise her profession on a freelance basis. She and Martin operate as Highfield Associates from their base in Llangedwyn near Oswestry on the Shropshire-Wales border.

Lisa is only too well aware of the

changing world in which the Institute has now to operate.

"Over the years, the Institute has fulfilled a largely educational role," she told *Welfare World*. "But that has had to change. We must now try to benefit from our partnership with City & Guilds and to develop and expand our membership function."

Lisa is very interested in occupational benevolent funds and the contribution they can make to individuals from different professional backgrounds who are experiencing difficulties in their lives.

She would like to hear from other members of the Institute who have knowledge and practical experience in this field. She can be contacted at caeuchaf@btinternet.com.

### Institute to accredit equality and diversity training courses

No one who attended the Institute of Welfare's annual education conference in Guildford in 2001 will forget the inspirational presentation given by Trevor Gordon on the theme of equality and diversity. It must truly rank as one of the most thought-provoking events in the Institute's history.

Since then Trevor, who was a college vice-principal, has established himself as a successful freelance educator and consultant, trading as Trevor Gordon-French Associates Ltd.

Recently, Trevor approached the Institute to inquire whether we would be prepared to accredit three of his one-day equality training courses. *Welfare World* can report that, following the normal processes, accreditation has been granted.



# News from the Greater London Centre...



A seminar on domestic violence was organised for members of the Institute of Welfare Greater London Centre on 16th March 2006. Presented by Dot Holmes and Irene Aherne (pictured above), who work alongside the Metropolitan Police, the session addressed a number of key issues that welfare officers may find themselves having to deal with.

## What counts as 'domestic violence'?

The definition used by the Association of Chief Police Officers is: ***"Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender"***.

## How big a problem is domestic violence?

So how widespread is it? The statistics are frightening:

- 1 in 4 women have experienced DV in their lifetime.
- 1 in 9 women will have experienced domestic violence in the past year.
- On average, a victim seeks help from up to 12 agencies before finding the right support service.
- Survivors on average experience up to 35 assaults before seeking help.
- DV accounts for a quarter of all recorded violent crime in England and Wales.
- DV is more likely to result in injury than any other types of assault.

The most obvious form of abuse is physical, but there are many others, including:

- emotional and psychological abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- financial abuse (depriving the other person of money);
- keeping the other person in isolation (separated from family and friends and with their movements controlled).

## How can the counsellor help?

When hearing an abuse victim's story, it is important to listen and be non-judgemental, as disclosure is difficult and painful for them.

Ask open questions. Use reflective listening to confirm what is being said. Always explain the confidentiality guidelines and boundaries, remembering the statutory duty to

## 'Domestic Violence Matters' seminar highlights key welfare role



disclose (i.e., child protection issues; preservation of life, etc.).

Build links in order to facilitate referrals to appropriate agencies. Be aware of issues for different groups - disabled and elderly people, same sex - outing/homophobia, cultural/religious.

Survivors of abuse contact agencies for different reasons:

- To stop the violence
- For protection
- To prevent future victimisation or the escalation of violence
- To access other means of support, advice or information.

Victims of abuse want the abuse to stop and may try formal and informal approaches. They may confide in friends, family, or the GP.

Statistically, it is the police who are the first statutory service to be approached, usually because of a crisis. The initial response is crucial. If it is negative, the victim will retreat from accessing support.

It is important for helping agencies to get to know what DV services are at grassroots level in the local area, including services for ethnic-specific and community-based black and minority ethnic groups, and those at a national level.

Every agency should be familiar with the national 24-hour helpline number at the very least: **0808-2000 247**. If possible, they should provide information by displaying posters, leaflets and cards.

Other helpline numbers are:

- Refuge 24-hour Helpline Freephone: 0808-2000 247
- Dove Project (provides refuge accommodation in east and south of England): 01702-300 006
- Devon Male, (help line for men): 08450-646 800
- Women's Aid Federation of England (WAFE): 0117-944 4411. Email: [info@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:info@womensaid.org.uk). They have useful publications, leaflets, posters etc.
- Southall Black Sisters: 0208-571 9595
- DVIP men's programme: 0208-748 6512

**In an EMERGENCY, dial 999!**

## Special feature

# Stress - It Makes You Think!

by John McConnell

**Fifteen years a go, when I was a social worker, I had six months off work due to stress. I was completely exhausted - physically and mentally - even the smallest task, like making a cup of tea, was a challenge.**

The signs of stress had been building up for years. The pressure of being a single parent, a shop steward, as well as a full-time social worker with a demanding caseload, meant that I was always on the run, dashing from one meeting to another, rushing home to cook tea or sort something out in the house.

There was no 'me' time, no time to recharge the battery, only more and more people demanding my time and attention.

As I span out of control, there was no one to support me, or put on the brake. The shouting and swearing in the office, and occasional tears, were seen as nothing more than me having an 'off day'.

It was only when I literally ground to a halt on a Friday evening in a supermarket car park (I could not move my body when I went to get out of the car) that everyone realised that there was something seriously wrong and I was left



*"No one is invincible. We all have a breaking point."*

feeling depressed and bewildered, wondering what on earth had happened to me and why.

The road to recovery was slow and, at one stage, I thought I would never be able to work. It took many months to rebuild my life through a combination of rest, good food, massage, counselling, acupuncture, meditation and, above all, self-reflection.

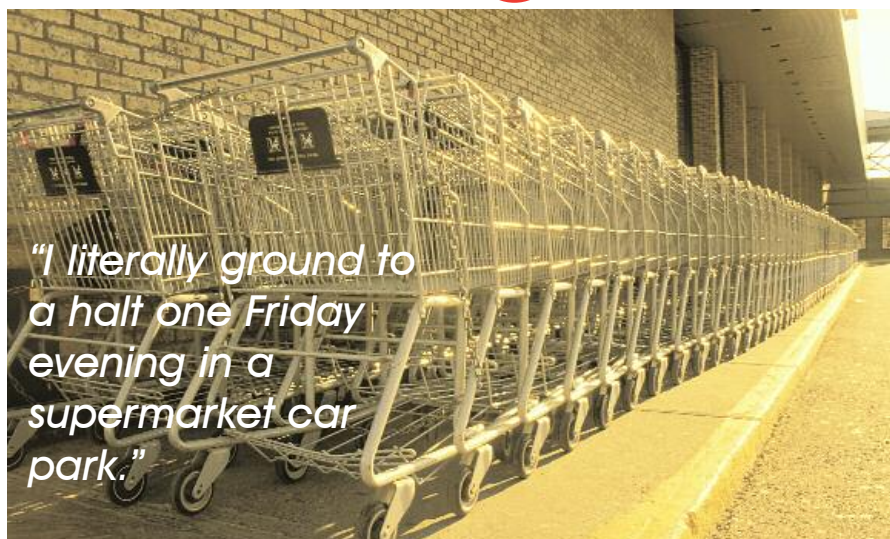
The lessons I learned are the foundation of my approach to stress management training and include the following:

**1** *Stress is a messenger.* It

tells us that there is something unhealthy in the way we are living our life. If we don't listen to the message and take positive action to address the causes of our stress, sooner or later we will have to face serious consequences. No one is invincible. We all have our breaking point, whether we realise it or not.

**2** *Each of us has to take responsibility for our own life.* We cannot expect, or assume, that managers will take on that responsibility – not only are managers often too stressed themselves to help but, because stress is such a subjective issue, no one else can really judge where we are at.

We need to educate ourselves about the signs and causes of stress and make others aware of our needs. Certainly, in my own case, I subconsciously expected my manager to take on the role of parent and protect me from myself. Consequently, I felt very angry and let down by him when he failed to deliver what I was wanting and needing.



*"I literally ground to a halt one Friday evening in a supermarket car park."*

**3** *We need to take time out to stand back* and question whether the way we are living our life is sustainable in the long run.

Is it really worth killing/seriously damaging ourselves for a bigger house, two cars, holidays abroad, or that promotion?

There is a lot to be said for an attitude of gratitude and appreciation for what we have and for developing a simpler and less expensive lifestyle, leaving more time and energy for ourselves, family and friends.

**4** *We need to retake control of our life* and learn to *respond*, rather than *react*, to the challenges we face.

This means stopping and thinking and realising we have a choice as to how we deal with things. We may not always be able to change the situation but we *can* change the way we handle it.

We can choose to see things in a positive, life-affirming way and act accordingly, or we can react on the basis of a negative, fear-inducing mind set, which will set off the 'fight or flight' response and leave us reeling.

Life is difficult, or a challenge. It all depends on how we see it. The power of positive thinking in all its forms (language, attitude, beliefs, values) cannot be over-emphasised.

**5** *The ability to say 'no'* in an assertive way is one of the most effective stress management techniques but also one of the most challenging.

It takes considerable confidence and courage to say 'no' to a manager/employer in the current climate of fear generated by the competitive global economy - many employees are already working excessive hours (unpaid) and 25% do not take their full leave

entitlement.

However, even in the public services, where the fear of the sack is a more remote possibility, staff are generally reluctant to assert their right to say "no".

Why? In my own experience, which has been confirmed in many talks and workshops, it all boils down to a lack of self esteem, a fear of rejection based on a feeling of being inadequate or not good enough.



*"We are always going to face excessive demands on our time."*

Rather than risk such rejection, people suffering from low self esteem are much more likely to say 'yes' even when they know that they will not be able to manage.

*I believe low self esteem is one of the key issues in stress management.* All of us need to take responsibility for our own personal growth and development and overcome our feelings of inadequacy, which are often rooted in early childhood experiences.

Fortunately, we do not have to go into therapy to sort out the problem. Simple cognitive behavioural techniques, available in many books, offer a solution-based approach. Together with mentoring and life coaching, which is becoming increasingly popular, this can be a very effective approach.

**6** *Prevention is better than cure.* Rather than managing stress, perhaps it would be better to concentrate, as Paul Wilson suggests, on creating calm at work.

Where the attention goes, energy flows. So the more we practise being calm but alert, the more we work smarter not harder.

The more peaceful the work environment, the more likely we are to enjoy the work process, and the less likely we are to feel stressed.

Obviously, this needs to be combined with a management culture in which workers feel respected and listened to and are given some autonomy over their working times and the work process.

**7** *Life is a marathon, not a sprint.* We need to recognise that we are always going to be facing excessive demands on our time, and that we really need to invest time and money in our own mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being if we are to remain on top.

If we take good care of the body through a healthy diet, regular exercise and a good sleep routine, and if we sustain and develop our inner resources through such practices as journaling, meditation and contemplation, we will not only survive but thrive in this ever-changing, exciting world.

## Conclusion

Stress can be seen as a blessing in disguise. It provides us with an opportunity to stand back and re-examine ourselves, our lifestyle and the society in which we live. It is an opportunity to grow and change and find alternative ways of living and being.

Viewed in this way, it is our friend and guide through which we can learn to be stress free!

## New guides to support social work placements available now

**Skills for Care has launched a new series of eight guides to support people who provide social work placements and ensure that students get the work-based learning experience they need to develop their social work skills.**

The new series, entitled *Capturing the Learning*, encapsulates the work of the Practice Learning Taskforce project, which ended in March this year.

Sample copies of the series, together with a final report summarising the achievements of the Practice Learning Taskforce over the past three years, are currently being mailed out to those with an interest in social care work-based learning, including directors of social services, universities, practice learning co-ordinators and training managers.

Former director of the Practice Learning Taskforce, Mike Leadbetter, said: "These guides, together with the final report, cover the full range of work undertaken by the Taskforce, and

offer practical guidance to improve the quality, quantity and diversity of practice learning opportunities in the private, public and voluntary sectors."

He continued: "The key to improving the delivery of public services is having a fully trained, competent and confident workforce. High quality work-based learning, supported by high quality academic input, is essential."

Skills for Care chief executive officer Andrea Rowe added: "The future image of social work lies in the hands of the students now being trained, so it is in everyone's best interests to ensure that they are appropriately equipped to deal with the challenges they will face."

The guides are available free of charge by calling 0113 245 1716 or by



completing the online order form at [www.practicelearning.org.uk](http://www.practicelearning.org.uk).

## Social care NVQ success rate improving, say Skills for Care and CWDC

**Figures from the Employers Organisation for local government (EO) released this month demonstrate a significant rise in the number of students achieving health and social care NVQs last year, with the number of certificates increasing by almost a quarter from December 2004 to December 2005.**

Chief executive officer of Skills for Care, Andrea Rowe, said: "The increase in the number of social care NVQs achieved demonstrates that students are increasingly sticking with their studies and achieving success.

"This is good news for prospective employers looking for qualified new staff, and will bring great benefits in the future to people who use social care services."

December 2005 saw registrations for new NVQ awards accounting for over 70 per cent of all registrations at level two, 83 per cent at level three, and 99 per cent at level four. Since December

2004, registrations for new NVQ awards have increased by 36 per cent, demonstrating the popularity of the new qualifications that Skills for Care and the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) helped to develop.

The new early years NVQ awards have been particularly successful. In December 2005, new awards in early years care and education accounted for 74 per cent of all child/early years certificates, up 73 per cent from the previous quarter.

Jane Haywood, chief executive of the CWDC, comments: "CWDC is pleased to see a rise in the number of students achieving these NVQs. Health and social care professionals play a key role in improving the lives of our children, young people and families."

She added: "CWDC will be working to ensure that this sector is an attractive and viable career option and to fully support health and social care workers in their roles."

The pattern is set to continue, as figures for the last quarter of 2005 demonstrate that registrations for health and social care NVQs increased by 50 per cent during the period September 2005 to December 2005, meaning that many more qualified staff will be entering the social care workforce in the near future.

Andrea concluded: "A better qualified workforce will support the General Social Care Council in registration of the wider workforce in future."

Skills for Care provides funding for workforce development and qualifications via its nine regional committees.

This funding has been an essential lever to enable the sector to move forward to acquire skills and qualifications.

**For further details of Skills for Care's regional committees, visit [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk).**

# At last! A website for working mums: [www.WorkingMums.co.uk](http://www.WorkingMums.co.uk)



**www.WorkingMums.co.uk is a new online service dedicated to helping working mums return to professional yet flexible work.**

In a survey carried out by WorkingMums.co.uk in London prior to the launch of the site, 80% of all working mums who responded wanted to work on a part-time basis, with 86% keen to explore freelancing or job-sharing opportunities.

Gillian Nissim developed the service in response to her own experiences and frustrations as a working mum, coupled with her husband's regular struggle to find quality professionals to complete project-based tasks.

Gillian said: "Employers need skilled

professionals. Mums will often have the qualifications and experience they require. So it makes perfect sense to launch a service like WorkingMums.co.uk that connects the two.

"So many working mums want a degree of flexibility in their jobs - to maximise the time they can spend with their children. The jobs and business opportunities that can provide that kind of flexibility are out there, so our aim is to provide mums with an easy route to them.

"It's a win for employers too - it's not always easy to find great people who want to work part-time, short-term or on a freelance basis or who are able to work from home.

"WorkingMums.co.uk has a growing database of candidates from a wide range of industry sectors who can meet those requirements."

WorkingMums.co.uk's initial focus is on connecting mums with employers - primarily through classified advertising.

This will be followed by:

- a business opportunities section;
- service directories for childcare and home help;
- articles and information;
- online forums.

## Study reveals older people's view on unfairness of paying for care

**A new study from Age Concern has found that older people see the system of paying for care as deeply unfair and confusing.**

Irrespective of age or geography, participants in focus groups wanted the state to provide a core level of free care for all older people who need it, particularly care over which there was no choice, such as washing, dressing and food preparation.

The study also found that the sample groups were particularly concerned that, over a reasonably low limit, an older person has to pay for all care costs with no help from the state.

This worrying 'cliff edge' was judged as unfair, particularly as property was generally felt to be sacrosanct, with many older people taking the view that their hard work and savings had paid for it, and that they wanted to pass it on as a legacy to their family.

There was also widespread criticism of the complexities and expense of charging for care. Many people, including some who were already making a contribution to the cost of their own care, could not understand how care charges were calculated.

All groups criticised the artificial barrier between social and health care.



Gordon Lishman, director-general of Age Concern, said: "The report gives strength to the arguments advanced by Age Concern, as well as the recent

report from the King's Fund, that there needs to be urgent reform of the financing of social care.

"It is clear that the present system is overly complicated and deeply unfair. The evidence is there. It is now up to the Government to give voters the fairer system of funding they demand."

## New European policy report launched to support the Green Paper on Mental Health

The International Longevity Centre UK (ILC-UK) has launched a new report in a drive to improve the lives of people in Europe with severe mental illness.

The report aims to support the European Commission Green Paper, which promises to seek dedicated funding and sustainable national policies on mental health throughout Europe.

"More support is required for people living with severe mental illness in

Europe," commented John Bowis, the European Parliament's Rapporteur for Mental Health.

Mental ill health affects 1 in 4 people in Europe and is second only to cardiovascular disease in its toll of morbidity and mortality. Severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, can reduce the life expectancy of those affected by between eight to twenty years.

The burden these illnesses pose to

society is significant but the impact to quality of life is devastating, not only to individuals but to their families as well.

The strain on relationships with family and friends, diminished educational and employment opportunities and the stigma associated with having a severe mental illness ultimately lead to social isolation and exclusion.

**To obtain a copy of the report, please visit [www.ilcuk.org.uk](http://www.ilcuk.org.uk) or call 020 7735 7565.**

## Workwise project opens mental health doors

A project from literally the other side of the world has shown how to help people with mental health problems to find their way back into the world of work.

The Workwise Employment Agency was founded in New Zealand in response to requests from mental health service users who simply wanted to access 'real work with real pay'. The

agency then gained momentum and today provides help to hundreds of people throughout New Zealand.

Last month, at a conference of the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership held in Scotland, Workwise chief executive officer Warren Elwin, explained the thinking behind this new model of practice. He said: "Workwise believes that the best

place to learn skills is on the job. We see our role as helping people to get directly into the labour market. It's not about getting someone any job. It's about getting the right job for the right person."

For details of the Workwise approach, together with case studies, please log on to [www.workwisetrust.co.nz](http://www.workwisetrust.co.nz).

## Book review

***Integrating Health and Social Care Services for Older Persons: Published by Ashgate***

Throughout Europe, more and more older people are experiencing the need for different kinds of health and social care. This is creating a complex situation in terms of the management and co-ordination of different tasks to be undertaken by different organisations, professionals and family carers.

This recently published book, based on research conducted in nine European countries, offers an overview of different approaches to the integration of care for older people and, through better integration, improvements in the quality of service provided.

In essence, it is about finding ways of overcoming the traditional social-health divide.

## News in brief

### **New charity for youth volunteers**

An organisation called v has been established that aims to inspire and engage one million new volunteers aged between 16 and 25.

### **Launch of deaf studies website**

The first academic website in the world to use British Sign Language was launched during *Deaf Awareness Week* in May. The site - [www.bris.ac.uk/deaf/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/deaf/) has been developed by staff and students at Bristol University to attract potential students.

### **Cutting workplace stress**

The Samaritans have launched a series of free roadshows to help managers tackle the causes of stress in the workplace. Entitled *Worklife*, the sessions demonstrate a series of fictional characters to enable

participants to explore challenging work situations without having to disclose their own experiences.

### **Help for parents with learning difficulties**

A new study - *Finding the Right Support?* - reviews examples of positive practice in supporting parents with learning difficulties and their children. A summary of the key findings can be viewed at [www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/NorahFry](http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/NorahFry).

### **Free debt advice service**

Individuals with mounting financial debts can log on to [www.payplan.com](http://www.payplan.com) to access free and impartial advice and help in stemming their losses and working out an acceptable repayment package with their creditors. Support is provided to clients throughout the repayment period.

## INSTITUTE OF WELFARE Greater London Centre



### Dates for your Diary

**Greater London Centre meetings for 2006 are on the following dates:**

**7 September 2006 - Aid for Asian Women**

**30 November 2006 - Back Care**

**Centre meetings are usually held at HM Land Registry, Lincoln's Inn Fields, Holborn, London**

**Meetings start at 11am and finish at 12pm.**

**Contact: Teresa Dixon, Secretary, IoW Greater London Centre, The White House,**

**White House Road, Little Ouse, Ely, Cambs CB7 4TG**

**Tel: (daytime) 01353 863378 Email: [Cutter-dixon@supanet.com](mailto:Cutter-dixon@supanet.com)**

**Training opportunities arise after Centre meetings, from 12:30 to 2:30 pm.**