Heart’s Inventions

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The first-person experiences of early residents of BC, captured on hours of nearly-forgotten audiotape, are getting the audience they deserve in a book and CD package that found its start as a master’s thesis.
BY KAT ESCHNER

On the cover: Mechanical Engineering co-op student Mike Lewis demonstrates CanAssist’s indoor ball launcher and treat dispenser. It was made for a young Delta woman (and her dog Toby) who has acute cerebral palsy. The full CanAssist story starts on page 22. Photo by Nik West, BA ’95.
Inclusion, a Gadget at a Time

Assistive technology from CanAssist breaks down barriers.

MORAN THAN FOUR MILLION CANADIANS DEAL WITH PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY issues. Hearing, seeing, communicating, walking, climbing stairs, bending, learning can all be day-to-day, personal challenges. They can also be barriers to income and a sense of sharing equal citizenship with other Canadians. With a growing, aging population the number of people with some form of disability is bound to increase.

Yet, statistics are statistics. It’s when someone close to you is part of that group, the numbers hit home.

Such was the case for Nigel Livingston.

As Tom Hawthorn reports in our cover story beginning on page 22, Livingston — who came to UVic as a forest biologist in the Department of Biology — had his personal and professional life turned around when his youngest daughter was diagnosed with a complex genetic disorder.

Through his family’s work with the Queen Alexandra Centre for Children’s Health, Livingston came to appreciate the tremendous need for assistive technology for all kinds of special needs.

Inspired, in 1999 he began assembling a team of volunteers — fellow faculty, students, staff, retirees and community members with a variety of skills — who diligently went about the job of designing and building an array of gadgets customized for individual users.

They responded to requests from people with special needs, their families or caregivers. Often, the requirements were so specialized that it was impossible to find commercial products to provide whatever help was required.

Word got around, and now, well past a decade into it, CanAssist has touched the lives of more than 600 infants, young people, adults and seniors.

The client list grows each week and CanAssist’s inventions can be found across BC and as far away as Africa and New Zealand. Usually, there’s no charge for technologies but donations help to offset development costs. From small beginnings, the service has grown to 30 employees and the busy operation is now formally recognized as a UVic entity by the Senate and the Board of Governors.

Apart from assistive technology, CanAssist is out to raise awareness about disability issues and it works to create job and training opportunities that weren’t there before.

Of course, there’s much work yet to be done. Inclusion and empowerment are elusive things. But Livingston and his team show what can be done when formidable measures of technical expertise are combined with heartfelt compassion.

MIKE McNENEY, EDITOR
mmcneney@uvic.ca
**Nice Shots**

Paul Nicklen’s Arctic Photos (spring 2010 issue) are inspiring. He really had to go through a lot of physical endurance to get those amazing shots. However, my favourite photo is that of Eva Markvoort (by Cyrus McEachern). It is the most striking photo portrait I have seen in years. The photo conveys the optimism of this young woman in spite of her daunting physical journey.

*Cathy Ray, BA ’81, Fort Fraser, BC*

**Correction**

Michael Edgson, BA ’93, won nine gold medals in the 1988 Seoul Paralympic Games, four golds and a silver at the 1992 Paralympics in Spain, and an additional seven medals at the 1984 games. He was the first athlete with a disability to be inducted into Swim Canada’s Circle of Excellence. Incomplete information appeared in our spring 2010 coverage of Lauren Woolstencroft’s performance at the Vancouver Paralympics.

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**Reply All**

- Letters to the editor
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*torch@uvic.ca*
As recent graduates of UVic’s school of music, Julie and Carli Kennedy’s adventures in music are just beginning. Both top music students, the identical twin sisters are pursuing a career in music as a performing duo, Carli on guitar and Julie, violin. And thanks to a scholarship given by Dr. Betty Kennedy (no relation), this dynamic duo got a boost in their studies too.

“The time commitment to study and practice is heavy, and the scholarships allowed us to focus on our musicianship without worrying about finances,” says Julie.

“We’re so grateful for the support,” says Carli. “Scholarships provide the added inspiration that spurred us on.”

As a retired UVic professor of mathematics, Betty Kennedy wanted to make a difference in students’ lives. “I feel I’ve had a good life and now I want to enhance the lives of others.”

Betty chose to create scholarships in areas that reflect her personal interests: music, law, engineering and mathematics. “Mathematics was my own discipline,” she says, “law was my husband’s, engineering was my father’s and music because I love classical music.”

Many UVic students depend on scholarships to pursue their educational dreams. Find out how your gift of a scholarship will create bright futures for deserving students. Please call us at 250.721.6003, visit our website www.uvic.ca/givingtouvic.

Or speak with the UVic student caller who contacts you.
Community Connections

The people of the university have diverse influences on communities close to campus and far beyond.

BY DAVID H. TURPIN
PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

ONE OF OUR KEY GOALS AS A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY IS TO SERVE communities in British Columbia, Canada and around the world — contributing intellectual, social and economic benefits in countless ways.

We strive to achieve that goal by offering real-world learning opportunities to our undergraduate and graduate students. Our faculty members, through their research, are engaged in the most critical issues facing society. And our worldwide alumni network contributes knowledge and skills in incredibly diverse ways.

Looking through this issue of the *UVic Torch Alumni Magazine* I can’t help but be reminded of the many ways in which the people of our university are committed to building stronger communities. The in-depth stories chronicled here offer clear and compelling examples of that commitment.

To begin with, the feature story focuses on research on human memory bridging the disciplines of psychology and neuroscience. It provides a fascinating insight into current research that affects us all — from the fallibility of memory, to the beneficial impact of exercise on memory, and finally to the connection between language and memory.

Research on those aspects of memory is not far removed from this issue’s story about the new *BC Voices* book and digital recordings. The book arises from a master’s thesis and sheds light on life in the province’s earliest days through the recorded voices and stories of First Nations members and pioneers. I’m pleased to learn that the book is already being added to high school English and Aboriginal Studies reading lists.

Our alumni come from all walks of life, and their influence is felt at all sorts of levels. One of the more influential members of the alumni community, particularly in light of the lead-up to the Vancouver Olympics, is retired Rear-Admiral Tyrone Pile. In an interview, he shares perspectives on a rewarding career, his completion of his master’s degree, and the challenges facing our naval forces.

And the cover story details how — with an idea that began from a deeply personal level — Dr. Nigel Livingston and his dedicated team of staff and volunteers have developed CanAssist into a vital resource for people with special needs. The technology, programs and services that CanAssist is responsible for have, in many ways, improved the quality of life for clients locally, provincially, nationally and around the world. The University of Victoria is immensely proud of everything that CanAssist has achieved — and will achieve in the future.

CanAssist is also a key component of one of the university’s current priorities: the construction of a new athletics facility. Along with a variety of recreational facilities — including a new basketball court, gymnasiums, and a climbing wall — the new building will include space for CanAssist to continue to grow.

I hope you’ll enjoy these stories and let them keep you connected to your university. Whether you are a recent graduate or whether it has been years since you set foot on campus, an engaged alumni network is vital to the strength of the University of Victoria and the communities it serves.

Our alumni come from all walks of life, and their influence is felt at all sorts of levels.
Reflections, Autumn

“I work in the McPherson Library at the front desk and one day I discovered this old photography book that had been donated, Reflections,” says Jeffery Henry, who produced the image you see here. His inspiration was David Robinson’s collection of photos of reflections in water, cobblestone puddles, store windows and other surfaces taken in Italy and published in 1978. Anthony Burgess wrote his novel, la Beard’s Roman Woman in response to Robinson’s reflection photos.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFFERY HENRY, BFA ’99
You see all kinds of different footwear at a convocation ceremony — from sneakers to stilettos. For some, shoe selection is an afterthought. For others it’s an expression of individuality amid the uniformity of graduation regalia.

But at the first ceremony of Spring Convocation in June, Laura Feyrer, MSc ’10, took it to a new and entirely meaningful level: the geographer sported a fresh pair of Xtratuf neoprene boots.

As she explained after the ceremony, good quality boots got her through the hours and hours of slogging in research boats on Clayoquot Sound during the completion of her master’s thesis on the foraging ecology of gray whales.

In all, 3,062 degrees, diplomas and certificates were awarded at Spring Convocation. Fall Convocation in November should see about 1,000 students formally completing their studies.

The June proceedings were also notable in that the university surpassed the total of 100,000 alumni.
Already married and with two children during his final year of studies, Richard Flury, BSc ’70, got his big break when recruiters from oil giant Amoco visited campus. Career prospects in Victoria weren’t great for a physics grad, not even one who would graduate with an honours degree. And if there was one thing Richard Flury needed it was a job to support his young family. As well, his bride, Liz, had cut short her UVic education after the first year to work at the Royal Bank.

“I think the urgency for me came from the fact that I was married and had two children and I had to figure out a way to look after the finances,” says Flury, now 63 and the father of three children and grandfather of seven. “He was lucky to get some good scholarships,” Liz Flury says of her husband of 44 years. “We remember how nice these scholarships are.” Flury’s entry-level job with Amoco in Calgary would eventually lead to a top job in London for one of four divisions of energy giant BP.

Following his retirement in 2001, and grateful for the part that UVic had played in a successful career, they decided payback was in order. That came in June with a $1.5-million donation to the Faculty of Science. The money is going toward the cost of the new Bob Wright Centre — Ocean, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Building. In recognition of the Flurys’ donation, the main lecture hall will bear their name.

“Broadly speaking, it was an opportunity to give back to an institution that I thought had played a key role in setting me up to be equipped to eventually have quite a successful career,” says Flury, a former recipient of the alumni association’s Distinguished Alumni Award for Lifetime Achievement. He hopes the donation inspires other alumni who benefited from their UVic educations.

In 2006, the Flurys established a $100-thousand scholarship fund for university transfer students bound for their third year of science studies. An impetus for their donations was their relationship with Tom Pedersen that began when he was dean of science. Flury and Pedersen subsequently took part in university/community lectures on such themes as Saanich Inlet and global warming. And when Pedersen became executive director of the UVic-based Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, he tagged Flury for the advisory board. At BP, Flury was chief executive of the gas, power and renewables section, a background that made him a perfect fit for PICS, Pedersen says. “He implicitly understands the science as well, which is a huge benefit to me because so many other people that are highly placed in society don’t,” Pedersen says. “He does.”

— KEITH NORBURY, BA ’85

### Esteemed Vic College Grads Honoured

**Frances Kelsey**, who attended Victoria College in 1930, and became known for refusing to allow the harmful sleeping aid thalidomide to be distributed to pregnant women in the United States, is the UVic Alumni Association’s selection for the 2010 Alumni Legacy Award. Kelsey was a recently-hired drug evaluation officer at the Food and Drug Administration in 1960 when — concerned about the side-effects of thalidomide — she resisted corporate pressure to approve the drug. Shortly after, thalidomide’s devastating effects became clear: more than 10,000 infants were born with birth defects worldwide.

Kelsey, 96, resides near Washington, DC, and is unable to attend the Legacy Awards. Also to be honoured at the Nov. 23 dinner at the Victoria Conference Centre is retired BC Supreme Court Justice **Robert Hutchison**, VC ’49, in the Legacy Sport category. He ran for Canada at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics and was instrumental in designing the Vikes athletics program.

Computer Science senior instructor **Mary Sanseverino**, MSc ’91, will receive the Harry Hickman Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching for her educational leadership and innovative teaching skills.

In the research category, **Biochemistry Prof. Terry Pearson** will be recognized for his work in antibody technology and his study of the parasites that cause African sleeping sickness. His recent work addresses the early diagnosis of cancer and infectious diseases.
The globular clusters are spectacular,” says Russ Robb, the enthusiastic senior scientific assistant with the Department of Physics and Astronomy. He’s talking about the star colours captured by the department’s brand new 32-inch Cassegrain reflecting telescope.

In midsummer, a crane lifted the $700-thousand photon catcher to the top of the Bob Wright Centre and gingerly lowered it through the window in the observatory dome. Then came a two-week installation period.

The fifth largest in Canada, and the largest university-based telescope in the country, it’s already getting plenty of use by Astronomy undergraduate and graduate students.

Combined with an advanced, long-exposure digital (CCD) camera, the telescope (built by DFM Engineering of Colorado) also supports the department’s research on asteroids and extrasolar planets.

For amateur astronomers — or just plain curious stargazers — the observatory is open to the public on Wednesday evenings, from 8 to 10 (weather permitting). Senior astronomy students will be on hand to answer questions.
Rabbit Roundup

They’ve generated almost as much press attention as Lady Gaga, but now there finally seems to be a non-lethal resolution to the question of what do with all of those campus rabbits.

At the end of August, the BC Supreme Court overturned an injunction and cleared the way for the university to resume a program trapping rabbits and handing them over to sanctuaries in Coombs, Cowichan Station, Salt Spring Island and Texas. Private donations to animal-rights groups are funding costs associated with spaying, neutering, and transportation.

The rabbits once numbered upwards of 1,600 — most of them abandoned by pet owners, or the offspring of abandoned pets. The university was forced to adopt a management plan because of the damage rabbits caused to campus grounds and vegetation. Safety and possible health hazards were also cited, and rabbits were migrating into nearby neighbourhoods.

The university hopes to eventually limit the population to 200 rabbits, restricting them to within Ring Road.
The Rounsefell is Ours!

Vikes men’s rugby won the 2010 BC championship and the Rounsefell Cup this spring with a 31-27 win over Vancouver’s Meraloma Rugby Club. It was a surprise victory, as the team overcame injuries and roster losses resulting from national team selections and summer job commitments. It’s UVic rugby’s third cup after wins in 2003 and 1971.

A Gift for Golf

Victoria College graduate Margaret Todd, one of Canada’s most accomplished golfers, gave $100-thousand to the Vikes to start a women’s golf athletic financial award. The fund will bear her and her late husband Jack’s names.

“I wanted to provide more incentive for young ladies to pursue their sporting ambitions, while attaining an exceptional education,” says Todd. She won 11 Victoria-and-district titles, qualified for the Canadian and US championships, and played on four international teams. Later she served on numerous boards and devised a course rating system. This past season Vikes golfer Anne Balser won the Canadian University Golf Championship.

Million-dollar Breakfasts

This year’s edition of the Vikes Championship Breakfast pushed the grand total of funds raised by the three-year-old event to more than one million dollars. The funds support financial awards for student-athletes. Ticket sales, lead corporate sponsorship from Dole, and the university’s commitment to match the first $150,000 helped the 2010 breakfast raise $355,000. Seven hundred early-risers attended September’s breakfast in McKinnon Gym to show support for the Vikes and to hear guest speaker Stephanie Dixon, BA ’09, winner of 19 Paralympic swimming medals.

More than 800 spirited students, staff and alumni turned up on a Saturday morning in September to form the megacast of the first (or second) UVic lip dub video, mouthing along to a couple of pop tunes.

Community-building undergraduate Shawn Slavin and a team of volunteers took on the project in response to a popular lip dub video posted on YouTube by Spain’s Universitat de Vic (aka “UVic”). When celebrity gossip blogger Perez Hilton mistook the Spanish UVic for the Canadian version, Slavin decided the best way to correct the error was to put Victoria on the map with its own viral video: uviclip-dub.com.

They brighten the winter with ski trips and ’80s-inspired Neon Ski-On parties, making the UVic Snow Club one of the more popular sports clubs on campus. They also have their own language:

- **Bonk** Smacking your board or skis on a non-snow object as part of a trick.
- **Grabs** Grabbing the edge of your snowboard to add extra challenge to spins or flips.
- **Goofy stance** Most snowboarders ride with their right foot in front. Someone who rides goofy leads with the left.
- **Fakie** When you are riding in the opposite orientation to your usual stance.
- **Sick** “That’s amazing!”
- **Steezy** see: Sick.
- **Yard sale** Crashed and all your gear got strewn across the slope? Yard sale!
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A set of genes slipped from a marine bacterium thousands of years ago and ever since, the Japanese have gleaned more calories from a sushi roll. Credit goes to a split-second swap.

The genetic material from the common marine bacteria Zobellia galactanivorans was scooped up by one of the islanders’ intestinal microbes, imbuing it with the power to digest seaweed. This serendipitous exchange occurred after the residents started downing the red algae nori with their fish and rice.

Structural biologist and biochemist Jan-Hendrik Hehemann, who recently arrived on campus to conduct his post-doctoral studies, discovered this sea-to-land transaction and detailed its far-flung ramifications.

As reported this spring in the journal Nature, Hehemann uncovered the horizontal gene transfer as a tantalizing by-product of his doctoral research at the Station Biologique de Roscoff in France. With his colleagues, he was investigating bacterial genes that degrade the carbohydrates of seaweeds, or porphyrans. He focused on a set of five genes in Zobellia “that were, based on their sequence, promising candidates for new functions,” he says.

Initially, the team implanted two of the five genes into Escherichia coli cells, reproduced the encoded enzymes and then attempted to determine their roles. After plucking seaweeds from the beaches of Brittany, Hehemann processed them to obtain the porphyrans. “I tested the recombinant proteins on the extracts and found high activity in one species, Porphyra umbilicalis or nori,” he says. “Discovering the function of these enzymes was really cool.”

Hehemann was the first to elucidate this new category of enzymes, called porphyranases. An even bigger find would follow.

Probing genetic databases, he compared gene sequences from Zobellia to the profiles of a variety of organisms. As expected, certain marine bacteria were equipped for cleaving porphyrans. Remarkably, these same genes were isolated from the intestines of Japanese individuals. “Right away, I thought it was too good to be true,” he says. “It was really promising. We were on to something.”

Like gumshoes in hot pursuit, the team then analyzed data from the stool samples of 13 Japanese people and 18 Americans. They checked for porphyranases. While the tests confirmed the potential enzymes in four of the Japanese, none was found in the intestinal flora of the Americans.

“His findings elicited interest from the public and praise from the scientific community. “This was a landmark study that showed how environment and diet can influence the microbiota in a sustained, long-term manner,” says Prof. Justin Sonnenburg of the Stanford University School of Medicine. “We’re at the beginning of understanding the way intestinal bacteria adapted over the course of human evolution.”

Hehemann came to UVic in February for a two-year post-doc with biochemist Alisdair Boraston. Hehemann will continue delving into marine bacterial enzymes that act on seaweed carbohydrates. He’ll also produce the enzyme found in the Japanese bowel microbe. “Then we’ll test it to see how it benefits from the acquisition of the genes from the marine bacterium,” he says.

The gene transfer — it’s not known precisely when it occurred — yielded definite upsides for the Japanese, and the oceanic genes now pervade the population. Hehemann even discovered them in the intestines of an unweaned baby girl. But no matter how many times Western aficionados sit down at a sushi bar, they’ll never latch on to the super-charged bacterium. Today’s nori is roasted and its original bacterial hitchhikers have been eliminated.

In fact, much of Western fare is hygienically processed and mass-produced, effectively nixing the chance for new genes to come on board.

Hehemann’s study may inspire further exploration. Did agriculture and cooking derail our ability to feast on this genetic abundance? Can the lack of exposure to a host of microbes increase susceptibility to disease?

“Horizontal gene transfer occurred after contact with non-sterile food,” he says. “If we only eat sterile food, then maybe we’re shutting ourselves off from any potentially beneficial genes. The more diverse foods we eat, the more diverse may be our gut microbes on the gene level.”

“We’re at the beginning of understanding the way intestinal bacteria adapted over the course of human evolution.”

Gut Reaction

Bacteria research reveals a specialized ability of Japanese to digest nori seaweed.

BY MAUREEN LICATA

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After a Stroke
Advanced brain imagery aids stroke recovery research.

“IN ORDER TO HELP PEOPLE, YOU NEED TO know what’s going on in the brain,” says Craig Brown, a neuroscientist in the Division of Medical Sciences, who studies the effects of stroke by using voltage-sensitive dye imaging, or VSD.

Fifty-thousand Canadians die from strokes every year and 300,000 are living with effects that mostly result from clots that interrupt blood flow to the brain.

At the centre of his research, Brown — a native Manitoban in ripped jeans and a short-sleeved cowboy shirt — uses VSD to see what’s happening in the brain of a mouse, before and after stroke.

The adjacent image shows how a mouse brain responds to touch of the left forepaw. Warm colours represent more vigorous brain responses. (The right side of the brain responds to touch on the left side of body.)

Panel one shows how the brain normally responds to touch of the left forepaw (measured in milliseconds of response time).

Panel two shows that the brain fails to respond to forepaw touch one week after a stroke in the somatosensory cortex (region that senses the body). The lack of responsiveness correlates with marked impairments in the use of the forepaw.

And panel three shows how the brain regains responsiveness to forepaw touch eight weeks after stroke. Also, the areas that don’t normally respond very much to touch (red-circled in left panel) start responding more (red-circled in panel three). The stroke-affected area shows no sign of response. Nor will it. Other parts of the brain have taken over. This applies to humans as well.

“How well people recover from a stroke varies considerably from person to person,” says Brown. “Ultimately, we hope to understand what type of brain changes are associated with optimal stroke recovery, and then use genetic or pharmacological tools to stimulate these positive brain changes.”

– GRANT KERR

Voltage-sensitive dye images show brain responses before, one week, and eight weeks after a stroke.

Banding Together
Volunteers take aim at declining hummingbird populations.

BY HEATHER REID, BSC ’02

WITH THROAT FEATHERS SCATTERING IRIDESCENT LIGHT IN EVERY direction, a male rufous hummingbird approaches a red plastic feeder. He lands and a gauzy net falls, trapping the bird inside. A gentle hand slips in and cups the feisty flier. The bird is wrapped in a soft cloth and brought to a table where volunteers record a series of measurements. A licenced bird-bander applies an aluminum cuff on the bird’s leg with an identifying number. The band is about the size of the letter C on a Canadian quarter.

Information gathered at this and 12 other banding and monitoring sites run by the Hummingbird Project of British Columbia...
may help researchers get to the bottom of rapidly declining hummingbird populations. From March to July each year, volunteers rise before dawn and head off with calipers and coffee to gather data for a citizen science project focused on a conspicuous family of birds that we know surprisingly little about.

Retired Math Prof. Betty Kennedy’s home on Galiano Island is often graced with dozens of hummingbirds. During a banding session in June, she sits on her deck and watches the hummingbirds flit around her garden. “It seemed like a good spot,” she says of how she came to host a banding team.

At 88, Kennedy still tends a glorious garden that rambles up a slope overlooking Active Pass. On her first night in the house in the early 1960s, she slept in an open porch and was roused early by the buzzing sound of hungry hummingbirds.

She put out a blue egg cup with sugar water and began a feeding routine that led her to design a feeder in the days before they were commercially available. Rufous hummingbirds are so plentiful at her place she’s got feeders that hold up to three litres of solution. “She buys truckloads of sugar,” says Mike Hoebel, the site’s bander and volunteer co-ordinator.

At the peak of migration 50 birds may be examined on Kennedy’s picnic table in a single day. It used to be that the group would handle nearly 100 at the same point in the season. “We haven’t had those super-big days for a number of years,” says Hoebel. “We don’t know why.”

Hummingbirds are unique to the Western Hemisphere with more than 300 species identified. In BC, eight species rely on intact habitat from Central America north for survival. Each monitoring site provides basic biological information that will be necessary to halt or reverse the population reductions observed in the last few decades.

Rufous hummingbirds, the most common species on Vancouver Island, have declined by an alarming 63 per cent, according to a report by the Western Hummingbird Partnership.

It is not known how long the birds typically live, how many offspring they produce or what the main causes of mortality are. Getting this baseline information may give conservationists, gardeners and urban planners a chance to help the birds adapt.

The local banding effort is under the wing of the Rocky Point Bird Observatory in Metchosin and feeds data to the continent-wide Hummingbird Monitoring Network.

Besides being entrancing to humans, hummingbirds are crucial pollinators of early spring flowers — used by other animals for food and shelter — before insects start buzzing around.

Many of the volunteers come from a science background and they bring those skills to the banding table.

At a banding session on Salt Spring Island, Jessie Fanucchi, BSc ’10, gets hands on experience for future fieldwork under the watchful eye of Ann Nightingale, MPA ’92, of the Rocky Point Bird Observatory in Metchosin.

Fanucchi captures her first bird and marvels at its energy. She feels its heart beating against the palm of her hand. After a few measurements, the bird gets a drink and flies from Fanucchi’s hand.

“Volunteering is a way to branch out and use knowledge that I have from UVic in a practical way,” Fanucchi says. “Hummingbirds are amazing little creatures.”

Making Themselves Clear

After Copenhagen and Climate-gate, scientists look for better ways to communicate with the media and the public.

BY LINDSEY NORRIS, BA ’07

Last December, one of the biggest news stories was the United Nations climate conference in Copenhagen, with all kinds of political, economic and environmental ramifications. But another story was also surfacing. A hacker had broken into the computer network of the climatic research unit at the University of East Anglia in Britain and stole hundreds of email messages that climate-change sceptics said suggested scientists had fabricated climate change data. The media called it “Climategate.”
Ultimately, three independent reviews found no evidence of tampered data, nor anything to challenge the scientific consensus that global warming is happening or that it is induced by human activity.

But the East Anglia scientists were chastised for the way they handled freedom of information requests. Investigators told them they could have saved themselves a lot of trouble by aggressively publishing all their data instead of worrying about how to stonewall their critics.

Essentially, the problem was not with their science, but how they communicated that science.

**FOUR MONTHS AFTER THE COPENHAGEN** conference, and a continent away, a discussion on media and global warming brings a full house to a UVic auditorium. There are four panellists: Jim Hoggan, LLB ’88, a Vancouver-based communications consultant and chair of the Suzuki Foundation; Lucinda Chodan, editor-in-chief of the Victoria Times Colonist; Tom Pedersen, marine geochemist and leader of the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions at UVic; and Peter Calamai, a former science writer for the Toronto Star.

They agree that several aspects of media coverage about global warming are problematic.

For his part, Hoggan thinks journalists need to start asking tougher questions about the credentials of people who suggest climate change isn’t happening. He points out how effectively climate-change sceptics have sowed doubt in the public’s mind about climate science. (He has also co-authored a book about it, *Climate Cover-up: the Crusade to Deny Global Warming).*

In a post-panel interview, Hoggan says: “It’s easy to create doubt and confusion, but it is very difficult to explain complicated scientific phenomena…it takes a denier 30 seconds to say the earth is cooling. It takes a climate scientist five minutes to explain why that isn’t the case.”

He believes getting scientists to talk to the public more would help. “I understand scientists aren’t in the PR business, but I think one of the things we need to do today is hear more from the people the public trusts, and that is climate scientists.”

Of course, part of what makes scientists trustworthy is also what keeps them from shouting from the rooftops, says Pedersen. It is the nature of scientists to be conservative. “We approach a question by posing (it) in the form of a hypothesis, and then we set out to destroy it,” he says. “We are sceptical by nature, and trained to question things.”

And when scientists do speak out, they aren’t all renowned for speaking in accessible language. That’s a missed opportunity, as language is a powerful tool. For instance, in the well-known memo to George W. Bush, Republican pollster Frank Luntz advised the former president to say “climate change,” not “global warming,” as the latter is more frightening.

“I am now coaching myself to say ‘global warming,’” Pedersen says wryly.

**GLOBAL WARMING ISN’T THE FIRST** issue to pit scientists against special interest groups — and confuse the public as a result. For many years, lobby groups told people that smoking had health benefits; that asbestos wasn’t harmful. They eventually went extinct under the relentless weight of public pressure. Pedersen believes peer pressure may be the tipping point for global warming, too.

“I think everybody is subject to change,” he says. “Where we find people change their attitudes is when their neighbours do. Recycling is a concrete example. We all put out blue boxes now, but in its early days, quite a few people turned their noses up. Now you are considered a pariah if you don’t put out a blue box.”

He thinks the communication issue could be tackled at the university level by training scientists to adjust their language for their audience. “But having said that, there aren’t many scientists who are very good at that,” he says. “A better approach would be to have those who are appear more frequently in public.”

Climatologist Andrew Weaver, BSc ’83, is one of those scientists. He says “the real problem is the fundamental lack of science literacy in the general populace.”

> “The communication of science demands that researchers understand the science of communications.”

Journalists are trained to get conflicting sides of the story, he notes, “but science doesn’t work that way. Scientists can have individual views on policy. However, science is not opinion, and it’s not politics...If I write a column about gravity I’m not going to go out and get quotes from different people.”

He is also not convinced that more discussion will get people to change.

“The job is now with society,” he says. “We’ve given lots of information. Science can keep informing, but society has to decide what they want to do with it.”

Calamai, the science writer, holds a bachelor’s degree in physics. He’s a rare example of someone who comfortable in news gathering as well as science. He’s also one of the founders of the new Science Media Centre of Canada. It aims to help reporters better understand scientific questions, and scientists to become better communicators with journalists.

“The communication of science demands that researchers understand the science of communications,” Calamai says.

He says the centre will try to excite Canadians about science. After all, he says, newspapers print what people want to read, and if people want science, newspapers will hire and train more science writers.

But in an appropriate demonstration of scientific reticence, Calamai does not present the SMCC as any sort of cure-all. “I do know that unless this and a whole lot of ventures start taking ownership of climate science, we aren’t going to get out of the current mess we’re in.”
Memory: its weaknesses, how the brain’s storage capacity can be improved and the link between memory and language.

BY GRANT KERR
James Boswell got this generalization half right in his renowned biography, Life of (Samuel) Johnson, published in 1791. Boswell could have gone further, saying that many of us start to question our own memory once we hit middle age. I know I did. My memory has never been very reliable, even in my youth. With each passing year its warrens and chinks seem to be filled with more detritus and less desirable matter. It groans, belches, makes sudden left turns and complains endlessly when I try to recall dates, events, or even where the heck I put my keys. Still, we carry on, this brain and I.

SO WHAT’S HAPPENING? Why can I remember the lyrics to an obscure punk song but have trouble recalling the small number of items I’m supposed to buy at the grocery store? Can I improve this as I settle into middle age? Or at any age? Can our memories even be trusted? If so, how much?

Let’s start at the beginning. There is compelling evidence that memory ultimately begins with the five senses that provide the information that we recall later. If we’re trying to remember a scintillating dinner party discussion, we might also associate it with that great dessert that was served. Or the smell of the coffee. Sensory memory is over in the blink of an eye but helps feed information to the short-term memory. The short-term itself lasts for a few seconds and is contained primarily in the pre-frontal lobe. This area of the brain is what shapes the front of our skulls, giving us humans the high, domed foreheads that other primates don’t have. It stores up to seven items at a time and usually lasts under a minute. So unless you make an effort to move the information into the long-term slot, you may lose it.

It stands to reason, then, that the bulk of our memory is long-term. That tidbit of trivia you want to retain from that inspiring conversation you had passes through the hippocampus, the brain’s sorting station. In trying to remember a detail by repeating it, you’re passing it through the hippocampus several times. The actual memories, however, are stored throughout the cortex.

To recall an experience, your brain has to reconstruct the event from several areas. It’s less a one-stop shop data retrieval than an old-fashioned research project: you go to several parts of the library to find all the information you need. But given that memories are associative, it’s more complicated than that. One memory leads to another and another until the picture becomes clear. This is called explicit or declarative memory: the events, details and bits of information we recall that we can put in words. Anniversaries, birthdays, phone numbers, even pictures we can describe.

SO WHY DO SOME PEOPLE have better memory recall than others? Sleep might have something to do with it. Scientific evidence suggests getting a good night’s shut-eye might help the brain’s storage system. But we naturally forget things. It’s the way the brain sheds information it doesn’t really need. Exacerbating this is stress and boredom, which affect the hippocampus and, hence, your memory.

Steve Lindsay, a cognitive psychologist in the Department of Psychology, is interested in how memory works and, more distressingly, how often it produces false beliefs and memories. Young children, with their active imaginations and deference to authority, are particularly impressionable. Adults, it turns out, are easily fooled as well.

“People can draw (memories) from a multitude of sources, even sources that don’t depict an actual event,” Lindsay says.

In a recent experiment, Lindsay and colleagues at the University of Warwick in England, for the first time, demonstrated that false evidence can create false beliefs and memories about recent actions.

In the study, published in the journal Memory and Cognition, 47 UVic undergraduates watched and copied a series of 37 simple actions, such as coin flips, kissing a magnifying glass, or playing air guitar. They were also asked to imagine performing a series of actions.

The sessions were videotaped and later edited to produce a fake video that made it appear the subject was watching a research assistant performing two actions that weren’t actually seen or repeated by the test participant. The doctored clips were then inserted into a series of unaltered segments.

About two weeks later the participants were asked questions about the previous actions and they were shown the video. The researchers found that the subjects generally accepted the altered video as accurate and that the video evidence alone was enough to sway their beliefs and memories.

Beyond the study’s concern with the mechanisms of false memory and imagination, Lindsay and his co-authors raise potential wider implications, such as whether video evidence may induce people to offer
knee before he played a university game. Hobbled by his injury, football star with dreams of playing in the CFL, Christie busted his Division of Medical Sciences. He lives what he learns. A high school crosswords and exercise.

Reviewing what you know, or have just learned, helps retain information. Reading and writing help your memory. So too do Sudoku, crosswords and exercise.

A big proponent of this is Brian Christie, a neuroscientist in the Division of Medical Sciences. He lives what he learns. A high school football star with dreams of playing in the CFL, Christie busted his knee before he played a university game. Hobbled by his injury, Christie packed on the pounds and stopped moving. But during his research days at California’s Salk Institute, he helped with lab studies that showed the health benefits of exercise. Not just the physical but the ability to build brain capacity and memory.

The research motivated him to get fit and stay that way. Exercise is like “fertilizer for the brain,” Christie says. On a cellular level, learning happens because the neural circuits in your brain are changed. These circuits hold a number of neurons that talk to each other via synapses, like telephone lines. While it’s true that we naturally lose neurons as we age, neurons are not only regenerated by exercising but new ones are grown as well. “Even when you have lost brain cells, you increase capacity of remaining ones. And cells don’t die as quickly,” Christie says.

That gives me hope. Since I was a boy I’ve recognized that I feel better after I’ve had a run or a bike ride. To function well, I need to move. I think more clearly, can recall bits of information better and my wife says I’m in a better mood. This should stand me in good stead for the future.

These days Christie is starting to explore the benefits of exercise in the aged. Even people who have been sedentary their whole lives can show significant improvement when they start moving, Christie says.

Although he works in memory, Christie has dreams as well. “My goal is to help regenerate cells that are lost or dying after the stroke and to lay down the structure that you can put new memory on. It’s a bit like replacing memory on a computer. When you do that, there’s nothing on it but you can load on new programs.”

**THERE’S ANOTHER SIDE TO MEMORY** too: the implicit, or non-declarative memory. It’s where we find procedural memory, motor skills.

This is one of several aspects of memory that fascinates Michael Masson. The Psychology faculty member studies memory, brain activity, how it relates to body movement and what role these actions play in language. Masson also wonders what role language has in our physical actions. As it turns out, language has a lot to do with it.

Evidence suggests that by reading about an action, the part of the brain that plans the action is stimulated as if the action was taking place. “If those hand actions are necessary, or a partial causal factor in enabling us to understand a sentence, if that’s damaged,” Masson wonders, “what impact will that have on language understanding?”

He and a UVic psychology colleague Daniel Bub have been chipping away at the mystery. Masson and Bub already know, for instance, that an object’s function is crucial to it being identified by name, even in young children. This language-function-action connection has long been established by other researchers.

In their own lab, Masson and Bub have built on previous evidence linking the written word and spoken word and how the premotor cortex reacts. So, a sentence describing the action of picking up a cell phone fires up a motor resonance to the brain that is in keeping with the actual use of the phone. This changes, however, if a picture of the action is shown following the sentence, bringing words and actions in line.

This fall, Masson, Bub and psychology colleague Ulrich Mueller plan to take these findings a step further. Asking 60 school children to use their hands in response to pictured objects, they hope to better comprehend the link between identification of objects, understanding of objects, an object’s function and hand actions.

“Might it be the case that those hand-action representations enable us to understand the sentence? If those hand actions are a necessary or a partial causal factor in enabling us to understand that sentence, if that’s damaged, what impact will that have on language understanding?”

In the long run, that’s what the psychologists want to find out.

“There’s a possibility of having a better understanding of what may happen when these sorts of skills don’t develop on a normal trajectory.”

Of course, “normal” is a relative term. It’s heartening to know that we aren’t all doomed where our memories are concerned. Work is being done thanks to the likes of Masson, Bub, Mueller, Christie and Lindsay. But it’s up to us as well. Turns out the old saying, “If first you don’t succeed, try, try again” has plenty of scientific back-up. By trying, trying again, we can help our memories stay intact.

“Memory is the diary that we all carry about with us.” – Oscar Wilde

“The true art of memory is the art of attention.” – Samuel Johnson
Father-daughter enthusiasm: CanAssist founder Nigel Livingston and Hannah.
With its growing collection of wonderfully inventive devices and gadgets, CanAssist makes it a more inclusive world for people with special needs.

BY TOM HAWTHORN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY NIK WEST, BA ’95

Heart’s Inventions

Nigel Livingston bounces around the room like a child in a toy store. He pushes buttons and flicks switches. He slips on a headband and bobs his noggin. This action brings a toy donkey to life. A plush Eeyore begins to speak in a recorded voice. A mopey voice says, “Don’t suppose you want to sing a song with me,” before launching into a familiar children’s song. With another flick of Livingston’s head, the gloomy donkey’s ears flap up and down. You can’t help but laugh.
A TALL MAN WITH AN OPEN, jovial face, Livingston’s schoolboy enthusiasm on this summer day seems more pronounced by his decision to wear short pants in the office. He is a serious man as proven by his education — a doctorate in biometeorology — and by his position as director of CanAssist. Among other projects, the University of Victoria program develops customized technologies for people with disabilities.

About 687,000 British Columbians live with a disability. That’s one of every six of us. As the population ages, the figures will grow.

“There’s unlimited demand,” Livingston says. “There’s a huge number of people with disabilities and challenges.”

Livingston’s ambitions for the program are not modest. Create innovative services for those with disabilities? Check. Devise fascinating gadgets to make life easier and independence possible? Check. Involve thousands of students so they become engaged in the mission of inclusion? Check. Change the world? Working on it.

CanAssist recently moved operations into E-Hut, a renovated building near the campus bus exchange. The building features large windows, wheelchair-accessible bathrooms, and a new concrete ramp at the entrance. It is bright and airy, a mansion compared to the program’s early days when Livingston operated from the side of his office desk and clients had to share space in crowded laboratories.

E-Hut hums with activity on a sleepy summer afternoon on campus. Co-op students work on software programs, while others tinker with gadgets. Dan Spelt, a former client with cerebral palsy who now works for CanAssist, is busy typing on a keyboard — using his mouth.

Livingston offers a tour, showing off gizmos conjured by the CanAssist wizards. A workshop houses pedal cars designed for the blind in which a sensor beeps the closer one approaches a fixed object. Elsewhere, there’s a BatSwinger, a clever device activated by pressing a button, allowing compressed carbon dioxide to swing a baseball bat at a ball on a tee. Children with physical and cognitive disabilities can now play the summer game.

A recent newsletter listed several other innovations. A seat with harnesses to attach to swings in public parks lets a four-year-old girl with spinal muscular atrophy ride alongside other neighbourhood kids.

During the Winter Olympics, Steven Cayer, a 17-year-old aspiring journalist with cerebral palsy, operated a high-definition video camera at the end of a 2.4-metre boom. He ran his powered wheelchair with his right hand, while he manipulated the camera by a joystick with his left hand. A sip-and-puff device allowed him to raise and lower the boom.

One gadget with commercial potential is the podWiz, a rechargeable adapter that attaches with Velcro to an iPod. The tool allows users to control such functions as play, pause, and skip forward from a single button. More than 200 children have since been given the opportunity to independently select their own music.

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, A TEENAGER WANTING control of his personal soundtrack led to the creation of what is now CanAssist.
It all started 11 years ago with a request from staff at the Queen Alexandra Centre for Children’s Health. A teenager named Paul, who had nearly drowned in a childhood accident, was unable to turn on his tape recorder to listen to a prized recording.

“He was blind and immobile,” Livingston recals. “He was in a wheelchair. Unable to talk.

“What they wanted me to do was to build a switch for him that would allow him to turn on his tape recorder. It was complicated. He had a lot of spasticity...” — Livingston waves his arms wildly, banging on the table — “...so he couldn’t hit a switch.”

He wags a pinky.

“The only movement he had was on the little finger of his hand.”

Unfortunately, the youth’s finger also had a tendency to lock into place.

“The device that we built was a ball with a pressure transducer inside, so when he pushed his finger against the ball it would detect the change in pressure.”

That solved the switch problem.

“Then there was a little pump. If his finger got locked, then it would re-inflate the ball and push his finger back.”

That solved another problem.

“His arm would shake like this and that wouldn’t set the thing off. It was only that little finger.”

So, to what did Paul listen, once he had the independence to control his tape recorder?

He favoured comedy routines by Richard Pryor, whose foul language shocked the staff, which in turn left the young man in stitches. Livingston howls in laughter in recalling the off-colour routines.

Though Livingston has called Canada home for 33 years, his accent betrays his English heritage. Born in the London borough of Ealing, it was the family’s expectation he would become a medical doctor, as his father and grandfather and great-grandfather had done, a calling dating back six generations. His own father became a barrister late in life and Livingston himself realized during a sabbatical that he was planning to enter medical school more from a sense of familial duty than personal passion.

During a year away from the classroom, he laboured aboard a ship before joining a kibbutz near the Gaza Strip, where he took part in farming duties while becoming intrigued by a roommate’s enthusiasm for physics. Back home, he skipped medicine, instead graduating with a physics degree from the University of Nottingham. He had become fascinated by environmental physics, much of which involved designing instrumentation.

He came to Canada to study with George Thurtell at the University of Guelph, completing a master’s degree. He earned a doctorate at the University of British Columbia by developing instruments measuring the exchange of CO₂ and water vapour in plants. He took a faculty position in the UVic Biology department in 1990. Four years ago, the university appointed him director of CanAssist.

This unexpected trajectory in his working life, launched by helping a young man operate a tape recorder, occurred because he had taken his youngest daughter to the Queen Alexandra for therapy. Hannah was slow to meet such childhood milestones as sitting up and speaking. A barrage of tests eventually led to a diagnosis of Angelman syndrome, a complex genetic disorder affecting the nervous system.
“There’s all the stages — shock, anger and grief,” he says. “You tend to look at the negative, what your child can’t do and won’t do. You go to a wedding and you think, ‘My daughter is never going to be able to do this.”’

In time, he recognized what her condition meant and came to appreciate it.

“Hannah tends to live for the moment, which is great. Totally naive, never embarrassed to express her enthusiasm. She’ll believe in Santa forever.”

What is now CanAssist started with an all-volunteer crew. Now, it has more than 30 employees with aspirations to hire more. “The bigger we get the more people we can serve,” Livingston says. All CanAssist projects are launched in response to a request from a special-needs person, or their families, or their caregivers. A fee is never charged for a service, or a technology.

The program is funded by the university, government, foundations and philanthropists. Some devices will have commercial potential. By being on campus, it can call on specialized expertise, while also providing opportunities for students, whom Livingston sees as heralds of a more integrated world.

“If they are informed,” he says, “when they become employers and leaders in society they’re the ones who are going to be pushing for greater inclusion.”

CanAssist has videos and letters as testimony that gadgets have improved life for clients, whether being able to operate the shutter of a digital camera, or launching a tennis ball for a dog to chase.

Left unstated is how much better the creators feel.

“There is nothing more satisfying than seeing an individual empowered. Nothing,” Livingston says with emphasis.

While the ingenuity of devices is eye-catching, a wide variety of services are also available, from painting murals to playing soccer to finding jobs.

One of the services is called TeenWork, providing work experience for youth with special needs. They have been placed with such employers as Subway Restaurants and the Ottavio Italian bakery in Oak Bay.

And if you’re shopping at Thrifty’s on Quadra Street you might find your groceries being bagged by a delightful young woman with an effervescent smile, a paid employee who takes delight in wearing a black tie, a white shirt, and a green apron. Her name tag reads: Hannah.

**ELECTRICAL** signals associated with muscle movement are detected by CanAssist’s EMG (electromyography) unit. It allows a user with ALS, MS or Duchene’s muscular dystrophy to operate things like TVs, light switches or iPods by clenching his jaw or wrinkling his forehead.
Livingston: On a mission of inclusion.
Retired Rear Admiral Tyrone Pile arrived at UVic just after the start of the first Gulf War. “An interesting introduction to campus.”
I grew up in a small town called Geraldton. It’s northeast of Thunder Bay, about 180 miles. In the dirty ’30s they called it the Muskeg Metropolis — so many miners went up there to strike it rich. Close to Lake Superior and a long way from the ocean.

The air cadets was the only truly organized youth organization in town. A lot of the young men, and eventually women, joined, got to see the country. Got to do neat things. And it was free.

It was mostly my father’s influence. He wanted me to be a pilot. I was into my pilot training at Portage La Prairie and about halfway through the program I went to the base commander and said, I’ve got to be honest with you, I’m really not enjoying this. A couple of days later I was here at CFB Esquimalt doing a naval interview and they were happy to have me.

I joined in ’75 so the first 15 years I was dealing with the Cold War. And the final 20 years, I’ve been dealing with the fallout of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the instability in numerous parts of the world that have been the consequences of that.

In 1983, I was delighted to be selected as the Canadian liaison officer for Her Majesty’s royal tour of the west coast of North America. I got to serve on Britannia for a couple of months. Who would ever conceive of spending all that time with the royal family, meeting President Reagan, his wife Nancy? I don’t know too many other careers that would give you those opportunities.

UVic was a turning point for me. I was still sort of living in the Canadian Forces bubble. It was a wonderful thing to go to a civilian institution and be challenged as to why Canada even needed a military. And I had that challenge just about every day in class.

I focused (my master’s) on the Royal Canadian Navy, post-Second World War. It had a lot of parallels with what our navy was going through in the late ’80s, early ’90s. And the admirals of the day had a lot of decisions to make about naval capabilities.

The navy is a mix of all this excitement and hard work to deploy ships. And that’s time away from family. So those are some of the things you have to consider as a young naval officer — this balance between family and career. It’s either a path you can accommodate or you can’t.

If you talk to any military person I’m sure that their first choice is not where they ended up. Because you just don’t know until you actually get some experience.

You really don’t understand who you are unless you understand your history, or a good part of it. And I felt we did not pay a lot of attention to our naval history within the Canadian Navy, the Canadian Forces at large.

The 21st century is going to be, already is, a maritime century. Many of the global issues that we see happening today are starting to push out into the coastal areas of states. The whole issue of the Arctic and global warming...illegal fishing, piracy, human smuggling.

I’ve been so busy with the Canadian navy centennial and the security for the Olympics in Vancouver that I haven’t given a lot of thought to what I’m going to do. I’m too young to “retire” retire. So I’m going to take some time off to travel with my wife (Debra Pile, BA ‘82). We are thinking of just hitting the road for about three to four months. I’m hoping that I’ll discover what it is that I want to do — come back refreshed and ready to take on the next adventure.

It also opened my eyes to the fact that your perception of your importance to the country is not the perception held by people outside the Canadian Forces. I realized the importance of educating the Canadian public on why we have a navy and why Canadians should continue to support the Canadian Forces.

One of the first days on campus was (after) the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1990. I was in uniform, and there were protests going on against the war and Canada’s involvement. And I was verbally abused by the protesters on campus. I took the time to talk to some of them about my perspective. So it was an interesting introduction to campus life.

Lessons Learned

Tyrone Pile, MA ’98, charted a course from the muskeg of north Ontario to Maritime Forces Pacific.

INTERVIEWED BY KEITH NORBURY, BA ’85 | PHOTOGRAPHY BY NIK WEST, BA ’95
TURN ON THE CD. THE VOICE CROSSES TIME TO TELL YOU ABOUT A quest: “I’m surprised how few people know about our great charac-
ters and the people that are semi-historical, semi-legendary in BC,”
says Imbert Orchard in a 1973 interview. The CBC journalist —
inspired by a native woman’s memory of the Klondike Gold Rush —
crossed the province in search of old-timers who could tell him
about their lives. Most of the 2,700 hours of Orchard’s interviews
never aired but they preserved a part of the history of early BC.

Donated to the BC Archives, the tapes mostly collected dust until
2000, when the CBC funded a countrywide effort to digitize its old
recordings. That’s when BC Archives brought in Victoria recording
whiz Robert “Lucky” Budd, MA ’05, to take on the Orchard Oral His-
tory Collection.

Now, his book Voices of BC: Stories From Our Past (Douglas & McIn-
tyre) and its three accompanying CDs cap Budd’s 10-year journey with
Orchard’s diverse interviews.

Budd’s interest in the project was rewarded during his first week
on the job. He found a tape labeled “Patenaude, Horsefly” that
turned out to be recording of a close friend’s great-great grandfa-
ther and a great-great uncle, talking about their lives among the
Cariboo’s first non-native settlers.

“When I showed it to Pharis [Patenaude], she played it for her
grandmother who started bawling. Not only had she not heard
these voices in 30 years, but no one in the family knew these record-
ings were made,” Budd says. “This is a goldmine, not only for BC
history but for family history.”

Budd tagged each tape with searchable keywords, and he became
determined to bring the tapes to a wider audience. So began his
master’s work in the UVic History Department. “Doing my thesis
really helped me compile my ideas about what this collection is and
what it isn’t. It was an unconventional route, but it...certainly
worked for me,” he says.

Voices takes a unique “three-dimensional” approach to provincial
history: read a story’s introduction and a transcript of the Orchard
interview, look at photographs of the interview subject or the period —
and then listen to a BC pioneer’s actual voice telling their story on CD.

“This (book) should be in the library of everybody who’s seriously
interested in the history of British Columbia,” says History Prof. Eric
Sager, Budd’s thesis advisor.

Just 24 of the Orchard interviews are excerpted in Voices but they,
like the entire collection, feature diverse and often marginalized
perspectives. In “It Won’t Do Anyone Any Good to Fight,” Chilli-
wack First Nation member Danny Milo recalls the 1858 conflict
between gold miners and the Nlaka’pamux (Thompson) people
that escalated into the Fraser Canyon War. With “Monarch of All I
Survey,” Sarah Glassey talks about being the first single woman to
own land in BC.

“What I really hope people get from listening to this material is a
sense of atmosphere. What we’re listening to here are people’s
memories,” Budd says.

Recording engineer Ian Stephen was alongside Orchard for every
hour of the interviews, from 1959 to 1966. Budd has come to view
Stephen as family — though he almost didn’t find him. That’s
because Orchard was part of a religious movement that led him to
change his name his first name from Robert. As a joke, he changed
the spelling of Stephen’s first name on all the recordings to “Ean.”

“I went through death records, birth records, obituaries, cemetery
records, everything for 10 years to try and find this guy, and I could
find nothing about him,” Budd says, “Three days before my book
was due, I found him in Campbell River.”

Orchard’s picture sits atop Stephen’s TV.

“To actually hear the people who lived in those times and what
they went through: you can’t get it by reading,” says Stephen. “The
expressions they come out with sometimes — it’s just out of this
world. This is what we realized when we were doing it.”

The book is already being added to secondary school reading lists,
starting with the Surrey School District.

“Having a better sense of our history in this province will hopeful-
ly encourage a stronger sense of creating our history now,” Budd
says. “The traditional out-West narrative tends to be ‘we came, we
saw, we conquered’. In BC, especially in the Orchard collection, it’s
‘we came, we saw, we learned to accommodate.’ The landscape is
just too epic to conquer.”
Ear to the past: “Lucky” Budd’s aural odyssey brings the Voices of BC back from the archive vaults.
Students have always sought out the gym or the field to balance their studies. Sport compliments academics through leadership, teamwork and volunteer experiences. A peek into the holdings of UVic Archives reveals more than 100 years of athletic fun and achievement.

Our extensive collection of historical photographs includes Victoria College team photographs — many of which have been donated by alumni and their families — with the oldest dating from the early 1900s. Between 1903 and 1915 UVic’s predecessor was affiliated with McGill and maintained close ties with Victoria High School, as is apparent in the photograph of the men’s BC Inter-Scholastic Champions for 1907-08. The members of the “Victoria High School Basket Ball Club” (photo 1) are wearing jerseys with the now-iconic overlapping V and C, for Victoria College. Basketball was also played by Victoria College women, as shown the photograph of the 1911-12 team (photo 2). While the players may be wearing their best dresses for the photo, their basketball uniforms were likely not dissimilar, consisting of long skirts and blouses.

After 1920, Victoria College was affiliated with UBC, and moved to the famous Craigdarroch Castle. Student handbooks reminded students that “there must be no games or other activities that would damage lawns or flowerbeds.” However, as a respite from their often over-crowded first and second year arts and science courses, students could pursue the coveted gold-on-blue varsity letters that were awarded for excellence in the major sports: field hockey and basketball for women; rugby, basketball and soccer for men.

The Lansdowne Era: Victoria College, 1946-1963, edited by Edward B. Harvey, VC ’59, provides comprehensive histories on women’s and
In addition to the major sports for women, there were volleyball, curling, swimming, badminton, fencing, bowling, golf, and tennis. Swimming practices were at the original Crystal Pool behind the Empress Hotel (now a part of the Victoria Conference Centre). In 1958, the men’s Vikings won the coveted Canadian Basketball Championship title. Other sports for men included ice hockey and water polo.

When UVic was established in 1963, more minor sports and intramurals were offered for recreation seekers. Intramural events from our poster collection include broom-ball, flag football and floor hockey for women and men (photo 4), and a 1984 tryout notice for the women’s rugby club. Speaking of rugby, so passionate were UVic rugby fans that they proclaimed their “happiness” from the Climenhaga observatory (photo 5). The men’s and women’s Vikings teams (formerly Vikings and Vikettes [photos 6 & 7]) have won 65 national titles in sports including rowing, cross-country and basketball, and our athletes have represented Canada at the international level. These events are documented in the Archives’ newspaper, poster and photograph holdings, and the late Peter Smith’s collection of Vikings athletics programs (photo 8) from 1978 to 2002.

The 1994 Commonwealth Games (photo 9) are another highlight from UVic’s sports history. These games marked the return of South Africa as a participating country and the first time disabled athletes were included as full members of their national teams. Posters, correspondence and plans from the games are also preserved at UVic Archives.

BY LARA WILSON, MA ’99, UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST
Visit University Archives weekdays, 8:30 – 4:30 (May to August: 10:30 – 4:30)
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A toast to two good friends
Alumni leaders moving on

BY GLENDA WYATT, BSC ’98
PRESIDENT, UVIC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

I HAVE BEEN VERY FORTUNATE, DURING MY TIME WITH THE ALUMNI Board of Directors, to work with some great people. Unfortunately, I’m going to be saying a fond farewell to two of those people, Don Jones and Shannon von Kaldenberg. Don, the fearless leader and Director of Alumni Services, is retiring at the end of 2010. Shannon, the Associate Vice President for Alumni and Development, has recently moved on to a new and exciting opportunity as Vice-President Leadership at the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

Don began his work with Alumni in 1991 as a Development & Alumni Relations Officer. In 1995 he was named Director of Alumni Services. As director, Don has overseen the development of the first alumni online community in Canada and the OLC Network is now licensed to several other universities and colleges across the country.

Don is a past-recipient of the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education’s Outstanding Achievement Award. Under Don’s guidance, the UVic Alumni Services was awarded the CCAE’s Silver Award for Best Program in Alumni Relations in 2007. The award was for “Plan A,” the name and visual identity for alumni supported student programs. He has worked tirelessly with the Alumni Board of Directors to improve and enhance the services and benefits offered to UVic Alumni.

I am grateful for Don’s leadership and have learned a lot from him.

Shannon joined the University of Victoria in 2005, coming from the Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia. During her time at UVic, she has been very successful at raising the profile of Alumni both on campus, in the community, across the country and around the world.

Her many efforts included trips to Asia, with UVic President David Turpin, to meet with Alumni Chapters. She has been one of our greatest advocates and I am thankful for all of her efforts.

Both Don and Shannon have provided me with encouragement and a sense of direction during my time on the Board of Directors. I am eternally grateful for their guidance and consider myself a better person for having known both of them. I will miss them both but wish them all the best in the future. I know my sentiments are shared by the entire Alumni Services staff and the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

On behalf of everyone, here’s wishing Don and Shannon a future full of exciting new adventures.

Change is inevitable and with these departures, we will see a change in the leadership of Alumni Services. I’m looking forward to meeting and working with the new leadership. Let’s see what the future brings.

We asked Mike Sider, BCom ’08, to give us the goods on the new Young Alumni group in Victoria:

Q&A: Young Alumni Program

What’s the main idea behind the Young Alumni program?
The main purpose is to bring recent graduates and young professionals in our community together. We focus on hosting fun, social events that promote networking and friendship.

What sort of activities have you got going on?
We aim to host an event every month or two. To date we have hosted rooftop volleyball, a comedy night, wine and cheese tastings, billiards tournaments, and a ‘visual’ scavenger hunt at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. We have found great support from local businesses and alumni and would love to expand our line-up. We welcome any new ideas for our next event.

What’s best about the program?
The best part is the ability to reconnect with old friends and the opportunity to create new relationships. UVic is a big part of the Victoria community and we are striving to provide a platform for a continued association between past students and the university.

Can anyone participate?
We currently market our events to alumni who have graduated in the last 10 years, regardless of age. However, we openly invite any UVic alumni and friends of our alumni to come out to any event.

How can someone hear about future events?
The Alumni Services office emails invitations to everyone who has graduated from UVic in the last 10 years and lives in Victoria. We have a Facebook group (UVic Young Alumni – Victoria) to advertise each event. And we promote via word of mouth. Once you attend one of our events it’s very easy to hear about the next one. I would suggest updating your email address with the alumni office and joining our Facebook group.
Look, He’s Pie-faced!

A fundraising-pie toss was one of the wackier highlights of TWIRP Week (The Woman Is Required to Pay) in Feb. 1966. The pie targets were AMS council members. As the Martlet explained, TWIRP Week allowed ladies to “assume the male role in our campus set up.” And the big TWIRP Dance at the Crystal Gardens ($3 admission) meant women could “ask whomever you want, wherever you want and not be considered a brazen hussy.”

Keeping in Touch

Let your friends from UVic know what’s going on in your life. Send your news to torch@uvic.ca. Our online reply and change of address forms are at uvic.ca/torch.

GARY CORBETT, VC ’53

VICTORIA COLLEGE

GARY CORBETT, VC ’53, has been named a 2010 “Insurance Legend” by the American Council of Life Insurers and the Society of Actuaries for his contributions to the insurance industry and society in general. Now retired from his position as senior vice-president and chief actuary with AXA Equitable, Gary lives in Seattle with his wife Consuelo. He remains involved in national and international charity work through the Rotary Club.

1969

THEO DOMBROWSKI, BA (English), has published Secret Beaches of Greater Victoria and Secret Beaches of Southern Vancouver Island (Heritage House), each with directions and maps for a great day on the shoreline. He’s donating his proceeds to the Georgia Strait Alliance and Doctors Without Borders. Theo is retired from teaching at Pearson College and now lives in Nanoose Bay.

1970

JOHN D’ARCANGELO, BA (History), aka “The Deak”, has retired after 37 years of teaching elementary school in the Kootenays. Plans include more travel, golf, cross-country skiing, attending hockey games at all levels and continuing to play shinny with adults one-third his age. The list also includes watching spring training baseball in Arizona and summer days enjoying the Columbia. He sends his regards
to former SAC and FTroop residents from 1968-70.

**William (Will) Sparks, BA**

(Political Science), went on to a degree from Duke University Law School in 1973. He was admitted to practice law in New York, New Jersey and Florida, during a career with law firms and in-house over a 37-year period. He is now retired from full-time law practice and lives in Long Island, NY. He still works part-time as a lawyer and among other things pursues an interest in show dogs and helping animals through the ASPCA and the American Kennel Club’s humane fund.

**1972**

**Judith-Blithe Barnard, BEd,** writes: “Finally settled down in private practice in Richmond as a registered social worker. Worked as a researcher for the provincial government, taught university, worked in social service agencies, helped take care of ailing parents and now am living with my dog, Pippin. Received my PhD (Utah) and MSW (Ontario). No more university for me!”

**Wendy Ellen Burton (née Caldebeck), BA** (English), has been appointed the inaugural director of teaching and learning at University of the Fraser Valley. Formerly an adult education faculty member at UVI, Wendy continues to devote her days to teaching and learning, especially with Aboriginal adult learners.

**1974**

**Dorrie Brown (née Friesen), BEd,** is busy in “retirement” in Moncton as a freelance writer, teacher, student, coach (art, drama and music), singer and actor. She taught for 30 years in Northern Newfoundland, south and north coast and central Labrador, from kindergarten to secondary, winning acclaim and awards in art and drama instruction. She recently oversaw “Uncommon Clay.” The education-through-art project involved 54 young artists from 13 communities who created a mural of 54 clay tiles commemorating Innu, Inuit, Métis and European heritage. She has also edited a book by the same name featuring each of the tiles and the artists. She and Herb Brown have two sons — Joel and Micah.

**1977**

**Kenneth Stubbs, MA** (Geography), was awarded the S. Smith Griswold Outstanding Air Pollution Official Award by the Air and Waste Management Association. The award recognizes government staff individuals whose outstanding accomplishments in the prevention and control of air pollution have been widely recognized internationally.

**1979**

**Ruth Wittenberg, BA** (English), has been appointed president of the BC Association of Institutes and Universities. Her new role follows a 29-year career in the BC public service that included 10 years as assistant deputy minister in three ministries. Ruth serves on the board of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and she writes that she “is also a fan of ‘old’ and ‘new’ English cars, (owning) one of each!”

**1982**

**Avvis Rasmusson (née Boshier), MEd,** writes: “I am looking forward to my second year on the UVic alumni board and to the Winchester Galleries, Oak Bay opening of my UK Paintings 2010, on Nov. 7. Proud Grandmama of seven.”

**1983**

**Marion Evamy, BA** (Psychology), checks in: “Great to be back in beautiful Victoria! Am settled in and loving life as a full-time artist.”

**1985**

**D.E. Knobbe (née Ferguson), BA** (Writing), resides in Huntington Beach, California: “I am an editor for a small press and a freelance writer. My first teen novel came out earlier this year, Runaway Storm (Emerald Book Company). It is largely set in the Gulf Islands.”

**1986**

**Carol McDougall, BEd,** teaches middle school fine arts in Greater Victoria and in April won the Science in Society Award from the Canadian Science Writers’ Association for A Salmon’s Sky View (First Choice Books), in the youth under 16 category. Previous winners have included Robert Bateman and David Suzuki.

**1987**

**Brian Stevenson, MA** (Political Science), has been appointed president and vice-chancellor of Lakehead University, in Thunder Bay. He began a five-year term on August 1. After receiving his PhD at Queen’s, Brian worked in foreign policy with the federal government, taught and held senior administrative positions at the University of Alberta, and most recently was provost and vice-president academic at the University of Winnipeg.

**1988**

**Belinda “Bindy” Sweett, BA** (Child and Youth Care), received the inaugural Mary Barkey Clinical Excellence Award for exemplary child life care and a high level of clinical skill. The award is from the US-based Child Life Council. Bindy has been an integral member of the child life department at BC Children’s Hospital for more than 20 years and serves as a sessional instructor in the School of Child and Youth Care. Examples of her work include establishing a child life position in BCCH’s surgical day care program, developing an internship program, integrating child life services into the pre-admission clinic, and innovative work with specialty teams.

**1989**

**John Yetman, BEd,** works for the Vancouver School Board and is
studying for his diploma in counselling psychology prior to entering a master’s program.

1993
MARGARET MURPHY, BSc (Geography), completed her MA at Carlton, with an emphasis on international trade, in 1998. In 2000 she travelled to the UK and took up an appointment at the present Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, developing quality assurance procedures. This was followed by a series of administrative positions at the University of Southampton. In 2009 she accepted the position of manager for the faculty of business and economics at Monash University in Melbourne, where she has been able to link up with her sister Ann, and parents Susan and PETER MURPHY, a former UVic Geography and Business professor. He retired in 2009 as associate dean of research in the faculty of law, La Trobe University, Melbourne. In addition to providing updates on Margaret and Ann Murphy (see: 1996 class year), Peter corrects a point in the magazine’s autumn 2008 story “Confounding Cornett”: “It was a great bunch of Geography students who were responsible for the ‘April Fools’ wall in the Cornett Building, not some Engineers as reported; and we have the photographs to prove it! They planned it carefully to create traffic confusion without damaging the building. The breezeway certainly disrupted the travel patterns of many that morning. I am happy to report that I was still in touch with this crazy bunch and I was delighted to attend their recent reunion, where they said goodbye to some of their professors including Colin Campbell, Chuen-Yen Lai, Stan Tuller, Colin Wood and yours truly. It was good to hear they how they all stood and sang O Canada after the ice hockey gold medal win in the Vancouver Olympics. Now I just have to convince them to develop the same enthusiasm for my Ohio State Buckeyes football team!”

1994
JANET MACDONALD, BA (English), has self-published her first children’s book, Rat Island, for kids between the ages of nine and 13. MICHELLE ROWSELL, BA (Psychology), is the manager of human resources with the public affairs bureau, part of the BC Public Service. She’s into her second year as chair of the BC Human Resource Management Association’s Vancou-

Comic Inspiration

Cranes dancing on Toronto’s skyline and the likenesses of a dead astronaut and a superhero — they’re all part of the creative vision of Toronto-based sculptor and Brandon Vickerd, MFA ’01.

For Dance of the Cranes, which lit up Toronto’s Nuit Blanche festival last fall, Vickerd collaborated with unionized crane operators.

This summer Vickerd teamed with fellow Visual Arts grads Kevin Yates, MFA ’01, and Donovan Barrow, BFA ’01, for Tales to Astonish, which was shown in Cambridge, ON. Their works reflects how comic books and science fiction have influenced the artists. Vickerd’s pieces included “Dead Astronaut” and a tribute to the Iron Man.

“I remember being 8 or 9,” Vickerd says, “and discovering comic books and how visual stories develop in narrative and how it would begin to kind of play on people’s emotions and involve you in it. I found that really exciting.”

Lean and athletically built, Vickerd looks nothing like the archetypal comic-book nerd. One of five children of a single mom, he grew up in an industrial area of Sarnia, know as Chemical Valley, which also influenced his art: “I remember as a kid thinking it looks like a space station at night.”

His carved wood “Dead Astronaut” is “a hybrid image,” says Vickerd. “It blends science fiction novel illustration with the numerous astronauts and cosmonauts that died in space. The sculpture draws from lowbrow sources. It’s a monument to the failed ambitions of modernism.”

KEITH NORBURY, BA ’85
Melbourne, Ann undertook further study at the University of Melbourne, and obtained her PhD in Law in 2007. Since graduation she has lived on the far South Coast of New South Wales, minutes from incredible surf beaches; and opened a consultancy business to go with her family and surfing activities. Ann is married to Harvey and they have two delightful boys.

1999

SARAH ROBERTS, BA (English), earned the $10,000-Danuta Gleed Literary Award from the Writers’ Union of Canada for Wax Boats (Caitlin Press), judged the best first English-language collection of short fiction by a Canadian author published in 2009. Of her writing, the judges noted a style that is “clear, evocative and flawless.”

DEBORAH WILLIS, BA ’06 (English), was the runner-up for her collection Vanishing and Other Stories (Penguin).

2000

SHAWN DOYLE, BCom, has written Grandpa’s War (General Store Publishing House), an account of his grandfather Bill Turner’s experiences as a RCAF navigator in World War II. The biography retraces many of his steps through Africa, Italy, and the Balkans, seeking a better understanding of the older man and of his generation. In the process, he tells a tale of a time that, although not so long ago, is beginning to slip into the fog of history. Shawn is a graduate of Harvard Law School and works for a New York-based law firm. He and his wife, Veronica, currently reside in Milan.

JANE STEVENSON (née YOUNG), BA (Anthropology), published The Railroader’s Wife: Letters from the Grand Trunk Pacific (Caitlin Press), describing events in northern BC during the construction of the GTP. It includes archival images and the letters of Bernice Medbury Martin, the wife of a GTP railway worker.

2001

ANDREA LANGLOIS, BA (Women’s Studies), and MARIAN VAN DER ZON, BA ’00 (Women’s Studies), along with Ron Sakolsky have co-edited Islands of Resistance: Pirate Radio in Canada (New Star). Seventeen contributions reveal the thriving counterculture behind anti-authoritarian broadcasting.

2002

SONYA CHANDLER, BSN, was named recipient of the School of Nursing’s 2010 Alumni Award of Excellence for her contributions to her community through advocacy, social justice and sustainability. A former Victoria city councillor, she vacated her council seat on Sept. 1 to move to Europe to pursue her master’s degree in sustainable health systems on a scholarship funded by the European Commission.

2003

BEN ADIVI, BSc (Kinesiology), recently graduated from Bond University’s doctor of physiotherapy program in Gold Coast, Australia, the first and only program of its kind in the country. He’s now one of 40 doctors of physiotherapy Down Under, and he’s seeking permanent residence there.

BEN ISITT, MA (History), writes from Vancouver: “After an enjoyable two years completing a post-doc at UVic, I have begun a new job as assistant professor of history at UBC.” Ben recently published the book From Victoria to Vladivostok: Canada’s Siberian Expedition, 1917-19 (UBC Press), drawing from a decade of research that began with an undergraduate paper in UVic’s Special Collections.
It’s not unusual to do a little travelling after graduation. But a record-breaking trek across North America in a van powered by waste vegetable oil collected from fast-food restaurants: that’s unusual.

Cloe Whittaker, BA ‘07, and Tyson Jerry completed their 48,000-km odyssey in May — 17 months after launching their “Driven to Sustain” (driventosustain.ca) tour from Victoria’s Mile Zero. Along the way they brought their message of environmental awareness to about 10,000 students in some 50 schools in Canada and the US.

“I have always been interested in the environment and that comes from my parents,” says Whittaker. “My mom worked in environmental health and my dad and I would always go camping.”

In her second semester at UVic, on a whim, she enrolled in Environmental Studies 100. “Duncan Taylor was my teacher and it amazed me how much it changed the way I thought in one course,” Whittaker says. She switched her minor to Environmental Studies, which prepared her mind for the adventure that would unfold after she met Jerry through a mutual friend.

“Our project is about raising awareness for alternatives...trying to figure out what to do to make life better — either for me or my family, for my community, for the environment,” Whittaker says. “The van (powered by) waste vegetable oil, that’s just one symbol...one alternative.”

— KEITH NORBURY, BA ’85

Home again: Driven to Sustain partners Cloe Whittaker and Tyson Jerry

DEVIN KRUFOFF, MFA (Writing), published his second novel, Flyways, in September with Thistledown Press. The book was originally conceived as a master’s thesis, under Bill Gaston. He is a previous winner of the Journey Prize for short fiction, and author of the novel, Compensation (Thistledown Press, 2006). Devin lives in rural Saskatchewan with his wife and son.

ERIC MANG, Cert (Public Relations), sent an update: “Two announcements, one familial and the other on employment. On April 27, 2010, my wife, Joeddi, gave birth to a boy. Ava is thrilled to be a big sister to James. On June 5th, 2010, I became director of health policy and government relations for the College of Family Physicians of Canada. I was formerly Manager of Health Policy at the CFPC.” Eric is also working toward his master of public administration, by distance education.

MICHAEL WARREN, BA (History in Art), and THERESA MCFARLAND, MA (History), opened Madrona Gallery, in Victoria on June 5. The gallery specializes in historic and contemporary Canadian paintings and sculpture.

DEVIN KRUFOFF, ’07

2007

PETER CAVELL, MMus (Composition), was part of 60x60, an international new music project featuring 60 one-minute performances. Cavell’s work, an eerie electronic composition entitled “Chipmunk Choir, Hoping to Forestall the Impending Apocalypse, Sings Bravely,” was included in a premier event of 60x60 Dance in London, as well as subsequent performances around the world in 2010 and 2011.

He lives in Toronto, where he is active as a composer, thereminist, and writer, as well as a musical director for The Second City troupe.

LORNE MILSAP, MEd (Physical Education/Coaching Studies), is a football coach and Recruiter for the 2009 Vanier Cup-winning Queen’s Gaels who defeated the University of Calgary 33-31 in a dramatic comeback last November in the national championship. Lorne is a secondary school teacher, teaching co-operative education, career studies and adaptive physical education in Stratford.

SUZANNE VON DER PORTEN, MBA, was selected to join Action Canada’s 11-month leadership and resource studies at the University of Waterloo, where she is currently pursuing a PhD in environmental studies. Action Canada is a public-private body set-up to support a network of emerging leaders.

2006

MARIANNE BOISSON-NEAULT, BA (Psychology), has written Every Living Being (Inkwater), an historical analysis of the role of animals in care-giving and their depiction in popular Western culture. Marie-Francine is a post-doctoral fellow at the Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph.

ROSEANN MILLIN, V C ’61, died in Montreal on Nov. 30, 2009. After graduating from Victoria College, Roseann enrolled in graduate studies in experimental medicine at McGill University. In 1968 she completed a MEd and worked as a counsellor and administrator at Dawson College in Montreal. She was a Tai Ji master and an active member of the Unitarian Church. Roseann was a Tai Ji master and an active member of Dawson College in Montreal. She completed a MEd and worked as a counsellor and administrator at Dawson College in Montreal. She was a Tai Ji master and an active member of the Unitarian Church.

IAN MCTAGGART-COWAN, died on April 18, 2010 at the age of 99. One of the country’s pioneering wildlife ecologists, McTaggart-Cowan enjoyed a long association with the university — as chancellor from 1979-84, a member of the board of governors and the alumni board of directors — culminating in 2005 with the founding of the Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan Professorship in Biodiversity Conservation and Ecological Restoration. He taught at UBC for 35 years and produced more than 100 documentaries on wildlife and conservation.

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Veggie Powered

It’s not unusual to do a little travelling after graduation. But a record-breaking trek across North America in a van powered by waste vegetable oil collected from fast-food restaurants: that’s unusual.

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— KEITH NORBURY, BA ’85
What’s New?

New job? New town? New chapter in your life? You send it, we print it in Keeping in Touch and your UVic contacts stay in the loop. Easy.

Do it by e-mail: send your update to torch@uvic.ca. Include your name, degree and grad year. If you’ve moved, send us your new address.

Say it with pictures: e-mail high resolution photo files (300 dpi, at least 5cm wide) along with your text update.

We also welcome news about fresh babies, new marriages — even election to public office. All updates may be edited for style, clarity and length.

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PHOEBE NOBLE, VC ’31, passed away on July 31, 2010 at the age of 94. Phoebe began teaching mathematics at Victoria College in 1945, commencing a 33-year career that continued until her retirement from UVic, where she was a professor emerita. She was UVic’s first female department head and had a hands-on role in planning the first residences. As Peter Smith wrote in A Multitude of the Wise: “she gave her huge heart to the institution... even in a multitude, she’s very special.” An avid gardener, she was instrumental in the Government House gardens restoration project.

ROBERT (BOB) ROGERS, university chancellor from 1991-96, died on May 21, 2010 at the age of 90. Known for his generosity with family, friends and his community, he headed Crown Zellerbach prior to a retirement that also included serving as the province’s lieutenant-governor.

JÁNOS SÁNDOR, conductor of the University of Victoria Orchestra and Chorus and the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra, died on May 14, 2010 after a lengthy battle with cancer. In 2000 he directed the combined UVic Orchestra and the GYOO, together with the UVic Chorus and a specially auditioned children’s choir in the first performances on Vancouver Island of Mahler’s “Symphony of a Thousand.”

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³ Contest organized jointly with Primmum Insurance Company and open to members, employees and other eligible people of all employee and professional and alumni groups affiliated to group view from the organizers. Complete contest rules and eligibility information available at www.ontology.com.
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AGM 2010

Nearly 200 alumni gathered in June for the 2010 Annual General Meeting of the UVic Alumni Association. Guest speaker — and past recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award — Prof. Nancy Turner of the School of Environmental Studies, presented a fascinating overview of the traditional uses of native plants on Vancouver Island and their current status in the face of urbanization.

For upcoming Alumni Events:
alumni.uvic.ca
Upon graduating from university, I promptly stowed-away on a cargo ship bound for South Korea, where I lived like a king for four years. Ahem. My wife is reading over my shoulder, and I can see her frown reflected in the screen. Okay, so we flew to South Korea together and taught in a few cities, which of course wouldn’t have been possible without degrees from UVic. And maybe this is a stretch, but I’ve often thought that overcoming the labyrinthine halls of the Cornett Building instilled in me a thirst for adventure. I certainly encountered the truly dark and mythological corners of UVic’s campus there, and these haunting memories are inextricably linked to one wickedly cold night in Korea.

It was a one-in-a-million shot, really. I slammed the door behind me and it locked on my jacket’s sleeve, pinning my wrist. Impressive, no? My first thought was of a lone magpie alighting on my windowsill that afternoon. Tapping at the glass. One for sorrow.

This is how I found myself alone in a dark, unheated hallway in the humanities building of a tiny college in Masan, in the middle of a Korean winter, with a Siberian cold front sweeping down the peninsula. I’d worked late, and my wife, who I shared the office with, had already left for the night with the keys. The security guard was gone too. Just call me Insp. Clouseau.

As I struggled to pull my sleeve free, news headlines slid through my mind: Beloved English instructor found frozen solid in school hallway. Ex-pat gnaws off own limb in unsuccessful attempt to save life. UVic alumnus’ death embarrasses alma matter.

Panic settled in as the temperature dropped, and rolling memories combined with grimmer thoughts, with rumours I’d heard while at UVic. See, that’s the thing about imagination and memory. We don’t remember things by accessing a cerebral DVD library — we reconstruct them. People. Places. Entire worlds sometimes. Not me of course. I have a photographic memory. Does it matter that my vision isn’t 20/20?

I remember all sorts of things. Like the librarian’s assistant at UVic who built towering castles out of hardcovers in the unmapped regions of the Polish literature section. Stumbling upon these structures was simply magical, until of course one of them collapsed. They found the assistant with the help of a St. Bernard hours later, dusty, but only a little shaken up.

Back in the dark hallway, my breath was white, my arms and legs numb. I’d always assumed that if I died on a campus it would be deep within the halls of the Cornett Building, the sound of a Minotaur’s hooves echoing off concrete walls as I stood facing a dead end.

Death. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that most of my time on UVic’s campus had been a polarized heaven and hell. I didn’t get to study much in the Fine Arts building, all glass and comfort. Maybe it was because I took Journalism. I mostly stuck to the MacLaurin Building, where my writing classes met in disused storage rooms underground. When the lighting went, we’d sit on our overturned aluminum buckets in silence, until the bare bulb flickered back to life among the water pipes and cobwebs of the five-foot ceiling.

And of course the art studios next door were simply off-limits all together. I still imagine each student on their chez lounge, smoking an unfiltered cigarette with a holder, sketching the day’s nude model. And don’t even get me started on the Business buildings, with their La-Z-Boy recliners and wall-sized flat screens. Or the Engineering faculty with their robot escorts. Yeah, that’s right, I know.

But back to me hanging limp from my jacket sleeve. An hour in, I had a vision. Of a fountain surrounded by immaculate lawns dotted with furry rabbits. Sounds of water and laughter, and then, looming up before me wreathed in white light, a giant library, a place of judgment and knowledge. A place of sombre peace — did you know there’s a café on the ground floor now?

This story ends with my sleeve ripping. I climbed out the fire escape and stumbled home through the freezing winter night. When I arrived, my wife just stared at my ruined jacket.

“Do I wanna know?” she asked, putting down her copy of the New Yorker (or was it the Torch?).

I told her the truth. About those snorting nostrils just out of sight down the dark hall. About the magpie, my vision of light, and the darkness bordering it.

“That’s quite the story,” said my wife, still expressionless.

“Memory, honey, memory,” I said.

She responded with the word faulty, but I wasn’t really listening, my mind still back in that hallway. Listening to that rumbling growl. Those pawing hooves.

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