The Doctors Are On Their Way
Medical education on campus
FEATURES

PEOPLE

10 LETTER FROM PHUKET
Paradise was not supposed to be like this. Alumnus Mike Corbeil sends an eyewitness account of the tragedy of the December 26 earthquake and tsunami.

AGING

14 HOW CAREGIVERS COPE
New research examines the unheralded work of informal caregivers: the family, friends or neighbours who help out the ailing or elderly.

EDUCATION

18 THE DOCTORS ARE ON THEIR WAY
They are the first of a new class of student physicians. Five exceptional young alumni begin their training in the Island Medical Program.

FITNESS

24 RACING AGAINST DIABETES
Community health specialist Joan Wharf Higgins wanted to show how recreation centres can play big roles in preventing diabetes. She found proof in the pedometer.

YOUTH HEALTH

26 CATCHING DREAMS
Adolescent girls, their health issues, and a voice of experience—keys to a mentoring strategy created by Nursing Prof. Elizabeth Banister.

DEPARTMENTS

2 SEVEN FLAMES
Editor’s note

3 MAILBOX
Readers write

6 RINGSIDE
News from campus

28 BOOKMARKS
Spring reading

29 KEEPING IN TOUCH
Notes from classmates

30 ALUMNI NEWS
People, programs and events

36 VOX ALUMNI
Pierre Berton at Victoria College

On the cover: Island Medical Program students (standing, left to right) David Harris, Steve Burgess, Patrizia Moccia, with (seated, left to right) Michelle Tousignant and Averil Russell. Foreground: “Oscar” the instructional skeleton.

Photo by Hélène Cyr.
Health-minded

This magazine and this column take their titles from the Torch and Seven Flames—symbolizing learning—that appear above the university’s coat of arms, which also includes the motto, “A multitude of the wise is the health of the world.”

When the coat of arms was selected in 1903 by the founders of Victoria College they imagined great things for post-secondary education in Victoria. They may not have been thinking of “health” in literal terms when they arrived at that Biblical phrase, from The Wisdom of Solomon, as an expression of their ideals. Yet the modern university is proving to be quite a direct reflection of a well-chosen motto.

You can find another, tangible symbol of the campus connection between health and learning—and it’s only a short walk from the bright new Medical Sciences Building. On the southwest corner of the Quadrangle stands a mature plane tree. It was planted 35 years ago by Dr. Bill Gibson, the former chancellor and Victoria College grad, on behalf of the Victoria Medical Society to symbolize cooperation between the university and the region’s doctors. The seedling is said to have grown from a seed of the plane tree under which Hippocrates, the “Father of Medicine,” taught on the Greek island of Cos.

At no time have the ideals represented by our century-old motto or that tall, stately tree seemed more prophetic. At no time have the minds and energy of the university’s educators, researchers and students been so directly involved with the health of their community. It’s alive in the students that are just starting their medical training on campus, in research for the young and the aging, and in the promotion of healthy living.

The people in our series of health-related features are dedicated to the welfare of others. They lead inspiring lives of learning and inquiry driven by the passion for caring. They remind us—in our wired (and wireless) world—of something higher to reach for, an agelessness at the heart of their efforts.

Mike McNeney
Editor
PICTURES TOLD THE STORY

I wanted to comment on the recent photo gallery of pictures with respect to the first day back in September (“Day One,” Autumn 2004). Of all the other articles I’ve read since leaving, it was one of the best. It brought back some very familiar feelings (good, and anxious) with respect to my first day back when I was attending UVic. Thanks for bringing back those memories.

ROBIN MITCHELL, BSC ’86
CALGARY

MORE ABOUT THE BONES

I kept “Bear Bones Evidence of Early Life” (Spring 2004) because I have an interest in such discoveries and because I wanted to pursue it further with a grandson in Grade 9.

Having read “Setting the Bones Straight” (Autumn 2004) I should now ask my grandson to read the original item and the three letters without comment from me, then ask him what he makes of it all. I am a retired teacher. If I were still in the classroom I would present the above to my students to get their responses and opinions.

For me personally I am reminded that readers must be wary. Also for me Ms. Wigen’s omissions seem more than a lapse. For one so close to research, her hazy memories surely should have been clarified before agreeing to the original item.

ANTHONY TADEY, PNS ’50
NORTH VANCOUVER

PART OF THE PARADE

I was among students from “the castle” (Autumn 2003) having enrolled in 1946 at the time that hundreds of ex-servicemen and women descended on the college. I joined the hundreds in the parade that marched on the Parliament buildings demanding a larger campus, which we got—with the Provincial Normal School at the Lansdowne campus.

I spent the next year there, leaving in 1948 to become a provincial civil servant until retirement in 1983.

Before moving to the Interior, I lived in Gordon Head and saw the development of the university at the new site. I recently was through the area again, and it is now quite a sight.

RAY JEFFERSON, VC ’46
150 MILE HOUSE

LETTERS: We always make room for your thoughts, opinions and reactions to these pages.

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We’re Expanding

There’s a building boom on campus. New construction will help the university cope with a space crunch from the growing population of young people plus the province-wide shift from a resource-based to knowledge-based economy. Close to 2,000 more full-time students will be at UVic by 2010. As a result, the campus is about to undergo one of the most active building phases in its 42-year history. The new projects include:

• William C. Mearns Centre for Learning, a technologically advanced extension of the McPherson Library. The project has received a $5-million gift from the family of the late Bill Mearns, a Victoria College graduate and a force behind the plan to establish the university. UVic and the provincial government matched the Mearns gift ($5-million each), with additional private funding rounding out the project’s $20-million cost. The centre will be fully wired, and will include a multi-media centre, a round-the-clock study area and an Internet café. A completion date hasn’t been set.

• An 11,000-square-metre, $50-million science building to consolidate the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, along with space for the Chemistry department.

• An 8,600-square-metre, $30-million social sciences/mathematics building will include four tiered lecture theatres and office space for the departments of Geography, Environmental Studies, Political Science, and Mathematics and Statistics. The province is contributing $60.4 million to the science and social sciences/mathematics buildings with $20.5 cost to be raised by UVic. Completion of both buildings is scheduled for 2008.

Planning and fundraising are also underway for a $6.5-million First Peoples House and a $14-million support services building. President David Turpin said the expansion program means “better classrooms, better labs—in fact space that we could not possibly have provided by rehabilitating older structures.”

Tech Park Purchased

The university has acquired the Vancouver Island Technology Park, in Saanich, in a move that promises to create greater synergy among faculty researchers, graduate students, co-op students, spin-off companies and established firms. The facility (on the site of the former Glendale Lodge) currently houses 23 companies employing 1,200 people and the university has plans to add up to six new buildings to the 14-hectare tech hub.

UVic is self-financing the $20.2-million transaction with the BC Buildings Corporation, with no impact on the university’s operating budget. Among the park’s tenants are MDS Metro medical labs, the Genome Proteomics Centre, and GenoLogics software, one of 35 companies that have been developed from research generated at the university.
**Hockey School**

*When word got out that English instructor Doug Beardsley was introducing a new course this spring—“Hockey Literature and the Canadian Psyche”—the 40 seats in the class were quickly reserved, ESPN offered to fly him to New York for an interview, and e-mail arrived from hockey fans and academics from as far away as Texas and China.*

“Because of the NHL lockout all of these people had vast, empty spaces to fill with no games going on,” says Beardsley, a wonderfully opinionated hockey nut. “They also think they can learn something about us as a nation by learning about the game, about the Canadian character. They’re right.”

Students in Beardsley’s class completed three research essays concentrating on the usual English studies terrain of imagery, symbolism or style, only in a hockey context. The reading list included classics like *The Divine Ryan*, by Wayne Johnston, *The Good Body* by Bill Gaston and *Les Canadiens* by Rick Salutin.

They’re the sort of books that get at the true meaning of being Canadian. By Beardsley’s definition, hockey represents a dark, Jungian counterbalance to the stereotype of the polite Canadian.

“I think that along with this peace-sharing, gentle—image—comes a need for mayhem. So we invent this game and—whammo!—you get on the ice and it serves as a channel for those external energies that we don’t allow ourselves elsewhere.”

As for the sorry state of the professional game, Beardsley says the lost season “leaves an appalling abyss. I think we feel lost without the game. The reason the game needs to be played in winter is that it is a metaphor for how to survive winter. It’s our form of saying, look, even up here in the frozen north we can turn this around and make it work for us.”

“I’m talking about something larger than what happens on the ice, and so is the course.”

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**Masterful Marsalis**

Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis—jazz statesman and one of the genre’s most prominent and controversial figures of the past two decades—joined the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra (including bassist Carlos Henriquez) at the University Centre in February. The big band’s sparkling performance was a presentation of the Victoria Jazz Society.

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**The Big Buildup**

For geologists who try to understand the way the earth generates its crust, Pito Deep, a submarine canyon near Easter Island, exposes a phenomenal treasure of rock outcroppings that were key parts of the volcanic process of earth-building.

In February, Kathy Gillis—one such geologist (and the director of the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences)—joined a research voyage to Pito Deep led by Duke University’s Jeff Karson.

The site is part of the East Pacific Rise, a mid-ocean ridge that’s spreading at the geologically “super fast” rate of 144 mm a year. A fortunate result of that speedy process is that in the last three million years it has exposed the conduits that brought molten rock towards the sea floor. Normally those geologically important rocks would be embedded a kilometre or so below the floor.

Gillis and graduate student Kerri Heft sent back the above image of one conduit, or sheeted dike. The photo includes an arm of the research submarine “Alvin” as it takes samples, about 3.6 km below the surface.
Alumni Survey Maps Future

The UVic Alumni Association has completed its most extensive survey of members and is using the feedback to initiate plans to generate more awareness and participation in the association’s programs and services.

The association contracted R.A. Malatest and Associates, a Victoria-based market research company, to conduct a telephone survey and focus group sessions. A total of 601 alumni participated in the survey in September. Follow-up focus groups were held in Victoria, Nanaimo and Vancouver.

The survey questions ranged from the level of satisfaction with alumni communications to the likelihood of participating in alumni events, and the level of interest in various services available to graduates.

Among the key findings, more than 70 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with communications, with the Torch being the most commonly read publication. The survey also asked alumni to rate their interest in topics contained in publications. Research, university news, continuing studies, alumni association news, and Keeping in Touch notes were the most popular choices.

Asked to rank their likelihood of attending different events, alumni chose as their top three picks: public lectures, reunions, and plays at the Phoenix Theatre.

In terms of services available to alumni, respondents most often chose travel packages, special rates on home insurance, and the Alumni Benefits Card.

Alumni Services director Don Jones thanks survey and focus group participants and says the information they’ve provided will define the future of alumni events, benefits, student programs and alumni services. “One of the things that has become clear from the survey is that a fair number of alumni are asking for services that we already offer,” Jones says. “Our challenge is to bring that information to them and, ultimately, to get more grads involved with their university either as volunteers or as financial supporters.”

A benefits and services guide, Alumni Almanac, is available from the alumni office (e-mail: alumni@uvic.ca). And all alumni are welcome to attend the association’s Annual General Meeting on June 22 at the University Club.

The Daily Dozen

Guy Pilch, MA ’99, a counselling psychologist and founder of Train the Brain Consulting, offers these basic tips for keeping the mind at its sharpest. Pilch, with the UVic Centre on Aging, presents workshops on maintaining brain power.

1. Get a good night’s sleep.
2. Eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet.
3. Maintain a positive outlook.
4. Control blood pressure and cholesterol.
5. Set goals and stretch yourself (without unrealistic expectations).
7. Manage your moods. Depression, anxiety, and panic affect brain performance.
8. Find someone caring to confide in.
9. Regular exercise has good mental as well as physical benefits.
10. Develop a spiritual practice. Research shows that the mental health effects of prayer and meditation are comparably beneficial.
11. Avoid health hazards. A glass of wine a day may have health benefits for some people; more than that will not help anyone’s brain functioning. Most drugs of abuse are very harmful to long term mental fitness.
12. Participate in brain stimulating activities like dancing, playing bridge or doing crosswords.

www.trainthebrainconsulting.com

No Fear

When Steve Canning—talented photographer, writer, student and, above all, adventurer—died last spring from injuries sustained in an accident on Mt. Logan he left a collection of fine photos like this one. He also wrote that through the dangerous extremes of climbing, skiing or base jumping, he lived without fear of death and hoped others could see life the same way. A scholarship in his name—boosted with more than $16,000 from a fundraising night that drew 300 people—has been created for students in the School of Environmental Studies.
Quotable

Tim Stockwell came to the university last year, joining the new Centre for Addictions Research of BC as its director. A professor of psychology, Stockwell’s research interests lie in alcohol policy and drinking patterns and their consequences. He was born and educated in London, England and early in his career, working at a drug addiction unit, he was active in a public battle to save the facility from Thatcher government cuts. Since then he’s never been shy about widely communicating the findings of solid research, most recently as head of Australia’s National Drug Research Institute. Here are excerpts from a recent conversation.

“I was good at math and physics. I like numbers and I like science. And I also like to feel I can do something that will benefit the community.

Most people kind of assume that research won’t be informed by what’s happening in the real world. From a researcher’s point of view that can be quite frustrating. I like to think that everything I’ve tried to do has been to either improve clinical response or, more recently, policy responses.

In Australia, brewers, distillers and winemakers are still able to sell incredibly cheap (products). Among their main customers are impoverished Aboriginal people who then waste themselves. It’s straightforward government policy. I saw our role to do research which shed light on it, raised the issue for public debate and tried to encourage better outcomes.

It seems extraordinary in BC that there’s a mayor in Vancouver who was actually voted in on a harm reduction ticket. I mean, I’ve never heard of this happening anywhere in the world. There’s a lot of progressive thinking and a feeling that new things can happen. That’s been confirmed since I’ve been here.

I think our job as an independent research unit is to hold up a mirror to the community to say, Well actually if you look across the whole province these are some of the things that perhaps you’re not aware of. Yes, you’re concerned about violence, road crashes, young people dying. This is what we know works and this is what you can do about it (through) prevention and promoting evidence-based programs.

Really, the way you get change is to make sure there’s awareness across the whole community. I think we have to communicate at all different levels. If we can set up something which is continually informing the political process and community awareness, as well as being trusted and used, that would be fantastic.

I like wine, I like beer and I occasionally drink spirits. I would like to believe it’s good for you but one of my research areas is questioning health benefits or the extent of them. I think there are benefits but there are a lot of exaggerated estimates of the benefits. The ways we normally use alcohol aren’t conducive to getting any benefit at all. You have to drink just a little bit and often, rather than once or twice a week drinking quite a lot, which is the way most people drink alcohol.

Tim Stockwell is co-editor of Preventing Harmful Substance Abuse, published this spring by John Wiley and Sons. The Centre for Addictions Research of BC is online at www.carbc.uvic.ca.
Mike Corbeil, BSW ’79, and his wife Cindy are former Victoria residents living on Phuket Island in Thailand. Safe from the worst of the December 26 earthquake and tsunami, Mike worked in the aftermath of the devastation to help survivors locate the missing. This is his account of an exhausting, heartbreakingly ordeal.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEDDEDA STEMLER
DECEMBER 26. After a late night celebrating Christmas with friends, I noticed my sofa shaking slightly. Was it an effect of the party or just my imagination? A second shake jolted the house and I knew it was an earthquake. That got the heart pumping.

I didn't think any more of it and at 10:00 a.m. we started making our Christmas calls to family in Victoria. I didn't know that the first tsunami wave was hitting the beach about two kilometres from our house. About an hour later, my friend German Mike came to our house, very shaken and having a hard time describing what he had just seen. At Kata Beach he had been unable to get through the chaos on the streets. People were receiving CPR, there was debris on the roads and vehicles were strewn about like matchsticks.

We immediately went to Nai Harn beach, where we spend a great deal of time, to check what was going on. A nearby lake was full of floating beach chairs and very muddy, murky water. Uprooted trees blocked parts of the road. I found a Thai friend who ran the beach chair concession. He was in shock. He described how the water had suddenly gone way out into the bay and then “just came up”—not a big wave, just a huge volume of rushing water.

We went about 150 metres down to the north end of the beach. People started to look anxious as a murmur rolled through the crowd that “it’s coming again.” The sea water was drawing out into the bay and we all ran from the beach to higher ground. There was a large surge of water, not a wave that caused damage but quite impressive.

Mike and I headed up to a lookout where you could see the beaches of Kata and Karon. The tidal action was very odd. The waves weren’t rolling in and out like they normally do—they kept lapping up to the shoreline. A British friend came up to the lookout after hearing on the radio that a large wave would be hitting at 1:00 p.m. Others had heard that a 50-metre wave was on its way. People, worried, scanned the horizon.

I realized I had about an hour to get home, put together a survival kit, pick up my wife Cindy and head back to the safety of the lookout. We packed and returned to find hundreds more crowding the hill. News came that the next big wave was not coming until 3:00 p.m. Then at 5:00 p.m., when it hadn’t materialized, we were told to go home. I was able to send an e-mail to family members and friends to let them know we were safe.

DECEMBER 27. I had heard about a relief centre at the provincial hall in Phuket town. There were tents with tables and signs indicating different countries. At the table with a “Canada” sign, Thai volunteers gave me forms to register missing people and forms to document people who needed passports. They showed me where the Thai immigration staff was fingerprinting and photographing people so they could replace lost travel documents and arrange transportation home.

I went to the Canadian Embassy area, and met Ambassador Denis Comeau, his military attaché and three Thai staff from the embassy in Bangkok. I can’t stress strongly enough how great the ambassador was under the circumstances. The area was bustling with embassy staff from at least 30 countries. Helicopters arrived with hundreds of survivors from around the region. Thailand’s well-organized equivalent of Girl Guides and Boy Scouts were in their uniforms helping to dispense truck loads of water. Volunteers at food stalls fed victims and volunteers.

Bulletin boards held hundreds of photos of the missing and the unidentified dead. It was startling to see so many people, so many children. Some were badly battered from the debris in the water, but most looked peaceful, as if sleeping. That was the first day of photos. The next and subsequent days brought more and more images of the dead, indescribable and unrecognizable.

DECEMBER 28. I went to the naval port to meet boats coming to Phuket Harbour from Phi Phi Island carrying survivors and 400 bodies of the dead. A temporary morgue was set up for family
members waiting to identify loved ones. A German man waited to identify his nine-year-old daughter and his mother. They had been together on Phi Phi, along with his wife and 12-year-old son. As the ferry approached to take them to Phuket, he asked his wife to go and get water for the trip. She went with his mother and daughter to the port area stores. As he waited in line with his son he saw the sea retreat and the waves suddenly approach. He ran with his son to higher ground. Afterwards he found his wife in shock. His mother had been swept away. Their daughter had been torn from his wife’s arms, screaming, dragged away with the debris. He was so strong in his resolve to identify his mother and daughter, so composed and determined.

December 31. I had received a phone call from the Canadian ambassador asking if I would go to Krabi town with another Canadian, Greg Jones, to look for Canadian passports. The sister of a missing Canadian girl gave me a description of her tattoos and photos. Another woman gave me a photo of her missing husband and described the burn scar on his stomach.

At the Krabi immigration office we found a pile of wet, sandy passports including five belonging to Canadians. Inside a makeshift morgue, trucks were arriving with more bodies. It was five days later and there was no refrigeration. Having seen the photos of the recent arrivals I knew there was no point in trying to look for identifying marks, nor did I feel I had the strength to do the job.

We recorded passport numbers, dates of birth, and names and saw the faces of so many young people as we wiped sand from their photos.

It was late, dark and New Year’s Eve.

•

Weeks later things seemed almost back to normal. Beach chairs reappeared Feb. 1. All of the clean up on Phuket was done and rebuilding was underway. Our beach chair vendor, Nui, who used to have 100 chairs, was allowed 20. Maybe the government would let him have more in the future but for now he wouldn’t need them; there were no tourists. The streets of Phuket’s beach towns were quiet. It’ll be tough if the tourists stay away.

Cindy, who teaches English at a Thai government school, helped students cope with grief and loss. One girl who lost her older sister didn’t know how to console her grieving parents. Another little girl, about 12, didn’t show up to school for the first week. Her family lost everything. She was embarrassed to go to school because she didn’t have an iron for her uniform.

For all of us the tears come easily. You think it is behind you, and then something reminds you of the sadness. You feel guilty because nothing happened to you and so much happened to others. You wonder how, over the course of time, they will deal with this.
How Caregivers Cope

Our aging population will grow to depend on the informal care of family, friends or neighbours. The job is rewarding and demanding and it can be overwhelming. Caregivers who cope (and there are lots of them) are helping the UVic Centre on Aging help caregivers who don’t handle the role so well.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY HOLLY PATTISON, BFA ’05

SETTLED INTO A GREEN LEATHER RECLINER, 82-YEAR-OLD RICHARD Bunbury looks almost as cozy as the butterscotch cocker spaniel sprawled on his raised legs. Several other long-term care residents at the Oak Bay Kiwanis care facility sit on overstuffed chairs or shuffle around the bright sitting area and adjoining sunroom.

As his wife Elaine sits in the loveseat next to him, Richard clutches a yellow ball with blue stars close to his chest. His fingers pulse at it like a heartbeat. Seeing a new visitor, the dog wags its tail and tries to stand. As I squat to make friends, Richard launches the soft ball at me. Elaine, a petite 76-year-old woman with neatly curled sandy blonde hair, immediately apologizes as I catch the ball, laugh and give it back to Richard.

“I throw the ball to him every day,” she explains. “It helps keep him alert.”

Richard murmurs and throws the ball into the middle of the room. A thin woman perched next to Elaine watches it roll into a corner.

“He’s lost words,” says Elaine. “But he still has quite a sense of humour, as you can see. Once I got really frustrated with him for not being able to talk and said, ‘Say something!’ He looked right at me and said, ‘Something.’ ”

Her silver bangles jingle as she clasps Richard’s hand. He looks at her, slightly puzzled.

It’s been just over a year since Elaine moved Richard, who has Alzheimer’s, into long-term care. For 11 years before that, she looked after him at home. As his condition progressed the level of care he needed increased. “It became very difficult,” she says. “He refused to undress, swallow his medication, and get out of the tub. Once when he refused to get out of the tub, I turned on the cold water—that got him out.”

Three mornings a week, home care workers helped Elaine bathe Richard, and the couple’s daughter came over every night to help put her father to bed. When he was still capable, Richard attended a day program so he could socialize and Elaine could catch a break.

“I wouldn’t have coped as long as I did without that assistance, especially the day program,” she says. “Some people find talking helps, but listening to other people’s stories pulled me down. It was enough to cope with what I had. I had to keep thinking positively. I’ve always believed you have to overcome.”

BARBARA WARMAN, 55, RESTS HER NUMB LEG ON A CUSHIONED ottoman. Two dogs and four of her seven cats curl up near her. The apartment is warm and smells of bread from the bakery on the ground floor.

A seasoned informal caregiver, Barbara provides care to her husband, who has rheumatoid arthritis, and to her 90-year-old blind mother, who lives down the hall. Barbara also has multiple sclerosis. But it doesn’t seem to impede or complicate her caregiving. “Caregiving gives MS something to take second place to.”

Over the past 15 years, Barbara’s also cared for her dying father, four aging aunts and uncles with varying degrees of dementia, and she’s provided respite care for a cousin’s wife.

Like most caregivers, Barbara tailors her caregiving duties for each recipient’s need and level of independence, which can change over time and from day-to-day. Sometimes caregiving means laundry, grocery shopping, helping with finances, driving, coordinating home support or providing meals. Other times, it involves more intimate challenges, such as bathing or toileting.

Barbara spoke about her experiences at a forum on intergenerational relationships. Jaws dropped as she cheerfully shared stories—like the one about bra shopping with her mother and
elderly aunt where the aunt with dementia went one way, her blind mother went the other and Barbara, who was using a walker for her MS, tried to round them up without anyone getting injured or lost.

When asked how she copes, Barb’s brown eyes grow wide and her eyebrows rise in a startled expression. “I don’t know,” she finally says, “you just do it.”

**A TEAM OF UVIC RESEARCHERS IS ALSO SEARCHING** for answers to that question. It’s the focus of a soon-to-be completed study by the university’s Centre on Aging. The study, “Caregiving: Why Some Cope Well,” funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, digs into informal caregiving—unpaid care—by talking to the family, friends, and in some cases, neighbours who provide physical and emotional support to others.

The three-year project involves 91 informal caregivers who help seniors living at home in Greater Victoria, Duncan and Nanaimo. Caregivers were interviewed at the beginning of the study with a follow-up session one year later.

“It was hard to get them in,” says sociologist and principal investigator Neena Chappell, “but once they were here it was like turning on a tap. People don’t usually ask about the caregiver. Even when there are people around, the focus tends to be on the care recipient.”

Chappell, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Social Gerontology, says the study focuses on the positive aspects of caregiving. Existing research tends to concentrate on the stresses and burdens, which creates a bias and draws a picture of burnout. But in her 1995 report, “Informal Caregivers to Adults in British Columbia,” Chappell found that most informal caregivers—91 per cent—feel they manage well.

“All caregivers talk about the stresses and strains,” says Chappell, “But most say, ‘I’m coping very well, thank you very much.’ They may get overwhelmed, but they still want to keep caregiving. So, what can we learn about caregivers coping well under demand to help those who don’t cope as well?”

In the current study, researchers examined coping skills in four categories: burden, stress, self-esteem and life satisfaction. Coping was measured in terms of problem-focused and emotional-focused coping. Problem-focused coping, says Chappell, includes taking assertive action or seeking information to solve problems. Emotional-focused coping usually involves detachment, denial or unhealthy behaviours—actions aimed at escape over solution.

“Results are still preliminary,” says Chappell. “But the strongest factors suggest psychological characteristics influence how well caregivers cope and who is most at risk. I didn’t expect the psychological factors to be as strong.”

Resilience and neuroticism were the two distinguishing factors—caregivers low in resilience or high in neuroticism had the most trouble coping.

Chappell says resilient people depend on themselves, take things in stride and see themselves as being able to handle difficult times. Neurotic people, she says, tend to be anxious, self-conscious, hostile, worrying and self-pitying.

“There are two avenues of help,” says Chappell. “We can bring in system help, which can give caregivers a break and help reduce their hours, and we can teach them how to cope. Maybe
you can’t teach someone who’s neurotic to not be neurotic, but the data suggest we can teach people positive coping methods.”

There are roughly 56,000 caregivers in the Capital Region and over 3.7 million across Canada. And there’s plenty of company coming. According to Statistics Canada projections, the proportion of seniors in Canada will grow from 12 per cent of the population in 2001 to more than 20 per cent by 2026. It’s likely that many of those seniors will rely on informal care.

“The nature of caregiving involves change,” says Chappell, looking ahead to the next steps in her research. “We’ll be examining whether people who were coping well during the first interview were still coping when the second was conducted. If not, why not? Has there been a change?”

Change came for Elaine Bunbury when full-time caregiving finally became too physically demanding and aggravated her own health problems—a slipped disc, a hernia and a history of heart trouble. But moving Richard into long-term care wasn’t easy. “I didn’t want him to come here. This is a wonderful place, but I was afraid he’d go down. So far, he hasn’t.” She reaches over to adjust the headphones that have slipped off Richard’s ears, releasing a tinny chorus of a Benny Goodman song. Richard doesn’t seem to notice. From behind wire-rimmed glasses, his gaze drifts across the room. “We’ve been married 55 years,” says Elaine. “I wouldn’t want him to think I dumped him. They tell me he’s not capable of thinking that, but I still worry. What must he think?”

Long-term care eased the physical load, but there’s no question Elaine continues to be a vital caregiver to her husband. For a few hours each day, she interacts with Richard in ways she believes will stimulate his mind and, she hopes, slow Alzheimer’s progression.

“I’m afraid to not come every day,” she says. “I don’t want him to forget me.” She peels a banana and puts it into his hand.


“Richard’s the storyteller,” she says. “I’m never quite sure I’ve gotten his words right. But then he’ll say, ‘That’s right. That’s how it happened.’ ”

“People don’t usually ask about the caregiver. Even when there are people around, the focus tends to be on the care recipient.”

Richard tries to speak, but can’t get the words out. Elaine leans over the arm of his chair and says, “What is it you want to say, Richard? Is it my name?” She repeats, “What’s my name?” a few times. The jewelled chain draping from her glasses glints in the late afternoon sun.

Richard’s mouth opens and closes but he doesn’t answer. As the moment hangs, I start to feel like an intruder and wonder if I should retrieve the forgotten yellow ball in the corner. But I can’t turn away. Then Elaine winks at me.

“You know it, don’t you?” she says to Richard. “You know my name, but you won’t tell me. You devil,” she teases. Elaine squeezes his hand and playfully rolls her eyes. Richard’s cheeks grow round as he gives her a huge grin.

Holly Pattison graduates in June from the UVic Writing program.
The Doctors Are On Their Way

Five young alumni are among the first generation of doctors in training with the new Island Medical Program. The next four years will challenge each of their exceptional abilities.

BY ANNE MULLENS
FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY BY HÉLÈNE CYR

IT WAS A MEMORABLE SATURDAY IN JUNE LAST YEAR AS PATRIZIA Moccia’s friends and family gathered to celebrate her marriage to her long-time sweetheart. In the midst of the festivities, the best man rose to make his toast to the bride, an accomplished 25-year-old who had graduated with distinction in 2002 from the university’s psychology department. The best man also made an important announcement. Moccia had learned just days earlier that she would be among the first 24 students in the Island Medical Program at the University of Victoria, part of the University of British Columbia’s newly expanded medical school. “A gasp went up from the guests and after that everyone was congratulating me on getting into medical school more than my wedding,” laughs Moccia.

Well of course. As wonderful as marriages are, they’re rather common. But getting into medical school these days—that’s really something. For every seat available in a first-year medical program in Canada, six or more students apply, almost all of them with excellent credentials. Some 1,315 hopefuls vied for UBC’s 200 available spots last year. But high marks and the right prerequisites aren’t enough to secure a place. Now, successful medical school applicants must outshine others in a wide range of criteria: volunteering, extracurricular activities, communication skills, civic engagement, empathy, leadership and more.

Five young UVic alumni had what it takes to nab one of the coveted seats in the IMP. Joining Moccia in the class of 2008 are: Michelle Tousignant, BSc ’03; Averil Russell, BA ’04; Steve Burgess, BSc ’03; and David Harris, BSc ’03.
Trailblazers: Five alumni are among the first class of 24 students in the Island Medical Program. They are (from the left): Patrizia Moccia, Michelle Tousignant, Averil Russell, David Harris and Steve Burgess.
The students are part of an historic milestone for medical education in Canada. For the first time, one medical school’s program is being offered on three campuses: UBC, UVic, and University of Northern BC in Prince George. They follow the same curriculum and take part in lectures delivered by video-conference link-ups.

The distributed model expands the capacity for medical school seats across the province and aims to bring more diverse students into the mix, particularly those who may be interested in practising in small towns or remote, rural areas of the province. Studies show that doctors tend to practice near the places they’re trained. The research seems to hold true for these five UVic alumni. Not only are they delighted that a new program enables them to earn a medical degree on a campus they love, all express hope that their medical careers will eventually see them practising on Vancouver Island—either as family doctors or specialists.

**Dr. Oscar Casiro, the head of the IMP, notes that the new approach is part of a dramatic shift in how the curriculum is taught and in the type of applicants selected to form the next generation of doctors.** Individuals with stellar academic records alone will have a hard time getting through the interview process if they don’t come across as personable, caring, and compassionate individuals with exceptional communication skills. “We really have a patient-centred approach,” says Casiro.

“At the heart of our selection is the question: would I want this person to be my doctor?”

With that guiding principle, it’s no surprise to find that this first crop of IMP students in the shiny labs and interactive lecture halls of UVic’s new $12-million Medical Sciences Building are about the warmest, most accomplished and well-rounded people you’re likely to meet at one place and one time.

“Everybody seems to play the piano—and I don’t mean dabbling, but really well,” quips David Harris, 24, who has Grade 8 conservatory piano and has been chosen vice-president of the 2008 IMP class. His extracurricular activities over the years are astonishing. He’s acted in musical theatre, coaches 13-year-old boys in soccer, volunteers at Queen Alexandra Hospital, and is a provincially-ranked badminton player. He’s no academic slouch either, graduating with distinction in biochemistry and microbiology.

Harris co-authored a peer-reviewed paper on T-cell immunology during undergraduate co-op work terms and credits those experiences for his drive and desire to be a doctor. Working in labs in the faculty of medicine at UBC he saw “how hard these brilliant people worked—they were really passionate. It taught me to be accountable, to really work hard and to care about what I was doing.”

The desire to make a meaningful contribution and to care for others seems to be a central characteristic of the five UVic alumni and their IMP colleagues. UVic kinesiology program graduate Michelle Tousignant, 25, fits that description. The
daughter of a senior Canadian military officer once visited her father in Rwanda where he was the force commander of the UN Assistance Mission, replacing General Romeo Dallaire. She spent time with the orphans of the genocide and saw the refugee camps.

“It made such a lasting impression on me. It made me realize I wanted a skill that would make me useful in a crisis and that’s when I started thinking about becoming a doctor,” says the athletic Tousignant, who came to UVic to be near her grandparents and to join the varsity rowing team. Her rowing, however, was sidelined by her grandmother’s sudden illness. Tousignant helped nurse her until her death. Her desire to enter medical school was fuelled again in 1999 when she went to work in rural health clinics in Honduras assisting with vaccinations and births. Following her kinesiology studies, she worked as an aquatic therapist at the Saanich Commonwealth Pool, helping people regain movement and strength following heart attacks, strokes, car crashes and other traumas.

“It was not a linear path to medical school but the whole time, since I was 14, I just couldn’t shake the idea of becoming a doctor,” says Tousignant.

Steve Burgess’ desire to be a doctor was fueled by a personal, life-changing experience. Burgess, 23, was born with a port wine birthmark on the left side of his face. He was often teased in elementary school. “An amazing physician made such a difference in my life,” said Burgess who at age 12 began laser treatments with Dr. Harvey Lui, a Vancouver dermatologist.

Burgess had some 22 laser treatments spanning six years—unprecedented at the time. The painful therapy successfully removed almost all signs of the purple discoloration. It also led to an enduring desire to become a dermatologist.

Like Tousignant, however, Burgess didn’t follow a direct path to his calling. He did his undergraduate degree in biology at UVic, specializing in genetics and cell biology. In his final year and after graduation he conducted research in the genetics of the fungus that causes Dutch Elm disease.

Even with that impressive record, Burgess didn’t get into medical school the first year he applied, missing an interview by only half a point. “I had many of the skills and experiences they were looking for but I didn’t know that I should detail them in the application, for example, telling them that I donate blood regularly. That in itself was worth a point.”

Harris had a similar experience. He, too, took two tries to get into medical school, despite having most of the qualities they were looking for the first time. “Writing a good application is a skill in itself,” he says, as Burgess nods in agreement.

Having so many skills, interests and aptitudes requires exceptional multi-tasking and time-management skills—exactly the skills needed in a highly demanding medical program. Most days start at 8 a.m. and the students are on the go often until late at night. Time is spent each week in videoconference lectures with colleagues at the other two sites, in small group learning sessions, and labs. They work one afternoon in the offices of local family doctors in Victoria and one afternoon at Royal Jubilee Hospital learning basic clinical skills, such as taking blood pressure and giving an injection.

**THE NEXT FOUR YEARS WILL CHALLENGE ALL OF THEIR EXCEPTIONAL ABILITIES**—requiring them to absorb vast medical knowledge that is rapidly evolving. They will be working in smaller and isolated communities throughout Vancouver Island to get a taste of medicine away from a big urban centre. They will have clinical clerkship rotations through the specialties of anesthesia, dermatology, emergency medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, pediatrics, psychiatry and surgery. Through it all, they will acquire the hands-on skills and knowledge.
to join the ranks of today’s medical healers.

“It is a really demanding program, but it is also really fascinating,” says Averil Russell, 24. Unlike the other four UVic grads, she didn’t get a science degree, opting for anthropology instead. It’s a route she feels has prepared her just as well. “Anthropology is all about the study of people, their physical characteristics, their societies and relationships. I think it is a great primer for medicine, because medicine is all about people too, particularly the situations or societal disparities that cause disease.” Russell did her honours research project on HIV infection in South Africa, gaining knowledge about AIDS that she’s already putting to use this year.

One of the key features of UBC’s medical education is called Problem-Based Learning (PBL). It’s a narrative, group approach to assimilating the knowledge to recognize and treat a huge array of diseases. Each Monday morning, students are provided with the symptoms and medical history of a patient. Over the week and working in teams, the students unravel the mystery behind the illness—learning the differential diagnosis, the way to administer and evaluate medical tests, and the types of therapies available. It’s like the real world of medicine where teams of health professionals deliver care for patients.

For the observer, what is most remarkable about this first group of students in the Island Medical Program is their congenial and co-operative nature. Any trace of the fierce application process is gone. The atmosphere is decidedly collegial. Patrizia Moccia, the newlywed, recalls the very first days of classes when her professors specifically made the point that while it was tough to get into medical school, now they were all colleagues. “The only thing that matters now is that, at the end of our training, we all emerge as good doctors.”

Anne Mullens is a Victoria-based writer specializing in health issues.
Fitness

Odelia Smith has covered a lot of ground—walking from Victoria to the village of Tlatlasikwala on Vancouver Island’s northern tip and back—without going far from home. She did it in a four-week virtual foot race with fellow students and teachers from the Saanich Indian School Board’s Adult Education Centre. Equipped with pedometers they recorded daily steps and mapped their progress. By the end, they not only reached their 460-kilometre goal but far surpassed it.

For Smith, a 29-year-old member of the Tsartlip First Nation, those were the first steps on a journey toward healthier eating, improved fitness and the loss of 91 kilograms. “I woke up. I real-

Racing Against Diabetes

Research at the grassroots level shows how—one step at a time—community recreation and health promotion can help to prevent diabetes where the risk is highest.

By Jennifer Blyth, BA ’95
Photography by Hélène Cyr
ized what I was doing to myself. (Now) I walk every day and I eat fruits and vegetables every day. It's an awesome feeling.”

Getting people moving was a goal of the four-year Saanich Peninsula Diabetes Prevention Project, led by the university’s School of Physical Education and supported by Health Canada. The study, concluded this spring, explored community recreation’s role in controlling Type 2 diabetes among higher-risk groups: single parents and low-income families, seniors, people with disabilities, and Aboriginal communities (where Type 2 diabetes occurs three to five times more per capita than in the general population).

More than two million Canadians have diabetes, with three million cases expected by the end of the decade. Among those with diabetes, 90 per cent have Type 2 (occurring when the body can’t properly use the insulin it produces). The disease can be delayed or prevented by maintaining a healthy body weight through fitness and nutrition.

“The anticipated number of people who will be living with Type 2 diabetes is really astronomical,” says Joan Wharf Higgins, professor and holder of the Canada Research Chair in Health and Society. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, so how can we curb the epidemic at the local level, in the community?”

The first two years of the study were largely spent with community organizations, identifying issues. Given the size of the Saanich Peninsula, transportation—its availability and cost—was seen as a key impediment to fitness participation. Other concerns involved time, cost, and a sense of intimidation if one wasn’t already athletic.

**Two major initiatives came from that assessment: the Aboriginal Walking Programs and A Taste of Healthy Living, a series of eight-week sessions promoting fitness and nutrition. Other programs included a nutrition newsletter for food bank clients, cooking classes, and a Web site (healthypeninsula.ca).**

A key partner was Panorama Recreation, which offers swimming, skating, racquet sports, fitness classes, and wellness programs for all ages. Still, some were unaware of the centre; others had misconceptions about its programs.

One solution was to base the Taste of Healthy Living programs and a health fair at Panorama (the Aboriginal Sport Development Centre hosted a second fair). Single parents or seniors feeling isolated in the community were introduced to new people and new opportunities. “Isolation breeds isolation,” Wharf Higgins observes, “so if you can somehow put a crack in that by whatever means, it really is the first step.”

Part of it, too, adds program coordinator Tara Taggart, BA ’02, was about “allowing people a comfortable and supportive environment to try something new that they may not have had the opportunity to try.”

Kit Brodsky joined the Taste of Healthy Living program to learn the importance of exercise and healthy eating in preventing Type 2 diabetes. Now, with two sessions under her belt, Brodsky is a program facilitator and has lowered her blood sugar levels, blood pressure, and her LDL or "bad" cholesterol—all without medication. She also dropped 30 pounds in the process. “I’m what they refer to as a success story,” she says. She now enjoys regular yoga sessions and strives each day to record 10,000 aerobic steps on her pedometer.

Aboriginal Walking Program participants reported that, apart from the fitness payoff, walking provided a break from routine, helped alleviate stress, and provided time to think and relax. Joint participation by students and staff also increased camaraderie, says teacher Kaleb Child, who with teacher Tye Swallow coordinated the walking program at the Adult Education Centre. “The first year we did the Vancouver Island race, it was kind of like an ongoing intramural program,” Child says. “It (created) a real sense of solidarity, team spirit and school spirit.”

The next race grew to 2 1/2 months, with the target destination spanning Canada. With more pedometers, participation climbed to about 75 people. It also extended to the Tribal School, with a three-month program for preschool to Grade 9 students.

The pedometers were critical. Apart from being fun gadgets they “let them celebrate their accomplishments on a daily basis,” Child says. Competition was important, too. With the race component, “people didn’t want to lose a step.”

**While individual successes were realized through the Diabetes Prevention Project, broader goals were met as well. The initial eight partners grew to 20. The resulting awareness among community groups about their respective programs and their ability to coordinate, not duplicate, services, has been a success in itself, Wharf Higgins says.**

Another goal is to simply maintain the momentum. The project’s legacy includes a pedometer-lending program at the Sidney public library and the training of senior and Aboriginal fitness leaders. The Adult Education Centre is lacing up for its next race,” thanks to funding from the Saanich Indian School Board for 20 more pedometers. And then there are people like Brodsky who, after reaping the personal rewards of fitness and good nutrition, are sharing that wisdom with others. Ideally, Wharf Higgins would like to see a funded position to coordinate a continued Peninsula program.

In a larger context, Wharf Higgins says the project has underlined the “need to urge policy makers and the public to shift their view of public recreation beyond fun and games, to the higher status of essential services.” Her point is that if recreation centres received more support for their programs and facilities, it would be easier for people to participate, get healthier, and reduce the burden on health care.

“The dwindling public purse and increased user fees make what is theoretically and historically a public service, intended to benefit all citizens, accessible only to those who can afford to pay. Rather than funneling more and more tax dollars into public health care, we would argue that earmarking a small portion to disease prevention and health promotion makes much greater sense.”

Jennifer Blyth is a freelance writer in Victoria.
Catching Dreams

Teenage girls and relationships: sometimes talking it out with a mentor, someone who has been there, can make all the difference in the world.

BY MARK VARDY, BA ’05
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HÉLÈNE CYR

The 9 a.m. buzzer signals the start of classes at the Chemainus First Nation’s Stu” Ate Lelum Secondary School. Two girls chat as they enter a classroom where they’re about to start their weekly participation in a university research project. The UVic Centre for Youth and Society calls it the Adolescent Girls’ Mentorship Study. The students here call it “girls’ group.”

Another girl shifts tables, dragging them together for the group. Her hardcover notebook for journal writing—each girls’ group participant has one—is out and she seems eager to start.

But there is no easy feeling of camaraderie as the group’s six 15- and 16-year-old girls settle in. Maybe it’s a reaction to the momentary presence of a square-looking white guy who’s writing about them for a university magazine, but between most group members there is only a guarded acknowledgement. Not all of these girls were friends before the group started meeting four weeks ago, but that is changing.

“Some of the girls were so closed in,” says the group’s mentor, Samantha Sam. “They didn’t talk to anyone or try to befriend anybody who was a stranger to them.” But the girls in the group, which focuses on their dating relationships, are becoming more open and comfortable with each other as the weeks go by.

Sam, 30 years old, lived through many of the same issues as the girls she is mentoring. She grew up poor, on reserve and in foster homes. At 15, she got into an abusive relationship that took five years to escape. She dropped out of high school to have a baby when she was 18.

“I’ve learned that when I open up more myself, that helps the girls open up during the session. I say my life experiences and my regrets. Then I’ll go on to all the goals I’ve achieved, and they’re really listening. I can talk to the girls about that.”

The Stu” Ate Lelum group is the latest in a series that focuses on teenage girls’ intimate relationships. In 1997, a Victoria community health clinic asked Elizabeth Banister, a professor in the School of Nursing, to research the most pressing health concerns of adolescent girls. Through focus groups and forums, she found that girls linked many of their health concerns, including unprotected sex and dating violence, to their relationships with boys.

“When you talk about health issues with them, it always comes back to relationships. Their relationship concerns end up becoming a thread through most (of their) health issues.”

Banister has developed a model for small groups of teenage girls to share experiences, strategies and information. Since 1999 there have since been 11 such groups, most of them in Victoria, typically involving eight girls, a facilitator/research assistant, and a mentor. As well as their regular meetings, the groups go on educational outings to community agencies that the girls themselves select. Banister and her research team are preparing
two curriculum manuals—one of which, funded by Health Canada, incorporates First Nations traditional knowledge—that will enable community groups across the province, and perhaps the country, to run similar groups.

Although dating violence receives a lot of attention, it’s not the groups’ exclusive focus. “It’s also (about) asserting your needs, and developing a sense of your own self, and connecting with who you are in a relationship. We help the girls identify when power dynamics were unequal in a relationship and what that would look like,” says Banister. “It’s important to focus on girls’ thinking, the way they see themselves and others.”

The mentorship study is among seven community-based projects on youth injury prevention—together known as the Community Alliance for Health Research—funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and organized by the UVic Centre for Youth and Society.

Each group’s mentor is chosen by the girls and shares both her negative and positive life experiences. Sam graduated from Stu’ Ate Lelum in 1995. She had dropped out twice, once to have her baby, and again when leaving her boyfriend. But she was motivated to finish high school and then go on to earn a certificate in business skills. “Watching all my aunts and uncles and my mom…alcohol, not working, not educated, I just wanted to do something, be able to have a job to have money to do things.”

Sam has worked at Stu’ Ate Lelum for over six years, first as receptionist and now as executive assistant. She is working toward a diploma in management through BC Open University. And, having broken the cycle of being stuck in abusive relationships, she is in a healthy and supportive one.

“I get things on my birthday now. The girls laugh along with me about all the good things that are happening to me now. They know what I’ve gone through.”

Mark Vardy will graduate in November from the UVic Writing program.

“With 20 minutes left in their session, the group is making traditional dream catchers. Brass hoops, beads, feathers and pipe-cleaners brighter than a new box of crayons are scattered on the table. The girls are more relaxed with one another, less cautious.

Before working on their dream catchers, Banister says, the girls discussed their personal goals, most of which centre on education. One participant’s goal is to continue her daily attendance at Stu’ Ate Lelum. Others share the goal of graduating from high school.

The girl who pushed tables together earlier in the morning is placing specific beads in her dream catcher to remind her of her goals: “Getting a degree in being a daycare worker, and being a professional dancer.”

Banister nods. She says a degree in child and youth care would be a good option for daycare work. The girl speaks up again. “I think we should have talked about our goals while we were making dream catchers, instead of before.” Banister thanks her and tells her it’s a good idea for future girls’ groups.

Sam is quietly writing the girls’ names on large brown envelopes to store their dream catchers until they finish them at their next meeting. After the girls have left, she says that if such a group like this existed when she was a teenager, she might have made different choices in her life.

“I just did things on my own, what I felt was right,” she says. “I had no mentor, no older sisters, no aunties or mother around me.” Now, after making a difference in these girls’ lives she is rethinking her own goals. She’ll complete her diploma in management, she says, and then she just might pursue a career working with and helping teens.

Mark Vardy will graduate in November from the UVic Writing program.
Buying a Franchise in Canada: Understanding and Negotiating your Franchisee Agreement
TONY WILSON, LLB '85
Franchises seem to be everywhere but it can be hard to find legal material written specifically for prospective franchise owners. Wilson offers a guide to avoiding the legal pitfalls that can come with a franchise, strategies for negotiating a better franchise deal, and a discussion of the pros and cons of owning a franchise.
Self-Counsel Press, 2005 • 192 pages • $18.95

Dark Sun: Te Rapunga and the Quest of George Dibbern
ERIKA GRUNDMANN, MA '89
The life story of German-born George Dibbern (1889-1962), interned in both World Wars, sailor-philosopher, vagabond, friend of all peoples. A self-proclaimed citizen of the world, he created his own passport and flag and used his 10-metre ketch as a means of building bridges of international friendship.
David Ling Publishing (NZ), 2004 • 510 pages • NZ$50

Everyone Can Cook Seafood
ERIK AKIS, Cert. '96
Culinary basics combined with dozens of recipes—from baked oysters with spinach and parmesan to miso-glazed salmon steaks—show any home cook how to prepare seafood on the stovetop, on the grill and in the oven. The new book picks up where Akis’ popular Everyone Can Cook left off.
Whitecap Books, 2004 • 224 pages • $22.95

Going Coastal
WENDY FRENCH, BA ’94
French’s writing has been called “chick-lit with snappy humour” and this, her second novel, promises more of the same. Jody Rogers, a 20-something small-town woman whose coming off a failed relationship, a job resignation and has no prospects—romantic or otherwise—on the horizon.
Forge Books/H.B. Fenn and Co., 2005 • 304 pages • $17.95

The Last Heathen: Encounters with Ghosts and Ancestors in Melanesia
CHARLES MONTGOMERY, BSc ’91
Montgomery followed the steps of his great-grandfather, the Anglican Bishop of Tasmania, through the South Pacific. The novel becomes a debate on the nature of magic, myth and religion—and a metaphor for the transforming power of storytelling. Winner of the 2005 Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction.
Douglas & McIntyre, 2004 • 314 pages • $24.95

Unmarked Landscapes Along Highway 16
SARAH DE LEEUW, BFA ’96
Stories from northwest BC’s rough landscape of fishing and logging communities related through richly detailed personal essays by a writer who has explored life along the road from Prince George to Prince Rupert.
NeWest Press, 2004 • 128 pages • $19.95

Starfish
A plague of fingersmiths, as though the stars had all fallen into the sea and become pilfering cold purple hands, the starfish search among slumbering oyster beds for the sunken reflection of the moon, blindly breaking the hinges of the shells, picking the locks on the luminous dream.
Catherine Greenwood from The Pearl King
Final Exams, 1971

Security patrolman Ray Stenning checks one of the 527 exam desks that awaited anxious students on April 15, 1971. It was a rare quiet moment on a campus embroiled in an intense controversy over faculty tenure. The photo was shot in Hut S, used as the main gymnasium until 1975 when the McKinnon Gym opened for athletics and became the new home of the mass exam-writing ritual.

1970

BILL WHITE, BA, is a guidance counsellor at Millwood High School in Halifax. “Following graduation I was a navy officer for three years, then left to pursue a teaching career in Nova Scotia. My UVic geography degree was a great selling feature! I’ve been a guidance counsellor since 1983.”

1975

LARRY ROSE, MA, is the news director at CKCO Television in Kitchener-Waterloo, and writes: “Anyone remember the old Lansdowne campus? Lectures in the Young building (which, of course, was actually a very old building)? Or perhaps the dart between Lansdowne and the new campus at Gordon Head? Well, the above goes back to 1964 so chances are most faculty, graduates and, most certainly, present day students, would not remember. So there’s definitely a geezer factor in my recollections of UVic. It was an exciting time with a feisty political climate on campus and off. We took part in huge protest marches to the legislature over university funding; the university was new and exploding in growth; and the experience on campus was a marvelous though intimidating adventure for someone from the small community of Rossland. I have gone back to Victoria only rarely but I did visit a couple of years ago and the changes to the scale of the campus and the number of new buildings is astonishing. As news director at CKCO I receive stacks of resumes from prospective employees. Last spring I came across one from an outstanding young journalist and noted that we shared a background at UVic. As it happened we were able to offer him, KYLE CHRISTIE, BA ’99, a job and he has done exceptionally well. So, we are UVic’s K-W connection and I have enjoyed sharing UVic experiences.”

1979

PATSY PETERS (nee BAWLFI), BA, is teaching core French and is the department head of modern languages at David Thompson Secondary School in Vancouver. “I completed my teaching diploma in French and socials at UBC and went on to teach 12 years at John Oliver Secondary School before moving over to David Thompson in 2001. I completed my master’s degree in leadership and administration in 2004 at UBC. My daughter Lara Peters is now completing her degree at McGill University. Love to hear from any of the old partiers from the “SubPub” days.

1981

VICKI EASINGWOOD, LLB, recently moved from Victoria to Duncan: “I have started a boutique-style legal practice dealing primarily with family law matters as well as providing support services to clients in day-to-day changes and challenges facing them during a separation and divorce. Mediation and negotiation are preferred to litigation.”

1983

GERALD KAZANOWSKI, BA, has been named to the Canadian Basketball Hall of Fame. After leading the Vikes to four straight national titles (1980-83), Gerald was drafted by the NBA’s Utah Jazz and enjoyed a pro career in Europe, Argentina and Mexico. He also played for Canada at the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games. • IAN RESTON, BA and BARB RESTON (nee FERRE), BEd ’88 provide this update from their home in Bratislava, Slovakia: “After 10 years of teaching in Invermere, we attended a job fair at Queen’s University; we were hired by Quality Schools International and placed...
In Closing...  

BY DOUG JOHNSON, BA ’77, LLB ’80  
PRESIDENT, UVIC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

At the end of June I will have completed my second term as President of the Alumni Association and this is likely my last message in the Torch. I have greatly enjoyed the experience and it has left me with the firm belief that the future is very bright for both the university and the association.

During the last few years the university has experienced considerable growth. There are several new buildings including student’s residences, the Island Medical Program Building, the Engineering/Computer Sciences Building, the Continuing Studies Building and the Technology Enterprise Facility. Many more new building projects are in the planning stages. These include the expansion of the library, the First Peoples’ House and more. It’s clear that UVic has become an institution of stature with a history and an identity of which all alumni can be proud.

The university turned 40 in 2003 and several members of its first graduating class returned to the campus to help us celebrate the special occasion. Many of them marveled at the growth of the university over the relatively short period of time that had passed since they attended as students. I am indeed fortunate to have been involved with our association at a time when the university was coming of age. It was a time when the alumni association itself also reached a level of maturity that compels it to seek increased responsibilities.

It is clear that the current administration of the university welcomes the participation of alumni in the affairs of the university. The association receives support in many ways from the university and our views are frequently sought. We are able to suggest nominees to the board of governors and are invited to sit on several university committees. We have representatives at all convocation ceremonies and generally have a part to play at almost every level of the university. If you wish to become involved, please contact the UVic Alumni Services office as there is always a need for volunteers to fill a variety of roles including to sit as board members or to serve on university committees.

In closing, I wish to thank all of the members of the alumni association board for the skill and devotion they have displayed over the past two years. They are the reason I am so confident that the future of the association will be bright. I also wish to thank the alumni staff: particularly Don Jones, Marlene Bergstrom, Lynn Wilson, Linda Nicoll, Mike McNeney, Greg Churchill and Karen Whyte for the unwavering support they have provided to me and the board. And finally, I wish to thank Faye Wightman, Vice-President of External Relations, for the support she has provided to the association and the many valuable contributions she has made at our meetings.
For the Alumni Investor, a New Partner

CLEARSIGHT WEALTH MANAGEMENT, a specialty niche investment and retirement planning firm with offices in Toronto and Vancouver, has signed a five-year affinity partnership agreement with the UVic Alumni Association.

The firm, launched in January 2004, promises to bring alumni customers the kind of service expected from larger firms without the commission sales approach of traditional brokers.

“We chose Clearsight because it has designed an exclusive program that offers exceptional benefits for our alumni—lower fees, professional advice and a wide selection of products,” says UVic Alumni Services director Don Jones. A residual, based on total assets administered by Clearsight, will be returned to the alumni association to support programs and services like student scholarships and grants.

The agreement between UVic and Clearsight is similar to others that the company has established with several Canadian university alumni associations—including those of the University of Toronto and UBC.

Clearsight is offering UVic alumni investment services that are based on an annual fee, as opposed to brokerage commissions. The firm targets mid-market investors with accounts ranging from $25,000 to $500,000—people often overlooked by larger investment firms that are geared toward high net worth customers.

“Our clients have experienced a lack of attention from brokers at big firms who demand a higher level of assets before treating people as full-service clients,” says Clearsight president and founder David Finley. “The retail investment industry has abandoned middle class Canadians because of a built-in cost structure that forces them to chase the high-margin, affluent individual.”

Clearsight’s professional financial advisors (typically with at least five years of experience and holding either a Certified Financial Planner or Charter Financial Analyst designation) operate on a commission-free basis. “They are on the same side of the table as our clients,” says Finley.

The company’s products and account options include wrap programs, mutual funds, fixed income investments, equities, and cash management services. The “Clearsight Alumni RRSP Stock Portfolio” includes 10 stocks selected by the Strategic Analysis Corporation and has posted a 19.8 per cent annual compounded rate of return over the past 12 years.

Clearsight is a member of the Investment Dealers Association and the Canadian Investor Protection Fund. It reaches clients and potential clients through alumni magazine advertising, e-mail and regular seminars on campus. A recent series of seminars in Victoria and Vancouver attracted 170 alumni from UVic, UBC, SFU and BCIT.

Clearsight Wealth Management is on the Web at www.clearsight.ca/uvic.

10 and 13) have recently returned to Yellowknife after a year abroad, living and working in England. We lived an hour southeast of London by train and had a very rewarding year. I worked for the National Health Service at Medway Maritime Hospital and Bruce taught in a large all boys comprehensive school, the Howard School for Boys.

After a year abroad, living and working in England, the couple moved to Kuwait. Who knows where the wind will blow us to next!” • JEFFREY DYMENT, LLB, and ELAINE DYMENT (nee ANGLIN), BEd ’00, recently moved to Kelowna where he has taken up a new position as deputy regional Crown counsel. “Life is great in the Okanagan!”

1989

JONATHAN RATEL, LLB, earned his master’s in law last December from the London School of Economics and Political Science, specializing in international law. He is currently in Sarajevo working as an international prosecutor with the special department for organized crime and corruption in the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Jonathan is on leave from his Crown counsel duties in BC. • ALISON SYDOR, BSc, was named Sport BC’s senior female athlete of the year. The mountain biker (and 1997 Distinguished Alumni Award winner) won a bronze at the 2004 world championships and narrowly missed an Olympic medal in Athens, finishing fourth. She has ranked in the world’s top five for 14 straight seasons.

1990

COLIN MACRAE, BA, is a self-employed communications and business consultant in Vancouver. He writes: “I’ve been involved in the public relations and communications industry in Vancouver for the past 11 years. In fact, my career in public relations started when I worked for the UVic PR department while in my 3rd and 4th years. Those early days of writing articles for the Torch, helping organize events and writing media advisories seem to have paid off. After graduating, I hit the road for three years of travel, working abroad, aid work and skiing. I’ve been in Vancouver since 1993, working in a variety of PR roles. Last year I started my own consulting practice, focusing on communications and business strategy development. It’s rolling along really nicely. I’ve been married to Sue since 1999, and have two young daughters (Kate and Claire).”

1991

CHARLES MONTGOMERY, BSc, won the 2005 Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction for his book, The Last Heathen: Encounters with Ghosts and Ancestors in Melanesia (see Bookmarks section). The honour includes $25,000 in cash. Montgomery is a freelance journalist based in Vancouver and specializing in travel, environment, globalization and myth. • RASMA-VINCA BERTZ, BMus, writes: “Guess I am feeling that 15 years away means I should be getting back in touch. Currently snowed under in Scotland, literally, with the weather and work as I’m creating a successful health assessment business.”
Alumni Travel Goes Coastal

Great vacations don’t have to involve flying to the other side of the world. Sometimes the best times—fresh air, stunning scenery, breathtaking culture—are just around the corner…or up the coast.

That’s where Victoria-based Maple Leaf Adventures comes in. The company has joined the UVic Alumni Travel program as a partner offering educational voyages aboard the beautiful heritage schooner, Maple Leaf.

Operated by class of 1994 alumni Kevin Smith and Maureen Gordon, Maple Leaf Adventures offers a variety of coastal excursions, including trips to the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii) and the pristine waters of southeast Alaska.

The nine-day journey through Haida Gwaii includes several hours of shore time each morning and afternoon with the guidance of expert naturalists.

“We’ve travelled this area extensively,” says Gordon, “and the knowledge of our crew, combined with the knowledge and impressive success despite being a young company,” • Judy Kelly, BEd, is an advancement assistant with PacificSport Victoria.

1995

Derek Ireland. BSc, graduated from New York University with a PhD in biology (June, 2004) and moved to Los Angeles to pursue immunology research at the University of Southern California. He married Joanna Lynn Hodges, on Sept. 4, 2004.

1996

Amy Collum (nee Morrissey), BA, is the executive director of Enchanted Woodland Children’s Society in Nanaimo where they offer childcare programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. She recently got her MA in early childhood education from Concordia University (St. Paul, MN). Her research was on the pairing of seniors in long-term care with preschoolers who attend daycare full-time. “A highlight for me in this study was when a grandma said, after volunteering for a year, ‘See Amy, we are still good at something.’

Community at work!”

1997

Cam Elford, MA, has joined San Diego-based Triathlete magazine as news editor and editor-at-large. He has been involved in the sport for 10 years as a competitor and writer. • Ian Moyer, MA, has been named assistant professor of classics and history at Pomona College in Claremont, California. He’s teaching introductory classical Greek and history courses and researching the cultural interactions between the ancient Greek and Egyptian worlds. • Cecilio Mulleda, BSc, is living in North Vancouver and working for Air Canada as an aircraft maintenance engineer. • Lisa Rotstano, BA, is a teacher-counsellor at College Heights Secondary in Prince George. • Gail Greenwood Wakulich, MA, is an instructor of English and creative writing at the College of the Rockies, Cranbrook campus, where she has taught since 1999.

For the latest travel options for all three partners, visit www.alumni.uvic.ca/travel.
Paddlers Cross “Holy Grail”

“Failure was never an option. But on a daily basis, failure looked possible,” says Les Jickling, sounding relaxed on the phone from his office in Vancouver. He deserves to feel good. He’s survived malaria, crocodiles and the sheer mental and physical anguish that sets in when you’ve paddled the length of the world’s longest, most famed river.

“It was really, really difficult. We were sick a lot and it was a logistical nightmare,” says the 1990 political science alumnus. But he and his teammate, Mark Tanner, did it. On Jan. 29 they reached the Mediterranean Sea after a 148-day epic that took them 5,000 km through some of the remotest corners of Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. They are the first to complete the journey, which began at Lake Tana, Ethiopia, where the Blue Nile rises.

“In paddling, the Blue Nile is generally thought of as the Holy Grail of rivers,” says Jickling. “Numerous people have died trying to run the river’s Northern Gorge.”

Surviving that section was a triumph on its own. What followed in the days and weeks ahead was grueling and often frustrating. They encountered crocodiles who displayed a hungry interest in oars. They went through civil war hot spots in Sudan. They caught malaria. They met bureaucratic resistance and skepticism as they tried to get the dozens of permits and visas they required. They consumed six to eight litres of water every day.

“Everything we had done in our lives to that point, we seemed to need,” Jickling says. “We had to draw on all of the skills and resourcefulness we could find.”

Les Jickling, BA ’90, and a teammate are the first to paddle from the Blue Nile to the Mediterranean Sea.

Jickling, employed by Vancouver’s Absolute Software and Tanner, from New Zealand, started out with a team of 11 paddlers with rafts and folding kayaks. All of the others dropped out along the way.

By the time they reached the sea it was “an anticlimax. We were so fatigued. There was a huge element of disbelief that seemed to eclipse everything.”

The paddlers are now focusing their efforts on drawing attention to issues of access to clean water for communities in the Nile Basin. A book is in the works and they plan to give public talks about their journey and fresh water conservation issues. The expedition’s Web site is at www.niletrip.com.
A new chapter of the Alumni Association, just for Aboriginal alumni, was launched in the fall and is focusing on building support networks for current and prospective students. “I hope the chapter supports and develops the sense of community among Aboriginal students,” says the chapter’s interim chair, Jewel Peters.

The chapter was officially launched in the fall at a colourful celebration—featuring traditional prayers, drumming, songs and words of encouragement—in Mungo Martin House, near the Royal BC Museum. More than 100 alumni, faculty and university officials attended the event. Speakers included UVic President David Turpin and UVic Writing alumnus Philip Kevin Paul, winner of the 2004 BC Book Prize for poetry.

Peters, a political science student from the Sto:lo Nation, sees the group helping “to develop networks of knowledge” between campus and Aboriginal communities.

The chapter has already begun planning the 2005 celebration for October 19, again at Mungo Martin House. Get involved by contacting the alumni office at alumni@uvic.ca.

IN MEMORIAM
ERNIE HARPER, BA ’71, died suddenly on June 18, 2004, while diving in the Galapagos Islands. He was gifted in the field of digital electronics, working for many years in the development of communications technology in Sweden.

SAUL HOLIFF, BA ’83, who managed Johnny Cash’s career in the 1960s and the early ’70s, died March 17 in Nanaimo at the age of 80. He earned a history degree after leaving a show business career that included managing Canadian country singer and TV host Tommy Hunter and the Statler Brothers.

Boxed Light
The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria is presenting a major retrospective of the career of visual artist Pat Martin Bates, the long-serving professor and 1991 recipient of the Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching. The show, running through to July 10, includes the light box shown here, “The Angel of the Blue Sky is Crying Parallax Tears, 1998.”

Upcoming Events
www.alumni.uvic.ca/events

May 21–22  Law Class of ’78 Reunion
June 7–10  Spring Convocation
June 22  Alumni Association AGM
July 9  Alumni Picnic, Beaver Lake Park
Aug. 20  Alumni Night with Vancouver Canadians Baseball
Oct. 19  Aboriginal Alumni Celebration
Nov. 9–10  Fall Convocation
Nov. 22  Legacy Awards
PIERRE BERTON ADMITTED HE NEGLECTED science classes at Victoria College in order to live and breathe the Microscope, the bulletin-board newspaper created by classmates Harold Parrott and Ivan Mouat.

Starting in 1938, he wrote a “Craigdarroch Comment” column and drew editorial cartoons like the one on this page, which appeared in March, 1939.

The “tallest red-headed man” at the college, as the student annual recorded, loved a good schoolyard argument. It was during one of those heated discussions that he announced he was going to be a journalist. His mother wanted him to be a research chemist and she warned that he would live his whole life in “frayed shirts and worn trousers.”

But Berton had made his decision and he would become one of the country’s best-known journalists, broadcasters, and authors, producing compelling and popular accounts of Canadian history among the 50 books he wrote. He died on Nov. 30, 2004 at the age of 84.