Home Care Hero

Alum Danny Birch takes nursing on the road
Create Possibilities.

As president of Carbon Credit Corp, Shawn Burns creates ways for other companies to make money in the new green economy. A tree, until now, was only worth something when it was turned into lumber. Shawn develops ways for sustainable forestry and agriculture, among other industries, to make money while leaving precious resources like trees still standing. It’s not easy being one of the pioneers of an entirely new economy but Shawn has the CMA mindset to make it happen. The CMA Program will strengthen your Strategy, Management and Accounting abilities, allowing you to make things happen. To learn more, contact Shannon Thompson at shannon@cmabc.com.
In this issue, it’s hats off to entrepreneurs. We’re chatting with alumni, members of the business community and faculty about their ventures. The timing couldn’t be better, because we’ve just launched our Graduate Certificate and Diploma in Entrepreneurship. Our first cohort started this May and our second intake will commence in September.

The graduate certificate is modelled after our award-winning bachelor and master’s in entrepreneurship specializations and is open to students from all areas of study. The three-month program focuses on the key theories, concepts, thinking and behaviours needed for a successful venture. We’re very excited to be helping people pursue their entrepreneurial dreams.

The sky is the limit for such dreams and no one exemplifies this better than our 2011 Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year Award recipient, JR Shaw. The Shaw Communications Inc. story is a testament to the power of pursuing a vision. In the company’s first 10 years, JR’s vision—to give people choice—laid the foundation for what would become the largest cable company in the country.

An entrepreneur has to be able to adjust to rapid change and solve problems quickly and effectively. Our article on e-entrepreneurs (“Net Profit,” p. 14) highlights several alumni who successfully face the challenges of staying ahead of the e-business curve and differentiating themselves from the rest of the pack.

More and more businesses are becoming social enterprises. Our cover story, “Health on Wheels” (p. 10), features Danny Birch, who combines his business acumen and passion for elder care to make life easier for senior citizens. Also in the social enterprise realm, alumnus David Frey has successfully made education his business, bringing teachers to the classrooms of the world (“Degree at Work,” p. 8).

And speaking of global classrooms, our first Master of Global Business cohort is on the cusp of graduation. It’s been an incredible journey for these students. They are currently on four-month global internship placements before they graduate this fall. The internship companies include, among many others, 8th Estate Winery in Hong Kong, L’Oréal Canada and Uniglobe Travel International in India. Prior to the work placements, the group spent a semester studying in Victoria, as well as one in Kaohsiung, Taiwan and one in Linz, Austria. Three members of the inaugural class tell us about their experiences in “Back of the Class” (p. 30).

I am always excited to hear what alumni are up to. Their adventures and business ventures are the stuff of which dreams are made. I’d love to hear your story, too.

Best regards,
Ali Dastmalchian
Professor and Dean
deanali@uvic.ca
Let’s face it: mistakes happen. Whether it’s a consulting decision that just didn’t work out, a service transaction that went awry or a product that didn’t quite measure up to a buyer’s expectations, a negative online review can be the unfortunate result.

When it comes to online reviews, it’s the customer’s point of view that gets Piggy’s proverbial conch. Why? Because clearly, you—the company—are biased. Of course, the customer may be too, but in the online world, it doesn’t matter.

Here’s the upside: a negative customer review is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to customer service. Avoid knee-jerk reactions and hurt feelings and take the opportunity to make it right, publicly. Being seen accepting your mistakes and, more importantly, fixing them, can do even more for your reputation than providing good service in the first place.

But before you rush to respond, check out these simple rules for doing it right:

Be timely
Monitor your reviews and respond to them quickly.

Apologize
Saying “I’m sorry” goes a long way online. Apologizing for a negative experience doesn’t automatically admit fault—it shows you’re willing to take responsibility and recognize the concerns of the customer in question.

Take the higher road
Just make your apology, don’t stoop to an online spat. This is about perception, remember?

Say “I don’t know”
Maybe you don’t have the answer right now, but your online response should show that you’re willing to work with the customer to find an amenable solution.

Follow up
Don’t just assume that posting a response is enough. Contact the customer if possible. If the review is anonymous, publicly entreat the customer to contact you so that you can make amends.

Whether you’re an employer looking to hire a grad, or an alum looking for your next job, UVic’s newest career resource, learninginmotion.uvic.ca, is sure to turn up a few options. On the site, you’ll find job postings from the Business Career Centre board, and you can book a one-on-one appointment with a career educator. It’s also a great resource for career information.

Jobs, jobs, jobs
Employers can post on the job board for free by registering through the portal. Since the site launched in October 2010, more than 1,100 employers have posted around 2,025 jobs.

Event info
Check out what’s happening on campus. A wide variety of speakers and organizations visit every year, and alumni are eligible to attend many of these events. It’s a great way to meet employers and other alumni, and learn what’s happening in the marketplace.

Volunteer opportunities
Thinking of volunteering? A full range of short-term, long-term, local and international volunteer opportunities can be found on the volunteer board.

A tutor registry
Know someone who needs a tutor? Want to offer your expertise to a struggling student? Register as a tutor or browse the listings to connect with the right people.

Casual work listings
The casual job board is where local homeowners can post casual work (lawn maintenance, child care, etc.). Interested students contact the homeowners directly.

The career portal is free: just sign in using your netlink ID and password. Need a netlink ID? Email helpdesk@uvic.ca or call 250-721-7687.

Be a top talent agent
3 tips for managers
By Marcus Campos, MBA ’06

In the pressure cooker of supply chain management, I’ve often found myself juggling many things at once: long-term strategy planning, sourcing and customer relationships (internal and external), to name a few. Over the years I’ve had to ask myself what should come first, and I’ve learned that successful leaders, and therefore successful organizations, are those that put their people first. Here’s how:

1. Hire talent and help that talent grow: Spend time and energy to ensure great talent acquisition during the hiring process. Implement an employee training program with an eye to developing talent and offer training in hard and soft skills. Mentor employees with leadership potential to ensure their, and by proxy the company’s, success.

2. Create a great work environment: Managers who take good care of people focus on creating an innovative and challenging environment for their employees. Staff should be free to work on processes, establish standards and procedures and apply tools. Managers should always strive to motivate their teams to pursue continuous improvement.

3. Have a plan: Does everyone know where the boat is headed? The company’s vision must be clear to everyone. Create a plan and align it with the company’s overall goals, and share it with the higher leadership. A good plan will include a road map for the next three to five years, with parameters for benchmarking.
Golden Reward
An altruistic entrepreneur establishes a student award with a sun-soaked payout

You win ... an all-expenses-paid trip to the Dominican Republic! It may sound like the big reveal on a game show, but for 10 lucky BCom and MBA students, it’s soon to be blissful reality. Recipients of the Rebecca MacDonald Work Hard, Play Hard Award, will spend a week at a posh seaside estate soaking up sun and frolicking in the sand. The first round of awardees will make the trip this July.

Established by Toronto-based entrepreneur and philanthropist Dr. Rebecca MacDonald, the new award will go to 10 top-achieving students (eight BComs and two MBAs). MacDonald says part of the rationale for the award is to teach students about work-life balance.

“I wanted this award to set them thinking about balance,” says MacDonald over the phone from the Dominican. “When they work very hard, get these fabulous marks and achieve what a lot of people in their own community never thought they could achieve, they get this extra gift that [shows] them the other side—the fun—that should come with any job that they will do later on in life.”

Awardees will have to demonstrate excellent grades, but also provide evidence that they’ve overcome hardship, via a 1,000-word essay. The idea is “success in the face of adversity,” something MacDonald, a self-made entrepreneur, knows all too well. Born in Yugoslavia, she came to Canada in 1974. She had training in medicine and classical piano, but few resources and limited English. Like so many immigrants, MacDonald wasn’t able to use her previous education when she came to Canada, due to language limitations, a lack of connections and old-fashioned discrimination. “What I experienced was adversity because I didn’t know anyone,” she says. “I had three things against me: I was a woman and a first-generation immigrant, and I didn’t speak English.”

She started out photocopying cheques for the Royal Bank and evolved into a self-described Girl Friday, taking on a variety of jobs, none of which held her interest for long—until she settled on sales. In 1989, post-deregulation, she got into the energy business, launching Energy Marketing, which grew to become the largest energy marketer in Ontario. Then, in 1996, she started Ontario Energy Savings Corporation, which now has annual sales of approximately $1.5 billion and 1,200 employees.

Amid the success, more adversity: MacDonald’s husband died in a car accident in 1992, and she raised two children as a single parent. She also battled and overcame severe rheumatoid arthritis. In 2002 she gave $3 million to help build the Rebecca MacDonald Centre for Arthritis and Autoimmune Disease at Toronto’s Mount Sinai Hospital.

MacDonald is modest about her other charitable activities, but pressed, she names a few: supporting inner city kids, artists and religious organizations.

“Every year I give a certain portion of my income to charity, and I believe that is a responsibility that comes with success,” she says.

She decided to establish the new award after visiting the UVic campus and being “so incredibly impressed by the diversity at the business school” and knowing that with diverse backgrounds come diverse economic circumstances and challenges.

And what’s on the agenda for the selected few? Mostly relaxation, says MacDonald. The sprawling estate is right on the beach, with lush gardens, a spa, tennis courts and a full fitness facility. “For most of them, I’m sure, if not all of them, it will be their first trip to a location like this, so I just want them to experience luxury that they would normally not get a chance to experience,” she says. Sounds fantastic—where do we sign up? BC
An enterprising grad finds his niche in door-to-door senior care

By Jessica Werb

Three years ago, Danny Birch (BCom ’09), then a third-year student, watched in dismay as his paternal grandmother began to require home care assistance.
Not frail enough to require a move into a residential facility, she nevertheless needed help at home with daily tasks, but was unserved by the idea of having strangers come into her home. “She lived in Winnipeg,” the casually dressed 25-year-old Birch recalls in an East Van coffee shop early one March morning. Lean and energetic, he speaks with youthful enthusiasm as he recounts his story over a latte, his Blackberry beeping and buzzing almost incessantly.

“We ended up getting the government to subsidize the care, but it’s a different person every time, [they come at] random times,” he says. “My dad, who is a doctor, was flying back and forth. So he was acting as her doctor. He was her caregiver—same with my dad’s sister. [They were] trying to take care of her when, at the time, they should have been there as her son and as her daughter.”

That experience sparked Birch’s interest in private home care, and he became convinced there must be a better way. He took one of the health care courses in his BCom program to devote a co-op term to building his own company. When a relative mentioned the health care franchise business was my way in.”

Danny Beach Designs was Birch’s first taste of real entrepreneurship, but since he had been raised in a medical household, it was perhaps inevitable that he would eventually find his way into the health care realm. “I always wanted to be either a doctor or a hockey player,” he confesses. His father did one year of university-level science, but realized it wasn’t the first time the elder Birch had made room for his son’s business endeavours. As a high school senior in West Vancouver, Birch himself available for consultations and house calls. He did one year of university-level science, but realized it wasn’t the first time the elder Birch had made room for his son’s business endeavours. As a high school senior in West Vancouver, Birch himself available for consultations and house calls. He chose because of its proximity to the general territory he chose for his BCom program to devote a co-op term to building his own company. When a relative mentioned his second cousin was the CFO of Nurse Next Door, the largest home care service provider in BC, he quickly got in touch.

“Business was sort of my passion. So I ended up going the health care route and business was my way in.”

—Danny Birch

“He gave me a tour of the place, and I told him what I was doing, that I was looking at starting my own kind of home care company. He goes, ‘Hey, there’s franchises available,’” says Birch. “It’s a pretty intense process, actually, to get a franchise. You have to go through two to three months of interviews, you have to put together a whole competitive analysis and basically you have to put a three-year budget together. They kind of put you through school, so it was perfect for me.”

By the time his co-op term ended, Birch was the proud new owner of the Nurse Next Door franchise in East Vancouver, a territory he chose because of its proximity to the general practice run by his father, Dr. Andrew Birch. Dr. Birch provided a small office space and additional support to his son, and made himself available for consultations and house calls.

“It wasn’t the first time the elder Birch had made room for his son’s business endeavours. As a high school senior in West Vancouver, Birch himself available for consultations and house calls. He chose because of its proximity to the general territory he chose for his BCom program to devote a co-op term to building his own company. When a relative mentioned his second cousin was the CFO of Nurse Next Door, the largest home care service provider in BC, he quickly got in touch.

“Business was sort of my passion. So I ended up going the health care route and business was my way in.”

—Danny Birch

“I do a lot of the HR and marketing,” Birch says. “I don’t have a nursing background, obviously. So I ended up taking over the business side of things.” That means hiring caregivers, conducting needs assessments with clients and managing payroll, among other tasks. It also means he’s on call 24-7. “I do absolutely everything from hiring, marketing, organizing care—everything. So yeah, it’s a big undertaking, but it’s fun,” he says. “It’s something I obviously have a passion for, and that’s important. You put in 24-hour days, and the bigger you get, the busier it gets.” Not that he’s complaining—for far from it. “It’s a life for me,” he says. “It’s not a job. I don’t look at it like I work 24 hours. I wake up and I start, and I go to bed and I stop. And I think you have to have that mentality if you’re an entrepreneur.”

As far as demographics are concerned, Birch is likely to get a whole lot busier in the coming years. According to figures from Statistics Canada, 13.7 per cent of the national population is over 65; in BC, seniors make up an even greater proportion, at 14.7 per cent. Notes Birch, “In about five to 10 years, it’ll be 25 per cent—one in four [people in the province] will be seniors.”

For the forward thinking entrepreneur, it’s a no-brainer. And, as far as Birch is concerned, the demand for home care is only going to become more intense, particularly among independently minded boomers who are unlikely to embrace residential care. “Whether it’s an independent facility or extended care, in a lot of them you just don’t get enough care,” he says. “We can do a live-in for pretty much the same cost as moving into a facility. Now, if someone wants to live at home for the rest of their life, they can. I get calls every single day like that. I get a call the other day and the woman said, ‘I grew up in this home, I’ve lived here for 60 years and I am not leaving.’”

Despite the potential of the home health-care industry, Birch isn’t ready to rule anything out for the future. “You never know,” he muses, with a glance at his pink Nurse Next Door car parked outside the café. “Being an entrepreneur, you’ve always got ideas jumping around in your head. But at this moment, it’s working great for me. I’m enjoying it. I’m a pretty optimistic, very stress-free person, I think. So I take it one day at a time.”

You have the ability to identify opportunities

As a UVic grad and entrepreneur, you have the ability to identify business opportunities for Victoria where others can’t. Together, we can showcase your business as well as your university city to your associates, partners and clients worldwide. Let’s explore opportunities to connect your business expertise with our conference expertise.


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LIKE A DIGITAL VERSION OF THE BIG BANG THEORY, the online universe started small and is continuously expanding. In 2000 there were an estimated 361 million Internet users; 10 years later there are close to two billion. Between 2006 and 2010, global e-commerce grew from US$335 billion to US$711 billion, and today Internet enterprises are part of a high-tech sector in British Columbia that generates roughly $10 billion annually. So being able to thrive as an Internet-based business in this superheated environment requires nimbleness and adaptability.

Business Class turned to three grads who are blazing new ground in the online economy to glean a few survival secrets. Anne Stefanyk (BCom ’04), signed on in 2008 as a “solution architect” for northStudio, a web development, design and marketing specialist firm with niches in e-commerce, tourism and education. Starting in 2000 as a two-person shop, the firm has grown to 34 employees, with offices in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, New Brunswick and Dubai and more than 200 clients.

“I’m basically an account manager,” says Stefanyk over the phone from the Victoria headquarters of northStudio. “I work with clients on shaping a concept and developing budgets and timelines.”

For Stefanyk, setting the pace in a competitive and ever-changing field boils down to management style; rather than a top-down hierarchy, northStudio fosters a culture of learning and fun that encourages an open exchange of ideas. The company is also constantly on the lookout for new technologies. “Things tend to happen organically here. We’re all geeks so we get together over drinks to talk about trends and new ideas,” she says.

The same goes for Drupal; while barely a blip on the cyber horizon, the firm saw potential in this open-source content management system. An eye for a good idea also explains why northStudio embraced 360-degree interactive media, or video shot from multiple perspectives. One of the company’s tourism clients, Nimmo Bay, now showcases the technology on its website, and the medium has been nominated as Victoria Advanced Technology Council product of the year.

Though Stefanyk’s career has evolved in ways she may not have expected while hitting the books at UVic, she says the business faculty’s entrepreneurship program gave her a running start. “I learned about how to ask for money and [about] marketing strategies, and just enough accounting to know that I need to hire an accountant,” she says. “I only wish the entrepreneurship program was longer than three months.”

Like northStudio, David Eckman (BCom ’96) and his business partner Darcy Foster were tinkering around with web-page-compatible, 360-degree virtual tours back when the technology was fresh. They immediately recognized the potential for marketing hotels and other attractions. From this foundation, Virtual Kingdom Interactive was born and quickly evolved from a web development company to an Internet marketing and SEO specialist. Eventually the company shortened its name to VKI Studios and began concentrating solely on marketing, because it was more profitable, Eckman says.

“Back when we started, nobody was talking about web analytics. It was a bit like the Wild West. There were many opportunities to drive traffic to your site by tricking search engines and their algorithms. That’s no longer the case,” says Eckman, acknowledging the increasing sophistication of search engines over the past decade.

According to Eckman, success for VKI Studios flows from constant networking with other marketing firms and nurturing Net Profit

Three grads share secrets of their online success

By Andrew Findlay

Anne Stefanyk

Back when competitors were still wrapping their heads around search engine optimization (SEO), northStudio had already thoroughly deconstructed Google and learned the importance of SEO in website performance, says Stefanyk.
close partnerships with companies that give them early access to new technology and tools. Like most leading information age companies, VKI eschews a rigid corporate culture in favour of one that makes employees part of the process, allowing them to actually contribute to building the brand.

The strategy has worked. VKI started in Eckman’s parents’ basement with a staff of two. It had 10 clients within its first year. The firm now has 15 employees and serves between 100 and 150 clients annually.

As the company has grown, the market has evolved. Since Eckman graduated, everything about the industry has changed, from content platforms to social media.

“We used to be strictly focused on delivering content to a 14-inch or 15-inch screen in a one-way conversation,” Eckman says. “Now we have two-way conversations with our customers across all these different web-connected devices, such as TVs, smart phones and tablets.”

In March of 2011, VKI Studios announced a merger with two competitors, WebShare Design and PublicInsite Web Analytics, to form Cardinal Path, which Eckman says will give the new business entity greater geographical reach. “This is an exciting time for us,” he says.

If there’s one facet of the Internet that evolves at particularly head-spinning rates, it’s gaming. In 2009, Jeff Bogensberger (MBA ’01) dove into this realm with business partner Enid Van Gils and launched SOCO Games, a developer of social networking games.

“I was working on a couple of fun websites and Enid mentioned that he was building a game for Facebook. He needed someone with a business and marketing background to help him make it a success. We began to map out the requirements, and like many before us, we completely underestimated the monster about to be attacked,” Bogensberger says. However, SOCO is determined to slay this monster. Last fall, the partners released their first game, Earth 2.0, on Facebook.

Game developers use monthly active user (MAU) numbers as a measurement of success, and SOCO’s Earth 2.0 quickly became a powerhouse. SOCO has more than 50 employees and over 25 million active users. “We had a small dream at the beginning, but now we’ve grown into a big dream. We’re on track to hit 100 million active users this June. Continued success for SOCO will depend on providing a seamless, error-free game experience, while continuously adding new features,” says Bogensberger.

The alternative is to languish and join the cemetery of long-forgotten games. However, SOCO has one other distinguishing attribute: the SOCO Games Players Fund, a philanthropic component that allows Earth 2.0 participants to play the game.

“From day one, we have taken a percentage of revenue from regular game play and put it into the fund. The players then choose from a list of 30 charities from all over the world,” Bogensberger says. “This creates a positive reason to play Earth 2.0.”

On the surface, online businesses and traditional bricks-and-mortar storefront enterprises are about as similar as water and coal. However Bogensberger, along with his fellow alumni Jeff and Stefanyk, believes the same rules apply: being responsive to the consumer, paying attention to detail and creating value. Keeping a close eye on the bottom line is also crucial, says the gaming entrepreneur.

To meet its talent needs and minimize office overhead, SOCO outsources most of its programming work. As for a guiding principle, SOCO adheres to an old one: “cash is king.”

“My advice is that every time you’re about to spend money, ask yourself: how does this expenditure increase revenue or positively impact the bottom line?” Bogensberger says. “Keep in mind that when you’re deciding whether you need that new espresso machine.”

What he appreciates most about the digital industry is its uncompromising transparency; everything is tracked and the numbers on user hits don’t lie. And even though an online game always starts with an impressive nugget of creative inspiration, it will remain a dream without an audience, unless it’s backed by a sound business model. This is where Bogensberger says his MBA studies come into play, arming him with the tools to check gut instincts against objective business case analysis. And it pays to keep your business sense sharp in this industry, where change is the only constant.

Van Gils and launched SOCO Games, a developer of social networking games.

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Lululemon CEO Christine Day on crafting a culture

As CEO of Lululemon Athletica, Christine Day is responsible for creating and executing long-term business strategies, directing the company’s continued development and reinforcing Lululemon’s position as a global leader of yoga-inspired women’s athletic apparel. Since joining the company in 2008, she has helped shareholders grow their investment by more than 1,100 per cent. She also sees 20 years at Starbucks, where she learned the intricacies of high-growth business development in a company with a strong culture.

Day spoke January 27 at the Gustavson School of Business. Business Class connected her before the talk to get her thoughts on building a shared-experience brand and working for two leading entrepreneurs.

BC: What was it like working for two very inspirational entrepreneurs—Chip Wilson, co-founder of Lululemon, and Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks?

CD: What is really important is that both of those entrepreneurs talk about the experience. We’re committed to creating moments where the guest talks about our experience and products because they really believe in the product. Whether she’s met us in the store or in the yoga studio, we let her tell the story.

To learn more about Christine Day’s strategy for “building a global brand that is locally relevant, with a world class business model,” visit: www.gustavson.uvic.ca/media/videos.
They say a successful entrepreneur is someone who can see just a bit farther down the road than the rest of us. This statement rings true for the Gustavson School of Business and its Board of Advisers, who have named JR Shaw, visionary and founder of Shaw Communications Inc., the school’s 2011 Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year.

Shaw launched Capital Cable, the forerunner to today’s giant, in Edmonton in 1966, where he had relocated from Ontario to expand the family pipe-coating business. Born James Robert Shaw in 1934, he grew up in Brigden, a small farming community in southern Ontario close enough to the US border to pick up TV signals coming from nearby Detroit and Cleveland. “[In Edmonton,] I’d come home and want to watch some TV, but there wasn’t much choice—all I could get was CBC English and French, and CTV,” says Shaw. I missed having the extra channels I could get back home.”

Shaw recognized an opportunity and spent five years negotiating with Ottawa to get the required licence. His perseverance paid off and Capital Cable connected its first customer in 1971. “A good friend said to me, ‘Young man, the real value in the world is real estate; cable is nothing more than a passing fad.’ Needless to say I didn’t listen. We started hanging wires and building our customer base one by one.”

As a result of his hard work, today Shaw Communications is a diversified media and communications company with 13,300 employees, providing broadband cable television, high-speed Internet, landline phone service, telecommunication services, satellite direct-to-home services and programming content to 3.4 million customers.

The company’s success built on Shaw’s commitment to customer service, a positive attitude, hard work and developing good managers.

“JR’s passion for choice and service is at the heart of the Shaw vision,” says Dr. Ali Dastmalchian, dean of the school of business. “Those twin values, plus a strong work ethic, established JR as one of our country’s most successful entrepreneurs and make him a wonderful role model for our students.”

Now serving as executive chair of the company, Shaw says he thinks of himself as a coach. “You don’t do it by yourself, that’s for sure,” he says.

His children have all earned their places on the Shaw team. “I gave my kids a choice to join the business, but they could not be parachuted to the top; they had to work from the bottom up,” he says. His eldest son, Jim, dug ditches; Brad worked in the company for five years before becoming a vice-president.

Cable Vision
UVic names communications pioneer JR Shaw Distinguished Entrepreneur of the Year
By Dianne George

At the helm: JR Shaw in the Shaw Communications head office.
The Exchange Equation

A new program helps students get the most out of going overseas

By David Herr, BCom ’10

Study-abroad students are often so overwhelmed by the smells, sights, tastes and sounds of their new environment that they have little or no time for reflection.

Ask one of the 150 or so returning exchange students how their time abroad was and they’ll likely say, “It changed my life!” or, “It was awesome!” However, ask them to delve deeper and they often find it difficult to articulate what they really mean.

Elisa Sivestri, 2009 exchange student, says before she left, someone told her the exchange would be a life-changing experience, but she didn’t believe it—at first. “I was wrong. And I didn’t notice until it was over. So much happens while you’re on exchange that you simply can’t compare it to a normal school term,” she says. “I have no doubt that the people I’ve met, the things I’ve done and the places I’ve been will stay with me for a lifetime.”

With this in mind, the Gustavson School of Business has introduced Enhancing Your Exchange Experience (E3), a new initiative for BCom students going on exchange. In the 2011-12 term, exchange students will complete a series of activities designed to help them gain a deeper understanding of the experience so that they’re able to better articulate its value to future employers. The program has three main elements:

Establishing Expectations: This activity helps students think strategically about maximizing their experience. Prior to departure, they set three goals and develop strategies for achieving them. They also learn about the concept of cultural intelligence and complete a brief self-assessment to identify ways of improving their intercultural competence.

The World is Your Classroom: The second activity, completed while students are on exchange, is designed to promote the integration of international experiences with academic studies. Students reflect, in writing, on an aspect of their exchange as it relates to their academic discipline. The responses are made available to faculty members to increase their awareness of students’ exchange experiences and provide new ways for teachers to engage students in class discussions.

The World Looks Different From Here: For the final activity, students write a personal essay, based on a list of topics designed to prompt reflection on the different types of learning and development that have occurred over the course of their exchange. With approximately 80 per cent of BCom students applying to spend a semester studying abroad, exchange plays a critical role in delivering a truly hands-on international experience. The E3 initiative is about making this experience, and the learning that comes out of it, richer and deeper.

Participants in “This is My Exchange Experience” are mostly satisfied with their exchange experience, feeling enriched and enhanced. However, they also feel more skilled in intercultural competence, and they have a deeper understanding of what it means to be an international student. They apply it to other situations. Always be at work early, stay longer, apply for the best education you can, then take the knowledge and be able to use it to other situations. Always be at work early, stay longer, have a smile and treat others as you want to be treated.

Elisa Sivestri, 2009 exchange student, says before she left, someone told her the exchange would be a life-changing experience, but she didn’t believe it—at first. “I was wrong. And I didn’t notice until it was over. So much happens while you’re on exchange that you simply can’t compare it to a normal school term,” she says. “I have no doubt that the people I’ve met, the things I’ve done and the places I’ve been will stay with me for a lifetime.”

With this in mind, the Gustavson School of Business has introduced Enhancing Your Exchange Experience (E3), a new initiative for BCom students going on exchange. In the 2011-12 term, exchange students will complete a series of activities designed to help them gain a deeper understanding of the experience so that they’re able to better articulate its value to future employers. The program has three main elements:

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It’s easy to see how Elton Pereira, 2008-2010, has become a successful entrepreneur. Pereira brings that energy, along with a whole lot of business acumen, passion and hard work, to his role as CEO of his family’s Victoria-based PC security and optimization company, ParetoLogic. The company, run by Pereira and his three brothers, has grown from just the four of them to a 145-person business, including RevenueWire—a leading e-commerce network that connects independent online marketers to businesses that want to grow their online sales. The company specializes in downloadable software products, capitalizing on Pereira’s experience in the field. As for the future, Pereira says he wants to stay on the cutting edge of his industry and expand ParetoLogic’s products and services, but also explore other digital enterprises. With several product launches slated for this year, he’ll be running in high gear for a long time to come.

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By Krista Boehnert

2008
Ren Hongge, BCom, or “Fred the CFO,” as he is known, is the treasurer general at Chongqing Maple Leaf International School, a BC-curriculum high school in China. Hongge has been key in founding and running the school since 2009. The current goal of his team is for 100 per cent of graduates to be accepted into the world’s top 100 universities in 2012. Hongge also co-founded DailySplice, a podcasting company, with a group of UVic students in 2007.

2007
Rian Bowden, BCom has been busy with business and family. Bowden manages business at DailySplice, a podcasting company he founded with other UVic students while in the BCom program. He recently started a new consulting company based on his expertise in local and mobile web strategy. He got married in July 2010 and he and his wife Nicole, along with their new baby, born in April, are planning to move to China in 2012 to expand the businesses.

Securities and TD Waterhouse in Calgary post-graduation. Although she thought she wanted to do something else with her life, she couldn’t shake the feeling that the financial industry was her calling. Klein’s dream is to help young people reach financial freedom.

2006
Av Hundle, BCom and Omar Lalani, BCom (2003) came together in 2009 to create Adepta Properties Inc. Today Adepta owns two full-service hotels in BC—a Howard Johnson and a Travelodge—that properties, and it continues to expand.

2005
Leanne Cadden, BCom completed her entrepreneurship degree with hopes of balancing and grounding her creativity with left brain processes. In the last eight years she has worked on five entrepreneurial start-ups and says she loves the thrill of creating businesses, branding and art from scratch. She is currently a full-time artist and mother and is researching the link between creative genius and mental illness.

Graham Lancaster and Alberio Bathory-Frota

Instructor Mia Maki asked her students to come up with solutions for a fictional couple inquiring about financial planning. Lancaster designed several planning calculators in an Excel spreadsheet and this evolved into a business idea. His goal was to create a website with consolidated tools and resources for financial calculations. He presented the formulas to Bathory-Frota, who recognized “Graham’s unique skill for creating calculators” and helped realize the project with his software engineering skills. Launched this spring, the site now offers a set of loan, mortgage, investment property, tax and educational financial calculators.

Business students now have a central point of access for finance calculators, so they can learn everything from one place,” says Lancaster. Finance professionals have embraced the site, too, as it allows users to make complex financial decisions easily. The site also gives non-professionals an alternative to using a financial adviser for debt repayment planning and researching investment options.

Lancaster and Bathory-Frota say they hope to provide value for users. They also hope the service will be recognized as unique. “Ultimate Calculators is different than what out there, because it’s more complete, easy to use and easy to understand,” says Bathory-Frota. And how do they manage their time between all of their obligations? “We’re trying very hard, but we’ve constantly battling the feeling that we could do a bit better in individual aspects of our lives if we weren’t doing it all,” says Bathory-Frota. Still, they’re finding a way, and no doubt looking forward to finishing their MBAs in the winter of 2011.
Scott Garman
By Rachelle LeBlanc Quiney, MBA ‘10

Scott Garman’s (BCom ’93) life has been a tale of courage, learning and strategy. “There are lots of different paths to take,” says the MacDonald Realty agent. “The learning really never ends.” In the late ’90s, after completing his BCom at UVic, and a chartered accounting designation, Garman found himself in Vancouver, employed with KPMG in high-tech management. After receiving his CA designation, self-employment wasn’t an option on his radar, he says. He just assumed he would work for a big firm, in a “competitive and billable-hours-focused” environment. After he says, he’s dedicated to ensuring his clients get just what they’re looking for in a home. He also provides expert advice in various consultant roles for development companies, such as Elkington Estates, a sustainable-forestry housing development near Shawnigan Lake.

Self-employment has proven an enriching experience and Garman says he enjoys the variety of his projects. Accountability is an important part of his outlook: “You take it for granted in a big company, but [not] when you’re out on your own. You have to learn how to keep yourself accountable.” In addition to real estate and consulting, Garman enjoys helping community groups and charities in his spare time.

Erin Sullivan and Michelle Clarke

Invest in the future, and good things will follow. This is the approach of Victoria consulting company Ideba. When Ideba began, president David Sly sought out professionals with skills, experience and long-term potential. The search led him to Erin Sullivan (BCom ’07). He had worked with Sullivan previously and been impressed by her work ethic. In January, Sullivan became director of client services, and she now heads up Ideba’s Victoria office. More recently, Sly extended his gaze to the university talent pipeline, hiring Gustavson student Michelle Clarke to May 2011 on co-op, as an account coordinator. Seeing she was a great fit for the company, he hired her for back-to-back co-op terms over the next two years, with the promise of full-time employment upon her graduation in 2013.

“Over the course of one’s career, we work with many smart, talented professionals. My goal was to bring all those people together as the dream team,” says Sly. Sly’s team strives to offer educational opportunities for up-and-comers in marketing and communications, and often works with the Gustavson School of Business. Ideba has sponsored the school’s IDC West team and the company’s staff members have participated in a number of other educational initiatives, including volunteering with the Commerce Students’ Society to develop a corporate sponsorship strategy for 2012. As a founding sponsor of Marketing Central Victoria (MCV), Ideba recently arranged a speaker series, bringing in industry experts to address local audiences on marketing-related topics. The lectures were a chance for professionals in the area, regardless of their business affiliation, to learn from industry leaders and network with their peers.

By providing educational, mentoring and networking opportunities to the next generation of marketers, Sly, Sullivan and Clarke are investing in the leaders of tomorrow. “The students and graduates in whom we invest represent the future of the global economy and we’re happy to be a part of their development and growth,” says Sly. No doubt Sullivan and Clarke echo his sentiment.

Class notes

activities such as skiing, training and golf. Mason is also a committee member for the Uvic and Gustavson Vancouver alumni chapters and a board member with Kids Up Front, a non-profit organization.

Trish Sterloff (née Cosgrove), MBA is the new Victoria Alumni Chapter chair. Sterloff has worked in marketing positions for companies such as Hunter Douglas and Club Med, specializing in event coordination, marketing communications and public relations. She moved to Victoria in 2002 and upon completing her MBA, joined the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. Sterloff is looking forward to connecting with alumni in her new role.

2003
Grant Storry, BCom recently decided it was time to venture out on his own. After a successful five-year career as senior manager of a dot-com boom. Stevenson and two partners started Electric Edge Systems Group Inc. in Victoria in 2001. The company quickly gained an impressive stable of clients, including BC Ferries and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The company had great success during the dot-com bust and has stayed in the black ever since. In early 2010, it launched a communication and data collection platform for use in the global commercial fishing industry.

The platform is rapidly expanding and is already in use in BC and the northeast US.

2001
Michaela Tokarski, MBA co-founded Coastal Contacts Inc. (TSX: CDA), a multimillion-dollar optical products retailer, in 2000. She held the position of vice-president of sales and marketing and currently sits on the board of directors. In 2006, she moved on to establishing market awareness for iPipe, an Internet payment service. Currently Tokarski is leveraging her passion for bringing together technology and human resources at Creekside Communication Inc., her web development company, which focuses on the needs of small businesses. Tokarski lives in Ottawa with her husband and three young children.

2000
Simon Cox, BCom and Sylvia Cox (née Craigmyne), BA ’00 have recently made a long-anticipated move back to Vancouver Island. They are settling into their new home in Cobble Hill and expecting their first child in July. Cox is managing the new Vancouver Island division of Yacht Sales West.

The platform is rapidly expanding and is already in use in BC and the northeast US.

1996
Lesley Patten, BCom (Tourism) has worked in France, England, the Cayman Islands and Victoria. Her current role is CEO of a Victoria-based enterprise called Every Aspect Management. This is an exciting new venture, offering event planning and association management services. Previously involved with the Gustavson alumni chapter, Patten is now on the UVic Alumni Association board of directors. She spends her spare time with her husband and daughter.

1995
Jeff Harris, MBA is a principal with Integrated Global Performance Solutions and also serves as president of the western practice, based in the Silicon Valley. IGPS specializes in developing integrated strategic and organizational performance solutions for organizations through a combination of information technology, business processes and human capital development. Harris and his wife Lisa (BA ’91 and COO of IGPS) are active in the local community and enjoy travelling in their free time.

Do you have news you’d like to share? Send us your update and we’ll put it in our next issue. Email your update, along with a high-resolution photo, to: boomer@uvic.ca.
Leadership: Essential Selections on Power, Authority and Influence  
Barbara Kellerman  

This breezy, small book is a gem for any leader, regardless of experience. Simple and straightforward, it gets to “the heart of the matter,” as noted in the subtitle, by boiling down 30 years of research on leadership into usable advice. As the authors note: “There are fundamental principles that inform and support the practices of leadership that were true 30 years ago, are true today and will be true 30 years from now.” They present 10 enduring, fundamental truths about leading—essentials for great leadership that are well worth checking yourself against.

—Robin Dyke

The Truth About Leadership:  
the No-Fads, Heart-of-the-Matter Facts You Need to Know  
James Kouzes and Barry Posner  

This book is about how to be innovative in everything we do. Carmin Gallo lays out seven principles of innovation—from “do what you love” to “master the message”—inspired by Apple Inc. CEO Steve Jobs. Gallo relates each principle to our daily lives, as well as to organizations. He provides excellent examples from a variety of businesses and individuals to illustrate each principle. The book is easy and fun to read because of Gallo’s conversational writing style. He wraps up each chapter with “Lessons,” practical tips that anyone can apply. Much like Gallo’s previous work, The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs, I highly recommend this book—it’s a great weekend read. I was inspired.

—Pat Elemans

The Other Side of Innovation:  
Solving the Execution Challenge  
Vijay Govindarajan and Chris Trimble  

You can’t survive in the business world without innovating, but once you come up with the big idea, how do you turn it into a breakthrough product, service or process improvement? Vijay Govindarajan and Chris Trimble have dedicated 10 years of study to taming the execution side of the innovation process, producing a clear set of principles and recommendations for converting ideas into actions. Not surprisingly, they stress the importance of a disciplined process. The real value of their message is what they offer on building teams to implement and manage innovations.

—Robin Dyke

Microfinance, Major Impact  
Business prof studies the effects of small-scale loans in the Third World

By Wendy Mah

Our newest international business professor is already inspiring eager young students to change the world. Dr. Josh Ault began his professorial career at UVic in the fall of 2010. He’s teaching what he knows best: microfinance in less-developed countries.

Growing up, Ault was always interested in community service. He spent two years living in Russia in his early 20s, working at orphanages and teaching English to schoolchildren. (Ault can still speak Russian, although he admits he’s a bit rusty.) Business was different there; a lesson he quickly learned one day when he went to buy some flour. As Ault was waiting for the vendor to weigh the amount on the scale, he noticed a tiny thread tied to the man’s finger, tuging to add a little extra to the price.

“It was a learning experience for me to be confronted with a situation where an individual businessman was choosing to purposely overcharge his customers,” Ault recalls. “It was this experience that really got me thinking about the negative, as well as positive, outcomes of business. The question in my mind became: When and under which conditions does business lead to positive outcomes for everyone?”

When his University of South Carolina PhD adviser asked what he wanted to study, Ault replied that he wanted to combine his interest in finance, macroeconomics, international business and community work. That led him to study microfinancing and the theories related to the Nobel Peace-prize winning Grameen model. The Grameen model of microfinancing requires a group of five entrepreneurs to approach a lender. Each entrepreneur is responsible for weekly payments back to the lender. Should one entrepreneur not be able to repay, the others would be responsible for the missed payment. In the spring of 2009, as part of his PhD research, Ault spent six weeks in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, observing firsthand the process of group micro-lending and the impact of giving small group loans to entrepreneurs whose only other options might be risky deals with loan sharks.

Ault says when he was in Kenya he learned that micro-financing is primarily based on trust. Thus, the Grameen model seems to work best in small, tight-knit communities where residents know their neighbours and governments and policies are not overly regulated. The model reduces risk to lending organizations, while providing capital to stimulate new entrepreneurial opportunities. Countries where there is evidence the Grameen model has been successful include Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Peru.

“For developed countries like Canada, the Grameen model does not work well for many reasons,” Ault says. “For instance, there are fewer incentives for the very poor to engage in entrepreneurship. Their basic needs are still met through our health-care and unemployment insurance systems, and this makes entrepreneurship a less attractive option.”

It’s also more difficult for Canadian lenders to use a model that relies on trust, says Ault. The poor in developed countries tend to be more transient, and less dependent on their health-care and unemployment insurance systems, and this makes entrepreneurship a less attractive option.”

Ault’s research in Africa has been presented at numerous international conferences, and he won the 2008 Most Promising Researcher Award from the Moore School of Business for his work.

So what’s next research-wise for Ault? There has been a shift in the Grameen model of microfinancing due to for-profit organizations getting involved in lending, so Ault will now be looking at how business affects societal problems, and the extent to which business can have a positive impact on society. He will be conducting his research in India.
The Amazing Sorin Rizeanu

By Wendy Mah

Quick, how long does it take to double your money at a given interest rate? Sorin Rizeanu can tell you within seconds. How does he do it? Well, no mathematician ever reveals his secrets.

Originally hailing from Bucharest, Romania, Rizeanu obtained both a bachelor and a master’s in mathematics. He spent time working in international sales before deciding to pursue his MBA at the University of South Carolina. At that same time, in the early 2000s, global economies were rapidly changing: contagion effects of the Asian crises were still stirring parts of the world, the dot-com crash was shaking the stock market and the failure of companies such as Enron and Worldcom was playing a part in the corporate crash was shaking the stock market in the early 2000s, global economies were rapidly changing: contagion effects of the Asian crises were still stirring parts of the world, the dot-com crash was shaking the stock market and the failure of companies such as Enron and Worldcom was playing a part in the crisis. Rizeanu pursued a PhD in international finance, also at the University of South Carolina. His current research focuses on corporate governance and international finance, including the structure of firm ownership, the quality of external audits and institutional efficiency, and their impact on firm valuation and debt maturities.

When he’s not entertaining his students by performing magic tricks, Rizeanu tries to stay focused on teaching the fundamentals. “Many people work very hard or have incredible talents and build wealth. However, wealth dissipates very quickly if one doesn’t understand the fundamentals of finance. People study finance not because they worry about money, but because they want to worry less about the money,” he explains. When Rizeanu isn’t teaching finance to BCom students, you can find him watching theatre, hiking or perfecting his mathemagician skills.

We’re AACSB-Certified!

A new international accreditation puts the Gustavson School of Business in the top tier of business schools worldwide. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accredited the school’s business programs following a thorough assessment of performance in teaching, research, curriculum development and evaluation and student learning outcomes. Read on to learn about the benefits of this new accreditation.

For faculty

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For alumni

Less than five per cent of the more than 11,000 business schools in the world have AACSB accreditation. Schools with this designation are recognized as having the highest-quality classes, professors, research, students and alumni in the world. Employers worldwide recognize AACSB schools for producing highly skilled graduates—and they often focus their recruiting efforts on alumni from accredited institutions.

Our BCom students have a terrific performance in the annual JDC West Competition, earning first place in the accounting and not-for-profit categories, second in entrepreneurship and third in the social category. They also won the sportsmanship award, which all student participants voted on. Congratulations to Sam So, captain of the Commerce Students’ Society JDC West team, to all of the participants and to coach Dr. Dale Ganley on the great results!

Exchanges up

A record number of students applied to go on exchange in 2011—190 compared to 160 in 2010. Europe was the most popular destination, with 74 per cent selecting it as their first choice. The most popular European school is WU in Vienna, followed closely by BI in Sweden and the University of Economics in Prague. The most popular schools in Asia are Singapore Management University and City University of Hong Kong. A number of our new universities were also selected: Atenas, Philippines; Corvinus, Hungary; INCAE, Costa Rica; Koç, Turkey; and Grenoble, France.

New faces

We’ve added five new members to our Board of Advisors, including three in Vancouver: Janet Bonaguro (MBA ’10), a senior manager with MNP, Matt Patterson (BCom ’00), a partner with PriceWaterhouseCoopers and Matthew Hall, retired CEO of Nestlé UK. Our new Victoria-based member is Heidi Worthington, marketing manager with the Victoria Conservatory of Music. We also have one new international board member: Anatolijus Fouracre (BCom ’00), service delivery manager for Barclays Bank in Spain.

Christine Jensen has joined us as the new associate director of MBA programs. Jensen has worked in the education and development sectors on four continents. Her most recent position was director of the Ecole Européenne du Management du Tourisme in Casablanca, Morocco.

Catching up with the ENTers

As part of this issue’s focus on entrepreneurship, we recently caught up with the ENT faculty team and asked, “Hey, what’s new with you?” Answers ahead.

Dr. Brent Mainprize: At the end of the calendar year I was teaching in the new MBA program in Taiwan, and early in 2010 I was involved with directed studies for engineering students who are part of the Wesley Clover program. From May to July, I’ll be instructing BCom students doing the ENT specialization and from May to August, I’ll be teaching the first cohort of Graduate Certificate and Diploma in Entrepreneurship in Australia. My community work also keeps me busy.

Dr. J. Brock Smith: At the start of the year I was on sabbatical visiting the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship at Strathclyde University in Glasgow. While on sabbatical I revised a manuscript on value creation theory, prepared another paper on entrepreneurial cognition and wrote the fourth edition of my intro marketing text. I returned to Victoria at the end of April to resume leadership of the ENT team, teach in the summer ENT specialization and help launch the Graduate Certificate and Diploma in Entrepreneurship. While in Scotland, I guest-lectured and advised entrepreneurship and marketing PhD students. I also aided, by distance, a team developing an innovation strategy for the university.

Dr. Marilyn Uy: In addition to my teaching duties, I’m currently serving as an ad hoc reviewer at two leading entrepreneurship journals: Journal of Business Venturing and Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice. This past year, I was honoured to receive the Gustavson School of Business Faculty Excellence in Research Award. In early 2011, the Journal of Applied Psychology published my co-authored article on the daily stress crossover between the unemployed and their employed spouses.

Dr. Charlene Zietsma: I’m the director of the PhD program and I teach Foundations of International Management Research. In my research, I’m currently collecting data on social, political and infrastructure barriers to clean technology entrepreneurship in BC, Ontario and Brazil, and the strategies entrepreneurs use to get around them. I am also working on collective entrepreneurship projects, studying Japan and the Netherlands as...
Global Masters
The first MGB class speaks out

Our first class of Master of Global Business (MGB) students are in the final stretch before graduation. The 18 students are currently on four-month work placements to complete the global internship component of their degrees. Prior to this, they spent a semester studying at UVic, one at National Sun Yat-Sen University in Taiwan and one at Johannes Kepler University in Austria. They’re all seasoned global business people at this point! We asked them to tell us about some of their experiences.

Cherie Tong
The MGB program has allowed us to experience three very different cultures in a short period of time. In both Taiwan and Austria, our peers from the other two schools helped us assimilate into the different living and teaching environments.

As for the classroom environment, the teaching style in Taiwan is less structured than in Canada. There, it’s not common for students to speak up in class; this is very different from the culture at UVic.

The cultural immersion outside of classes was educational, too. I’m thinking of the Taiwanese snack carts, where I found a new favourite food: savoury green onion pancakes cooked on a flat grill. You get a choice of fillings and flavours; for example, cheese, curry and egg, combined with a blend of soy and chili sauce. Yum!

Our experiences in the MGB have enhanced our cultural awareness and honed the skills we’ll need to survive in today’s diverse business environment. Overall, it has taught me that cultural differences don’t separate us from one another—they bring us closer together and teach us new ways of solving problems.

Julian Legazpi
Inside the MGB classroom, there is a sense of excitement and a culture of debate. Every day and every class is unique in its objectives. Whether we’re learning about investment opportunities in Asia or visiting multinational corporations in Europe, the experiences we’ve had in the program have helped form the basis for cultural awareness, and shed some light on doing business in a foreign context.

Regardless of which university we were studying at, our instructors infused a sense of excitement by inviting industry professionals to guest-lecture and keeping our program content fresh and stimulating. Engaging discussions opened us to new ideas and helped foster healthy competition among classmates.

Many of the projects we have undertaken consistently redefine what “hands-on education” means: the focus is always to learn by doing. We’ve been dropped into the throes of real business problems and dealt with real management issues.

Daniel McCombe
Learning about, and across, other cultures is an exciting challenge. This was true whether we were studying at home in Victoria or abroad in Taiwan or Austria. In the Victoria segment of the program, I began to recognize key differences between us and our international colleagues—in how we react to teaching styles, in which business issues we find most relevant and in how we solve problems.

It was critical for us to recognize and leverage these differences when working in teams, which was an integral part of the MGB curriculum. When we were presenting projects to professors and business leaders from each of the three countries, it was crucial to understand how cultural environments were shaping perspectives and expectations. Thus, we had to exchange knowledge about cultural differences so that we could best tailor our project work to suit the sensibilities of our audience.

This has been the most important thing I have taken from the program, and it has helped me achieve success within the classroom—no matter where in the world that classroom may be.
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