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Issue 23

AMRC Newsletter

Alexandro Malaspina Research Centre, Malaspina University College, Nanaimo, BC, Canada

Heritage Research Group Lectures

In February and March AMRC hosted three free public lectures organised by its recently formed Heritage Research Group.

On February 14 Barry Gough spoke about his latest book, *Fortune's a River* (profiled in our last issue), adding interesting further detail to its findings about the Canadian rôle in the exploration of the Columbia River.

Historian Michael Bliss, who is University Professor-Emeritus at the University of Toronto, visited on March 10, and spoke about

Failed and Changing Dreams of Canada.

The final talk, on March 13, was given by Kevin Neary, a former Royal BC Museum historian who has been putting his skills as a researcher to good socio-political use in support of the claims of local First Nations to aboriginal title to the land they occupy.

In the Canadian justice system, such claims depend legally on many factors, including the uninterrupted occupation of the territory in question.

While oral history has been recognized by the courts as a relevant form of testimony, questions have been raised about the extent to which it shows that indigenous people engaged in the practices of possession of and jurisdiction over land.

Neary's rôle has been to show that the written records of European visitors, notable those of the Spanish, leave it in no doubt that such practices existed at the time of contact, thus bolstering the claims to title.

Contact Info:

John Black
Liberal Studies Dept.
Malaspina University
College
900 Fifth Street
Nanaimo, BC
V9R 5S5
Canada

Tel: +1-250-740-6495

Fax: +1-250-740-6458

black@mala.ca

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Personnel News

- Research assistants Lorill Ireland and María Soto de Podriske are coming to the end of their terms at the Centre, having translated all the Spanish letters and newspaper articles they worked on. Two further documents are in progress, and it is hoped that it will be possible to extend their work into the next academic year.

- Research Associate Russell McNeil will speak about Marcus Aurelius and Stoicism at the 14th annual conference of the Association for Core Texts and Courses in Plymouth, MA.

- Profs. Laurie Meijer-Drees and Melody Martin have been appointed Teaching Scholars for 2008-9 in the Malaspina Teaching and Learning Centre.

- Prof. Lisa MacLean has been granted Research Leave during 2008-9 to continue work on a multimedia visual art project entitled *Ruination*. As part of her leave Prof. MacLean will take up two artist-in-residence posts in Turkey.

- Prof. Cheryl Warsh of the Heritage Research Group has been instrumental, with her spouse Michael, in setting up

the Warsh Law Corporation Undergraduate Research Award. The Award will support a fourth-year Malaspina student engaged in research and planning to continue to graduate study.

- Director John Black is leading a study group to Prague in June and July. While there, he will visit the Náprstek Museum in search of materials related to Tadeáš Haenke, the Bohemian botanist who was a member of the Malaspina Expedition.

AMRC Website: web.mala.bc.ca/black/amrc/index.htm