Workshop Helps to Separate Fact from Fiction in Real Life Stories

Finding the truth is not easy.

BY CRISTINA CALBOREANU

What do we read when we read autobiography? And what exactly are we reading when we watch autobiographical plays?

We commonly expect to find the truth in autobiography, in narratives and in plays. But, as one of UBC’s experts in autobiography studies explains, that expectation may not be entirely realistic.

“Autobiography is something complex, written, or produced, by another human being, so it’s a form of art in its own right,” explains English professor Sherrill Grace. “And that is manifestly the case when we’re talking about the-”

According to Grace, autobiographical plays have become more and more common in 20th century literature, but the interplay between theatre and autobiography, and the reasons for the prevalence of the genre have still to be investigated. That is what an innovative exploratory workshop organized by UBC’s English and Theatre departments with support from the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, the UBC Hampton Fund and the McLean Chair for Canadian Studies, has set out to do.

The workshop, titled “Putting a Life on Stage”, will explore the challenges of staging and performing autobiography. It includes keynote lectures, panel sessions, and roundtable discussions featuring a stellar cast of scholars from around the world and some of Canada’s most respected playwrights, including Heaven Pullock, Joy Coghill, Marve Moore and Linda Griffiths.

The focal point of the workshop is a performance of Song of This Place, by renowned UBC alumnus Joy Coghill. The play, which explores a seafarer’s struggle to portray P.C. artist Emily Carr on stage, is, according to director Robert More, “unique” in its approach and its courage to examine “the creative process and the artistic voice in itself.” It contains both biographical and autobiographical elements, which are explored through the use of Bunraku-style puppets, or animatronics, masks, held by manipulators visible to the audience. Four UBC students will give life to the 19 puppets.

“We are moving across a divide here, by involving students in a live play production,” says Grace. “Working with Robert More, who is Canada’s leading expert on puppets, they’re getting a course in a very specialized area which is not part of the regular curriculum.”

The workshop runs February 18-22. For more information, visit http://autobiography.arts.ubc.ca. For Canadian Studies, has set out to do.

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Bounce at The Bell

UBC professor Heather McKay has conducted a pilot study that fol-

lowed almost 100 students who had

jumped actually built 3.2 per cent

more bone mass in the hip region of the

body than the other children.

UBC Nursing professor

Warnock told the

“Researcher Study

Newborns’ Pain Being

Circumcised

UBC Nursing professor Fay

Warnock is leading a research study on

the pain babies sustain from cir-

cumcision. The researchers system-

atically note and itemize the behav-

iour of 10 baby boys during circum-

cision means exhaustive and suc-

cessive viewing of each of these 90-

minute tapes on a second-by-second-

basis.

Warnock says her work “is very

basic in that it is focused on detail-

ning normally occurring newborn pain

related behaviours... Its usefulness is

conceptual and, possibly, it could

be used to develop treatments for

children who are having difficulty

sleeping.”

Hush little baby: Fay Warnock’s

study focused on circumcision

because it is “an intense form of

newborn acute pain.”

She says the study focused on cir-

cumcision because it is “an intense form

of newborn acute pain,” but also that

researchers in the field of pain

management and neonatal intensive

care are interested in developing

treatment methods that can be used for

newborns who are having difficulty

sleeping.

The study also focused on cir-

cumcision because it is an intense

form of newborn acute pain, but it

may also provide insights into

other kinds of acute pain.

Anorexia May

Emphysema

The malnutrition that results from

the eating disorder anorexia ner-

vosa may cause emphysema, accord-

ing to a study led by UBC radiology

professor Harvey O. Coxson, also a

VCHM member.

The study, conducted by 14

anorexia patients and found the

amount of lung tissue in patients

with anorexia nervosa,” Coxson told

CBS News.

“Is it unclear whether these struc-

tural changes are permanent, but if

they are, early therapy is important in

patients who have anorexia,”

Coxson says.

Man bites dog? No, Planet

emphases.

“Hot spots are everywhere in the

surface of the star keeping pace with

the planet, but just a little bit

ahead,” Shkolnik told

national post.

On behalf of United Way of the Lower

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Protecting Young Workers from Crippling Injuries

By Hilary Thomson

A 15-year-old sawmill worker was fatally crushed when a log he was attempting to straighten rolled off the skid of an idle deck. A 21-year-old lumber jack entered a hazard area without turning off the power. He sustained a crushing injury to his foot resulting in five severed toes.

An 18-year-old power press operator had his right hand and forearm crushed when he reached into the die area to remove some jammed material. He had been on this job for two weeks at the time of the accident.

These real-life accidents taken from a Workers’ Compensation Board of B.C. (WCB) report called Protecting Young Workers illustrate how young workers, 15-24 years old, account for the highest rate of compensation claims among all age groups in B.C.

Besides being a tough way to begin working life, these injuries may possibly be at the start of long-term health consequences, according to UBC researcher Mieke Koehoorn.

An assistant professor in the department of health care and epidemiology, Koehoorn has launched a study that looks at the experiences of young workers in B.C. She wants to know if persistent symptoms from early work injuries result in increased usage of health-care services in the long term, beyond workers’ compensation benefits.

“People have higher claim rates mainly due to stereotypes,” says Koehoorn, who is a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Scholar. “New workers may be too intimidated to ask questions about safety, not yet prepared in terms of work or safety training or so eager to prove themselves on the job that they perform tasks they’re unfamiliar with.”

In addition, young workers are often assigned low-end jobs that carry the greatest risk factors. As new workers, they are often unable to recognize workplace hazards and are unaware of their rights as workers to operate in a safe environment.

In a two-year study, funded by the WCB, Koehoorn will examine data that covers the 15-year period from 1985-2000. Using WCB and provincial health records, she will assess if young workers with a compensation claim have more contact over time with the health-care system than individuals of the same age, sex and geographic location.

She thanks young workers who seek continued medical attention outside the compensation system because, although they have symptoms after the claim is closed, they don’t know how to recoup a claim. Also, they may be reluctant to take further off work that will damage their fledgling work record.

Industries where young workers are most likely to be injured include retail and services, food manufacturing, construction and forestry sectors. Common injuries include back, wrist, hand and forearm, and eye injuries.

Koehoorn hopes that her research findings will lead to a better understanding of the impact of work-related injuries and help to direct more resources to protection and regulatory efforts aimed specifically at young workers.

For more information on injuries to young workers, visit www.wbca.bc.ca/publications/news and click on the focus report called Protecting Young Workers...

Did you know?

UBC projects received more than $1.6 million in funding from the WCB, Research Secretariat in 2003, out of a total of $1.8 million awarded to all institutions.

The Research Secretariat launched its first annual research competition in November 2000. The mission of the secretariat is to support scientific research, and will lead to a reduction in the incidence and severity of work-related injury and disease.

Stay, work, and play

In our forest by the sea. We offer the best range of affordable accommodation, meeting space and conference services in the Lower Mainland. Come find out why.

UBC students have a new way to pay tuition and other fees online – Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Students can transfer funds from their bank account and pay whichever UBC fees they choose – whenever they choose.

UBC is the first university in Canada to offer this form of EFT. It gives students complete control over how and when they pay their fees. It’s fast, user-friendly, and cheaper – for both students and the university – than credit card payments, currently the most frequently-used form of online payment.

To pay by EFT, students log on to the Student Services Centre web site. EFT is part of Enrolment Services’ Consolidated Billing initiative. For details, visit www.e-strategy.ubc.ca.
Villages in Ularin, East Timor live off the land. They farm and they fish. It is not easy being a farmer in a place like this, what with rugged terrain, poor soils, and unpredictable rainfall. And it’s even harder when you live in a country where 75 per cent of the physical infrastructure was destroyed or severely damaged in the three quarters of the population was displaced. Seemingly small things can easily throw off the delicate balance of this life. Things like how long it takes to dry the food that needs to be preserved. It usually takes more than five days, during which time large amounts of fruit and fish are wasted due to parasites, contamination. That means there will be less to eat.

And that is what UBC third-year Integrated Engineering student Monica Rucki was trying to prevent during her four-month internship with Engineers Without Borders. Using solar energy, Rucki worked to build solar dryers that would cut the drying time for fish and fruit to less than two days. Prototypes were built from locally available, inexpensive materials, and locals were trained how to build and maintain the dryers.

Rucki’s experience in East Timor was just one example of the work done by Engineers Without Borders (EWB), whose 3,700 members are working on 30 projects in 20 countries to promote human development through access to technology and a focus on building capacity in the local communities.

“We’re interested in solutions, as opposed to going some- thing away and then leaving, which is not particularly useful,” says Brendan Baker, a recent Metals and Materials student at UBC.

But it’s in this spirit of humility and selflessness that EWB is trying to prevent during her four-month internship with the Filipino government. The UBC chapter is trying to raise 40 computers and $5,000 to help restart Setting up IT training centres in the Philippines, helping Filipino youth develop computer literacy skills and increase their employability. They are hoping some of these youths will in turn become computer teachers able to keep the IT training centres alive. “The long-term hope is that the centres are able to self sustain,” explains project leader Jordan Marr.

As part of the UBC chapter’s local projects, volunteers with the Scale project have travelled to the Philippines to work with local communities to develop new designs for soil drying systems and provide training on how to build and maintain them. As part of this work, UBC students in the Department of Mechanical Engineering are partnering with researchers from the University of the Philippines to develop new designs for soil drying systems and provide training on how to build and maintain them.

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The UBC chapter of EWB was founded in 2001 and is already one of the fastest growing and most active in the world.

“Getting involved in international development and global issues among students and the Vancouver community,” says Rucki, co-president of the UBC chapter. “We do that through our internships abroad, through our local projects, and our Speaker series here on campus.”

The UBC chapter is involved in a variety of overseas projects, such as Scale, an EWB-sponsored Information and Communications Technology (ICT) project developed in partnership with the Filipino government. The UBC chapter is trying to raise 40 computers and $5,000 to help restart Setting up IT training centres in the Philippines, helping Filipino youth develop computer literacy skills and increase their employability. They are hoping some of these youths will in turn become computer teachers able to keep the IT training centres alive. “The long-term hope is that the centres are able to self sustain,” explains project leader Jordan Marr.

“Often there is a perception that we’re sending people over there to teach and to impart our knowledge to the local people, and that’s not true,” says Baker. “In fact, it may be even more so that you’re learning how things are done here in the world and how the world works, and you can bring that back and use it here. We hope to see a huge difference in the way things are done here, in terms of how we address issues overseas and even in terms of how we address issues here in Canada.”

“One of the greatest things I brought back was just humility,” adds Rucki. “You gain an immense appreciation for the fact that there are other ways to live than just the way we live, that really works and that make people happy.”

The University of British Columbia hires on the basis of merit and is committed to employment equity. We encourage all qualified persons to apply.

Applications, accompanied by a detailed curriculum vitae and names of three references, should be directed by February 29, 2004 to: Gavin C.E. Stuart, MD, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, Room 317, Instructional Resources Centre, 2194 Health Sciences Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3.

The University of British Columbia is an equal opportunity employer. Women and members of visible minorities are encouraged to apply. The University of British Columbia is committed to employment equity and encourages applications from women and members of visible minorities.
Old Skill Provides Modern Solution to Heart Valve Replacement

New technique may mean no more broken breathers, by HILARY THOMSON

A traditional surgeon’s craft was the inspiration for a new technique to replace heart valves without major surgery.

Much like a ship in a bottle, the procedure involves inserting a foldable valve through a small incision and running the valve along a blood vessel into the heart where it’s "attached and detached remotely — a virtually non-surgical intervention.

Valve replacement surgery currently requires breaking tibias and breaching to sear the heart, a minimum of a week’s hospitalization and considerable recuperation time.

Called Percutaneous Valve Replacement, the new procedure is being developed by Dr. John Webb, director of the cardiac catheterization laboratory at St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver. Still in the experimental stage, the technique offers promise for patients who are too ill to survive traditional valve replacement surgery.

The new method involves a small incision made in the thigh to allow a tube the size of a pencil to be inserted. The tube is threaded along the veins up to the heart. Once the valve has been inserted and attached as the heart, the tube is withdrawn. After a couple of stitches for the incision and a drain, the patient will be able to go home.

Simple sound? Not quite, says Webb, who is also a UBC associate clinical professor of cardiology.

“The new remote procedure is still highly experimental. We’ve haven’t tried it on a patient. The device is about three feet long and the placement of the valve within the complex structure of the heart is critical. A few hair widths out of place and the whole thing is wrong. We have to get it exactly right every time.”

If the technique can be perfected, it would mean huge healthcare savings compared to current methods requiring an operating room and long hospital stays. Most importantly, it would mean that individuals who are too weak for surgery and unlikely to survive might be saved.

Also, patients would be avoid the significant pain and discomfort of heart valve replacement surgery.

“When they broke my breast bone and ribs to get at my heart it really hurt,” says 66-year-old Eleanor Wehry. “I was in the hospital for a long time. It was two or three months before I felt better.”

Four valves direct blood to and from the body through the heart: the aortic valve, the pulmonary valve, the tricuspid valve, and the mitral valve. Any of these valves may malfunction because of a birth defect, infection, disease, or trauma. When the malfunction is so severe that it interferes with blood flow, an individual will have heart palpitations, fainting spells, and/or difficulty breathing. These symptoms will progressively worsen and cause death unless the damaged valve is replaced surgically.

Webb expects it will at least be two years before patients can benefit from the procedure.

About 80 per cent of Canadians have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease and 11 per cent have three or more risk factors or more, according to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. Risk factors for cardiovascular disease include smoking, lack of exercise, being overweight, and high blood pressure.

For more information on heart disease and treatment, visit www.heartandstroke.ca.
UBC Public Affairs has opened both a radio and TV studio on campus where you can do live interviews with local, national and international media outlets.

To learn more about being a UBC expert, call us at 604.822.2064 and visit our web site at www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/experts/signup

Imagine a 750 hectare park with over 50 kilometers of trails as your front yard. And after a walk or a run, when you returned to your home you’d be greeted by wide-open views of the Pacific Ocean, Coastal Islands and Coast Mountains, surrounded by countless cultural, social and outdoor opportunities. Now, picture all this in West Point Grey on the grounds of the University of British Columbia. And finally, consider that this could be the site of your new home.

Argyll House is a rare collection of apartment homes, penthouses and townhomes built to the highest standards. And with all that is best about living in Vancouver at your doorstep, living here really could be a walk in the park.

For more information call us at 604.228.8100 or visit our website at www.argyllhouse.ca

For the Love of Money

A financial planning workshop for recent grads just in time for tax season!

BY VANESSA CLARKE

A lot of us love money, but not many of us relish the annual chore of working out our taxes – especially when our efforts don’t result in a nice fat return. The Young Alumni Network is offering recent graduates a workshop that will teach them how to manage their money efficiently and invest it wisely:

Just in time for the March 1 RRSP deadline, Jonathan Pagtakhan, BA’98, a financial advisor with CIBC, will teach workshop participants new investment strategies and ways to keep the taxman at bay. He’ll talk about goal setting, borrowing, cash flow management, RRSPs, investment planning and asset allocation. A representative from London Life will also be on hand to talk about different types of insurance.

Thursday, February 12th
HSBC Hall UBC - Robson Square
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Cost: $15
For tickets, please contact Sandra:
salumniinfo@alumni.ubc.ca or 604-822-3313

Jonathan Pagtakhan is a volunteer on the Young Alumni Network committee, helping to organize events that will be useful to recent graduates in their professional development (there are also plenty of opportunities for socializing). One of Jonathan’s favourite memories of UBC is of the couches at Sedgwick Library – perhaps a contender for the best place to kiss on campus?

For more information about the Young Alumni Network, a program offered by the UBC Alumni Association, please contact Dianna DeBlare at YaNmentor@alumni.ubc.ca or 604-822-8917 or visit the website: http://www.alumni.ubc.ca/programs/young-alumni/index.html
Robert Rohling demonstrates the steerable biopsy needles he and fellow inventors have engineered.

He says the main challenge for doc- tors is to imagine where to direct the needle, without actually being able to see where it’s going. It’s a skill that comes only with experience. The poten- tial dangers are numerous: a misplaced needle can cause bleeding, pain, or seed healthy cells with cancerous ones.

“There’s a certain anxiety when you insert a big needle into someone and you don’t know whether you’re going to get results or not.”

The device that the research team hopes will improve the technique of needle insertion is that instead of putting a straight needle through the skin at the best access point, and pushed in until the tip reaches the target, doctors hit their target on the first try — and save their patients the stress and potential complications.

Robert Rohling, professor of mechanical engineering and electrical and computer engineering, says the steerable needle’s capabilities.

“Let’s say you want to know about the needle’s inventors are already thinking about how to improve the needle’s capabilities.”

“We look at all kinds of applications and think ahead to even more advanced systems where we have computer-aided control.”

Rohling adds that while the cost of the system is still more than a regular, disposable needle, the health-care sav- ings will be in the reduction of time it takes doctors to perform a procedure. The researchers’ next step is to pre- pare the prototype for clinical trials.

While there may be many popular places to kiss on campus, in 1951 UBC engineers were concerned with the quality of the lake. Their main worry was that the most popular attraction was the Kissatorium.

Engineers claimed it regenerated the intensity, heat, and pressure of the kiss, and then transformed them to a numerical rating on the needle graph. When the needle hit ten, a large red neon sign claimed it registered the intensity, heat, and pressure of the kiss.
Youth in crisis in the Lower Mainland can now turn to their computer for help. UBC Education professor Shelley Hymel is piloting Canada’s first web-based “hotline” for youth in collaboration with the Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Centre of B.C. (Crisis Centre in Vancouver) and SAFER (Suicide Awareness Follow-up, Education and Research) Counselling Service.

“Young people are increasingly comfortable with computers and may use the web to seek support in a time of crisis,” says Hymel, an expert on bullying and youth in crisis. “We want to find an effective way to reach them.

“Kids need to talk. If they’re talking on the web, then that’s where we need to go.”

The web-based hotline is a place where youth can confidentially talk about issues they are facing at school, at home and in the community, such as relationships or family problems, bullying, racial discrimination, mental health issues, victimization, addictions and more. The site allows youth to connect with volunteers aged 19 to 25 who have been specially trained to provide crisis intervention, psychological first aid, support and resource information.

The site went live in January and is being promoted in Burnaby secondary schools through the 2003/04 school year, with the potential to expand throughout the Lower Mainland. It features a one-on-one free and confidential link enabling youth to talk to someone online at any time (limited number of hours), an e-mail address for youth to write about their problems and receive a guaranteed response in 24 to 48 hours, the 24-hour Distress Line phone number to the Crisis Centre in Vancouver as well as links to other crisis centres in B.C., a list of youth-provided resources available in the Lower Mainland, and information and facts about common problems that youth face, including bullying and harassment, stress, suicidal feelings and teenage pregnancy.

“We don’t do therapy online. We focus on providing non-judgmental support to callers through the ‘art of listening’ and then if appropriate provide options and resources.”

For Teens in Crisis, Help can be a Click Away
UBC Education professor pilots web-based crisis hotline for youth

By Erika Smisek

Anne Martin-Matthews has been appointed scientific director of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Institute of Aging.

The appointment is effective for the term Jan. 1 to July 1, 2004.

Martin-Matthews joined UBC in 1998 and is a professor of family medicine in the School of Social Work and Family Studies. Her research interests include families and aging, intergenerational relationships, widowhood and health.

A fellow of the Gerontological Society of America, Martin-Matthews most recently served as vice-chair of the advisory board of the Institute of Aging.

One of CIHR’s 13 institutes, the Institute of Aging is dedicated to supporting research that promotes healthy aging. The institute links researchers located in universities, hospitals and other research centres across Canada.

CIHR is the Government of Canada’s premier agency for health research.