

UBC REPORTS

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Getting the Small Picture

BioImaging facility sees it all. BY MICHELLE COOK



Elaine Humphrey sees a lot of strange things in her line of work, but some of the requests she gets are even stranger — like the time a crew member on the X-Files called to borrow some of Humphrey's creepy “bug” photos to use in an episode of the popular sci-fi TV show.

Stranger still was the day a researcher from the Centre for Disease Control asked her if he could come to her offices to take some pictures of a new virus named SARS.

Fielding such diverse requests is all in a day's work when you run UBC's BioImaging Facility, says Humphrey, the unit's director since 1996.

It's the place where people go when they want to get a picture — a really good picture — of what they're studying. That includes everything from viruses and bacteria to human brain tissue and the body parts of all kinds of garden crawlers magnified to thousands of times their actual size.

The facility is tucked away, in classic horror movie fashion, in a remote basement corner of the BioSciences Building. But the strangest things in it are the images produced there with the help of some of the most sophisticated microscopes, computers, scanners and other magnification and digital photo production equipment on the market.

On the walls are close-ups — many of them taken by Humphrey — of python-sized millipedes, tarantula fangs, and a centimetre-long poacher fish of dragon-like proportions. As for

the SARS virus, Humphrey says it wasn't so menacing to look at, even when enlarged.

“It was just a blob with little blobs around it,” says Humphrey. “Not nearly as gorgeous as the beautiful crystalline structures of marine viruses that are brought down from [microbiology and immunology and marine biology professor Curtis] Suttle's lab to be photographed.”

If Humphrey, who has a PhD in oceanography, sounds like she's seen it all, she probably has — at least when it comes to the biological sciences research being done on campus.

Annually more than 650 researchers use the facility. On a typical day, UBC's star microbiologist Brett Finlay might drop by to do some work related to his research on the SARS vaccine or E. coli bacteria, or leading immunologist Wilf Jefferies could book time to produce images for his work to combat immune disorders. Outside users — from biotech powerhouse QLT to local artisan cheese makers — also pay to use the equipment.

Humphrey is quick to point out that research isn't the facility's only function. She and her staff are just as likely to be found teaching a group of graduate students how to use the Cryo

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PHOTO: BAYNE STANLEY

With sophisticated magnification techniques, Elaine Humphrey can take larger-than-life photos of sea creatures like the poacher fish (above left).

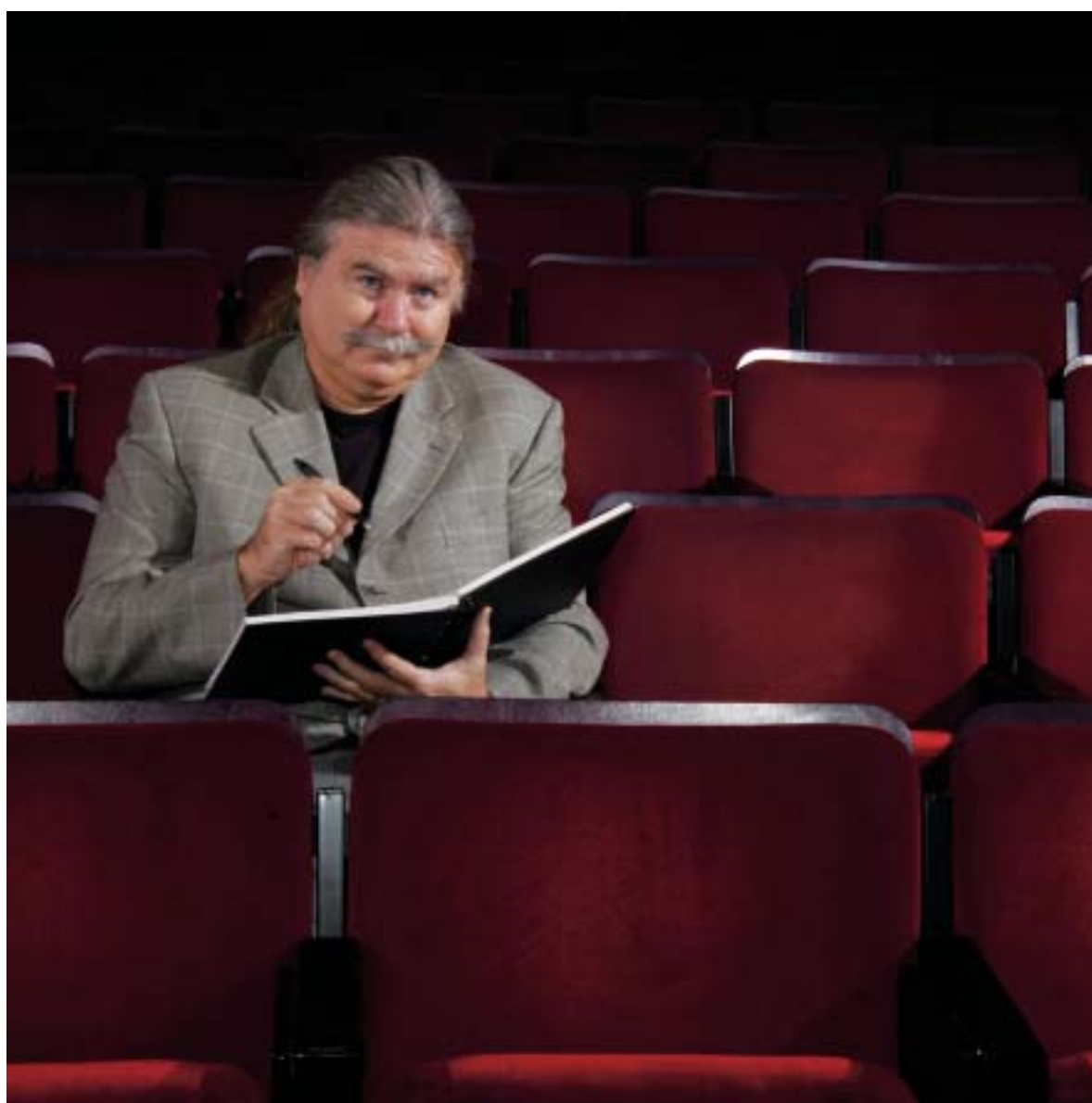


PHOTO: BAYNE STANLEY

Mark Harris believes more — and better — subtitled films will enrich our culture and our lives.

Not Lost in Translation

UBC Creative Writing course examines the art of subtitling. BY ERICA SMISHEK

Mark Harris more closely resembles your big brother's gentle, slightly disheveled best friend than a cultural warlord.

But word by word, line by line, he is taking on Hollywood's global domination of the creative marketplace and injecting some much-needed diversity into the films, television, animation and even comic books available to Canadians.

Harris is the originator, instructor and inspirational guru behind *The Art of Subtitling*, a unique course offered through UBC's Creative Writing program and thought to be the only one of its kind in Canada. Aimed at filmmakers, screenwriters, playwrights, language and comparative literature students, film scholars and freelance journalists, it explores one of the most important if underrated motion picture arts.

“I consider it a counter-attack to [Motion Picture Association of America President] Jack Valenti and his desire to dominate the world market with American films,” Harris says. “I want to have genuine globalism versus this phony globalism we have now.”

“Why is it that with 150 channels, we can't see Indonesian flying head [well known in Southeast

Asian folklore, a vampire-like creature who must feed on blood] movies? Why do we just get reruns of *Seinfeld* or *MASH*?”

Quite clearly, the man loves language and is fascinated by how words unite with pictures or performance to create a rare slice of life shaped by country and culture. He wants to share that love with students and, in the process, develop a talent pool capable of creating idiomatic Canadian versions of foreign-language films.

“I want to open up people's minds to different things,” Harris says with enthusiasm and without arrogance.

Working in teams, language and literature specialists are paired with students who concentrate on screenwriting and film studies. They have the opportunity to study the script as it is rewritten into another language and to become the writer or co-writer of select scripts and scenes in English.

In addition to subtitles for films, students produce versions of comic books, graphic novels, animation, TV-friendly plays and opera libretti. More unusual projects have included an entirely new genre called *photoroman*, which matches autobiographical

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IN THE NEWS

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

Canada Fast-Tracks Vaccines

Canadian researchers are fast-tracking efforts to ward off the deadly SARS virus.

Research funded by the province of British Columbia and led by UBC microbiologist *Brett Finlay* could see human trials in place as early as next fall if there was another outbreak of SARS.

This summer's outbreak affected 8,100 people around the world, killing 774, including 44 in Canada.

"This is not a long, slow, methodical work-it-out type (of) vaccine," Finlay told Reuters.com, adding that his group is trying to parlay \$2.6 million Cdn into a usable vaccine in an unprecedented two years — a process that normally takes a decade and at least \$200 million Cdn.

Seeking Ivy Amid the Maple

The number of American university students in Canada has nearly doubled in the last five years, to more than 4,200 this year, reports the Los Angeles Times.

Three leading Canadian schools — UBC in Vancouver, the University of Toronto and Queens University in Kingston, — have drawn more Americans by recruiting jointly in the United States, calling their group "Canadian Ivy."

Donald Webrung, a UBC professor who directs international recruiting for the school, said the number of U.S. undergraduates at UBC has more than tripled in five years, to 241 students in the last school year.

Anorexia may Cause Emphysema

The malnutrition that results from anorexia may cause emphysema, UBC radiology professor *Harvey Coxon* told CBS News.

Coxon and colleagues used a new method of assessing computed tomography scans to analyze the lungs of 14 anorexia patients and found the malnutrition in these patients changed the physical structure of their lungs.

"There is a reduction in the amount of lung tissue in patients with anorexia nervosa," says Coxon, who is also an investigator at Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute at Vancouver General Hospital.

"It is unclear whether these structural changes are permanent, but if they are, early therapy is important in patients who have anorexia."

Sexing up Cellphone Ads

Mobile phones with cameras are quickly catching on in Canada — and Telus Mobility has seized on



PHOTO: BAYNE STANLEY

More and more U.S. students are coming to Canada for quality post-secondary education.

the new technology with a heavy advertising blitz that combines cute with sexual innuendo.

Using sex "can be very effective," UBC marketing professor *Darren Dahl* told The Globe and Mail.

"It certainly attracts attention," said Dahl, who is researching sexual themes in advertising. "That's the first goal of advertising, to break through the clutter."

Still, he says, the situation is a "bit tricky. With concerns of privacy with these types of phones, it's a tough balancing act."

S&P Affirms UBC 'AA-' Ratings

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services has affirmed its 'AA-' long-term issuer credit and senior unsecured debt ratings on UBC, reports Forbes.com.

The ratings on UBC reflect the university's status as a flagship university in British Columbia and its broad course range with high academic standards.

The ratings also reflect UBC's strong and growing research capability, together with significant endowment income that diversify the university's revenue sources.

Paving the Way for Female Viagra

UBC master's student *Shona Penhale* has boldly gone where no scientist has gone before — and mapped the previously unidentified nerves that cause sexual pleasure in women.

Penhale has unravelled the mysterious conduits of nerves that lace through a mere — but critical — eight centimetres of the vagina.

The results could provide vital information about female sexual dysfunction, may lead to a viable Viagra for women and could help surgeons avoid damaging crucial pleasure-carrying nerve pathways

during surgery.

"It was completely uncharted," Penhale told The Globe and Mail. Already, a doctor in Europe is using a three-dimensional computer model based on Penhale's findings as an educational tool.

Hockey and Opera Collide on 'Opera Night in Canada'

The *UBC Opera Ensemble* is using Canada's favourite sport to introduce school children to the opera.

Dressed in red practice jerseys, the ensemble emerge onstage to the Hockey Night in Canada theme song. The front of their jerseys show a treble clef while on the back, instead of surnames, appear each "player's" voice name: soprano, mezzo, tenor and baritone. The performance consists of excerpts from famous operas.

The goal is to show kids that singing opera can be a job, just like playing hockey, co-creator and soprano *Shauna Martin* told the CBC. She hopes that giving children this early taste will help open their minds to opera when they get older.

Why Abused Women Take it

UBC professor *Mary Russell* has spent the last 15 years trying to figure out why women become locked in abusive relationships. She now believes she has the key.

Along with obvious factors such as financial hardship and fear of reprisals, women stay because of their beliefs about relationships, Russell told the Vancouver Sun.

"Belief systems are critical, they underlie everything," said Russell, who found those who abuse their partners believe they are superior, deserving, and the centre of their lives.

Abused women also often feel they can't manage on their own, and are convinced their partner comes first, Russell added. □

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Health Students Fan Out Across B.C.

Program the first of its kind in Canada. BY HILARY THOMSON

For the past four years, Monika Milewski has been pursuing a degree in nursing — sitting in campus lecture halls, tutorials, labs and study groups with other nursing students and faculty.

That all changed last summer. That's when she got involved in the Interprofessional Rural Program of BC (IRPbc) and found herself working in a small hospital in Bella Coola on B.C.'s west coast, part of a team of students in disciplines that included medicine, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physical therapy and social work.

The first program of its kind in Canada, the IRPbc seeks to improve health-science students' capacity to collaborate in patient care.

"I was motivated by being with other IRPbc students interested in working with the same population that I was," says Milewski, who has returned to Bella Coola to fill a temporary nursing position. "Besides learning from the other students, I felt lucky to learn from nurses and other health professionals experienced in the field."

IRPbc students complete placements of 4-12 weeks under the supervision of a local health-care professional. Phase I of the program began in the summer of 2003 with students working in Bella Coola and Hazelton and Port McNeill on Vancouver Island.

"We're trying to transform the health-care system with this program," says Grant Charles, assistant professor at UBC's School of

ate professor of family practice, to Kingcome, a remote village 290 km northeast of Vancouver.

While there, they completed an on-the-spot assessment for several patients with diabetes and other health problems.

"The patients were delighted to get attention they would not otherwise have received," says Avery, who



Health-care students are getting out of the classroom and into the B.C. countryside.

works in Port McNeill at the northern end of Vancouver Island. "There is an immediacy to these situations that allows for an enormous learning potential. Students learn to think on their feet and get on with the job

of Fruitvale, population 2,000.

"In a small, isolated community the dynamic is totally different than in the city. The responsibilities of the practitioners are much greater," says Suttie. "I'd like to see first-hand how the health-care community interacts within a rural community."

Students work side by side and learn from and about each other. They

There is an immediacy to these situations that allows for an enormous learning potential. Students learn to think on their feet and get on with the job because if they don't do it, no one will.

Social Work and Family Studies and part of the IRPbc team. "We're teaching students how to interact differently — how to understand patient care from the perspective of other health-care providers. This type of program has never been done before."

Kathy Copeman-Stewart, IRPbc program manager, advises that this month, 18 students from seven post-secondary institutions, including 10 fourth-year UBC students, will be going to the original sites and to Fort St. John in northeastern B.C. and Trail in the southeast of the province. They will work in teams at hospitals that range in size from 15-80 beds. Activities include flying in to remote communities with a visiting health professional and shadowing health-care professionals.

Students in occupational therapy and physiotherapy took their first trip in a helicopter to accompany Dr. Granger Avery, a UBC clinical associ-

because if they don't do it, no one will. That's the major value of rural teaching."

Students also learn first-hand about the primitive level of health services in some parts of the province and what life is like in remote communities, he adds.

Before their placement, students are given a two-day orientation that looks at interactive behaviour, ability to resolve conflicts within a group and learning how to work with aboriginal communities.

The placement curriculum also addresses the challenges of maintaining personal and professional boundaries in towns where everyone knows everyone and health-care professionals are highly visible members of the community.

Pharmacy student Charlotte Suttie will be working at Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital in Trail, about 15 minutes from her hometown

set team goals.

Medical student Naomi Dove says that in addition to offering a greater understanding of the perspective and skills of other health-care professionals, the program "helped to make me aware of some of the misconceptions existing between professions and the limitations of my own profession."

"It's critical that one health-care professional knows the responsibilities and competencies of the other," says John Gilbert, chair of IRPbc's implementation committee and principal of UBC's College of Health Disciplines. "That way, no one falls between the cracks and the right hand has a pretty good idea what the left hand is doing."

IRPbc is overseen by the BC Academic Health Council in partnership with health authorities, post-secondary institution and rural communities, with support from the Ministry of Health Planning. □

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

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Getting the Small Picture

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scanning electron microscope to freeze and crack cells open for examination, or giving a group of mesmerized school children an introductory course on using an electron microscope to do a little forensic detective work.

"It's exciting to look at viruses, it's exciting to look at tissue, or inside a cell," says the ebullient Humphrey. "There's so much inside a cell and when you look at some of them you think 'what on earth does that do?'"

She adds that she wants students to feel the 'wow' factor of what's possible with such high-tech equipment without feeling intimidated to use it.

The facility's education and training component is important when you consider that the microscopes in question don't look anything like those clunky black ones you used in high school science class. Last year Humphrey spent \$2.25 million on new instruments. One of those was the field emission scanning electron microscope (SEM). It fills an entire room and can enlarge images 500,000 times.

Two of the facility's electron

microscopes have telepresence. This allows a graduate student looking at a specimen in the lab to discuss it with their supervisor in another location in real time using an Internet connection.

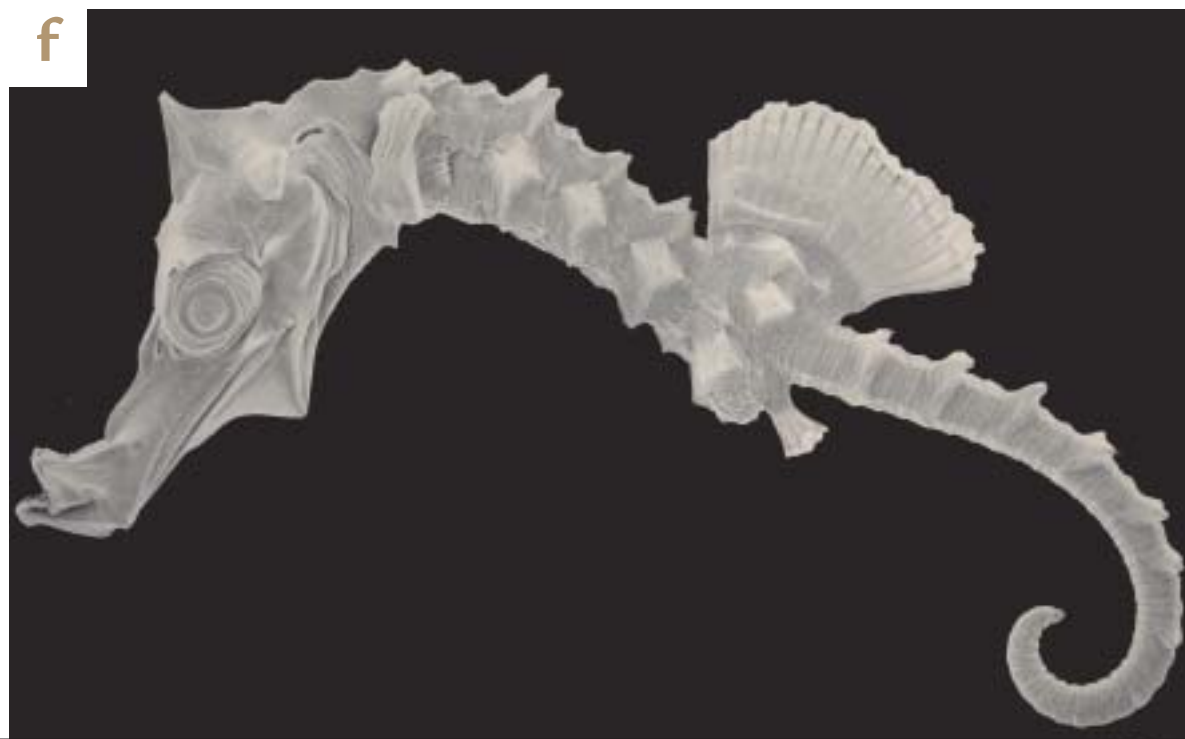
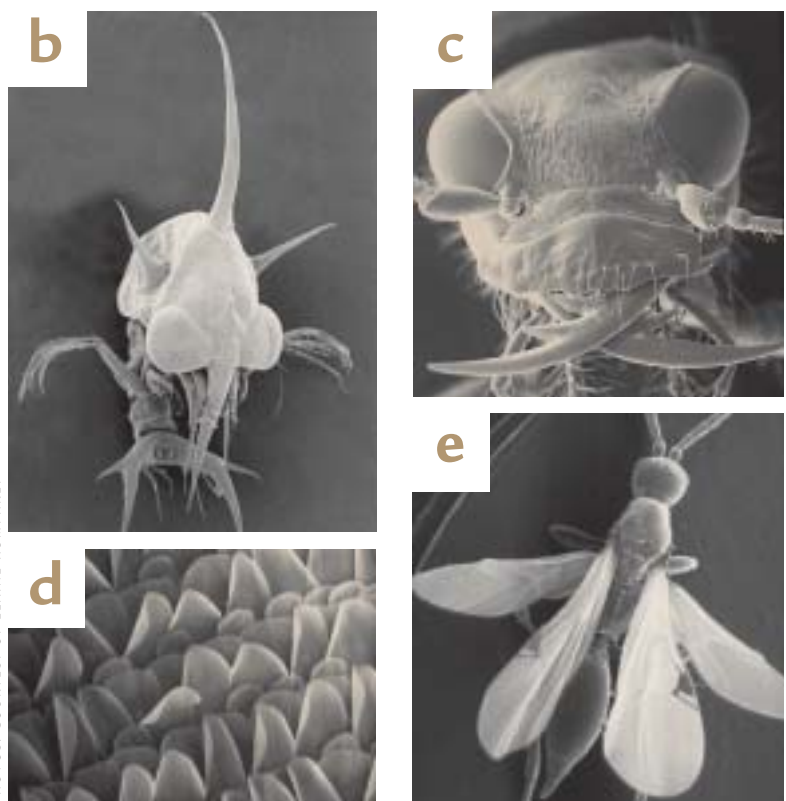
Humphrey is eagerly awaiting the arrival of a variable pressure SEM that can magnify wet materials like wood and food samples. Also on her wish list is a 4D microscope (no one else in Canada has one) that would be able to collect a stack of images in seconds.

With an infectious enthusiasm, Humphrey says her main goal is to create a one-stop shop where all users can get advice and access to the equipment necessary to produce the highest resolution images possible.

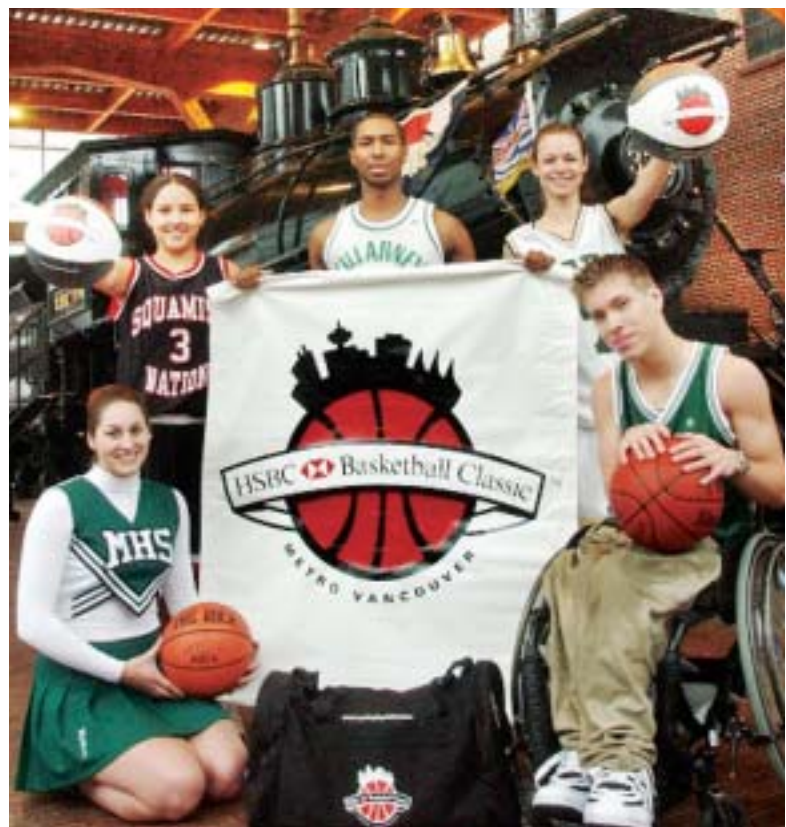
After all, says Humphrey, "a picture tells a thousand words. The SARS virus for instance, you can tell people about it, over and over, and about sequencing the genome, but if you can show them a picture, that gets them interested."

The BioImaging Facility will be opening a second "branch" in the basement of UBC's soon-to-be completed Life Sciences Centre. □

Rogues' Gallery — Take a gander at the gallery of images taken in the BioImaging facility. Can you guess what the following specimens are?



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ELAINE HUMPHREY
 a. A newly hatched poacher fish. b. Zoëa, a crab larva which lives on plankton. c. Tiger beetle head. d. Butterfly wings. e. A parasitic hymenopteran wasp. f. Sea horse.



The fourth Annual HSBC Basketball Classic tournament held its finals and award ceremony at UBC's War Memorial Gym on Dec. 6. For the first time, five First Nations teams representing three B.C. bands participated in the unique exhibition games, where fifty-four \$1,000 scholarships were handed out to players for their sportsmanship and community service. Cheerleader Chelsea Mason (l to r), Tiffany Joseph of the Squamish Nation, Lonzell Webster, Sam Fashler and Marco Pasqua. □

Overdue Book Fines Feed the Foodbank

Food for Fines program a hit. BY MICHELLE COOK

The UBC Library collected more than 4,900 items for the Greater Vancouver Food Bank in November — and waived just over \$9,800 in fines — by asking library users to pay off their debts from overdue books with food instead of cash.

Called Food for Fines, the initiative was the brainchild of AMS president Oana Chirila, who got the idea at a meeting of her counterparts from other Canadian universities. Queen's University and all the universities in Nova Scotia currently run similar programs in their libraries. Chirila approached university librarian Catherine Quinlan about the possibility of launching something similar at UBC.

Run from Nov. 24 to 28 to coincide with the Food Bank's annual drive, all borrowers with library fines could participate. For every non-perishable food item donated, they got \$2 waived from their existing fines, up to a maximum of \$20. All library cardholders were eligible, whether they were students, staff, alumni, faculty, or community members.

"People were really enthusiastic," says assistant

university librarian Tim Atkinson, who co-ordinated the drive at UBC Library's 15 branches. "Many brought in 10 items to qualify for the \$20 fine waiver and then donated more items over and above that."

By the end of the five-day drive, the Food Bank had 150 boxes of non-perishable items to pick up from campus.

"The response was amazing. We even got a donation mailed in from a student on Salt Spring Island," Atkinson says. "The students loved it. The staff loved it. Several staff members have approached me to say they really hope we'll do it again next year."

Chirila credits much of the success of Food for Fines to timing. "It was the end of the year and students thought it was a good way to pay off their library fines and help the community at the same time."

She adds that the food drive helped to improve students' attitudes about the Library.

"They saw it as a goodwill gesture and they appreciated it." □

The Topic of Talk

UBC researcher takes note of how Western culture manages conversations. BY ERICA SMISHEK

Couldn't get a word in edge-wise during some of those Christmas cocktail parties?

Before you chalk it up to rudeness on the part of your conversational partners, you might want to consider what topics were talked about, how much you knew about them and how much your own conversational style and

language preferences influenced the interaction.

Caroline Rieger, an assistant professor in UBC's department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies who teaches German language and applied lin-

guistics, is studying factors that have a significant effect on "topic talk." Who determines or selects the topic of a conversation? When and how is a topic changed or shifted? What influences how long or if a person talks about a particular topic?

Rieger's research examines topic talk in bilinguals, specifically English and German speakers, and is motivated by a Japanese research study of American and Japanese business discourse. That study concluded that Westerners take a greater proportion of turns in the topics they initiate while Japanese always take shorter turns and distribute their turns evenly regardless of who initiates a topic. Moreover, Americans optimize the strength of the individual while Japanese emphasize the strength of the group.

"It might appear to be rudeness, of a person not taking care of their conversational partner," she says. "But for a Westerner, it is quite natural behaviour. In Western cultures, other interactional and social rules seem to guide topic man-

agement more than in Asian cultures.

"However, I found that Westerners who initiate a topic do not necessarily speak more about it," Rieger explains. "Sometimes topic initiation can be a request for more information, an invitation to tell a story or a question to get the conversation started or moving in a different direction.

"For example, if you ask someone about their weekend or vacation, they will have more to contribute than the person who asked the question. They have the expertise on the topic, so they will have more to offer."

Rieger concludes that people in Western cultures do not assume that they have a right to talk more because they initiated a topic. At least they don't make regular use of that right.

"You must look at the different factors that guide conversation," she says. "Topic expertise plays a major role. There are also individual variations and conversational styles. Some people are wordier. Some are more comfortable talking, some are more comfortable listening. Discourse type and individual preferences in language also have a significant effect on topic management, topic initiation and length of contribution in conversations of bilingual speakers."

Rieger analyzed 16 conversations of female and male bilingual

speakers of German and English and focused on topic initiation and length of contribution in topic talk. Each conversation was videotaped, with the two participants seated during the discussion.

"In German, we have an expression called 'showing our chocolate side,'" Rieger explains. "It's essentially putting your best face forward or being on your best behavior. Like in a job interview — you are conscious of your goals at the beginning but eventually if the interview is engaging you forget about the impression you're trying to make.

"Participants were a bit unnatural at first but they soon forgot about the camera. I could tell because many did not present their chocolate side throughout the conversation. Instead they engaged in the type of gossip you would not want to see videotaped before they returned to explore more significant topics. When a conversation is engaging, it's engaging."

Rieger, who speaks Lëtzebuergesch (spoken throughout Luxembourg), Italian, French, German and English, worked in public relations in Germany before obtaining a PhD at the University of Alberta. She joined UBC in 2001.

She anticipates the results of her study will be ready for publication this summer. □



ILLUSTRATION: SHARMINI THIAGARAJAH

Mapping the Sixth Sense

Psychology's Ron Rensink discovers visual sensing without seeing

BY ERICA SMISHEK

Most of us have felt it before — that sinking feeling that something is about to happen, that something is not quite right. It's the stuff of scary movies, X-Files episodes and psychic visits.

But according to a new study by Ron Rensink, an associate professor in both psychology and computer science at UBC, the "sixth sense" is a distinct mode of visual perception and may be something all of us can learn to employ.

He calls it "mindsight" — the

sequence, with a brief gray field between successive images. Participants were asked to hit a button when they saw a change.

But some participants asked if they should hit the button when they actually saw the change — or when they first felt something happening.

Intrigued, Rensink re-jigged the experiment. Forty participants were instead asked to hit a button once when they sensed a change — that is, had a "feeling" that a change was occurring — and a second time

if light came into your eyes, it would have to result in a picture. If it didn't result in a picture, it must mean that it can't be vision.

"What I'm saying is no, that first assumption is wrong. Light can come into your eyes and do other things. There are other perceptual systems and it can result in other forms of experience. It's all vision — it's just a different kind of vision. There is nothing really magical about it. It's just a different way of perceiving, so it's a different kind of

A lot of people feel kind of threatened by this, by the idea that the conscious mind is not necessarily the ultimate in terms of intelligence or control.

phenomenon where people can sense a change but do not see it (i.e. have a visual experience of it) for several seconds.

"There is something there — people do have access to this other subsystem," says Rensink, whose findings appear in the January issue of *Psychological Science*.

"Vision is not just one ability, it's not just one sense. There is vision for conscious perception — this picture you have of what's going on — and there is also vision for action. It turns out these are two very different subsystems — one of them is conscious, one of them is non-conscious — and they actually work slightly differently. That's why when you're driving, for example, you can actually tune out and you can drive just fine because this other system takes over."

In a preliminary experiment initially designed to test attention, Rensink presented participants with a photograph of a real-world scene and a modified photograph in a

when they actually saw the change.

Most participants only saw the change. But some sensed a change two or three seconds before they actually saw it.

"About a third of people seem to get this feeling of something happening, of something changing," says Rensink. "You can't really say what it is, you can't really say when it is. It's just a gut feeling . . . It's clear whatever it is, they're using it in their everyday experience."

A noted vision researcher, Rensink spent six years at Cambridge Basic Research, a partnership involving the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard and Nissan Motor Co. Prompted in part by a finding that accidents in city driving were often classified as "driver looked but failed to see," he initially studied "change blindness" (people's blindness to scene changes) and later conducted the experiments that were part of the mindsight findings.

"In the past, people believed that

experience, which I think is actually pretty cool. This is not magical."

But it is controversial.

"It's not going to make everybody happy," he says matter-of-factly of findings that took more than two years — and significant verification — to publish.

"A lot of people feel kind of threatened by this, by the idea that the conscious mind is not necessarily the ultimate in terms of intelligence or control. If you think that the conscious mind is the end-all and be-all, this kind of work is disturbing."

Rensink says people need to trust their gut instincts and believes we can likely train ourselves to hone them.

"In the longer run, it's worth taking a look at intuition to get more insight into this area," he says. "Maybe this will tend to lead people to develop their intuitions and realize that these intuitions are informative and we should respect them. This may help us in all



PHOTO: SHARMINI THIAGARAJAH

Noted vision researcher Ron Rensink has found visual link to intuition.

kinds of endeavours."

In practical terms, Rensink, who is part of a team of UBC researchers investigating the possibilities of intelligent human-automobile interfaces, says if one can actually induce this gut feeling, scientists may be able to use it in cars as a kind of warning.

"What you'd like is a way to say, 'slow down, or dangerous curve ahead.' If you're getting a feeling that something is not quite right, this may in fact get people to be more cautious."

He also thinks it could be applied to the arts, used deliberately, for

example, in the cinema to give the audience an even "spookier movie experience."

Rensink plans further analysis to determine what may separate people who have this sense from people who don't. Is it a personality variable? Is it attitude or mental set? And what part of the brain is responsible?

"If people are capable of this, they are probably capable of a lot more," he says. "We just don't know yet. We'll see where it leads us in the future. It could be the start of something interesting — a whole other way of using vision." □

North Campus

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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Monday, January 12, 2004 @ 7:00 pm in the Asian Centre Auditorium, 1871 West Mall. Parking is available in the adjacent Fraser River Parkade.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

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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.

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UNIVERSITY TOWN

Not Lost in Translation

continued from page 1

stories to photographs.

"Students love it," Harris says. "They never know what's going to happen next.

"Nobody grows up and says 'I'm going to be a subtitler.' It takes awhile to get people up to speed. You need to expose them to a lot of stuff. Everything clicks at the end of the semester."

Harris has a PhD in Comparative Literature and a master's degree in Film Studies, reviews films for the *Georgia Straight* and has published poems, translations and some 3,000 essays, articles and reviews in more than 50 periodicals. He teaches film history and theory and is the former programming director of the Pacific Cinematheque, a not-for-profit Vancouver-based society dedicated to the understanding of film and moving images.

In 1999, he did the titles for *La Cambure*, an Eric Rohmer short subject presented at the Vancouver International Film Festival, a project he calls the "launch pad" for the subtitling course.

Hungarian-born translator Karoly Sandor, 72, has taken the course numerous times and has known his instructor since Harris was a PhD candidate at UBC.

"Mark Harris is a very gifted person," says Sandor. "There is no doubt that spending time in class with Harris gives you so much information that you want to know. You're prompted to read, you're prompted to go to movies, you're prompted to fulfill your potential as a human being. I see my young classmates and they are under a spell."

Harris' own fascination with subtitling began as a student in one of UBC creative writing Prof. George McWhirter's translation courses. He was appalled by what

gets missed when a film is subtitled from one language into another, pointing to a three-minute sequence of dialogue from Fritz Lang's *M* that was reduced to one line — "I can't help myself."

"Subtitles can be wretched," Harris says. "It's usually due to speed or cheapness, not incompetence."

His favourite bad examples come from English-language versions of Hong Kong films from the 1980s.

"They are missing verbs and are non-grammatical. The best line was one that said, 'suck the coffin mushroom now.'"

It all comes down to translation, which Sandor calls "the furnace before you bake the bread of subtitling."

"If the world didn't have translation," Sandor says, "we wouldn't know Dostoevsky or Chekhov, we'd only know Shakespeare in English, we wouldn't know Newton or Einstein. Translation is the key to the vault of treasures of others. That's how we share. That's how life becomes so much richer."

While definite mechanical rules apply (subtitles usually contain 40 to 45 characters per three-second burst of film time, for example), Harris' broader goal is to help students overcome such challenges as "explosion of talk" (very wordy dialogue, often containing plot information), historical inaccuracy, impenetrable slang, nuance of the particular genre (comedy, drama, action, etc.) and idiom, and to inspire them to create subtitled works that may be even better than the original language versions.

"I want us to participate in creating a universe where you can see Indonesian flying head movies on channel 123," says Harris.

Look out Jack Valenti. □



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Dying Patients Don't Want to be Stoned

Most want pain relief, not a marijuana high. BY HILARY THOMSON

Imagine you are dying a slow, painful death and someone offers you marijuana to relieve your pain. How quickly would you take it?

Not so quickly, according to a study done by palliative care expert Romayne Gallagher. Almost 70 palliative care patients were asked about their attitudes and beliefs surrounding medicinal use of marijuana. Gallagher and fellow researchers from the BC Cancer Agency and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, VGH site, found the patients had a variety of worries and questions.

"These individuals had some real concerns about using the drug — concerns that were surprising considering these people were at the end of their life," says Gallagher, a clinical professor in the Faculty of Medicine's division of palliative care.

Marijuana has been available for medical use in Canada since July 2001 when Health Canada implemented the Marijuana Medical Access Regulations. A doctor's recommendation allows patients to obtain and use marijuana without prosecution.

Participants in the study — conducted at cancer centres and palliative care units in Vancouver and Kelowna — worried that smoking would result in lung problems, that second-hand smoke would harm their families' health and that they might become addicted to the drug.

Gallagher says both patients and doctors often need to be convinced of the value and safety of readily available pain-relieving drugs such as morphine. Some current attitudes mirror beliefs held decades ago. An article from the 1941 *Journal of the American Medical Association* states that, "The use of narcotics in terminal cancer is to be condemned if it can possibly be avoided . . . It is well known that small, regularly administered doses may be counted on to cause and maintain addiction . . ."

Many study participants believed that marijuana is safer than morphine. In reality, says Gallagher, both drugs are safe if used responsibly. Most participants don't want to smoke the drug and they don't want marijuana's side effects.

"They want pain relief — they don't want to be stoned," says Gallagher.

Study participants — whose average age was 56 — also had social concerns about using marijuana. Some, particularly Asian patients, were afraid of neighbours and police finding out.

"It was disturbing to find that most of these patients were willing to try marijuana despite their concerns and lack of information," she says. "They are a very vulnerable population and eager to use whatever works. The only problem is, we don't have clear evidence about how marijuana does work to treat symptoms in dying people."

In addition to a lack of clinical research information,

there are significant obstacles in obtaining the drug. Few dying patients have the energy to start their own grow-op. Buying from suppliers, such as compassion clubs established to distribute marijuana for medical use, can cost up to several hundred dollars per month.

Russell Barth, a 34-year-old who takes marijuana for chronic pain and anxiety, reports it took nine months to get the necessary forms processed so that he could obtain and possess the drug. One of the co-founders of the National Compassion Society in Ottawa, he turned to marijuana because he could not tolerate the pharmaceuticals prescribed to him. His roommate uses the drug to help control epilepsy. Together, they have spent up to \$500 per month on medical marijuana.

"It's not an easy drug to use — it's expensive and there's a lot of bureaucracy involved to get it. Health Canada offers marijuana for slightly less money, but it's poor quality and contains chemicals."

In addition to financial barriers to using the drug, there are medical issues to consider. Marijuana interacts negatively with drugs that slow down the central nervous system, including sleeping pills, some pain medications, antihistamines and seizure medications as well as antiviral drugs used to treat AIDS.

Gallagher points out that there have been no clinical trials of marijuana in Canada, leaving patients pretty much on their own to determine what works for them. She would like to see Canada learn from other countries, such as the U.K., which is conducting large marijuana trials.

In the largest investigation ever done on the treatment of multiple sclerosis, U.K. researchers recently studied marijuana use in more than 600 patients and found that although the drug had no significant effect on muscle spasticity (according to an independent assessment scale) the majority of patients felt it had reduced spasticity symptoms and pain. There was also some evidence that marijuana treatment led to improved mobility.

Gallagher would also like to see regulated prescriptions, a standardized route of administration and dosage, and pharmacare coverage of the marijuana pill as a recognized pain reliever.

Pharmacare covers drugs approved for prescription use by Health Canada. A whole-cannabis preparation called Sativex is currently going through the approval process in the U.K., which may lead to approval in Canada, according to Dr. David Hadorn, who has served as a consultant to the B.C. Pharmacare program.

If Health Canada does approve the drug, Pharmacare would then decide if it should be subsidized and what restrictions, if any, should be placed on the subsidies.

For more information about the medical use of marijuana, visit Health Canada's website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca. □

TIMEPIECE 1912



At UBC's first convocation in 1912, Henry Esson Young, B.C.'s minister of education from 1907 to 1916 was dubbed "the Father of the University" for all his unflagging zeal in setting the university on its way. In his remarks at that ceremony he said that he, "was sure that, no matter what government might be in control of the affairs of the province, the university would always receive sympathetic and generous consideration." □

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Doctors and Nurses Need to Keep Up with Genetic Training

Many now getting that information from newspapers

BY HILARY THOMSON

Your father and uncle both died of a heart attack and you've gone to your doctor to find out if you're at risk.

The only problem is — your doctor doesn't know much more than you do.

This scenario is all too

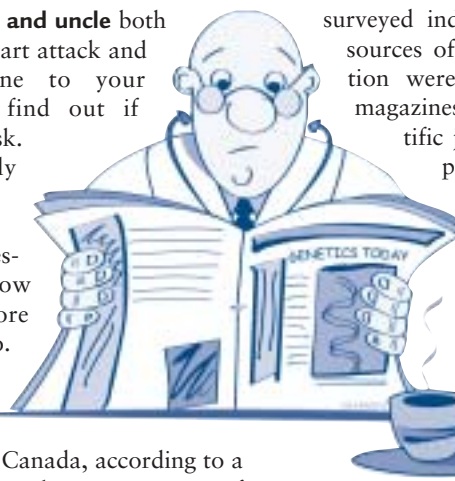
common in Canada, according to a study done by a group of researchers led by Joan Bottorff, a UBC professor of nursing and a UBC Distinguished University Scholar.

The team looked at the education needs and roles of practicing doctors and nurses regarding genetic testing and diseases with a hereditary component. They polled more than 1,400 doctors and the same number of nurses across Canada to investigate their knowledge, involvement and confidence in providing current and accurate genetic information on diseases such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and neurodegenerative illnesses like Alzheimer's and Huntington's disease.

They found that 48 per cent of nurses and 31 per cent of doctors lacked formal education in genetics.

"Genetics is evolving rapidly and many health practitioners are struggling to keep up," says Bottorff. "The need for information is becoming urgent as more genetic tests and genetically tailored therapies become available."

The average age of the survey respondents was 46 years for nurses and 48 years for physicians. Educated before anyone had heard about Dolly the cloned sheep, those



surveyed indicated their main sources of genetics information were newspapers and magazines, television, scientific journals and pamphlets and patients with genetic disorders.

With data gained from these sources, doctors and nurses work with patients on diet and exercise plans to reduce their risk of inherited illness and advise them on genetic screening and testing, family planning and other issues.

Bottorff says there's a pressing need for combined professional education programs for doctors and nurses because their roles in providing genetic information often overlap. Challenges to providing such programs include reaching out to practitioners in rural areas and keeping curricula up to date.

Bottorff and a group of provincial and national practitioners and policy-makers will meet this month to strategize how to develop continuing education courses in genetics. But the needs of practicing doctors and nurses are not the only concern. Genetics is not consistently integrated into nursing and medical curricula and few nursing faculty members are qualified to teach the subject.

"Are we preparing practitioners for the future? That's the question," says Bottorff. Her vision for genetics education includes basic information that can serve as a benchmark for all practitioners, modules for nurses in advanced practice such as cancer nursing and a separate stream of graduate nursing education focused on genetics. □

kudos

Robert Molday, a professor of biochemistry, molecular biology and ophthalmology, has been awarded the Professor Jacob Biely Faculty Research Prize, and zoology professor Sarah Otto has received the UBC Charles A. McDowell Award for Excellence in Research.

Molday, Canada Research Chair in Vision and Macular Degeneration, studies the molecular, cellular and genetic interplay that leads to disease affecting vision. He is an expert on macular degeneration — the leading cause of blindness in the developed world.



Robert Molday, professor of biochemistry, molecular biology and ophthalmology.

Otto is an expert in population genetics and evolutionary biology. She develops and analyses mathematical models to study how populations change over time to identify when and whether particular evolutionary transitions are possible.

Winners of the 2003 Killam Research Prizes of \$5,000 have also been announced: (in alphabetical order)

David Dreisinger, metals and materials engineering • Thomas Grigliatti, zoology • Sneja Gunew, English • Darrin Lehman, psychology • Maurice Levi, finance division, Sauder School of Business • Bruce McManus, pathology and laboratory medicine and iCAPTURE Centre • Tim Salcudean, electrical and computer engineering and Canada Research Chair in Intelligent Computer Interface Design • John Willinsky, language and literacy education • Michael Wolf, chemistry • Sheila Woody, psychology.

The Biely and McDowell awards are named for former UBC researchers. Prof. Emeritus Charles McDowell headed UBC's chemistry department for 26 years. Biely, an international poultry scientist, was a UBC faculty member from 1935-68. He died in 1981. □



Sarah Otto, zoology professor.

LETTER from OXFORD



Ed.'s Note: UBC's most recent Rhodes Scholar Yaa Heema Obiri-Yeboah sent us this letter from Oxford.

Hello Everyone,

Hope you're doing well back in Vancouver.

I have to say that I'm really enjoying myself here in Oxford — a.k.a. land of "dreaming spires."

I've met so many wonderful people. The Canadian Rhodes Scholars are a fantastic group — we got along so well right from the start. I've met so many people from all around the world — the graduate community is very international — and it's been fantastic to hear about all of their experiences and their future plans.

I'm currently in the one-year master's course in the English department focussing on 20th century literature and I'll be writing a dissertation on African literature. My class consists mostly of Americans, with a spattering of Brits and me the lonely Canadian!

Back in October I became an official member of the University through the much talked about matriculation ceremony . . . some of which is in Latin. We all dressed up in black and white with black gowns and got to walk through the city like a group of lemmings. There were so many tourists at the Sheldonian Theatre taking pictures of us. It was quite amusing to have strangers from different parts of the world asking us to pose for their cameras!

The most interesting thing that has happened during my time here is the trip by all current Rhodes Scholars at Oxford to Buckingham Palace! The Queen and

Prince Philip hosted a reception in our honour (as 2003 was the 100th anniversary of the scholarship). We were all presented individually to the queen and prince. And to top off the evening, Nelson Mandela was in attendance! I wasn't fortunate enough to speak to him, but the fact that he was able to take the time to come to such an event and speak with even a few of us was wonderful. The Mandela Rhodes Trust has just been founded and it is preparing initiatives on behalf of Nelson Mandela in South Africa.

I've made several attempts while here to try very Oxonian and British things — yes Oxonian is a real word! I've been punting down the Thames, have walked through many meadows, experienced the joys of the British rail system, have been to the Cotswolds, have had Yorkshire pudding, and am rowing with my college. Rowing has been great fun. During seventh week (Oxford-speak for the seventh week of Michaelmas (first term) all of the college boat clubs raced in the Christ Church Regatta, an event held for the College novice crews. It was a wonderful opportunity to watch some great races and see College spirit (and rivalry) at its best.

Well, the term is winding down meaning that deadlines call so I must go.

I will talk to you soon!
All the best and take care,
Yaa-Hemaa

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