Sociologist honoured for improving seniors’ lives

UVic sociologist Dr. Neena Chappell’s lifetime of scholarship and service to the scientific and academic communities has earned her a Career Achievement Award from the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of B.C. (CUFA/BC). Chappell, who holds the Canada Research Chair in social gerontology, has done groundbreaking research on the extent and importance of informal health care support services for seniors. She’s internationally known for her work on home care, supporting the case for government expansion in this area to provide more efficient and appropriate health care for an aging society. Her work examines the integration of informal and formal care systems for seniors.

Over the past 26 years, Chappell has led the development of two world-class interdisciplinary research centres on aging at the University of Manitoba and UVic. She’s produced 170 peer-reviewed articles, five books, two edited books and 36 reports, delivered 89 invited addresses and attracted more than $20 million in research funding.

Chappell has also been actively involved in many scholarly and professional organizations and made major contributions to the development of research funding bodies in Canada.

“It’s a privilege to spend my time doing what I believe in and enjoy so much,” says Chappell. “To be recognized for doing so, is indeed an honour.”

CUFA/BC represents approximately 3,600 faculty members, professional librarians and other academic staff at five B.C. universities. In 2002, UVic physiologist Dr. Nancy Sherwood won the CUFA/BC Career Achievement Award. Over the years, a number of UVic professors have won CUFA/BC’s Academic of the Year Award: ethno-botanist Dr. Nancy Turner (2002), chemist Dr. Reg Mitchell (2000), and child and youth care professor Dr. Sibylle Arzt (1998).

The $1,000 award was presented to Chappell at a CUFA/BC dinner in Vancouver last month.

Link infrastructure grants to water conservation, urges UVic research group

Water-guzzling Canadian municipalities should make a commitment to water conservation before being eligible for federal infrastructure grants, say the researchers behind a new report on urban water management.

The Future in Every Drop: The Benefits, Barriers, and Practice of Urban Water Demand Management in Canada by UVic’s POLIS project on ecological governance, recommends a fundamental shift in water usage in the country and calls for action by all levels of government to ensure a sustainable future for water.

“Governments must lead by example, demonstrate the importance of water conservation and the potential for innovative solutions, and help create a lasting ‘water ethic’ in its citizens,” says Michael M’Gonigle, director of the POLIS project and eco-research professor of environmental law and policy. “A simple first step is for governments to link infrastructure grants to conservation-based water planning. In many cases, conservation is the next best and cheapest source of ‘new’ water for Canadian cities.”

The POLIS team’s previous two reports on water management examined and diagnosed Canada’s ailing urban water management system. The Future in Every Drop provides the prescription—practical action plans to implement demand management.

To promote the recommenda-

tions in the report, the POLIS urban water team has presented their research to Environment Canada and encouraged the federal government to consider the report as a blueprint for action.

M’Gonigle believes this dialogue is a good first step toward the federal government taking the lead on water conservation.

“Prime Minister Paul Martin knows, sustainable cities are critical to the future of our nation and water is a key starting point.” The POLIS team will continue to meet with other levels of government to further promote the key steps to incorporate demand management for urban water sustainability in Canada.

The latest report from the POLIS researchers emphasizes that the traditional supply-side approach to urban water management in Canada, which seeks new water sources and expands infrastructure,
Historic water tower damaged by fire

UVic’s facilities management department continues to assess the damage caused by a fire on the night of April 28 to the Hamsterly Farm water tower on Hare Road at the entrance to Alumni House. The blaze was reported at around 9:30 p.m. Saanich Fire Department extinguished the fire but there was extensive damage to the tower. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. The water tower was built in 1911 for an area farmer and was originally a tank on a timber structure. In 1933, it was enclosed, roofed and the tower shingled to incorporate it into the adjacent stables. It became part of UVic in the late 1960s. The tower was used by the university as storage for boats and other equipment.

Law duo nearly world champs

Two UVic law students narrowly missed being world champions and finished second in the recent International Client Counselling Competition, organized by the American Bar Association in Glasgow, Scotland. The competition re-quires students to demonstrate the range of skills needed to establish good lawyer-client relationships in a series of on-the-spot scenarios. Maria Bennett Morris and teammate Darin Reeves persevered through 12 regional competi-tions in North America to take the national title in Florida, qualifying them to compete for the world title. UVic law professor Andrew Prie and law ses-sional instructor Steve Perks shared the team’s coaching duties. UVic placed second to a team from the University of Auckland, New Zealand—finishing only one point behind on total marks compiled from 15 different standards.

Hot off the press

UVic Research 2004: Fourth edition of the prize-winning research an-nual, is now being distributed to key audiences, informing them of the great variety and outstanding quality of research endeavours conducted by UVic faculty. This year’s 12-page colour publication profiles projects of re-searchers working at the forefront of a broad range of disciplines. It includes a special cover story on the research involvement of undergraduate and graduate students who, with the mentorship and guidance of outstanding faculty members, are well on their way to becoming the research leaders of tomorrow. UVic Research 2004 was produced by communications services and designed by Mafual Group International. A PDF version is posted on the Web at: www.research.uvic.ca/research_uvic/uvicprints.htm.

University steps up attack on e-spam mail

Tired of those e-mail messages about inadequate body parts and get-rich-quick schemes? Blocking “spam” can be easier thanks to recent upgrades to UVic’s e-mail filtering system. Instead of having to set up filters yourself, you can now have the university server now do the work for you. “It’s a one-stop deal,” says John Foxgord of computing and system services (CASS). He anticipates the changes will reduce the huge number of unwanted e-mail messages the university receives daily. The university receives up to 450,000 off-campus e-mail messages a day, and almost half of that is spam blocked by our system services (CASS). He adds that if it takes two seconds to delete each spam message, then it collectively takes campus users more than 80 hours a day to delete all 150,000. That adds up to a lot of distraction and frustration.

Three years ago CASS initiated a filtering system that assesses and scores the likelihood of e-mail being spam. By opting-in to these two methods of spam filtering, users can avoid the headache of deleting unsolicited e-mail.

“There’s not one silver bullet for fighting spam,” says Foxgord. “But we’ll continue to add more mechanisms to improve this service.”

To find out more go to: www.uvic.ca/spam or call the help desk at 721-7687 for assistance. Faculty and staff members can attend drop-in sessions in HSD B241 Thurs-days from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. Departments can also contact the education services group to arrange for help.
Warning:
Relying on the Internet for sex and advice may harm your health

by Maria Lironi

Viewing online porn or using the Internet to become sexually aroused, in conjunction with using the Net as a source of sexual information, may harm your offline relationships and your health.

That’s one of the findings from a survey of 760 UVic first-year psychology students.

Dr. Sylvain Boile, a psychologist in UVic counseling services, asked the students—96 per cent of whom were under the age of 25—to participate in the 2002 study by completing an online questionnaire.

The 120-question survey asked respondents how they felt they performed socially, their bonds with family, their sexual practices, and their interest in relationships and sex on the Internet.

The study examined differences in Internet-related problems and psycho-social functioning among four patterns of participation in online sexual information and entertainment activities. The four subgroups were: entertainment seekers, who use the Web to access porn or become sexually aroused; information seekers, who use the Net to access sex information; seekers of both entertainment and information; and students who said they don’t use the Internet for either type of activity.

Respondents who don’t use the Internet for arousal or information about sex were more satisfied and connected with their offline life than other groups. Students who only seek sexual information online had strong offline affiliations. Those who only view porn or sexual sexual arousal online didn’t show signs of being dissatisfied with their offline life either. However, students who use the Net for both types of activities found that their real-life relationships and overall functioning suffered.

“Young adults who overuse the Internet to a degree that limits their participation in real life appear to be at risk of developing sexual and relationship problems,” Boile explains. “This can delay or distort the development of their sense of who they are and their ability to form intimate and satisfying relationships.”

Boile’s study was published in last month’s issue of Cyberpsychology & Behavior, a bimonthly peer-reviewed journal that explores the impact of the Internet, multimedia and virtual reality on behaviour and society.

And the nominees are...
Computing, complexity and the human factor
An interdisciplinary team studies the interplay of technology and human behaviour

by Melissa Doyle

Rapid growth in computing technologies challenges our ability to visualize and navigate large bodies of information. But Dr. Margaret-Anne Storey (computer science) and her team in UVic's computer-human interaction and software engineering lab (CHISEL) are developing tools to help.

Computer programs have become increasingly complex, and even everyday word processors commonly require millions of lines of code to provide instructions for how a program accomplishes its tasks. As users of these programs, we can be dazzled by the range and complexity of their features. And the challenge is even greater for those who create these programs—software engineers who design their structure and programmers who write the code.

Faced with tasks of such astounding complexity, humans must rely on thinking aids to help them understand and mentally “map” the intricate conceptual relationships among large masses of information. As director of CHISEL, Storey leads an interdisciplinary team of researchers and graduate students developing software solutions to help people manipulate large bodies of information and solve complex tasks.

At the heart of their success is an approach that stresses the importance of human factors as well as the technology. “We’re trying to understand the interplay of technology, human behaviour, cognitive ability and social structure,” says Storey. “This enables us to design and improve technologies that will increase the efficiency with which people can access, process and manipulate information.”

Among the current projects, PhD student Ian Bull is working on the development of tools to provide programmers with visual representations of the structure of a program linked to textual views of its code. Another study by PhD student Michifeld Maczewski focuses on how youth are affected socially and psychologically by the culture of technological connectedness fostered by the Internet, cell phones and other technologies. The team is also working on GILD (Groupware-enabled Integrated Learning and Development), a tool to aid in teaching and learning Java, a programming language. In developing GILD, Storey addresses the challenge of teaching students how to program and combines the two aspects of her work that she enjoys the most. “I’m here because I love research and I love to teach. GILD allows me to do both.”

One obstacle to students and instructors when programming courses is the lack of integration of material from lectures, textbooks, overheads, drawing and Web-based tools. In addition to the specific tools and methods of Java programming, “these resources,” says Storey, “are scattered and difficult to update, share, and interconnect with other relevant information.”

GILD reduces this complexity, allowing both parties to interact with course material and assignments, support material and each other without having to switch between resources. “The power of GILD is its ability to smooth the progress of programming and help students and teachers more easily identify potential problem areas,” says Storey. “Information management of any kind is a human activity done by people for the benefit of other people.”

By placing an emphasis on the human factor—the sociology and psychology of human-computer interactions—Storey hopes to continue providing solutions that help us meet the technological challenges and complexities of the future.
Co-op student finds his niche in “adventure law”

by Marni Friesen

Third-year law student Simon Owen’s current co-op job has taken him from the security of UVic’s ivy-towered campus in Victoria, B.C., to the middle of a multicultural downtown that is the antithesis of his home town. Owen describes the part of town he works in as “chaotic and exciting.”

Owen’s job puts him in the midst of a multicultural downtown that is the antithesis of wealthy, security-fenced neighbourhoods in other parts of the city. Owen describes the part of town he works in as “chaotic and exciting.”

Fruit stalls mingle with street-front bars and minibuses. It’s a city sweating out its pride and determination,” he says. “I love it because it rises above and exists in spite of the ever-present fear here. “I guess I’ve never felt less safe, but I’m energized and feel privileged to witness the courage of those struggling to re-create South Africa out of apartheid’s still-smouldering ashes.”

Owen’s job combines field work with behind-the-scenes research. He investigates issues such as how law reform works for women in the post-apartheid country, and the independence of court-martial tribunals. He’s also spent time in poverty-stricken rural areas, investigating complaints of sub-standard school conditions in kwazulu-Natal Province, on the country’s eastern extremities.

“They’re pretty easy to document when kids have no desks, no doors and no roof,” says Owen. “The internship is a chance for Owen to learn more about public interest law, his preferred area of study. It requires him to pull together diverse streams of law practice, looking at pre-and post-apartheid law in South Africa, as well as traditional and international legal frameworks.

“I also get to participate in first-instance rights cases, such as the right to education, which haven’t been directly addressed by the courts before,” he says. “They’re breaking new ground and drawing the first lines on the constitutional map. I get to be much closer to the whole process than I ever could in Canada at this stage in my studies,” he says.

Another useful skill he’s picked up is how to extract his vehicle from a rain-soaked sand road. The secret is to have lots of help. “Half the students and the principal of the remote school we were visiting were helping dig us out,” he says. “Eventually, a Land Rover came by with a winch.”

“Fruit stalls mingle with street-front bars and minibuses. It’s a city sweating out its pride and determination,” he says. “I love it because it rises above and exists in spite of the ever-present fear here.

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“The whole experience showed Pitman what she could do things I never thought I could.”

All my jobs have been sickeningly fun,” she laughs. “I love this field because the job is to help people enjoy themselves.”

Hands-on education at the edge of the Earth

by Marni Friesen

At the age of 57, Marilyn Pitman isn’t your average university student, or your average camp counsellor.

But the ultra-fit fourth-year recreation and health education (RHED) student isn’t interested in being average—or in acting her age.

Last summer, Pitman joined dozens of students from all over the world, including two thumbs from UVic, working as a recreation leader for groups of disabled and disadvantaged children attending summer camps at Atlantic College near Cardiff, Wales.

“It was like being on the edge of the Earth,” says Pitman of the college’s spectacular setting—800-year-old St. Donat’s Castle, perched over the Bristol Channel. Atlantic College is one of 10 United World Colleges around the world, including Victoria’s Pearson College, which evolved from the vision of German educator Karl Hahn. The institution has been a frequent employer of UVic physical education co-op students since the early 70s.

Pitman’s days were spent rock climbing, kayaking, orienteering and even jousting with young summer campers. Many of her co-workers were graduates of the college itself, and came from all corners of the globe.

“I’m a very mature student,” she laughs. “I mean, I was almost three times as old as most of the students I was working with. For me, the job was a big social and physical challenge. But I’ve never been too old for this. You just have to throw yourself in.”

It’s the same attitude that brought Pitman to UVic. When she retired from a career as a microbiology lab technologist, Pitman knew she wanted to turn her passion for fitness into a full-time job.

“I chose to go into the RHED program because of its mandate to co-op programs,” she says. “I knew that with so many experiences available I’d figure out just what I wanted to do.”

Recent co-op terms have seen her working as a personal trainer and as a recreation leader and conversation partner at a local English school. But that first co-op term in Wales made a lasting impression.

“The whole experience showed me that I could do things I never thought I could.”

All my jobs have been sickeningly fun,” she laughs. “I love this field because the job is to help people enjoy themselves.”

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FACING OFF AGAINST AUTISM
Can a computer game help autistic children recognize faces and expressions?

by Shannon McCallum

What’s the first thing you notice when you enter a room? For most of us, it’s people or, more specifically, people’s faces. Individuals with autism, however, are just as likely to first notice a chair, book or painting.

Dr. Jim Tanaka, a UVic cognitive neuroscientist, has developed a computer game that may improve the face-processing abilities of children with autism by jumpstarting the area of the brain that recognizes faces.

“Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) seem to have deficits in processing faces—not only with recognizing to whom the face belongs, but also with the emotional expression of a face,” explains Tanaka, whose research focuses on the perceptual processes involved in expert object recognition. This face-processing problem may explain why these children seem to have deficits in their social and emotional abilities.

To develop “face expertise” in children with autism, Tanaka has developed the Let’s Face It! computer program. The research is a collaborative project with the Yale Child Study Centre, funded by a $2-million five-year grant from the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

One of Tanaka’s goals is to confirm whether children with ASD really do have deficits in face processing. “We’re trying to understand how the cognitive and neurological processes of children with ASD differ from those of non-ASD children,” he says.

A second goal is to find out whether using Let’s Face It! in an intensive intervention program can teach children with ASD to become experts at recognizing faces and whether face training produces changes in brain activity.

The program is a series of games that involve distinguishing faces from other everyday objects, attaching labels to facial expressions and interpreting the meaning of facial cues in a social context. Since the speed and accuracy of the responses are recorded by the program, it’s possible to identify the tasks with which the child has difficulty. The games increase in difficulty with each successful completion of a level, enabling the children to sharpen their face-processing skills.

But the work doesn’t end when the computer is turned off. “We know that children with ASD are pretty good with computers, but it’s important for them to have one-on-one interaction with people, as well, since that’s what they tend to have problems with,” says Tanaka.

So, enter “face tutors,” who work individually with the kids using lessons tailored for each child’s specific needs. Face tutors help the children build on their face-processing skills by performing activities similar to those in the games, but in a more realistic and demanding social setting.

Assisting in the project are two grads of Oberlin College in Ohio, Dave Swanson and Martha Kaisser, who came to Victoria to continue working on the project with Tanaka when he left Oberlin to join UVic’s psychology department this year. Such dedication is what Tanaka means when he refers to this project as a “labour of love.”

“In my other lifetime, I was a teacher pursuing a master’s degree in special education, so I’ve kind of come full circle. While we’re excited about the scientific questions that the research raises, we’re equally motivated by the benefits that the project might produce for children with autism.”

This article was written by Shannon McCallum, a student in the faculty of graduate studies, as a participant in the UVic SPARK program (Students Promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge), supported by the vice president academic and provost and the vice president research.

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POLIS report...continued from p.1

In many cases, conservation is the next best and cheapest source of “new” water for Canadian cities.

is increasingly expensive and environmentally unsustainable. The report provides a blueprint for federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments to take action through demand management to protect the future of Canadian fresh water resources.

“Conservation and demand management can no longer be seen as an emergency response to drought,” says Oliver Brandes, research associate and co-author of the report with Keith Ferguson.

“Other industrialized countries have used demand management measures such as water-efficient fixtures, leak repair, public education and incentives to reduce water use, without affecting quality of life for end users. Simply put, using less water does not lower quality of life.”

While provinces and territories are the primary regulators and administrators of freshwater use, regional and municipal authorities set prices, deliver the water and treat the resulting wastewater. M’Gonigle says federal and provincial governments can play a critical role in achieving long-term water sustainability through linking infrastructure grants to conservation, ensuring sufficient capacities for demand management exist at local levels, and making sure sufficient data and research exist to guide local decision-makers.

The Future in Every Drop report is available online at www.water.org.

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**Engineering outreach program awarded $10,000 grant**

Go WEST, a high school outreach program run by UVic engineers, students, has been awarded $10,000 from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council’s annual PromoScience competition.

The Go WEST team seeks to break down the barriers and misconceptions that prevent students from pursuing careers in engineering and technology. The NSERC funds will allow Go WEST to reach more than 3,000 students on Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, Sunshine Coast and the Lower Mainland.

"Giving high school students the chance to see if engineering interests them is what Go WEST is all about," says program director Jill Nishida. "Many students, especially girls, don’t find out about engineering in high school. When I was in Grades 10 and 11 I had no idea what engineering was. Now I’m graduating from UVic’s faculty of engineering next year.”

The NSERC funds will also go toward Go WEST summer camps. The camps are designed to immerse secondary students—Grades 9 through 12—in all aspects of engineering, from campus life and course offerings to industry tours and discussions with engineers, scientists, professors, and current students. Participants take part in activities and workshops that involve problem-solving and design. For more information go to www.gowest.uvic.ca or call 721-8983.

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**RING PUBLICATION SCHEDULE**

**SPRING-SUMMER 2004**

Calendar items should be sent to Uvic communications (Kedwick 149, fax 721-8495), e-mail ucom@uvic.ca or entered into the online calendar: uvic.ca/events by no later than 4 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to the week of publication. Calendar items are printed in The Ring on a space-available basis with priority given to academic events of broad appeal. For more information call 721-7636.

**PUBLICATION DATE**

May 2

**COPY DEADLINE**

June 3

July 8

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**Events free unless otherwise indicated. For a complete list of events, see www.uvic.ca/events**

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**At the Galleries**

www.maltwood.uvic.ca


**Sunday, May 9**

UVic Finnerty Gardens Tour and Tea 1–4 p.m. Free guided tours of UVic Finnerty Gardens. Tours begin at the entrance near the Interfaith Chapel. 721-7014 or www.me.uvic.ca/meggc.

**Tuesday, May 18**

Mechanical Engineering Graduate Research Colloquium 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Students describe their research in 15-minute presentations and/or display their posters. Cadboro Commons, McKenzie Sinclair room. 721-6089 or www.maltwood.uvic.ca/ART.

**Wednesday, May 19**

Continuing Studies Lecture 7 p.m. Linking Community Business and Government: A Case Study in Systems Development from Australia. Dr. Steve Benson, Edith Cowan University, Australia. Clearihue A311. 721-6039 or www.me.uvic.ca/meggc.
Campus teams are already forming to participate in Bike to Work Week 2004 from June 7 to 13. Last year UVic had a record number of faculty and staff cycle to work and Bike to Work Week organizers hope for an even bigger turnout this year.

This year, as an incentive to get even more employees trying out commuter cycling, UVic facilities management will award all campus participants an individual prize.

"Cycling is a great way to get exercise and reduce your impact on our local environment," says UVic's interim sustainability coordinator Sarah Webb, organizer for this year's Bike to Work Week events at UVic.

"The support stations, cycling clinics and special events provide the chance for you to learn new skills and improve your confidence on the road."

Webb has kits available for those who are acting as team captains. Participants who want to join an existing team or start a new one can contact Webb at 472-5011 or sarahwebb@fmgt.uvic.ca.

"Cyclists are reminded to take advantage of the amenities on campus, such as showers, bike lockers and covered bike racks," says Webb. "There are also a number of designated safe bike routes to campus that are perfect for new riders."

Participants can find more information about Bike to Work Week and can register their team or themselves online at www.biketoworkvictoria.ca.

It’s time to sign up for Bike to Work Week 2004

Wendy Gedney, a teacher at Gordon Head Elementary School and a tireless supporter of the university, has been named the first recipient of the UVic Alumni Association's Volunteer Appreciation Award.

Gedney's list of volunteer activities reads like a curriculum vitae. Since 1970 she's been teaching and raising a family, but when she finished her education degree in 1983 she jumped into volunteering for UVic's Alumni Association. She served several terms as board member and president while sitting on numerous committees.

"I'm very honoured," says Gedney. "I feel so strongly about the university and the Alumni Association that we brought our grandchildren to UVic's 100th anniversary open house."

Gedney was instrumental in establishing the Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Distinguished Alumni Award, the Howard and Linda Petch Scholarship in Education and for granting, on behalf of the association, $250,000 in capital funds to UVic's centre for global studies and student residences.

Gedney’s work doesn’t stop there: Her interests and passions touch all areas of the association. She helped create the history and archive committee and was key in getting Peter Smith’s book, A Multitude of the Wise: UVic Remembered, published. Thanks to Gedney, graduating students now receive an alumni pin, a small but meaningful token of membership into the association.

The award will be presented to Gedney at the UVic Alumni Association's annual general meeting at the University Club on June 8. The meeting is open to all alumni.