



UBC REPORTS

2009 CONGREGATION ISSUE

Degree of determination



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

NUTRITION 2009

Two strokes and a sprawling campus couldn't keep Gary Tam from getting his UBC degree.

By BRIAN LIN

It's 14 years in the making, but when Gary Tam walks across the Chan Centre stage this May to pick up his Bachelor's degree, he'll know that nothing – not even two strokes and a sprawling campus – could keep him from realizing his dream.

Tam first came to UBC straight out of high school in 1995. "I was actually a pretty bright student and did really well in high school," Tam says. "UBC is the best university in the province – and one of the best in the world – so it was a no brainer choosing to come here."

But his first stint at UBC was short-lived. Just two months into his freshman year studying engineering in the Faculty of Applied Science, Tam suffered a stroke. "There is no family history of heart disease and I wasn't eating wrong, so it was a complete shock," says Tam, who

took a semester off but returned the following fall to the Faculty of Science.

His second stroke hit two years later, severely affecting his motor skills and forcing him to eventually quit school in 2001. Despite being confined to a wheelchair, Tam volunteered at the Heart and Stroke Foundation, visiting elementary schools in the Lower Mainland and educating children about strokes.

"In the back of my mind, I've always wanted to come back and get my degree," says Tam. "I was determined to do it even though I was out of school for a long time."

In 2006, Tam enrolled in the Food, Nutrition and Health Program in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems (LFS). "I really wasn't sure what I wanted to study," says Tam. "In retrospect I'm glad I stuck with LFS because the people there

really went the extra mile to help me complete my studies – and I learned so much about important issues facing our world today like food security, organic crops and food economics."

UBC's sprawling campus presented a real challenge for Tam. Most of his classes were

held in the faculty's home building about two kilometres south of the bus loop – approximately a 20-minute walk for able-bodied persons.

"I thought I knew the rigours of university but gosh was I wrong," he says. "I had no idea how hard it would be to physically get to and from school."

Tam credits the UBC's

Birdcoop Fitness Centre for helping him meet the physical demands of getting to and from class. Exercises using his own body weight – chin-ups, push-ups and sit-ups, for example – have improved his mobility so he can ride public transit and get around assisted by canes.

whatever life throws your way."

Jeary's admiration is mirrored by many who have come in contact with Tam, including Lynn Newman, LFS Assistant Dean, Students.

"I absolutely love Gary as the word 'quit' just isn't in his vocabulary," says Newman. "Despite the challenges that he faces, he never complains and just gets on with things. His perseverance leads me to believe that he's going to accomplish great things in his life."

Tam, who hopes to pursue a career in business, says the congregation ceremony will be special to both him and his family. Tam's older brother graduated from the same faculty in 2000. "It feels good, you know, finally getting that degree that I've always been working towards," says Tam. "My parents will definitely be there – they can't wait to see me graduate. It's been a long time coming." **R**

"The word 'quit' just isn't in his vocabulary."

Class of 2009: More than 6,500 undergraduate and graduate students receive their degrees at Congregation ceremonies from May 20-27 in Vancouver, and June 5 in Kelowna. They join more than 250,000 alumni

worldwide. To see exclusive videos that accompany the stories in this congregation edition, visit: www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/ubcreports.

For information about graduation ceremonies, visit: www.graduation.ubc.ca.

IN THE NEWS

Highlights of UBC media coverage in April 2009. COMPILED BY SEAN SULLIVAN



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

UBC Assoc. Prof. Lawrence Frank says taking public transit may help people keep fit.



Congratulations to Our New Associate Dean of Scholarships & Awards: Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe

It is with great pleasure Dr. Barbara Evans, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies announces that Dr. Rhodri Windsor-Liscombe has accepted the position of Associate Dean, Scholarships and Awards effective July 1st, 2009. This is a three year term appointment.

Along with an impressive research record in design history and its social impact, Dr. Windsor-Liscombe brings a wide array of experience in service to the University and the community as a Department Head in Art History and Visual Art and through his committee, Senate, and Awards adjudication work. Notably his Awards administration and adjudication experience has been at both the institutional and national levels. Dean Evans is delighted he has decided to join her team and his new colleagues at Graduate Studies, Associate Deans Jim Thompson, Cindy Prescott and Susan Porter. Assistant Dean Dianne Tromba and the Awards team unit all look forward to many interesting collaborations around initiatives of excellence in graduate education.

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Pot boosts lung disease risk

A new UBC study suggests people who smoke both tobacco and marijuana may have a high risk of developing a group of lung diseases that includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

The findings suggest that marijuana and cigarette smoking may act “synergistically” to promote chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, said UBC Assoc. Prof. **Wan-Cheung Tan**.

However, smoking pot alone doesn't seem to increase the risk of the deadly lung condition, said reports in *Reuters*, *the Globe and Mail*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Forbes* and the *CBC*.

Spiders offer evolutionary clues

UBC researcher **Wayne Maddison** played a key role in the discoveries of dozens of new species of animals and plants in a “lost paradise” in the South Pacific.

Maddison documented 50 types of never-before-identified jumping spiders during a month-

long trek through Papua New Guinea.

He said three of the new spider varieties were particularly special, as they show strikingly distinctive evolutionary lineages that had been unknown before.

Bloomberg, *the Guardian*, *the Times*, *The Independent* and the *Daily Telegraph* reported on the discoveries.

Office flirtation lowers morale

A study co-authored by Sauder School of Business Prof. **Karl Aquino** finds that some employees say they enjoy the occasional sexually charged joke, discussions of sexual matters or flirtation around the office.

However, there's flip side: those employees felt less valued and were less productive than those who frowned on sexual banter, the study says.

The research, covered by *MSNBC*, *the National Post*, *CTV* and the *Edmonton Sun*, found 10 percent of women and 46 percent of men who had experienced office titillation found it enjoyable. But, the more

they experienced it, the lower their morale.

Take the bus, stay in shape

A new study by researchers at UBC suggests taking public transit may help you keep fit.

The study by researcher **Ugo Lachapelle** and Assoc. Prof. **Lawrence Frank** of the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning found people who take public transit are three times more likely than those who don't to meet the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada's suggested daily minimum of physical activity.

The study, reported by *MSN*, *the Huffington Post*, *CBC*, *Globe and Mail*, *Metro* and *Times of India*, said people who drove the most were the least likely to meet the recommended level of physical activity.

Correction: The photo accompanying the May UBC Reports story *Ugandan students advance digital literacy* was misattributed. It was taken by Prof. Bonny Norton.

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HUMAN KINETICS 2009

PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Katie Jeanes, co-organizer of Storm the Wall, is a top intramural player and won the first-ever Outstanding Student Award.

Student's legacy is over the wall

By SEAN SULLIVAN

Ask Katie Jeanes about her greatest accomplishment during her time at UBC, and she's quick to answer.

"Storm the Wall," the graduating Human Kinetics student says. "It was like nothing I'll ever experience again."

This year Jeanes, along with UBC REC staff member Warren Scheske, organized North America's largest intramural event, which involves upwards of 10,000 participants and spectators over six days. The event is a team relay race around campus that involves a swim, sprint, road bike course, a one kilometre run and culminates with scaling a 12-foot wall.

"Being able to see the impact we had on campus and having

thousands of people take part — it was incredible," she says.

The event caps off a long list of accomplishments in her time at UBC, which include playing a part in the coordination of GALA, the international student orientation program, a term as vice-president of the Human Kinetics Undergraduate Society and coordinating volunteers for the 2008 Student Leadership Conference.

As an avid basketball, volleyball and soccer player, it's little surprise that Jeanes received the 2007 Earl Award for being the top female intramural participant at UBC. This year, she was the first recipient of the UBC Outstanding Student Award, presented annually to a student who has made exceptional volunteer contributions.

As she graduates this May with a degree in Kinesiology and Health Science, with a minor in Commerce, Jeanes says her volunteer work was key in shaping her degree.

"Through being involved in UBC REC I saw how I could use my degree in sport and event management," she says.

Jeanes climbed the ranks of the UBC REC program, which oversees sports and events as wide-ranging as basketball, dodgeball and even inner-tube water polo, in her four years at UBC. This year she was one of six event directors, after terms as a director of Nitobe Basketball, Handley Cup Soccer & SRC Futsal and Todd Ice Hockey.

Jeanes also re-launched UBC REC's ice hockey league after a one-year hiatus, leading a

campus-wide promotional blitz that filled the program on the first day of registration.

Not bad for someone who admits to being a little afraid of ice.

"I can't skate and I don't know how to play hockey, but I know how to organize," she laughs.

Jeanes also took advantage of UBC's Go Global program, spending a semester at the University of Queensland in Australia studying human kinetics and sciences.

"It's one of the best things I've done with my time at UBC,"

she says.

As she readies to graduate, Jeanes has one suggestion for new students eager to add an extra dimension to their university career.

"Just get involved," she says. "Try everything until you find something you're really passionate about, and stick with it."

"I've met people on their first day at UBC, and it's obvious that they are terrified. But they figure, 'I'm here, so I might as well throw myself into the fire and see what happens.' I think that's a great approach to take." **R**

School of Human Kinetics celebrates 60 years

It's been six decades since UBC's School of Human Kinetics graduated its first class of 38 students, most of them Second World War veterans whose tuition was paid by the federal government.

This May, 196 students will graduate from the school that's grown from a physical education program to a discipline devoted to a comprehensive and systematic study of movement behaviour.

The program began in 1936 as the Department of Physical Education, with intramurals and a voluntary physical education program. By 1945, all undergrads were required to take two years of physical education classes in sports and dance.

In 1946, the department offered Western Canada's first four-year degree program in P.E., and in 1949 graduated its first class.

Canada's first masters of physical education followed, before the school moved under the umbrella of the Faculty of Education in 1963.

The curriculum changed a number of times throughout the years, and in 1987 students could choose from seven different programs. Two years later the school introduced its first enrolment restrictions to curb a flood of applications.

By 1994, the school was re-named the School of Human Kinetics, offering a bachelor and master's degree in Human Kinetics, as well as a PhD, M.Sc. and M.A.

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For the love of chemistry

By **BUD MORTENSON**

“I love chemistry” is handwritten down the front of Jessica Pilfold’s lab coat. Front, back, sleeves and sides, the coat is also adorned with colourful thank-you messages from chemistry students she helped this year as a teaching assistant at UBC Okanagan.

Pilfold is about to graduate with a chemistry degree and is considering a future in teaching chemistry -- or maybe forensic lab work -- as she moves on from being an undergrad, a teaching assistant, a tutor, and a student ambassador, to become a graduate student this summer. It’s the next phase in an educational adventure that began four years ago, when Pilfold moved from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to attend the brand-new UBC Okanagan.

“It was more than I expected,” she says of the campus when she arrived in August 2005 as one of the first students at UBC Okanagan, and one of the first to receive a four-year UBC Major Entrance Scholarship totaling \$40,000.

Pilfold says she learned important things about herself during her four years as an undergraduate. “With a major in chemistry and a minor in math, I found I could be interested in different subjects at once,” she says. “And I learned how to manage my time. Something a lot of students struggle with is finding a balance between school and work. I found having a scholarship – allowing me to



C H E M I S T R Y 2 0 0 9

Jessica Pilfold’s research experiences this year as an undergraduate at UBC Okanagan encouraged her to continue into graduate studies.

PHOTO: BUD MORTENSON

focus on academics – was very beneficial.”

Though her scholarship alleviated some of the financial pressure of student life, Pilfold found it rewarding to work on campus. For two and a half years she served as a student ambassador leading visitors on tours of the UBC Okanagan campus, and she joined the Academic Resource Centre as a chemistry tutor. “They are jobs that I enjoy, not out of necessity but out of desire – things like tutoring and being a teaching assistant.”

At the end of her third year, Pilfold received an Irving K. Barber Undergraduate Research Award which funded a summer of chemistry research under the supervision of chemistry researcher Alaa Abd-El-Aziz – who as Provost holds the position of top research and academic officer at UBC Okanagan.

The summer project had Pilfold developing a special kind of molecule called a calixarene that can have many useful real-world applications.

“We were creating molecules shaped like baskets, with the goal of attaching smaller molecules to the upper and lower rims of the basket, and then making a polymer (even larger molecule) of the new material,” she says. “Calixarenes can have filtering properties and sensing properties – you could use them to, for example, take

continued on page 6

Couple drops everything to pursue law degrees



L A W 2 0 0 9

Bob Kucheran and Brenda Osmond were looking for a fresh start. “Law was our common ground,” Kucheran says.

PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

By **SEAN SULLIVAN**

At an age when many successful professionals are settling in to a comfortable lifestyle, Bob Kucheran and Brenda Osmond made an unusual choice.

Tossing aside an award-winning downtown condo,

six-figure incomes and fulfilling professional lives in pharmacy, the married couple decided to start fresh.

This May, Kucheran and Osmond will graduate side-by-side from the UBC Faculty of Law.

“We decided, when it came to our previous life, ‘Been there,

done that, what’s next?’” says Kucheran, 61. “We wanted to do something that would build upon our previous careers, something that would open new doors for us, and something we could do together.”

Osmond is already a UBC alumna, having graduated in the second-ever class of UBC’s

Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program in the 1990s. Her studies there led her to the College of Pharmacists, where she was deputy registrar for 10 years.

Kucheran’s career includes stints in the Air Force and as a counsellor to troubled teens, before his most recent post

as CEO of the B.C. Pharmacy Association.

Now married for 15 years, the pair worked on opposing sides of the street in the pharmacy world: he in advocacy, she in regulation. In the late 1990s, they led the charge to have the morning-after pill made available to women in B.C. without a doctor’s prescription – a first in the world.

At UBC’s Law school, they’ve worked side-by-side. “I don’t believe I could have done this, were it not for the fact that Brenda and I were doing this together,” Kucheran says. “Our reading load in first year was somewhere around 150 to 200 pages of dense legal text every night, just to get ready for classes the next day.

“The fact that we were both going through that, we managed to pull each other along by our bootstraps,” he says.

The workload wasn’t the only challenge. In their second year of law school, Osmond was diagnosed with colon cancer. Her course selection had to be tailored to allow flexibility while she recovered from surgery then fought her way through a bi-weekly chemotherapy schedule. That’s where her competitive streak kicked in.

continued on page 6

Africa feeds Pharmacy grad's compassion

By RANDY SCHMIDT

Kristin DeGirolamo's family has shaped her passions in life. Her interests have taken her from Victoria, B.C., to Uganda, and from competitive golf to pharmacy studies. Ultimately, they've led to an unusually well-defined career focus on HIV/AIDS drug therapy.

The Pharmaceutical Sciences graduating student grew up in a family of golfers – her grandmother's picture hangs in the B.C. Golf Hall of Fame housed just beside UBC's Vancouver campus.

DeGirolamo played varsity golf herself for three years at the University of Victoria, before figuring out how she wanted to pursue her other distinct interest: caring for those with HIV/AIDS.

Her mother was a nurse whose own life was shaped by a colleague – Wayne – who contracted HIV/AIDS, and passed away. The red-headed DeGirolamo has fond childhood memories of Wayne, who also had red hair, taking her for strawberry sundaes.

Her mother's profession, and the death of her childhood friend, fed an early interest in health care. But DeGirolamo was struggling through large classes in biochemistry at UVic before she came upon the field that was a perfect fit: pharmaceutical sciences.

Through a summer job she met Dr. Reg Smith, a UBC



Kristin DeGirolamo spent a summer in Uganda working with The AIDS Support Organization (TASO).

Pharmacy alumnus working with the Victoria Heart Institute Foundation. Smith saw patients every day, and helped conduct drug trials and develop new drug therapies.

"This was something I could really get into," says DeGirolamo. "It had the patient side, as well as the scientific

side. I needed something with a human aspect, but I was also very interested in research."

Smith encouraged DeGirolamo to apply to UBC's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences in 2005. Four years later she is poised to graduate and enter a demanding hospital residency program as a clinical pharmacist. She is

thrilled she will get to do an HIV rotation.

From her first year, despite the heavy demands of the professional program, DeGirolamo has volunteered with the B.C. Persons with AIDS Society. She writes a regular drug information column for their newsletter.

After her second year, DeGirolamo went to Uganda for the summer, through a work term organized by UBC's Go Global office, to volunteer with the The AIDS Support Organization (TASO). She was impressed with the efforts of

continued on page 7

Engineering an Olympic performance



Matthew Tunnicliffe's Olympic snowboard dreams almost crashed to earth this year.

By BASIL WAUGH

Matthew Tunnicliffe, a hopeful for Canada's 2010 Olympic snowboard team, spent his UBC studies learning how materials are made. This year, he learned what he was made of.

The high-flying student almost

saw his Olympic dreams crash to earth when he shredded his ankle – just 15 months before the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games – and had to undergo surgery.

Tunnicliffe went from blasting 40-foot jumps, and racking up serious airmiles to race in exotic alpine locations, to being

completely grounded. But the graduating engineering student says the upcoming Games have provided ample motivation for a speedy recovery.

"It would mean so much to me to race for Canada in the Olympics," says Tunnicliffe, who is jockeying – along with

his older brother Patrick – for one of Canada's four available roster spots for snowboardcross, a high-octane mix between snowboarding and motocross. "My focus has totally been on making the team and staying on top of school."

"I lost valuable time with my

injury, but I've worked hard to make it up," says Tunnicliffe, who couldn't even walk four months ago. After a grueling rehab, the 24-year-old returned to competition just five weeks after doctors repaired his ankle in December 2008.

In 2010, snowboardcross will make its second Olympic appearance after debuting in 2006 in Torino, Italy. Competitors gear up in protective armour and hurtle downhill at speeds in excess of 60 kilometres per hour, racing each other and the clock. Steep banks, jumps and hairpin turns are fixtures on the special courses, as are spectacular wipe-outs. "It's total mayhem, but a total rush," he says.

UBC's materials engineering program – ranked among the best in North America – attracted the Gananoque, Ont. native to UBC. "Materials and how things are made have always fascinated me," says Tunnicliffe, who learned the qualities and processes required to produce nanomaterials, biomaterials, composites and metals.

Visit www.ubc.ca/2010 for more UBC Olympic and Paralympic stories

continued on page 7



GEOLOGICAL ENGINEERING 2009

Marisol Valerio – and her alter ego Violet Sin – is driven by passion in her pursuit of higher education and musical inspirations.

Exploring nature, music with passion

By BRIAN LIN

Passion underscores everything Marisol Valerio does, be it collecting soil samples by helicopter in the Northwest Territories or playing the violin dressed as her alter ego, medieval fantasy warrior Violet Sin.

The Costa Rican transplant was attracted to B.C. for its natural beauty and diverse culture, and she got everything she had hoped for – on top of an education she says would be “difficult to find elsewhere” in the faculties of Science and Applied Science.

“Geological engineering combines my love of math and physics with my passion for the

outdoors,” says Valerio, who’s graduating this month with a Bachelor of Applied Science degree. “People in my field get into it because they enjoy the work. It’s definitely not your average nine-to-five desk job.”

Valerio says the mentors and colleagues she’s met over the past five years are serving society by providing something it needs. “And we’re coming up with knowledge and skills to bring the industry beyond complying with existing regulations but doing what’s best for the environment – because for many of us, our love of nature is why we got into the field in the first place.”

While her studies and co-op placements have taken her from

diamond mines in Canada’s Northwest Territories to uranium explorations in Australia, her musical talents have taken her back in time in a variety of genres. Valerio has served as orchestra conductor and performed in four student opera productions and also plays the violin in three bands spanning country, Latin and “folk metal” genres.

On stage, Valerio (a.k.a Violet Sin, her folk metal persona) is joined by fellow UBC students and *Scythia* band members – Thorgen Hellhammer, Helmut Doomfist, Lady Thundertroll, Savage Tombfiller and the Souleater – as she unleashes the “angel’s harp,” or violin. Their

original “battle songs” tell stories of wizards and goblins.

“I’ve been playing the violin since I was four but it wasn’t until I came to UBC that I realized there were so many different ways of expressing myself musically,” says Valerio. “In a way, it sums up my experience here in Vancouver, where you can hear five different languages just sitting on the bus.

“The opportunity to immerse myself in a variety of opinions and traditions and learn from students and teachers from around the world has really broadened my horizon,” she adds. “As an international student, it’s reassuring to see people embracing diversity –

I never felt like an outsider.”

With a full-time job already lined up with a Vancouver-based consulting firm, Valerio is looking forward to taking a few days off to visit Hawaii. “Compared to my native Costa Rica, the pace is so much faster here and people are a lot more ‘efficient,’” she says. “Managing time well and keeping a good work-life balance is another valuable skill I’ve learned during my time at UBC.”

To hear *Scythia* performances, visit the band’s MySpace profile at www.myspace.com/thorgenhellhammer. **R**

CHEMISTRY

continued from page 4

contaminants out of drinking water.”

The experience ignited new research ideas, and that summer project became the focus of her fourth-year honours project in organic chemistry.

“The Undergraduate Research Award project gave me hands-on experience in a lab doing research that has never been done before – it’s on the leading edge, new, and very exciting,” says Pilfold. “I became more aware of what I wanted out of my degree and it definitely nudged me toward thinking

about graduate studies.

“Kudos to Ike Barber for donating the money for such an important and rewarding program,” she says of the forestry magnate and UBC alumnus who has contributed more than \$30 million to support initiatives at both UBC campuses, including the Undergraduate Research Award program in the Okanagan.

“It’s something not a lot of students get to do. If you receive a URA, you’re really lucky,” says Pilfold. “You’re in for an experience that teaches you things you could never learn in a classroom. It gives you a breadth of knowledge that makes you really well-rounded in a particular subject area. It helps you decide what you want to focus on.” **R**

LAW

continued from page 4

“I just couldn’t let Bob graduate before I did,” she laughs. “I’m now fully recovered, and we’re going to be on the convocation platform together.”

Both students have eagerly added extracurricular roles to their already bulging schedules. In 2008 he was elected executive director of the UBC Law Students’ Legal Advice Program, which provides free legal advice and representation at clinics located throughout Vancouver. Osmond was chosen by her peers as law school representative to the UBC Senate in her third year.

As they prepare for a new chapter in their careers – Kucheran in criminal law, Osmond in a broader role – they

have high praise for UBC’s law program.

“The faculty and staff have been a great support to both of us. Neither of us has ever been aware of being treated differently because of our age,” Osmond says. “Obviously we’re old enough to be parents or grandparents to some of the students, but we just all felt like colleagues.”

That’s not to say their kids weren’t allowed to put in a couple of jobs.

Kucheran’s son Michael, now 26, was in his final year at UBC when his father began his first year of law. “He told his friends on the T-Birds football team that his old man doesn’t know what he wants to be when he grows up,” Kucheran laughs. “That’s pretty much true.” **R**

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PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Dan Haves produced hard-hitting news stories for PBS Frontline, HDNet's Dan Rather Reports and CBC.

A brave new media world

By **BASIL WAUGH**

You might think Dan Haves would be worried about his future. Think again.

Sure, news organizations are shedding jobs at unprecedented rates as audiences and advertisers flock from traditional news formats – newspapers, radio and television – to the web.

But as Haves and the UBC Graduate School of Journalism class of '09 prepare to enter a hyper-competitive labour market, he is confident their future is bright.

“Reading about job cuts is scary, but people want news more than ever,” says Haves, a native of London, Ont. who

recently completed an internship with the CBC. He says people are choosing a new generation of websites that allow them to personalize breaking news and commentary, such as Google News. “The industry is reorganizing. It’s painful, but skilled journalists are crucial, especially now.”

Haves believes newsrooms are moving towards a model that UBC’s journalism program has long championed: multiplatform journalism. In the old model, large news organizations assign several journalists to each produce content for their specialty medium: print, TV, radio and online. In this new model, a single journalist does

it all.

“We’re trained to arrive at a news event and do everything – video, photos, writing, editing,” says Haves, a film studies major who was attracted to UBC by faculty such as Peter Klein, *Emmy Award*-winning 60 Minutes producer, and Alfred Hermida, founder of the BBC’s news website. “I also like being able to wear shorts 365 days a year in Vancouver.”

Haves complemented his technical skills with classes in subjects such as ethics and law to prepare him for challenges journalists face. A major highlight, he says, was a pilot *International Reporting* class, in which students travelled to

China, Ghana and India, creating a hard-hitting documentary on rich countries sending waste to developing countries. “It could air on PBS *Frontline* as early as June,” he says.

“International reporting is perhaps the most challenging form of journalism, because you are working in a different language and a different culture,” says Haves of the class which recently received \$1 million from Vancouver philanthropist Alison Lawton to send 10 students each year abroad to cover important and under-reported issues. “But it was an amazing experience and I’m a better journalist because of it.”

Haves co-produced a

documentary on Insite, Vancouver’s safe injection site for HDNet’s *Dan Rather Reports*, another unforgettable experience. “It was so great watching Dan Rather in action,” Haves says of the iconic newsmen who mentored UBC students for a second consecutive year. “He taught me a lot about staying in control of difficult interviews – and I know it’s an experience I wouldn’t have had anywhere else.”

To see a Haves news story, visit visit: www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/ubcreports **R**

PHARMACY

continued from page 5

this Ugandan group which has helped reduce the rate of AIDS infections from about 25 per cent to nine per cent in Masaka, Uganda. Mornings were spent organizing patients’ drugs, and afternoons were spent riding through remote areas on the back of a motorcycle to deliver care to patients. The experience had a huge impact on her.

“Africa and its people are so beautiful, and they have been unfairly ravaged by this disease,” says DeGirolamo. “My experience strengthened me wanting to go into HIV care. I really value being able to go and contribute what I can.”

Volunteering is clearly a way of life for this graduate.

During her four years at UBC she also found time to join the pharmaceutical fraternity Kappa Psi and was elected its regent. Fraternity members focused on community service, serving at a Vancouver soup kitchen and doing local fundraising.

She was also elected by her peers to serve as the student representative on the board of the Canadian Pharmacists Association for two years.

DeGirolamo’s time in Uganda serving those with HIV/AIDS, however, remains a real highlight.

“The kindness of people was amazing,” says DeGirolamo. “That’s something I’ll definitely try to remember in my practice. Sometimes people just need you to listen, and acknowledge that what they are saying is important.” **R**

ENGINEERING

continued from page 5

Tunncliffe says the Faculty of Applied Science is one of his biggest fans, providing flexibility and more than \$5,000 in financial support. “They have been so supportive. Everyone is always pumped to hear about how things are going.”

“It was a really challenging season, but the adversity made me both a better athlete and student,” says Tunncliffe, who tracks his progress daily in a training journal. “Having to juggle school and sport, plus the injury, really made me dig deep,” he says. “I learned the importance of goals, blocking out distractions, staying focused, time management and the ability to perform at the right time,

under pressure.

“Hopefully, I’ll be able to use all these skills up on Cypress during the 2010 Winter Games.”

Last month, the Canadian Snowboard Federation recognized Tunncliffe’s dedication to snowboarding with a \$5,000 award, named after the

late Canadian snowboarder Jake Holden.

For more information: Matthew and Patrick Tunncliffe website: tunnclifferracing.com

Tunncliffe competition video: www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/ubcreports **R**

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Grad studies loss of traditional identity

By BRIAN LIN

Kyle Bateson's Master's thesis paints an artful portrait of a landless First Nations people and the strong spiritual connection its younger generation – including himself – has to a land they have yet to call home.

Bateson is a member of the Missanabie Cree First Nation, a community displaced from its traditional territory in Northern Ontario when the Government of Canada failed to set aside land for the signatory band as part of Treaty No. 9 in 1906.

Growing up in Saskatoon, Bateson's only interaction with his traditional territory was an annual weeklong gathering, a tradition that only began in 1992.

"Like many other Aboriginal peoples, the Cree see themselves as interconnected with their environment and all living things and spirits therein," says Bateson. "For example, memory is said to be embedded in the land and in the observation of changes and transition of landmarks and events in the territory."

The impact on his community's value system – or on that of any landless Aboriginal community – from being denied access to their land had never been comprehensively evaluated until Bateson undertook it as his Master's thesis. The study – and the process leading to its results – is especially poignant now that the

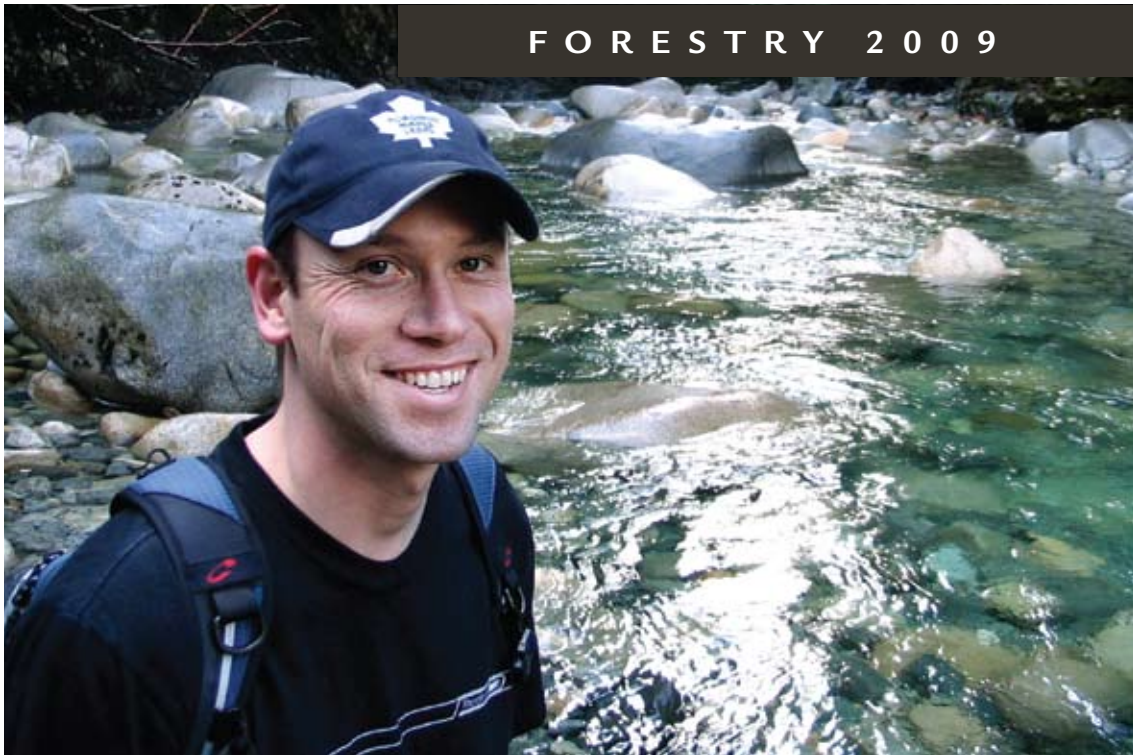


PHOTO: COURTESY KYLE BATESON

Kyle Bateson found that young people like him have strong connections to their traditional territory despite never having lived there.

Missanabie Cree First Nation is on the brink of reaching a land transfer agreement with Ontario.

"My family and the people in my community supported me through my undergrad and I wanted to do something that would be useful in the effort to regain our place," says Bateson, who pursued graduate studies at UBC's Faculty of Forestry after receiving his Bachelor's degree there in 2006.

By surveying band members living across Canada and during the last annual gathering, Bateson asked fellow members

to list and prioritize what the traditional territory meant to them in the past and into the future. What he found both validated long-held beliefs and unearthed new insights.

"Three themes emerged from the process: cultural and spiritual, economic and conservation, and community infrastructure," says Bateson. "Despite the long absence from their traditional territory, the majority of the members saw the land as a spiritual place and as part of their identity."

In addition, while community

members had different ways of expressing their connections to the land, they agreed that any future development needs to address sustainability and ecological responsibility, as well as economic benefits.

Bateson also found that young people had strong ties to the land. "The majority of the participants who emphasized the cultural and spiritual values of the land were between the ages of 18 and 30," says Bateson. "Despite never having lived on their traditional territory, the annual gatherings over the

past 17 years have allowed our youth to visit the land of their ancestors and engage in activities that help answer questions about their cultural identity."

Bateson's thesis defense was attended by members of the Missanabie First Nation, who "unanimously expressed their support and admiration for Kyle's work in a very moving way," according to the Defense Chair Report. "One member of the band's Council stated that he was going to need to re-evaluate his own views as a consequence of reading the results reported in the thesis."

"This work is for members of my community. To have them participate in the pursuit of my education was very gratifying," says Bateson, who will be the first graduate in the Faculty of Forestry to receive a new Honours designation for outstanding Master thesis.

Since passing his thesis exams, Bateson has moved to Prince Rupert to begin work as an environmental assessment coordinator for the Gitxaala Nation.

"Throughout my time at UBC, I've had the opportunity to focus on First Nations land issues," says Bateson. "That, along with training in research and scientific methodology, has been extremely valuable in my current job and ensuring the interests of the First Nations are addressed." **R**

Medicine grad helps others start over

By DANIEL PRESNELL

Nailyn Rasool recalls something her father, a family doctor in Burnaby, told her one night after they helped a recently landed immigrant family with their sick child.

"That was us 30 years ago," said the elder Dr. Meenaz Rasool, a Ugandan refugee. "When we came to Canada, we were in the same position as those people; we didn't have money for medication, and we didn't know where to go for support."

The events of that night awakened the younger Rasool to a new calling: becoming a doctor, and helping refugees with stories similar to her own family to lead productive, healthy, and meaningful lives in their new communities.

"In medicine we empower people to take responsibility for their health," says Rasool, who graduates from the UBC MD undergraduate program this May. "To me, we're working with refugees to empower individuals not only with health, but with their education, their finances, their self-confidence and identity."

As an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, she co-founded Learning to Integrate New Cultures Canada, a refugee



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Nailyn Rasool helped start a refugee outreach program while an undergraduate.

outreach program that provides resources and mentors to help educate and integrate refugee youth in their new communities. The successful program led her to Ottawa, where she worked with the UN High Commission on Refugees to develop and implement education programs promoting pluralism.

While those experiences have been thrilling, none quite compare with the lessons learned from the young refugees she has worked with in Metro Vancouver. Rasool describes an unproductive tutoring session with a 16-year-old girl from Afghanistan, who had lived most of her life under the Taliban, and was not allowed to go to school. Rasool repeatedly reminded her: all you have to do is study.

"She finally turned to me and said, 'I don't know how to study.' Something as simple as studying was so foreign to her and that is huge when you are trying to advance your education."

Rasool believes such obstacles, while difficult, can be surmounted. She points to her recent participation in Peace Child International's 2008 World Youth Congress in Quebec City as proof. The World Youth Congress brings together young adults chosen from over 120 countries on the basis of community service, innovation

and leadership.

"It was amazing to discuss the needs of young people from different perspectives, and to work with people at the top of government and non-governmental aid organizations, and with young people who are active in their communities around the world," says Rasool. "One of the main themes was that change doesn't come from the top down, it has to come from all levels."

She admits that on the surface, her focus on medicine and her work with refugees bears little apparent relationship. But to her, it is a perfect encapsulation of the "all levels" approach she champions. She sees tremendous opportunity to fuse her knowledge and experience to further international health development.

In fact, her passion for helping others start over may have exerted some influence on Rasool's choice to pursue a career in Neurology.

"It is a profession where you really work with the person, because when someone has a neurological illness, you work with them on the medicine, but also their soul—getting them back to where they used to be, and helping them attain a better quality of life." **R**

Dentistry grad committed to service

By SEAN SULLIVAN

For Michelle Lauwers dentistry is more than a science: it's a charitable calling and an art.

"An artist may take a piece of wood or stone and carve it into something beautiful," Lauwers says. "In the same way we're taking a piece of composite or amalgam and sculpting a smile."

The graduating Dentistry student will have plenty of support as she embarks on her career: Her husband, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law are all UBC Dentistry graduates.

"We try not to talk too much about dentistry," she says of husband Ryan Lauwers (DMD'04), brother-in-law Kevin Lauwers (DMD'05) and sister-in-law and long time friend Candace Woodman (DMD'07).

Choosing dentistry as a career wasn't on Lauwers' mind while growing up in Port Moody, B.C., though she says she was never one to shy away from visits to the dentist. "I loved getting the prize at the end," she laughs.

After two years at the University of Victoria, she studied to become a dental assistant at Vancouver Community College. After completing the certified dental assisting program she realized that she wanted to further pursue a career in dentistry. A degree in cellular and molecular biology at SFU followed before she began Dentistry at UBC.

As the clinic representative for her class and team leader of the mentoring program, she's



Michelle Lauwers hopes to team with family members to create a dental mission to Mexico.

received a number of awards, including the Dr. Cal Waddell Memorial Scholarship and the Dr. Cal Waddell Western Canada Dental Society Scholarship.

Lauwers has also been active in the program's volunteer efforts, which include free and low-cost clinics in the Downtown Eastside. She describes her volunteer work in the neighbourhood as "eye-opening and rewarding."

"People have preconceived ideas about the Downtown Eastside, but many of the residents are just everyday

people who have not had access to dental care," she says.

Patients the students see in the community are frequently in pain, due to a lack of preventive treatment and education in oral self-care. The UBC students perform extractions, fillings and the beginnings of root canals to ease the patients' suffering.

Lauwers' leadership and desire to help others has led her to future aspirations of a dental mission to Mexico. Along with her husband, brother-in-law and sister-in-law, she hopes to partner with their church, which has

already established an ongoing ministry in Mexico.

"As a family we are hoping to provide much needed preventive and restorative dental treatment for the people of this community," she says.

There's a host of logistics to be contemplated before planning of this ambitious project begins, but Lauwers says she feels a calling to help.

"I have a skill that can be used to serve people who are less fortunate than me," she says. "The major goal would be to alleviate pain and provide

education on preventive oral self-care."

In the immediate future, Lauwers is hoping to begin the next chapter of her career as an associate dentist.

"I'd like to find a principal dentist who will be a good mentor and shares a similar philosophy of practice," she says, "someone I can learn from and who will help me grow as a clinician."

"As dentists, we are committed to lifelong education, in order to provide the highest quality of care for our patients." ■

Graduating with a patent



NEW VENTURE DESIGN 2009

Crystal Hung and Alex Zolpys are turning class projects into new consumer products in an innovative UBC course.

By BASIL WAUGH

UBC graduating student Crystal Hung hopes a reality television show will help turn a class project into a successful new consumer product.

The Sauder School of Business student entrepreneur is co-creator of *EasyPlug*, a magnetic adapter designed to prevent injuries and protect electronic

devices. When someone trips on its cord, the accessory automatically releases from its power source. "That means no flying laptops, no people tripping on cords," the 23-year-old says.

Next month, Hung and five students will pitch the concept to the Vantec Angels, a group of Vancouver-area technology entrepreneurs. The team has also been guaranteed an audition

with CBC's popular venture-capitalist television show, *Dragon's Den*.

"I am excited to see how far we can take this," says Hung, who has already won more than \$15,000 at Canada's largest venture business competitions, including Toronto's *TieQuest* and Vancouver's *Enterprize*. She and her team have created a patent and company to support

EasyPlug, which is compatible with most home electronics, from vacuum cleaners to power tools.

Another UBC student invention turning heads is *Purelito*, a portable water purifier for travelers. Using ultraviolet (UV) radiation technology – the same as Vancouver's new Seymour-Capilano water filtration plant

– the hockey puck-sized device enables travelers to quickly purify potentially unsafe drinking water.

"You pour water in the top and it comes out treated and safe," says *Purelito* co-creator Alex Zolpys, a graduating UBC Faculty of Applied Science student who will also present to

continued on page 11

PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Homework is the best medicine

By BRIAN KLADKO

Jocelyn Harris is the first to admit that the research she undertook for her doctorate is a “no brainer.” Yet it may very well usher in a new approach to helping victims of stroke recover faster.

Harris, who will be one of the first two UBC students to receive a PhD in Rehabilitation Science, drew from her own experience as an occupational therapist, helping patients regain their strength and dexterity after suffering strokes or injuries.

“I had way too many patients to see individually,” says Harris, a 39-year-old Vancouver resident. “I was really frustrated that I couldn’t give them enough time. I started to think about what we could do. That’s what inspired me to go back to school.”

The answer was staring her in the face during those 50-minute therapy sessions: the patient and their families. What if they could do “homework” between sessions, so the patients could build on the progress made with their therapists?

As commonsensical as the idea seems, it went against occupational therapy orthodoxy. Therapists fear that exercises done improperly could be harmful. Family members, already overwhelmed by events, may not want the additional burden of learning a set of tasks and rallying their loved ones to exert themselves.

“But I still think it was way under-utilized,” Harris says. At MSA Hospital in Abbotsford, where she worked mostly with stroke patients, “family members were often there, especially spouses. Often they would sit



Jocelyn Harris has helped devise a set of exercises for the arm and hand that patients can do without therapists.

in my therapy sessions with the client. I just sort of thought, “What if we could actually get them more involved?”

With Physical Therapy

Professor Janice Eng, Harris devised the Graded Repetitive Arm Supplementary Program (GRASP), a set of exercises for the arm and hand that patients

could do without therapists. With funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon, they created a user-friendly book with detailed

pictures and instructions describing the exercises.

Therapists at four sites in Vancouver, Kelowna and Victoria distributed the books to 53 stroke patients, thoroughly reviewed the material with them and their family members, and asked them to do the assignments outside of the sessions.

The results, to be published in the June issue of *Stroke*, showed GRASP patients notched a 30 per cent improvement in the use of their arms after four weeks, compared to a 15 per cent improvement in the control group, based on their ability to perform such tasks as putting toothpaste on a toothbrush or pouring water into a glass.

Harris also saw results on a more personal level. A wife who was helping her husband turned to Harris and remarked, “I didn’t really know what I was supposed to do to help him, and now I feel like I can be part of his recovery.”

All four sites are now implementing GRASP, incorporating it into group therapy and outpatient settings. Eng, her advisor, is developing a similar program for the leg.

“Jocelyn represented the ideal doctoral student, who critically questioned the current practices in rehabilitation, really pushed the boundaries of innovation, and set in motion change that would benefit the health of our patients,” Eng says.

In June, Harris heads to the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute for a two-year fellowship. It should come as no surprise that Harris, who believes homework can be the best medicine, wants to pursue a career in academia. **R**

Studying the past to build a better future

By JODY JACOB

Aaron Derickson’s heritage has influenced his passion for historical knowledge, particularly regarding Canadian and Aboriginal history.

A member of the Okanagan First Nation, Derickson graduates from UBC Okanagan this June with a BA in History and minor in French, and says his goal is to use this knowledge to create a better future for himself, his community and his culture.

“My family has certainly played a big part in motivating me,” says Derickson. “My grandfather was a chief, a councilor, a farmer, a father and a soldier. He was a lot of things to many people, and he started out with nothing.

“Canada was a different place 50 years ago, and my mother was raised in poverty, even though my grandfather worked very hard. Their stories, and the way they overcame their challenges to help others, has been a strong, positive factor in my personal and educational journey.”



Aaron Derickson aims to become a high school history teacher, and to inspire future students.

Derickson plans to return to UBC Okanagan in the fall to get his bachelor of education, bringing him a step closer to his goal of becoming a high school French and History teacher. After

completing his BEd, he wants to pursue his master’s degree in Canadian Aboriginal history and eventually, when the timing is right, his PhD.

“I decided to become a high

school teacher because they have the power to impact their student’s lives and inspire them to find their own passions.

“Not only can I potentially make a difference in the lives of

my students, but I can have a positive impact on the Aboriginal community in the Okanagan, and eventually make an impact in Canada and beyond.”

Already Derickson has been working to inspire others and build his community in a positive way. A youth worker for the Westbank First Nation, he has also been involved as a volunteer pastor in his church, and in a program called Connecting Fun for Families, aimed at assisting and educating parents on the reserve.

As Derickson moves forward in his life, with the goal of helping others do the same, he will take with him one very important lesson from his studies at UBC Okanagan: the art of learning.

“I discovered how to really learn,” he explains. “There is a difference between completing an assignment and learning from the assignment. This was part of the character development I underwent at university. I’d say that the personal growth aspect is my best memory of UBC Okanagan.” **R**

Staff receive top UBC honour

NEW VENTURE DESIGN
continued from page 9

the Vantec Angels. “There’s no pumping or stirring in chemicals, it’s hands-free.”

In addition to hard work, Hung and Zolpys credit their successes to an innovative undergraduate UBC class, *New Venture Design*. Established in 2005, the two-term course brings together business and engineering students to create new consumer products and bring them to market.

“Unlike many courses that involve business plans around theoretical ideas, this course requires that teams generate a patentable idea and take it forward as a real new business start up,” says Prof. Paul Cubbon, Sauder School of Business. “This involves prototyping, seeking seed funding and much more.”

“Getting interdisciplinary teams together, with a mix of technical, finance, marketing and communication skills is a great experience for the students,” says UBC Engineering Prof. Philippe Kruchten. “It is an effective way to prepare them for their careers, and as we continue to see, it can even result in enterprise creation.”

Last year, one of the class teams, *PeerFX*, was offered \$250,000 of venture capital funding on CBC’s *Dragon’s Den* for its peer-to-peer currency exchange system. And the energy monitoring product of another class team, *Energy Aware*, will be included in the Olympic Village during the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

“This is the most time I’ve put into anything, but it was totally worth it,” Hung says. “It has been such a great learning experience.”

New Venture Design has received financial support from UBC alumnus and Vancouver entrepreneur Ken Spencer, co-founder of *Creo*.

Team EasyPlug members include: Crystal Hung, Max Miller, Ryan Fetterly, Jay Jagpal, Shane Miller-Tait and Greg Wong. *Team Purelito:* Alex Zolpys, Sherry Ding, Alastair McKee, Sherry Chen, Graham Smith and Anika De la Flor. **R**



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

UBC is bestowing its top award for staff contributions to: (from left to right) Bernice Urbaniak, John Sacre, Laura-Lynn Lowry, Alan Steeves and Kersti Krug.

By RANDY SCHMIDT

Five members of the university community are being recognized for outstanding contributions to campus life and for personal achievements as recipients of the 2009 President’s Service Award for Excellence (PSAE). Each recipient will receive the award – a gold medal and \$5,000 – in

a presentation during Spring Congregation ceremonies.

Bernice Urbaniak, Administrative Manager, School of Human Kinetics and President, Association of Administrative and Professional Staff (AAPS), has worked at UBC since 1990. Urbaniak is recognized by colleagues as a skilled manager who deals

exceptionally well with complex responsibilities. Many comment on her dedication to helping faculty, students and staff in her area, a commitment that translates to campus colleagues through her years of service with AAPS.

John Sacre has worked at UBC’s Land and Building Services since 1989. In his current role he works to ensure the campus is run well and that public dollars are appropriately allocated. Colleagues credit Sacre with a commitment to getting things done, and he has been instrumental in developing an apprenticeship program at UBC for trades staff. Outside of UBC, Sacre has been a medal-winning field hockey player, and national juniors coach.

Laura-Lynn Lowry has worked at UBC for nearly 35 years, starting in the old Faculty Club and then serving in Food Services operating the Barn Coffee Shop, before being selected as the Tim Hortons supervisor in 2006. Wherever she has worked, Lowry has been an effective manager and quickly built strong employee and customer relationships, say colleagues. She has volunteered her time organizing Tim Horton’s Camp Days, and pancake days for the United Way. Lowry also serves as CUPE 116 senior shop steward for Food Services.

Alan Steeves, Computer and Electronics Manager in the Dept. of Mechanical Engineering, is acknowledged for providing outstanding service to UBC for 30 years. In addition to managing the computer network for a large department, Steeves played a key role in attracting a multi-million dollar in-kind donation from the General Motors sponsored PACE program. He has served as national secretary on the Trout Unlimited Canada board, and is a talented First Nations artist.

Kersti Krug is recognized for service to UBC in many areas, and especially for leadership in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and during the transition of interdisciplinary units from FOGS to the College of Interdisciplinary Studies (CFIS), where she is Assistant Principal, Strategic Development and Administration. She is credited as a major contributor in conducting research to advance UBC graduate programs, and for exceptionally hard work and leadership in the creation of CFIS.

Nominations are still open until May 31 for the newly announced category of Vancouver campus President’s Staff Awards. Visit: www.ceremonies.ubc.ca **R**

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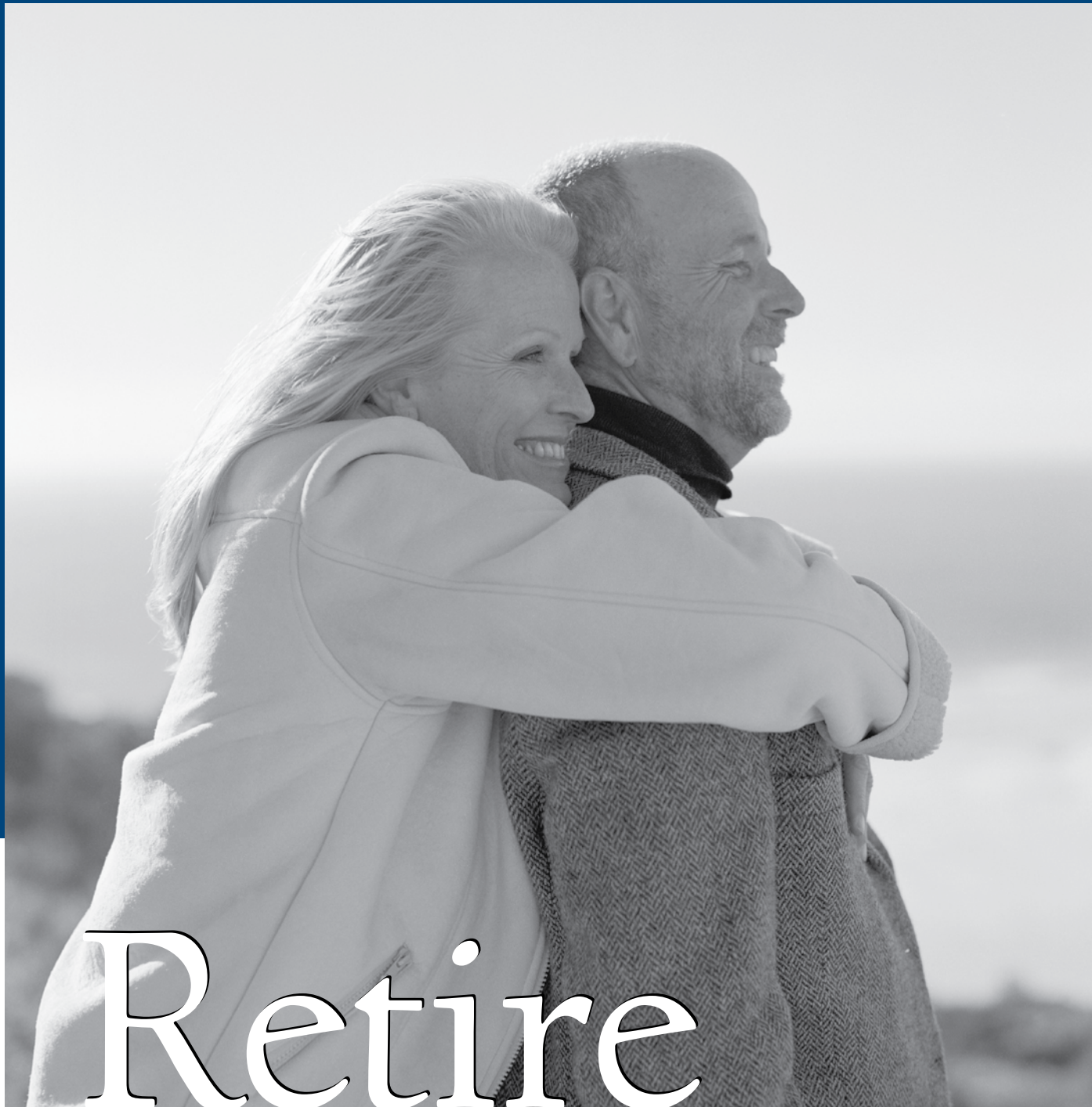
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To see videos of Crystal Hung and Alex Zolpys talking about their projects, visit: www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/ubcreports

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