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WHEN WE TALK ABOUT COMMUNITY

BY MIKE MCNENY

ONE NIGHT A FEW YEARS AGO I HELPED TO PUT ON A CAMPUS LECTURE BY a key figure behind the Hubble Space Telescope project. He was brought to town by the physics and astronomy department to talk about the marvelous discoveries delivered by the orbiting eye on the universe. One of the larger lecture halls had been booked but half an hour before the scheduled start of the talk, all of the 300-plus seats in the room were occupied. More and more people gathered outside the theatre. In the end, the speaker obliged to deliver his talk twice in the same night, a double-header, in order to accommodate the huge amount of interest.

That experience taught me something more than just to book a larger room next time. The enormous turn-out demonstrated what a university can offer its community. And it was a measure of the demand from the community for access to stimulating learning experiences.

There are many ways in which the exchange of ideas entwines the wider community and its university. At its heart is the dynamic relationship between a learner and a professor which renews itself with zest each year when classes begin. As time goes by and when degree requirements are completed, those students cross the convocation stage and take their university experience with them to wherever life leads. In this way, the university community is an expanding galaxy of ideas and interests, opportunities and rewards.

One role of the Torch is to reflect the ways the people of this university shape the places where they live, care for each other, set down roots, and endure the daily work of life and thought. They have stories of individual effort, motivation and expertise that contribute to our sense of place. They are what we talk about when we talk about community.

Students learn to interpret course material from professors but some of the real lessons at university come from other students. We need your help in telling these stories in an upcoming Torch feature tentatively entitled Student Teachers. It will be a series of first-person stories of experiences—in the classroom or not—between students that had a long-lasting impact. They might be heart-breaking, inspirational, or humourous but most of all they need to evoke the special kinds of learning that can occur between students. Write to Student Teachers, UVic Torch Alumni Magazine, PO Box 1700 Stn CSC, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2. Or send e-mail to mmcneney@uvic.ca. Submissions should be between 400 and 800 words and must arrive no later than July 15, 2002. It will be great to hear from you.

MAILBOX

Missing Victoria

Aislinn Hunter’s article “A Campus at Large” (Torch, Autumn 2001) was the best I have read in years concerning the UVic and Victoria community “affair” which has grown so much.

I arrived in Victoria from Brazil in August 1961 to start studying at the Lansdowne campus of Victoria College. I lived, studied and worked summers in Victoria for several years. After about 18 months as the Canadian Press correspondent at the B.C. legislative assembly it was off to Vancouver and the western bureau of CP in the big city.

But my family missed Victoria and went back for a few days whenever possible to some of the same places Aislinn mentions: the Inner Harbour, Bastion Square, lower Johnson St., and beaches like Gonzales and Willows to “cozy up to the shoreline” like the city itself. So places like Rebar and Bohemetea sound new to me, but certainly worth a visit at the next opportunity.

PETER CARL ARMSTRONG (BA ’68), ANGRA DOS REIS, BRAZIL

Letters welcome

Put pen to paper (or fingertips to keyboard) and send a letter to the Torch. We are always happy to get mail from readers, whether they’re critical or contented. Our address is the UVic Torch, PO. Box 1700, Stn CSC, Victoria B.C. V8W 2Y2. Fax us at (250) 721-8955 or send e-mail to mmcneney@uvic.ca. We reserve the right to edit letters to make them fit our pages.

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UNIVERSITY governors have approved a budget that raises tuition fees 30 per cent. Control over tuition levels was returned to the governors by the provincial government after it lifted the six-year tuition freeze in February.

The university says government funding isn’t keeping up with costs. “We have been put in a very, very difficult situation,” says President David Turpin, adding that the only solutions were to generate new revenue or cut programs. The latter was ruled out since the university has made cuts in five of the last seven years. Tuition is expected to increase again in each of the next two years when UVic will be required to take in more students with the same government grant in 2003-04 and reduced funding the following year. Full-time undergraduate tuition is now $2,796, up $644. Full-time graduate tuition rises $826 to $3,579 per year. Differential fees to cover extra program costs and fund improvements in business and engineering will also increase over and above the general tuition hike. Differential fees in law will increase next year.

The university added $2.5 million in student aid so that 45 per cent more students can get scholarships, bursaries and work study positions—“an important component,” says Turpin, for keeping UVic accessible to qualified students from all backgrounds.

Students’ Society Chairperson Jaime Matten says students feel “a lot of anxiety and nervousness about how they’re going to finance their education. It affects the quality of the educational experience when you’re trying to balance two or three part-time jobs...the trouble is that tuition will probably double over the next three years.”

Budget approval followed a five-hour board meeting attended by 71 students (many of whom joined a February rally at the legislature, see photo). Onlookers surrounded the meeting table, rattled macaroni boxes, sounded a siren, and set off a fire alarm that forced adjournment to another building.

Says Matten, “Students are very aware of the tough bind that the university is facing. The B.C. government is asking them to do more with less. But students can’t bear the brunt of it.”

FREEZE OUT, TUITION UP

DAVID CLAUS used to get a ribbing from his friends when, waiting for water to heat up for a pasta dinner, he couldn’t help explaining the thermal dynamics of boiling water. The man has a natural feel for technology, gets great grades, loves the outdoors and is committed to helping others. All together, he has exactly what it takes to be a Rhodes Scholar.

This fall Claus (BEng ’01) will attend the University of Oxford as UVic’s second consecutive Rhodes recipient. The scholarship is worth $100,000 and promises innumerable experiences and opportunities.

Claus spent a co-op work term in Uganda during his mechanical engineering studies. The relief project in which he was involved improved the water system in the town of Ndeija.

“I went into engineering to gain skills to help people. It was rewarding to be able to bring in the water and really change people’s lives. Some of them would spend half a day, every day collecting water. But after the system was put in they just have to walk 20 feet to a tap.”

Claus expects his Oxford studies will lead to more work in the developing world. “An MSc in robotics and sensors will make me employable but it will also make it possible to work internationally...wherever there is demand.”

Ready to go anywhere. It comes from his upbringing. The son of a pastor, Claus was born in the U.S. and spent his early years in an inner-city neighbourhood of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The family is now in Prince George after stops in Calgary and Campbell River.

Fellow Rhodes Scholar Kate Ballem (BSc ’01) began doctoral studies last year at the Oxford BabyLab investigating early language learning. “I’m enjoying every minute of it,” says Ballem. “The first term can be a bit overwhelming simply because there are so many new things to do. It can take some time to find a balance that works.”

OXFORD BOUND

RICHARD WARRINGTON PHOTO

RINGSIDE

DAVE MAH PHOTO
The ice at GM Place, home of the Vancouver Canucks, has never been an NHL player’s dream. Until this past season. The basketball Grizzlies left town, the building was kept cooler and less humid, and a chemical analysis of the rink’s flood water led to huge improvements at ice level.

Jason Hartley (BEng ’94) can claim a good chunk of credit for the better ice. As chief engineer at GM Place, Hartley and a staff of 20 are responsible for the “back of house” operations. “The business we’re in is all about excitement and providing the best venue. It’s all about putting on a show.”

But the ice has always been a problem. When the NHL challenged teams to improve their ice conditions—for the sake of the game and to prevent injuries—they suggested looking at the water.

Hartley accepted the challenge. He compared Vancouver’s water to samples from some of the better rinks. What he found was that the coastal reservoir water is almost pure next to the artesian well water used on the better skating surfaces around the NHL. So, the next step was to add a mixture of salts, carbonates and sands to the Vancouver water.

Harder water has meant harder ice. The players pivot without ice chips exploding from their blades and passes are crisper. In league rankings compiled from game reports by teams and on-ice officials, the quality of GM Place ice rose this season to the league’s top three.

Hartley started working with sports venues during a co-op work placement with the Victoria Commonwealth Games. He has been with GM Place since it opened in 1995—a dream job for a lifelong hockey fan.

“When working here, one of the great benefits is NHL hockey. Sometimes you have to pinch yourself. Friends say it must be great to get to go to every game. But I find when I’m (at the rink) I’m more consumed by the job, so usually I prefer to watch from home.”

It’s no wonder Izzy’s hair stands straight up. The clown persona of Shannan Calcutt (BFA ’97) is a spontaneous blur as she enters the Phoenix Theatre in white make-up and a red nose, a yellow life preserver over her wedding gown.

She blows her whistle and yells to the audience. “I can’t do it! I just can’t,” she says, panting and vigorously pumping her handbag. “Okay here I go. No wait! I can’t! I can’t!”

The audience is immediately involved and it doesn’t take long before someone shouts: “You can do it Izzy!” They’re giving her a count down as she musters courage to take the stage. It’s intense and emotionally draining to be part of It’s me, Only Better!—a zany, bittersweet story of Izzy’s quest for true love.

Calcutt’s trilogy of one-woman shows has won awards and acclaim at North American comedy and fringe festivals since 1999. That’s because there’s more to Izzy than your typical clown.

“I want people to come to the show to laugh and be entertained, but it’s also my goal to make them leave thinking,” Calcutt said before a recent performance on campus. “You’re going to see what you want to see from Izzy and so it’ll be a different show for everyone.”
The university’s new strategic plan, adopted unanimously this winter by the board of governors and senate, maps the next 10 years of UVic’s evolution—a period of dramatic change in which it will strive to be “a university of choice for outstanding students, faculty and staff from British Columbia, Canada and the world.”

The plan identifies four key goals under these headings: people, quality, community and resources. Within each category are objectives and specific action steps.

The people section focuses on recruiting, retaining and supporting a “diverse group of exceptional students, faculty, staff and alumni.” The quality of teaching and research will be measured by external review, with all programs expected to rank among the top 20 per cent against comparable programs from across Canada. UVic wants to secure its place as a cornerstone among the top 20 per cent of Canadian universities in the level of alumni support.

One of the things that really distinguishes great universities is “that many students from across the province and across the country who were interested in coming to the University of Victoria have decided to go elsewhere simply because they weren’t able to get into residence.”

In response, new housing with a total of 596 new first-year residence beds will be added to meet an objective of including a space in residence with every first-year student’s offer of admission by the start of the 2004-05 school year. The cost, $23.4 million, will be self-financed by the university. The strategic plan also sets a goal of increasing student financial support to the top 20 per cent of Canadian universities by 2010.

The university expects to attract more aboriginal students, so planning is underway for a First Peoples House along with enhanced support services and courses and teaching methods tailored to the aboriginal community.

Creating better ties with the university’s 60,000 alumni is another key priority. The aim is to rank among the top 20 per cent of Canadian universities in the level of alumni support.

The UVic strategic plan is on-line at web.uvic.ca/univsec/strategicplan.html.
A MONTH OF MOVIES

Our winner of the Cinecenta 30th anniversary essay contest (Torch, Autumn 2001) is fourth-year psychology student Liz Aitken who won passes to see 30 upcoming films. Here’s her entry:

A late summer evening in the middle of a week-long heat wave. Lawrence of Arabia. Looking forward to a cold Haagen-Daaz ice cream from the Munchie bar. “Oh, sorry we’re out of those.” Darn.

Sitting in the back row with three good friends. Geez, it seems to be a bit warm in here. Guy from Munchie bar walks in. “If I could have your attention please. Unfortunately our air conditioning system is broken at the moment, we are sorry for any inconvenience.”

How long is the movie again? I don’t know, at least a couple of hours.

The lights fade to black. The movie is amazing; great scenes of vast desert, I mean desert, and it’s as if I can feel the heat of the Arabian sun permeating my body. It gets hotter and hotter. I can’t help but notice my friends are squirming in their seats and even unbuttoning their shirts. I see some movement way down in front. Someone opens the exit doors and the evening light gains our attention. A sigh of relief sweeps the audience.

But still, the warmth does not disappear and those open doors with lovely fresh air seem so far away from the back row. The scenes of Lawrence crossing the terrible desert go on and on. My mouth is dry, my clothes are sticking to me. On screen, Lawrence starts to fade while riding on his camel. He doses off and slumps to the side. I feel his pain—I too, could just close my eyes and drift off...

But finally, off in the distance, I see something. Lawrence! We are saved! Water! I feel the water Lawrence drinks in my mouth too, and imagine that water is all mine. But after only a few seconds, my mouth feels dry once again...It goes on...I don’t know how much longer I can last. I can’t concentrate...

What? It’s over? People around me start to get up. My friends and I give each other looks of exhaustion and pain. And we all make a run for water, followed by a search for some cold Haagen-Daaz ice cream bars.

Cinecenta’s film schedule is on-line at cinecenta.com.

COMPENDIUM

The UVIC LAW FACULTY is tops in Canada for the sixth time in seven years in the annual national survey of law grads compiled by Canadian Lawyer magazine. Taken into consideration are curriculum, faculty, fellow students, testing, facilities, and relevance...Child and Youth Care student HEATHER FISHER earned a $25,000 (U.S.) scholarship from Rotary International to study conflict management in South Africa. Her desire to advocate for disadvantaged children and their families has taken her to Haiti, Botswana, South African townships and Nepal...Vice-President of External Relations JIM GRIFFITH has held the post since 1999 after serving 10 years as director and executive director of student and ancillary services. He has spent more than 36 years in higher education...Nominations are invited for Distingushed Education Alumni Awards. Three letters of support and a brief profile of the nominee should be sent, prior to Aug. 31, to the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria, P.O. Box 3010 STN CSC, Victoria, V8W 3N4. The awards recognize alumni educators of distinction...DEBORA THORNELEY (BFA ’85) has become the first executive director of the Mary Winspear Community Cultural Centre in Sidney...KEVIN TKACHUK (BA ’01) lined up for Oxford in the 120th University Match against Cambridge with 55,000 in attendance for the winter’s British rugby tradition. “I’ve really been amazed at how much attention is paid to it,” Tkachuk told the Globe and Mail. Tkachuk has also appeared on Canada’s national team eight times...The MALAHAT REVIEW receives credit for being the first to publish “The Deep,” Ontario writer Mary Swan’s short-story that won the 2001 O. Henry Award—the top U.S. award for short stories. The story appeared in the Summer 2000 issue of the literary journal...The 2001 UVic Community Leadership Awards were given this year to RICHARD HOLMES (BA ’94), DR. ELIZABETH KENNEDY, and NAZ RAYANI. Holmes led fundraising for the Mary Winspear Community Cultural Centre and started the Celebrity Waiters’ Luncheon for leukemia research. Kennedy, UVic math professor emeritus, has been heavily involved in volunteer organizations including the UVic Finnerty Garden Friends. Rayani has been behind the annual Partnership Walk, a fundraiser for the Aga Khan Foundation and its work in addressing poverty...The Lesser Blessed by RICHARD VAN CAMP (BFA ’96) has been awarded Germany’s top prize for translation (juvenile category) at the Frankfurt International Book Fair...Climate researcher ANDREW WEAVER (BSc ’83) has won a Killam Research Fellowship. The grant allows the Earth and Ocean Sciences professor to dedicate the next two years to research on how plant life and carbon cycles adapted to climate changes over the last 400,000 years...DOUG MANNING (BED ’75, MED ’84) is a member of the Premier’s Technology Council. Manning runs Bridges.com, a provider of career and educational planning programs...Vancouver screenwriter J. ANDREW MCEVOY (BA ’83) won the first Slamdance SCI FI Screenplay competition with his feature The Pixilated Man.
FORESTS WITHIN GLASS

Forest biologists settle into a new computerized research greenhouse.

BY VALERIE SHORE

LIKE A KID IN A CANDY STORE, PLANT PHYSIOLOGIST BARBARA HAWKINS can't decide which aspect of her research to tackle next.

“I’m almost overwhelmed by the possibilities,” she laughs as she stands in the gleaming new Bev Glover Greenhouse Facility, which opened in early April on Ring Road across from the Engineering Office Wing and Petch Building. The one-level, 603 square-metre building features six computerized, climate-controlled greenhouses that can mimic—on a smaller scale—the high-tech growth environments used by the forest industry to nurture tree seedlings.

“To finally have a state-of-the-art facility like this on campus opens up a whole new horizon of research opportunities,” says Hawkins.

It’s a sentiment shared by everyone connected with UVic’s Centre for Forest Biology, a research and graduate training program within the departments of biology, and biochemistry and microbiology. The centre focuses on forest regeneration and biotechnology, working closely with local forest companies, forest nurseries, seed orchards and biotechnology firms to optimize seedling care and survival before, during and after replanting.

The centre’s six faculty members supervise more than 20 graduate students, attract over $800,000 a year in research funding, and publish about 40 papers annually. Current areas of study include tree reproductive biology, tree physiology, molecular genetics, and resistance of trees to disease, stress and insects.

For years, centre researchers got by with a “low-tech” greenhouse built in 1965 behind the Saunders Building. “It has virtually no environmental control settings and there were too many users needing different conditions,” says Hawkins. “It’s fine for growing plants for teaching, but not for advanced research.”

And there were other logistical problems. Plant preparation facilities were nowhere near the greenhouse. The growth chambers, where seedlings are typically started off, were in the basement of the Cunningham Building. And potting, harvesting and handling were done in an open-air compound off Cedar Hill Cross Road.

“It was very awkward,” says Hawkins. “We were running around from location to location, putting a lot of miles on the truck. And people weren’t doing the experiments they wanted to do because we just didn’t have the facilities.”

The new facility has an array of valves, switches and pipes to control variables such as light, temperature, carbon dioxide, humidity and ventilation and water. Two of the greenhouses are equipped with a nutrient mixing system, an overhead irrigation system and blackout curtains. An adjoining service area includes the 16 growth chambers transported from Cunningham, as well as counters, sinks and working space for plant propagation, potting, handling and harvest.

Funding for the $1.3 million building was provided by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund, UVic and the private sector.

“It’s a wonderful facility. I can’t wait to use it,” says Hawkins, whose work on nutrient uptake and cold hardness in conifers requires hundreds of seedlings to be grown under a range of environmental conditions. Her goal is to find species or genotypes—genetically similar individuals within a species—that transport nutrients efficiently or are especially resistant to cold temperatures during the vulnerable seedling years.

“Trying to do this work in the field is impossible because there are so many variables to consider,” she says. “You need to make...
comparisons between genotypes where you can carefully control all of the environmental variables except one.”

The greenhouse also opens the door for more controlled studies on plants and global warming. “There’s a lot of debate right now about climate change and the responses of plants to elevated concentrations of carbon dioxide,” says the director of the Centre for Forest Biology, Nigel Livingston, who studies carbon exchange between trees and the atmosphere. “Now we can do larger-scale experiments we could only dream about a few years ago.”

Having access to a sophisticated research facility is also an attractive lure for new graduate and postdoctoral students, visiting scientists and faculty. Peter Constabel can attest to that. He joined the biology faculty in February, in part due to the new greenhouse facility.

Constabel studies how trees defend themselves against insect pests and disease. As surprising as it sounds, plants can respond very quickly when an insect begins munching on their leaves.

“A plant immediately shifts its metabolism away from normal functions such as photosynthesis and starts synthesizing new chemicals and proteins,” he explains. These proteins can be toxic to the insect, or slow down its progress long enough to minimize damage. In poplars, this defence system is plant-wide; when one leaf is attacked, the whole plant will ‘know’ and react within hours.

“We’re trying to understand the mechanisms that transmit this wound signal and activate defence systems throughout the plant,” says Constabel. “Ultimately, we want to be able to select superior genotypes for forest replanting.”

But that’s far down the line. First, Constabel needs to grow dozens and dozens of young trees in a modern greenhouse facility. He’s come to the right place.

**HONOURING BEV GLOVER**

**THE NEW ADVANCED GREENHOUSE FACILITY IS NAMED FOR BEV GLOVER,** who died of cancer in 2001 after 11 years as a popular and devoted senior lab assistant in biology.

“Bev was incredibly patient and always good-humoured. Her unbridled enthusiasm for biology was infectious,” says Nigel Livingston, director of the Centre for Forest Biology. “Literally thousands of students were touched and inspired by her. She was loved and respected by them, as she was by her colleagues.”

Born and raised in Victoria, Glover earned a BSc in biology from UVic in 1979 before attending Guelph University for her master’s in botany and environmental biology.

At UVic she had the task of co-ordinating teaching labs, organizing teaching assistants, preparing lab materials, filling in for faculty at lectures and acting as a surrogate parent for students, grad students—and sometimes even faculty.

**CANNED ART**

There’s more to old salmon labels than their value as collectables.


“Salmon can labels from the Pacific Coast were among the first pieces of advertising-cum-packaging to be distributed across the globe. The labels promote a kind of quasi-utopian image of the Northwest Coast,” says History in Art master’s candidate Claudia Lorenz.

With most of B.C.’s salmon destined for British consumers, marketers created a vast mythical landscape to appeal to the desire for land and popular romantic notions about bountiful nature.

“Any resemblance of the images on the labels to actual coastal scenery could be accidental, deliberate or non-existent,” notes Lorenz, “as long as the artist included the required iconic mountain backdrop, water and lush vegetation.”

The level of artistic skill varies and the artists are anonymous. In most cases they were by employees of printers in Victoria, Vancouver or San Francisco.

The study is also a reminder of the importance of the commercial ties that existed between Victoria and San Francisco. “It was a principal supply route, long after the Gold Rush,” says Lorenz. “Ink, paper, printing expertise—it all came through San Francisco.”

Lorenz’s interpretation of dozens of historic labels was part of a collaborative research project with history grad student Kathy McKay, Prof. Carol Gibson-Wood, and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery in Steveston. Funding was provided by the Community-University Research Alliance and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Once they arrived in supermarkets, the labels also had to achieve two things: make the product stand out on the store shelf and persuade consumers who, until the onset of canned goods, were used to buying only fresh or salted fish. Says Lorenz, “The label had to create the impression that the fish was edible and that it came from a good place. So there were images of salmon and clean, ice cold waters.”

—MIKE MCNENELY
**COLLEGE IN THE CASTLE**

Oral history captures memories of student life at Craigdarroch.

**BY MIKE MCNENEY**

**Between 1921 and 1946 Victoria College occupied the castle**
that 19th century coal baron Robert Dunsmuir built—the splendid granite and sandstone Victoria landmark called Craigdarroch.

Those were special times in the history of the college, which was founded in 1903 at Victoria High School and evolved into the University of Victoria 60 years later. Now, to bring the castle years to life, an oral history project has been initiated by the Craigdarroch Castle Society along with the UVic Co-operative Education Program and the Victoria College Craigdarroch Castle Alumni Association.

“It’s really important that these stories are told,” says project co-ordinator Sue Parfitt (BA ’98), a UVic co-op student in Cultural Resources Management. She plans to interview—one on audio or video tape—25 former VC students who attended classes in the castle.

Several interviews have been completed already. They offer an insightful portrait of a learning environment that demanded high academic standards but also fostered a close sense of community among students and faculty. Most of the students were from middle class Victoria families. The student body was small—usually fewer than 300 students until returning World War II veterans pushed enrollment above 600 and the college relocated to the Lansdowne Campus, now occupied by Camosun College. Annual tuition in the late 1920s and early 1930s was about $100.

James Gibson (VC ’29), who was named a Rhodes Scholar in 1931 and was the founding president of Brock University in Ontario, recalls “a cheerful noisiness about the place” inspired by camaraderie and regular pranks between sophomores and freshmen.

His brother, William Gibson (VC ’31), is a former chancellor of UVic. The first college official he remembers meeting was Walter Gage. Not much older than the students, Gage was an energetic mathematician and registrar who symbolized the Roaring 20s with his love of popular music and zest for life. “He could see everyone coming in the front door. Usually he would hail them and sometimes he would jump over the counter to meet them.

“I think the day I started, the great New York stock market crash occurred in 1929. So up to Walter’s private office, up the back stairs, an awful lot of students went to get help, largely from his pocket.

“He was (also) a wonderful shot with a piece of chalk. He could wake somebody up and say, ‘What did you say?’ One day a dog wandered in and looked up at Walter and he said, ‘Good. The most intelligent face I’ve seen today!’ He was a great spoofer, he just loved fun.” He later became president of UBC, a period known as the Age of Gage.

From the perspective of the castle society, the stories of VC grads offer insights into the physical details of the building during the period—paint styles and the uses of certain rooms, for example.

Bernard Shipton (VC ’35), a former editor of the “Craigdarroch” student annual, remembers two special places in the castle. The library, reached by climbing “stairway after stairway, each narrower than the last,” offered views of the city and beyond.

But there was even one more flight of stairs that he would climb, leading to “a tiny room, eight by eight, looking right at the slope of Mt. Tolmie. This, eventually, became my office. I can’t remember how it happened. Perhaps just because I had the annual to edit and asked the right people. That was certainly one of the happiest short periods of my life.”

Anyone who attended Victoria College during the castle years is asked to contact Sue Parfitt at (250) 592-5323 or by e-mail at cdc_chin@island.net. A full history of Victoria College is found in *A Multitude of the Wise: UVic Remembered* by Peter L. Smith.
The most important **motive** for **work** in school and in life is pleasure in work, **pleasure** in its **result**, and the knowledge of the **value** of the result to the **community**.

—Albert Einstein

**expressions of community**

In the pages that follow, *Torch* writers and photographers frame the ways the people of the University of Victoria and their communities are entwined.
Every community must face its past at some point. To see what can happen when we do, take a walk through the narrow alleys of Victoria’s Chinatown—among some of our city’s oldest ghosts, through a landscape that was designed to give them rest.

Fan Tan Alley, with barely room for two people to stand shoulder to shoulder, is an adventure. I enter Canada’s oldest remaining Chinatown here. Bright colours beckon from unusual stores and the late 19th century bricks give a warm and friendly atmosphere. I stop to peer through a gate to see firewood stacked and laundry hung to dry. A burst of steam and flavour from the Fan Tan Café surrounds me as I duck into a tempting doorway.

The first entrances to Chinatown, established in 1858, were rickety plank bridges that crossed the Johnson St. ravine, leading to a cluster of wooden shacks. As uncounted Chinese were lost building the CP Railway, their countrymen came together here to send home their bones so that the ghosts would not wander lost. Inner Chinatown mirrors its history with a maze of narrow passageways and secret entrances, surprising courtyards and tiny rooms. I can imagine people fleeing anti-Asian riots and police raids, melting into this labyrinth.

I make my way out into the light of Fisgard St. The air is heavy with the fragrance of ripe fruit and spices. The street furniture, the lampposts, and even the sidewalks are stylized to show Chinese character. I stop to watch as a small girl tugs impatiently at her mother who is lingering to chat with a friend in rapid Cantonese.

Hidden in the streetscape are hints of the struggle to keep families together despite repression and an immigration policy that barred most Chinese women and children. The sites of old brothels, opium dens and gambling halls tell stories of a community of bachelors. Frosted windows between the first and second floors of many Chinatown buildings are evidence of “cheater stories,” built to avoid taxes and perhaps to hide relatives. Up ahead, a proudly renovated Chinese public school stands as a defiant reminder of the days when Victoria’s community values included the “protection” of their children from contact with Chinese children.

Chinatown’s population began to decline in the 1940s. By the 1970s, the neighbourhood had become derelict, an uncomfortable reminder of segregation, a ghost town within our downtown core. But in 1979 city council asked UVic urban geographer David Lai to present his vision for Chinatown’s beautification and preservation. An active member of the Chinese community, Lai was dismayed by the condition of Chinatown. His plan included community consultation, artist-led gentrification in Fan Tan Alley, heritage preservation, benches, buried utility wires, relocation of care for elderly Chinese, and the addition of symbols of Chinese culture to the urban landscape. The most important symbol is the Gate of Harmonious Interest, built in 1981 and inspired by the temporary gates from Chinatown’s past.

Victoria’s Chinatown, revived from historic neglect, is a case study of community co-operation.
The gate is like an ancestral shrine that frames Fisgard in a splash of red and gold. Its green dragon and red phoenix portray a union of duality, a harmony of Yin and Yang. Stone lions from mainland China guard the curved Taiwanese tiles. Written on the gate in Chinese characters, in the spirit in which it was created it says: “To Work together with One Heart, To help Each Other Achieve Harmony.”

The creation of the gate was a chance for both Chinese and non-Chinese communities to embrace a new attitude of co-operation. The two groups split the cost of construction (and renovation in the mid 1990s), with the provincial government matching the dollars raised. Lai says Victoria’s Chinatown is unique in that the non-Chinese community contributed so significantly to rejuvenation.

Mickey Lam, a City of Victoria planner, worked closely with both communities to design the new look of Chinatown. Bob Wright, then city councillor, was a driving force in the project and emphasized recognition of the outstanding citizenship of the Chinese community despite a difficult history. Mel Cooper of CFAX radio used his station to gather support from the non-Chinese community in the form of volunteers and donations. One quarter of the funding for the Gate of Harmonious Interest came from the community response to his station’s efforts. He remembers warmly the ceremonial opening of the gate: “Everyone felt so good about it…there was a glow, a lot of pride.”

I remember the unveiling of the gate when I was 9—the excitement of firecrackers and people cheering, scrambling for candies and fortune cookies thrown through the air. I remember my sense of wonder at the Lion Dancers—children my own age transformed into undulating mystical beings.

What will the future hold for this slice of Victoria’s living history? Wright says someone needs to take up the torch in order to protect the character of Chinatown. He would like to see it extended one block north to Herald St. with Chinese character required for new development facades. Cooper hopes to see both communities work together to make Chinese gardens inside the courtyards, another part of Lai’s original vision. Unless Victoria continues to build on that vision, the unique qualities of Chinatown will be lost, and the past put to rest only briefly.

Chinatown’s revitalization was more than a physical restoration of an area; it was a symbolic acknowledgment of an unjust history, and a promise for the future. Under the Gate of Harmonious Interest is a time capsule, to be opened in 2081, containing a message of cultural harmony for future generations. It is up to Victorians to keep the promise and to co-operate to provide a lively home for the spirits and ghosts of Chinatown’s past.

Inner Chinatown mirrors its history with a maze of narrow passageways and secret entrances, surprising courtyards and tiny rooms.

Cara Segger is working toward her MA in urban geography.
He gets more ink than a lot of the politicians in the provincial legislature. The phrase “UVic political science professor Norman Ruff” is practically a press gallery cliché.

When news breaks from political circles—as a new law is introduced or a politician finds himself in hot water (this is B.C. after all)—journalists call Ruff for his analysis. His number is in the rolodex of reporters from media outlets large and small. He gets calls from the New York Times and the Economist, regional weeklies and small interior radio stations. There are too many to keep track of during the course of a year.

It started in the early 80s when news gatherers across the country began turning more frequently to academics for their insight. Ruff’s first interview dealt with government’s use of “closure” to cut off debate.

“In hindsight I made a mistake,” he says ruefully. “They asked me how difficult it was to use closure politically. And I said, oh well, it’s rather like serial murder—after the first it becomes easier. So I remember it very well because afterward I thought, why did I use that sort of example—as if I had some kind of experience with serial murder!”

Sitting atop his desk—in an office overflowing with books, papers and boxes—are thick three-ring binders containing 2002 B.C. budget documents. There’s very little distance between the content of his class lectures, which evolve with the times, and what he talks about in the papers and on the airwaves.

“I’m a political junkie, especially with B.C. politics, so I don’t see a separation between the two. I’m a member of the university community (but) that doesn’t mean you’re in an ivory tower, you’re part of the much larger community. So I guess I regard myself as a kind of a public resource. The community benefits from this larger context and my students benefit from the sense of immediacy. It makes me a better a teacher,” says Ruff, who has been with UVic since 1969.

Don’t confuse keen observation of the political climate with a desire to hob-nob with the press gallery and the political people—it’s something he “assiduously” avoids. His professional home is the lecture hall and his office in the Cornett Building. “I don’t try to cultivate relationships with people in the media or with politicians. I’ll go and sit in the public gallery maybe once a session to get the feel of it.”

He may not be around the legislature buildings too much, but for reporters he’s as close as the phone.

“Sometimes people stop and say, we always see you. Why is it always you? Maybe this sounds a bit vain but one reason you do see my name is that I do answer phone calls. I’ve heard that said—not about academics here so much but at UBC and so on—that people don’t return calls. So I have a reputation of someone who, if a reporter rings on a deadline, will return the call. I also tend to be concise.”

His insights are called upon most when something beyond the predictable occurs. Then he often finds himself in the role of a political priest, delivering last rites over a politician’s career. It first occurred to him during the Nanaimo Commonwealth Holdings affair and the debate was whether the premier (Mike Harcourt) should resign.

“It struck me, and there had been a number of resignations in the previous administration, that my role in B.C. politics is to signal when it’s appropriate to write the obituary and when it might be premature. I guess that applies now as well.”

No discussion with Norman Ruff would be complete without his assessment of the current state of political affairs. “I think the last five years were a bit of an aberration because of the performance of the (Glen) Clark administration. If you look at public opinion polls, the kinds of issues, and the way that groups are re-organizing...we’re back to where we were in ’96. So it’s sort of B.C. politics as usual. Unfortunately.”

Reporters everywhere seek Norman Ruff’s perspective on B.C. politics.
The accounting office is called “Beanland.” To get to the staff lunchroom you pass—on the same floor—the “Big Shots” office, known as the executive suite at other companies. Flight crew members are apt to mix corny jokes with standard safety announcements. This is the unconventional WestJet community, a workplace where the first rule is to have fun no matter how brutally competitive the Canadian airline industry can be.

“We take the job seriously, but we don’t take ourselves seriously,” notes one of those Big Shots—vice-president Mark Hill (BA ’85). It’s a formula that has helped the no-frills flyer buck the trend of money losing airlines. Profits continue to climb faster than a 737, more routes are being added and employees—80 per cent of whom are shareholders—are joining in the success. Some pilots who signed on when the airline started flying less than 10 years ago are now millionaires thanks to profit-sharing and the company’s stock purchase plan. There are flight attendants who hold more than half a million dollars worth of company stock.

When Hill wrote the company’s first business plan he envisioned a work environment completely different from the competition, a place where employees actually enjoy coming to the job each day. “We hire risk-takers, a different breed,” says Hill, who looked at existing problems and Canadian carriers and borrowed ideas from other low-cost airline successes including Southwest Airlines in the U.S. The half serious WestJet motto is “if you’re not having fun, you’re fired.”

How Much Fun Can One Airline Have? By Mike McNaney

At WestJet, fun is serious business.
Orange plastic syringe lids, common as cigarette butts, pile by the hundreds near dumpsters and along alley walls, lining the paths of addicts in undone shoes who scour the ground desperately for any trace of spilled crack cocaine.

Any walk—day or night—through Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside offers graphic evidence of the local drug plague. The related life and death statistics for Canada’s poorest neighbourhood are equally grim.

In 1997 the area was declared a public health emergency by the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board. An explosive HIV infection rate, at 18 per cent, remains among the highest observed in the developed world. Since 1996, on average 300 people die every year from overdoses. Of the estimated 5,000 users in the neighbourhood, 90 per cent are hepatitis C positive.

“The real problem is that nobody’s doing anything about it, or very few people are,” says Thomas Kerr, a 35-year-old educational psychology PhD student who has spent the past five years working with drug users.

Initially drawn to the Downtown Eastside by his AIDS-related research, Kerr was soon asked to write a report on the need for safe injection sites. These days he’s working alongside injection drug users from the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), a community action group involved in harm reduction activities including alley patrols and syringe exchanges. Kerr is working with VANDU members on a collaborative research project aimed at assessing the organization’s impact on current public health efforts. Says Kerr, “I think we have a model relationship that works really well.”

Kerr is helping to train VANDU members in the basics of research—to go out on the streets, recruit participants, conduct surveys and face-to-face interviews. His role is to provide guidance and, hopefully, leave the community in similar or better shape than he found it in. “The hardest shift to make (as an academic) working here is accepting that your research may do absolutely nothing for the people you’re trying to help,” he says. “That’s why you have to ensure that the process is beneficial to them.”

He’s admittedly “obsessed” with establishing legally sanctioned safe injection sites where users can inject pre-obtained drugs in a sterile setting under medical supervision and he is recognized amicably on the streets as the “safe injection site guy.” His motivation is simple—he can’t stand to see the people he works with inject in dirty alleys with used rigs, become infected with HIV, and die.

On the Streets Where

BY REBECCA LOCKHART (BA ’02)
PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK DIDLICK

“Everyone needs to see what goes on in these alleys to understand the reality of the Downtown Eastside.”

300 people overdose every year, the HIV rate is out of control but Thomas Kerr, the “safe injection site guy,” vows to shout and scream until something’s done.
Navigating the Nomikai

BY ROB MCMAHON

Shinjuku, like many of Tokyo’s districts, is split in two. On the west is the bureaucratic centre of one of the world’s most populated cities, complete with ridiculously high government offices, honeycombed “capsule” hotel rooms, and block-wide corporate banners. To the east is a neon-lit chaos of soap-houses and bars. I’m spending the year feeling somewhere in the middle, a living example of Japan’s move to globalization.

As a visiting gaijin (foreigner) student intern, my job is to write an English information technology newsletter. Sandwiched between cultures and languages, I find sitting elbow-to-elbow with the office kachou, or group manager, intimidating without a cubicle to hide behind. A typical day has us sharing lunch breaks and elevator rides. Only the discovery of our mutual hatred of cafeteria food breaks down awkward tension.

After the office muzak has been silenced and the computers have been shut down, the chatter begins. Social events are organized on the basis of group solidarity, yet segregated by gender. I quickly learned that this leisure time is governed by other rules, too. If a new member has joined the group, there will be a nomikai or drinking party. At the nomikai, conversations reflect business strategies as much as baseball scores. An empty glass signifies catastrophe. Juniors take turns scuttling around the table to fill the cups of their superiors who reciprocate with a curt nod, or in Japanese terms, a shallow bow.

The nomikai is an opportunist’s dream. Under the influence of sake and bolstered by karaoke, even the most insignificant individual can sidle up to his boss and slur a list of grievances without fear of reprisal. With alcohol acting as a truth serum to the formality of Japanese society, people are free to voice their real opinions. Sometimes they’ll feign drunkenness to get a point across, with the option of blaming sake if things go awry.

When Monday rolls around the events at the nomikai are completely ignored. As a history student, I find myself battling to recall previous events which elude me as surely as if they had been swallowed alive. Co-workers who spent Friday night clapping me on the back and venting frustrations now barely nod in greeting. To cope, I blame what I assume are hallucinations on my low tolerance for sake, note the shift in office allegiances, shoot the kachou a grin, and hurry to sign up for next week’s party.

Rob McMahon is working towards a history and writing degree and spent a co-op work term at Seiko-Epson in Japan.
Since September 11, we have probably all heard the word “terrorism” several times a day. The news has been filled with commentary from politicians, academics, military analysts, journalists, religious leaders and civil society leaders, and the clash of these voices all talking at once has been confusing.

How can we make sense of it all? How do the seeds of violently expressed conflict take root and spread?

Research on ethnic conflict over the past decade suggests that ethnic and religious groups tend to mobilize when for a long time they have become frustrated and angry about injustice, discrimination and exclusion of their groups. Conflict researchers have also noted levels of conflict escalation—from incipient discontent to stages in which conflict becomes manifest and claims are made. At this stage conflict can easily be triggered or incited to out-of-control stages characterized by escalating destruction and violence.

More is known about conflict escalation than about de-escalation.

The earlier the intervention, the more chance there is of addressing conflict constructively. Unfortunately, we do not have the luxury of early intervention in the case of the conflicts involving the Middle East. It’s quite a few decades too late. But there are many other situations in the world where there are opportunities to address the roots of conflict. What about right here in Canada? It was recently suggested that the anger of some frustrated aboriginal youth means we have some dangerously brewing conflicts in Canada. The bearer of this bad news, Liberal MP Stephen Owen, was publicly contradicted by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, but, alas, several organizations of aboriginal people agreed with Mr. Owen. In world terms, Canada has been peaceful, and the historical record indicates that aboriginal people in Canada are unlikely to take up organized violence in a doctrinal way. But surely we are well advised to prevent escalation by seriously addressing these protracted historical conflicts at their roots.

In response to September 11, we have been intervening militarily, and discussing strengthening our military options and resources. We have talked about gaining more and better intelligence. There has been talk of financial resources to track the flow of money and other resources used in the flow of international criminals, arms, drugs and money. There have been laws passed or proposed to strengthen law enforcement and security. In the language of conflict resolution these are called “power-based” approaches.

We have also heard about several “rights-based approaches.” Examples include bringing to justice perpetrators of international crimes through the existing international and domestic legal system.

Last week, we heard Dr. Gordon Smith (UVic Centre for Global Studies) comment on how there needs to be a consideration of “interest-based” approaches (in which) there would be consideration of how to meet human aspirations and needs of all parties. I might follow the lead of thinkers like Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen and move from the “basic needs approach” to a “capabilities approach” that asks instead how people might flourish. They also redefine poverty as “capability deprivation,” which is better at getting to problems of inequality and lack of choice that diminish human capabilities to flourish. Examples of interventions that work include official overseas development assistance and efforts to address global inequalities.

Another approach is called “transformative”...to create, restore and transform relationships, not just among allies, but among political enemies. I can hear some of you thinking: “Surely you are not suggesting we negotiate with terrorists?”
have often heard this challenge, and it’s true that direct negotiation between conflicting parties becomes less and less possible at the most severe levels of conflict escalation. A better time to negotiate political or moral conflict is before one of the parties, usually the party that feels excluded or disadvantaged, decides to take up arms. And of course, there are many roles for negotiators and mediators to help de-escalate violent political conflict.

We live in a world in which no one truth is accepted as a universally legitimate moral foundation for law or public policy. But perhaps we can aim for better and more sustained dialogue about moral conflicts before they turn into warfare. My own view is that conflict resolution can make its most important contributions in fostering sustained dialogue where we do not stop vexing one another about things we disagree with, but we do so in ways that allow us to keep on listening and talking...prevent violence, and save many lives.

If force is the primary approach used to suppress grievances it’s likely the suppressed group’s grievances will live on until the next opportunity to raise them—particularly if the power approaches do not meet basic standards of internationally agreed morality and legitimacy. If instead the emphasis is primarily on building good relationships, there is a better foundation for addressing interests while respecting rights. In such a climate power approaches are less necessary. The question for us and for our leaders is, where is the emphasis in the current “war on terror” and how effective is this in the long-term to root out political violence?

UVic Continuing Studies is publishing a booklet of edited transcripts from all five lectures and community forum presentations in the series “Responses to Terrorism: An Analysis.” To order, call (250) 721-8481 or e-mail arts&sci@uvcs.uvic.ca. Series co-sponsors were the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation; the faculties of Humanities, Law, Social Sciences and Science; the Division of Continuing Studies; the Centre for Global Studies; the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives; and the World History Caucus at UVic.
The Social Web

BY MARIANNE SCOTT

SURELY it’s cute, single, educated, and on-line.” That’s how Barry Taylor (BEd ’91) described his cyber-date, a woman he met in 1994 during the early days of e-mail connectedness. Taylor and his virtual love exchanged increasingly intimate details about their lives and eventually had a date. But reality wasn’t as fun as virtuality and the relationship fizzled.

Taylor and his date were pioneers. Today, meeting on-line is commonplace.

How the Web is re-defining community is the subject of new research being led by psychologist Sylvain Boies and his UVic Counselling Centre colleagues Joe Parsons, Rita Knodel and Kazimiera Stypka. They have developed a 120-question confidential survey and invited UVic first-year psychology students and the general public to complete it on-line. Students earned course credits for taking part. The survey poses frank questions about how respondents feel they perform socially and at work, their bonds with family, their sexual practices, and their interest in relationships and sex on the Internet (the questionnaire is at http://142.104.32.45/internetusesurvey/).

Boies says the initial 760 responses received from students provide a valid scientific sample, allowing several levels of analysis of Internet-based social and sexual relationships. It’s still early, but preliminary analysis shows that among respondents, 40 per cent had trolled the Internet for sexual entertainment. Those most likely to seek on-line sexual entertainment usually began searching for on-line sexual information at an early age, many before age 14. The survey also shows that 12 per cent had used on-line dating services, 86 per cent had accidentally found sexually-explicit material while surfing, 86 per cent had received sexually-explicit material from others, and 40 per cent had forwarded such material.

The survey also demonstrates a correlation between the number of on-line and off-line sexual partners. “But, as we analyze the data more in depth we’ll learn if real life experiences inspire virtual intimacy or if the freedom of the Internet encourages more relationships in reality.” The survey also shows that respondents who feel they have most control over their lives and receive social support from family and friends are least likely to become Internet addicts. Adds Boies, “That just reinforces the idea that family and community play a strong role in mental well-being.”

Boies’ academic interest in the Internet began with his post-graduate studies, when he investigated how Internet sex can turn into an addiction. “But,” Boies emphasizes, “I don’t want to imply that connecting through the Internet is all negative. I’m asking if there’s a new social space created on the Internet. Whether it co-exists with real life or fulfills different needs.”

“I’m looking at how cyberspace is used both to establish and maintain relationships,” he continues. “It can be a great way to find peer support, locate people with similar interests, or to exchange information about disabilities or disease. The Web can help, say, a young gay person residing in an isolated small town. Any minority group can connect. And it seems the Internet can assist people (to) find a life partner—the dating component is huge.” Boies cites a 2001 study that estimates a million Canadians have visited an on-line dating service, that 65,000 use the service (two guys for every woman), and that on-line dating is now “mainstream, especially for the affluent and better educated.”

Yet Boies also recognizes the Internet can be dangerous for susceptible users. Depressed people who have trouble relating to others, for example. “Web-connectedness may make them feel better, but can also lead to greater disassociation. The net provides easy access to others, but it’s still a virtual, not a real world. And net users can pretend to be someone else, like we once hid our identity at a masked ball.”

He adds that the Internet’s massive number of porn sites can also create havoc. “Vulnerable personalities can become so addicted to porn they get aroused just approaching the keyboard,” says Boies. “I’m interested in learning when normal exploration of sex sites turns dangerous. I see the Internet as a great tool, with great potential, but with risks attached.”

Barry Taylor believes his early “cyber-lizing” was educational. “I learned,” he says via e-mail, “that the medium is freedom-granting and inhibitions disappear. But I also discovered (that) romance in real life is much harder work than it is on-line. There, it’s only words; here it’s everything I am.”
On at the Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery until June 13 is the Visual Arts Department Alumni Show, exhibiting the work of more than 60 artists. Paintings, drawings, sculptures and other mixed media works are featured.

Pictured here, clockwise from top left: “Easel” by Heather Cragg; “Gorge Tree #1” by Roland Le Blanc; “Returning” by Suzanne Bessette; “Family” by Carl Beam; untitled by Chris Jackh; and “Balance” by Audrey Oppel.
Setting Their Own Course

“SAGE” learning groups are keeping seniors sharp.

BY MARIA LIRONI (BA ’85)

Lively conversation, gourmet dining and a world-class view—it certainly doesn’t sound like your typical university class. And it isn’t. Most of the students are over 50 and they’re not doing this for credit, but for the opportunity to meet other people and learn about new things. It’s all part of the SAGE program, offered by UVic Continuing Studies.

SAGE—Stimulate, Advance, and Guide Education groups—covers a variety of programs and projects. It gives older learners a chance to pursue favourite subjects in depth, on their own and in study groups that devise their own topics, research the material and facilitate classes.

For North Saanich resident Janet Konsmo, a 92-year-old retired pharmacist, SAGE keeps her active with new people, places and concepts. “I had been so busy all my life that I never had the opportunity to do anything but business and family,” recalls Konsmo. “I joined SAGE because it presented me with an opportunity to expand my interests.

“I’ve enjoyed every single session. In fact, in 11 years I’ve only missed one meeting and that’s because I was visiting Australia. Of course I researched Australia thoroughly for one of the groups before I went.”

The topics are interesting and timely. Recent themes include the role of food in history, milestones of the 20th century, and inventions and technologies. SAGE is far less expensive than regular courses and since it’s based at UVic’s Dunsmuir Lodge training and conference centre, it’s also more accessible for people who live on the Saanich Peninsula. The lodge’s gourmet dining room is also a great place to meet after class.

Painter and retired shopkeeper Pat Lewis has also been part of SAGE from its start in 1990. “When we first began, there were just four of us. Now some of the SAGE groups are so popular that there are waiting lists to get in. And it’s not just because of the interesting topics either. The people are great.”

After so many years together, there is a bond among these elder students and they are so connected that they’d rather pick the group first, the topic second.

“The university wants to be as flexible as possible,” says SAGE co-ordinator Janet King. “While it’s not the way we originally designed it, it is what works the best for this group of students. SAGE is, after all, about students controlling their own learning.”

SAGE is for all ages, but because most of the study groups are held in the day the members tend to be retired. Those demographics should change if the university starts offering SAGE in the evenings and at UVic Downtown.

In the meantime, SAGE students such as Lewis are reaping the benefits of learning from, and with, their peers. “After I retired I drove my wife nuts because I was around the house all the time,” Tom Martin, the group facilitator, explains. “I wanted to change that and I also wanted to keep my mind going. It’s great to go to lectures but you don’t learn as much as you do here. You have to participate—that’s the difference with these groups—so you learn more.”

Lewis was a little more succinct in explaining her reasons for being part of the group. “At 82, I’ve got to keep my mind working. I don’t want to turn into a vegetable any faster than I have to.”

Konsmo: “I joined SAGE because it presented me with an opportunity to expand my interests.”
GOING FOR IT

Simon Ibell will cycle from Port Hardy to Victoria this summer for MPS.

BY JORDANA FROESE (BA ’02)

The auditorium lights dim, the music comes up and 40 young faces smile on Simon Ibell. The UVic leisure administration student—and former manager of the Vikes men’s basketball and women’s soccer teams—addresses students at St Michael’s University School. He has been frequently speaking to groups like this to tell them about the obstacles he overcomes everyday.

“I may have a disability, but that doesn’t make it a handicap,” Ibell says, quoting Terry Fox. “It’s never stopped me from doing what I love. I’ve chosen to not worry about what I don’t have and instead be thankful for all that I do.”

Ibell was born with Muchopolysacharridosis (MPS) II, an enzyme deficiency also known as Hunter Syndrome. The condition has empowered Ibell to speak about his disability in the community and to organize the first ever Bike4MPS tour. On June 25th, after graduation, Ibell will start out on his epic bicycling journey, stretching along 500km of road between Port Hardy and Victoria.

It will be a physically demanding ride that will challenge his hearing, breathing and joint problems. But he’s got a specially outfitted bike and he’ll have plenty of inspirational support over the 10-day journey.

One of those supporters will be friend and Victoria-raised NBA star Steve Nash of the Dallas Mavericks. “Simon is an optimist and he refuses to allow negativity to be a part of his life,” says Nash, via e-mail from Dallas. “He is a person I look up to.”

Nash and other supporters will cycle legs of the tour with Ibell, helping with public presentations and raising funds for MPS research. But Ibell also hopes to show that living with a disability doesn’t have to be completely limiting. “We all have our own disabilities and struggles,” he says. “But that doesn’t mean we don’t have the potential to overcome them.”

Parents Marie and Roger Ibell say their son’s attitude hasn’t changed since a very young age. “Simon strongly believes that his so called ‘physical imperfection’ was a sign of a higher calling,” says Roger Ibell. “He believes it’s to show that if you have the will you can achieve anything in life.”

“Simon’s attitude toward life should be a lesson for all of us to learn from,” adds Ian Hyde-Lay, a former teacher of Ibell’s at SMUS. “You really put your own life into perspective when you see what he goes through every day and he does it with a smile.”

Bike4MPS will help fund research for the 1-in-125,000 sufferers of the seven different levels of MPS in Canada. Although recent advances in medical technology have allowed sufferers of the level II and IV MPS to benefit from enzyme replacement treatment, more research is still needed for the other groups. Ibell hopes to help bring a better quality of life to all MPS sufferers by fundraising, but also focuses on encouraging his audiences to create a positive life against all obstacles and disabilities.

“I’ve always believed in the idea that your handicap shouldn’t overtake you—no matter what it is.”

On the field, on the court or in front of any audience, Ibell’s attitude continues to amaze those around him. He has become a role model and often receives inspired letters from his audi-
ences. Through involvement with Vikes athletics over the last five years, Ibelle has also gained respect and recognition from coaches and athletes across North America. Best friend and Vikes alumnus Ali Wilmott (BA ’01) credits much of his athletic success and the Vikes’ 1997 drive to the basketball national championship to Ibelle’s enthusiasm and support.

Close friend Wanda Rozwadowska of the Vikes women’s soccer team, adds “Simon approaches life with child-like optimism and enthusiasm we often lose as we grow older. His love of life is so infectious.”

The Bike4MPS drive got a great shot in the arm earlier in the year from Maverick’s owner Mark Cuban who gave $125,000 U.S. He had received a hefty fine from the NBA and normally matches his fined amounts with charity donations. Bike4MPS has already reached Ibelle’s original fundraising goal with the help of Cuban’s donation and several corporate sponsors.

For Ibelle, this is only the beginning of his MPS awareness quest. “I see this as a kick off to creating awareness for MPS and disabilities across Canada and North America. It’s something I’ll always be involved with.”

Jordana Froese wrote this profile during her co-op work term with UVic Communications. She graduates in June with her BA in English.
BOOKED
new titles from alums

Drama

Joan MacLeod (BA ‘78) The Shape of a Girl and Jewel (Talonbooks). Beyond a mere dramatization of the Reena Virk murder, Shape... offers the embrace of trust as the way out of violence and hatred. Jewel is a dramatic monologue based on the sinking of the Ocean Ranger oil rig.

Fiction

Theresa Kishkan (BA ‘78) Sisters of Grass (Goose Lane). After finding a cache of old mementoes, a museum curator reconstructs the life of their owner—a native girl emerging into adulthood.

Teresa McWhirter (BA ’96) Some Girls Do (Polestar/Raincoast). A story of tough, independent urban adults in their 20s who are strong enough to say no to love and wise enough to describe how they reached that point.

Brian Payton (BA ’89) Hail Mary Corner (Beach Holme). A debut novel that brings a “frank and touching” approach to life at a Vancouver Island boarding school that moves from prejudice to redemption and regret.

Laisha Rosnau (BA ’96) The Sudden Weight of Snow (McClelland & Stewart). A 17-year-old girl comes into her own in small town B.C., through the joy and pain of growing up, yearning for freedom and sexual discovery.

Non-Fiction

Ian Baird (BA ‘72, ’78) and Peter Smith (VC ’49) Ghosts on the Grade (Empire). For hikers and cyclists, a guide to southern Vancouver Island’s abandoned railways. Packed with history, maps and photos.

Poetry

Marlene Cookshaw (BFA ’89) Shameless (Brick Books). The poet (and editor of the Malahat Review) examines closely life “Between/the lovely knots” in her fourth collection.

Brad Cran (BFA ’97) The Good Life (Nightwood). Society’s excesses and how things are taken for granted provide the focus of this first collection from a “muscular and tender and musically rich” new voice.

Jason Dewinetz (BA ’00) Moving to the Clear (NeWest). His first full-length book of poems examines images “both tangible and ethereal...the beauty of the grotesque.”

Carla Funk (BFA ’97, MA ’99) Head Full of Sun (Nightwood). A celebration of poetry and language that uses biblical forms and stories that “give blood and bone” to the spiritual.

Jay Ruzesky (BA ’88) Blue Himalayan Poppies (Nightwood). Collected work from the past seven years explores “the way the sudden memory of someone/surprises the mind.”
Greetings from the UVic Alumni Association. I trust this issue of the Torch finds you in good health and enjoying a bit of spring fever! Here are some important initiatives you should know about:

• Following an extensive process, the university has adopted a strategic plan (see page 8) that, for the first time, includes some very specific objectives for alumni involvement. First, to implement an alumni relations plan to enhance the involvement of UVic alumni with their university throughout their lives. Second, to develop a role for our alumni in all programs involving community outreach and liaison.

• The alumni association is interested in developing new branches in communities where there are significant alumni populations. In B.C., this includes Vancouver and the Lower Mainland (where we have over 10,000 alumni), Nanaimo and Central Vancouver Island, Kelowna and the central Okanagan. Outside B.C., the cities targeted for branch development are Calgary, Toronto and Ottawa, where we have alumni representatives and have held events that were well attended. It’s our hope that once these alumni branches are established, they will become involved in their communities through student recruitment, co-op liaison and fundraising.

• In Victoria, we are planning an awards dinner to be held November 4. The event, which will be attended by members of the community, will raise money for entrance scholarships. It’s hoped that similar events can also be developed in Vancouver, Toronto and other cities, to raise entrance scholarship dollars to benefit students from those communities. We also hope to have branch volunteers involved in making presentations to scholarship recipients from these areas.

• If you are interested in becoming involved with a UVic Alumni Association branch in your community, or in starting one, please contact the Alumni Affairs office (250) 721-6000 or 1-800-808-6828.

• Developing community by fostering relationships between alumni and students is an important priority that is addressed through our participation in career fairs, the annual on-campus Grad Year Orientation Coffeehouse and the OLC (On-Line Community) Network. If you haven’t visited our OLC, or if it’s been a while since you last updated your information or searched the alumni directory, check us out at alumni.uvic.ca/olc.

We value your involvement, feedback and comments. Please do stay in touch.

BRANCHING OUT

BY CATHY WHITEHEAD (MBA ’98) PRESIDENT, UVIC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Alumni Calendar

MAY 29 UVic Alumni Association Annual General Meeting and Reception
MAY 2 All Canadian Universities Event in Silicon Valley, CA
MAY 27 UVic Vancouver Branch Golf Tournament
MAY 30 Kelowna Branch UVic Alumni Reception
JUNE 7 All Canadian Universities Dinner in Chicago
NOVEMBER 4 Alumni Awards and Sports Hall of Fame Dinner

For more details visit alumni.uvic.ca/events.htm or contact Alumni Affairs at 721-6000, toll-free at 1-800-808-6828.

Don’t miss out...

Give us your e-mail address and we will send you an e-invitation to alumni events planned for your community. E-mail your address to alumni@uvic.ca

All e-mail addresses received by May 31, 2002 will be entered into a draw for a UVic alumni vest.

Send Your E-mail Address To Us Today!

Get ready to celebrate!

The UVic Alumni Association invites you to celebrate 100 years of higher education in B.C. and the 40th anniversary of the University of Victoria in 2003. Several events are being planned, including a Homecoming to the Castle organized by the Victoria College Craigdarroch Castle Alumni Association.

Visit our Website at alumni.uvic.ca for more information on all the events. To volunteer or to share your university memories with other alumni, call Alumni Affairs at 721-6000, toll free at 1-800-808-6828 or e-mail alumni@uvic.ca

Send Your E-mail Address To Us Today!
When UVic grads in Hong Kong were looking for a new president for their branch of the UVic Alumni Association, friends nominated Alan Cheung (BCom ’99). After all, anyone with the organizational skills to start up Victoria’s first Chinese language radio association would have what it takes to marshal the 500 UVic alumni in Hong Kong.

“Our aim for the alumni branch is somewhat the same as running the Chinese Student Radio Association (at CFUV),” Cheung says. “We want to promote UVic in Hong Kong so that more people know about it, and know that UVic is a good school.”

Cheung hosted a show on CFUV for two years while he was completing his international commerce studies. The show helped to produce a singing contest, with help from Fairchild TV of Vancouver and a Hong Kong television station, that drew an audience of 300 to the Farquhar Auditorium at the University Centre. “That’s one thing I remember most…that was great. I learned about organizing and that’s why I’m interested in the alumni branch.”

Just as student radio helped spread the word about UVic to the Chinese community, Cheung hopes the Hong Kong alumni branch can promote the university and also help future students.

“Some students are currently studying their first year of UVic courses in Hong Kong. The branch is going to introduce them to UVic school life, the environment here, and what the culture is like. Some people who are taking the courses have never been to Canada or Victoria.”

Cheung, who works in tax services with Ernst & Young, completed his masters in Hong Kong late last year. The experience reinforced the differences between the education systems.

“I have one degree in Canada and one degree in Hong Kong—they are different things. The relationship with the students and the professors is different, the culture is different too. The environment (at UVic) is good. The campus is good. Nice air, compared to Hong Kong. But the best thing at UVic is there are many more projects than exams. I found doing projects was excellent for my career. It was just practical, and we could meet with business people and sell ideas for them, or make recommendations.”

Those are advantages that more people need to know about, says Cheung.

“I found that when I started up the CSRA that people in Hong Kong, and even the Chinese people in Vancouver, don’t know much about UVic. They say, ‘Oh, um, UVic is not as good as UBC and SFU.’ Well, me and my partners in the association don’t agree. That’s why we wanted to get the information to them, that UVic is good,” Cheung smiles, “…at least the same as UBC and SFU.”

—Mike McNeney

FORMER CFUV HOST LEADS HONG KONG ALUMS

A NEW CHAPTER IN EDUCATION

The Faculty of Education Alumni Chapter was officially launched on April 13 with the mission of encouraging lifelong relationships between the faculty and its grads.

The chapter will—among other functions—support both new and experienced teachers; encourage networking and professional sharing between recent graduates, experienced teachers and others in the education community; assist in the transition from student to professional; and facilitate the flow of information between teachers in different districts and different disciplines.

The mandate has strong support from the founding co-chairs Wendy Gedney (BEd ’83) and Kevin Dranchuk (BEd ’00), Dean of Education Budd Hall and the UVic Alumni Affairs office.

The chapter was recommended by an education faculty task force, appointed late last year, that looked at several pressing concerns.

Commonly, alumni lose contact with the university as they move to professional careers after graduation. They miss out on a valuable resource that could make the transition to full-time teaching less traumatic and isolated, particularly in the profession’s turbulent environment and climate of recent months. Also, the impending teacher shortage means pressures on teachers and administrators will increase significantly. To address the shortage, teacher education programs have been expanded around the province and UVic will need to compete even more to attract the best students.

For more information contact the Faculty of Education at (250) 721-7757 or e-mail mpatenau@uvic.ca.

—Peter Gardiner (BSC Biology ’76, MA Science Education ’96)
GO TEE TO GREEN WITH VANCOUVER ALUMNI

1st Annual UVic Alumni Golf Tournament
Monday, May 27 at Noon
Quilchena Golf and Country Club, Richmond

Visit alumni.uvic.ca/vancouver for details, fees, and more information about UVic’s Vancouver Alumni Branch.
Register on-line or call Alumni Affairs toll free at 1-800-808-6828.
Space is limited—book early.

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KEEPI NG IN TOUCH

Education

CARLA MILLAR (BEd ‘01), “After graduating in June 2001, I moved to Tacoma, WA. I am working for the Lakewood Family YMCA as a lead site director for before and after school child care. I get my own classroom and I work in a school with children from grades kindergarten to five. Although I am not teaching, I am building seniority and working with children. Also, I am getting married in July of 2002. If you want to get in touch with me, e-mail me at icmarrine284@hotmail.com.”

JACK MILLER (BEd Secondary ‘70, MEd Curriculum Studies ‘86) and Verna (BA ’96 Geography) are still living on the Basque Ranch south of Cache Creek. Verna is research director for Tmiwx—a First Nations indigenous research and natural resource development organization of the Nicola Tribal Association in Merritt. Jack has just recently accepted a full-time continuing position in the School of Education at the University College of the Cariboo in Kamloops. He is currently teaching physical education methods and classroom assessment and evaluation in the Elementary BEd program at UCC as well as observing, assessing, and supporting student teachers in their teaching practicum at local elementary schools. Jack is also a doctoral candidate in the Education Leadership and Policy program at UBC, which he hopes to complete in 2004.

Human and Social Development

PETER HILTON (MPA ’96), “My wife, SOFI ALMERS (MEd ’70) and I currently work for Jonkoping University in Sweden. I am the director of international relations at the Jonkoping International Business School and Sofi is the international director at the School of Health Sciences. Both schools have exchange agreements with UVic. We have two children: Emily is 7 and Nicholas is 4.”

LAURA KRAEMER (née Nicol) (BA ’01 Philosophy) and MARTIN KRAEMER (BSc ’98 Physics) were married on June 9, 2001 and live in Calgary. Call, write or visit! Contact Laura at lnicol@alumni.uvic.ca.

SHEILA MCMANUS (MA ’94) completed her PhD in history at York University in 2001, and spent the 2001-02 academic year as a post-doctoral associate at Yale University.

STEPHEN PIERZCHALA (BA ’90 Humanities, AMIT Cert.’99), “I am currently working in San Mateo, CA for Keynote Systems (keynote.com) as the principal technical trainer. This entails working directly with the largest e-commerce companies in the world to explain and interpret our performance measurement data. I have been married to Samantha Ewing since 1995 and we have two children: Cameron Ewing (2.5 years) and Kinnear Pierzchala (5 months). If you would like to contact me, please feel free to write me at stephen@pierzchala.com. Personal Web page: pierzchala.com.”

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Jack Miller

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some 45 countries abroad, I decided to become an independent consultant in association with a former colleague in Rio and currently co-operate with several consultants in the drinks business around the world, including non-alcoholic beverages and mineral waters. • LOUISE CARDUNER (BA ’91). “Since graduating from UVic my travels have led me back to the prairies, where I currently reside in Alix, Alberta. I enjoy my position as the business manager at a local Chev dealership... however my passion is with my five horses. I am very active with several rodeo associations. I just wanted to keep in touch with those of you I have not seen in ages. Please drop me a line or visit my home on the net at smarthorse.ca.” • KEN HEGAN (BA ’98 Sociology) works in Vancouver as a filmmaker/journalist. Visit: voiceoffreedom.net.

Victoria College
ED POMEROY (VC ’58). “Hi, I am a Vic College grad, class of 1958 and wanted to tell you that I am now professor emeritus of psychology at Brock University and was the 2001 recipient of the Canadian Psychological Association’s award for Distinguished Contributions to Community or Public Service. Best regards, I enjoy the Torch.”

In Memoriam
RUTH E. GOWERS (MA ’76 History). Christopher Gowers writes from England: “I regret to inform you that my wife Ruth died on 19 Feb. 1998 and I am very sorry that it has taken so long to notify you. Ruth died in post as Head of Languages at Millham Ford School, a state secondary school for girls in Oxford, where she taught French and Spanish. She was an active member of the British Association of Canadian Studies and also wrote a short biography of Emily Carr as part of a series of biographies of famous women published by Berg Publishers Ltd. of Oxford. I have read the Torch with interest and I have very many happy memories of visiting the campus when Ruth was a graduate student and fellow in the department of History.”

THE SKYLINE STRANGE...”

I have been living in New York City, in the borough of Staten Island and “but for the grace of God” none of my family, friends and co-workers were hurt in the World Trade Center attack. My wife Christine and I were riding the M6 bus from the Staten Island Ferry to our offices in midtown Manhattan when the driver screamed: “The World Trade’s on fire!” We had passed what will forever be known as Ground Zero no more than 10 minutes before, thinking nothing of it, watching the crowds of commuters jay-walking in front of the bus that crawled along Church St., in front of the towers, by the Millennium Hotel.

We had evacuated our offices, opting for the little New York Waterway and Circle Line ferries on the Hudson that left for the safety of New Jersey, Dunkirk-style (they weren’t letting people back to Staten Island). As we slowly made our way through the orderly lines we scanned the skies looking fearfully for planes, as radios and cell phones chattered.

My wife and I were worried about our son, who is a paramedic. She finally heard from him at 1am; safe but shell-shocked. He arrived on the scene just before the towers collapsed; he saw the second one crumble. In the meantime, I was calling and e-mailing people letting them know we were all right. This included our new landlady in Victoria. Only a few days earlier we had arrived back from Victoria after renting a place there. I had always loved Victoria and my wife fell in love with the city during our honeymoon in 1998. The initial shock has worn off but the aftershocks are still there: Like the endless bomb scares and building evacuations. Like the security checkpoints that tie up the bridges and tunnels. Like the sounds of planes that make you jump, except for the oddly reassuring high-pitched scream of fighter aircraft. Like the face of my son when he talks about the attack, and mentions some of the horrible stories that thankfully never got reported. Like the crowded funeral homes and churches and lines of hearses in my neighborhood. Like the smell of smoke, that included the odor of lives lost, that hit me on my way to work—the skyline strange without the towers but with the burnt-out hulk of the World Financial Center atrium looming over the waterfront. We wish for anyone anywhere in the world to never go through and witness an act like this ever again. — Brendan Read (BA ’84 Political Science)
I have been asked by the UVic Torch to explain what motivated me to chair the fundraising committee for the university’s new educational endowment for aboriginal justice. I have also been asked to say why I feel this initiative is an important one. These two questions are closely connected.

I have always been an enthusiastic supporter of the University of Victoria Faculty of Law. I personally—and through my role on the executive of the Canadian Bar Association B.C. branch—supported the establishment of the school in the early 1970s and was rewarded for that support by having the opportunity to get to know its first dean, the late Murray Fraser. Murray was generous enough to have me visit UVic as a special lecturer on various matters over the years while he was dean. This cemented my relationship with the university and led to Murray appointing me to the dean selection committee when Bill Neilson was our choice.

I became sufficiently impressed with the law school and its continuing good management by a succession of deans that my wife and I established a law faculty bursary fund for single parents (with preference to native students).

To the present. The creation of a chair for aboriginal education in law at UVic is a strong move. It represents an important step, through the educational process, toward the reconciliation of the significant issues which exist between First Nations and the various levels of government within Canada.

When I agreed to help build financial support for the new aboriginal justice initiative at UVic, I knew that I could find (and indeed have found) a very impressive group of British Columbians who would work together to support the program and its ability to promote understanding of aboriginal issues and improve the lives of aboriginal people and communities.

Among the endowment’s esteemed patrons are Rick Hansen, Joe Gosnell, Len Marchand Sr., Mel Cooper, David Foster and Wendy John. The committee will attempt to generate donations to match the generous contribution of $500,000 already received from the Law Foundation of B.C. In addition, I was impressed with the fact that the faculty was able to entice Prof. John Borrows, an outstanding educator in this field, to accept the challenge as the first chair of aboriginal justice and governance.

During the last 20 years, aboriginal rights and title and other issues involving native people have become more and more complex and important. I recall, when I was national president of the Canadian Bar Association in 1986, establishing “equal justice for native people” as my top priority. Yet, since that time nowhere near enough has been done in the law schools of our country to provide the range of courses desperately needed by both aboriginal and non-aboriginal students interested in this subject matter.

It seems to me that what is missing from most of our law schools is a comprehensive program or full menu of courses which are unique to aboriginal law. One of the best known subjects, of course, is the study of aboriginal rights and title but that is such a small part of what is truly needed for a full curriculum. Governance; the justice system as it was practiced in early days and more recently by many First Nations; checks and balances with respect to elected band governments; rights under the Indian Act and other laws and statutes; fishing and adoption rights—these are only a few components of what I would describe as a comprehensive program of legal education.

The continued failure to offer such a broad curriculum in Canadian law schools restricts our ability to overcome misunderstandings between our nations. It will result in more confrontation and a lack of understanding about each other’s culture and needs.

Bryan Williams served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia from 1996 to 2000. He is associate counsel with the Vancouver law firm of Miller Thomson.

What is missing from most of our law schools is a full menu of courses unique to aboriginal law.

By Bryan Williams, Q.C. (LLD ’90)