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On the cover: Science Venture 2006 campers (left to right) Jacob Wilson-Potter, Rory Pozzolo and Maya Pozzolo and the K’NEX set they used to learn about engineering concepts. Story on page 22. Photograph by Hélène Cyr.
One of the Wise
On the passing of Peter Smith, a tribute.

ABOVE MY DESK, WITHIN EASY REACH, IS MY UVic BIBLE. A MULTITUDE OF THE WISE: UVic Remembered was given to me the week I came to work at the university in 1997. It’s been my trusted companion ever since.

Ample evidence of its value may be found in the dozens of sticky notes that it has sprouted like little yellow dog ears. Most of them are cryptically labeled—according to an editor’s hurried, unscientific methods—for future reference.

One of the first notes marks page 31 and says simply, in pencil: “Pearse” for Benjamin W. Pearse who died in 1902 and left $10,000 to establish a post-secondary school in Victoria, where none had existed at the time. I placed that post-it when we were working a story to mark the centennial of higher education in this city.

Or there’s the note marked “E.B. Paul,” for the founding principal of Victoria College. We used an archive photo of him sitting in his garden, marking papers, on the cover of the first issue of the Torch that I edited. I had spotted the photo in another section of the book.

The last note that I’ve stuck in my copy of Multitude of the Wise isn’t labeled at all. It’s on a page that discusses the university’s inaugural year of classes, when 125 full-time teachers were listed in the 1963-64 course calendar (compared to the current roster of nearly 800 professors).

One of those first faculty members was a hometown gentleman, an alumnus of Victoria College, a classicist who had gone off to attain his doctorate from Yale. He was Peter L. Smith.

There would be many, many ways that he would have his impact on campus life over the next four decades and more. He was a teacher (first and foremost), administrator, stage actor, translator, tour guide, basketball supporter, family man and dog master.

He was also an unofficial historian and the author of Multitude of the Wise. He kept meticulous history files and biographies on all that was the story of UVic, Victoria College and Victoria High School.

When he died from a stroke this summer, it came as a bitter shock. Although he was well into his retirement years, he remained active in the life of the university. Most recently he was a tremendous help as the members of the Victoria College Craigdarroch Castle Alumni Association developed and launched their new Web site. He was their go-to-guy for historical facts, from biographies to mailing lists.

And now we take stock of what’s left. We have his wonderful book about UVic (in addition to his others, like the most recent one on the history of flight in Victoria). We also have stacks of text and the 360 photos and the oral history tapes that he left in the highly capable hands of the staff of UVic Archives.

What’s lost to the university community is the witty, deep link to our history that Peter Smith gave us along with his collegiality.

This edition of our magazine is dedicated to him.

MIKE MCNENEEY
EDITOR
NAME THAT JUDOCA
I viewed with particular interest your “Throwback, 1965” photo in the spring 2006 edition. It first appeared in the student yearbook that year (yes, in the early years of UVic we did produce a yearbook!). I am indeed the thrower in the photo, and I believe the judoga in the air, upside down was Don Alexander. After leaving UVic, he had an outstanding career with the RCMP, retiring as a staff sergeant. He is now deceased. I’m not certain about all the remaining athletes in the photo, but the young man on the extreme left is Richard Crossley.

I must state that the male and female members of that Judo Club were a particularly hardy lot. As a first-degree black belt (shodan), I did an exhibition down at the Young Building (Victoria College, Lansdowne campus) in ’63 and was subsequently asked to start a judo club when we all moved up to the Gordon Head campus. There we were first provided with one of the old unheated military shacks, with a broken window. Snow occasionally blew through that broken pane onto the mat (an old piece of canvas covering some hammock mattresses). Warming up for a workout certainly took on a whole new meaning. Ah, those were the days my friends!

JIM LONDON, MA ’76
VICTORIA

THREE CHEERS
I just pirated my husband’s copy of the Torch (we’re both alumni but never met while we were there) which arrived today, and read it from cover to cover. I think this version of the Torch is one of the best I’ve read in a long time. It is more spacious, bright and brimming with experiences. I love all the real-life ways people are incorporating the globe in what they do and the passions they have. I also love the two-page photo dedicated to Ms. Woolstencroft’s achievements at the Paralympics. Thanks for a good read.

HEATHER BELL, BA ’97
HALIFAX

I read the latest edition of the Torch from cover to cover and am most impressed with it. Not only is the content very interesting, but the design is most pleasing. I can’t tell you how much I enjoy a clean page! Also, I really like to read an article start to finish without having to go searching it after the first page. I am even going to share this issue with my husband, who is a typographical designer. Usually I hide publications from him because I don’t want to hear the rant!

ARLEIGH TRAIL, MEd ’03
SHAWNIGAN LAKE

NO PERKS HERE
My family and I currently live in Brussels where my husband works for the Canadian delegation to NATO, as a military senior staff officer. During our time here I have also worked at the Canadian delegation as receptionist. I found the “Inside Tact” story interesting and amusing. Why amusing? The paragraph concerning the perks of working as the Canadian ambassador to NATO is more a highly romantic notion than grounded in reality. That, or the delegation has shifted hallways. The desks are neither outsized, nor the carpets fine nor is there a private government of Canada jet at his, or the ambassador’s disposal. The carpets are a hodgepodge of colour and design, well-cleaned and replaced, piece-meal on a budgetary basis [read: only as the government of Canada budget allows; I daresay some of the carpets are older than my teenaged sons].

TERESA MILLS-CLARK, BSN ’83
BRUSSELS

I appreciate so much receiving the Torch and read it cover to cover, finding the articles most interesting. Although I never had the opportunity to attend university after high school (graduating in the Depression years) I have taken many Continuing Studies courses in the past few years. Recently I’ve concluded participation in a four-year research study (“Project Mind”) through the Centre on Aging and the Department of Psychology. I’ve been very fortunate to have had these opportunities, for, as I approach 87 years, it has become more difficult to bus it to UVic.

EILEEN RUTHERFORD
VICTORIA

BE SEEN, BE HEARD
The Torch heartily welcomes mail from our readers. Send your feedback via email to torch@uvic.ca or through the mail to:
Editor, UVic Torch Alumni Magazine
PO Box 3060, STN CSC
Victoria, BC V8W 3R4
Correspondence may be edited for length, style and clarity.
WHEN YOU THINK about the impact of the University of Victoria, the first thing that may come to mind is the role we play in shaping our students. Without a doubt, the learning experience that our faculty and instructors provide is one that our graduates look upon with justifiable pride. What may not come to mind quite as readily, however, is the impact that the university has on the people and communities beyond our classrooms.

The role of UVic in the community, regionally, nationally and internationally, is one that I see gaining increasing importance. One needs only to consider some of the current statistics that reflect the vitality of the relationship between UVic and the communities which it serves.

For example, an amazing number of people come to the university each year to attend lectures, concerts, athletics events or merely to stroll through and enjoy the beauty of our campus. In fact, no less than 500,000 visits are made to campus each year for performances and events at facilities such as University Centre Farquhar Auditorium and the UVic Students’ Society’s Cinecenta Theatre. Phoenix Theatre productions are enjoying incredible popularity. Vikes athletics draw solid support from fans in the Capital Region and beyond. And of course our Continuing Studies programs attract thousands of life-long learners every year.

Beyond Ring Road, we have teams of community-based researchers engaged in some of the most significant issues facing society today. At the same time, the many volunteer members of the UVic Speakers Bureau—faculty members, instructors, retired professors and graduate students—share their expertise with hundreds of community groups every year.

The cover story of this issue of the Torch features one such example of the impact of the university. Each summer, Science Venture camps attract hundreds of young people, instilling in them an exciting eagerness to learn about science and engineering through hands-on exercises, fun games and quizzes. They get tremendous opportunities to visit advanced laboratories and to talk to researchers about their work. The story also shows how our researchers are leading efforts to promote science literacy through new ways of teaching science in schools.

UVic truly is a community resource and it’s a point of major emphasis as we plan the future direction of the university. Our newly re-drafted Strategic Plan (uvic.ca/strategicreview) takes to heart the importance of community engagement, both on campus and off. In the plan, we’re challenging ourselves to make those links even stronger. It’s an endeavour that will benefit the University of Victoria and the communities we serve for generations to come.

UVic truly is a community resource.
The View from 2,000 Feet

June 24, 3:45 pm: the warmer days hadn’t quite taken their full toll on the snow that capped the Olympic Mountains and a cruise ship glided toward Ogden Point. Two major current construction projects were taking shape: the Social Sciences and Mathematics Building, across from the stadium, and the Science complex, near the Elliott Building. Ground was broken a little later in the summer on the Mearns Centre for Learning, a McPherson Library addition.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SANDY BEAMAN
Here’s a test of your visual memory of campus. The challenge is to identify the images shown here. Each one was taken at various locations around campus in September. Stumped on any of them? Turn to page 42 for a peek at the answers.
BBQ U

THE ANNUAL PRESIDENT’S Barbeque kicked off the school year in style under blue skies (and the enticing essence of grill smoke). Sharing a laugh in the main photo are geology students Zhihuan Wan and Emilie Bonnet. In the bottom left photo Steven Rubin, a geography undergrad from California and professional rock climber, demonstrates a balanced approach to school life. In the other picture, third year anthropology/French student Claire Doherty gets set to help serve the hundreds of students lined up for free grub.

And Green All Over

FROM THE TOWERING ATRIUM TO the touch-screen technology, the new Engineering/Computer Science Building is a fine addition to campus. The complex holds the Computer Science Department and the Engineering Co-op Program. It has two lecture theatres, classrooms and labs. Fundamentally “green,” the building’s compact six-storey design includes dual plumbing to use recycled water, a system for recovering heat from waste water, and natural light for more than 85 per cent of occupied space.

Heard On Campus

“Mother Earth is precious and sacred. She is the dust and ashes of all of our ancestors. It is through our ancestors and their teachings that we become who we are. As you go forth, remember your past. Live a life that touches others and remember: A gift that is given in kindness and caring will last into eternity.”

— ARTHUR VICKERS, ARTIST, HON. DOCTORATE OF FINE ARTS, JUNE 8 CONVOCATION
IT WAS A PRE-MARRIAGE COMPATIBILITY TEST UNLIKE ANY OTHER, ONE OF endurance and commitment that either cements or obliterates a couple’s relationship. And when Julie Wafaei, MSc ’01, and Colin Angus completed the first human-powered trip around the world on May 20—including rowing 13,000-km across the Atlantic—they had not only done what no one else had accomplished, they: (A) still loved each other; and, (B) came back with a world of stories to tell.

The expedition began in 2004 when Angus and Tim Harvey, BA ’02, set out from Vancouver determined to show that non-motorized transportation can really take you places—and to draw attention to the impact of global warming at the same time. They made it as far as Siberia before agreeing to part ways. That’s when Wafaei—who had been managing the expedition from Vancouver and working at her day job, in molecular biology—joined Angus for the bike trek through Europe and the perilous journey across the Atlantic in a glorified, but seaworthy, wooden row-boat.

“A lot of times there were moments we thought we might not make it. We had some pretty adverse conditions on the Atlantic,” says Wafaei, in what qualifies as a definitive understatement. “We got hit by two hurricanes and two tropical storms on top of that. It was the worst hurricane season in history. Both hurricanes were formed on our birthdays. Very nice gifts. We both wished for better weather, too!”

“We’re crazy? We’ve heard that on occasion.”

The dicey moments actually began not long after they headed for the high seas, such as the moment of “sheer terror” when they nearly got crunched by a freighter, only to be ushered to safety by its generous bow wave.

But the danger and the daily grind of 10 hours of rowing (each) were offset by the beautiful isolation of being at sea, and the marine life that kept them company: the schools of fish that trailed their boat, the sea turtles, dolphins and “flying fish that were absolutely incredible, you would just see a flock of fish take to the sky.”

Back home now, they are taking their stories of adventure across the country with talks and presentations of some of the highlights of the 100 hours of video they captured. Books are in the works, there’s hope for a feature-length TV documentary, and there are future plans for a rowing expedition through Europe.

And there’ll be a triumphant wedding next summer. It’s sort of the icing on the cake after the treachery they’ve endured together. “Being with the person you want to marry, traveling in that kind of intense environment—there’s a lot of things that can go wrong,” she says. “But we went ahead and did it. You’re either going to find out that you’re really not compatible or it’s going to bring you closer together. It’s an unusual litmus test… I don’t know if I would recommend it!”

In November, Colin Angus and Julie Wafaei will receive the Adventurers of the Year Award from the National Geographic Society.
Go Vikes

The Vikes athletics season is already well underway. Here’s the upcoming men’s and women’s basketball schedule for McKinnon Gym. For complete information and the latest results for all of the teams, visit www.govikesgo.com.

Vikes Basketball 2006-07

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Nov. 3</td>
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<td>Memorial Tournament (men)</td>
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<td>Jan. 5–6</td>
<td>Trinity Western</td>
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<td>Jan. 26–27</td>
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<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>UC Fraser Valley</td>
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<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>Thompson Rivers</td>
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6 pm: Women’s tipoff
8 pm: Men’s tipoff

From a Distance

On the face of it, doing a Public Administration master’s degree completely online may seem like an isolating experience. But really the program’s virtual teamwork, collaborative writing and conferencing software make it a rewarding experience.

“I was more involved and interactive online than in my on-campus undergraduate degree,” says Devon Lyons, MPA ’06, the first graduate of the MPA Online program. “Working online worked for me. I enjoyed the communication tools and the opportunity to connect with students via group projects—and with an occasional coffee date.”

The MPA Online program started in September 2003. It’s for students employed full-time in the public sector with three to five years of work experience and who can handle the 10-15 hours of work each week for each course. A two-course per term workload leads to completion of the degree within three years.

“I am just a bit obsessive about organization, so that helped.”

Compendium

Top teacher: Nursing Prof. Gweneth Doane was awarded a 3M Teaching Fellowship, the top Canadian honour for excellence and leadership in university teaching. Doane, a 2004 winner of the Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching, is highly regarded for her ability to link research with teaching. A specialist in ethics in nursing, she’s also adept at bringing technology into the learning environment.

Royally speaking: The summer also brought word of two more faculty members being named to the Royal Society of Canada. They are Humanities Dean Andrew Rippin, a leading authority on Islamic studies, and History Prof. Patricia Roy, known for her work in Canadian ethnic history.

NEPTUNE rising: The UVic-led undersea research project, NEPTUNE (see Torch, spring 2004), got a boost in September. The first cabled ocean observatory, to be built off the coast of the Vancouver Island starting next year, received an additional $20 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation ($8 million) and the BC Knowledge Development Fund ($8 million) and in-kind support from industry partner Alcatel ($4 million). It will nearly triple NEPTUNE’s planned array of instruments to measure seismic activity and marine climate and ecology.

Aboriginal economy: Support grows for the first National Chair in Economic Development, at UVic. Initial funding of $2 million from Industry Canada and $1 million from the province has been followed by $1-million commitments each from BC Hydro and the Calgary-based natural gas producer Encana Corporation. A further $200,000 has been donated by pipeline operator, Enbridge Inc. The chair holder could be named next year, residing in the faculties of Law and Business because of their respective teaching and research strengths in Aboriginal law and entrepreneurship.

Rabbits, rabbits, rabbits: Leave it to the campus rabbits to arouse controversy this summer when news of a new fence to keep them out of Finnerty Gardens ignited debate in the local press. Letter writers weighed in on the plant-chomping burrowers. In one corner, those in favour of eliminating the “pests.” In the other corner, those who adore their uniqueness as a kind of UVic icon. The hubbub had settled by September when classes resumed, the rabbits hopping freely.
Leading Lights
2006 Legacy Awards honour the best of the best.

IN EQUAL MEASURE A CONSUMMATE LEGAL PROFESSIONAL AND A GOOD citizen, Constance “Connie” Isherwood (née Holmes) is the 2006 recipient of the UVic Alumni Association’s Distinguished Alumni Award for Lifetime Achievement.

After studying at Victoria College from 1947-49, she became one of eight women admitted to the UBC law school (in a class of 208). She graduated at the top of that class, returned to Victoria, and for 55 years has been providing legal services in the areas of wills, estates, mortgages and family law. She is the senior practising female lawyer in the province.

Colleagues who endorsed her nomination cited Isherwood’s “Quiet self-confidence that comes from intellectual equality.” They also draw attention to her community involvement. As Chancellor of the Anglican Diocese of BC, she provides legal advice. She was president of the Family and Children’s Service of Victoria and she authored the original constitution of the UVic Alumni Association.

A remarkable woman, energetic and enthusiastic, Isherwood is—as a nominator put it—“legendary” in Victoria for her “sense of fairness and integrity.”

The 2006 Legacy Awards, under the co-chairmanship of Mel and Carmela Cooper, will be presented Nov. 21 at a gala dinner at the Victoria Conference Centre. Along with Isherwood, here are the night’s other honorees:

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

ANDREW WEAVER, Bachelor of Science 1983
Since earning his PhD from UBC in 1987, Andrew Weaver has emerged as one of Canada’s foremost authorities on the science of climate change. Apart from his advanced contributions to climate modelling, he has frequently contributed to the public discourse surrounding climate science. Raised in Victoria, he is a co-founder of a network of educational weather stations in Vancouver Island schools. At UVic, he holds the Canada Research Chair in Climate Modelling and Analysis.

DAVID GARRISON, Bachelor of Engineering 1994 and SHANNON HUNT, Master of Arts, 1993
David Garrison and Shannon Hunt are the creators and publishers of YES Mag (The Scientific Magazine for Adventurous Minds) for ages 9 to 14 and KNOW (The Scientific Magazine for Curious Kids) for ages 6 to 9. Simple but accurate, intelligent and fun, the magazines have inspired thousands of young scientists. Garrison and Hunt are past recipients of awards from the Science Council of BC and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

ALUMNI AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

PROF. ED ISHIGURO, Biochemistry & Microbiology
Ed Ishiguro, this year’s winner of the Harry Hickman Award (for regular faculty members) is known for love of teaching—even when it meant juggling countless administrative duties during his eight years as department chair. Now, even though he officially retired on July 1, he continues to handle teaching duties, curriculum matters as well as giving public talks through the UVic Speakers Bureau.

KELLI FAWKES, Chemistry
The second recipient of the Gillian Sherwin Award (for non-faculty instructors), Kelli Fawkes has, in a few short years, earned the respect of faculty, graduate students and undergrads with her enthusiasm, organizational skills and eye for detail. A UVic graduate (BSc ’97), she has led the complete overhaul of courses, and introduced the concept of team teaching in the department.

UVIC SPORTS HALL OF FAME

KIRSTEN BARNES (Rowing)
A two-time Olympic gold medalist (fours and eights) at the 1992 Barcelona Games, Kirsten Barnes has become a leading sports psychologist. After earning her undergraduate degree in human performance she completed her doctorate in sport psychology at the University of Bristol. Most recently she has been the lead psychologist with the English Institute of Sport.

GERALD KAZANOWSKI (Basketball)
A key member of four national championship Vikes teams (1980-83) and a 10-year national team veteran (including the 1984 and
1988 Olympics), Gerald Kazanowski is among the best to have ever played Vikes hoops. A seventh-round selection in the 1983 NBA draft, “Kaz” is a member of the Canadian Basketball Hall of Fame and the Basketball BC Hall of Fame. He completed an economics degree and continues to be involved with youth basketball in Victoria where he works for an investment firm.

LUANNE KRAWETZ (Basketball)
A pivotal part of three national championship teams at UVic, Luanne Krawetz (née Hebb) was named the country’s most outstanding player in the 1982 season. She also named a CIAU tournament all-star team that same year. She completed a bachelor of education and returned to UVic for her master’s, graduating in 1993. She currently works for the Faculty of Education and is the sister of fellow Hall of Fame basketball player Chris Hebb.

HOWARD PETCH (Builder)
As president of UVic from 1975-90, Howard Petch set the foundation for the university’s athletics program. Among other initiatives, he created a task force that set the criteria for selecting the sports upon which UVic would focus, aided by funding from new student fees negotiated with student representatives. He approved the the National Coaching Institute and National Training Centres at UVic and was a key proponent of the 1994 Commonwealth Games. Varsity teams earned 25 national championships during his term.

1975 MEN’S SOCCER TEAM
Winners of UVic’s first national university sports title, the 1975 men’s soccer squad earned the championship banner with a defeat of Concordia. Team members were: Michael Armstrong, Brian Barraclough, Ernie Carson, Vic Escude, John Gage, Gord Horth, Wolfgang Lachmund, Danny Lomas, Gord Manzini (deceased), Peter Mason, Paul Peterson, Douglas Puritch, Ken Ross, Mike Sails, Peter Saunders, Scott Taylor and John Turnbull. They were coached by Brian Hughes and managed by George Smith.

Nomination forms for the 2007 Legacy Awards are online at alumni.uvic.ca/legacy awards.
New Leases on Learning

University 101 opens doors to education that seemed closed shut.

BY BETH HAYSOM
PHOTOGRAPH BY DON PIERCE

LAST YEAR DARCY MERRICK WAS STRANDED ON THE FRINGES OF SOCIETY.
“I compare it to writer’s block. I had life block, was depressed and not going out,” says the soft-spoken Victoria poet who has spent much of his life dealing with early childhood abuse in schools, homelessness and health problems. Then he joined University 101, an experimental community course in humanities launched by the university to offer the potent joy of learning to disadvantaged people, many of whom, like Merrick, have been floundering in “a sea of troubles.”

With UVic staff and community members, Merrick helped to set up the free introductory course designed for people who would not usually consider university because of social or economic barriers. It ran in January through April and Merrick was one of the first students.

It changed everything: “Uni 101 opened my mind. It got me out reading and functioning. I’ve started a new lifestyle and I’m feeling good about myself.”

Now Merrick is taking more courses and continues to volunteer on the board for University 101: “I found faith in teachers that I’d lost years ago and respect for higher education, I want to help other people to discover that.”

Among the diverse group of 21 students were recovering drug addicts, those with mental health issues, single parents and others living close to the poverty line. For 10 weeks they wrapped their minds around critical thinking, history and the great literature of Plato, Eliot and Shakespeare.

The first University 101 pilot proved such a success that the university and various community groups organized a second University 101 course this fall. A fresh crop of students is attending twice-weekly sessions at UVic’s downtown campus. The evening begins with a meal followed by a lecture and discussions.

“No one is resting on their laurels. Like Merrick, several of the former students are on the board helping to spread the word about University 101 and seek more support to continue and expand the courses. Organizers are planning a University 102 course next year focusing on social sciences and they are looking for more sponsorship help.

It will be open to all former 101 graduates but Lauri Nerman couldn’t wait. Among Uni 101’s many star students, Nerman was motivated to take a summer course in creative writing. Now she has earned scholarships enabling her to pick up the threads of her UVic degree that she dropped in 1974.

“Uni 101 was a wonderful stepping stone back to the world of education,” says Nerman, who hopes eventually to pursue a career in counselling. “It boosted my self-confidence and helped me realize that I could go back—that I have something to give and a way to give it.”

“Uni 101 was a wonderful stepping stone back to the world of education.”
Back to the books: University 101 students Lauri Nerman and Darcy Merrick with (on the right) coordinator Becky Cory, BA ’04 in the McPherson Library.
HEALTH CARE

From RN to NP

Nurse Practitioner program grads join the health care team.

BY ROB MCMAHON, BA ’03
PHOTOGRAPH BY ROB KRUYT

On a warm summer morning there’s a relaxed atmosphere around the cleft palate and craniofacial area of BC Children’s Hospital. Kids run around and play with a plastic furniture set as their parents watch. Nearby in a private assessment room, Nurse Practitioner Lorine Scott tends to her patient, a four-year-old boy from Prince George who was born with a cleft palate. She listens to his heartbeat with a stethoscope decorated with purple alligators. After a few moments she passes the eartips to little Treyden Cardinal. “Can you hear that? What is it saying?” she asks as Treyden tilts his head to concentrate on the sound.

Scott, MN ’06, is among the first graduates of nurse practitioners programs introduced in 2003 at UVic and UBC. Through the program, experienced nurses gain the knowledge and skills that—according to research—will improve overall health care delivery. That’s because nurse practitioners are qualified to assess and treat many of the routine ailments previously handled by physicians and surgeons so that they, in turn, can focus on more complicated cases.

“A nurse practitioner has additional education at the master’s level,” says Prof. Marjorie MacDonald, Interim Director of the UVic School of Nursing. “They do everything a registered nurse can do and more.”

While there are three kinds of NP designations in Canada (family, pediatric and adult), UVic and UBC focus on family-based training. Students learn about health issues across the lifespan and in the context of families. Nurse practitioners were employed in Canada as far back as the ’60s but only recently have most provinces begun regulating them. In 2005, the BC government officially designated nurse practitioners under the Health Professions Act.

“I like the way nurses approach patients,” says Scott. “A nurse’s education looks not only at a patient’s illness and condition, but also…at the experience of life for the family.”

Scott’s career began in 1972. After much deliberation, she decided to go back to school as one of the first 15 students at UVic’s NP program, via distance education. She worked full-time during her training and did a three-month practicum on Pender Island. Final exams, standards, and scope of practice are administered by the College of Registered Nurses of BC.

Scott and other NPs can diagnose and manage patients with common acute and chronic physical and mental conditions. They can also prescribe certain medications and order diagnostic services. Nurse practitioners are also able to work somewhat autonomously—that is, they don’t have to act solely on a doctor’s recommendations and can perform certain functions without securing a physician’s approval.

At Children’s Hospital, Scott works collaboratively with health authorities and other members of the health care team—plastic surgeons, speech pathologists, orthodontists, social workers—to build connections among the 15 families she cares for each day and the specialists they need to see.

“I know a bit about what everyone does,” says Scott. “Our job is to help the children achieve whatever their personal best is.”

As Treyden and his family get ready to leave after his assessment, Scott finishes going over the details of his case, including his medical and social history, with his mom. “It’s always nice to come here,” says Tanya MacRobbie, who has traveled to the hospital from Prince George once a year since her son was born. “Lorine always answers all the questions we have, and she knows everything we need to know.”

Being there for families each step of the way is the most rewarding part of her work. “I help parents come to terms with having a baby that’s different. It can be pretty devastating to be told that. It’s an honour to be allowed into someone’s life at a time of sometimes sadness or crisis. It’s a very intimate moment, and being allowed to be a part of that and maybe offering my assistance is wonderful.”
Communities that Click

The UVic Online Community evolves from its roots in the early Internet with new ways for alumni and students to connect.

BY ROB McMACHON, BA ’03

When Erica Grainger plans a party, swaps photos or organizes meetings for the Student Ambassador Association she helps to lead, she doesn’t visit a coffee shop or a friend’s living room. Instead, the 20-year-old kinesiology student goes to her computer and signs on to the UVic Online Community (olcnetwork.net/uvic) to let members of her group know about meetings or the status of their latest campus service project. “The site makes it easy to keep connected,” she says. “And with the online community, it’s not only your friends but also older alumni who can give you advice.”

September brought the launch of a new test version of the online community adding forums, photo albums and social networking features to the original service used by thousands of students and alumni since it was introduced by the UVic Alumni Association in 1998. Its new tools are inspired by Web trends led by popular sites like Facebook, MySpace and YouTube that capitalize on the strengths of the Web 2.0 phenomenon: its ability to let users interact with each other, collaborate and share words and pictures on Web pages.

“The new online community takes the best examples of blogs and social networking sites and brings them all together into a package that’s attractive and easy to use,” says Greg Churchill, the alumni department’s information technology coordinator. “It was designed to evolve with and incorporate emerging Web trends.”

Statistics Canada reports that about two-thirds of Canadians were online in 2005. According to a Pew Internet and American Life Project report released in March, twice as many people had high-speed Internet service at home compared to the year before. There are now more than 600 billion Web pages and a growing list of more than 12 million bloggers (just over half are under the age of 30) diarizing about their daily lives or their favourite passions.

Sara White, a 20-year-old Web designer and third year Business student, is one Web user shaping her own online experience through Web sites like Facebook. Her photos, short biography and links to other people’s profiles are a snapshot of her life. She says most of her friends belong to at least five such sites. “Initially, the Web had so much content created for consumption by a small group of people,” says White. “Now, anyone can create content…[and] you browse content created by people like yourself, not just so-called experts.”

Freelance sports writer Lucas Aykroyd, MA ’97, was one of the first to sign up with the original UVic network. After posting an online profile, Aykroyd connected with other people in his field. When he thought about moving to San Francisco, Aykroyd sent a note to an alumna who was a writer living in the region. “She wrote back a long letter outlining the opportunities in the Bay Area…It was a really useful experience.”

With thousands of different personalities contributing content, online communities are constantly shifting. As people form networks and debate issues, they exchange ideas that can translate into side projects—from business deals to artistic endeavors. This, says Churchill, is what makes the technology magical and gets him excited about where the next phase of the online community (and the Internet) will take us. “The content you see on Web sites is originating from the desktops of millions of Web users. It’s completely unpredictable. That’s why it’s so fascinating.”

UVic’s Online Community
Students and alumni can use the new UVic Online Community to:
- form study groups
- plan class reunions and other events
- post resumes
- create forums and share photos
- create personal profiles
- request career and travel advice
- exchange business cards
- search job postings
- receive email and private messages from members
- contact 1,600 mentors across Canada through “Mentors Online” olcnetwork.net/uvic

Opposite page: some of the faces of the UVic Online Community.
A formula for fun: Science Venture campers Maya Pozzolo, Rory Pozzolo and Jacob Wilson-Potter.
Science With Kid Appeal

The Human Genome Project. Stem cell research. Climate change. Even the experts can find fast-advancing science hard to keep up with. But science literacy is essential—we just need to start teaching it better.

BY FRANCES BACKHOUSE
PHOTOGRAPH BY HÉLÈNE CYR
Here's a test for your inner "grossologist." Which of these statements is false: (A) Silent but deadly farts are produced almost entirely by bacterial metabolic by-products; or (B) A normal person may pass gas around five times a day? If you're not sure, try asking one of the 900 kids who attended Science Venture camps at the university this summer and played Grossology. The game with questions and answers only a kid could love tests players' knowledge about things like burps and farts, armpits and earwax, slug slime and animals that eat their own poop. It's fun, it's engaging and it bears little resemblance to the way science is taught in most school classrooms—which is the whole point.

"We want to make [the camps] really accessible to everybody," says Science Venture program director Roberta MacDonald, BA '87. "We want to keep the idea in their minds that science is fun and something they might want to choose as a career."

Of course playing giggle-inducing games is just one way of doing that. The week-long day camps for students entering grades one to eight investigate biology, chemistry, physics and engineering concepts through a wide range of innovative hands-on activities (from chocolate chip cookie mining to making borax snowflakes), interactive experiments, outdoor pursuits and building projects, as well as visits to university labs and direct contact with working scientists and engineers from on and off campus.

"The children can come and explore freely and they don't have to worry about getting a mark at the end of it," says MacDonald. They also "get to see scientists doing science"—an opportunity that she says is rare in the regular education system and which helps kids "realize you can ask questions and go find out the answers yourself through your own research."

In the 16 years Science Venture has been operating at UVic it has gained many fans, among them Faculty of Education Prof. Larry Yore, grandfather of two young former campers. "It's a fantastic experience," says Yore, his eyes sparkling. "There's a bit more noise [compared to a typical school classroom], there's a little chaos, and you have to have some extra hands and eyes there, but those kids are truly excited." And that excites him.

Yore is one of the world's leading authorities on science literacy, which he defines as the ability to read and understand a newspaper article about a scientific event or idea. "It isn't simply taking meaning from text"—being able to "decode" or say the words. "It's making meaning with text and that means you have to bring something to it."

Several "somethings" actually, including cognitive abilities, experience in critical thinking, familiarity with scientific language and an understanding of the unifying concepts of science. Elaborating on the last point, Yore says: "It's not (about) knowing the minutia of science, the isolated infobits that we learn and memorize for the test. It's understanding the big picture, how all those little bits fit together to make sense of the world."

Unfortunately, traditional teaching models aren't doing a very good job of delivering this package. "We've got a whole group of kids that we're not getting to," says Yore. "Public schools and universities are doing very well for the top group, let's say it's 11 percent. And there's probably 11 percent on the other end that we're always going to struggle [to reach]. But that leaves 78 percent in the middle that have great potential, if we can just find some way to help them make the connections and see the light."

Yore's latest efforts to achieve this goal are through the Pacific Centre for Scientific and Technological Literacy (CRYSTAL), which he co-directs with faculty colleague Prof. Wolff-Michael Roth. The Pacific centre is one of five university-based hubs created in 2005 by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. The goal is to work with teachers, scientists and non-governmental organizations to offer more participatory science programs for K–12 students and to assess their effectiveness in raising the level of science and technology literacy and increasing post-secondary science enrolment.

One of the first schools to get on board was Strawberry Vale Elementary in Saanich, which already had a relationship with UVic's Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Understanding Science (CETUS). After one year of working with CETUS alone and another with the combined forces of CETUS and CRYSTAL, Strawberry Vale vice-principal Calvin Parsons, MEd '03, has nothing but praise for both.

"Our teachers were very good science teachers before," says Parsons, "but by giving them time to focus on developing and enhancing their science lesson plans and giving them more resources, we've definitely enhanced the kids' learning situation. I see that the kids are focused on science. They're asking science questions. They're 'sciencing' as (CETUS researcher) David Blades says. We were heavily into that before and it's just given us more opportunities." Such as having weather station installed on the school's roof.

The school is part of the UVic School-based Weather Station Network developed by the UVic Climate Modelling Group along with local school districts. Students at Strawberry Vale and more
than 70 other Vancouver Island schools track temperature, humidity, wind speed and other weather data. Strawberry Vale's principal gives a weather report based on the station's readings over the school PA system every morning.

Ultimately, Yore hopes the efforts of his group will decrease the prevalence of science illiteracy and “help people become fuller participants in the public debate about science, technology, society and environment.” Whether it’s global warming, clearcut logging or some other issue, “if we as citizens don’t understand the basic science and how science works, how are we ever going to make informed decisions?” he asks.

Across campus, in the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, retired Prof. Ed Ishiguro echoes Yore's concerns, using one of the many recent rapid advancements in science as a case in point. “If members of the general public don’t understand what came out of the Human Genome Project,” Ishiguro wonders, “how are they going to make wise, rational decisions about how they manage their health?”

Ten years ago Ishiguro, a winner of this year’s Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching, began reaching out to non-scientists. He now calls it his mission in life. “As professional scientists I think we have an obligation to bring science down to the level where everybody can understand it,” he says. “Not everybody can do this, but those that can should take this into the classroom and to the general public.” Creating and teaching a first year biochemistry course for non-science students is one way he has put his beliefs into action. Accepting frequent community speaking engagements, both as a member of the UVic Speakers Bureau and independently, is another.

Ishiguro also thinks the news media need to do a better job of reporting on science, an assessment that journalism Prof. Lynne van Luven agrees with. The problem, she says, is that since the 1980s there has been “a huge shrinkage” in attention to science news by the mainstream media and in the number of full-time science reporters, who are knowledgeable about, interested in and dedicated to science reporting. Instead, there’s more “soft” news—lifestyles and celebrities stories—and a lack of specialized coverage.

“People will cover three or four beats simultaneously, which of course means that they’re skimming over the top of everything. It’s very frustrating for committed reporters to have to do that. It’s disheartening, because you can’t really give the attention you want to give to any one of the beats, so you end up being trivial in almost all of them.”

Nevertheless, says van Luven, many UVic students are interested in science writing, especially environmental aspects. The Writing Department has responded by making science and environment one of the beats it emphasizes in second and third year reporting courses and by periodically offering focused science journalism courses. It also offers a professional writing minor for students majoring in other areas. “We actually encourage people to have an area of specialty and then train themselves to be professional writers so they can work in that area,” she explains. “So you can have the science behind you, but you can also write for the lay reader.”

Two UVic grads who exemplify this approach are David Garrison, BEng ’94, and Shannon Hunt, MA ’93, founders of two children’s science magazines: YES Mag, a decade-old, award-winning publication for nine to 14 year olds, and the recently launched KNOW, for ages six to nine. This November, the couple, who work side by side as publisher and editor respectively, will be jointly honoured with a Distinguished Young Alumni award from the UVic Alumni Association.

With its Brain Bumpers, do-at-home projects and scientist profiles, reading YES is a lot like going to science camp, so it’s not surprising that Science Venture is an enthusiastic promoter of the magazine and that many campers become subscribers. After all, a kid’s got to keep on top of things if she wants to win at Grossology next summer, right? (And if she does keep informed, there’s a good chance she’ll know that the false statement at the beginning of this story is B: a normal person actually passes gas around 14 times a day.)
They’re popular in zoos but if you want to see wild ring-tailed lemurs, the only place to find them is in southern Madagascar. And so almost every year for nearly two decades, biological anthropologist Lisa Gould (left) has packed field gear and made the long journey to the world’s fourth largest island, off the south-east coast of Africa. Her explorations have put her at the forefront of science’s understanding of the behaviour and ecology of these distinctive primates.
I’VE BEEN STUDYING RING-TAILED LEMURS since 1987. I was drawn to them by their uniqueness—they’re lovely animals—and the fact they weren’t well studied at the time. Now there’s lots and lots of research not just on lemurs but Madagascar in general.

YOU GET TO KNOW THEM SO WELL. It’s like living in the middle of a soap opera. In any primate group, somebody’s always in trouble.

THERE WAS AN OLD MALE who had broken his tibia. The sad thing is it took a couple of months for him to die. But there was another fairly low ranking male who stuck with him. This was fascinating. When the group moved, he waited for him and groomed him when he was dying. In evolutionary psychology there’s this idea that there’s no true altruism. But it was very interesting that he was sticking by this guy.

MOST LEMURS ARE FEMALE DOMINANT and there’s lots of contention as to why. The most sensible (explanation) is that Madagascar is a very seasonal island. It’s battered by cyclones. It’s subject to really severe drought. All the females give birth within a short period during the dry season when there’s not much food available. So it would be in the best interest of the males to let the females have priority access to the food, and have their offspring survive.

SO PRIORITY ACCESS TO FOOD evolved into social dominance. If a female wants to rest in an area where there’s a beam of sun and a male’s there she can just walk over to him and smack him and he leaves. It’s just the way it works.

THERE’S ALWAYS GOING TO BE an alpha female in the group. It’s based on good social and manipulative skills. That’s true of all primates and all mammals: the highest ranking has the best manipulative and social skills.

MADAGASCAR IS KIND OF URGENT. It’s a real environmental hotspot because there’s not very much forest left there. In the next 10 or 20 years there could be a lot of extinctions.

I’VE WORKED AT TWO PRIMARY field study sites. One site (the Berenty Private Reserve) I’m returning to this year after 19 years. Research was started at Berenty in 1960s by (lemur research pioneer) Alison Jolly. There are lots of foreign researchers plus (local) Malagasy scientists and students. Every time I go, I provide about $750 US to assist Malagasy grad students.

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THIS YEAR (AND FOR THE NEXT five years) I’ll be studying nutritional ecology. It’ll be arduous: recording everything they eat, how long they eat, estimating how much they’re taking in, comparing males and females during lactation period. I’ll also be looking at predator-sensitive foraging.

I COULDN’T BE FARTHER AWAY from Madagascar than I am here at UVic. In 2002 there was nearly a civil war and I couldn’t go. You realize you have an attachment to the place. There are aspects I like, others are really hard…I’m always happy to come home.

Walking into Audain’s office, one instantly senses the Victoria College alumnus’ love of the form. Abstract paintings line the hallway leading to his work space. Across from his desk, Queen Elizabeth II’s eyes seem to glimmer from the Andy Warhol portrait that hangs on the wall.

“Great artwork has a magical quality to it,” says Audain as he sits back and closes his eyes to speak. “Norman Mailer wrote that if you have the privilege to live with a great artwork, it enriches your life and broadens your horizons.”

Audain’s own horizon spans from BC—where his family has lived for generations—to Asia and beyond. He’s visited every Asian country except Bhutan, and has homes in Japan and Thailand. He’s lived in France, New York, Hong Kong, London and Toronto. At 17, he rode a bus from Victoria to Mexico City to see the works of the Mexican muralists of the 1920s: David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and Rufino Tamayo.

But of all the places he’s experienced, Audain is most comfortable at home in BC. “I love to go out into the woods and know every plant and animal that lives there. You can put a fishing hook in the sea and know all about the fish that you catch—or don’t catch. I feel totally comfortable, totally at home.”

Audain considers himself “a bit of a BC nationalist,” a belief stemming from his family’s deep roots in the province beginning in 1851, when Robert Dunsmuir arrived in Fort Rupert (near Port Hardy) from Scotland. Before his death in 1889, Dunsmuir had become the wealthiest (and most controversial) man in BC. He developed the rich coal fields near Nanaimo, strictly resisted attempts to unionize his workforce and received a lucrative federal contract to build the E&N Railway. Audain is connected to Dunsmuir through his son James, who served as the province’s premier and lieutenant governor. James’ eldest daughter, Sarah Byrd Audain, or “Byrdie”, was Audain’s grandmother.

Born in England, Audain moved to Victoria at age nine. Growing up, he remembers boxing with sailors from the Esquimalt navy base. He trained three times a week with the Victoria City Police Boxing Club, and traveled to tournaments across the Pacific Northwest. One year, he was the only non-Aboriginal boxer invited to fight in the Buckskin Gloves tournament.

Attending Victoria College in 1959-60, he crammed two years of academics into his time at the Lansdowne campus (now the home of Camosun College). He also held a part-time job at Butchart Gardens. “I was fairly busy at the time, and sometimes I wonder how I could have done everything…but then I recall: I didn’t have a girlfriend.”

When Victoria College and the residents of Greater Victoria started a community campaign to bring a full-fledged university to the city, he joined a “one-night blitz” fundraising challenge. Each student was given three names and addresses, and
set off to solicit donations. Audain collected $1,300 from the two people he visited. The first, a shipyard worker in View Royal, was fixing his furnace at the time. Audain interrupted his work, and after hearing his pitch, the man wrote a cheque for $1,000.

He worked a variety of jobs—social worker, agricultural economist, housing policy consultant—before settling at Polygon in 1980. Audain likes to think of Polygon’s high-rises, townhouses and single-family communities as frames for public artworks. He says his company was the first developer in the province to use original artwork in its model homes. Most recently, it commissioned First Nations artist Ray Natrall to carve a traditional hunting canoe at an apartment development in Port Moody.

These days, he devotes as much as half of his time to cultural matters. With his wife, Yoshiko Karasawa, he manages the Audain Foundation for the Visual Arts. Established in 1997, the foundation has donated more than $4 million to the arts in BC and Canada. Audain has served on the board of the Vancouver Art Gallery, and was its president for two years. For him, supporting art is a way to feel connected.

“I’ve always been interested in understanding a nation or region through its artwork. My view is that art is something for everyone, that it shouldn’t be the preserve of the bourgeoisie who can afford to hang an important picture on their walls. I think art animates communities and adds to the quality of urban life.”
Solo Force

Comedic hurricane Charles Ross brings his off-Broadway success—a wildly condensed version of the *Star Wars* trilogy—to campus in January.

*BY JOHN THRELFALL, BA '96*
*PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINE MARSHALL*

It’s any young actor’s dream: become a smash sensation by creating and performing your own show. And that’s exactly what Charles Ross has done with his pair of internationally acclaimed solo productions, *One Man Star Wars Trilogy* and *One Man Lord of the Rings*. But just as Luke Skywalker had to face his dark side, so too does this Phoenix Theatre grad. In a mythological twist normally found in galaxies far, far away, the shadow Ross has to deal with is that of his own creation.

It seems inevitable that *Star Wars* would play some part in the life of the Prince George-born actor. After all, he had seen the original movie more than 400 times before he was 11, by which time he had committed virtually every line to memory. But how many *Star Wars* fans—of any age—could imagine not only holding a licensing agreement with Lucasfilm but also being personally invited to perform at the launch of the final installment of the iconic film series, *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*? Then you’ve got the hanging out with Hollywood celebs (Ian McKellen, Vin Diesel), the mentions in hip magazines (*Esquire, Spin*) and A-list TV spots (*Late Night with Conan O’Brien, The Today Show*). It’s all a little out of this world.

On stage, Ross, BFA ’98, is quite literally a tornado of thespian energy—leaping, gesturing and mimicking his way through a pair of 60-minute, prop-and-costume-free film adaptations. But off stage, Ross is surprisingly quiet and composed, carrying his lanky, 6’3” frame in an almost Zen-like fashion when we meet back where it all began for him, at the Phoenix Theatre. It’s nice synchronicity. Not only is Charles Ross (‘Charlie’ to his friends) returning to campus to star in this season’s Spotlight on Alumni, opening January 24, but it turns out we’re sitting in the same dressing room where he spent the better part of five years. “No, really,” he laughs. “I dragged in a couch and practically lived here.” And was there any evidence early on that he’d shortly become one of the Phoenix’s greatest hits? “I don’t know if I was any more gifted or promising than anyone else,” he shrugs, “but I did everything I could in the program.” He singles out three acting instructors—Linda Hardy, John Krich and Kaz Piesowocki—as strong influences, but also notes he did much more than just study. “I did so much work here that I had to take an extra year to complete my electives. Being at the Phoenix was a chance to do as much practical, acting work as I possibly could—because I knew that wouldn’t happen out in the ‘real’ world.”

Another chance the Phoenix afforded him was meeting fellow actor TJ Dawe, BFA ’97. If you’re looking for the source of the force that is Charles Ross, Dawe’s your man. Better known as his own solo star (*Labrador, The Slip-Knot*), Dawe is the director of both the *One Man* shows; but he also saw something in Ross the faculty was missing. “Charlie was always cast as ‘the heavy’,” recalls Dawe, himself a *Star Wars* buff. “He was tall, could grow a beard and looked older than the 19 years he was. But no one ever took advantage of his comic talents.

“He would often do wild improvisations where he’d pantomime insane acts of violence, usually against himself,” Dawe continues. “Arrows being shot into his stomach, intestines being ripped out, screaming so loud his throat exploded and his eyes popped—and then a meteor would land and vaporize him. And if people were laughing, he’d just keep going. It wasn’t unusual for him to do this for 45 minutes at a time, all impro-
vised. He was a comic hurricane—and he never got cast in comic roles. It mystified me.”

**Yet for all the success that Hurricane has generated—and let’s not mince words, Ross has already been more successful than most actors will ever be—he seems a bit bothered by the position in which he finds himself. Catching a glimpse of his own face in the dressing room mirrors, Ross poses a rhetorical question. “How do you avoid the genre you’ve put yourself into?” He pauses and spreads his hands. “This isn’t strict theatre, like Shakespeare; it’s kind of a performance piece—but no one would come to see it if they heard it was performance art, so I’ve disguised it as theatre. Unfortunately for me, I’ve kind of type-cast myself as a sci-fi geek. I’m all on my own in some weird little single-member club, where I’m not strictly an actor, I’m not strictly doing theatre, and I’m not working with anybody else.

“It’s funny,” he says, although he’s not really laughing. “All I’ve ever wanted to be is someone who could make a living—and even that, especially in theatre, is extremely difficult. But I remember TJ saying, ‘Once you have this show, you can do whatever you like with it’—and it was almost like a curse.”

Of course, any curse that lets a young actor make, by his own admission, $11,000 US for a 10-day run—and that was before his five-month stint off-Broadway in 2005—doesn’t seem so bad. But with the upcoming Phoenix run coinciding with the fifth anniversary of his *One Man Star Wars* debut, Ross estimates he’s done the same show a thousand times or more. Suddenly, the curse analogy starts to make sense. Dollars, it seems, do come with a price. “Since the show has gone well, I’ve found myself becoming further and further isolated,” he says, referring more to his professional than personal life. “I feel almost trapped by it now; I think I need to find some time off. I’m beginning to realize how fantastic it would be to go and work for somebody else. I mean, all you have to do is act; I haven’t just acted in so long.”

**By writing and starring in his own pair of hit shows, Ross, 32, has already done more than most actors could ever hope. And anyway, isn’t there something deeper going on here between the performer and his audience? TJ Dawe clearly thinks so. “One of my favourite things about *One Man Star Wars* is how ancient it is. I mean, *Beowulf* was spoken, so were the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—and all to audiences who already knew the story.” Noting that Lucas based much of *Star Wars* on Joseph Campbell’s classic *Hero With A Thousand Faces*, Dawe is quick to point out the mythopoetic subtext at work. “Charlie’s very much stepping into the shoes of a bard, recreating an epic myth for an audience; it’s a modern telling of the myth, but it’s the same story.”

Still, there comes a time when everybody has to put away their light sabre. “I would like to see an end to this,” Ross concludes. “And there is something coming up next year: Lucasfilm’s 30th anniversary of the original *Star Wars* release, and I think I might be getting an invitation to do the show there. Now, that might be the natural place to say, ‘Thanks very much folks, it’s been great.’ Because it could go on forever. I don’t want to be 60 years old and dragging my sorry ass out to do the *One Man Seniors Star Wars Show.*”

It could indeed be the perfect way to say goodbye, especially if *Star Wars* auteur George Lucas was in the house. Has Lucas ever seen him perform? “Nope.” Ross smiles—not the professional show-biz grin he’s flashed to countless cameras, but a simple, more sincere look that makes his eyes crinkle with pleasure—much like an eight-year-old boy watching *Star Wars* for the first time. “But that would actually be the best ending for me, to do it for him. It’d be like doing it for the maker, like I’d get to do my show for the deity of a religion. That would be cool.”
Poetry and the City
Meet Victoria Poet Laureate Carla Funk.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY HOLLY PATTISON, BFA '05

Carla Funk secures her waist-length hair in a coil at the nape of her neck and snaps on a pair of yellow rubber gloves. She steps into the bramble patch and starts plopping blackberries into the ice cream bucket dangling from her belt loop. She may wield a lofty title, but Victoria’s first poet laureate is about as down-to-earth as the crisp she plans to bake with this morning’s pickings. “I love the smell of blackberry bushes in the morning,” says the 32-year-old UVic Writing instructor and alumna (MA ’99). “They smell like black flowers.”

Poet laureates traditionally wrote poems for the English monarchy, celebrating official occasions and national events. Their contemporary counterparts aim to raise awareness of literary arts and make poetry more accessible. During Funk’s two-and-half-year stint as the city’s “literary and cultural ambassador,” she’ll recite her poetry at official city events and write three new poems each year. Being expected to be creative on-demand might intimidate some wordsmiths, but Funk, who’s married and has a twelve-year-old daughter, says she’s relaxed about her writing and trusts her creative process. “An image sticks in my head and I have to write it down. Then I let it sit for a while.” The images are rich, but not always pretty.

“Beauty on its own is a bit of a lie,” says the blue-eyed blonde. She uses a hoe to reach up and draw down another vine. “We live in a flawed world—it’s honest to speak of flaws as well as beauty.” She jokes how she’s drawn to roadkill and talks about her recent fascination with a dead roadside Canada goose, which has become the central image of a poem she’s working on.

“It seemed so unusual and humiliated and mythic and still lovely in some strange way. Its black feet were curled up like little question marks. ‘What happened?’”

Poet and UVic Writing Department Chair Lorna Crozier believes Funk will make a perfect poet laureate. She describes Funk’s poetry as being able to see “both the ridiculous and sublime about ourselves and the city we live in. She will open the doors to poetry and you’ll feel welcome to step in.” Funk is convinced that poetry offers so much variety there must be at least one voice every person can identify with. She intends to demonstrate this range—and hopefully draw in some who remain leery of the art—through showcasing local poets at readings and on the public library’s poet-of-the-month Web site.

“Good poetry has to move you, and I don’t mean to tears. When you connect with a poem, something in you shifts. Each person is shifted in a different way. It’s just finding what you connect with. I love redeeming the pain and sifting through it for the beautiful.” She gently shakes her berry bucket. “I want to believe that even in pain and tragedy and scars, there is something to be mined, some beauty to be found, some light to come through the cracks.”

Recent titles from UVic authors

Canadian Franchise Law Handbook
Daniel So, LLB ’99
A plain language explanation of the legal requirements for franchising in Canada, and the obligations on each party in a franchise relationship.
(LexisNexis Canada, 2005)

Shadow of the Bear
Brian Payton, BA ’89
A work of narrative nonfiction, Shadow of the Bear chronicles a personal search for the world’s eight remaining bear species across continents, cultures, and memory.
(Viking Canada, 2006)

We’re Not Robots
Enid Elliot, Ph.D ’01
The stories of infant/toddler caregivers illustrate the complexity of balancing various relationships yet remaining emotionally present and mindfully engaged. Elliot demonstrates how caregivers can achieve a delicate balance.
(SUNY Press, 2006)

Send forthcoming book notices to torch@uvic.ca
**Hand in Hand**

It’s a timeless image of companionship, even if briefcases and handbags have long been replaced by the ubiquitous back pack. The two students in this picture were seen through David Shelton’s lens on a wintry afternoon in 1967. There’s a stark quality to it: the black and white tones, the sharp shadows, the young leafless trees. Yet the interlocked hands—are they parting or just meeting up?—suggest a warm bond. There have been countless campus love stories, bitter and sweet, down through the years. Why not share yours with Torch readers? Contact the editor at torch@uvic.ca.

**KEEPING IN TOUCH** torch@uvic.ca

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**1966**

**LARRY MCCANN**, BA, earned the Victoria Hallmark Society’s Award of Merit for his efforts to teach students about local heritage and for his ongoing contributions to heritage preservation. A veteran faculty member in the Department of Geography, Larry was also a contributor to the spring edition of this magazine.

**1972**

**BOYD PAYNE**, BSc, is now president and CEO of Elk Valley Coal Partnership. Elk Valley is made up of Canada’s senior metallurgical coal mining properties and is the world’s second largest coal exporter.

**1973**

**MARK BAILEY**, BA, has been appointed Ambassador to the Syrian Arab Republic. A career diplomat, he joined the department of external affairs in 1973 and prior to his new posting was director general of the foreign affairs department’s Middle East and North Africa Bureau.

**1974**

**SUSAN MCFADDEN**, BEd, is an adjunct assistant professor of dance at Western Oregon University. Early this year, she received the university’s Excellence in Teaching Award. She says her philosophy can be summed up in a quote from comedian Lily Tomlin: “Everything I’ve done is collaborative.”

**1975**

**GRAHAM CARR**, BA, is living in Victoria and says he’s “taken early retirement, and enjoying it immensely. Would love to hear from former UVic students with whom I was once connected.”

**1980**

**CHRIS HEBB**, BA, has been appointed senior vice-president of broadcast for Toronto Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment. The Vikes basketball hall-of-famer had spent the prior 11 years in a similar post with the Vancouver Canucks parent company, Orca Bay Sports and Entertainment. • **MARTIN CHARLES MCNEIL**, MA, writes: “After leaving Canada Post Corporation I spent some time working in Fort McMurray, Alberta. In both of these organizations I was involved in employee assistance and organizational development. In my private practice I work with police, the workers compensation board, and a number of other companies.”

**1981**

**GORD ANDERSON**, BA, was promoted to deputy fire chief with Esquimalt Fire Rescue this spring. He served in the navy after graduation, then spent five years with the Victoria Police before joining the Esquimalt service. Esquimalt Fire Rescue was established in 2003 when the police operations amalgamated with the Victoria force.

**1982**

**JOHN O’BRIEN**, BA, reports: “After completing a contract as director, government records service, I am now in start-up mode for IRM Strategies, based in Hong Kong and active throughout the region. Still finding the time to experience the wonders of Asia.”

**1983**

**WADE KEARLEY**, BFA, has released a new collection of poems, *Let Me Burn Like This* (Creative
A Fish Story, Alumni Style
Alumni volunteering: you never know what it might lead to.

BY LARRY CROSS, Bed ’64
PRESIDENT, UVIC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Being involved with UVic has its share of adventures. I’m living proof. The most recent example involved, of all things, a fish. My wife Dianne came to me to say that Beth Doman, our friend and a graphic designer at the university, had called. Beth wanted me to cook a salmon. No problem, I said, and went about my business.

You might wonder why no questions entered my mind about such an unusual request. But you need to understand that Beth is a vegetarian who wouldn’t cook a salmon if her life depended on it. So, she needed a surrogate chef to do the deed. After all, I am a noted omnivore—about-town, and I do a lot of cooking. A natural choice!

The next day, I discovered a whole coho on the kitchen counter and Beth in the living room enjoying a glass of wine with Dianne. Beth explained the salmon. I could keep the meat; she only wanted half—the fish—from mid-section to tail—skeleton only. It turns out the fish would be the key design element in promotional materials for a February forum on the state of our oceans. Sponsored by the university and the Royal Society of Canada, “Are We Killing the World’s Oceans?” promises to be one of those provocative public gatherings that really enrich our community.

So, that night, I set about poaching the coho, then stripped the flesh and dutifully cleaned the skeleton with a paint brush. Be sure to look for the forum advertising—and note the skeleton section and the cook responsible for it!

I have to say that my involvement with the UVic Alumni Association has provided some very interesting, if unexpected, experiences like this. But it’s all fun and hopefully it makes you think about getting involved too. You probably won’t be asked to cook a salmon but you will connect with a lot of interesting and creative people.

My next problem is that I have about five pounds of salmon in my freezer. I’ve decided I need to hold a contest for the best salmon recipe. Send your recipe for salmon chowder, salmon casserole, salmon cakes or any other form of flaked salmon to me at my page tmc56ca@yahoo.com.

One other thing: Dianne and I have decided to take the MSC Opera Transatlantic Cruise sponsored by the Alumni Travel Program in April. If any of you would like to join us, contact University Travel at (250) 721-4322 for information. We could try a little fishing during the crossing!
Bringing UVic to You

By meeting with alumni, wherever they can be found, we’re keeping you in the campus loop.

BY SHANNON VON KALDENBERG
ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT ALUMNI AND DEVELOPMENT

I recently completed my first year of working at UVic and in those 12 months I’ve had the opportunity to meet with hundreds of alumni in Victoria, Vancouver, across Canada and in Asia. Your enthusiasm and commitment to UVic never fails to impress.

I enjoy getting out and meeting as many alumni as possible. It’s vital. That’s because I see my role as one that represents alumni interests and makes sure your voice is heard within the university. I need to hear from you. I need to know what the university can do for you.

In my travels over the past year, you’ve told me how important it is for us to keep our community of alumni bound to each other and to the university. When I think back on the things we’ve accomplished this year, I recall the great get together we had at GM Place in Vancouver. Our guest speaker that night was Chris Hebb, BA ’80, who at the time was the vice-president of broadcast and new media for Orca Bay Sports and Entertainment, the parent company of the Vancouver Canucks. He’s since moved on to work for the Toronto Maple Leafs—but we won’t hold that against him! We’ll get him involved in Toronto.

One of the truly great things about that night in Vancouver was the cross section of grads that were in attendance. We had representation from the Class of ’72 all the way up to recent grads. It was great to see, and Chris’ talk—about the major connections between his linguistics degree and his career path—were truly inspiring and we appreciate Chris sharing his time and his observations with our group.

If you can’t make it out to our events there are many ways to keep in contact with UVic: send a Keeping in Touch note to the Torch or become a member of the new UVic Online Community. You can also join an alumni chapter. If there isn’t already a chapter for your department or area of interest, we can help you start one.

In the year ahead, I’m making it my goal to meet more alumni and to build an even stronger community. I want to know what you like about what we’re doing for alumni and what we can improve.

For the time being, let me again say that it has been an honour and a privilege to sit down with our alumni as I’ve learned the lay of the land. I look forward to meeting with you during my travels this coming year. Check the alumni Web site (alumni.uvic.ca) to find out when we will be in your community.
1995

GLEN HALLS, PhD, an Edmonton-based contemporary jazz pianist, composer and improviser, has released a new CD, *Progression Meditation*. Apart from composing and performing, his current research and creative interests include the spirituality of improvisation, aesthetics, eastern religion and philosophy.

MARK SEEPMAN, BComm, writes: “In August 2004 I'm happy to announce that I got married to my wife Keri in our hometown of Vernon. Also in 2004 I left my role as an independent technology consultant and took on a new position with Reynolds & Reynolds Canada as the senior account manager for Central BC. This year we built a new home and I am thoroughly enjoying both married life and my position with Reynolds.”

1996

RICH FAST, BEd, and MAUREEN VON TIGERSTROM, MEd, have welcomed a son. Liam (sporting the Vikes diaper shirt in the photo with father Rich) was born on May 2, 2006.

WENSVEEN, BA, became the senior director of planning for Marriott this August. “I am responsible for planning efforts of new resort development worldwide.” John has an extensive background in aviation and the airline industry and has published two books: *Air Transportation: A Management Perspective* and *Wheels Up: Airline Business Plan Development*. He’s living in Orlando, Florida.

CATHLEEN WITH, BA, has published her first book, *SKIDS* (Arsenal Pulp Press), and read at the Vancouver International Writer’s Festival in October. JOHN YEUNG, LLB, is a lawyer at Boughton Peterson Yang Anderson in Hong Kong practicing law in the areas of corporate-commercial, mergers and acquisitions, private equity and trusts and succession planning. In his spare time, John is learning to play ice hockey.

1997

HEATHER BELL, BA, and CAMERON LANSDELL, BA ’87, never met on campus, but found each other years later in Vancouver. Heather writes: “We were married in September 2005 and currently live in Richmond. Cameron works at the head office of London Drugs in the IT department and plays soccer and ultimate. I've been working in recreation with seniors and people with disabilities and, having just completed two diplomas in gerontology and adult education, am in Halifax to do my master’s at Dalhousie. I still occasionally play water polo, am an avid dragonboat/kayak paddler and just began to play ultimate under Cam’s tutelage! Warm thoughts to our UVic friends!”

KATHERINE WU, BComm, has news: “After graduation from UVic, I came back to Hong Kong for career development. I am now working for an international firm, which manages financial documentation. My area of focus is in human resources and people development.”

A Big Welcome

Many of the approximately 600 entrance scholarship recipients were given an official welcome to campus just after they settled into their first year at UVic. The reception, organized by the Student Ambassador Association, is a chance for students to meet (and to eat!) and to hear from Alumni Association President Larry Cross and Vice-President Academic Jamie Cassels. The annual event is co-presented by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

Rack and Roll

The latest campus service project to be completed by the Student Ambassadors Association gives students and campus visitors more places to lock up their bikes. The SAA has allocated $4,500 to the purchase of 10 new bike racks at various places around UVic. The group is marking its 10th anniversary this year and the racks are the third significant contribution they’ve made to campus life. In recent years, the SAA (an alumni-affiliated group that raises funds through convocation flower and diploma frame sales) has purchased armchairs for the McPherson Library study area and new exercise equipment for the McKinnon Building.

College Pride

DID YOU NOW THAT THE WOMAN WHO WARNED the world about the dangers of the drug thalidomide attended Victoria College when it was in Craigdarroch Castle? Or that UVic’s predecessor also had among its students two young men who would become known worldwide for their unique artistic visions? Dr. Frances Kelsey, Bill Reid and Jack Shadbolt all share that distinction and they are among many of the VC alumni featured in a new Web site at www.alumni.uvic.ca/vcccaa. It’s a project of the members of the Victoria College Craigdarroch Castle Alumni Association, who also share the college’s rich history at a permanent display that you can visit at Craigdarroch Castle.
Turning it Around

RAFFI CAVOUKIAN—MUSICIAN, CHILDREN’S TROUBADOUR and advocate—visited campus in June for the Canadian launch of the anthology *Child Honouring: How to Turn this World Around*. Raffi co-edited the book with Sharna Olfman and it includes a foreword by the Dalai Lama. The theme revolves around a “children first” emphasis on many of the issues facing society and represent what Raffi calls his personal “renaissance.” The event was presented by the UVic Education Alumni Chapter.

Spin to Win

Apart from the line up for the free burgers at the President’s Day of Welcome at the start of the school year, the other sure place to find a big group of students is at the Alumni Association’s Spin-the-Wheel game. There was a small prize for all “spinners” so no one walked away empty-handed.

Here’s the Plan

WITH THE START OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR CAME THE LAUNCH OF A NEW EFFORT TO bring students into the loop in terms of what the alumni association can offer, even before graduation. “Plan A!” is the new name for the bundle of services—from grants and scholarships to alumni-supported programs like career counselling. There was plenty of face-to-face contact with alumni volunteers during the lead-up to the start of the school year and orientation talks were given by Associate Vice-President of Alumni and Development Shannon von Kaldenberg. Students were encouraged to visit www.planA.uvic.ca for a one-stop list of services.

1998

SIOBIAN ANDRIAMAMPIANINA (née SMITH), BA, is working with the United Nations: “Finished working with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the UN Development Program in Kosovo from 2000-2006. Just took up an assignment with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Kathmandu, Nepal. Married on July 26, 2005 in Vancouver.”

MORGAN COLLINS, BFA, married Robin Imrie on February 18, 2006 in a small and beautiful ceremony in Burnaby. They are now living in Vancouver.

CARL GOMEZ, MA, has been appointed vice-president, research with Bentall Capital, the real estate advisory and service firm. Prior to the new job, he held senior economist positions with two leading Canadian financial institutions and he was a real estate economist with CMHC.

TIM MCGUIRE, BComm, moved houses, moved offices and continues to work on his golf swing.

MATT POLLARD, LLB, reports: “After a year in the UK studying for an LLM in International Human Rights Law, I’m working as a legal adviser to an international non-governmental organization in Geneva: the Association for the Prevention of Tor-}

2000

KELLY NEUFELD BUCCINI, BA, reports: “I left the Ministry of Children and Family Development in 2003 to return to Vancouver Island. Got married and was employed as a family counsellor on the Southern Gulf Islands for 18 months. I returned to child protection in 2005 when I was hired by Lalum’u-tul’ Smun’eem, a fully delegated child protection agency within Cowichan Tribes. I love my job and working for this agency, and hope to stay here a long time.”

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Mark Shannon, ’02

MARK SHANNON, ’02

KEIR WILMAT, BSc, has an update: “I’ve just graduated from law at University of Toronto and will be articling at Torys. I’m also working for MTU as their legal and policies correspondent.”
Changing careers and countries has started to become second nature to me and I feel like I am becoming a professional student...of life.”

STEPHEN MOGATAS, BSN, is a chiropractic student at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in Toronto and he’s the students’ council vice-president.

MARK SHANNON, BComm, has an update: “After finishing my BComm in Victoria, I spent half a year (and 30,000 kms) in Australia taking pictures. Since returning to Calgary, I’ve started my own professional photography business specializing in commercial work, weddings and outdoors. Some recent highlights include getting published in Architectural Digest and winning a national outdoors photography contest. I know much of what I’ve been able to accomplish has come through my experience with the Faculty of Business Entrepreneurship program. I can be reached at mark@mark11.com.”

2003

DAVID CHONG, BSW, has this to report: “I studied at UVic for about seven years. Initially I was in the program of Health Information Science. After I had gone through the study until third year, I switched to the social work program. Since I graduated in 2003, I came back to Hong Kong to work as a school social worker. It’s a great pleasure for me to be a UVic graduate.”

JAKE MCEWAN, BA, was selected for a $20,000 Action Canada Fellowship to study leadership development and public policy issues. He and 14 other young people, all early in their careers, will focus on enterprise in Canada.

National University. In 2004 I returned and started working with Nanaimo Youth Services in the youth employment centre. I am also a graduate student now with UVic, and will finish my masters in counselling in September 2007.”

2004

BASIL ALEXANDER, LLB/MPA ’04, is currently practicing in Toronto with Klippensteins. His major files have included the Ipperwash Inquiry, representing the estate of Dudley George, who was killed by Ontario Provincial Police during a land claims dispute in 1995.

MURRAY CLUFF, MEd, coached Torino Olympic champion Jenn Heil to a gold medal in freestyle moguls. Murray competed for 10 years on the freestyle World Cup circuit before turning to coaching. He’s a National Coaching Certification Program Level 4 coach.

KARA FLANAGAN, MA, writes: “I’m planning a silent auction for United Way to raise money for agencies in Toronto.”

CYNDI PALLEN, BSW, returned to Powell River after graduation and is working as a coun-
sellsor with the Tla’amin Community Health Service’s addictions program. She’s initiated a drug awareness walk, jog or run to encourage Powell River-area Aboriginal people to stay off drugs and alcohol.

2005

Former Vikes soccer player and assistant coach DEAN ANDERSON, MEd, and wife TARA ANDERSON (née ELLIOTT), MA ’03, welcomed Carter James Anderson into the world on Feb. 4, 2006. • JONATHAN MARTIN, MASc, was among six Canadian scientists invited this spring to the Mars Desert Research Station in Utah sponsored by the Mars Society of Canada, promoters of space exploration to the Red Planet. The two-week research and training exercise simulated a Mars exploration to the Red Planet. The two-week research and training exercise simulated a Mars exploration to the Red Planet.

IN MEMORIAM

GERRY DUNN, BEd ’64, died on April 19, 2006. A member of the first UVic graduating class, Gerry taught for 34 years in the Greater Victoria School District, starting at Metchosin School. He was a pilot officer in the RCAF prior to his university years and he shared his time volunteering with a variety of community organizations including the Boy Scouts and Victoria Hospice Society.

JANICE SARGENT, VC ’61, succumbed to cancer on July 11, 2006 at the age of 63. She was the daughter of Grace and Harry Hickman, former principal of Victoria College and the first (acting) president of the university. Like her father, Janice was a French language scholar, educator and strong supporter of the UVic Alumni Association. Donations in her memory may be made to the Grace and Harry Hickman Scholarship Fund.

ISOBEL SEARLS (née GIBSON), VC ’32, passed away on August 5, 2006. After her Vic College years, she moved to the US to study nutrition. Her husband, Elmer Searls, taught animal nutrition at the University of Washington and following his death Isobel came back to Victoria and pursued her love of botany. She’s survived by her brother, former UVic Chancellor William Gibson, nieces and nephews.

PETER SMITH, VC ’49, unofficial university historian and founding chair of the classics department (now Greek and Roman Studies) died Aug. 29 following a stroke. He was UVic’s longest-serving faculty member when he retired in 1998, closing out a career that included, apart from his much-loved teaching position, a series of administrative responsibilities including dean of fine arts and appointments to the UVic Senate and the faculty association executive. Known for his humour and good nature, Smith was actively involved with the alumni association and on its behalf wrote the history of post-secondary education in Victoria, A Multitude of the Wise: UVic Remembered. He was also a Distinguished Alumni Award recipient. Those so inclined may contribute to the Peter L. Smith Scholarship in Greek and Roman Studies, through the UVic Development office. A tribute to Dr. Smith appears on page two of this magazine.

The UVic Alumni Association has entered a formal sponsorship agreement with Vikes Athletics, formalizing its support of events like the annual UVic Golf Classic and the Athletic Awards Banquet. One of the most obvious examples of the level of alumni involvement with the university is the growing number of Vikes alumni chapters. There are now 10. Contact Development and Alumni Relations Officer Brent Dobbie at (250) 472-4642 to learn more, or look for chapters on the UVic Online Community Network (www.olcnetwork.net/uvic).

Nobody messes with George Huey. He may have withered from age and too much golf, but his wide shoulders and big hands—plumped up by years of pulling prawn traps off the coast of Pender Harbour—still grant him a wide berth around town. But even more intimidating than his stature are his stories. Back in the ’60s and ’70s, Huey used to break knee-caps for Mafioso-types in Toronto. All his yarns, told in a deep smoker’s rumble, involve tough guys whose names end in ‘ee’—Jimmy, Mickey, Donny—and who inevitably end up on the receiving end of Huey’s sizable knuckles.

In high school, I worked at the Pender Harbour 9-holer and got to be friends with Huey. Last year, when I told him I was moving to New York to attend a journalism school just blocks from Harlem, a rare look of concern crossed his face. “You bloody well watch out for yourself,” he said. “I done business down there. Those guys don’t mess around. A life ain’t worth nuthin’ on them streets.”

I’m a child of Lotusland. I was raised around old hippies, wind-swept cedars and emerald mountains. In 2001, I went to UVic. There I learned to thank bus drivers, wear flip-flops year-round, play ultimate, and watch the cherry blossoms fall. Huey couldn’t see me surviving New York, city of sharp elbows and switchblades. Neither could I, really.

New York smelled a sucker as soon as I walked out of JFK airport. Limousine drivers swarmed me, all promising cheap fares to Manhattan. I knew better. I’d read my Lonely Planet. It advised to steer clear of these vultures, and walk to the lineup for city-approved yellow cabs where the regulated price would be $45.

Ten minutes later, I found myself riding shotgun in a sleek, black Chevy Suburban—shiny rims, tinted windows, leather—completely unsure if the driver was taking me to my apartment or some landfill in Staten Island where I’d be robbed and deposited in the ground alongside mob turncoats and TV din- ner trays. The driver had talked me into paying him twice the going rate. My guidebook was wrong, he claimed. Yellow cabs actually charged $115 to go to Manhattan. He was a good liar.

I was courteous to the driver all the same. That’s just the way I was raised. I asked him all about his life—he was a Kashmiri refugee—and I think he started to feel sorry for this naïve passenger he’d so easily taken for 90 bucks. Familiar Manhattan images began to pass by: the Empire State Building, Times Square, Broadway. I’d cheated the gutter. When we finally stopped in front of my new place, I handed him $85 and rooted around in my pockets for another five. “No, don’t worry,” he said. “This is fine. This is fine.”

“Oh thanks very much,” I said.

He climbed back into his Suburban. “Goodbye,” he said. “You be careful.”

Sure he still fleeced me, but my discount for good behaviour taught me something: an easygoing West Coast demeanour might be my best big city defence.

In a place so famous for pushy go-getters, I set myself apart by holding doors, looking people in the eye, helping carry strollers up subway stairs—basically continuing the decency I’d learned out west.

At journalism school, one of our most daunting tasks was to get quotes from high-ups with the city government. Some students believed in asserting themselves over the phone and were quickly tangled in layers of bureaucratic brush-offs. I managed to please-and-thank-you my way to good quotes.

In the fall, each student had to ride along with NYPD cops to get a sense of the city’s underbelly. Many students were hurt that the cops didn’t take them seriously. My cops sensed that I didn’t care about being taken seriously or about the city’s crime rate, so we dropped the pretense and spent four blissful hours together trying to find Brooklyn’s best cup of coffee. It made a great story.

My first job offer out of school came from Rupert Murdoch’s bloodthirsty New York Post, a paper where the reporters are just as hard-boiled as the creeps they splash across the front page every day. In me, the Post found a reporter who could empathize his way into the living rooms of mourners and murderers both.

This summer I flew back to BC for a few weeks to relax with family and friends. On the sun-drenched deck of the Grasshopper Pub in Pender Harbour, I bumped into old George Huey. “Jesus Christ, look who it is,” he bellowed. “You actually got out of that place alive.”

“Just barely,” I lied.