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PHOTO: DARIN DUECK

UBC Archivist Leads World Effort to Preserve Digital Records

BY LORRAINE CHAN

Now that Grandma has learned to upload her digital photos and Dad has agreed to file his tax returns online,

to develop a national U.S. standard for record keeping.

"I woke up one morning and said to myself,

"Now that we can generate and keep the perfect digital record, how do we preserve it in the long term if technology is changing so fast that three years later we can no longer read it?"

we're all collectively wondering how cyber records will stand the test of time.

With the right start, all electronic records can be preserved, says Luciana Duranti, professor and chair of archival studies at the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies (SLAIS).

Duranti is leading the world's largest effort to devise clear methods and guidelines for preserving digital records that remain accurate, authentic and accessible decades after their creation.

As Director of the InterPARES (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems) Project, Duranti has set up an international network of scholars from 20 countries, which include China, Australia, Netherlands, Italy, Botswana, the U.S. and U.K. Based at SLAIS, InterPARES confers with scientists and artists, archival experts, government and private industry.

Duranti conceived this brainchild in 1998 after she assisted the U.S. Pentagon

'now that we can generate and keep the perfect digital record, how do we preserve it in the long term if technology is changing so fast that three years later we can no longer read it?'"

Duranti asked the right question. Under her guidance, the InterPARES Project has twice won support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (SSHRC-MCRI) and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Other funders include the National Science Foundation of the United States, and China, a country that has already adopted InterPARES authenticity requirements as law.

One of the basic conundrums we face, says Duranti, is that it's impossible to preserve digital material or electronic transactions.

"The only thing we can do is maintain our capacity of continually reproducing digital records and re-creating digital works in such a way that we can prove they're authentic copies."

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Luciana Duranti heads the world's largest project to establish clear guidelines for preserving electronic records.

Africa's Top Health Challenges

Nursing students learn on front lines. BY HILARY THOMSON

Impromptu ukulele concerts and munching mangoes by moonlight may seem like scenes from a carefree holiday. In fact, they represent the work experiences of UBC School of Nursing students who have created clinical practicums in Africa.

As part of a fourth-year clinical course called Exploring Avenues of Nursing Practice, Nash Dhalla and Sarah Rohde have just headed to South Africa to spend six weeks at urban hospitals and rural clinics.

The clinical experiences can focus on various avenues of practice such as mental health and pain management. Dhalla and Rohde have organized a clinical rotation that explores prevention and care for people living with HIV/AIDS in

the Eastern Cape, one of South Africa's poorest provinces, where more than 20 per cent of the population has HIV.

"The huge incidence of the disease can seem overwhelming, but I believe it's possible to make a difference," says 39-year-old Dhalla, who worked for nine years as a TB outreach worker in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside where many patients also had HIV/AIDS. "My experience has shown me that supportive health care — literally bringing health-care services to people on the street — can work."

Both students have an international perspective.

Dhalla, who was born in Uganda, holds an undergraduate degree in inter-

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UBC nursing grad Chloe Lemire-Elmore treats a young Ghanian patient as part of fourth-year coursework.

The Next Big Thing

UBC Experts Give us a Peek at Our Future

For many, New Year's marks a time to reflect on new possibility. In this spirit, UBC Reports asked a range of UBC experts to tell us about the Next Big Thing that will have an impact on our lives. You'll be fascinated by their forecasts. From "conscious" robotic cars, to the discovery of a

planet capable of life, to eliminating the need for blood donors — the novel, the progressive and the previously inconceivable are already on our doorstep, according to these leading minds. Here is a summary of their comments.

To read the full text, visit www.ubc.ca/nextbigthing

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IN THE NEWS

Highlights of UBC Media Coverage in December 2005. COMPILED BY BASIL WAUGH

SURVEY: PEACE, ORDER AND ROCKY GOVERNMENT

The Economist Magazine's 14-page survey of Canada, *Peace, Order and Rocky Government*, features six stories on the country's regional, political, economic and cultural issues.

In a story on Canadian attitudes toward immigration, foreign editor Peter David writes, "Canadians have happily allowed the inflow to transform the ethnic mix and therefore the colours, flavours and rhythms of its cities. In Vancouver, Canada's Pacific gateway to China, UBC President **Martha Piper** reckons that half of her university's Canadian — not foreign — students speak a language other than English at home."

On Canada's political landscape, David writes, "If the Liberals are the natural party of government, says **Philip Resnick**, a political scientist at the University of British Columbia, the real opposition is at the provincial level, 'where you find strong fiefs and strong premiers'."

Resnick's book, *The European Roots of Canadian Identity*, is cited as a source for the series of articles.

THE END OF MENSTRUATION?

A new oral contraceptive that claims to virtually eliminate periods is raising questions about the benefits, ethics and potential dangers of menstrual suppression.

Anya, created by Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, is the first low-dose birth control pill taken 365 days a year. It is pending approval by Health Canada, but expected to hit the Canadian and U.S. markets in 2006.

In an interview with *Macleans Magazine*, the UBC Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research's **Jerilynn Prior** says that menstruation is a "carefully crafted cycle, and a vital sign of our health."

Prior characterizes continuous-use pills as another way for pharmaceutical companies to market



PHOTO: BAYNE STANLEY

UBC Political scientist **Richard Johnston** has commented extensively on the federal election campaign.

a flagging product. "Regulatory bodies are saying, 'We approved the original pill, so this must be okay.' But even the original pill probably contains negatives we still don't really know about."

In a similar story in the *Edmonton Sun*, the centre's **Christine Hitchcock** expresses concern over the impact of high hormone doses. "You always need to consider what the benefits are against what the costs are."

GENDER AND RACE IN FEDERAL ELECTION ADS

The Globe and Mail suggests that the Conservative Party of Canada is targeting female voters with its current television advertising campaign.

In all three ads, Conservative Party Leader **Stephen Harper** is shown discussing crime, taxes and corruption with an audience of women. In one, Harper states that he would end house arrests, ensure minimum prison terms for serious crimes, and make sure deported criminals leave the country.

UBC political scientist **Richard Johnston** comments, "it's pretty

tame as far as crime ads go," but suggests that by evoking deportation the Conservatives "may be priming something out there that has a racial and ethnic subtext."

UBC ELECTION STOCK MARKET: BETTING ON DEMOCRACY

Forget about polls. If you want to know the outcome of the upcoming federal election, the *Ottawa Citizen* suggests that you visit UBC's online election stock market.

The UBC online market, created by the UBC Sauder School of Business, went live at esm.ubc.ca on Dec. 13 for its sixth election campaign. The site lets users buy and sell units that represent the major parties' popular-vote percentages, their seat counts, and their chances of forming the government.

The Citizen reports that with just 443 people participating in the 2000 federal election, the UBC market predicted the Liberal popular vote to within 1.5 percentage points, the Canadian Alliance to 1.7, the Bloc's to 0.6, the New Democrats' to 0.4, and got the Tories bang on. □

UBC REPORTS

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

Editor
Randy Schmidt randy.schmidt@ubc.ca

Design Director
Chris Dahl chris.dahl@ubc.ca

Designer
Sharmini Thiagarajah sharmini@exchange.ubc.ca

Principal Photography
Martin Dee martin.dee@ubc.ca

Contributors
Lorraine Chan lorraine.chan@ubc.ca
Brian Lin brian.lin@ubc.ca

Bud Mortenson bud.mortenson@ubc.ca
Hilary Thomson hilary.thomson@ubc.ca
Basil Waugh basil.waugh@ubc.ca

Advertising
Sarah Walker public.affairs@ubc.ca

NEXT ISSUE: FEBRUARY 2, 2006

UBC Reports is published monthly by the UBC Public Affairs Office
310 — 6251 Cecil Green Park Road
Vancouver BC Canada V6T 1Z1

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Student Club First to Earn Canadian International Education Award

BY BASIL WAUGH

A group of UBC political junkies are attracting the attention of international diplomats with a series of innovative programs that are giving students a voice in global policy discussions,

engagement and global citizenship. I think this shows that our members are really walking the talk."

One of the highlights of IRSA's programming is its Night of a Thousand Dinners, which is the

"By reaching out to countries — including the U.S., which has still not signed the Ottawa landmine treaty — we are showing how students can keep an issue on government agendas."

and extending learning beyond the classroom.

UBC's 235-member International Relations Student Association (IRSA) is engaging students, government officials, and international policy experts in cutting-edge negotiation simulations, foreign policy discussions and fundraising events.

This fall, IRSA became the first student-run organization to be recognized as most outstanding university program in international education by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), which represents 200 educational institutions around Canada. The award recognizes IRSA's leadership in promoting international learning, and cites it as a model of best practices.

"To be recognized as most outstanding program in Canada is an enormous honour, especially as a student organization," says IRSA president and fourth-year international relations student Fernando de la Mora. "When it comes to civic

largest student-organized fundraiser in the world for landmine awareness. This year the group presented the dinner at Vancouver's Westin Bayshore Resort and Marina in partnership with Mines Action Canada and the governments of Canada, U.S., Britain, and Costa Rica.

"By reaching out to countries — including the U.S., which has still not signed the Ottawa landmine treaty — we are showing how students can keep an issue on government agendas," says de la Mora. "It used to be considered unthinkable that innocent lives would stop being lost to landmines, but with hard work, I believe that we'll see it in our lifetime."

IRSA has also been particularly innovative in model negotiations. It has been voted best delegation five years running at the National Model NATO in Washington, DC, competing against major military institutions such as West Point Academy. It also hosts the largest Model United



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Fernando de la Mora and the International Relations Students Association are giving UBC students a voice in global policy discussions.

Nations in Western Canada, and, in January 2005, worked closely with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs to perform the first and only simulation of the then upcoming Human Security Network Ministerial Meeting, which negotiates policy in advance of the United Nations General Assembly.

"Working with policy-makers is enriching our educational experience exponentially," says de la Mora. "And to our surprise, the diplomatic community has been very interested in what students have to say on global issues."

Andrew Caddell, senior policy advisor, Foreign Affairs Canada, says

that IRSA's negotiation simulations are a helpful resource in preparing governments and external organization for negotiations.

"IRSA's models are very close to the actual experience due to their attention to detail and research. Being able to see how negotiations unfold in the academic setting is tremendously valuable to me as an observer."

On the strength of this simulation, Foreign Affairs invited IRSA members to attend the actual sitting of the 14-nation Human Security Network Ministerial Meeting in Ottawa.

De la Mora says, "It was incredible to see the similarities between our event and the real thing. Watching

many of the same recommendations that we made move up the policy ladder was really satisfying."

After graduation, de la Mora intends to return to his native Mexico to work as a diplomatic attaché, with the goal of becoming an ambassador. In joining the diplomatic community, he would join, among others, former club president Jeff Reynolds who works at NATO; alumnus Gary Lee who is engaged in softwood lumber negotiations with International Trade Canada, and former vice-president Brendon Miller who is working on the democratization process of Iraq at the Research Triangle Institute in Washington, D.C. □

Preserving Digital Records

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Further, she adds, these copies must be as accurate and reliable as the originals were for the very short time of their existence.

"See these floppy disks?" asks Duranti. "You can't read these anymore. To preserve something, you have to transfer it to new technology. But then when you change it, you then must ask whether it's still authentic. Does it still have the same identity? How much have we lost of its integrity?"

InterPARES recommends that data should be "mass migrated" or transferred to new technologies every three to five years. However, Duranti says one of the largest problems is that it's impossible to migrate records unless they're created correctly from the start. For example, documents containing a digital signature could cause major hiccups.

"That signature is encrypted information so it would travel on a different computer pathway from the rest of the text," she explains. "To make sure you can migrate that document, the signature must be detached."

She says artists thrive on living in the moment, but unless they think long term, they will lose their creations to time. "When a musician writes a score on paper, we've got it hundreds of years later."

"But if it's an interactive per-



PHOTO: DARIN DUECK

formance between a musical instrument and computer software, the interaction has to be documented and preserved if that music is ever going to be recreated when the computer programs are migrated."

When it comes to science, Duranti believes that accurate, authentic records can mean life or death. "We're talking about medical records, chemical waste records, anything that can affect the health of people or their survival."

She points to live and active digital information as an especially thorny area. While organizations welcome the torrents of digital data as vital lifeblood, methods to preserve these records are in their infancy. Duranti describes

one case study where municipal employees depend on a web-based city map to make decisions that range from garbage pick up to granting new building permits. The map continually reconfigures itself whenever a municipal

department inputs new data.

"But because the data on the map are continually overwritten," she says, "there's no record of them at any given time, nor legal or historical accountability for the city employees' decisions."

InterPARES is currently collaborating with that municipality to develop a prototype for preserving records that are long term, accurate and authentic while providing city workers a fluid stream of active data. □

Memory of the World

The InterPARES Project is sharing its findings with Caribbean and Latin American scholars through funding from the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme.

In 1992, UNESCO launched the program to improve the protection and accessibility of humanity's documented heritage. The program is supporting close to 70 projects throughout the world, from Armenia to Uzbekistan.

Last fall, InterPARES Director Luciana Duranti hosted at UBC five archival scholars from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and Peru. Naming themselves the CLAUD (Caribbean and Latin America InterPARES Dissemination) team, the participants delved into case studies and sifted through InterPARES research methodology, products and findings.

"UNESCO is concerned about developing countries which are generating and receiving digital materials, but have no knowledge or resources to maintain their archival holdings or library collections," says Duranti.

Rosely Rondinelli, Head, Archival Services at Brazil's Museu do Índio, says she found the face-to-face meetings invaluable. "We've read Luciana's work and studied her InterPARES theories, but here I could clarify many points with her," says Rondinelli.

In February, the CLAUD team will return to UBC for another three weeks to further its knowledge and to adapt InterPARES findings to the requirements of the countries involved. The team will also take part in the InterPARES plenary research workshop, an event that will bring 60 international delegates to Vancouver. The CLAUD team will discuss how they plan to disseminate the InterPARES knowledge over the next year.

Arien Gonzalez Crespo heads the Research Department of Library and Archives at Casa de las Américas. This Cuban institution has the mandate to promote, collect and preserve Latin American history.

"I like Luciana's emphasis of applying traditional archival methods to our contemporary electronic records," says Crespo, "how we can draw a line between the past and present in our ideas and thinking."

Duranti credits this approach for the success of InterPARES and the trust the Project elicits from older cultures.

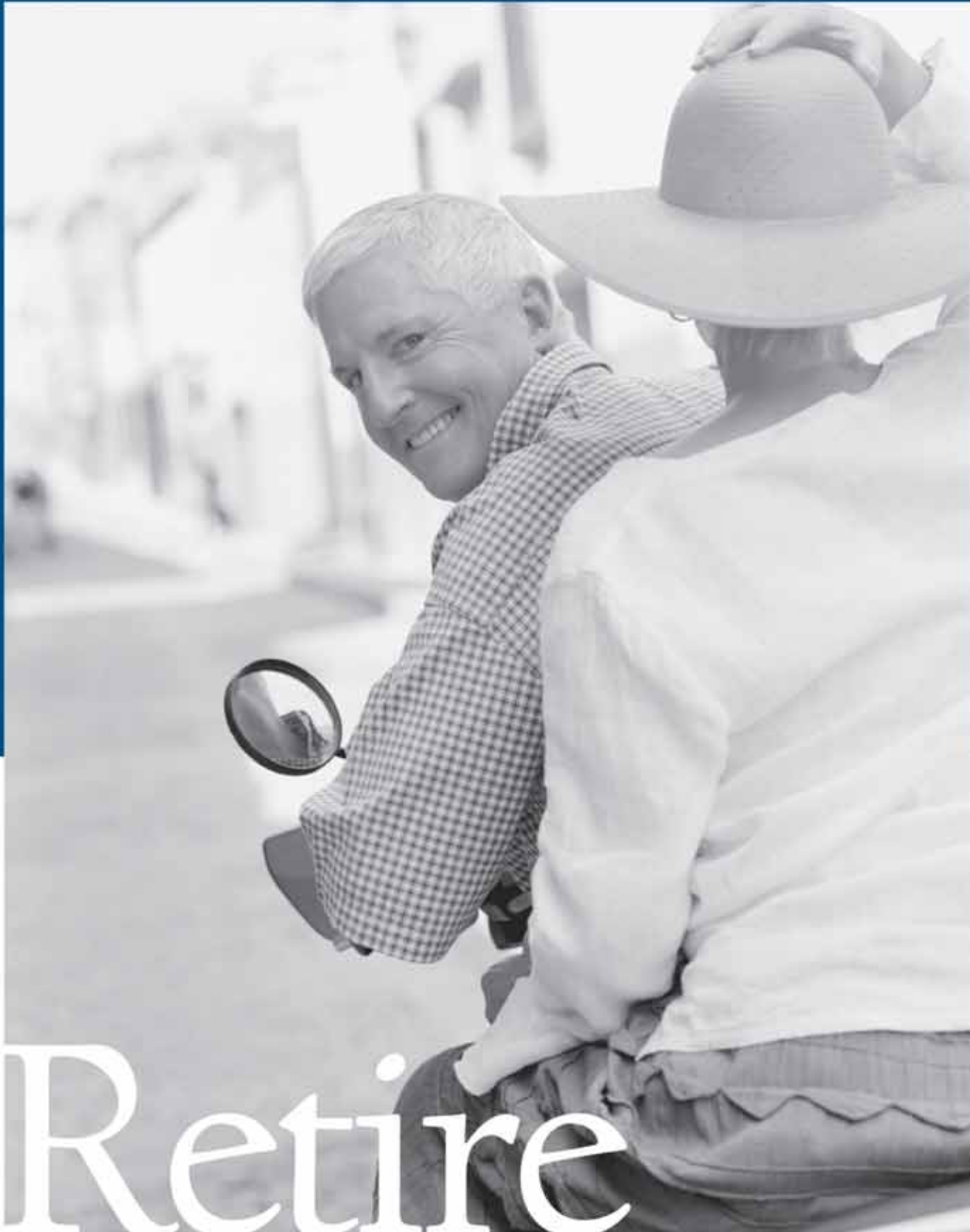
"Before, with digital preservation, people never looked at what came before to understand the products of new complex technologies. They always treated the digital world as an entirely new world."

"My fundamental hypothesis is there is nothing entirely new. Human records may have changed their support from tablets, to parchment to hard drives, but the principles are the same."

Duranti, who was educated in her native Italy and reads Latin, Greek and Sanskrit, is used to handling records and documents that span millennia. She aims at balancing past and present, high tech and ancient ways in her approach to cyber records. Duranti says that while developing countries may not be so skilled technologically, they boast millennia of knowledge that is extremely useful for the understanding and control of digital material.

"Latin American cultures can refer to Aztec and Mayan records," says Duranti, "China, Egypt, Babylon and Rome all have maintained records through the centuries."

She adds, "And younger cultures like the U.S. have the technology so it all evens out. That's why the InterPARES Project works, everybody is contributing to the solutions." □



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Critical Thinking Goes Beyond Borders

UBC Okanagan professor expanding critical thinking exchange between India and Canada

BY BUD MORTENSON

Phil Balcaen has traded the past two December holiday seasons in Canada for a chance to help several schools in India weave critical thinking into the fabric of their curriculum. It's the beginning of what he hopes will become a broad, ongoing exchange of educators from India and Canada, sharing their classroom experiences with critical thinking.

"This project is about embedding critical thinking throughout the curriculum," says Balcaen, an associate professor with UBC Okanagan's Faculty of Education. "It means changing curriculum for an ongoing focus on critical thinking, and changing the culture of the classroom."

Invited by the principals of Indian elementary and high schools interested in producing more critically minded students, on his month-long visits Balcaen holds intensive workshops with small groups of teachers at each participating school. Over three days, he introduces classroom-based teaching methods developed by the Critical Thinking Consortium, a non-profit association of more than 30 B.C. school districts, faculties of education and other educational organizations.

Balcaen was a high school math and science teacher and program administrator in B.C. for 20 years before earning his PhD, researching how schools and universities can collaborate on school reform. In addition to his annual visits to India, he is working with organizations across Canada keen on expanding the role of critical thinking in high school curriculum.

In the 1800s, the British introduced to India a rote learning system emphasizing memorization and exam performance. Education has come a long way since then. Today, teachers in India — and Canada, for that matter — want to spark more student creativity and critical analysis. Balcaen says some kinds of problem-solving "are not attended to very well in conventional teaching. You have to teach people how to ask questions a certain way."

"We are teaching them what criteria for judgment are, a critical thinking-related vocabulary, and habits of mind that help kids become critically minded," he says, explaining that critical thinking isn't a skill you learn. Rather, it is a set of intellectual tools used in solving critical challenges.

A teacher who can devise meaningful challenges can better engage students with the curriculum and to think critically. Alas, says Balcaen, conventional teaching too often lacks these critical challenges.

For example, in a conventional classroom, science students might be asked to name a list of pollutants mentioned in a report they've read. To elicit critical thinking, a teacher might instead ask them to use justifiable criteria to rank the pollutants in order of the danger they pose to the environment, and choose the top two — and only two — on which to



UBC Okanagan education professor Phil Balcaen returned this month from his second visit to India where he is helping schools develop teaching methods for critical thinking.

spend a limited budget for cleanup.

He points out that while critical thinking is studied by academics in many places, the Critical Thinking Consortium is a leader in developing ways to put critical thinking into real-world classroom practice.

"We have taken a set of ideas and adapted them to make them usable in classrooms," he says. "The translation of these ideas into pedagogy is where we're different. The activities are all developed by practicing teachers, not by academics. They're then tweaked and fortified — tweaked so they don't have just one right answer, and fortified by including the use of intellectual tools."

Balcaen works with schools such as Vivek High School in Chandigarh, and India's historic first public school, the Doon School in Dehradun. He has observed that critical thinking approaches apply just as well in a classroom in Chandigarh or Dehradun as they do at a high school in Prince George, B.C. Now, with the experience of two holiday-season visits to Indian schools, Balcaen hopes to hold a critical thinking symposium at UBC Okanagan to expand the exchange of teachers and knowledge from Canada and India.

"One of my goals is to build a

program that allows more exchange with our faculty going there, and teachers from there coming here," he says. He is already linking teachers using special online knowledge-sharing tools, which has maintained momentum for the project in the Indian schools.

And momentum is important. "We have learned that you can't do a workshop, then go away, and expect something to happen," Balcaen observes. "It takes repeated visits — each session reinforcing and deepening teachers' understanding of the concepts being taught."

Participants in India have made a five-year commitment to the critical thinking initiative. "They are learning to do this work with others," he says. "It's a very structural and cultural approach to education reform."

Future research will determine how — and by how much — students improve academically after becoming critical thinkers, but Balcaen says there's plenty of anecdotal evidence to suggest students and schools benefit.

"The agenda here is to support people to be more thoughtful," he says. "From an education perspective, the greatest thing we're finding is that kids in Canada and in India are far more engaged in their learning process." □

Putting Critical Thinking Tools into Practice

Who had a more significant impact on the colonization of New France — the fur traders or church missionaries?

That's the critical challenge posed by one activity in the widely used Critical Challenges curriculum for Grade 9 social studies, published by Rich Thinking Resources, an initiative of Richmond, B.C.'s School District 38.

There may be no single "right" answer, but the process of responding to the challenge is where a lot of learning can take place. Exploring how fur traders and missionaries influenced the colonization of the region in the mid-17th century, students are challenged to use a variety of intellectual tools — background knowledge, criteria for judgment, a vocabulary, thinking strategies, and the habits of mind they have developed to be critically minded — to come up with a well-reasoned response to the challenge. □



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A more detailed position description is available in the Associate Dean's Office for those who wish to review it.

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A more detailed position description is available in the Associate Dean's Office for those who wish to review it.

Faculty of Medicine



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Eating Disorders

Understanding the supportive role of families and friends. BY HILARY THOMSON



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

To eat or not to eat? Researchers will study how personal interactions can improve readiness to change.

Imagine the fear and frustration of those who love someone with an eating disorder — an illness where refusal of treatment, dropout and relapse are commonplace.

Josie Geller hopes to improve this scenario with a study that will explore how family and friends of an individual with an eating disorder can best support them and contribute to their recovery.

A UBC associate professor of psychiatry, Geller is director of research at the Eating Disorders Program at St Paul's Hospital.

Friends and family members may not be able to offer valuable support because they perceive the illness as a problem with eating that can be, and should be easily fixed.

She specializes in issues surrounding readiness to change. She and program colleagues Suja Srikameswaran, a clinical assistant professor of psychiatry, and post doctoral fellow Erin Dunn will examine social support in eating disorders.

"Individuals with eating disorders are notoriously ambivalent about recovery," says Geller. "Although we know social support is crucial in promoting recovery from illness or trauma, people with eating disorders describe the social support they receive as inadequate."

There may be many factors that account for that feeling, but little is known about them, adds Geller. She and her research team want to find out what actually occurs in interactions between people with eating disorders and

their family and friends.

The three-year study is the first of its kind to examine social support in a clinical setting in a comprehensive way. Researchers will look at content of interactions, how support is given and how satisfying the interactions are from the patient's perspective.

They will study anorexia nervosa — an eating disorder characterized by low body weight — and bulimia nervosa — characterized by binge eating and vomiting. Rates of recovery for anorexia and bulimia are reported to be only about 40 per cent, making new

safety is ensured throughout treatment, while health-care providers help them unravel complicated motivations.

"The person may experience the disorder as shameful, isolating and harmful, but the symptoms may also provide a sense of accomplishment and a way of avoiding difficult emotions."

Researchers will ask study participants to respond to vignettes or scenarios that depict common social dilemmas for those with eating disorders — such as being harassed by peers to gain weight — to learn more about supportive

approaches and improved interventions a critical need, says Geller.

The researchers will study 110 individuals over the age of 17, recruited from the St. Paul's program, their parents and their friends as well as 20 individuals who have recovered and 20 family and friends who have supported someone with the illness.

Friends and family members may not be able to offer valuable support because they perceive the illness as a problem with eating that can be, and should be easily fixed, says Geller.

"It's unfair to ask individuals to give up their eating disorder until they've decided they want to, and have found alternative ways of meeting needs that eating disorder thoughts and behaviours provided."

Patients' medical and psychiatric

interventions. They will also interview recovered individuals to find what kinds of support they found valuable, as well as friends and family to find out more about their beliefs about chronic illness and barriers to recovery.

Researchers will also be further exploring a paradox revealed in earlier studies. Supporters acknowledged that collaboration with the patient and allowing them to recover at their own pace was a helpful intervention. However, the same supporters were also shown to be controlling and directive.

"We want to find out more about what drives that behaviour," says Geller. "So little is known about supporters' own distress, beliefs or understanding of the disorder."

continued on page 10

CELEBRATE RESEARCH WEEK

CELEBRATE RESEARCH WEEK will showcase the many exciting areas of research at UBC and will feature an exceptionally wide array of faculties, departments, schools and partner institutions during March 4 – 11, 2006.

This year's theme "**Our Place in the World**" has produced an excellent line up of events. There will be a flurry of activities including lectures, seminars, displays and open houses at the Point Grey, Robson Square and UBC Okanagan campuses. If your department would like to participate, call 604.822.5675.

Keep an eye on www.research.ubc.ca for a comprehensive and up to date Event Calendar soon to be posted.





PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Catherine Rankin admires her favourite research subject — a one-millimetre worm with 302 neurons.

Simple Worm Holds Clues to Human Learning, Memory



BY LORRAINE CHAN

What can we learn from a brainless, one-millimetre worm about human behaviour and mental disorders? Plenty, as UBC Psychology Prof. Catharine Rankin is showing

“Schizophrenics habituate abnormally,” says Rankin. “They have a hard time filtering out irrelevant stimuli.”

Rankin aims to isolate the genes that play a role in habituation for worms. “We can then understand the

that if a worm gets lots of stimulation during development there are high levels of genes that make synapses, which are the connections between nerve cells. If the developing worm is deprived of stimulation, there are fewer of these genes, suggesting

the effects of early deprivation.”

An example Rankin gives for deprivation would be severely neglected children who have not been stimulated, held or nurtured early in life.

Rankin has also contributed to a growing body of research that shows

turned down.

“Prior to that, we saw genes as a software program that always runs the same, but that’s not the case at all,” she explains. “Instead, think of each gene as having one or more volume knobs. And these can, within a

Pulitzer-prize winning science writer Matt Ridley...dubbed Rankin a “brilliant young scientist in Vancouver who has essentially observed in real time the changes in the nematode as it learns new experience.”

through her work with the *C. elegans* nematode.

For the past 15 years, Rankin, a behaviour, memory and learning expert, has been focusing on this simple worm to better grasp the complex workings of humans. Her research may uncover genetic tools that could be used for treating disorders like schizophrenia, a diagnosis given to almost half the patients hospitalized for mental disorders.

For Rankin, the worm — a self-fertilizing hermaphrodite with a life span of two weeks — makes a perfect research subject. She explains that while humans have a trillion neurons and rats have millions to billions, the nematode has only 302.

“If you want to understand basic properties of electricity, would you start with a computer or a flashlight?” asks Rankin. “The worm is my flashlight.”

She says in addition to its simplicity, the worm holds a lot of other attractions for researchers. In 1998, *C. elegans* was the first animal to have its genome sequenced. As well, there are 2,000 worm experts in the world who pool their findings in a shared database.

“It’s like working on an animal with an instruction manual,” says Rankin, who focuses on deciphering the genes and cellular processes that govern memory and learning.

“I study habituation, which is the simplest form of learning.”

Habituation, she explains, refers to how a healthy person learns to filter out background stimuli such as the feeling of cloth on the body, the sound of one’s own breathing or the traffic noises from a nearby street.

rules and apply those principles for genes in other animals including humans.”

In 1990, Rankin was the first researcher to prove that *C. elegans* could change its behaviour with memory and experience. By tapping the side of the petri dish, Rankin cued the nematode to move backwards. She found that worms would learn to ignore the taps if they were repeated a number of times. As well, Rankin discovered that worms could remember this training for at least 48 hours.

She was also first among her peers to discover some of the worm’s mechanisms of memory. She tested a number of genes until she found one that affected memory, and then measured how much of it was being made after the tapping exercise. Worms that had learned showed they had more of that particular gene.

Rankin is also looking at mechanisms that control how memories are stored, retrieved or erased. Such mechanisms may eventually be used to help people release traumatic memories such as rape, she says.

Pulitzer-prize winning science writer Matt Ridley, author of *Nature via Nurture*, *Genes Experience* and *What Makes us Human*, recently dubbed Rankin a “brilliant young scientist in Vancouver who has essentially observed in real time the changes in the nematode as it learns new experience.”

To achieve this, Rankin uses specific genes that have had green fluorescent protein attached. The protein lights up and can be used to measure how much of that gene is being produced and used. Rankin has shown

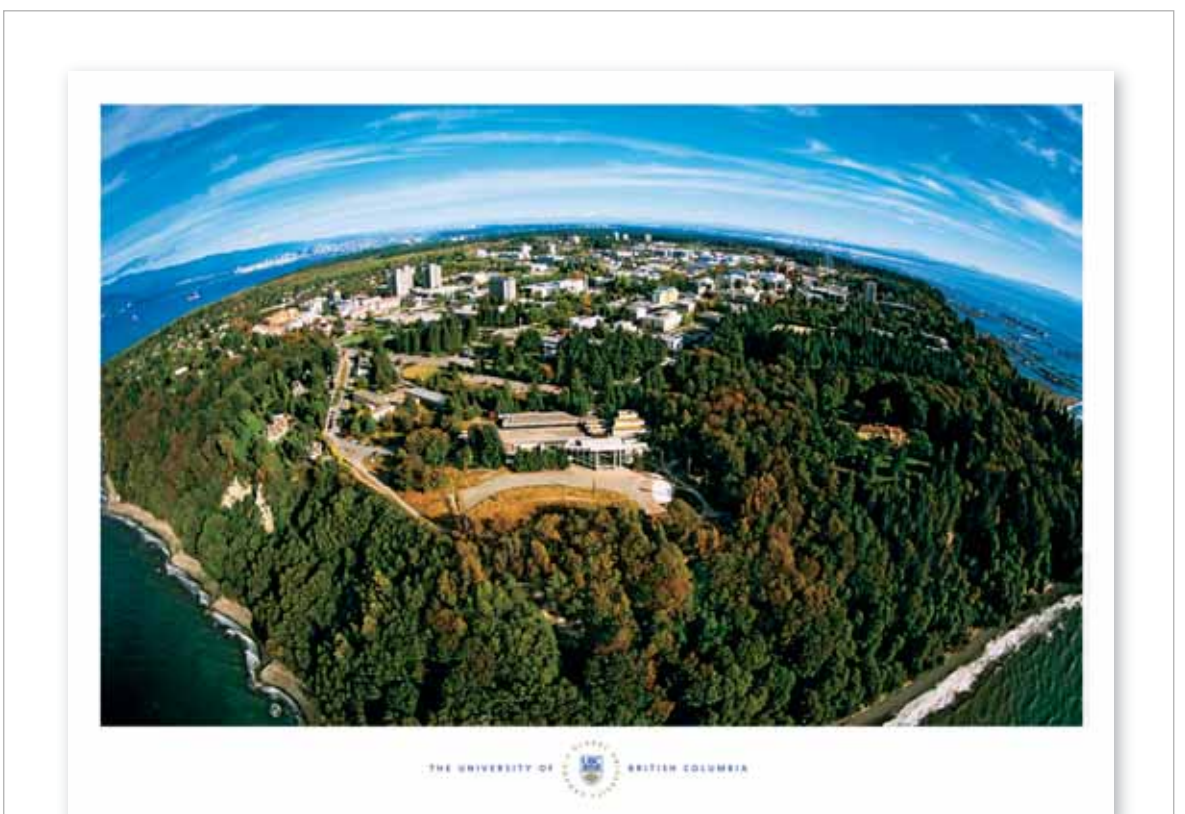
weaker synapses.

“No one has shown how experience causes gene expression changes in living animals at the cellular level before,” she says. “Down the road, this information may give us tools for gene therapy when it comes to treating memory disorders or reversing

that genes don’t operate as immutable blueprints, but change with experience and when interacting with surroundings. Again, she observes these subtle shifts through watching how the worm’s green fluorescent protein gets brighter when genes are turned up and dimmer when the genes are

certain range, be turned up or down by its experience.”

Rankin’s research has garnered funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Human Early Learning Partnership. □



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The Next Big Thing continued from page 1



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Dr. Ross MacGillivray, Director of the Centre for Blood Research.

New Gene Therapies: *Elizabeth M. Simpson, Senior Scientist, Centre for Molecular Medicine & Therapeutics*

Advances in gene therapy hold the promise of important new therapeutic benefits for brain disorders such as Alzheimer and Parkinson Disease, even though for most individual patients we don't know the causative genes.

"Conscious" Cars: *Alan Mackworth, Professor, Department of Computer Science*
Thanks to recent technological breakthroughs, we are on the verge of seeing "conscious" vehicles. Imagine cars that are aware of their surroundings, able to plan a route and drive it safely while obeying traffic signs and avoiding obstacles. Or wheelchairs that are aware of the layout of a house, and able to learn about pet cats and dogs.

Prescription Pets: *Stanley Coren, Professor, Department of Psychology*

Will physicians soon be "prescribing" pet dogs to the elderly? Current research may soon uncover a breakthrough in our understanding of how pets can significantly extend the health and well-being of the elderly.

Discovering Terra Nova: *Jaymie Matthews, Associate Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy*

In the next 10 years, astronomers have a strong chance of discovering a planet that has the right characteristics to allow for life, thanks to new ways of "seeing" planets, and space telescopes like Canada's MOST space telescope, already searching for terra nova.

Genes, Environment and Health: *Dr. Clyde Hertzman, Director, Human Early Learning Partnership*

You can't blame it on your genes, after all. The growing field of epigenetics will turn thinking on its head that genes destine people to pre-determined outcomes. We will soon learn how environmental influences cause some genes to be expressed, and others not, in ways that make a significant difference for human health.

Artificial Blood Platelets: *Dr. Ross MacGillivray, Director, Centre for Blood Research and Dr. Dana Devine, Professor, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine*

The next big breakthrough in

blood transfusion research will be increased availability of platelets that will make crisis-driven blood donor drives a thing of the past. Eventually, artificial platelets may eliminate the need for blood donors altogether.

New Ethics for Global Media: *Stephen Ward, Associate Professor, School of Journalism*

The globalization of media will spur a transformation of ethics. Principles of objectivity will have to be redefined, as will duties of journalists to understand how jingoistic, biased or patriotic reporting might inflame conflict, rather than build understanding.

Education Goes Mobile: *Veronica Gaylie, Assistant Professor, UBC Okanagan Faculty of Education*
The future will see more teaching and learning outside the four walls of the traditional classroom. That is, the movement in interdisciplinary teaching and learning, combined with greater access to mobile technology, will increasingly move students toward community and environmentally based education.

Fuel Cells: *David Wilkinson, Professor, Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering*
Fuel cells will play an important role in energy sustainability and global climate change, two of the biggest issues for the 21st century. Fuel cells are poised at roughly the same place as personal computers were a few decades ago, and we'll soon see them in handheld electronic devices, PCs and other portable devices. □

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Tsunami Response One Year Later *Students engaged in range of projects.* BY BRIAN LIN

When the devastating tsunami hit Southeast Asia in December 2004, Shane Barter knew from experience that the best thing UBC had to offer was the energy and passion of its students.

Drawing from his extensive experience working with non-government organizations (NGOs) in the region, which includes serving as a long-term election monitor for the Carter Centre, publishing a book on the Aceh conflict, and completing several humanitarian missions, the political science PhD student began organizing UBC student teams to roll up their sleeves and pitch in.

"Basically, I just help out with the language barrier, provide historical and cultural context," says Barter, 25, "and guide both UBC students and local groups through the process of setting up internships. The students are responsible for coming up with their own projects that use local expertise and lead to capacity building."

One such group, led by Civil Engineering master's student Sahar Safaie, is helping provide minor, cost-effective structural modifications to traditional and economy housing to ensure they stand up to future earthquakes (see *Engineering Students Compile Seismic Guidelines for Tsunami Reconstruction*, below)

"When I put out a call for



PHOTO: SHANE BARTER

Students in Aceh and messages of peace from their Canadian penpals.

action through departmental and student email lists, I expected most of the response to come from social science students," says Barter. "But it was the engineers who really stepped up to the plate and followed through with their ideas."

Meanwhile, a student from the Faculty of Education designed an elementary school curriculum called "what does peace look like?" which encouraged Vancouver and Aceh school children, Grades two to four, to communicate through pictures and crafts.

"We asked kids from a Vancouver school to draw pictures of what they think peace is. One

kid drew a picture of a cat and a dog sleeping together," says Barter. "The kids over there sent back crafts and drawings showing where they live."

"The students here are learning there's actually real kids involved — kids that draw in similar styles and about similar themes," says Barter. "It gives them a personal stake. As they grow up, they'll probably be more politically and ethically minded."

For the students in Aceh, Barter says the exchange gives them something relief money can't buy.

"To actually connect with individual students who are just like them, in another country, is motivating, especially for students

who've gone through a lot of trauma and have lost a lot."

Now, on the eve of the first anniversary of the tsunami, a project close to Barter's heart is finally coming to fruition.

"We've applied for a grant from the British Columbia Library Association's Libraries Across Borders program to build a community library at the Saree School," says Barter. "This school was started by a friend of mine who died in the tsunami. The grant will allow us to create the physical structure in rural Aceh, fill it with books and a couple of computers, and pay for training through University Syiah Kuala in Banda."

The library will be open to school children and adults, as well as serve as a resource for NGOs. "We've arranged for at least 30 per cent of the books to be donated by local publishers. Local volunteers are recruited to run the place, and village elders will teach kids. There'll also be a small bookstore and Internet café to help generate some revenue so that it's sustainable in the long run," says Barter.

Barter credits UBC's Go Global student exchange program and the Global Service Committee — an inter-departmental committee struck to co-ordinate UBC's commitments to global citizenship,

namely in response to natural disasters and development — for their institutional support to these and other ad hoc projects that may spell the beginning of long-term collaborations in the region.

"There's a huge demand from the students at UBC to take part in global citizenship, but not many know how to go about it," says Barter, who would like to see better integration of community service learning into the curriculum and more faculty involvement in global service activities.

"UBC is going in the right direction," says Barter. "The Global Service Committee is even considering how to incorporate global service commitments among faculty members into tenure review. But there's more work to be done to capitalize on the energy the students have and their desire to do this."

The benefits to students are enormous, says Barter. "My experience in the field has been extremely valuable in writing my MA — and now my PhD — thesis, and in the amount of credibility I have speaking at conferences around the world. It's a lot of the grass roots stuff that you don't get from the Ivory Tower." Such experiences are invaluable for young academics, Barter adds. "It matures them, lets them engage with other students, and interact with the literatures." □

Engineering Students Compile Seismic Guidelines for Tsunami Reconstruction BY BRIAN LIN

Sahar Safaie prepared herself for the worst natural disaster in recent history when she traveled to northern Sumatra in July to observe and document the reconstruction process in the tsunami-ravaged region.

What she found — through witnessing the resilience of people who had lost so much, and yet remained hopeful of the future — was the motivation to apply her knowledge and the determination to make a difference in the world.

"I was very excited about being on the ground and I was hoping to be able to do something about the devastation," says Safaie, a master's student in the Dept. of Civil Engineering. "But when I finally got there and saw the overwhelming destruction, I felt utterly powerless, I thought, how could a graduate student like me be any help to these people?"

Safaie's faculty advisor, Civil Engineering Asst. Prof. Ken Elwood, joined her and four other engineering students on the reconnaissance trip. He says witnessing the damage after a disaster can be extremely difficult for a young researcher.

"My first post-disaster field project was Turkey in August 1999 after the Koceali earthquake and I went through the same experience," says Elwood.

"It is natural to feel frustrated and hopeless when faced with all the devastation. But once you realize that, as earthquake engineers, through our research and teaching, we can provide the tools to reduce the losses in the future. This type of experience provides the motivation to do research of tremendous significance."

When Safaie discovered there were no specific guidelines that accounted for seismic risks, she



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Civil Engineering master's student Sahar Safaie and Asst. Prof. Ken Elwood are part of a team that travelled to Sumatra after the December 2004 tsunami. (Right) Devastating destruction witnessed by the UBC team in Northern Sumatra.

saw an opportunity to do something that could have long-term ramifications for the safety of people in the region.

"The available guideline which was developed for the reconstruction process was not providing adequate information for construction practice and seismic performance of buildings," says Safaie.

The team, which included graduate students in structural, materials, mechanical and earthquake engineering, as well as a UBC undergraduate student orig-

inally from Indonesia, came up with a plan to remedy the situation.

They began developing a reference document for Confined Masonry Construction method, which is the most common construction practice in Indonesia before and after tsunami. This type of construction is also practiced in South America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and South East Asia. Safaie has since completed a review of existing



PHOTO: SAHAR SAFAIE

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Seismic Guidelines for Tsunami Reconstruction continued from page 9

research on confined masonry buildings and a team of graduate students are collecting guidelines from other countries and highlighting contradictions in published guidelines, a project that will continue through the next school term. They are planning to make this reference document available to organizations dealing with reconstruction both in Indonesia and in Pakistan.

Since the team returned to

Vancouver, they have presented their findings to raise awareness here in Canada while continuing to provide support to Indonesian NGOs and reconstruction teams.

"The trip to Aceh was an invaluable experience for everyone on the team. We learned a great deal about disaster relief work and international development," says Safaie. "It proved that young students have a lot to contribute if they believe in something and work hard to

achieve it. Personally, this trip was the highlight of my Master's education, and it helped me realize where my passion lies — international development — and what I'm good at — leadership," says Safaie, who adds that the trip would not have been possible without the support of Elwood, the UBC Go Global Student Exchange program and the Interdisciplinary Working Group, headed by political science PhD student Shane Barter (see *Tsunami Response One Year Later*, page 9).

Elwood who remains a technical advisor with Build Change, a local NGO working on reconstruction in Indonesia, has arranged for reference books donated by UBC faculty to be delivered to reconstruction teams in the area.

Shortly after the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, the team was asked to provide reconstruction resources. "It's rewarding to see a focus on improved reconstruction practices occurring now in other regions," says Elwood. □

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Eating Disorders

continued from page 6



Research results will serve as a resource for eating disorders workshops and to help create materials to help family and friends support loved ones to recover from eating disorders.

Anorexia and bulimia predominantly affect young women and it is estimated that three per cent of Canadian women will be affected by eating disorders in their lifetime. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric illness, with 10-20 per cent of patients eventually dying from complications, according to the Canadian Mental Health Association.

For more information on eating disorders, visit the National Eating Disorders Information Centre web site at www.nedic.ca or the St. Paul's program at www.stpaulseat-disorders.ca.

St Paul's Hospital is part of Providence Health Care that provides care in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and offers specialty services in co-ordination with the Provincial Health Services Authority. □

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Africa's Top Health Challenges

continued from page 1

national development and found the shift to nursing care for marginalized populations to be a logical transition. Rohde was

there was no doctor on site. It put them in a "very awkward and ethically challenging position," she says, but they

of Nursing in Punjab state, India. "Our students are very enthusiastic about contributing their

"I believe HIV is a defining epidemic of our generation and the opportunity to work alongside South African nurses on both prevention and care is a unique one."

raised in Indonesia, Haiti and Delhi, and completed a degree in history at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. She returned to India to work with refugees before enrolling in UBC's School of Nursing. Her family now lives in East London in the Eastern Cape and will host the students during their stay.

The pair hopes to better understand the role of the community health nurse in educating, counseling and caring for people with HIV/AIDS.

"I believe HIV is a defining epidemic of our generation and the opportunity to work alongside South African nurses on both prevention and care is a unique one," says the 31-year-old Rohde, who intends to eventually return overseas to work in public health. "I hope this experience will both give me a perspective on a worldwide health crisis and provide me with skills to work in any setting where this epidemic is critical — which is so many parts of the world."

To facilitate the clinical experience, UBC's School of Nursing has collaborated with the School of Nursing at the University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape. Dhalla and Rohde will work with fellow nursing students at two teaching hospitals in East London, and associated urban and rural clinics. They will also work with women's groups in the affected communities and assist nurses in remote rural clinics.

In addition, they will help bring health-care services to villagers living on the Eastern Cape coast by getting on board the Phelophepa Health Train that carries a multidisciplinary team to remote sites.

Dhalla and Rohde will work with an HIV health-care team to help prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, support patients receiving antiretroviral therapy and will work to understand how traditional Xhosa healing beliefs affect treatment of the epidemic.

This year's trip was inspired, in part, by the experience of four fellow UBC Nursing students who traveled to Africa in May 2005. The foursome had significant individual health and development experiences in Brazil, Mali and India, and were based in a small village in East Ghana. They did clinical work, in some cases walking miles to visit patients immobilized by their illness, and offered community health education sessions.

"Music was a keystone part of our teaching," says School of Nursing graduate Chloe Lemire-Elmore. "I brought a ukulele with me, and for every topic we taught, we composed a catchy song in the local language for our 'students' to sing along with us to reinforce the message."

She says one of the challenges was that villagers looked to the four students as health-care experts in all areas because

responded by using textbooks extensively, relying on local health-care providers' own knowledge and working together on every case.

The international coursework in Africa has created additional global connections for the School of Nursing, which also has a well-established partnership with Guru Nanak College

knowledge and competencies in a global context — they are showing amazing initiative and passion," says Marion Clauson, associate director of UBC Nursing undergraduate programs.

Those wishing to support Dhalla and Rohde's trip may contact them at ndhalla@yahoo.com. □



Nursing grad Chloe Lemire-Elmore describes a highlight of her clinical rotation in a Ghanaian village:

"The music, the dancing, the children, the magical simplicity of village life, lantern lit by night, drumming and chanting in the distance as we fell asleep, the luscious ripe mangoes, the people, definitely the people, the people. The bond that developed between them and us, as well as between us — living through such a magical, challenging and inspiring experience." □

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**Did you know?**

The development of Hawthorn Place Neighbourhood has so far contributed over \$36 million dollars to the UBC Endowment. This money will now be used to support student scholarships, bursaries, research programs and academic infrastructure.



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South Campus Receives Board Approval

UBC's Board of Governors has given final approval for University Town's South Campus Neighbourhood Plan. This follows the GVRD Board of Directors determination that the plan complied with the University's Official Community Plan.

"We are thrilled by this outcome and congratulate the entire UBC team for producing a neighbourhood plan that truly leads the region in terms of its community consultation program and sustainability initiatives," said Dennis Pavlich, UBC Vice-President External and Legal Affairs.

The South Campus plan was subject to rigorous public consultation, which included the formation of the South Campus Working Group. This consisted of stakeholders from various community groups and neighbours, as well as representatives of UBC's faculty, students, and staff. Group members provided relevant community input and reported to their respective groups on plan development.

South Campus is conceived as a pedestrian-oriented village in the forest – a relatively dense development integrated within a wooded setting. Homes will include two and three-story townhomes, four-storey apartments and 18-storey apartment buildings. A 65,000 square foot mixed use village centre will straddle Wesbrook Mall and will feature retail shops as well as professional, institutional and residential space. A 180-suite seniors' living facility is planned, as are a public school and a community centre.



Artist's rendering of South Campus Neighbourhood Village

South Campus is the largest of University Town's seven new residential neighbourhoods and will become home to some 4,000 people in 1,989 residences – adding a significant work-study population to the university.

For further information on South Campus please visit: www.universitytown.ubc.ca/living_neighbourhoods_southcampus.php

Hawthorn Place Nears Completion

The transformation of the infamous Lot B parking lot into Hawthorn Place Neighbourhood is nearing completion. The UBC Development Permit

Board has issued the final development permit for the last residential site in Hawthorn Place. On completion (scheduled for Spring 2006) Hawthorn Place will consist of 708 townhouse and apartment units and approximately 1,416 residents. About 20 per cent of the units are faculty and staff co-development, 30 per cent are faculty and staff rental, and 50 per cent are market homes. A community centre, including a daycare, neighbourhood parks and Rhododendron Wood are important amenities for this new University Town neighbourhood.

West Point Grey Is Not A Parking Lot!

Commuters traveling to UBC are encouraged to respect UBC's neighbours and not park on neighbourhood streets. Neighbourhood parking creates problems for residents and businesses by clogging areas intended to serve residential and daily business needs. The City of Vancouver's Street and Traffic Bylaw (2849) prohibits non-resident parking for more than three hours on streets abutting residential or commercial properties, and offenders can be fined or have their vehicles towed. U-Pass holders can park at any regional park-and-ride facility and travel by transit to UBC.

Information regarding travel options to UBC is available at www.trek.ubc.ca.

Round, Round-A-Bout We Go

UBC is seeking community feedback on proposed roundabouts for 16th Avenue and associated traffic calming initiatives on East Mall. Roundabouts were first discussed in the context of South Campus Neighbourhood planning in combination with narrowing 16th Avenue through UBC to two lanes. Modern roundabouts reduce the number and severity of collisions compared to signalized intersections and old traffic circles. Improving pedestrian and cyclist safety across 16th Avenue is important for South Campus.

To learn more and provide feedback visit the Campus & Community Planning website at www.planning.ubc.ca.



Plenty of room for children in the completed Hawthorn Place neighbourhood park

GETTING AROUND

Community Shuttles

UBC, TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company will launch a Community Shuttle Program at UBC no later than September 2006. Community Shuttles are minibuses that work to complement existing transit service provided by regular buses. While specific details on routes and schedules are yet to be determined, two community shuttles operating approximately 5,000 service hours per year are anticipated. The buses are equipped to carry up to 24 passengers in addition to two people in wheelchairs. The service will improve access to those areas that are not well served by regular transit service at UBC, particularly from residential neighbourhoods such as Hampton Place and East Campus.

Look for public open houses and opportunities for feedback on this service sometime in the New Year. Stay tuned for more information at www.trek.ubc.ca.



UBC shuttle bus circa 1926 (UBC Archives photo)