

THE COMMUNICATOR

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY'S EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

April/May 1999



Ken Putt(L), recently hired chef/manager of the new University Club, and Dr. Michael Stavely, chair of the club's governing board, pose for a picture in the

club's new facility on the fifth floor of the Arts and Administration Building annex.

University Club to open its doors in May

The new University Club is set to open during the first week of May. The new enterprise is self-financing and operated by an elected board. The club will continue in the tradition of the old Faculty/Staff Club, which was housed in the Junior Common Room. All faculty and staff were recently sent a membership application form. Membership is open to all full and part-time employees of the university and the fee has been set at a flat rate of \$65 per year (about \$2.50 per pay day). Ken Putt, the club's chef/manager, says the club will be open for morning coffee and will serve lunch. A small selection of wines and beers will also be available from the bar. The new facility is located in the former cafeteria on the fifth floor of the Arts and Administration Annex. In addition to the larger site, the club's cuisine is bound to be popular: Mr. Putt has worked in the kitchens of some of the better restaurants in the city including The Fishing Admiral, The Flake House and Pier 17. For more information about the University Club, please call Dr. Michael Staveley, Geography, 737-8999, or reach him by e-mail, staveley@morgan.ucs.mun.ca.

Contents

- [From the President](#)
- [Campus Life](#)
- [Human Resources](#)
- [Career Scene](#)
- [Safety Notes](#)
- [From the Garden](#)

You can perform a full-text keyword search on [this issue](#) or on [all on-line issues](#) of the [Communicator](#).

| [Memorial Home Page](#) | [Communicator Home Page](#) | [Division of University Relations Home Page](#)

What's in a name?

The university is currently defending itself in a lawsuit on the issue of an honours science degree with a specialty in "software engineering." This degree was approved by the Senate on Oct. 8, 1996. Because the issue has escalated in recent months, readers may be interested in how it came about.

Several years ago the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) wrote about 40 universities, warning that they should not undertake academic programs labelled as software engineering outside their faculties of engineering. Memorial University did not receive this letter; whether by design or oversight we do not know.

At the time, our Senate was discussing the offering of a software engineering option within Computer Science, a department within the Faculty of Science. Our Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science argued against this proposal. After a long and sometimes acrimonious debate within Senate and Senate committees, including two special committees struck for the purpose of attempting to reconcile the issue, Senate voted to approve a software engineering option within the Computer Science Department within the Faculty of Science.

The degree is a bachelor of science degree. The degree certificate would not contain the words "software engineering." We have offered that both the university Calendar and the student transcript would contain the words "Completion of the Honours in Computer Science (Software Engineering) Program does not qualify persons to hold the designation Professional Engineer as defined by various provincial Acts governing the engineering profession."

You will appreciate therefore that this is not an engineering degree and that no accreditation is sought, and further that graduates are specifically told that they are not professional engineers as a consequence of graduating from this program.

We were in communication with CCPE during the many months of debate and discussion within the university Senate, and we have done our best to make it clear to CCPE that academic programs, admissions, grading of courses, and the awarding of diplomas, certificates, and degrees are all matters that are entirely within the purview of the Senate. The authority of Senate seems to be widely misunderstood within the engineering community outside the university.

At an early stage, we suggested to CCPE that this was a matter for national attention, given our growing awareness of the number of universities that were offering such courses and degrees outside Faculties of Engineering (including some which didn't have Faculties of Engineering) and the fact that some universities had already produced graduates. We received no response to this suggestion, and shortly

after we were sued in federal court for infringement of a trademark allegedly owned by CCPE and/or the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Newfoundland (APEGN).

Given the fact that we had tried very hard over a long period to bring this matter to an amicable conclusion within the university, given the fact that we were unable to do so, and given the fact that a number of other universities were already offering similar programs, we really had no choice but to defend ourselves. The issue had by then evolved into a challenge of the right of universities to develop their own academic offerings, and would be seen by many as a direct challenge to the longstanding principle of academic freedom. Given that the matter was and is one of national rather than local proportions, we approached the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada for support, both moral and financial, and we have received both in full measure.

Meanwhile, subsequent to the lawsuit being filed, we met with CCPE, APEGN and the Association of Universities and Colleges (AUCC) in Ottawa to once again attempt to convince the engineering community that this matter had to be taken up at a national level with a view to creating a code of best practice, or recommended protocols, or whatever. We suggested that the legal manoeuvrings be put on hold while such a discussion took place. This was refused by CCPE/APEGN.

We had thus resigned ourselves to awaiting the outcome of the court proceedings scheduled for September 1999. We remain convinced that this issue is being dealt with in the wrong place and by the wrong process, but we are not in court by choice.

Meanwhile, APEGN and CCPE recently combined to stop the process of accreditation for Memorial's engineering programs for reasons that have absolutely nothing to do with the structure and content of those programs. Some have described this as unprofessional and unethical; indeed an abuse of the public trust conferred upon APEGN by provincial legislation. Whatever prospect we had of bringing this issue together within the university — and given enough time I believe there was at least a prospect of doing so — has become immeasurably more complicated by the combination of a lawsuit and the subsequent escalation, even before the lawsuit was heard.

The university's attempts to deal with this issue internally and nationally have been persistent and genuine. Regrettably, the approach by APEGN/CCPE has been confrontational from the start, with the confrontation now having escalated to the point where the room for manoeuvre on our part has just about disappeared, so that we are left with little choice except to defend our interests. On the matter of accreditation, these are our students' interests, so the decision is automatic.

We and AUCC, mainly AUCC, will spend at least \$400,000 on legal costs in defending ourselves in one lawsuit and seeking injunctive relief in another court application on the accreditation issue. We are not the only university in Canada offering software engineering outside faculties of engineering. We were not the first. We still don't know why we were singled out.

A.W. May, OC
President and Vice - Chancellor

Campus Life

Ask Me...

about students at Memorial

An information column provided by the Student Development Office of Student Affairs and services

Marilyn Moore

Anglican/United Campus Chaplain, Student Development

"The time has come," the walrus said, "to speak of many things ...," (Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland). Not the least of these things is the help a strong faith can give to students who are struggling with preparations for exams — some of which will make a difference to whether a student will graduate this year — and getting papers finished and handed in on time. Do not get me wrong, faith cannot replace diligent study, conscientious work and class attendance. Neither is faith a Band-Aid that will get students through exams for which they have not studied!

The topics of religion and spirituality are often neglected, sometimes consciously omitted, or even taboo in the realms of higher education. This does not mean that these topics are seen as unimportant, but with multi-faith considerations and denominational differences it is difficult for faculty and staff to know what to say when it comes to questions of faith. Members of the chaplaincy can provide guidance in these areas, and are open to individual and group discussions.

Participation in faith groups can help students deal with personal and religious issues, as well as lifestyle choices and personal and moral issues. In order to enhance and build on the presence of Campus Ministry at Memorial University, the following need to be considered:

- The needs of a multi-dimensional university body that includes ethnic minorities, multi-faith practitioners, returning students, commuters, students older than average, single parent families, faculty, staff and administration.
- The need for a strong faith that unites social and personal concerns, that addresses the need for quiet and communal prayer, and involvement in social concerns.
- Questions about values, faith, technology,

and professional ethics need to be addressed. The university needs to be challenged: it needs to educate for social justice and social responsibility as well as the job market.

The breakdown of parochialism needs to be encouraged, in part, by opening dialogue across cultural, racial and religious lines. There needs to be support for cross-campus involvement and for participation in regional and national student movements that can lead to an exploration of relationships among individuals locally and internationally.

Support for faith and religious issues is available at Memorial. Students can be referred to any of the chaplains in Campus Ministry, which is located in Room T-3036 in the Thomson Student Centre. For further information, please call 737-4376 (Anglican/United), 737-4374 (Pentecostal), 737-8589 (Roman Catholic), and 737-4375 (Salvation Army). Although the chaplains are affiliated with different Christian denominations, we are there for students of any faith or none. Our Web site www.ucs.mun.ca/~campmin/ provides links to each of us. We offer a friendly ear, a place to discuss a variety of topics, and a place to meet with friends or to meet new friends.

Editor's note: Tom Brophy, Student Affairs, was the author of the previous article in this series titled 'What are the benefits of getting involved?' which appeared in the Vol. 13, No. 1 issue of The Communicator.

Needed: a few good party organizers

Monty Green, manager of Employer and Employee Relations, is looking for a few good party organizers. Monty believes that the university's 50th anniversary should be celebrated by employees and that a campus party can only complement the long list of other activities planned for this special year.

"I was thinking of a big outdoor party on campus in late summer, sometime between Aug. 15 and Sept. 8, Monty told *The Communicator*. "Most people will be back from summer vacation at that time. Entertainment and some light snacks was what I had in mind. It would be chance for all of us to get together and recognize that 50 years is quite an accomplishment. We would charge a low ticket price and all profits would go to the Opportunity Fund."

Of course, the event can't go ahead without some help. If you are interested in volunteering please call Monty at 737-7405 or via e-mail at mgreen@morgan.ucs.mun.ca by May 1, 1999. Details of the event, if the volunteers materialize, will be forthcoming.

Human Resources

Award honours contributions of employees

Since 1995, the President's Award for Exemplary Service has been awarded to administrative staff members to recognize their commitment to service excellence within the university community. The award honours contributions in several areas: service, support and professionalism; excellent performance in the job; extending help to students, faculty, fellow employees, parents, and university guests; and involvement with committees or organizations. The awards are a way for the university to recognize staff members' accomplishments, resourcefulness, initiative, creativity, leadership, responsiveness in delivering service, and dedication to high standards as a member of the Memorial University staff. Up to a total of five awards are presented each year.

Suggestions for improving the nomination and selection process for this award are welcomed. Many academic and administrative units have indicated that a September nomination time frame, with a Sept. 30 deadline, is not practical. The nomination process has therefore been moved to the spring and it is now time recognize those members of our staff for doing an outstanding job by nominating such individuals for the President's Award for Exemplary Service.

To qualify for the award, candidates will be administrative and support staff of Memorial University and its agencies who have worked at the university for at least three years but who have not been a previous winner. Nominations may come from alumni, faculty, staff, students and other members of the university community.

Nomination forms will be available April 1 from the Office of the Vice-President (Administration and Finance) and Legal Counsel, Arts and Administration Building, Room A-2024.

Even if you have nominated someone before, nominate that person again. If you would like information about the awards call Marilyn Thompson, manager of Organizational Effectiveness, Human Resources, 737-4627 or by e-mail marilynt@morgan.ucs.mun.ca.

Previous recipients:

1995: Paul Barnes, Earth Sciences; Daphne Corbett, Physics; Dr. Lenka Husa, Animal Care Services; Roxanne Millan, Faculty of Arts; and Michael Rayment, Computer Science.

1996: James Cooper, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science; Mary Halliday, Fisheries and Marine Institute; Patrick Hannon, Chemistry; Gary McManus, Geography;

and Harold Squires, Budgets and Audits.

1997: Carolyn Emerson, Biology; David Kirkland, Council of the Student's Union; Steve Milway, Psychology; Shirley Moulton, Comptroller's Office; and Judith Smith, Sociology.

1998: Christine Burke, Faculty of Business Administration; Monty Green, Human Resources; Vera Griffin, Faculty of Medicine; Gerard Hayes, Student Affairs and Services; and Nora Kennedy, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College.

The award includes: a citation which is presented at a president's reception, a personalized framed scroll, an award of \$1000 and permanent recognition in a university display.

Employee Profile:

Linda Carroll Student Affairs Officer, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College



If there's one task that can be frustrating for students these days, it's cutting a path through the red tape of student aid. That's where Linda Carroll comes in. As Sir Wilfred Grenfell College's only student affairs officer, Linda is responsible for helping students get the best and quickest service possible when dealing with student aid issues.

"I help the students through the maze of bureaucracy and make student aid seem a little less daunting," says Linda, who moved to Corner Brook about 16 years ago with her husband, David, the chair of Grenfell's environmental studies program. Linda began her career at Grenfell in 1989 as a high school liaison officer, and remained in that position until 1991, when she took up her current post. She holds an education degree and is now completing the final course toward her MA in education leadership.

"The best part of my job is getting to know the students and watching them grow and develop over the years, especially now that they stay here longer," says Linda, referring to the 11 full degree programs that Grenfell offers.

A mother of two, Richard, 18, and Joey, 15, Linda has also immersed herself in the activities of the community around her. Like many west coast residents, she recently took on the task of becoming a volunteer for the 1999 Canada Winter Games.

"Grenfell played a significant role in the Games," she says, noting the facilities provided to the 1999 Canada Winter Games Host Society for sport venues, team meeting rooms and sleeping quarters. "I thought it was important to get involved in an event of this magnitude. It was really exciting to be a part of it."

Linda was the co-chairperson of the Games' entertainment unit for the Athletes Village, as well as an enthusiastic participant in the opening and closing ceremonies.

"The highlight for me was to be a part of (west coast composer) Ged Blackmore's group," she says, adding the group was responsible for the music and dancing portions of the ceremonies. "It was a major endeavour for a small community like ours to take on. I was glad to represent not only my province and region, but also the Grenfell community which has become a meaningful and challenging part of my life."

New vacation entitlement policy approved

The university's senior executive has approved a new policy on vacation entitlement. Up to now new employees appointed to permanent positions were not entitled to annual leave based on service with Memorial or with the provincial government. This meant that most new employees began accruing annual leave at the rate of 15 or 20 days per year even though Memorial employees who accepted positions with the government had their university service recognized. Raelene Thomas, leave management and quality improvement co-ordinator, noted that the policy could conceivably benefit a number of Memorial employees by earning their vacation at higher accrual rates earlier in their career with Memorial.

The policy is applicable to permanent administrative employees only, including permanent sessionals, unionized and non-bargaining employees, management and senior administrators, including those at the Marine Institute and Grenfell College. The new policy does not apply to academic employees, employees of agencies, or academic administrators. The new policy has no effect on severance, redundancy payment or pension entitlements.

Employees with at least six months continuous service in a position with a government department,

agency, board or commission, with less than a 30-day break between leaving employment with the government and beginning employment with Memorial, will have their provincial government service recognized. Employees with at least six months' continuous service in a permanent or sessional position at Memorial are not subject to the 30-day break in service.

The policy and an application form have been circulated to deans, directors and department heads and are also available on the Web at <http://www.mun.ca/humanres/updates> Reasonable proof of prior service must accompany all requests for recognition of service. The Department of Human Resources will process all requests and notify the employee of whether the prior service will be recognized. Adjustments, if the service is recognized, will be effective the first of the month following the date the request is received in the Department of Human Resources. There is no retroactive application of the policy or recognition of service.

Understanding your statement of vacation entitlement

The Department of Human Resources regularly issues a Statement of Vacation Entitlement to each employee, and this generates a number of questions from employees. The key to interpreting the statement is to remember that it is a "snap shot" of your leave balances as of the day the report is generated. Below is an explanation of each of the categories of leaves for a typical employee.

Assuming the following: Last fiscal year - 1998-1999; Current fiscal year - 1999-2000; and, Next fiscal year - 2000-2001.

CARRIED FROM PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR - the year prior to the year printed on the top line of the report. Current reports have been issued for fiscal year 1999-2000.

You will see:

- a positive number if you did not use all of your 1998-99 entitlement,
- a negative number if you used more than your 1998-99 entitlement,
- a zero if you used all of your 1998-99 entitlement.

ENTITLEMENT FOR CURRENT FISCAL YEAR - this is the leave that you earned in the past fiscal year for use in the current fiscal year.

ENTITLEMENT EARNED FOR NEXT FISCAL YEAR - this is the leave that you are earning in this year for use in the next fiscal year.

VACATION TAKEN IN CURRENT FISCAL YEAR - this is the leave that you have taken in the period April 1, 1999, to March 31, 2000, inclusive.

VACATION PAID IN CURRENT YEAR - applies only to employees whose contracts have lapsed without being rehired or employees who have been laid off.

VACATION HOURS REMAINING IN CURRENT FISCAL YEAR - represents the amount of leave you earned last year for use in this year, minus the amount of leave you have taken in this year.

Performance management initiative will undergo further development

The Department of Human Resources has advised the campus community that based on feedback received about the performance management initiative, plans for the program are being reviewed and will undergo further development. The development process will continue until at least spring 2000.

Dr. George Hickman, director of Human Resources, said that there has been a tremendous amount of feedback about the initiative. "This feedback has been invaluable in identifying key issues in the introduction of a formal appraisal system for non-academic staff members," Dr. Hickman said. "The responses are welcomed and appreciated."

He explained that a close analysis of feedback led the department to decide that the performance management process was going to take more time than was earlier anticipated. "We are going to slow the process and make the necessary revisions and bring it forward again when the timing is appropriate," he explained.

However, he also stressed that his department is committed to the concept of performance management. With this goal in mind, pilot projects pertaining to the initiative will continue and the draft policy, methodology for data collection and report writing process will be further revised and refined. Dr. Hickman also said that his department will increase the opportunities for related supervisory training.

Career Scene

Career Changes

The following career changes have received approval since the last issue of *The Communicator*. They are provided by Human Resources and are current at the time of publication.

ACADEMIC

Appointments

Timothy Steeves, Music, assistant professor,
Aug. 1, 1999.

Dr. Iakov Afanassiev, Physics and Physical Oceanography, assistant professor,
June 1, 1999.

Dr. Paul Myers, Physics and Physical Oceanography, assistant professor,
June 1, 1999.

Dr. Norah Duggan, Medicine,
assistant professor, April 1, 1999.

Dr. Bridget Fernandez, Medicine,
assistant professor, Aug. 1, 1999.

Dr. Mohamed Ravaliala, Medicine,
April 1, 1999.

Dr. Peter Moosbrugger, Medicine,
clinical assistant professor (stipendiary), April 1, 1999.

Dr. Axel Meisen, Engineering and Applied Science, professor, Sept. 1, 1999.

Term Appointments

Dr. Heather Flynn, Medicine, clinical assistant professor (stipendiary),
March 29, 1999.

Dr. Azza Hamed, Pediatrics, Medicine, clinical assistant professor (stipendiary), March 15, 1999.

Dr. John Sheldon, Medicine,
clinical assistant professor (stipendiary), April 1, 1999.

Appointments Other

Dr. Gunther Hartmann, Political Science, Head, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. Banfield Younghusband, Genetics, Medicine, Interim Chair, March 15, 1999.

Dr. Wang Junzhe, Nursing, Visiting Scholar, April 1, 1999.

Cross Appointments

Dr. Charlie Randell, C-CORE to Engineering and Applied Science,
April 1, 1999.

Dr. Sharon Buehler, Community Health
to Discipline of Medicine, Medicine, March 15, 1999.

Dr. Margaret Burton, Biology to
Ocean Sciences Centre, April 1, 1999.

Dr. P. Dabinett, Biology to Ocean
Sciences Centre, April 1, 1999.

Dr. Edward Miller, Biology to Ocean Sciences Centre, April 1, 1999.

Dr. W. Montevicchi, Psychology to
Ocean Sciences Centre, April 1, 1999.

Dr. J. Robinson, Biochemistry to
Ocean Sciences Centre, April 1, 1999.

Tenures

Dr. Howard Heys, Engineering and Applied Science, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. S. M. R. Adluri, Engineering and Applied Science, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. Chan Ching, Engineering and Applied Science, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. L. Phillips, Pharmacy, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. Nancy Dahn, Music, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. Peter Cornish, Counselling Centre, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. Pierre Rouleau, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. Rebecca Law, Pharmacy, Sept. 1, 1999.

Promotions

Dr. S. M. R. Adluri, Engineering and Applied Science, associate professor, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. Chan Ching, Engineering and Applied Science, associate professor, Sept. 1, 1999.

Dr. L. Phillips, Pharmacy, associate professor, Sept. 1, 1999.

Retirements

Calvin Hender, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Aug. 31, 1999.

Correction to previous issue

Tenure

Dr. Marc Thackray, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Sept. 1, 1999.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Contractual to Permanent Appointments

Linda Sturge, Science, intermediate secretary, Dec. 17, 1998.

Promotions

Eileen Hayes, Science, senior secretary, Dec. 17, 1998.

Retirements

Helger Eckenweber, Technical Services, technologist III, Dec. 4, 1998.

Phyllis Fitzgerald, Marine Institute, library technician III, Feb. 26, 1998.

Leo Galway, Medicine, audiovisual assistant, Nov. 4, 1999.

David Snow, Office of the Registrar, contractual employee, Feb. 14, 1999.

Safety Notes

Fire drills necessary part of fire safety

In the past weeks, and continuing into the spring, fire drills are being conducted in all major campus buildings. These drills are held to identify potential problems in building evacuation, check response times and to familiarize building occupants with fire evacuation procedures. Do you know what to do when the fire alarm sounds?

On hearing the fire alarm:

- Proceed to the nearest exit and evacuate.
- Walk, don't run.

If you are the last person leaving the room and time permits, turn off gas and other utilities.

- Close the door behind you.
- Don't delay to pick up personal items.

Once outside, stand clear of the building. Do not re-enter the building until advised by Campus Enforcement and Patrol.

The following two items are critically important:

- Know in advance the evacuation route to the nearest exit.
- Always consider an alternate route in case the primary exit is blocked. (Evacuation routes can be determined from emergency evacuation plans posted throughout campus buildings and employees should review them periodically.)

Protect our waterways

During a heavy rainfall we've all noticed the runoff into the street grates. But where does the water go then? The grates are part of a storm drain system that flows into a catch basin, usually a local stream or

pond. Unfortunately, other materials also find their way into the system. Runoff carries with it anything that will float, dissolve or be moved along. Problems can arise when hazardous products such as gasoline, oil and soap are carried in the water. Such items can upset the balance of life in our waterways.

On campus we are particularly cognizant of areas such as Long Pond and Burton's Pond and the impact pollution would have on the fish and waterfowl that are a part of these ecosystems. Prevention and early intervention are the best defense against this type of pollution.

Never pour hazardous liquids down the storm drain. If you spill hazardous materials onto a roadway or parking lot, or if you see such a spill, try to divert the flow away from the storm drains.

We can all do our part to help protect our waterways. During Environment Week — May 30 to June 5 — the safety office will hold demonstrations to show members of the campus community other ways they can contribute to a greener tomorrow. Keep an eye out for our announcements.

Follow these back-saving tips

With spring fast approaching, many of us have thoughts of working in our gardens. Bending and digging in the garden can put undue strain on your back. To help you stay healthy here are a few back protection tips:

- Take time to warm up and stretch inside the house before you go out.
 - When lifting, bend at the knees so you use your legs, not your back.
 - When shoveling, use your thigh as a fulcrum; let your arms and legs do most of the work.
 - Move closer to a new work area, instead of reaching, this will avoid putting your spine in an awkward, twisting position.
-

From The Garden

How to debug your houseplants

Carl White
Botanical Gardens

So what's bugging your houseplants? The following is a list of possible suspects and some ways to curb their influence.

Aphids are 2-3 mm long, soft bodied insects that feed on plant sap and often infect stressed plants. They can be winged or wingless and can be translucent green or black in colour. They congregate in bunches or colonies on the underside of leaves and new shoots. Infested plants become yellow and twisted with curled leaves that eventually fall off. Growth is stunted and, in bad cases, new buds are poorly formed. Control can be achieved in several ways; pick off the adults you can see and spray thoroughly with water to remove the eggs. Safer's Insecticidal Soap at 20 ml/l of water or Pyrethrum 0.2 per cent according to label instructions should give good control. (*Editor's note: Pesticides must be used with care; readers should refer to the How to Spray section below for safety hints.*)

Fungus gnats are 3-6 mm flies. The adults are harmless but the young maggots live in the soil and feed on organic matter. They thrive in moist soil and affected plants will be stunted and foliage may fall off. The best control is to remove plants from the soil, wash the roots and repot in sterilized soil. I wouldn't worry about these guys too much, for in all my years dealing with plants I have yet to see damage caused by fungus gnat maggots.

Mealy bugs are tiny, white insects that look like tufts of lint. They are another of the 'sap suckers' and bad infestations will cause stunted growth and eventually kill the plant. You will find them on the underside of leaves and where the leaves branch off from the main stem of the plant. Use the same controls as for aphids.

Mites are generally too small to be seen without a magnifying glass. They are brownish in colour and look like dust. Mites suck plant juices and leave foliage speckled and yellow. If not controlled the leaves will turn brown and fall off, and new growth will be stunted with deformed buds. Spider mites produce webs on the leaves to hide and feed under. Plants growing in hot, dry locations are most susceptible to mite attack. Take control measures as soon as you notice these pests because mites multiply very rapidly. Try Safer's Insecticidal Soap at 20 ml/l of water or two treatments of Malathion 50 per cent at 2 ml/l of water, 10 days apart.

Scale insects are oval bugs up to 4 mm in diameter that don't resemble any other pest. When I first encountered them I thought they were a fungus of some sort. Nope, they are bugs all right, with a brown shell-like covering. They can be found on stems and leaves and suck juices from the plant causing poor, stunted growth. They attach themselves to the plant and move very slowly. This means you can scrub them off with a toothbrush dipped in rubbing alcohol or dab them with alcohol using a Q-tip and pick them off by hand.

Springtails are the little, white bugs that you see hopping around the soil surface after you water. They range in size from microscopic to about 5 mm. They love wet soil and feed on decayed organic matter in the soil. They may attack tender new growth but prefer material that is already dead. If you have them you could be overwatering. They are not a big threat but since nobody likes bugs in the house try treating the soil with Pyrethrum or Malathion at the concentrations mentioned earlier. Transplanting to new sterile soil after washing the roots is another way to control them.

Thrips are small, thin pests, the young being yellow and the adults brown or black. The adults are winged and tend to fly around the plant when disturbed. They rasp the plant tissue and suck the juice, leaving silver specks on the surface. Their black droppings are small but you can still see them on a badly infested plant. Females leave a small scar on the tissue where they deposit their eggs. Decent control can be achieved with the same materials used on aphids.

Whiteflies are small pests that hide and feed on the undersides of leaves. They suck the plant juices, leaving foliage pale or discoloured. These little guys are hard to get rid of because they fly around and seem to build up immunity to insecticide as fast as you can apply it. You have to trick them by spraying Malathion 50 per cent at 2 ml/l of water, then about five days later apply Pyrethrum 0.2 per cent (follow label) then a week later hit them with the Malathion again. Goodbye whitefly.

How to Spray

Don't "spray and pray". Pesticide applications, especially indoors should be a last resort. Remember that these substances are poisons and treat them as such. Whenever you apply an insecticide you must follow the directions on the label.

Read the full label as many products list the plants that it is safe to use the product on. Ferns and cacti are two groups that can suffer from certain chemical treatments. If your plant is not listed, you can try a little of the chemical on a few leaves and wait a couple of days to see if any damage occurs. If the instructions say "2 ml/l of water" then you must use that formulation; 4 ml/l is not twice as good or twice as fast. Don't set the infested plant on the kitchen table and spray. Never apply chemicals around fish tanks, pet dishes or food preparation areas. Treat the plants outside if possible and if it is too cold, use the basement or the garage. Another trick you might want to try is using a spray booth to treat your houseplants. Place a large cardboard box on its end, put the plant inside and tape the lid flaps shut. Cut a small (2 inch) U-shaped slit on two sides of the box. This will create two flaps you can fold up to apply the insecticide. You can now place the nozzle of your sprayer in the open flaps and spray, containing all the spray in the box. Plants should be

sprayed until they just start to drip. Leave plant in the box until it is dry.

Never place a plant that has just been sprayed in direct sunlight. Sadly, the best control method for a severely-infested houseplant is to throw it out. You can always take a cutting, clean all the critters off it, and start a new plant. Many insecticides now have formulations for houseplants and some like Safer's Insecticidal Soap and Pyrethrum come in their own sprayer bottles. This is handy for the occasional user and eliminates mixing and cleaning the spray equipment. So don't be bugged. Next issue we will look at some houseplant diseases and control measures.
