The Magical Massey Experiment

The deadline

The neverending tick tick tick of the looming deadline.

I am reminded of the deadline as I sit in the warm March sun looking out my window into the enchanting Massey College courtyard, while sipping my coffee. The absence of a daily deadline since becoming a journalism fellow has been my salvation but today it’s my fear. Today’s deadline is writing the front page article for this year’s edition of The Owl. Do I even still know how to write? Have I lost my ability to tell a story with (I hope) style and flair? As the ever-persistent Toronto wind frantically agitates the branches of the tree outside my window, I start reflecting on the Massey experience, deadlines and what comes next.

I don’t think any reporter really knows what they’re getting into when they sign up for the Massey Fellowship. One of the first things I recall Jim Lebans saying when we first met was “So… does anybody have an idea of what we’re supposed to be doing here?” All of us looked at each other, shrugged our shoulders and smiled. We were all very happy to be here we just didn’t know exactly why.

It would become clear, as weeks and months went by just how lucky we actually were. Not only because of the gala and the wonderful trips we got to take (Cape Breton, Germany and Finland) and the wonderful trips we got to take, but friends I have made this year have been some of the finest journalists, but friends I have come across in my lifetime.

— Rodney Sieh

and because we would make good friends hopefully for life – but also because this magical year has this amazing ability to give you wings.

For Rodney Sieh, the fellowship was a welcome change of scenery after having survived turbulent years and being sentenced to jail for 5000 years. Yes, 5000 years. He ended up spending 80 long days in jail for exposing corruption. A year studying and meeting people in Canada was just what he needed. “I take home with me fond memories of travels, engagements and intellectual exchanges with not only some of the finest journalists, but friends I have come across in my lifetime.”

This year, we watched as Donald Trump came across in my lifetime.”

— Rodney Sieh

The deadline

I like to believe that I think differently – through the people I have met, the places I have traveled, and the courses I have taken.

— Katie Daubs

and the courses I have taken.

To think differently is not insignificant. Especially today, as the role of journalism is more than ever being challenged and redefined. Thinking differently might just be the remedy in this time of “fake news.” Journalists are more than ever (or so it seems) subject to scrutiny and feel the need to step up their game: to dig deeper, to seek justice, to expose facts. If Marguerite Duras was right when she wrote: “Journalism without a moral position is impossible. Every journalist is a moralist. It’s absolutely unavoidable,” then the act of removing oneself from the everyday daily grind of writing news to seek a better understanding of a variety of subjects is essential. It seems all of us will leave Massey wanting to be better journalists and better human beings. As Hugo De Grandpré says it: “I come out of this experience with a renewed sense of curiosity, and a strong desire to keep learning and discovering new things, and putting this knowledge and experience to useful purposes, in journalism and elsewhere.”

As for deadlines, we will soon enough be back in front of screens, typing frenetically as the countdown to air-time or publishing time approaches. I’m happy to report I think I have not lost my ability to write… and I am certain my very talented, newly found friends have not either.
The reluctant 'criminal'

BY RODNEY SIEH

The dawn of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States of America has offered Canada a perfect opportunity to take its claims as the perfect alternative for many looking for an escape. While Mr. Trump’s anti-immigrant stance has awakened the world to a new order of racism, discrimination and a heavy-handed anti-immigration policy, Canada is scoring on the moment to trumpet itself as a nation of compassion, fairness and great pride for Canadians.

Canada’s domestic refugee protection system and Resettlement Assistance Program have been hailed by the United Nations system and Resettlement Assistance Program Canada’s domestic refugee protection system and Resettlement Assistance Program Canada’s domestic refugee protection system and Resettlement Assistance Program Canada’s domestic refugee protection system and Resettlement Assistance Program the country as a whole (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) which has praised Canada for providing a haven for individuals with well-founded fear of persecution who are unable to return to their homeland.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

In my homeland, Liberia I was sentenced to 5,000 years in prison for standing up to the Government of Liberia. I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.

I’m not a refugee but as one of five Southam Journalism Fellows this year I’m glad that efforts are being made to do better.” He told the crowd.
A stranger to the ice

BY RODNEY SIH

I've always wondered what it would be like to put on skates and brave the ice. As a copy editor at the Post Standard in Syracuse several years ago, I often overheard my workmates talk about skating on ice but I never dared giving the bloody thing a try. In Monrovia, Liberia, where I was born and raised, the weather will never open up to ice - at least in my lifetime.

That's just the reality because we have only two seasons: It's either rainy or steamy hot. We have a tropical climate that makes it hot and humid all year round.

The contrast in weather was definitely on my mind when Katie, Jim, Martine and Hugo arrived at Nathan Phillips Square, near the seat of the city government, to introduce me to the ice.

I must say I was impressed. When I walked past here last September, there was no ice but a beautiful reflecting pool. I was told that had I arrived a couple of months earlier, I would have seen some beautiful concerts, outdoor art exhibitions and a magical haven for fun.

But wishful thoughts were far from my mind.

I had already been forewarned to watch out for Hugo, the king of the ice. 

My competitive edge knew no limits. This was not dice throwing which we were introduced to earlier on the bonding trip in Nova Scotia, or anything like lugging a trail. It was a new territory for me.

It was a bit of trial and error but even amid my eagerness to get on the ice and get this all over with, I had broken the cardinal rule for beginners, I failed to make sure that my skating boots were tight enough to avoid a major disaster.

Both Hugo and Jim took turns making sure that my skates were tied well enough for the task ahead.

Then came showtime, my first walk on ice. It was a grounding beginning, I found it difficult finding my balance and the pains under my feet spurred a pinch I've never experienced before. The gang was right behind me being supportive.

Behind every small slip and every missed fall, was a strong friendship amongst a band of journalists that have somehow managed to become brothers and sisters, taking time off our professional duties to bond in a rather unique but fun way. I got to see not just a beautiful part of Toronto but felt a sense of warmth and appreciation from some of the best of this beautiful city has to offer amid a sea of unlimited and endless possibilities.

I am Emily Mockler, the Owl: designs.

I have some familiarity with Massey through the partnership of Anson and Massey College, and am a huge fan of the broadcast version as well as the printed book of the Massey Lectures. I was really drawn to being in an intellectual environment. I am also the daughter of an architect and interior designer, and I love the aesthetic of Ron Thom’s design. The building is truly a masterpiece and a contemporary take on classical collegial designs.

Emily Mockler: I am Emily Mockler, the new Programs and Events Coordinator at Massey College. This is my first year here at Massey College. Previously I worked with House of Anansi Press.

Emily: What attracted you working at Massey?

EM: I had some familiarity with Massey College through the partnership of Anson and Massey College, and am a huge fan of the broadcast version as well as the printed book of the Massey Lectures. I was really drawn to being in an intellectual environment. I am also the daughter of an architect and interior designer, and I love the aesthetic of Ron Thom’s design. The building is truly a masterpiece and a contemporary take on classical collegial designs.

EM: My primary role is to take care of the administrative side of the William Southam Journalism Fellowship Program, but I also manage the Scholars at Rirk program. I do a fair amount of internal and external communications. I help to run the Polanyi Awards, Science at Massey, Public Policy at Massey. The Walter Gordon Symposium, the CIFAR Massey Talks and a lot of the other fantastic one-off events that we host.

EM: Are there any projects or initiatives that you would like to work on in the future?

EM: I am very sensitive to all of the time honored traditions that we have, and would never make change for the sake of change, but I do believe that there are a number of things that can be updated while still embracing the spirit and essence of Massey.

EM: I've been a part of (along with Amelia Martin and Aniselle Beer) working to bring Massey College's website up to date and hope to have it launched in the very near future. Further to that, given my background in publishing, I'd really love to create some formal literary programming here at the college – maybe building upon or revamping our book club. Our other really big goal of mine is to increase the scope of our Scholars at Risk program. I know more than ever, it is important to support scholars and students who face violence, imprisonment, censorship and a whole lot of other challenges in their home countries. Massey College has a strong history in doing so, and I hope to build upon it.

EM: Now, after a few months in that role, what are your impressions about the college?

EM: I'm really enjoying my time here at Massey. Every day is different and I love working with and meeting new people.

EM: And is there something that surprised you – something that you didn't expect?

EM: To be honest, I didn't realize that I would have such an amazing office. But after 8+ years in an open concept office getting used to the quiet has been an adjustment. I get a bit lonely from time to time and I've even caught myself talking to myself... All that to say I'm always happy to have visitors!

EM: Anything else?

EM: Nope, just thanking everyone for being so great and welcoming.

This interview was conducted by Hugo de Graafpré and was edited for publication.
Koko kokko!

Koko kokko!" is a phrase that means "yes" or "ok" in Finnish. It is often used to confirm understanding or agreement.

The sentence "It was a beautiful day of flat calm, and the sun shone on the sea too." means that the weather was calm and pleasant.

The sentence "I went to see him at breakfast, and he offered me a glass of water." means that the person went to see someone at breakfast and was offered a glass of water.

The sentence "It was the off season in Cape Breton." means that it was not peak tourist season in Cape Breton.

The sentence "We spent the next morning learning about the history of Kiasma." means that they spent the morning learning about the history of Kiasma.

The sentence "A visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and memorial in the small town of Oranienburg, not far outside Berlin, was a moving experience. The numbers of prisoners imprisoned there were staggering - over 30,000 prisoners at a time during the war and over 90,000 after the war." means that a visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and memorial was a moving experience. The numbers of prisoners imprisoned there were staggering - over 30,000 prisoners at a time during the war and over 90,000 after the war.

The sentence "After a hearty meal, it was on to Baddeck, where we saw the Titanic Memorial." means that after a hearty meal, they went to Baddeck, where they saw the Titanic Memorial.

The sentence "At night, we would sing traditional Finnish songs while enjoying the view from the restaurant." means that at night, they would sing traditional Finnish songs while enjoying the view from the restaurant.

The sentence "The trip to Finland was a wonderful experience for all of us." means that the trip to Finland was a wonderful experience for all of us.

The sentence "We spent the next morning learning about the history of Kiasma." means that they spent the morning learning about the history of Kiasma.

The sentence "A visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and memorial in the small town of Oranienburg, not far outside Berlin, was a moving experience. The numbers of prisoners imprisoned there were staggering - over 30,000 prisoners at a time during the war and over 90,000 after the war." means that a visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and memorial was a moving experience. The numbers of prisoners imprisoned there were staggering - over 30,000 prisoners at a time during the war and over 90,000 after the war.

The sentence "After a hearty meal, it was on to Baddeck, where we saw the Titanic Memorial." means that after a hearty meal, they went to Baddeck, where they saw the Titanic Memorial.

The sentence "At night, we would sing traditional Finnish songs while enjoying the view from the restaurant." means that at night, they would sing traditional Finnish songs while enjoying the view from the restaurant.

The sentence "The trip to Finland was a wonderful experience for all of us." means that the trip to Finland was a wonderful experience for all of us.

The sentence "We spent the next morning learning about the history of Kiasma." means that they spent the morning learning about the history of Kiasma.

The sentence "A visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and memorial in the small town of Oranienburg, not far outside Berlin, was a moving experience. The numbers of prisoners imprisoned there were staggering - over 30,000 prisoners at a time during the war and over 90,000 after the war." means that a visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and memorial was a moving experience. The numbers of prisoners imprisoned there were staggering - over 30,000 prisoners at a time during the war and over 90,000 after the war.

The sentence "After a hearty meal, it was on to Baddeck, where we saw the Titanic Memorial." means that after a hearty meal, they went to Baddeck, where they saw the Titanic Memorial.

The sentence "At night, we would sing traditional Finnish songs while enjoying the view from the restaurant." means that at night, they would sing traditional Finnish songs while enjoying the view from the restaurant.

The sentence "The trip to Finland was a wonderful experience for all of us." means that the trip to Finland was a wonderful experience for all of us.

The sentence "We spent the next morning learning about the history of Kiasma." means that they spent the morning learning about the history of Kiasma.

The sentence "A visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and memorial in the small town of Oranienburg, not far outside Berlin, was a moving experience. The numbers of prisoners imprisoned there were staggering - over 30,000 prisoners at a time during the war and over 90,000 after the war." means that a visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and memorial was a moving experience. The numbers of prisoners imprisoned there were staggering - over 30,000 prisoners at a time during the war and over 90,000 after the war.

The sentence "After a hearty meal, it was on to Baddeck, where we saw the Titanic Memorial." means that after a hearty meal, they went to Baddeck, where they saw the Titanic Memorial.

The sentence "At night, we would sing traditional Finnish songs while enjoying the view from the restaurant." means that at night, they would sing traditional Finnish songs while enjoying the view from the restaurant.

The sentence "The trip to Finland was a wonderful experience for all of us." means that the trip to Finland was a wonderful experience for all of us.
Behind the closed doors of the journalists’ lunches

BY HUGO DE GRANDPÈRE

What is happening every Thursday behind the closed doors of the private dining room? The short answer is sorry, we can’t tell you. The journalists are holding their weekly lunch with selected guests, and all conversations are off the record. 

There is no great mystery here, though, the Thursday lunches feature people coming from all walks of life, and they basically get to eat lunch.

It may sound like an awful experience for the poor guests, but thankfully, most feedback we received was positive. “The atmosphere was great, and we felt comfortable asking questions and sharing our thoughts with the journalists.”

For journalists, it is basically Christmas. Someone (somewhere) once said: journalism would be the best profession on earth if only you didn’t have to file. Indeed, having the privilege to speak with people who are experts in their own fields and have fascinating stories to tell, without the pressure of producing any kind of report, is quite a treat.

The group, which often includes a few junior fellows, academic advisor Bob Johnson and the programs and events coordinator Emily Mockler, sits down at 12:15 p.m. Everyone briefly introduces themselves as lunch is being served. The guest is encouraged to start eating right away, before the questions start coming and they do very quickly.

If you are in that seat, is there an art to skillfully balance eating with a lot of talking? This question puzzled, and sometimes stressed me out all year. “I did not feel stressed about the eating part! I love food, and they do very quickly.”

Guests have to remember that I spent 10 years as a medical student, and a resident, and a fellow, so I have found the exercise useful as well. “So it was nice to actually sit down and eat lunch!”

For journalists, it is basically Christmas. Someone (somewhere) once said: journalism would be the best profession on earth if only you didn’t have to file. Indeed, having the privilege to speak with people who are experts in their own fields and have fascinating stories to tell, without the pressure of producing any kind of report, is quite a treat.

The group, which often includes a few junior fellows, academic advisor Bob Johnson and the programs and events coordinator Emily Mockler, sits down at 12:15 p.m. Everyone briefly introduces themselves as lunch is being served. The guest is encouraged to start eating right away, before the questions start coming and they do very quickly.

If you are in that seat, is there an art to skillfully balance eating with a lot of talking? This question puzzled, and sometimes stressed me out all year. “I did not feel stressed about the eating part! I love food, and they do very quickly.”

Guests have to remember that I spent 10 years as a medical student, and a resident, and a fellow, so I have found the exercise useful as well. “So it was nice to actually sit down and eat lunch!”

These lunches are a central part of the Southam Fellowship program, and they require the journalism fellows to draft a lot of potential “targets” at the beginning of the year. It is meant to be a collective effort, but as any such endeavour, natural leaders emerge of the pack, and we are therefore eternally grateful to fellow Jim Lebans for dutifully taking the lead.

So what is happening every Thursday at noon behind these closed doors? A longer answer is: some fascinating and very insightful conversations. And luckily, some guests seem to have found the exercise useful as well.

Guests at last year’s Thursday Lunches

Peter Fahnenholz, German Consul General in Toronto
Margaret MacMillan, Historian and professor, Oxford University
John Fraser, Master Emeritus, Massey College
Hugh Segal, Master, Massey College
Allison Smith, Former Washington Correspondent for CBC
Zita Cobb, Co-founder and CEO, Shorefast Foundation
Sally Armstrong, Journalist and activist
Robert Bothwell, Historion, professor, Munk School of Global Affairs
Kona Williams, Forensic pathologist, Ontario Forensic Pathology Service
David Evans, Curator of Vertebrate Palaeontology, Royal Ontario Museum
John Polanyi, Chemist, Nobel Laureate, peace activist
Janet Rossant, Senior Scientist, Developmental & Stem Cell Biology program (Hospital for Sick Children)
Robert Lecours, CEO, CBC/Radio-Canada
Michael Cooke, Editor in chief, Toronto Star
Ted Sargent, Canada Research Chair in Nanotechnology and vice-president (International), University of Toronto
Barbara Sherwood Lollar, Geochemist and Macsey Science Chair
Jon Allen, Former Canadian ambassador to Israel and Spain, Fellow, Munk School of Global Affairs
Janice Neil, Chair, Ryerson School of Journalism
Ronald Deibert, Director of the Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs
Tom Henheffer, Executive Director of Canadian Journalists for Free Expression
Bob Rae, Former Premier of Ontario, Canadian lawyer and negotiator
Adrienne Arsenault, Journalist at CBC
Ahmed Hussen*, Minister of Immigration, Government of Canada

* The Thursday lunch was replaced with a Saturday meeting to accommodate the minister’s schedule.
It is a sunny March Sunday in the quad and the FIRE Committee members are hard at work. David Sutton is scraping hot gooshy cheese and serving it to eager Masseyites. Owen Kane is standing nearby, in case of a fire (or cheese) emergency while Jason Brennan is cutting a baguette in perfectly shaped cheese vessels. It is the annual Massey Raclette, beautifully orchestrated by the 2016-17 Cheese Master, Elizabeth Rouget. This very sought-after title was hard earned by Rouget, who was crowned by ex-Cheese Master Adrian Deleon. Unlike Rouget, the members of the FIRE committee were not given the title, nor did they fight for it. They just took it.

Secretive beginnings

Indeed, the FIRE (Fyngare place and Ingmosk Reporting and Enthusiasm) Committee is an “unofficial” council that began in the 2015-2016 year, although the members profess the lineage dates back to 1962 “since the fireplace is the central architectural feature of the college,” as Jason Brennan, the inaugural co-chair likes to say. He insists that “In many ways, but especially chronologically, [it is] the original committee of the Junior Common Room.” Perhaps the autocratic nature of the committee can be in part explained by its secretive beginning.

“We’re unable to comment on ‘elections’ or any kind of internal processes, only to say that the FIRE committee has an unwritten tradition of passing the torch,” Brennan says. “Some Fellows may find this lack of democratic transparency inflammatory, which is fine by us. The FIRE (Fireplace and Recognition) may find this lack of democratic transparency inflammatory, which is fine by us. The FIRE committee is mostly smoke and mirrors.”

Techniques, tips, hopes and dreams

Anyone who has ever had the privilege of working by the fire in the Junior Common Room on a cold winter day has surely noticed the configuration of the fire: a “four-log stater with two logs on top of two others,” as Kane puts it. He likes it because it “goes off like a rocket,” releasing a lot of heat with little kindling and a lot of paper. While it is not the best looking fire, the membership does not discriminate among fires. As Sutton says, “She hotter, the better!”

So, what is the ultimate goal of our fire-loving friends? “One day [we shall] achieve our long-term goal of turning the entire College into a blazing bonfire whose heat will reach up into the heavens in a glorious tower of flame,” Sutton says. Now that’s enthusiasm...

A night to remember… vaguely

BY JIM LEBAN

What could be the best way to mark a year of intellectual and cultural engagement at one of Canada’s most respected institutions of higher learning? How could we best celebrate, with the Junior Fellows who’ve welcomed us so warmly, the richness and diversity of the Massey experience? Perhaps a poetry reading, to immortalize the experience in words? Or a concert of carefully selected classical music, played with sensitivity and artistry by accomplished artists? We might sponsor a lecture on some edifying subject of social and political significance.

Martine: It’s Karaoke, no question.
Katie: Osseus, good call!
Jim: Wait, so the best way to celebrate this wonderful year at Massey is to indulge in a ritual humiliation invented to inculcate ineptitude among so-called Japanese office workers against the summing total of their daily lives?
Katie: C’mom Jim, it’ll be fun. We can do “Linger.”

Hugo: Great Idea! Just one little tweak – an all Robert Charlebois karaoke evening!

Rodney: WHAM! “Wake me up, before you go, go….”

Martine: No children, we’re starting with Copacabana. Barry Manilow is a god, and this will be our sacrifice to him. And we need choreography – we can act out the parts - use ketchup packets for blood when Tony gets shot - or was it Rizzo? - Anyway, it will be a spectacle!

Jim: Over my dead body.

Martine: We need costumes. Wigs! Makeup! Feathers! Sequins! Rodney: for his peace! Yeah, Hi, how are you doing? I’m not too good. I need your help. We’re having a karaoke party tomorrow night and we really need a Donald Trump wig. You have a blonde wig? Can you style it for me? (No!) Could a hairdresser do it for me?
Katie: Rodney - it’s OK, I know a great wig place! Wait, Jim - are you having an asthma attack?
Jim: It was a sigh. A very deep sigh.
Hugo: “Mom pays ce n’est pas un pays, c’est l’Europe…”

Katie: Please, kill me now. Use that butterknife. I’ll be so much less painful than singing Barry Manilow.

Rodney: “I’m never gonna dance again, Guilty feel have got no rhythm…”

On March 6, 2017, the JCR rocked with tuneful renditions of many classic popular standards, performed admirably by an assortment of talented and enthusiastic Junior Fellows. Copacabana happened. The Foundation Fellows insist that they all had a great time - and that there’s no truth to the rumour that Jim has entered therapy for Post Karaoke Stress Disorder wearing his Spock wig and matching ear.
What was your best hope when you started the fellowship this year? What happened?

Martine: My best hope as I embarked in this beautiful (and weird) journey was pretty simple: to deepen my knowledge of Indigenous history, law and policy. On a more personal level, I felt I needed a break from the daily news to reflect on where I want to go from here. This fellowship has given me all of that and so much more. I met amazing people and gained things I really needed: more self-confidence but mostly an idea as to where I want to go from here.

Katie: I was so excited to be a student again and I thought this time I’d do it right – enjoying the readings for their own sake, taking my time, not learning for an exam. But I also told myself I’d get to the Hart House gym at least three times a week. I learned that the occasional afternoon cocktail in the common room and the conversations that came with them, were a much better use of my time.

Hugo: Put simply, I was hoping to meet interesting people and to learn interesting things. These wishes were met and largely surpassed. This has been an incredibly inspiring and stimulating year. I am leaving Massey with expanded horizons and a genuine desire to keep feeding this curiosity.

Rodney: I guess I was looking forward to a great year of fellowship with a fun bunch – a year away from real journalism work. I never anticipated a late start and a rugged experience with Canadian immigration. But it ended up being a really great experience with Canadian immigration. I never anticipated a late start and a rugged year away from real journalism work.

What was your favourite or most unusual Massey moment?

Martine: Favourite moments at Massey are looking out my window at the courtyard. It is so pretty. And also acting as the costume judge for the Halloween bash. Most unusual was sitting next to Harry Rosen at a Senior Fellow lunch.

Katie: The strangest moments have mostly been in the basement, where I once saw a group of Junior Fellows frozen in silence with imaginary swords.

Hugo: It’s probably a collection of moments – the first look at Massey, at the rooms and the surroundings, during the interview in May 2016. The first visit to the round room. The first high table with gowns and everyone all dressed up. The first look at the Santayana quote in the dining hall... Massey is a very special place!

Rodney: I would say the Harry Potter-like high table aura caught me off guard a bit. It is always fun to attend but found the gown requirements somewhat strange but interesting, though I enjoyed every moment of the high table dinners.

Jim: Finding myself on stage at the Christmas Gaudy with the Massey Belles bluegrass band singing carols. I think the first note I sang on Mele Kalikimaka was about four notes flat, but I think I recovered somewhat after that.

What was the most surprising thing you learned in the courses you did?

Martine: In Medieval Relics class I learned how ecclesiastical vestments were made and the meaning of materials used.

Katie: How to identify the sex of a skeleton from the angle of its pelvic bones.

Hugo: Probably all the talks about how robots will take over and how the whole world will find themselves out of work – not only journalists! It was a recurring topic in a lot of panels and discussions throughout the year, and I audited a great law seminar on the impacts of these technological changes.

Rodney: I guess it would be the global journalism course’s attraction of a wide range of students from various fields of work interested in learning about journalism. I was puzzled that so many are still interested in the workings of what we do despite the rapid decline of the print media and aggressive competition from social media.

Jim: I did a fascinating cognitive science course on consciousness which revealed that though many are exploring the idea, we’re really still searching for an understanding of what consciousness is – which has interesting implications for Artificial Intelligence in the next decade.

For each of your fellow fellows, imagine the place or situation you’d be in where you’d most like to have that person by your side.

Martine: Jim – a game show! He would be the perfect partner. I could sit back and drink a glass of wine while he wins us a free trip around the world! Katie – a deserted island. The girl is hilarious! We would have a blast. She’s also very positive and so being into the hearts of the zombies and convince them to let us live and take care of us. He’s pretty convincing.

Katie: Jim is a trusted advisor on the finer things at any liquor store, essential for translating conversations about CRISPR technology, ancient water and solar energy, and always good with a call back joke, even months later. If they ever bring back La Soirée Canadien, I’d like to have front row seats with Martine by my side. She is also a good person to have in any situation requiring crafting or good French wine.

Rodney: Hugo – To liven things up in any social event, especially in Hearst. Katie – As a co-panelist on a chip judging contest. Jim – As a partner in a high intensity karaoke round robin. Jim – Any time the internet breaks down, as my real life WikiJimmy.

Hugo: Martine – To learn things up in any social event, especially in Hearst.

Katie: – A co-panelist on a chip judging contest.

Jim: – As a partner in a high intensity karaoke round robin. Jim – Any time the internet breaks down, as my real life WikiJimmy.

Rodney: – To liven things up in any social event, especially in Hearst.

Hugo: Martine – To learn things up in any social event, especially in Hearst.

Katie: – A co-panelist on a chip judging contest.

Jim: – As a partner in a high intensity karaoke round robin. Jim – Any time the internet breaks down, as my real life WikiJimmy.

Hugo: – To liven things up in any social event, especially in Hearst.

Katie: – A co-panelist on a chip judging contest.

Jim: – As a partner in a high intensity karaoke round robin. Jim – Any time the internet breaks down, as my real life WikiJimmy.

Hugo: Martine – To learn things up in any social event, especially in Hearst.