



UBC REPORTS

SPECIAL ISSUE : UBC CONGREGATION 2003

The Canadian Armed Forces has a New Dentist

Military career made it all possible

BY HILARY THOMSON

He's a second lieutenant in the Canadian Armed Forces, but lately Sunny Tatra has had a hard time getting anyone to salute him.

That's because the 32-year-old is also a UBC student who graduates this month with a Doctor of Dental Medicine degree.

Tatra joined the service after a cousin in the military bet him he couldn't tough it out for even one year as a soldier. That was 1990. Since then, he has been an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces which has supported, in whole or in part, his 12 years of education with tuition, books, cost of living allowance and salary.

"If it hadn't been for the military, I never would have had this education," he says. "My parents couldn't have afforded to help send me to university for so many years but with the support I've received, getting an education is my full-time job."

A Calgary native, Tatra obtained a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from the University of Calgary in 1993. He took another bachelor's degree – this time in Botany – in 1996, followed by a master's degree in plant molecular physiology and gene expression earned in 1999, the year he enrolled at UBC's Faculty of Dentistry.

When he wasn't pursuing a degree, Tatra was hitting the books as an officer and in 1994 qualified as a military health-care administrator. He has also taught basic and officer training, and schooled medical assistants during a one-year full-time stint as an officer and during summer breaks between terms.

Originally aiming to be a physician, Tatra opted for Dentistry because he felt it offered a better chance for a balanced home life.

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Sunny Tatra (lower left) thanks the military for his degree. Coleen Heemskerk thanks her university education for helping her to see the world.

Agricultural Sciences Grad Studied in Holland, Sweden and Uganda

Serves as career ambassador for her faculty

BY MICHELLE COOK

Coleen Heemskerk doesn't have a good head for carrying well water.

The Agricultural Sciences undergraduate discovered her shortcoming during a study trip to Uganda last year when she spent several days with a rural family eager to show her their way of life. That included teaching Heemskerk, 25, how to chase away marauding baboons from their crops, and giving her a 10-lb "trainer" Gerry can to transport water on foot from a community well 45 minutes away.

"The people in the village could carry 20-lb cans on their heads without holding on to them," Heemskerk recalls. "But I had to use my hands, and I actually tripped and broke my can. I had children following me and laughing because they'd never seen a white person do that kind of work. They told me my head wasn't flat enough."

Heemskerk's introduction to Ugandan life also included visits to a sustainable farm operation, a wild game reserve, a rehab zoo, an orphanage, and meetings with 15 non government organizations and a group of Ugandan university students, one of whom sported bullet scars on her legs – the result of ongoing civil war in northern Uganda.

For Heemskerk, the eye-opening experiences were all part of coursework for the Global Resource Systems (GRS) program. The undergraduate program lets students specialize in a resource discipline and world region of their choice. Heemskerk opted to focus on international development in Africa and Europe.

She says she was drawn to the program's international exchange component and flexibility which led her to study in Holland and Sweden. Heemskerk's trip to Uganda was part of a course she took at the Swedish Agricultural University-SLU.


She says she was struck by the openness and generosity of the people she met in Africa and also saw that the West has a lot to learn about from developing countries sustainable agriculture.

Following her graduation from UBC, Heemskerk hopes to return to Sweden and shift her academic interests from agriculture and international development to graduate work in conflict management. She hopes to do long-term development work in Africa, and eventually work for a UN agency.

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Since 1916, UBC graduates have gathered to celebrate their success as students in Congregation ceremonies that bring together faculty, staff, alumni, families and friends. ♪ From May 21-28 more than 5,000 graduates will cross the stage at UBC's Chan Centre for the Performing Arts to receive their degrees from UBC Chancellor Allan McEachern. In 22 separate ceremonies, degrees from 12 faculties as well as 9 honorary degrees will be conferred. ♪ This year's UBC graduates, whose ideas and innovation are creating new approaches to local and global issues, will join the more than 200,000 alumni now living and working in countries around the world. ♪ For more information about UBC's Congregation ceremonies visit www.graduation.ubc.ca

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN DEE



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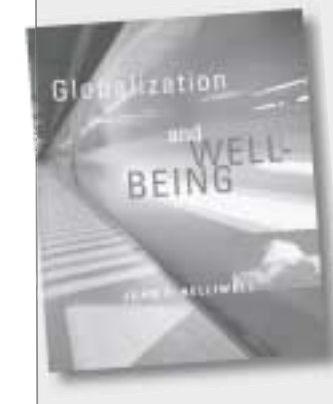
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IN THE NEWS

Highlights of UBC Media Coverage in April 2003. COMPILED BY BRIAN LIN

Workaholics can be Healthy
New research from Australia found “no strong evidence” of a link between coronary heart disease and work-related stress.
What matters isn’t how hard you work, but how much you like what you do. “A number of studies show that having control at work is positive - not just being in charge of other people, but having the freedom to make decisions,” UBC epidemiologist **Aleck Ostry** told the *New York Times*.
“Workaholism can be useful when you are making the most of your skills and education, you are stretching yourself and are held in high esteem.”

Stars on War
U.S. country radio stations recently dropped the Dixie Chicks from their play list when lead singer Natalie Mains told a London concert audience she was ashamed the President of the United States was from Texas.
Documentary filmmaker Michael Moore, actress Susan Sarandon and Madonna are all speaking out against the war on Iraq. But their message is not always popular.
“Now is a time when our commitment to free speech is difficult. This is when we need it most,” UBC journalism professor **Stephen Ward** told *Global National*. “It goes against everything that we believe in a free society, which is the free expression of difficult and



VP Research Indira Samarasekera applauds SARS team for its break through discovery.

possibly offensive views for many people at a time when we need it.”

Microbe Man
UBC microbiologist **Brett Finlay** told the *National Post* that there is no need for people to get obsessive about hand-washing amidst the SARS scare.
“We are more microbe than we are human,” said Finlay. “There are actually 10 times more microbes in us and on us than there are human cells. Put another way, the average person is home to 1,000,000,000,000,000 microbes (10 to the power of 14.) They are invisible because bacteria, viruses and fungi are much smaller than human cells.”
All of which means it is a good idea to wash your hands before

eating and after using the toilet. “In every gram of feces you secrete there are more bacteria than there are humans in the world,” said Finlay, who does not shy away from the reality of the inner world. “It’s gross, but it’s real life.”

Research Funding Worth it
In a letter to the *Vancouver Sun*, UBC VP Research **Indira Samarasekera** said the scientists at the Michael Smith Genome Science Centre at the B.C. Cancer Agency accomplished a remarkable feat by being the first group in the world to sequence the coronavirus, suspected of causing SARS.
“The work [of **Dr. Marco Marra**, **Dr. Caroline Astell**, **Dr. Steve Jones** and their team], at the Michael Smith Genome Science Centre, named after the UBC Nobel Laureate Michael Smith, is a testament to scientific excellence and the sheer power of basic research. It also demonstrates that funding of leading research pays off in spades,” said Samarasekera.
“The breakthrough on SARS has put the B.C. Cancer Agency, UBC and Canada on the map,” said Samarasekera. “Many of the scientists on Dr. Marra’s team, including Dr. Marra, were attracted back to Canada from the U.S. because of the renewed vitality of the research climate in this country. This is only the beginning of what is emerging as an extraordinary period for knowledge creation in Canada, with profound social and economic benefits.” □

LETTERS

Editor:

Why do I see the same names commenting all the time and lambasting the University in its attempt to bring the University into the 21st Century? Has anyone stopped to consider why there is a need for a University Plan? Perhaps these nay-sayers might reconsider their lack of foresight. Canada continues to lose some of its finest athletes and academics. We educate them and then send them off to other places because they cannot afford to live on or near campus. How can they train in inadequate facilities. Facilities, what facilities? Were these critics aware that the indoor pool has more than 15,000 people using it per week? How can top athletes train in a facility with no space and one that is not regulation size? Both the indoor and outdoor pool are not capable of hosting national or international level meets. There is no pool in the lower mainland that can host a high caliber swim meet, water polo tournament or synchro swimming event. B.C. prides itself on its fitness. Well, let’s provide the community surrounding UBC the opportunity to participate in activities. Here’s an argument for the fogies who want to keep the pool as a heritage site. First of all what’s there now is not as it was intended. It was supposed to have been made into an indoor pool as soon as the Empire Games were over. There were

change rooms and there were stores there too, coffee shops. During the Empire Games held here in the early 50’s did anyone know that Bannister and Landy were the first to break the four minute mile in running? It takes a track to train, track, what track? There is no track now in Vancouver for athletes. The list goes on, baseball, rowing, etc.

It appears these same selfish individuals do not consider that housing right in the centre of campus might be attractive to investors and families alike. I have children who will shortly be attending the University. I would gladly buy them a condo, because I believe in four to six years I will have had an excellent return on my investment in more ways than one. Having a vibrant and alive centre of campus will encourage people to remain on campus even after graduation. Three new proposed elementary schools will make the university a great place for families to be and perhaps keep graduating PhD’s from leaving for what is now much greener pastures. Please everyone who reads this respond to the positive for the University Plan so we can move forward instead of burying our heads in the sand.

Lee-Ann Strelzow

UBC REPORTS

Director, Public Affairs
Scott Macrae scott.macrae@ubc.ca

Editor
Paul Patterson paul.patterson@ubc.ca

Design Director
Chris Dahl chris.dahl@ubc.ca

Designer
Sharmini Thiagarajah sharmini@exchange.ubc.ca

Contributors
Michelle Cook michelle.cook@ubc.ca
Brian Lin brian.lin@ubc.ca
Erica Smishek erica.smishek@ubc.ca
Hilary Thomson hilary.thomson@ubc.ca

Advertising
Cristina Calboreanu mccalbor@exchange.ubc.ca

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310 – 6251 Cecil Green Park Road
Vancouver BC Canada V6T 1Z1

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It's a long road from Russia to the backyard of Bill Gates' house, but Computer Science student Natali Altshuler made the trip in just nine years.

The vivacious 22-year-old even got a chance to meet the Microsoft chairman in person. The brief encounter occurred last year during a barbeque for interns at Gates' home. Altshuler says it was one of the highlights of her experience in the Computer Science Co-operative Education Program.

"I got to shake his hand and how many people can say that?" says Altshuler. "The co-op program gave me opportunities I would not have had otherwise."

Altshuler, who will receive her Bachelor of Science with a minor in Commerce this month, immigrated with her family to Canada when she was 13. Her parents – both musicians – wanted to give her and her sister a better life.

She arrived from Russia speaking no English and began Grade 8 as an ESL student. When she graduated from high school, Altshuler was not only fluent but had an unconditional offer of acceptance to UBC with an Outstanding Student Initiative (OSI) scholarship.

She says getting accepted into the computer science co-op program in her second year was one of the best things that ever happened to her.

Through the program, she worked in software development



Natali Altshuler will soon be working for the world's leading electronic game maker.

Computer Science Grad Makes an Impression at Microsoft

Then lands major job at Electronic Arts. BY MICHELLE COOK

at Motorola Canada Ltd. (which named her Motorola Ambassador to UBC after she completed her work term), and at MacDonald Dettwiler & Associates (MDA), where she worked on a naval combat operator-training simulator (MDA gave her a scholarship based on her contribution to the project). Those co-op experiences helped her to land a position as a program manager intern at Microsoft Corp. in Seattle.

An engaging blend of intelligence and charisma, Altshuler shatters the image of computer science majors as quiet, shy technophiles.

In her co-op placements and on campus, Altshuler says she always looked for ways to make an impact. At Motorola, she co-ordinated several large events. At UBC, she was a long-standing executive of the Computer Science Students Society – eventually becoming president in her final year – and helped to organize numerous activities including information sessions and a computer-industry career fair.

Although driven by a desire to do her best and make her family proud, Altshuler believes in balancing work and play. It's a philosophy that will serve her well in her new job as development director at Electronic Arts, the world's leading developer of electronic games.

"EA is a perfect match for me," Altshuler says. "What appealed to me is that you're creating something that people can use and enjoy." □

First Nations Access Program Makes Dream Come True

Aboriginal student begins Forestry career

BY BRIAN LIN

Chris Anderson's love for the outdoors led him to the Faculty of Forestry, and now a university education may give him a career in the woods.

Growing up near Sproat Lake outside Port Alberni, Anderson spent many weekends at his grandmother's house on the Tseshaht First Nation reserve and developed a passion for plants and fishing.

"I love being out on the river in the summer, floating around in the boat, waiting for fish to come up the river," says Anderson, who still participates in his band's annual food fishery. "The river is silent and all you hear is a splash and you know it is time to set the net."

But it was his Swedish father, a machine operator who built roads for Macmillan Bloedel, who inspired him to pursue a career in forestry.

"He always had exciting stories to tell when he came home from work," Anderson recalls. "I remember thinking how cool it would be to work outdoors."

Now, with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry degree, he's looking forward to a future doing just that.

A university education, he says, made it all possible.

"My parents have always emphasized the importance of education," says Anderson. "I guess they wanted to make sure my brothers and I enjoy the opportunities they didn't have without post-secondary education."

"But I never thought I'd go to university. My biggest aspiration was community college," says the 28-year-old, who spent a year at Malaspina University College in Nanaimo before he learned about UBC's First Nations Professional Science Access Program, which provided academic upgrading for aboriginal students. Students were

encouraged to apply to the Applied Science, Agricultural Sciences or Forestry program upon fulfilling grade 11 and 12 science and math pre-requisites.

The program was discontinued in 1998 after a three-year run, but Anderson had already reaped the benefit.

"I wouldn't have considered going to university if it weren't for the Access program," says Anderson.

Anderson says the best part about studying forest operations is the opportunity to incorporate in the field what he learns in school.

"The program prepared me for what I would encounter while working in the forest industry, it can also lead to professional engineer status."

In addition to studying at UBC's research forests, he has spent summers as an engineering contractor in a joint venture between his band and Coast Forest Management, as a squad boss fighting forest fires with the B.C. Forest Service and as a danger tree assessor.

"I worked with a partner to assess the safety of trees within the areas our fire crew would be operating," says Anderson. "We'd walk through the area and flag for removal any trees we deemed hazardous to the safety of our crew. The fallers who follow us would then remove these trees before the fire crew was permitted to enter the area."

As for his future career, Anderson wants to combine his interests in forestry and engineering and work on becoming a registered professional forester and professional engineer. His aboriginal background, Anderson says, will definitely help him when dealing with First Nations forest land and resource issues. □



Chris Anderson can see the forest and the trees and the possibilities.

Fashionable Congregation Wear

What the Best-Dressed Graduates will be Wearing this Spring and More Importantly...Why?

BY BRIAN LIN

It all started in the Middle Ages.

Congregation gowns and academic dress originated from the clergy regalia from that period, according to University Relations Director Chuck Slonecker, who has been running congregation ceremonies since 1989.

“At the time, monks and priests were often brought into an area by business people, where they were asked to pray to prevent the spread of the plague and other epidemics. Eventually they also undertook the responsibility of educating the children and that’s the beginning of academia as we know it.

“The priests’ gowns reflect their religious order and the monk’s hoods were designed so the congregation could toss in their contribution as they walked by. The mortarboard is associated with Oxford whereas the bonnet originated with Henry VIII and what was known as the Cambridge Hat.”

UBC, like many other Canadian and U.S. universities, follows the British tradition of academic dress.

“Each university can decide the style and colours of their gowns, within some general rules,” explains Ellis Courtney, associate director of the Ceremonies Office. “The hoods are lined in different colours to represent the different degrees.”

Undergraduate & Master’s

The undergraduate gown, modelled by Sameer Al-Abdul-Wahid (1), president of the graduating class, is black with long sleeves. The edged light blue lining in his hood signifies al-Abdul-Wahid’s Bachelor of Science degree.

The Master’s gown is identical to the undergraduate gown, with the exception of the full lining in distinctive colours to signify the graduate’s degree.

PhD

The PhD regalia consist of a maroon silk gown and sleeves of UBC blue with gold piping. Brian Wilhelm (2), who’s receiving his PhD in medical genetics and his wife Josette-Renee Landry (3), who is receiving her PhD in genetics, are wearing the typical PhD gowns, including a hood with blue silk shell and gold lining.

Faculty

Faculty members typically wear regalia from their alma mater. Chuck Slonecker’s (4) gown

is representative of most North American PhD gowns. His black gown with velvet chevron was purchased from his alma mater, the University of Washington, 35 years ago for US\$200. The purple and gold of his hood are UW’s colours while the blue signifies his PhD degree in Science.

Library, Archival and Information Studies Prof. Luciana Duranti’s (5) gown is one of the most colourful among faculty members at UBC. Adorned with lace around

the neck, the gown comes from Duranti’s alma mater, the University of Roma in Rome, Italy.

“It’s a black gown with red cuffs which are folded to different lengths and held up by a different cord to signify your rank and degree,” explains Duranti. “My gown has a dark green sash held on the shoulder by a gold rosette on black velvet. Green signifies archival science

and gold on black is our Faculty (Library and Archival Science) colour.”

President, Chancellor and Honorary Degree recipients

The colour and style of the President, Chancellor and honorary degree recipient gowns are particular to UBC. Honorary degree recipients wear red gowns lined in blue, purple or cream velvet for the respective degrees (LL.D., D.S.c. and D.Litt.) □



Lowering the Risk for Health-Care Workers

Grad student discovers the dangers in disinfectants. BY MICHELLE COOK



Karen Rideout discovered that clean medical instruments don't always mean safe instruments, at least not for the people who clean them.

Karen Rideout is breathing a little easier these days – and it’s not just because she successfully completed her MSc in Occupational and Environmental Hygiene last month.

The findings from Rideout’s master’s thesis could benefit health-care workers worldwide currently using highly toxic chemicals known to cause respiratory problems, to clean endoscopes and other medical instruments that are too delicate to be disinfected with heat.

An asthma sufferer herself, Rideout was interested in examining the health risks for B.C. health-care workers exposed to glutaraldehyde, a chemical disinfectant that has been in wide use for 40 years, as well as two disinfectants (Cidex OPA and Compliance) that have recently come onto the market and are billed by their manufacturers as safer.

“Up to 26 per cent of people who use it [glutaraldehyde] develop some sort of respiratory symptoms, including asthma, and about 40 per cent develop skin problems such as dermatitis and allergic reactions, but there just hasn’t been anything to replace it,” Rideout says.

In the first survey of its kind to be done in the province, Rideout worked with the Occupational Safety and Health Agency for Healthcare to canvas B.C. hospitals about their choice of disinfectants. She also studied the federal regulatory process for getting chemical disinfectants approved.

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Personal History Leads to Precedent Setting PhD Research

BY ERICA SMISHEK

Alison Pryer did not predict that an essay on her childhood sexual abuse included in her PhD dissertation would provoke a legal and ethical debate at UBC and eventually set a precedent to allow people to write about someone without their consent – but with a disclaimer.

Given that her research examined the role of storytelling in teaching, she just thought it made sense to weave personal memoir with theory in her dissertation for her Education PhD in Curriculum and Instruction.

“This was not done for personal reasons or for revenge,” Pryer, 36, explains. “I thought I could contribute to a piece of the puzzle. Survivors do have a right to their stories.

“When people do narrative research, it is not just sweet little stories. Narrative is very powerful. It has the power to hurt and the power to heal.”

As she cradles two-month-old daughter Katie in her arms, the warm, soft-spoken Brit does not look or sound like a revolutionary. She came upon her research suddenly after completing an introductory course in narrative.

“When teachers teach, they always teach in terms of story,” she says. “Teachers relate to each other in terms of story. Communities are built out of stories. That’s how we get our meaning. I began writing and journaling when I was a teacher [in Germany, Egypt and Japan], observing classroom life

and the everyday.”

Her PhD dissertation is a collection of essays on many themes (sensuality in the classroom, erotics in learning, identity and displacement, Zen art, the aesthetic and erotic in hockey) that examine dualistic structures found through culture, including many educational institutions. One essay deals with childhood sexual abuse.

“I wanted to explore the effects of childhood sexual abuse – how it silences victims, how educational institutions work to silence them and how teaching education programs work to silence those stories.

“We have a very masculine tradition. It affects what can be taught, what can be said, what counts as good knowledge... There are different ways stories can be silenced – through lack of support, lack of curriculum materials. I wanted to give voice to this issue.”

Born in London, educated in Scotland, Pryer completed a M.A. in art history and German and began her career as a curator at the British Museum in London. Turning to teaching because of her love of children, their energy and zest for life, she has taught students from four to 70 years old on four different continents.

“Be kind. That’s what I advise my students,” says Pryer, who was also a faculty advisor in UBC’s Teacher Education Program. “At the end of the day, how you relate to people is what matters. That’s how people learn.” □

Alison Pryer, a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, found her story had the power to heal.

Lowering the Risk

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She found that current regulations focus more on whether a chemical will serve its intended purpose than on protecting the health of the workers who use it. She also found that while the newer products appear to be safer choices, there still isn’t enough data to prove this. Among her thesis recommendations is a call for stricter requirements at the regulatory level that would take into consideration a chemical disinfectant’s effects on employee health.

Rideout’s accomplishment is impressive considering that three years ago she hadn’t even heard of occupational and environmental hygiene.

Originally from Newfoundland, Rideout, 31, earned a BA in Music from Wilfrid Laurier University before deciding that her professional interests lay in nutrition. She got a BSc in Applied Human Nutrition from Mount Saint Vincent University and then headed west.

She was working for a plant science journal in Victoria when she received a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) scholarship.

“The scholarship encouraged me to think about what I really wanted to do; I wanted to use the opportunity to work toward making a difference in people’s lives,” Rideout says. “I knew I wanted to be working with people and in the health field and then I discovered the School of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene on UBC’s website.”

Rideout admits the leap from nutritional studies was a big one, but she credits the school’s tight-knit group of students and faculty members for giving her the support she needed to succeed. □

Pharmacy Grad is Multi-Talented

He is also a paramedic and an auto mechanic. BY HILARY THOMSON



Paul Gibson’s life as an auto mechanic and paramedic led him to Pharmacy.

At a time when most UBC grads are looking forward to their first professional job, Paul Gibbons will be embarking on his third career.

The 33-year-old, who will receive his Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Sciences degree this month, is also a qualified auto mechanic and a licensed paramedic.

After graduating from high school in 1988 in Sooke, B.C., Gibbons worked as a heavy-duty mechanic in logging camps on Vancouver Island and later as an auto mechanic. In addition, he worked part time with the Otter Point Fire Dept., leaving in 1992 to serve as a paramedic with the B.C. Ambulance Service.

While working at a Victoria auto dealership that serviced the area’s ambulances, he found himself repairing ambulances by day and attending calls in the same vehicles at night.

His work as a paramedic inspired his seven-year journey to become a pharmacist. After years of attending calls where patients had multiple complaints and numerous medications, he developed a curiosity about how medications were prescribed and how they worked in the body.

Still working at two jobs, he enrolled in Camosun College to upgrade his maths and sciences and graduated with a diploma in applied chemistry and biochemistry. He entered UBC in 1999.

“Pharmacy really fits for me,” he says. “It has satisfied my curiosity about the science of drugs and I’m able to work with people, which I enjoy doing.”

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It wasn't hard to keep Alicia Miller down on the farm after her Arts Co-op program led her to six-week stint on a hobby farm.

Co-op Made the Difference for Wesbrook Scholar

Experience included communications and talking turkey. BY ERICA SMISHEK

Alicia Miller didn't know a thing about farming when her Arts Co-op work term took her to the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries in Abbotsford to write profiles of farmers for a non-farming audience.

But six weeks taking care of her boss' five-acre hobby farm while he and his family went on vacation changed all that.

"I have a huge sense of appreciation for it now," says the energetic and engaging

Association, and helped create a highly successful peer mentorship program for Arts Co-op students.

She also gained varied experiences, working in communications-related positions with a small internet travel publisher in West Vancouver, the Canadian International Development Agency in Ottawa, and Harbour Publishing, one of B.C.'s foremost book publishers, based on the Sunshine Coast.

"Co-op was a deciding factor in why I came to UBC," Miller

full-time job at Harbour Publishing later this summer following a five-week French immersion program in Quebec and a trip to the Maritimes and New York.

"It's a really exciting time to be joining the company. They are growing, they are expanding their distribution into the U.S. Plus I just have a real passion for books. I'll be working with different ideas and a whole variety of topics. It's the perfect marriage of what I'm interested in." □

Co-op was a deciding factor in why I came to UBC

Miller, 23, who tended to a racehorse, two steers, five chickens, a dog, cats, gerbils – and 40 turkeys, which she had to retrieve when they escaped through an electric fence into tall grass.

"They are so stupid. I never enjoyed eating Christmas turkey so much as I did that year."

Miller, an Arts Co-op student with a major in English and minor in Canadian Studies, achieved an exceptional record of academic, professional and community excellence during her undergraduate degree. This year's C.K. Choi scholar and a Wesbrook scholar, she was a *Ubyyssey* staff writer and a founding member of the UBC Arts Co-op Students'

explains. "You have a conception of what certain jobs are but you don't know the day-to-day realities of them. You also see the relevance of your academic studies, which is easy to lose sight of in Arts. You gain writing, reading and analytical skills but it is not always a one-to-one relationship with jobs like in some other faculties."

Miller rounds out her busy life with swing dancing, campus aerobics and athletics, reading, writing, piano, guitar, hiking, kayaking, travelling and photography. This term, she worked part time at UBC Press and also trained for the UBC Sprint Distance Triathlon in early March, her first, which she completed in one hour, 55 minutes.

She will begin a permanent


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Tamsin Morgana and her 8-year-old son Alec made a very successful team in their quest for a nursing degree.

Single Mom Succeeds with Her Son’s Love and Support

His medical condition led her into Nursing

BY MICHELLE COOK

Tackling tough assignments can be a lot easier if you’ve got a study buddy. For Nursing student and single mom Tamsin Morgana, that buddy was her 8-year-old son Alec.

“We did our homework together,” Morgana says. “He would give me advice when I was having a tough time and he knew I was overwhelmed. And he’d draw me pictures.”

Alec’s support means a lot to Morgana, 40, because if it weren’t for him, she might not have left a successful career in sales and marketing to go back to school.

Alec was born with a congenital heart defect and has survived two-open heart surgeries. Today, he is a healthy, active tennis and violin player and a budding artist who produced artwork to encourage

What also attracted her to nursing was the possibility of more stability than what the local marketing industry offered, and more flexible work hours that would allow her to spend more time with her son. The two-year multiple-entry nursing program offered by the Faculty of Applied Science also gave her a chance to expand her skills.

Morgana says returning to school as a mom and mature student was an intimidating and often nerve-wracking adventure that put her time-management skills to the ultimate test, but she credits her family and son for helping her to make it through.

During her practicum, Morgana worked in community health and found a niche where she could combine her

“Everyone said I was crazy, and I saw there were problems in nursing, but it didn’t scare me.”

many of Morgana’s fellow students. Although Morgana’s parents are both health professionals (her mother is a nurse and her father, Ted Allen, is a UBC Clinical Professor of Medicine Emeritus), it was her experience dealing with her son’s medical condition that opened her eyes to the vocation of nursing.

“I saw it as more meaningful, quality work where you’re helping people and giving back to the community,” Morgana says. “Everyone said I was crazy, and I saw there were problems in nursing, but it didn’t scare me.”

new and old career skills. The field focuses on prevention and promotion campaigns and, after she graduates, Morgana hopes to continue working as a children and youth community nurse visiting schools and clinics throughout Vancouver to provide health care, information and access to resources.

“Community health nursing is about getting out there and meeting people and helping them to meet their goals and needs,” Morgana says.

She’s also looking forward to having more free time to play with her study buddy, Alec. □

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PS&AE recipients for this year are (left to right) Mary Murphy, Deborah Austin, James Ramsay, Ellis Courtney and Eileen Oertwig.

President’s Service Award Winners

BY HILARY THOMSON

Five members of the university community are being recognized for their outstanding contributions to UBC and campus life as recipients of this year’s President’s Service Award for Excellence.

Each recipient will receive a gold medal and \$5,000 in a presentation during Spring Congregation ceremonies.

Deborah Austin, director of Human Resources and Administration, Land and Building Services, joined UBC in 1998.

Known as an effective communicator who gets people onside and moving forward, she is credited with significant cultural change within the department. Her accomplishments include an effective return to work program, a new attendance program, an equity plan and staff recognition programs.

Her leadership is characterized by compassion, fairness and

respect, and colleagues say the ‘ripple effect’ of her behaviour has led to the success of the entire Land and Building Services group. In addition, she chaired the very successful UBC 2002 United Way campaign. Acting as a mentor, guide and role model, Austin’s colleagues say she is dedicated to improving the university as a workplace and a community.

As associate director of the Ceremonies Office, Eilis Courtney oversees functions that range from royal visits to pancake breakfasts.

Known for her competence, humour and unflappable nature, she has served as UBC’s resident expert on ceremony and protocol for more than 10 years. Her skills are particularly appreciated at Congregation, where she ensures the event is memorable for each of the thousands of graduates and their families. With her depth of

campus knowledge and loyalty to the university, she has been described by colleagues as one of UBC’s finest ambassadors.

In addition to her official campus duties, Courtney also volunteers to serve Christmas dinner to UBC international students and has been involved in UBC’s United Way campaign since 1991.

Mary Murphy joined UBC in 1981 and has been senior student advisor, Faculty of Applied Science, since 1992.

Her colleagues have called her a champion of students who is knowledgeable about all facets of the undergraduate program from recruitment to graduation. She is known for having the answer to every question and has been called ‘the epitome of multitasking’. She has participated in recruitment events, ensured programs meet accreditation criteria and advised

students on admissions, academic planning and program changes.

In November 1992, she received a Just Desserts Award from the Alma Mater Society in recognition of her service and her ability to create a welcoming atmosphere of confidence and trust.

Eileen Oertwig has served for 12 years as administrative secretary to the dean of the Faculty of Arts.

Recognized as a pivotal point of contact between the dean and the many constituents in the faculty, she has been described as an indispensable asset. Through her organized, professional and reliable support, Oertwig has served as assistant, advisor and confidant to five deans. She is especially known for her considerable institutional memory and is said to be a living compendium of deadlines.

In 1996, students gave her a Just Desserts award in recognition of

her assistance and positive influence.

James Ramsay celebrates 30 years with UBC this year. He joined the university in 1973 as a plumber and now serves as a manager in Project Services, Land and Building Services.

Co-workers say that he represents the working spirit of UBC – someone who takes pride in the many projects he has been involved in. He is able to motivate workers to meet his high standards of productivity and quality and is well known for giving personal time when an employee or colleague needs help.

Credited with being a key player in developing his department, Ramsay’s wide knowledge of campus procedures and personnel has allowed him to contribute to initiatives that range from safety policies to efficiency improvements.□

Former Israeli Combat Commander Finds New Start in Vancouver

For commerce grad, teamwork is a transferable skill. BY ERICA SMISHEK

Five years as an officer in the Israeli Defense Force taught Nir Kushnir valuable lessons about teamwork, lessons that have served him well as a Commerce student and a future business leader.

“In the military, you really learn

an 80-person combat unit, but says that he, like most Israelis, does not view the military as a profession.

“You do the best you can,” he explains. “I knew I had to participate so I took part with my moral standards. You can influence people and make sure what you

Kushnir relied on collaboration to meet the challenges of being an older student in a “very competitive faculty.”

“Teamwork is huge. You have to rely on your friends. I really tried to help other people on the team to achieve synergy. If you try to do

“In Israel, you don’t learn history from an objective point of view. You can’t take a step back. Here, people still have emotions and problems but you can listen to people analyze things and get a different perspective. It changes your attitude.”

In Israel, you don’t learn history from an objective point of view. You can’t take a step back.

how to work in teams and how to develop your interpersonal skills,” says Kushnir, who will graduate with a BCom in Management Information Systems. “The power and control are not coming from your rank but who you are and your ability to lead and motivate and interact with people.”

At age 18, all Israelis must complete a three-year stint in the Defense Force. Kushnir served two additional years and commanded

believe in comes through.”

Born in Tel Aviv, the affable and assured 29-year-old attended business school part time and worked in marketing and telecommunications before deciding to pursue a degree at UBC. He visited Vancouver in May 2001, met with International Student Recruitment and Advising, wrote the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and returned in August once accepted.

everything yourself, you won’t achieve anything.”

In addition to Commerce courses, he studied political science and history to gain some balance and perspective.

“University is a great place to learn to tolerate other positions,” he says. “And it is a great place to meet people from all over the world. I met some Palestinians and had academic discussions of everyday problems that affect our lives.

Kushnir, now an avid snowboarder and long distance runner (he participated in this year’s Vancouver Marathon), is currently exploring job opportunities with a large private company in the Lower Mainland.

“It is easy to start your life here. Vancouver is a multicultural place. People you meet have all come here from elsewhere. I see opportunity for work and my career.” □



Nir Kushnir brings strong leadership to business.

When the first graduates to sign the UBC Sustainability Pledge walk across the Chan Centre stage this month, they won't be wearing green caps or recycled gowns. What will distinguish them is a promise they've made to use the knowledge they've gained at UBC to improve sustainability in their communities, and remain socially and environmentally responsible in their personal and professional lives.

Launched in September 2002, the UBC Sustainability Pledge is the brainchild of Rebecca Best, an Environmental Sciences student who will receive her BSc at Spring Congregation and who is also one of this year's Wesbrook Scholars. Best has been involved in various sustainability initiatives throughout her studies at UBC.

Last April, she approached the Campus Sustainability and Student Development offices with the idea of starting a graduation pledge that would encourage students to take their values and ideas about sustainability into their workplaces.

"The pledge is about more than launching office recycling programs and encouraging colleagues to turn off the lights," Best says. "It can mean lobbying employers to refuse environmentally or socially damaging contracts, or looking for work specifically related to sustainability like a conservation officer."

The pledge concept originated in 1987 at California's Humboldt State University when a group of students drafted a promise to apply their social and environmental values to their careers once they left school. It has now spread to more than 50 U.S. campuses including Harvard, MIT and Notre Dame.

In Canada, the idea has been slower to catch on. UBC is one of



Rebecca Best has been collecting pledges from other graduates who share her sustainability concerns.

UBC Grads take the Pledge

Keep it green. BY MICHELLE COOK

only a few schools to adopt the idea, but it takes the pledge one step farther than its American counterparts by expanding it into a personal as well as professional commitment that begins in school, not only upon graduation.

To date, 180 UBC students have taken the pledge electronically. The number is lower than Best had hoped for but, she says, many

students on campus are already involved in sustainability projects and as more people hear about the pledge and more volunteers sign on to help manage the pledge program, she expects that number to grow.

As part of the program, those who've signed on receive monthly e-mails containing ideas about putting sustainability into daily

practice, including information on courses, speakers, websites, career forums, networking nights and special events. Best says the goal is to help like-minded students find ways to connect with each other and work together so they don't feel like they are upholding the pledge alone.

With Congregation fast approaching, Best says a bigger

challenge will be providing support to pledges once they graduate. She plans to stay on for a few months after her own graduation to help expand the program's resources. She is confident that she and other graduates will not only be able to keep their promise but will make a difference with it.

"As more and more graduates sign on, hopefully we can send a message to potential employers that these kinds of issues are important and we will be looking at a company's social and environmental policies when choosing where to work," Best says. "More companies are realizing that they need to make a strong social and environmental commitment to be attractive to us."

For more information on the Sustainability Pledge visit the website at www.sustain.ubc.ca/sustainable_u/ □

Agricultural Sciences Grad continued from page 1

Although the global nature of her studies kept Heemskerk away from UBC for two and a half years of her four-year degree, while on campus, she was the volunteer coordinator for the UBC Farm during its start-up year and, last year, she helped out with the Farm's Salad Bar program for local elementary schools. Heemskerk also served as a career ambassador for her faculty, using her own global experiences to convey to high school students the world of possibilities that Agricultural Sciences studies have to offer. □

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Law graduate Linas Antanavicius knows how to cover the courts...just give him the ball.

UBC Law Grad to be Married in Romania

Lithuanian lawyer adds UBC degree. BY ERICA SMISHEK

From the law courts of Lithuania to the basketball courts at UBC, Linas Antanavicius has covered a lot of ground in 31 years. He's about to cover more.

Armed with a new Bachelor of Laws from UBC, Antanavicius will article with downtown Vancouver law firm Specht & Pryer, which specializes in personal injury and corporate and commercial law, later this summer. But first he and

Miami. He was a lawyer for the Ministry of Health in Lithuania and, at 23, was the youngest person to serve as a City Counselor in Vilnius, the capital, after the country gained independence.

"I had an interest in history and politics and had participated in the independence movement in Lithuania," he explains of his public service. "It was good experience at such a young age. I made

market economy but the political system is still developing."

Determined to broaden his opportunities to practice law, Antanavicius came to UBC to study common law.

During his studies he worked at the law firm where he will article, assisted faculty members with research, conducted research for the International Legal Resources Corporation, volunteered for the

I would like to have some clients in Europe who want to do business in Canada and some clients in Canada who want to do business in Europe

fiancée Ann Seymour, also a new UBC law graduate, will travel to Lithuania, pick up his mother and brother, and join Seymour's family in her native Romania for their wedding.

"I told him he has to take a break," she says. "He hasn't had any time off in three years."

Her genial partner just smiles, knowing that hard work is ingrained in his character.

Born in Lithuania, 6'7" Antanavicius received a degree in civil law at Vilnius University in 1995 and also studied business law in Sweden and health legislation in

good connections and contacts and learned more about how political life works."

Lithuania became the first Soviet republic to declare its independence in March 1990; the proclamation was finally recognized in September 1991 and the last Russian troops withdrew in 1993.

"The country has changed very rapidly," says Antanavicius. "Thirteen years ago, it was hard to imagine we'd be a member of the European Union. Now there is a lot of legislation to deal with the shift from a socialist economy to a

UBC Law Students' Legal Advice Program and played in the UBC Nitobe Basketball League. He serves on the Lithuanian Community of British Columbia board and established the Baltic Business Network to unite professionals from the Baltic States and assist with trade missions.

"I would like to have some clients in Europe who want to do business in Canada and some clients in Canada who want to do business in Europe," he says of his future law career. "It would be ideal given my knowledge of both environments." □


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Killam Teaching Prize Winner on Most Popular Professor List

BY ERICA SMISHEK

Prof. Shirley Sullivan believes learning can take place anywhere – in offices, hallways, lounges and even on public transportation.

“I have an irresistible urge to teach no matter where I am – even on the bus!” says Sullivan, a professor of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies.

Her love of learning, of what it means to be human and of classical languages and literature has inspired countless students since Sullivan came to UBC in 1972. It has also earned her one of 22 University Killam Teaching Prizes to be awarded to faculty members at Spring Congregation.

“University does two things,” she says. “First, it imparts knowledge – students gain information that they never had before. Secondly it teaches students how to think. We know they won’t remember the specific information, especially about something like the early Greeks, which are rather obscure. But they will learn how to analyze and understand.”

A distinguished scholar whose research focuses on the nature of personality in early Greeks, Sullivan is known to exemplify in her lectures what she demands of her students – rigour, passion and absolute commitment.

“I tell my students that first they must appreciate fully what the philosopher is saying. If they want to criticize after that, that’s fine. But they have to understand how the ancient mind works, then begin to use their own minds.”

Sullivan, who has been included on the “most popular professors in Canada” list in Maclean’s university rankings, believes effective teaching can give young students hope in a complicated world and prepare them to be good citizens.

It helps if students are fascinated by the subject matter.

“I agree with Plato’s conviction that people can be happy only if

they are being creative,” Sullivan says. “If their creative powers are being crushed or the student is in a subject where their heart isn’t, their special talents aren’t being allowed to flower and flourish.

“If a student is not doing well in a course it may not be that the subject is too difficult but that the subject does not allow them to be creative.”

Killam Teaching Prize winners are selected by their faculties based on recommendations from students and colleagues. Each winner receives \$5,000 from university endowment sources. Recipients are distinguished by their creativity, commitment and dynamic approach to learning.

Other Killam Teaching Prize recipients for 2003 are Faculty of Agricultural Sciences: Assoc. Prof. Gwen Chapman, Food, Nutrition and Health; Faculty of Applied Science: Asst. Prof. Antony Hodgson, Mechanical Engineering; Assoc. Prof. Steven Wilton, Electrical and Computer Engineering; Faculty of Arts: Assoc. Prof. Geoffrey Hall, Psychology; Assoc. Prof. Judith Saltman, Library, Archival and Information Studies; Sr. Lect. Allen Sens, Political Science; Faculty of Commerce: Lect. Deborah Meredith; Faculty of Dentistry: Clin. Assoc. Prof. Ian Matthew, Oral Biological and Medical Sciences; Faculty of Education: Prof. Graeme Chalmers, Curriculum Studies; Assoc. Prof. Bonny Norton, Language and Literacy Education; Faculty of Forestry: Asst. Prof. Paul Wood, Forest Resources Management; Faculty of Graduate Studies: Prof. Wesley Pue, Law; Prof. Michael Chandler, Psychology; Faculty of Law: Prof. Anthony Sheppard; Faculty of Medicine: Assoc. Prof. Sylvie Langlois, Medical Genetics; Prof. Andrew Macnab, Pediatrics; Director, Asst. Prof. Lesley



PHOTO: HILLARY THOMSON

Prof. Shirley Sullivan wins Killam Teaching Prize.

Bainbridge, Rehabilitation Sciences; Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences: Prof. John McNeill; Faculty of Science: Asst. Prof. Andre Marziali, Physics and Astronomy; Prof. James Berger, Zoology; Assoc. Prof. Michael Feeley, Computer Science. □

The Canadian Armed Forces has a New Dentist

continued from page 1

The toughest part of the last four years, he says, has been the intensity of the dental program – the volume of information and skills to be mastered. Even so, the experienced student was the first recipient of the Dean of Dentistry scholarship in 2001/2002. Because his education was paid for, Tatra redirected his award to fellow students and has established an annual bursary of \$1,000 to support a student entering UBC Dentistry.

Tatra will be posted to the Canadian Forces Base at Esquimalt on Vancouver Island after graduation where, for four years, he will serve as one of the base dentists. Once licenced, he returns to his previous rank of captain and with every patient in uniform, his dental skills are sure to earn him a salute or two. □

TIME PIECE 1967



The man who gave UBC its “soul” is about to retire. When Nestor Korchinsky came to UBC in 1967 he had a vision for a sports and recreation program. What UBC missed, he felt was an intramural sport program for all students. “Academics give a university its character. Extracurricular activities give it personality. Together they give it a soul,” he said. Nestor’s “soul” of UBC eventually became the largest and most comprehensive intramural sports program in North America. He also became a legend on campus by serving as the congregation marshal for the past 25 years. But this graduation ceremony will be his last. He leaves behind a legacy that has become one of the most dominant features of UBC student life.