



UBC REPORTS



This summer hundreds of students and faculty traveled near and wide as part of UBC study projects, international practica and fascinating research endeavours. This issue tells some of their stories, in their own

words. The snapshots of learning experiences that emerge from locales as diverse as China and Syria, or Uganda and Peru, are likely to re-emerge as global insights from both sides of the lectern as classes resume this fall.



Syrian artifacts reveal the secrets of countless centuries of human habitation.

PHOTO: MARIE-CLAUDE BOILEAU

EXPLORING SYRIA'S ANCIENT PAST

From: Assoc. Prof. Lisa Cooper
Orontes River Valley, Western Syria

Lisa Cooper is an Associate Professor in the Dept. of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies

Despite the hot sun, which at 10:30 in the morning is already mercilessly beating down upon me, I can't take my eyes off the ground in front of me, where there lies a delicate fragment of pottery painted with black bands and white wavy patterns. I know from similar vessels encountered on other archaeological sites that this was once part of a drinking goblet. A few steps away, I see another similarly decorated pot sherd, and then another, and I know that that I am walking over a site that supported a human settlement dating back more than 4,000 years.

Together with Gillian Gunter, my graduate student from the Dept. of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies at UBC, we continue to pick up these lovely sherds, depositing them in our red buckets, and moving on to the next stretch of terrain, which is certain to yield further fascinating artifacts. Later in the day, we will return to our comfortable dig-house and refresh ourselves with a cool shower and clean clothes. Then we'll embark on the task of cataloguing, drawing and photographing our distinctively decorated cup fragments,

continued on page 4

WAITING ON AN ECUADORIAN ROADSIDE

From: Latin American Studies student Peggy Lucas
Province of Bolivar, Ecuador

Peggy Lucas, from Calgary, AB, is entering her fourth year studying English and Latin American Studies. For 10 weeks this summer, she and five other UBC students travelled to Ecuador to work with the Department of Indigenous Health to help increase community health in the areas of water treatment, health education, sustainable agriculture and first aid. The project was facilitated by UBC's Global Outreach Student Association.

In Ecuador, the sun rises every morning at 6 a.m., and sets every evening at 6 p.m. Since I've been here, I've found myself naturally following this dependable cycle, waking up with the sun every day. I also notice myself telling time by the sun, a remarkably easy feat on the equator. In a land where nature lends itself so readily to punctuality, you would imagine that the rest of the culture would follow suit; but in Ecuador, no one is ever on time.

Our group of six UBC students came to work with rural indigenous communities in the province of Bolívar and we are completing a stay in one of the more isolated communities. This community is a four-hour drive from the nearest town and a one-

hour hike through the jungle to reach the road. After two weeks in this community — building garbage pits, fixing water pipes and offering workshops on nutrition, reproductive and sexual health, waste management, water purification, human rights, and more — and with only one week left of the project, we are ready to head home.

We awoke at 6 a.m. to pack up our belongings and supplies, load them onto the horses the community generously supplied for our trek, and hike down to the road to meet the car that was supposed to pick us up at 8 a.m. That was four hours ago.

By Ecuador standards this isn't that long a wait, and anyway, we have been enjoying our last day here. Some members



Students Heather Bell and Peggy Lucas (in hat) prepare a garden with new friends.

PHOTO: COURTESY PEGGY LUCAS

of the community are waiting with us, so we're continuing the cultural exchange. We gave a short demonstration of hockey — complete with a fight and "jersey"ing — and they asked the perpetual question, "How many litres of milk does a cow produce in Canada?" (I really need to look that up when I

get home). Around 11 a.m., we took a dip in the river, and I felt pretty grateful that the car hadn't shown up quite yet.

An old man came and invited us to his porch to eat oranges. We decided that the car wasn't going to show up, so we would wait for the bus instead, which we can do just as well from his

house as here.

And, what do you know — just when I've had my fill of oranges, the bus comes rolling around the corner. I'm majoring in Latin American Studies, but I learned something today about Ecuador I never could in a classroom: everything happens right on time. **R**

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IN THE NEWS

Highlights of UBC Media Coverage in August 2006. COMPILED BY BASIL WAUGH

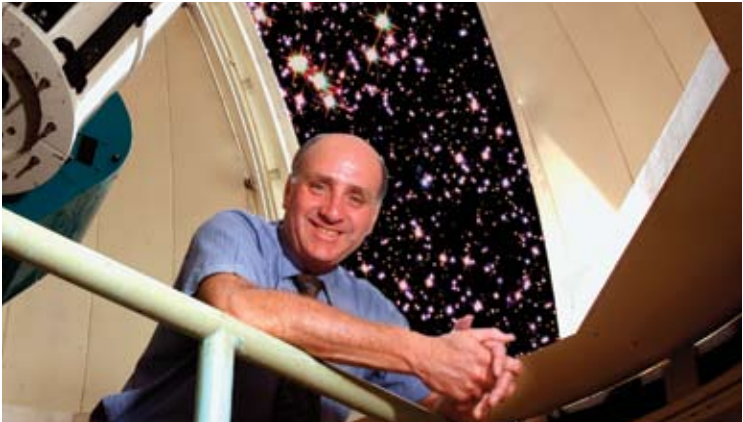
UBC-Led Team Uncovers Faintest Stars Ever

Scores of international media, including the *British Broadcasting Corporation*, *United Press International*, *Canadian Press*, *National Post* and *Globe and Mail*, reported on a discovery by a UBC-led team of astronomers of the dimmest stars ever seen in a globular star cluster, a feat expected to yield insights into the stars' age, origin and evolution.

Globular clusters are concentrations of hundreds of thousands of stars. Using NASA's Hubble telescope, the researchers focused on one of the closest clusters to Earth, known as NGC 6397. By calculating the mass of the faintest ancient stars, researchers can now work out the minimum mass needed for a star to survive.

"The light from these faint stars is so dim that it is equivalent to that produced by a birthday candle on the Moon, as seen from Earth," said UBC's **Harvey Richer**, lead researcher of the study.

UBC Expert Proposes Bold Shift in Fight Against AIDS
Dr. Julio Montaner, Director of



Prof. Harvey Richer led a team using NASA's Hubble telescope.

the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS and new president of the International AIDS Society, features prominently in international and national media coverage of August's International AIDS Conference in Toronto.

In a special HIV/AIDS edition of the U.K.-based medical journal *The Lancet*, reported on by China's *People's Daily Online*, New Zealand's *Stuff*, CTV, CBC, *Globe and Mail*, *Maclean's* and *Canadian Press*, Montaner argues that treating everyone infected with HIV could dramatically reduce the number of new infections in the world, effectively creating a chemical quarantine around the virus that causes AIDS. **R**

Quarter Century Club

A total of 46 UBC faculty members will be recognized at this year's Quarter Century Club annual dinner on Oct. 4.

Established in 1996 by then President David Strangway, the Quarter Century Club recognizes full-time faculty members and librarians with 25 years of service. In addition to the Quarter Century Club inductees, this year's dinner will also honour 14 faculty members and librarians who have worked at UBC for 35 years. In 2003, the club began recognizing these active members, known collectively as Tempus Fugit, or "time flies."

For information: www.ceremonies.ubc.ca/qcc.

KUDOS

Appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada, **UBC Prof. Brett Finlay** is an international leader in bacterial disease research and is also the UBC Peter Wall Institute Distinguished Professor and winner of the national 2006 Killam Research Prize in the Health Sciences. Finlay has also recently received the Flavelle Medal, awarded by the Royal Society of Canada for an outstanding contribution to biological science.

UBC Chemistry **Prof. Emeritus David Dolphin** adds the title Officer of

the Order of Canada to his 2005 Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal for Science and Engineering, widely recognized as the country's most prestigious science award. His groundbreaking achievement is the research that led to the creation of Visudyne™ — the world's first treatment for age-related macular degeneration, the most common cause of blindness.

Harvey Thommasen, an Asst. Clinical Prof. in UBC's Dept. of Family Practice Medicine, has been appointed Member of the Order of Canada.

Thommasen has published several research projects on physician retention and burnout/depression in rural BC communities.

The Royal Society of Canada has given the Alice Wilson Award to Asst. Prof. of Physical Therapy **Teresa Liu-Ambrose** for outstanding academic qualifications entering a career in scholarship and research at the postdoctoral level. Liu-Ambrose's research interests are in fracture prevention.

UBC REPORTS

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Antamina, in Peru, is the largest open-pit copper-zinc mine in the world.

ON TOP OF THE WORLD: Dealing with Mining Challenges

From: Master’s student Danny Bay
Andes Mountains, Peru, 4,000 metres above sea level
Graduate Earth and Ocean Sciences student Danny Bay, of Toronto, ON, writes about mining challenges in the Andes where he is working on research for his thesis with fellow UBC Mining Engineering student Juan Carlos Corazao of Cusco, Peru.

It has already been six weeks since I arrived here at the Antamina mine in Peru. The region is so beautiful. The mine is set in the Andes Mountains, over 4,000 metres above sea level. People from all over the world are attracted to a nearby area due to the spectacular scenery of a breathtaking, snow-capped mountain range.

I don’t get to spend time being a tourist here because the project at the mine is very

experimental waste rock pile that weighs approximately 25,000 tonnes, and is modeled after the giant waste rock piles found in the mine.

During construction of the pile, more than 130 sensors and sampling devices were placed. All devices are linked to an instrumentation hut, where the data will be collected and later analyzed. We hope to identify and understand processes that control the release and transport

months here. As this was my first time at a mine, I got to observe how the workings of the mine are driven by economics. In addition, being in a South American country, I had little choice but to learn the language in order to express myself, share thoughts and ideas about the project, and to exchange dialogue about our cultural differences.

Juan Carlos and I saw first hand how fieldwork and the

Our project consists of building an experimental waste rock pile that weighs approximately 25,000 tonnes.

intense. When I arrived here I joined Juan Carlos Corazao, a graduate student from UBC’s Dept. of Mining Engineering, who has been here since January. He came here with a post-doctoral student, Colin Fyffe, who worked on the project for the first three months. They’ve worked very hard on the project.

I know you don’t know much about what I’m doing, so I’ll try to explain it. Essentially, mines extract ore that is processed into metals. The ore is surrounded by other rocks that have no economic value. This is what we call waste rock. The waste rock is separated from the ore and dumped in giant waste rock piles. Once waste rock is extracted and exposed to the air and precipitation, several chemical reactions can occur that can cause environmental problems, especially to water.

Antamina is the largest open-pit copper-zinc mine in the world, and has to deal with many environmental challenges. The project that we’re working on is a collaboration between professors Roger Beckie, Uli Mayer and Leslie Smith of the Dept. of Earth and Ocean Sciences, and Bern Klein and Ward Wilson from the Dept. of Mining Engineering. Our project consists of building an

of potentially hazardous elements that seep out from the pile and into the environment. The Antamina mine can then use this information to implement the best environmental management practices for its operations and subsequent closure.

The mine encourages employment of people from surrounding communities. In general, the local people are poor and live in small adobe (mud) buildings that are typically without the amenities that we are so accustomed to in Canada, such as electricity and access to potable water. The Antamina mine is working with the local communities to solve some of these problems.

Throughout the construction of the project, most of the people we have worked with have come from the surrounding communities. They are generally very friendly (as we recently discovered when we were invited to a nearby community for a typical Andes meal of guinea pig and boiled potato) and always want to learn more, especially from people with different backgrounds. Quite often they enjoy contributing to the project not just with their labour, but with new ideas to accomplish tasks.

I learned a lot in the last few

theory we learned in classes can be applied together in the real world. We experienced how design, construction, instrumentation, field tests, communication, project management and the ability to meet and solve technical and other challenges are all important in the completion of a project of this magnitude. **R**

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SYRIA continued from page 1



Archaeologist Lisa Cooper holds a baked clay animal figurine, a precious and rare find at a site that normally yields pottery fragments.

PHOTO: BERNARD LACHANCE

attempting to establish when precisely they were produced, and what they tell us about the people who once used them so long ago.

This is my eleventh season of archaeological work in Syria, and I still get an incredible feeling of excitement when I travel through this country, knowing that it has supported countless centuries of human habitation. This is especially the case of the Ghab region of the Orontes River Valley of Western Syria, where I am currently working as part of a Syro-Canadian archaeological team under the direction of Michel Fortin of Laval University.

Only a few kilometres away to the east lies a site where some of our early human ancestors several hundreds of thousands of

Judging by its size, the very site upon which I am now standing would have witnessed the long sweep of human history. Rising up to 25 metres above the level of the surrounding plain, this artificial hill — or “tell” as it is called in Arabic — was formed by successive settlements, each built and re-built on top of the other through time. Our archaeological team is especially interested in these kinds of tells. Using satellite images, topographical maps and state-of-the-art GPS equipment, we have been able to locate and explore 11 such tells, and by the end of the season we will have completed a survey of 19 of these ancient sites. Although we are only collecting pottery from the surface of the mounds in order to ascertain the periods during

Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in Syria, Nadir and Mossab bring to our team a first-rate knowledge of the Orontes Valley, combined with many years of archaeological field experience. Each day Gill and I find ourselves greatly encouraged by their good humour and high spirits despite the withering heat and the dust. Tonight we will go to Nadir’s house, built in the shadow of Qal’at Mudiq’s towering walls, where we will dine on a feast of roast chicken and rice carefully spread out on a carpet on the floor.

Over cups of sweet tea served to us by Nadir’s inquisitive children, we will chat animatedly about our archaeological adventures, and friends and family in Syria and in far-off Canada.

I see another similarly-decorated pot sherd, and then another, and I know that that I am walking over a site that supported a human settlement dating back more than 4,000 years.

years ago butchered animal meat with crudely-shaped stone axes. I can see another site directly to the north, where in a more recent period of antiquity, the Romans constructed a magnificent city known as Apamea, adorning it with a stunning avenue of majestic stone columns. Nearby, there also lies the medieval castle of Qal’at Mudiq, which the Arabs fortified in the 11th century AD in order to check the advance of Crusaders on their long march towards Jerusalem.

which they were occupied, I can’t help but imagine the inestimable wealth of human antiquity that lies beneath my feet, waiting to be uncovered by future excavators.

As I stoop to pick up one more piece of pottery, I look down the slope, where I see my two Syrian colleagues, Nadir and Mossab, excitedly peering over a Byzantine stone block which bears an ornately carved cross on one of its sides. As representatives of the General

Leaning back on a comfortable cushion, I reflect on how collegial and productive our partnership with the Syrians has been despite the fact that other parts of the Middle East are now embroiled in political upheavals and unrest. I think about how happy I will be to return to Syria again in future years so that I can continue my exploration of the country’s rich past and delight in the discovery of its antiquities in the company of those who have become my good friends. **R**

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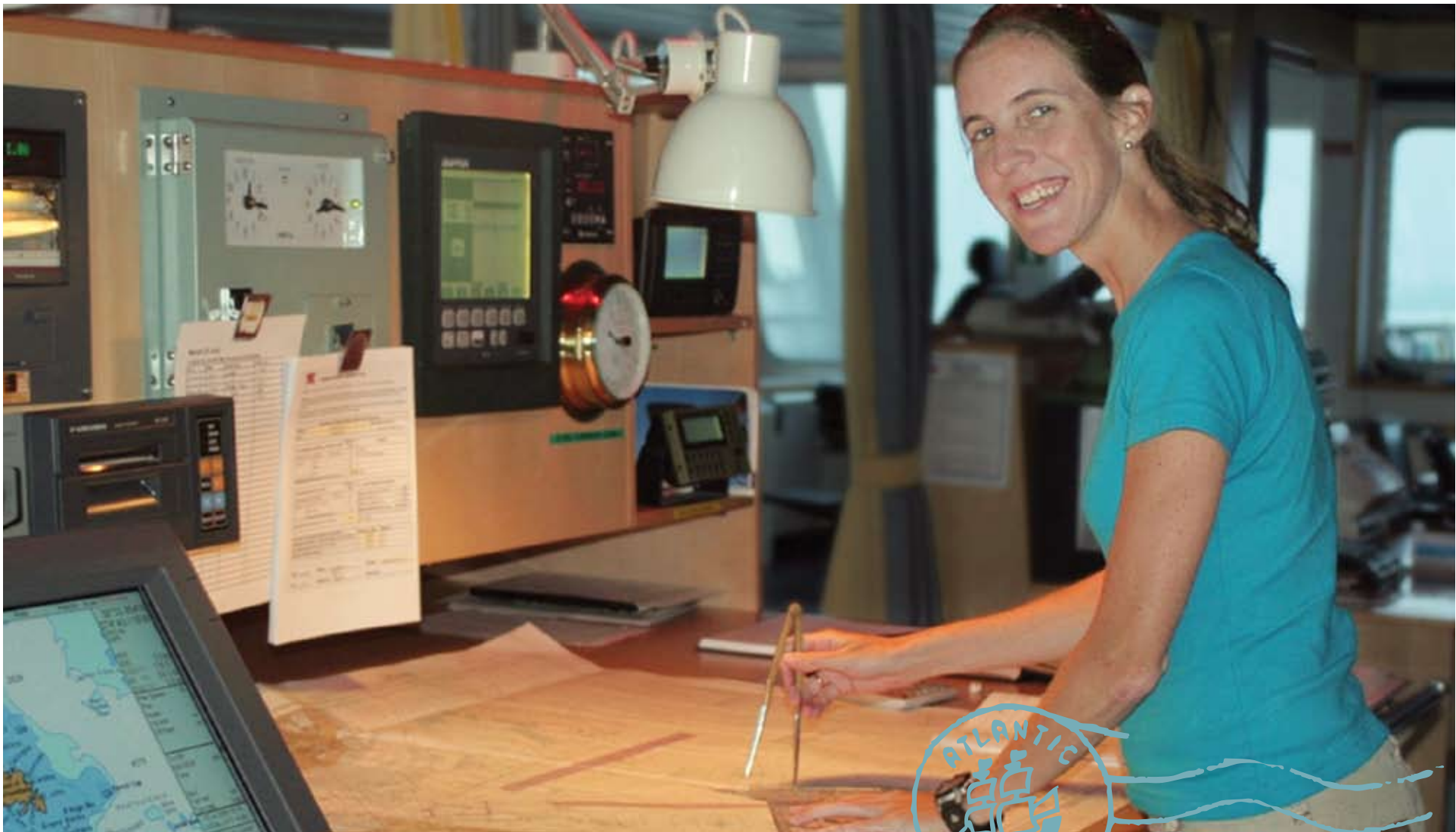
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On the bridge of the Australian Spirit oil tanker, MBA student Patricia Silva plots the current position of the ship on the nautical chart.

PHOTO: COURTESY PATRICIA SILVA

NAVIGATING THE SHIPPING BUSINESS

From: MBA student Patricia Silva
Various points across the high seas

Sauder School of Business student Patricia Silva spent several weeks of her MBA internship studying administrative processes on board an oil tanker.

July 4 – Departing from Freeport, Texas:

It's 7:30 p.m. and I can't believe it. I'm finally on board the Australian Spirit, a huge oil tanker. I've been waiting since February when I was first offered this MBA internship by Mats Gerschman, Managing Director of Sauder's Centre for Operations Excellence. As a business analyst, I'll be looking at ways to reduce administrative workload on board vessels operated by Teekay Shipping, a large Vancouver-based company. Teekay has a fleet of more than

also analyze the amount of time he spends on documentation, the sources of information he refers to and the approach he uses to perform the task. During the 10 a.m. coffee break with senior officers, the ship's master informs us that due to the bad weather the vessel will not be able to berth tonight, nor will it be able to anchor so far out in deep water. It may seem scary, but the master is able to rely on GPS devices and weather forecasts, including wind direction and wave height, to determine what the ship's position will be the next morning.

between the gyro and magnetic compass. Of course, I've also managed to complete my research.

Everyone is ready to discharge the 600,000 barrels of crude oil. However, the terminal does not have the capacity to receive the cargo, so we have to wait at anchor for four days. This becomes even more interesting considering tropical storm Beryl is heading north towards our position.

While waiting to berth, I present the findings to the senior officers. They are glad to hear that we have found some areas of improvement that

It may seem scary, but the ship's master is able to rely on GPS devices and weather forecasts, including wind direction and wave height, to determine what the ship's position will be the next morning.

140 ships, which carry 10 per cent of the world's sea-borne oil. The project will involve me and my fellow MBA candidate, Marcel Wenzin, each joining a vessel and sailing on them for a week or two.

Now, after boarding the ship, I'm sitting on the couch in my private cabin. We've been walked through the extensive safety instructions, and I'm really looking forward to tomorrow's departure for Bonaire (Netherlands Antilles), 3,360 kilometres away.

July 10 – A typical day, arriving at Bonaire:

At 8 a.m., after breakfast, I observe how the Chief Officer finalizes the cargo loading plan. I

At lunch I share soup and a choice of fish or prawns with the multi-national crew. We discuss some of the initial findings regarding the number of documents filled out for certain processes. Afterwards, I head up to the bridge where I learn how to read navigation charts, plot the vessel's position and watch for ships on the radar. A tough night awaits me, not from the sound from the engine, but because with the bad weather, the ship is rolling almost six degrees on each side.

July 17 to 21 – Arriving at Philadelphia:

After 13 days, I know a lot about navigation, including how to find a star and the difference

could reduce the administrative workload by enhancing some systems and centralizing particular information. This proposal will be validated on our next trip and, if it still holds true, Teekay's seafarers will benefit from the reduced administrative workload on board.

My time on the Australian Spirit is almost over. I hear the engine starting and the cabin rumbling with a familiar vibration. In a couple of hours a pilot will be on board to guide us up the river and in six more hours we will be berthing at Philadelphia.

This is how my trip ends and I head back home, happy to have met the crew and experienced such a wonderful trip. **R**



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Hundreds of ancient earth ovens used by First Nations dot traditional root gathering grounds.

EXPLORING B.C.’S BLACK HOLES

From: Assoc. Prof. Sandra Peacock
Near Cache Creek, B.C.
Paleoethnobotanist Sandra Peacock, of UBC Okanagan’s Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, worked with students this summer to create a detailed list of the remains of plant species charred in earth ovens used by First Nations people 2,000 years ago.

I discovered my first “black hole” 15 years ago. It was a large, circular depression — about four metres across and a metre deep — with a prominent, raised rim and it stood out in the dry grasslands of a valley I was surveying in the southern interior plateau of British Columbia. Excavations revealed a rock-lined basin filled with blackened sediments, burnt wood and charred plants, and copious amounts of fire-cracked rock (hence the nickname “black hole”).

continuous use. For the past two summers, Prof. Brian Kooyman, of the University of Calgary’s Dept. of Archeology, and I have led groups of students to continue excavations at an archaeological site in the Hat Creek Valley, near Cache Creek, B.C. — a spot where generations of First Nations people have gathered for more than 2,000 years to collect and cook edible roots. As a paleoethnobotanist, I study people-plant relationships by analyzing plant remains

the beginning. The list might tell me whether I’ve recovered wood charcoal or seeds of wild berries. But it says nothing of the cultural use and significance of these species. For that, I turn to traditional knowledge systems, and specifically to the ethnobotanical evidence. Many of today’s elders remember helping their grandmothers harvest and prepare wild roots for pit cooking. Their stories and recipes have taught me a great deal about the plants I find in ancient

Plant use traditions shared by contemporary First Nations elders can guide my interpretations of these ancient root-processing sites.

This particular black hole turned out to be almost 2,000 years old. What are black holes? They are the remains of ancient earth ovens used by First Nations people from throughout B.C. to pit cook a variety of wild root foods — a rich source of carbohydrate energy harvested in large quantities, steamed in earth ovens and stored for winter. Construction and repeated use of the ovens created permanent features on the landscape, massive basins and mounds up to eight metres in diameter. Hundreds dot traditional root gathering grounds, marking more than 3,000 years of from archaeological sites. Black holes are highly visible and full of charred plants to recover and identify. Further, plant use traditions shared by contemporary First Nations elders can guide my interpretations of these ancient root-processing sites, blending perspectives from Western science and traditional ecological knowledge — two different but complementary ways of knowing — to produce a more complete picture of past plant use. My goal is to create a detailed accounting of the species present at the site. Creating such a species list is an essential step in paleoethnobotany, but it’s just

earth ovens and about the ovens themselves. For example, Plateau peoples name hundreds of plants in their own languages. Prayers and protocols surround the harvesting and cooking of wild root foods, and these practices are reinforced by oral traditions passed between generations. Such insights challenge me to think about past people-plant relationships in new ways. Earth ovens — B.C.’s black holes — are not simply “camp kitchens” but symbols of a highly sophisticated system of wild plant food production developed by Plateau peoples over thousands of years. **R**

BUYING SOCKS IN HARBIN

From: Asst. Prof. Amy Hanser
Harbin, Northeastern China
Amy Hanser, an Assistant Professor of Sociology, has spent six weeks in China’s far northeast interviewing people about their family consumption patterns as part of a new research project on consumerism in China. Among other things, she plans to integrate her findings into her course on social inequality.

After our interview, Aunt Liu and I stroll over to the nearby clothing market, where she plans to purchase some new socks for herself and her daughter. I have spent a good part of the morning asking Aunt Liu questions about her family’s finances and their everyday consumer practices:

Where do they shop for food, and why? Where do they purchase clothing? How often? Do they worry about buying sub-standard goods when they shop? During the interview, Aunt Liu insists that she rarely worries about the quality of the goods she purchases. I am in the city of Harbin,

in northeastern China, to investigate how recent and rapid economic and social changes in China are shaping the consumer habits and practices of ordinary Chinese city residents. I am interested in some big and sometimes abstract questions: How does economic and social

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Mother Irene and baby, the first patients attended by UBC midwifery student Aisia Salo.

MIDWIVES WITHOUT BORDERS

**From: Midwifery students Aisia Salo and Chloe Dayman
Hospitals in Kampala and Masaka, Uganda**

Third-year midwifery students Aisia Salo and Chloe Dayman, both of Victoria, B.C., spent six weeks attending births in Kampala and Masaka, Uganda, as part of a partnership between UBC and Makerere University, Uganda. They posted this note about their work on their blog www.midwifeadventures.blogspot.com.

In the midwifery unit, Ward 14, where we have been working so far, there are about 20–30 births a day. The facilities are very basic. Only low-risk women can deliver here, so if they have complications or have had more than five babies, we don’t see them. About four or five midwives are on staff at any one time. Women come in alone and get assessed (have the abdomen palpated, fetal heart auscultated, and history taken) and then are sent home or to the labour area. This consists of one large room with bare beds.

The women are required to purchase supplies to bring with them: four pairs sterile gloves, two pieces of plastic to cover the bed, a roll of cotton wool (in place of sponges and pads), a razor blade to cut the cord, two syringes for oxytocin, and a cloth to dry and wrap the baby. These cost about \$2 or so.

The monitoring in labour consists of vaginal exams every four hours or so, as at home, and once in awhile (maybe once or twice during labour) they use a metal Pinard horn to listen to the baby. There is one blood pressure

cuff, which doesn’t seem to get used, and I don’t think they have a thermometer, nor do they take the maternal pulse. The oxygen, suction, and autoclave are all in disrepair and don’t work. They do have bag-and-masks.

There are experienced midwives. When the women feel like pushing, they call for the midwife and move into the delivery room, which has two tables. They lay their piece of plastic out and climb up, and push out their babies. ■

HARBIN *continued from page 6*

inequality manifest itself in the realm of daily consumption? What kinds of consumer strategies do families of different economic levels adopt, and how do these strategies shape their daily lives?

But this afternoon, my goal is simply to observe. I stand at

she digs around in her cloth bag for her wad of money. Later, we stop to purchase pantyhose from another stall, and Aunt Liu repeats this careful inspection of the merchandise.

Aunt Liu’s behaviour is part of what I have come to understand as a “stratification

practices. Although she herself denies that she engages in such anxious shopping behaviours, Aunt Liu’s careful inspection of merchandise marks her as a low-income, low-status urbanite in China today.

It is my hope that the interviews and observations I

Low-income shoppers like Aunt Liu spend their limited incomes in marketplaces offering few or no quality guarantees, whereas wealthier shoppers opt for higher-status settings that offer service and merchandise guarantees.

a market stall where stacks of short nylon socks embroidered with flowers are on display. Aunt Liu carefully inspects each individual sock before setting it aside as purchase-worthy. She pulls each sock over her hand, stretching her fingers apart so she can spot any flaws — a pull, run, or mis-stitch. Each time Aunt Liu discovers a problem, she insistently points it out to the sock vendor, who rolls her eyes in frustration at Aunt Liu’s earnestness. After 20 minutes or so, Aunt Liu finally manages to select 10 pairs of socks, and

of risk” in relation to consumption, shopping, and marketplace practices in urban China today. In particular, low-income shoppers like Aunt Liu spend their limited incomes in marketplaces offering few or no quality guarantees, whereas wealthier shoppers opt for higher-status settings that offer service and merchandise guarantees. This results in fundamentally distinct experiences of markets and consumption and in dramatically different sets of shopping strategies and consumer

conduct during this summer research trip will enable me to explore in some detail the contours of a stratified consumer culture in urban China. Ultimately, I am interested in both what stratified consumer practices reflect about inequality as well as the ways in which such practices actually create urban inequalities. Indeed, these different shopping practices and stratified consumer mindsets are themselves a form of inequality and a fundamental aspect of urban culture in China today. ■



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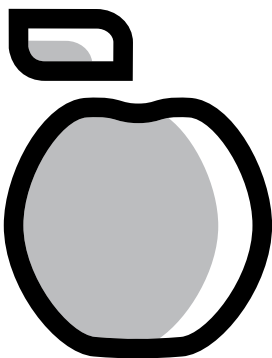
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