

UBC REPORTS

2 UBC in the News


3 Pink Justice

4 New Marshal

5 Pregnant Pause

7 Finding Diamonds

8 Kudos

 For decades, university students had a simple way to rate their professors — word of mouth. These days, they're more likely to visit a website called ratemyprofessors.com where students can anonymously post comments on the teaching abilities of their instructors. They can even use chili peppers to identify who's "hot" on campus.

And if you think UBC students aren't using it — think again. The U.S.-based site contains reviews of nearly 250,000 post-secondary teachers across North America — including 1,810 instructors from UBC.

If Laura Best has her way, UBC students won't need to rely on chili pepper rankings to get information about their professors.

Earlier this year, Best, the VP Academic for the AMS, began working with university officials to create the Teaching Excellence Initiative (TEI), an online database containing comprehensive evaluation data on UBC instructors.

"Students are frustrated so they're creating their own evaluation systems," Best says. "They want this information, and it should be presented in a professional manner, not with chili pepper rankings beside professors' names."

"UBC has wonderful faculty, brilliant researchers and engaging teachers. They're diverse and accomplished and [with TEI], I want to showcase that to incoming and current students so that when they have to make choices about courses, or about coming here to UBC, they can make educated decisions."

Currently, UBC has no centralized database of information on its faculty members and instructors, and access to evaluation data is inconsistent among the university's 12 faculties. In the past, another AMS initiative called the Yardstick attempted to provide online teaching evaluations, but the project failed due to lack of faculty participation, limited scope of information, and concerns that the system was being used to compare and judge

Grading the Professors

New database makes it official. BY MICHELLE COOK



Arts student Laura Best (l) and economics lecturer Robert Gateman put the bite on rating professors with chili peppers.

faculty members.

The TEI database would be a maintained by the university and searchable by instructor or course. It would contain information on an instructor's various areas of expertise — teaching, research and published works — as well as strengths and interests. Best would also like the database to eventually include each professor's teaching philosophy.

Best hopes the TEI's scope will help it to succeed where the Yardstick did not.

"I think that it's comprehensive and that has been a real selling point with people who aren't comfortable with

the idea of a professor with a number rating beside their name," she says.

As a third-year arts student, Best says she finds it frustrating to fill out evaluation forms for her courses at the end of each term and never see the end result of the evaluation process. Judging from feedback received by the AMS, other students feel the same way.

"Students e-mail me asking about teaching evaluations for certain departments and during the AMS elections, students were asking what we would do about evaluations," Best says.

"Now, if you want an evaluation

on a teacher, you have to go to the department in person and request it. If you want to know what a professor's research interests are, you have to go to the department homepage. Then, if you want to find a course that the professor teaches, you have to go to the student services centre. The information is out there, but at different levels of accessibility and most students don't know to ask for evaluations and most departments don't publicize them," Best says.

In comparison, the University of Western Ontario has a comprehensive online database of undergraduate course and instructor evaluations that

is maintained by the university. The University of Toronto works with the Arts and Science Student Union to publish the "anti-calendar" a comprehensive online listing of professor evaluations that is publicly accessible and supported by the dean of Arts and Science. Based on the recommendations of a task force created to look at teaching evaluations, the University of Calgary has created a Universal Student Rating of Instruction (USRI) website that includes a ratings database accessible to students and faculty. McGill is beginning to make its teaching evaluations available through an Internet database.

Although the TEI is still in its early stages, Best has been encouraged by the support it has received from the university administration, senate, the AMS and The Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth (TAG).

"Our belief is that students should have as much good information as possible to choices about what courses they want to take and that information needs to be in-depth and multidimensional," says TAG director Gary Poole.

The Faculty of Arts was already building a database of teaching evaluations and professor profiles when it was approached by Best to participate in the AMS initiative. The faculty sees the benefits of the TEI for both students and professors says Margery Fee, associate dean for Arts.

"I think this is great step forward. My feeling is that we have some excellent teachers here at UBC and some average, and some even below average, and this will help professors get their competitive urges going."

Best admits that some faculties, like Arts, are more interested in TEI than others. She hopes that when the Arts site launches in spring 2004, it will spur all faculties to participate.

"Students have been asking for evaluations for a long time and it's a question of finding a way that's accessible to students and representative of faculty members and beneficial to the university and I think this model addresses all those needs." □



THE NEW IRVING K. BARBER LEARNING CENTRE

This model shows a night view concept of the new Irving K. Barber Learning Centre which, when completed in 2005, will transform UBC's main library into a state of the art resource centre accessible to all British Columbians. It is currently under construction around the core of the Main Library, which opened in 1925. It will add more than 200,000 new square feet of inside floor spaced fully equipped to support wireless technology both inside and out. □

Unspoken Epidemic

BY HILARY THOMSON

What is the effect of continued exposure to the suffering of others?

That's the question UBC researchers and international trauma specialists will explore in an interdisciplinary workshop to be held in 2004 at UBC's Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies (PWIAS).

Cumulative exposure to suffering may result in vicarious trauma, also known as secondary trauma or compassion fatigue. Affecting people working with traumatized survivors, the condition is characterized by a transformation within the helper because of their empathy with the survivor. The transformation often means the helper develops similar traumatic stress reactions as the survivor.

Dr. David Kuhl, of the department of family practice, along with Assoc. Prof. Marla Arvay and Prof. Marv Westwood of the department of educational and counselling psychology and special education, are organizing a workshop to examine the scope and severity of vicarious trauma and also look at prevention and treatment strategies. Vicarious trauma affects both professional and non-professional helpers, however, the

workshop will focus solely on the effect on professionals ranging from nurses, doctors and humanitarian aid workers to lawyers and journalists.

"Vicarious trauma has been



recognized for about 15 years but there is little research in the area and no prevention or treatment programs exist," says Kuhl, an expert in palliative care and doctor-patient communication. "Left untreated, caregivers can become cynical, disillusioned, even intolerant and hostile toward everyone in their life — including the person they are supposed to be helping."

Listening to graphic descriptions of horrific events or witnessing or hearing of people's cruelty to one another are just some of the experiences that can lead to vicarious trauma — an occupational hazard for many professional helpers.

Symptoms of vicarious trauma can emerge without warning. They include fatigue, heart palpitations, difficulty concentrating and decision-making and feelings of anxiety, irritability and a cynical, dehumanizing attitude. Other signs are intrusive imagery and thoughts, depression or avoidance.

Often there is a significant disruption in identity, worldview, or religious beliefs. Those with a prior history of significant trauma or instability may suffer to a greater degree.

As symptoms progress, the helper can become less sensitive to the victim's concerns.

Dying patients have told Kuhl that the way the health-care provider communicated with them caused more suffering than the illness itself. The interactions start a downward spiral of pain, unmet needs and additional trauma, for both victim and helper. A Canadian Medical Association study recently reported that 45 per cent of doctors show features of burnout — a possible component of vicarious trauma.

continued on page 6



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IN THE NEWS

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

UBC Researcher Discovers 'Control Room' that Regulates Immune Response

The approximately 50 million people in the U.S. who suffer from autoimmune diseases like HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, and arthritis, may soon be able to control their immune responses, thanks to a breakthrough discovery by UBC microbiology and immunology professor Wilfred Jefferies.

Jefferies has discovered and characterized the mechanics of a cellular pathway that triggers immune responses, reported the *Associated Press*. He and his team have also uncovered a specialized cell substructure, or organelle, that dictates exactly how the immune system will be activated.

Jefferies believes that it will take about five years for scientists to use this information to create new therapies such as medication or vaccines to regulate immune responses in humans.

A New Kind of Genome

Some scientists are now sequencing "metagenomes," the DNA of entire ecosystems. The new efforts seek to read all the DNA in the bacterial communities found in a patch of soil or seawater or even the lining of the human gut.

Extracting DNA fragments from the environment can be difficult, particularly from soil, which contains acids that break down the genetic material.



PHOTO: HILARY THOMSON

Microbiology and Immunology Prof. Wilfred Jefferies has found the cellular pathway that triggers immune response.

"When somebody says they are going to sequence all the bacteria in a soil sample, well, that's rubbish," UBC microbiology and immunology professor emeritus Julian Davies told *The New York Times*.

There is still debate about how valuable it will be to reconstruct the genomes of all members of a community. "What you get is a catalogue," Davies said. "You get unnamed organisms. The question is how can you tell what they do."

Fish Fart Not Just Hot Air

Biologists have linked a mysterious, underwater farting sound to bubbles coming out of a herring's anus. No fish had been known to emit sound from its anus nor to be capable of producing such a high-pitched noise.

"It sounds just like a high-pitched raspberry," UBC fisheries professor Ben Wilson told the *New Scientist*.

Wilson and his colleagues cannot be sure why herring make this sound, but initial research suggests that it might explain the puzzle of how shoals keep together after dark.

HIV Undertreated Despite Availability of Free Care

Patients continue to die from untreated HIV despite the availability of free health care and drugs in some areas, according to research conducted by UBC professor Evan Wood.

Wood and colleagues used statistical tests to compare patients who had received anti-HIV drugs before death with those who had died without ever receiving treatment. HIV care and antiretroviral drugs are available free of charge in B.C.

Of the 1,094 patients who died from an HIV-related cause, nearly a third had never received treatment, the authors report in *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*.

Even among those who received treatment, only 28 percent of aboriginal people and 36 percent of women received anti-HIV drugs at least 75 percent of the time, the report indicates.

Cultural barriers "will need a culturally driven and relevant response," Wood told *Reuters*. □

LETTERS

Dear Editor:

Ed. Note: The following letter concerning an article entitled "University Town Continues to Grow" from *UBC Reports* Oct. 2, 2003 has been edited for length.

I don't think that any of us living in the faculty/staff corner of Hawthorn Place (near the intersection of Thunderbird and West Mall) are opposed to "including people from other parts of the community." If Dr. Pavlich really believes this, then he is very mistaken. If, however, he is engaged in his own form of political rhetoric he is doing a disservice to faculty who have made a commitment to live on campus and reduce the environmental impact of this university.

I would suspect that there are few who would really challenge the difficulties of accessing the local housing market for incoming faculty. For example, the least expensive family-size housing unit being provided in Hawthorn Lane that is targeted at faculty and staff would require a household income of at least \$110,000 per year. That is far above the starting salary for most faculty in arts and reasonably higher than starting salaries in most other faculties. Of course, whether or not an employer should be concerned about the housing needs of its employees is a separate question altogether.

One of the stated reasons (both publicly and in published documents) of creating a 'university town,' is to reduce the

impact of commuter traffic. The GVRD has been insistent that UBC take responsibility for the massive volume of single occupant cars commuting out to UBC every morning and returning home every evening. However, with housing priced out of the reach of most faculty and staff the people who are able to purchase housing here are far more likely to be single car commuting off campus, not just to work but also for shopping etc. One might also add that under the current conditions the near campus commuting will likely increase as children are ferried to and from school, short trips out for shopping or entertainment in the evening are organized by the growing on-campus community.

And finally, Dr. Pavlich says, with what one might imagine as some exasperation "we're not creating a monastery here." How true. Dr. Pavlich and his compatriots are creating another modernist suburb designed in a way that will make it hard to tell whether one is standing in a development on Point Grey, Steveston, Maple Ridge, North Vancouver or anywhere else that developers are in charge. What might actually contribute to a richer learning, academic, and research environment - in terms of innovative and environmentally friendly building design and grounds maintenance - has been ignored in the race to fit things into the bottom line.

Charles Menzies
Hawthorn Lane resident

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Lessons from The Pink Book

Law student prepares girls' guide to justice system . BY ERICA SMISHEK

UBC Law student Patricia Cochran sees red when she thinks how poorly adolescent girls living in poverty are treated in the criminal justice system.

She'd prefer to see pink.

Cochran is heading up the



UBC Law student Patricia Cochran.

research and writing for *The Pink Book*, a handbook designed to provide defence lawyers with the information they need to bring the best defence for girls aged 12 to 18 under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and protect the rights of girls in prison. Another version, *The Little Pink Book*, is also being prepared for girls themselves.

"Young women's rights are often overlooked and are not responded to fairly by police, by the courts, not by the correctional system," Cochran says. "I hope the books will help change that."

The books are an initiative of Justice for Girls, a social justice organization that promotes support, justice and equality for adolescent girls who have experienced violence and live in poverty. Cochran, now in third-year law, began doing pro bono work for the group two years ago, completing legal research projects and making presentations at workshops and conferences on behalf of the organization.

She and fellow law student Kat Kinch are collaborating on the handbooks, which will be readable collections of explanations and tips about legal issues, including human rights, through every step of the criminal justice process.

"Essentially, we're saying 'here's the law, here's what we think about the law, here's some background and here's some advice,'" Cochran explains. "We'll also be incorporating stories that are made up but are related to real lives. This will per-

sonalize issues and procedures in a way so people can understand how some obscure law can affect these young women."

Justice for Girls, which is partly funded by the Law Foundation of B.C. and Status of Women Canada, takes the feminist position that young women in poverty are the experts of their own experience. It works to provide the support and resources that girls need to act on their own behalf in creating change in their lives.

Cochran, who has a BA from McGill University and an MA in political science from the University of Toronto, says the books adhere to the same principle.

"We want lawyers to better understand how to effectively communicate with these young women. It's the responsibility of a lawyer that their client actually understands what's going on and that their client has to be the one to give the lawyer instructions.

"Many girls don't realize what their rights are in this regard. Lawyers must explain the roles clearly and put the decisions into the hands of young women in terms of whether to respond and how to proceed through the system. We need to put the power into these young women's hands."

Justice For Girls has also been working on a rights card, a basic outline with tips on what to do if approached by the authorities, arrested, interrogated, asked to be stripped searched, etc. that girls can carry in their pockets. □

UBC Researchers Help Save Millions for Health-Care Employers

BY HILARY THOMSON

A team of University of British Columbia researchers has helped B.C. health-care employers save approximately \$51 million in the past two years, according to a report recently released by the Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare (OHSAH).

"Our remarkable success is due to a strong collaboration of union and management and a unique association with the research community," says Annalee Yassi, OHSAH director and director of

interventions that include a guide to reducing workplace violence, programs to improve health and safety in kitchens and bagless laundry systems.

"This group provides an important bridge between academic research and real-life situations," says Chris Allnutt, Hospital Employees' Union secretary-business manager. "OHSAH analyses what works and what doesn't and then takes those theories into the workplace to create

"We hope that further investment will allow us to continue this work," says Yassi, Canada Research Chair in Transdisciplinary Health Promotion. "Taking care of health-care workers is absolutely necessary if we want to provide quality patient care."

Jointly governed by health-care employers and union representatives, OHSAH includes UBC researchers in faculties ranging from arts to applied science. The group studies, designs and evaluates inter-

B.C.'s health-care sector accounts for more time lost from work than any other provincial industry sector, according to the WCB's Statistics 2002.

UBC's Institute for Health Promotion Research.

The report cites a drop of 28 per cent in health-care industry injury rates since 1998, the year OHSAH was conceived, and a 38 per cent drop in time lost due to injury since 1999. Without the decreases, health-care employers would have paid about \$51 million more in Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) assessment rates over the last two years, says Yassi.

B.C.'s health-care sector accounts for more time lost from work than any other provincial industry sector, according to the WCB's *Statistics 2002*.

A key intervention has been the use of ceiling lifts to move patients. Following OHSAH research, the provincial health ministry and WCB invested \$21 million in 2001 toward new bed and lifting devices. Pilot studies at four sites showed reduction in lifting injuries of up to 80 per cent. Health-care employers and unions are implementing use of the lifts province-wide.

OHSAH has also collaborated in

interventions that have been shown to be effective."

The report marks the end of a five-year mandate for the group.

ventions and recommends health improvement strategies.

The report is available at www.ohsah.bc.ca. □

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The Iona Building at Vancouver School of Theology on the UBC campus. Photo: Perry Danforth

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If you are a UBC author, please contact Margaret Friesen **by January 7, 2004**.
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How Many Species can We Afford to Lose?

Researchers use new approach. BY MICHELLE COOK

Will we really be worse off when the last giant panda disappears from the earth? Does our own survival depend on the fate of the mountain gorilla?

one species can have on an entire ecosystem. Fifty years ago, disease had reduced the population of wildebeests on the plain to 100,000. Today, they number 1.5 million. With their come-

we can't do it all at once," Sinclair explains. "So this is going to be done bit by bit and when we get different people trying different things, we'll learn from that to build a more comprehensive experiment."

And if animal lovers were getting nervous, rest assured there are no plans to knock out any of the big predators or beloved furry poster animals — elephants, otters, orangutans — that we've come to associate with habitat loss or extinction. Researchers will be focusing instead on insects, plants, fungi and species like the nematode — a hard working little organism that lives in the soil decomposing dead plant material and recycling nutrients from it — because that's where they suspect most of the real biodiversity action is.

"If you knock out mammals, at a certain scale, it doesn't matter," Sinclair says. "In terms of the way the world functions, it probably doesn't matter whether we've got pandas or not. They're nice and furry,

appeal to us emotionally and esthetically, and could act as flagships to promote conservation, but in terms of how the

system works, it's probably not a big deal.

"Whereas, if you knock out certain bacteria from the soil, it's a big deal. We don't know that — yet, but there's an old adage that the answer lies in the soil and it probably does."

For this reason, the project may not capture the public's imagination and attention the way the studies of specific species done by scientists like Diane Fossey and Jane Goodall did 40 years ago, but Sinclair says the issues that BIOKO will be addressing are very much on the 21st century agenda. □

United Way Contributions Climb

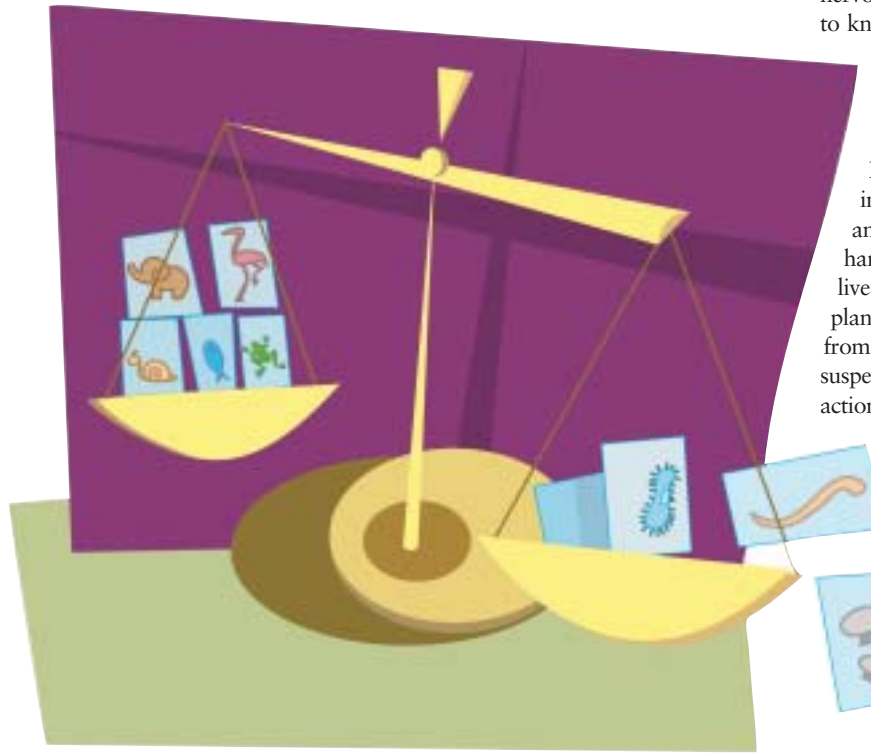


As the 2003 UBC United Way campaign wraps up this month, volunteers and donors continue to support this growing campaign. "With more than \$350,000 raised we have achieved 70 per cent of our fundraising goal to support social programs and services in the Lower Mainland," Eilis Courtney, one of this year's chairs, notes. "With one month left we are confident that we will reach our goal."

About \$15,000 of the money raised has come from the special events that have been going on around campus. "Departments have really shone in this area this year — from 50/50 draws to pancake breakfasts to traditional bake sales, students, faculty and staff have really worked together," says Deborah Austin, Courtney's co-chair. "These events have raised money, but as important is the awareness they've raised about the need to contribute to this community cause."

Both Austin and Courtney agree that the campaign would not be as successful as it is without the tremendous hard work and support of the volunteers on campus. "They deserve a huge thank you," Courtney says.

Donations will be accepted until the end of the tax year, Dec. 31. For more information on the campaign, photos and mentions about volunteers or how to donate, please visit www.unitedway.ubc.ca or phone 604-822-8929. □



The whooping crane? The common house sparrow?

The popular answer to all these questions would be 'yes.' The fact is we just don't know, says UBC zoology professor Anthony Sinclair, who has launched a project to study what really happens when a species gets "knocked out" of one of the planet's ecosystems.

"One of the dogmas that our society has is that biodiversity plays an important role in the stability of our systems, but we haven't actually got the evidence yet to support this," says Sinclair. "It sounds nice. It sounds logical, but my own experience of seeing so many species is that they can't all have equally important roles. There must be a huge number which don't matter."

"We need to ask, 'does it matter?' and it's important to recognize that we don't know the answer."

With a worldwide environmental movement fighting to protect thousands of plants, animals, insects and birds on endangered species lists, Sinclair knows it's a loaded question but one he will keep asking with the Biodiversity Knockout Experiment (BIOKO).

Launched two years ago with a

back, Sinclair and others have been able to track the effect on thousands of other species of plants, insects and animals and also on the climate in the wildebeest's habitat. But nobody has ever tried a controlled knock-out before.

For the BIOKO experiment, researchers will first remove a key species group from a controlled study plot. They will then subject the plot to a man-made disturbance. In the Yukon pilot being undertaken by UBC botany professor Roy Turkington and student Jennie McLaren, groups of native plants, legumes and fungi have been removed from the study area and fertilizer has been applied. The effects of the species loss on the plot will be monitored over three years.

It's an approach that's never been tried before. In the past, researchers have studied biodiversity by putting a few species together in a controlled environment, and extrapolating the results to determine the effects on larger habitats. The knock-out experiment starts at the opposite end of the scale with thousands of species and systematically removes key groups.

If the Yukon pilot is successful, plans are underway to conduct the same experiment in many different

geographical environments such as grasslands, savannah and tundra. Sinclair says that Canada, with its extreme environments ranging from the Far North with no species to the Prairies with a diversity of species, is particularly suited to the BIOKO experiment.

The massive, worldwide initiative will be run from UBC's Integrated Biodiversity Laboratory, a new facility for multidisciplinary research that will be built with \$33 million in funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund, in addition to funding from UBC.

Once the lab is completed, in about five years, Sinclair expects BIOKO to swing into high gear, with a new generation of ecosystem specialists from around the world involved in knock-out research.

"This is a big idea, and a big experiment; it will take a lot of people, and

CHUCK SLONECKER – RETIRES



Certificate of Merit for the UBC Master Teacher Award. He won the Killam Teaching Prize for UBC Medicine in 1996. He also received the JCB Grant Award from the Canadian Association for Anatomy, Neurobiology and Cell Biology. In 2001, he received the President's Service Award.

He is involved with the YMCA Youth Basketball Association Program and was a board member, Community Unit, from 1975-1991. Slonecker also served for two years as the acting vice president of External Relations at UBC.

Slonecker has produced 19 publications, five book reviews, 16 special publications, one text book and 25 abstracts.

It will not be easy to replace Chuck Slonecker. In fact, the university has decided that it will take two people to take his place in the ceremonies office.

Eilis Courtney will take over as Director of Ceremonies and will retain the administrative duties of the role. As the former Associate Director of Ceremonies she oversaw functions that ranged from the royal visit to pancake breakfasts. Known for her competence, humour and unflappable nature, she has served as UBC's resident expert on ceremony and protocol for more than 10 years.

The ceremonial role of the function will now be split off into a new position called University Marshal. This prestigious position is modeled on a similar title and role at Harvard University.

UBC's first university marshal is Nancy Hermiston who is also a professor in the School of Music. (see sidebar below)

Chuck Slonecker's legacy of public service and years of loyal devotion to UBC will undoubtedly be missed but unlikely to be ever forgotten. □

New Marshal

There's a new Marshal in town, a new University Marshal to be exact.

Music professor Nancy Hermiston has been appointed UBC's first university marshal. Starting Jan. 1, she will take over the ceremonial duties performed for the last 13 years by the retiring Director of Ceremonies, Chuck Slonecker.

"It's a great job. I love it," said Prof. Hermiston. "I'm really going to enjoy it."

Hermiston was appointed to the U.B.C. faculty in 1995 as coordinator of the voice and opera division. Her operatic career has taken her throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. Her New York debut took place in Carnegie Hall with Marilyn Horne and Mario Bernardi. Her European debut led to a permanent engagement with the prestigious Nürnberg Opera. She has held numerous appointments as voice teacher, and as stage director at the Meistersinger Konservatorium, Nürnberg, and the University of Toronto opera and performance divisions.

Her Opera Ensemble, created in 1995, has performed in Europe five times and has begun an association with the Opera House in Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic, for regular summer performances



Music professor Nancy Hermiston has been appointed UBC's first university marshal.

there. They have also toured British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario and collaborated with Vancouver Opera, the Vancouver Symphony and various community groups.

This new role she will fill is modeled after a similar position at Harvard University. The University Marshal that takes the lead role at graduation ceremonies — selecting and directing marshals and mace-bearers and directing the Chancellors procession. The Marshal also acts as MC at major university events such as building openings, recognition events and the UBC annual general meeting. The Marshal will always be a full-time UBC faculty member appointed for a five-year term. □

What to Expect — or Make That Forget — When You're Expecting

Psychology research explores link between hormones and memory. BY ERICA SMISHEK

Expectant mothers not-so-affectionately call it “baby brain” — that memory loss that strikes during preg-

nancy in the male brain.

Galea's research with rats and meadow voles, funded through the



Liisa Galea, associate professor of psychology at UBC.

nancy, especially in the third trimester, and leaves them wondering where they've put their keys or parked their car.

It's no laughing matter and it's not their imagination. But it could be their hormones.

Liisa Galea, an associate professor of psychology at UBC, is studying how estrogen levels affect learning and memory. She says while people blame fluctuating hormone levels for all kinds of strange behaviours and emotions, few women make the connection between their menstrual cycle and their ability to think.

“Evidence shows that the ability to orient position in the environment is related to hormones,” Galea explains. “These spatial abilities decline during the third trimester of pregnancy and bounce back later on.”

She knows of what she speaks. Pointing out her office window to the parking lot across UBC's West Mall, Galea recounts her own inability to find her car on numerous occasions during her last weeks of pregnancy.

“I was supposed to pick up my son at 5 p.m. and had 15 minutes to get there,” she says. “I was in tears in the parking garage because I couldn't remember where I left my car.”

People need two kinds of memory to find their cars at day's end. Reference memory — long-term stable memory that does not change from day-to-day — reminds us that we always park in Lot One. Working memory — which assimilates new information that changes frequently — allows us to recall the specific spot in the lot.

Galea explains that medium levels of estrogen, particularly estradiol, assist with spatial working memory. Estradiol levels are optimum during menstruation, for example, so a woman would find it easier to locate her car during that particular time of the month.

Levels are absent or extremely low during menopause, however, and are very high during ovulation or the last trimester of pregnancy. These times are associated with poorer spatial ability, hence spatial working memory declines and finding that car gets more difficult.

Women aren't alone in the battle. Men have just as many estrogen receptors in the brain as women and testosterone is converted to estradiol

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, explores how estradiol affects learning and memory and the brain. Does it affect the architecture of the brain and change of the shape of brain cells? Does it regulate the birth of new neurons in adulthood? And why do estrogens (women produce three different forms — estrone, estradiol and estriol) seem to protect against the detrimental effects of stress caused by the release of the corticosteroid hormones?

“Having kids is a life-changing experience,” she says. “It's not until you experience it that you see some of the questions that arise. When I got pregnant, I realized that there wasn't a lot of work being done in this area.”

While there have been anecdotal reports of memory problems from women in pregnancy and menopause, studies from the scientific community have been limited. Some have attributed weakened memory to iron-deficiency during pregnancy, others to high levels of oxytocin, a natural hormone produced in women during pregnancy and while nursing.

In the late 1990s, British researchers scanned the brains of 10 moms-to-be during their last trimesters and again a few months after their babies were born, and announced that brain cell volume decreases during pregnancy, only to plump up again sometime after delivery.

“It was a big splash in the media at the time,” Galea says. “But the problem was that researchers never did baseline measurements. Their results just lead to more questions. Could it really mean that maybe the brain grew? Does it mean that childbirth makes the brain more efficient? Or is it just that we have more to do once we're mothers and have to become better managers?” □

Trek 2010 Gets a Face-Lift

A new vision for the future. BY BRIAN LIN

Trek 2000, UBC's strategic plan, is undergoing a face-lift as the university re-examines its current vision and looks forward to a landmark year for British Columbia.

Tentatively titled *Trek 2010*, the new strategic planning document is gathering input from a wide range of internal and external communities on what UBC's long-term goals should be for the rest of the decade. Ten thousand copies of a discussion paper and survey have been distributed on and off campus. The survey is also available online at www.trek2000.ubc.ca/future.html.

“2010 will be a significant year for UBC and the province with the Winter Olympics showcasing the best we have to offer,” says Herbert Rosengarten, executive director of the President's Office. “It's also a reasonable target for us to achieve a new set of goals.”

Published in 1998, *Trek 2000* identified steps to advance the university in five areas: people, learning, research, community and internationalization. Supplemental pamphlets and annual “report cards” were added to assist members of the campus community implement the strategies from both the macro and micro levels.

“Our grand vision in *Trek 2000* was to become the best university in Canada,” explains Rosengarten, widely regarded as the official keeper of the *Trek* vision. “For *Trek 2010*, we want to examine whether that

goal was too ambitious, or whether we should extend our horizon and compare ourselves to the best universities in the world.

“Meanwhile, we must remember that first and foremost we are here to serve our students,” says Rosengarten. “We need to be tuned into the world around us while recognizing that our primary commitment is to the citizens of British Columbia.”

Since the publication of *Trek 2000*, research funding has almost tripled and student bursaries and scholarship have increased significantly. The aggressive recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty has made UBC an attractive place for top students in both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Much stronger links have been forged with external and international communities through the Learning Exchange, the downtown Robson Square campus, and the International Student Initiative; and the expansion of the medical school will double the number of medical students by 2010.

“We've made great progress and achieved many of our original goals,” says Rosengarten. “But in the area of First Nations student recruitment, in particular, we recognize the need to devise new approaches and set realistic targets.”

The “one thousand by 2000” motion passed by the Senate in 1996 stipulated that UBC was to recruit 1,000 First Nations students by the year 2000. The goal was incorporated into *Trek 2000* but remains one of the

most difficult to achieve — currently there are approximately 500 self-identified aboriginal students at UBC.

As a result, *Trek 2010* will seek input specifically from aboriginal students and communities through the First Nations House of Learning and through band counsellors. “Right now, a reasonable goal looks something like increasing First Nations student enrolment by 10 per cent every year,” says Rosengarten, who adds that such a strategy can better ensure continuous growth in aboriginal student recruitment.

“*Trek 2010* will be our guide through dramatic changes in store for UBC, including the creation of a vibrant University Town, and the development of the new Ike Barber Learning Centre, which will provide our students with cutting-edge learning technology,” says Rosengarten.

“One of the biggest challenges ahead is to improve the learning environment despite constraints in space and funding, and a good strategic plan will definitely make things easier.

“That's why we encourage everybody to participate in the survey and tell us what they think is important to UBC's future.” □



Enough Tribbles for One Day

Mapping the Psychological Effects of Space and Polar Missions. BY ERICA SMISHEK

In the world of fiction, astronauts and Polar explorers often go mad, are overtaken by small, irresistibly cute furry creatures, or get killed by alien life forms or mysterious disease. The ending is rarely a happy one.

In this world, however, these modern-day adventurers usually face slightly more banal challenges — post-mission career pursuits and goals, relationship and family issues, spiritual crisis.

There has been a drastic change in how astronauts have been viewed by the public just as there was with Antarctica. At first, they were pioneers; they became very famous and went on triumphal tours. But who is in the Antarctic now? Whom can you name?

Yet no one can deny that the lives of these men and women are a little less ordinary than many and that weeks or months isolated in space or at polar research stations has an impact on them, their colleagues and their families.

Peter Suedfeld, professor emeritus of psychology at UBC, has embarked on a four-year study to determine exactly what that impact is. In the first behavioural science contract awarded by the Canadian Space Agency, Suedfeld will research the values, motivations, problem-solving approaches, emotional reactions and spiritual experiences of participants before, during and after polar and space missions as well as the reactions of their

organizational support personnel. His wife, UBC Social Work and Family Studies associate professor Phyllis Johnson, will study the reactions of their families.

“It's clear if you look at the autobiographies of astronauts that having flown in space puts them on a different track in life,” says Suedfeld. “Some stay in the space program, some go into business, some go into academia.

“But a lot take some totally

these missions,” he says. “And much of the research has also ignored the positive impact.”

Suedfeld says the favourable long-term psychological effects of working in such secluded environments outweigh the occasional undesirable short-term changes (sleep disturbances, anxiety attacks, concentration problems, sadness).

“There can be a real sense of achievement for most of the partic-

ipants on these missions. And there is a real sense of awe at the grandeur of the environment they're in,” he says.

“It often makes people reorganize their priorities. And it can give them a profound feeling of hope, optimism and love.”

Suedfeld will compare the 40-year span of manned space flight with early Antarctic explorations. Specifically, he and Johnson will do a thematic content analysis of the materials — diaries, letters, journals, interviews, autobiographies, etc. — that have been written or recorded by participants, support personnel and family members on missions sponsored from various

continued on page 6



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North Campus Draft Neighbourhood Plan

UBC has prepared a *Draft* Neighbourhood Plan for the North Campus area.

North Campus is located north of Northwest Marine Drive and is surrounded by Pacific Spirit Regional Park. The area includes lands from Green College to Norman MacKenzie House.

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DIRECTIONS

For a map showing the location of the Asian Centre go to: www.planning.ubc.ca/wayfinding/Finding/dbase.html and enter "Asian Centre" or call (604) 822-6400 for more information.

INTERNET

Background and information: www.universitytown.ubc.ca

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Linda Moore, Associate Director
External Affairs, University Town
Tel: 604.822.6400
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UNIVERSITY TOWN

Unspoken Epidemic

continued from page 1

"These people are paying the price for a job that needs to get done," says Kuhl.

As a physician, Kuhl is well aware of how health-care professionals are often regarded as heroic or superhuman and unaffected by the trauma they witness.

"Denying or trivializing feelings and leaving your personal life at home becomes a matter of pride — but psychologically it's not possible."

The phenomenon is also seen in military personnel who witness atrocities, torture and death. Marv Westwood has

worked extensively with veterans and Canadian peacekeepers suffering from stress reactions to trauma. Some of the counselling interventions he has used, such as guided autobiography and therapeutic re-enactment, may also be useful for those suffering vicarious trauma.

Marla Arvay, a specialist in the effects of trauma, has conducted a national survey on vicarious trauma in Canada as well as a narrative study on trauma counsellors' experience of the condition.

Funding for the workshop is provided by the PWIAS and UBC's Office of the Vice-president, Research. □

Enough Tribbles

continued from page 5

"There has been a drastic change in how astronauts have been viewed by the public just as there was with Antarctica. At first, they were pioneers; they became very famous and went on triumphal tours. But who is in the Antarctic now? Whom can you name? The public doesn't know what's going on down there.

"It's the same thing with astronauts. We knew those on the first Apollo missions. But who were the last 10 or 20 people to go into space? People will know the names if there was a disaster but we don't know the average working astronaut.

"I'm curious how this change in adulation and fame affects the explorers and astronauts themselves."

Suedfeld's previous research has included studies in political, environmental, social, health and cognitive psychology as

well as personality. With a general focus on how people cope with and adapt to demanding, challenging and stressful experiences, he has completed archival studies of decision-making during international and personal crises, participant observation and field studies in polar stations, and interviews with Holocaust survivors, prisoners in solitary confinement, astronauts and polar explorers.

He says the new study won't help with the selection process for future space missions but instead will better prepare participants, their families and the organizational support staff for the missions and provide support after the fact.

"So few psychologists are involved in this field — yet the issues are applicable to the rest of the world," Suedfeld says. "It is a great research opportunity and I hope this will lead to more behavioural science research in a space context by Canadians." □



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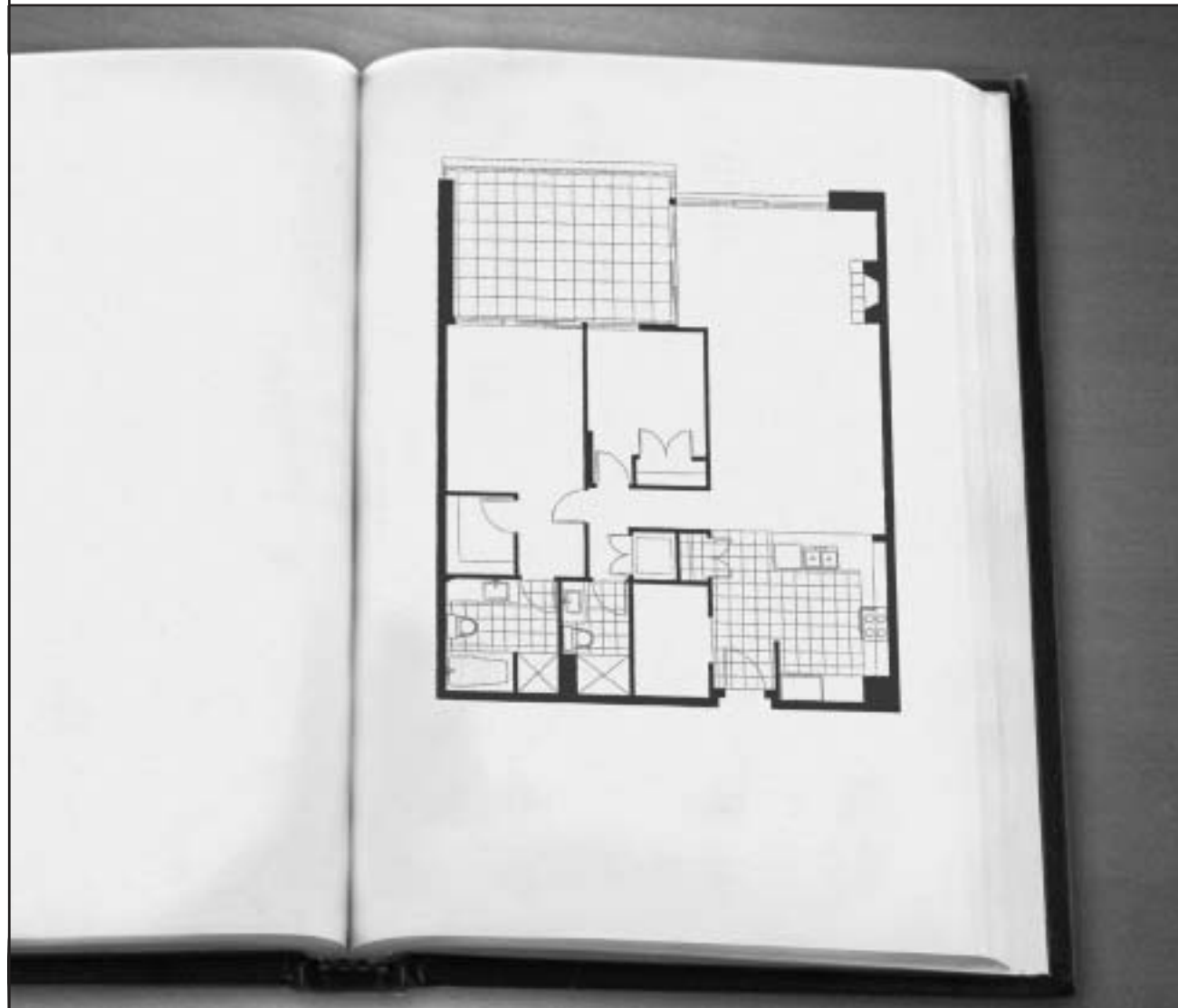
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A New Way to Search for Diamonds in the Rough

Breaking new ground

BY MICHELLE COOK

Thanks to an invitation to study an unusual deposit of kimberlite in Canada's Northwest Territories, UBC researchers have discovered a new, cost-effective way to help diamond mining companies search for the valuable minerals and develop mine operations.

Kimberlite is a rare type of rock that sometimes, but not always, contains diamonds.

While their findings may be new, researchers Ron Clowes and Phil Hammer used an existing method of underground exploration — seismic reflection — that is commonly used by the petroleum industry to produce subsurface images but until now, has not been considered effective for finding diamonds.

"There were a lot of unknowns from a research point of view and we wanted to answer two questions," says Hammer, a research associate in the Dept. of Earth and Ocean Sciences. "Is seismic reflection a cost-effective way to explore for shallow



UBC researchers used vibroseis trucks to help them 'map' kimberlite fields in Canada's Northwest Territories.

The problem was that the kimberlite at Snap Lake is unlike most of the world's other kimberlite deposits.

Kimberlite formations are created when kimberlite magma travels rapidly to the earth's surface in massive explosive eruptions. The eruptions typically form

depths we wanted to look at — depths ranging from near the surface down to 1,500 metres, and you would not normally be able to see it without extremely high frequencies which are quickly absorbed with depth."

With funding from the two companies

In a business where it can cost up to \$300,000 to drill one sample hole to reach certain types of kimberlite deposits, mining companies want to know as much as possible about a mineral deposit before breaking the earth's surface.

kimberlite dykes and sills in a hard rock environment like the Northwest Territories, and can seismic reflection produce images of the kimberlite that would be useful for mine planning?"

In a business where it can cost up to \$300,000 to drill one sample hole to reach certain types of kimberlite deposits, mining companies want to know as much as possible about a mineral deposit before breaking the earth's surface. Hammer says the work done at UBC proved seismic reflection could be a very good exploration tool for some kimberlite structures.

"The results suggest that we can use it to find the thin, kimberlite sheets at depths of more than 1,000 metres. In addition, the technique can show where kimberlite sheets are really complex. That is of interest to mining companies because it's the complex areas that are going to cost them extra money to mine."

Hammer and Clowes became involved in Canada's diamond hunting race in 1999 when Clowes was approached by Vancouver-based company, Diamond Resources Ltd. A professor of earth and ocean sciences and director of Lithoprobe, a 20-year national earth sciences research project, Clowes has been working with hundreds of geosciences researchers to explore Canada's geological history, including the development of seismic reflection technologies needed to see what lies beneath the country's surface.

Diamond Resources was interested in whether seismic reflection could be used to explore a field of kimberlite at Snap Lake. Seismic reflection, like sonar, uses sound waves to "map" subsurface terrain. From previous geology work, the company already knew that the Snap Lake kimberlite, located 100 km south of the rich kimberlite deposits of Lac de Gras where the Ekati and Diavik diamond mines now operate, contained high-quality diamonds.

carrot-shaped pipes with surface diameters hundreds of metres wide that taper down into the earth for thousands of metres. Diamonds lie buried in these long, vertical pipes.

Unlike the more common vertical pipes, the Snap Lake kimberlite deposit is a thin, flat-lying sheet, two to three metres thick, spread out over 25 square kilometres. It gently dips from the surface to depths of 1,300 metres or more. It also feathers, in places, into multiple strands.

The kimberlite's unusual structure made it difficult to detect with traditional exploration methods such as magnetic and electromagnetic surveys done from the air. Without more specific information about the type of deposit, drilling over such a vast area would be prohibitively expensive, and mapping the sheet for mine development purposes would be difficult. Diamond Resources, along with international diamond giant DeBeers, which owns 70 per cent of the Snap Lake property through its Canadian subsidiary, needed to find a different way to gather detailed data. The companies asked Clowes for help.

"Knowing what we've been able to achieve with helping base metal companies in applying seismic reflection technologies to exploration, they wondered whether this method would be feasible at Snap Lake," Clowes says, adding that, at first, even he was sceptical.

"Seismic reflection techniques are well suited for mapping sub-horizontal structures so kimberlite dykes and sills have the potential to be good seismic targets," Clowes explains. "But I didn't know whether the technique would work at Snap Lake. If you took a straight rule-of-thumb analysis, it shouldn't work because the kimberlite is so thin relative to the

and a collaborative research grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Clowes and Hammer first ran a computer-based feasibility study using data taken from drill hole samples from the site. Based on these results, they headed into the field in April 2001 to see if they could use seismic reflection to map the underground kimberlite field beneath the tundra and the icy surface of Snap Lake.

With more than 800 tiny geophones planted along a straight line in the frozen ground to pick up subsurface sound waves, the researchers ran seismic surveys using two methods to produce vibrations — explosive charges and vibroseis, a way of pounding the earth with a device mounted on a pickup-truck-sized vehicle. The results surprised them. Emerging from the data was a striking image of the kimberlite curving deep down into the earth.

"We thought we'd probably have success at shallower depths, but we imaged the kimberlite to well over 1,500 metres and that was very exciting and rewarding," Hammer says.

The companies that sponsored the research are also pleased with the results. Diamond Resources has since carried out a second successful survey using vibroseis. DeBeers has plans to begin mining the property, and has consulted with Clowes and Hammer about running marine seismic surveys on Snap Lake with the goal of further identifying the kimberlite's characteristics. The company has indicated that it wants to continue seismic exploration work.

"If a 2D marine survey is successful, they can also apply this technique in 3D fashion, and that's what they're really interested in — mapping in 3D," Clowes says. □

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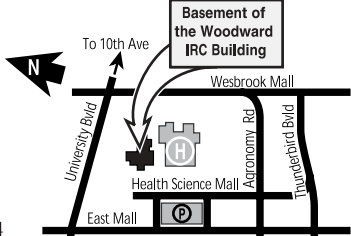
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UBC Development Permit Board

The Development Permit Board meets on the third Wednesday of every month at 5 p.m. to consider development applications for non-institutional development on campus lands, unless there are no applications to consider. The public is invited to attend meetings. Please visit the Campus & Community Planning website for information on upcoming meeting dates and locations.

The December Development Permit Board will convene one week early on account of the holiday season:

Date: Wednesday, December 10, 2003

Time: 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Location: Peter Wall Institute, 6331 Crescent Road, Lg. Conference Rm.

Current development applications are posted on our website at:
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If you have questions contact:

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Karly Henney, Planning Assistant
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Two UBC Professors Emeriti have been Awarded France's Highest Honour.

Dr. Chuni Roy, clinical professor emeritus of psychiatry, and Dr. Victor Gomel, professor emeritus, obstetrics and gynecology, have been named Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur.

Created in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, the Legion of Honour is the highest award given by the French Republic for outstanding service to France.

Roy, who joined UBC in 1972, pioneered the treatment of psychiatrically ill prisoners in Canada. He served as medical director of a maximum-security psychiatric prison hospital in Abbotsford, B.C., where medical graduates were trained in a postgraduate diploma course in penitentiary medicine that Roy developed in collaboration with the University of Paris.

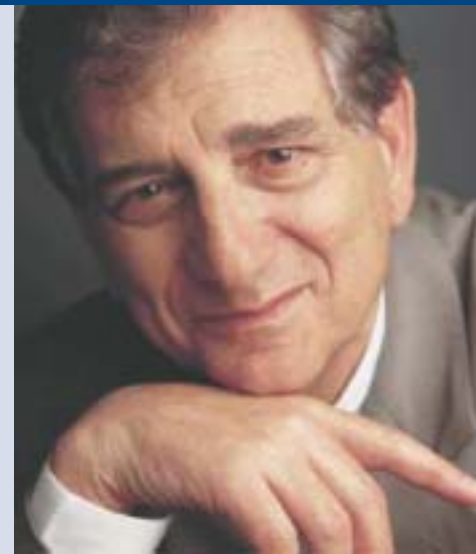
Founder of the International Council of Prison Medical Services based in Paris, Roy launched an international campaign for the ethical treatment of prisoners. Roy is also honorary consul of the French-speaking West African nation of Burkina Faso.

Gomel is an expert in gynecologic surgery and reproductive medicine. He has trained French gynecologists for more than 20 years and is planning a French national education and research centre on birthing.

Gomel joined UBC in 1964 and introduced many surgical techniques to Canada such as laparoscopy and hysteroscopy. Described as an international superstar of microsurgery, he has offered international workshops in microsurgical techniques in gynecology for almost 30 years. He has also contributed significantly to knowledge of female reproductive physiology.

He developed an in vitro fertilization (IVF) program in UBC's Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynecology that in 1983 was successful in delivering Canada's first IVF baby.

The awards will be presented in Paris.



Victor Gomel earns France's highest honour.

UBC Professor Emeritus Awarded Order of the Rising Sun of Japan

John F. Howes, UBC professor emeritus of Asian Studies, has been awarded the Order of the Rising Sun of Japan in recognition of his service and dedication to facilitate understanding between Canada and Japan. The award is one Japan's most prestigious honours.

According to the Consulate General of Japan, Howes — who first studied and worked in Japan in the 1940s — actively found ways to connect with local communities and academic organizations bridging Japan and the West. His practical approach to teaching and enthusiasm influenced generations of students.

Howes specializes in Christianity in Japan, the modernization of Japan and the study of two influential thinkers of the modern era, Uchimura Kanzo and Nitobe Inazo.

New Head for Island Medical Program

Dr. Oscar Casiro has been appointed associate dean of the Island Medical Program (IMP), part of UBC's Faculty of Medicine expansion.

Educated in Argentina, Casiro immigrated to Canada in 1980 and completed training in pediatrics and neonatology at the University of Manitoba. He has worked at the Health Sciences Centre there since 1985 and has been associate dean of undergraduate medical education at the University of Manitoba since 1999.

His research interests include the long-term outcomes of high-risk premature infants and the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy.

Casiro will be based at the University of Victoria and will also serve as head of the division of medical sciences. He will assume his responsibilities in January, 2004.

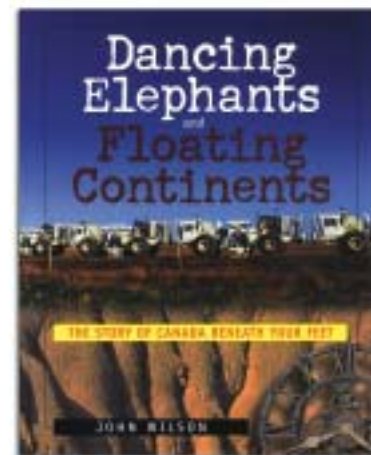
The IMP, along with the Northern Medical Program at the University of Northern B.C., are partner programs in the Faculty of Medicine's expansion that will double the number of undergraduate medical student spaces by 2010. □

A Good Read BY MICHELLE COOK

With the holiday season approaching, those with young ones on their gift lists might want to consider a remarkable children's book with an interesting UBC link.

Dancing Elephants and Floating Continents (Key Porter Books, 2003, \$24.95) tells the story of how the earth was formed. Complete with continents that crash and crush, oceans that vanish and reappear and mountain ranges that rise and crumble, it's an adventure story sure to thrill budding geologists that was written using data from the Lithoprobe project, Canada's largest and longest-lived national earth sciences research project. Since 1984, more than 800 university, government and industry scientists have been studying and probing the earth's crust to understand the geological evolution of Canada.

And the UBC link? Lithoprobe's director is Prof. Ron Clowes, a geophysicist and professor in the Earth and Ocean Sciences Dept. who helped author John Wilson with the book's content and illustrations. □



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