University seeks your views on its future

The University of Victoria’s planning and priorities committee is leading a process to review and renew the university’s strategic plan, *A Vision for the Future*. The process includes seeking advice and feedback from the university community—students, faculty, staff, alumni and others—by Feb. 28.

Two key documents—the “University of Victoria Strategic Issues Discussion Paper” and the “Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan”—were published in the November 2005 *Ring*. This is a reminder that stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in planning the future direction of UVic via written feedback and consultation meetings.

Visit uvic.ca/strategicreview to see the January/February consultation schedule for campus groups, download the relevant documents and submit written feedback.

Alcohol is nation’s favourite and most dangerous drug—report

by Maria Lironi

If you drink alcohol, you may be putting your health at risk, says a recent report by UVic’s Centre for Addictions Research BC (CARBC).

“There’s no doubt that alcohol is Canada’s favourite drug,” says CARBC director Dr. Tim Sneddon, who co-authored the report. "Illicit drugs get more headlines but alcohol causes more harm in terms of premature deaths, and health, social and economic costs.”

The report, titled “Patterns of Risky Alcohol Use in British Columbia and Canada: Results of the 2004 Canadian Addictions Survey,” compared drinking patterns in B.C. and Canada against guidelines for low-risk alcohol consumption using the 2004 Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS).

The results suggest that most alcohol consumed in B.C. and Canada puts the health and safety of drinkers at risk. Seventy-three per cent of all reported alcohol consumption is consumed at levels above the Canadian low-risk drinking guidelines.

As well, 40 per cent of British Columbians at least occasionally drink above low-risk levels and put themselves and others at risk of short-term harm. More than 90 per cent of alcohol consumed by young males in low-risk drinking guidelines.

Low-risk drinking guidelines offer people a way to understand when the risks to health and safety become significant. As defined by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Ontario, they are 14 or fewer standard drinks per week for men and nine or fewer for women with no more than two on any one day. Standard drinks refer to one small bottle of beer, a medium-sized glass of wine, or a measure of spirits—all of which contain roughly the same alcohol.

The report also reveals that most people do not consistently drink in a way that puts themselves at increased risk of cancer, liver disease and other chronic illnesses. However, a substantial number of drinkers put themselves at risk of acute harm through occasional bouts of excess.

According to a recent report by the University of Victoria seeks your views on its future

First Nations pole is focus of unusual education course

by Patty Pitts

When Songhees carver Butch Dick carefully lifts the protective wrap from the partially carved log in the MacLaurin Building’s Wilford John Gallery, the aroma of cedar fills the area. A paper note left on the carving is thoroughly dampened from the moisture still escaping the log, months after it was cut in the forest.

Students approach the log with respect and a bit of reverence, as if it’s still a living thing. They’re reminded it’s “the old man” and it’s the focus of a unique course that is transforming both the wood and the students who come in contact with it.

The “Protection and Welcoming Pole” course—EDU 487/591—uses the pole to engage students in education and other fields in learning about aboriginal culture. The students were divided into teams to take their turns carving the pole and document the pole’s and their progress on a website, a video, through educational materials, and ceremonies.

Throughout the process the students heard traditional songs and stories and learned through traditional indigenous methods, sometimes at a pace unlike their regular classes.

“It’s a different approach,” says education PhD student Joe Karmel. “Here, we’re always emphasizing slowing down. It’s also an examination of how we look at time.”

Val Wisdom, a fifth-year education student and Komoks from Port Hardy, calls the course “a totally different approach to education. It takes us beyond what we had thought teaching and learning was. This is what we should strive for as a good teacher. We should teach for all levels of intelligence.”

While the students used traditional methods (rolling the pole on the grass) to maneuver the piece of cedar into MacLaurin, they’re harnessing the latest technology to tell the subsequent stories of its transformation.

Videos and other updates are posted to polecarvers.libsyn.com where team leader Dr. Ted Rieden posts weekly podcasts about the project.

As a thunderbird, whale and wolves emerged from the fragrant wood under the watchful eye of Dick, a seasonal instructor and mentor to assistant carver Fabian Quackister, the students underwent a similar change.
The University of Victoria is putting the pedal to the metal for 2006 with a new communications vehicle to help researchers communicate their leadership position in a wide range of fields.

It’s a suite of print and electronic materials built around a new, central theme for UVic research—“We’re going places.” The materials use high-

way imagery to capture the sense of moving forward and reaching critical destinations such as Discovery, Innovation, Partnerships, Knowledge Transfer, and The Leading Edge. "We’re going places" is a metaphor that works on many different levels,” says Dr. Martin Taylor, vice president research. “It’s a proud and confident statement of UVic’s institutional commitment to research excellence and acknowledges the university’s growing reputation as a research powerhouse.”

The theme connects research communications initiatives with the broader campus to strategically position UVic with its key external audiences. The materials echo the distinct UVic “look” that is emerging from the institutional strategic communications planning process.

The first set of materials off the production line includes a 5.5 x 11-inch pocket folder and an extendable deck of cards that focuses on research in eight areas of institutional strength—computational modelling and information processing; fine and performing arts, genomics and proteomics; global change and sustainability; indigenous and cultural studies; matter and energy; oceans and climate; and society and health.

The concept is expandable and adaptable. New areas and more cards can be added, and the imagery can be adapted to fit the peculiarities of other disciplines. For example, a navigation buoy is the iconic image for a new ocean research prioritization folder.

The folders, card and concept are available to any UVic department, school or centre that wants to publicize its own research activities. New cards can be within the areas listed above or in others that are more in line with the strengths and specializations of the unit. Communications services will manage the production process, in consultation with the initiating unit and the office of the vice president research.

For more information on how you can produce a research communications card or set of cards for your unit or research area, download your “Driver’s Manual” online at www.uvic.ca/research/communications/toolkit.html or contact Valerie Shore (research communications officer) at vshore@uvic.ca or 721-7641.

The University of Victoria

Education pole continued from p.1

“There’s a transformation of each participant … and the transformation of our teaching methods,” adds Dick, who taught First Nations art and culture for 20 years in the Greater Victoria school district.

“Dick, who taught First Nations art and culture for 20 years in the Greater Victoria school district, is pleased with the transformations that are taking place on the pole and with the students. “We want to get away from the stereotypes and generalizations of First Nations people,” he says. “The kids [in school] didn’t realize that First Nations people even existed today. They’re only seen them in museums and think we’re all behind plexiglass. They think we all speak the same language and all have the same culture.”

Dick is pleased that the house pole will reflect the Lickwillhut (Nuu-chah-nulth) and Songhees (south island) styles. When finished, it will be installed in the MacLaurin Building to be a lasting First Nations presence and contribute to a more welcoming atmosphere for First Nations students.

“vice president to step down this fall

Jack Falk, vice president finance and operations, announced last month that he intends to step down from his position in September 2006. “Since coming to UVic in 1999, Jack has served the university exceptionally well, providing leadership in a broad range of areas,” says UVic President Dr. David Turpin. “His dedication and commitment will be missed by us all!”

In announcing his intention to step down, Falk expressed his gratitude to the university community for the opportunity to serve in his position “for these exciting years at UVic.” Turpin added that Falk is open to being involved with UVic in the future and that he will continue to work to accomplish several projects over the coming months. The university will have an opportunity to formally thank Falk and to celebrate his contributions to UVic later in the year. The search for a new vice president finance and operations will be initiated this month.
Green economics
A UVic economist proves there’s more to saving the environment than science

Cornelis “Case” van Kooten may seem like a fish out of water. He’s the Canada Research Chair in Environmental Studies and Climate Change and he’s housed in UVic’s department of economics.

“It might seem a little odd,” he says, “but in fact the two seemingly disparate fields of climate and economics go hand in hand. To study climate change and natural resources, you have to look at economics at the same time.”

Van Kooten is widely recognized as a leader in devising effective economic measures for analysing various aspects of the environment. He approaches natural resource issues from many angles. One of his research projects looks at the cost of using terrestrial “carbon sinks” to lessen climate change.

Increased tree growth and better agricultural practices create what scientists call carbon sinks. As the build-up of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere leads to a build-up of greenhouse gases, carbon sinks help by sucking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and reversing the effects of greenhouse gas buildup.

His studies have looked at the cost of tree-planting programs. “One idea is to encourage farmers to plant more trees rather than agricultural crops,” he says. “We’re looking at the cost of doing that, versus getting someone out of their SUV and into a smaller car. Interestingly, it turns out that getting them into a smaller car is much cheaper than trying to plant trees.”

He has also examined the use of zero tillage, the practice of not plowing crops into storable after farmers harvest their fields. “When you plow a field, it’s more susceptible to decay, and decay releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere,” van Kooten explains.

van Kooten looks at the big economic picture when it comes to climate change. “Scientists have to ask, do you moderate climate change, or do you just let it go and then adapt to it?” he says. “You can adapt by planting more drought-resistant crops, and in places where sea-level rise is causing engineers to build dykes.”

In another branch of his research, van Kooten is studying invasive species, specifically a California plant called the yellow star thistle. “It’s actually quite pretty,” he says, “but it sucks up the moisture on dry rangelands, cows don’t like it, and it can kill horses if they eat it.”

Like Canada’s broom, the thistle came to North America in the 1890s and has expanded its range ever since. It now covers about half of California and van Kooten is researching how to control it. “There are different methods you can use, but remember, we’re trying to control it from an economic perspective.”

Options include chemicals, fire, and integrated pest management. The Canadian Forest Service is interested in the project, he notes. “We’ve been looking at the economics of using a particular kind of fly that lays its eggs in the seed head and then about 80 per cent of the seeds die.”

van Kooten also studies the economic value of wildlife. “If we want to know what grizzly bears are worth, for example, how do we determine that? Nobody trades them, nobody buys them, there’s some hunting of them, but that’s not their true value to society,” he says.

As an economist, van Kooten wants a framework for valuing wild life such as bears and is working to refine an existing technique called the “contingent valuation method.”

“We propose a program in a questionnaire and then ask people what they’re willing to pay for that program,” he says. “Given the right questions and respondents, you can know what people are willing to pay for elephants in Africa, or for whales in the North Atlantic.”

Other wildlife projects include the economic impact on sage grouse of grazing cattle on public land, and whether trade in ivory is legal or bad for conserving African elephants.

In the future, van Kooten will be looking at energy sources as they relate to land use and water supplies to generate economically viable power.

“Economists are usually more theoretical,” he says. “I’m trying to relate economics to application, not theory.”

Hang on to that apple core, don’t trash that trails and save that banana peel from slipping into the garbage can—a new consumer composting program is being launched on campus beginning this month.

For the past two years, UVic has been composting all food wastes from its restaurants and food outlets on campus. Now the program is being expanded to allow students, faculty and staff to drop food leftovers and “compost-ables” into special green totes located at three centralized recycling stations on campus beside the Student Union Building; beside the fountain (next to Clearwater B-wing); and in the quadrangle across from Croom.

In addition, offices or departments wanting a mini compost bin in their lunchroom can do so if they have a “compost champion”—a volunteer who will commit to educating colleagues and bringing their full biodegradable Baggies of compost to the centralized stations.

About 15 campus departments or units have already committed to becoming “compost-ments.”

“We’re helping to reduce our impact on the local environment,” says UVic sustainability co-ordinator Sarah Webb, who is in charge of the program. “By composting food wastes we can save space in the Harland landfill and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

To date, over 300 metric tonnes of waste have been diverted from Harland with the existing program. Organizers hope that the composting expansion will result in an additional 70 to 100 tonnes of waste saved from the landfill each year.

“Compost-ables” include leftovers from meals such as fruit and vegetable peelings, paper napkins, plates or cups, cardboard stirrers or choppsticks, coffee grounds and filters and tea bags.

To become a “compost champion” or for more information, contact Webb at 472-5011 or sarawebb@pacific.net.ca.

Campus goes “compost ments”

The Spring 2006 Continuing Studies Calendar is available on campus. Drop by the Continuing Studies Building, corner of Ring Road and Gabriola Road, or find it on the Web at www.continuingstudies.uvic.ca.

Join us for courses in the arts, humanities, business, computing, culture and heritage, dispute resolution, health and wellness, history, issues, ideas, languages, law, nature and the environment, public relations, teaching, science, and travel study.

Non-credit courses and certificate/diploma study—there’s something for everyone!

Meet new people, pursue professional development opportunities, enhance your career qualifications, or just have fun with lifelong learning.

Some courses start in January so REGISTER EARLY!

Register online or call 472-4747

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Looking to re-energize your course curriculum?

by Robie Liscomb

When the school of child and youth care faced the task of designing curriculum for their new doctoral program, they found help in the form of the popular course redesign workshop offered by the learning and teaching centre.

And they’re not alone. More than 100 instructors from all faculties seeking to create new courses or rethink existing ones have participated in the workshops.

“The workshops are all about the quality of our academic programs,” says centre director Dr. Geri Van Gyn. “They provide the structure, environment and support for instructors to examine their courses systematically and plan for achieving specific results.”

A special version of the course redesign workshop has concentrated on integrating a global perspective into courses and has attracted national attention for its potential to contribute to universities’ plans for internationalization.

Three faculty members from child and youth care took part in the workshop while developing the foundational and research methodology courses for their PhD program.

“By the end of the workshop, we had defined the course objectives and developed the course outlines, assessments and criteria for grading,” says Dr. Carrie Hoskins, one of the participants.

The workshop was helpful, says Hoskins, as a way of enabling faculty to focus their time and commitment to curriculum development—something that can be difficult without such a formal structure.

She also stresses the value of the collaborative nature of the exercise.

“We learned a lot from the other participants. They asked some really hard questions, which stimulated our thinking, and we borrowed some of their ideas.”

Another important factor was the excitement about teaching generated by Geri Van Gyn as facilitator,” says Hoskins. “Not only did she lead the process very effectively, she also served as an excellent model for our own teaching.”

Faculty members interested in participating in the 2006 spring course redesign workshop are encouraged to contact the learning and teaching centre at trec@uvic.ca or 721-8571.
President’s Distinguished Service Awards

Eleven people from several departments came together to help students make the transition from newbie to grad by forming the Student Transition Centre (see team member names in column at right).

For UVic students who aren’t sure who to ask, the centre provides information and programs for UVic students to help their transition into the university and beyond.

“There’s no question in my mind that this group provides an invaluable service not just to students but to the entire campus community,” says graduate studies dean Dr. Ann Devos. “Students who have had an effective orientation are better at their studies, require fewer remedial services from staff, and are able to make more significant contributions to campus life.”

“Sue Corner and her team are creating a model of collaboration at UVic that fosters leadership and community, promotes social responsibility, positive values and sensitivity to diversity and creates invaluable connections between students, staff and faculty,” says David Clode, executive director of student and ancillary services.

The centre is located in the SUB, room B010 and its drop-in hours are Monday to Friday, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. For more information visit web. uvic.ca/transi-
tion/.

Award winners continued from p.1

The team award goes to the student transition centre team, led by Sue Corner (student affairs). The core team members are Devin Arnold (student affairs), Tia Robertson (international and exchange student services), Anna Stein (resource centre for students with a disability), Sonya Chandler (family contrace
tion), Allison Gain (student transition centre), Linda Nicoll (alumni services), Jennifer Murgison (career services), Tri-\nticia Best and Rita Knodel (counselling services), and Bruno Rocca (student recruitment).

Described by his colleagues as the “consummate educator and humanist,” Yousuf Ebrahim has been a senior laboratory instructor in the biology department since 1974. He’ll be retiring in 2006. However, during a time when many others might be content to coast or wind down, Ebrahim has been progressively elevating his efforts to enrich the education of undergraduates.

His contributions include: organizing and participating in field trips to the Bamfield Marine Science Centre; designing and teaching a popular continuing studies course that explores marine biology from a global perspective; spearheading the Malaysian Field School where UVic students spend six weeks learning about tropical biodiversity and field ecology; and acting as an undergraduate advisor in the biology department.

Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre’s public education co-
ordinator Anne Stewart was an undergraduate when she first met Ebrahim 30 years ago. “Like everyone else in the class I was inspired and intrigued by Yousuf’s knowledge and ways of teaching,” she recalls. “I was inspired through my contact with Yousuf to continue in marine studies. Now as a member of the centre’s staff I, in turn, reach thousands of students each year. The ripple effect that Yousuf creates contin-
ues.”

“Yousuf’s passion for all things biological and his dedication to teaching are highly appreciated by both his students and the faculty,” adds science dean Dr. Tom Fyles. “It’s a pleasure to have these qualities rec-
ognized by the university through this award.”

Rosemary Pulez is an ad-
ministrative officer in the chemistry department. As part of the department’s 40th anniversary in 2003, she organized a reunion of chemistry graduates. One of the first challenges was to develop contacts with chemistry alumni, and she conceived the idea of the Elements newsletter for chemistry grads.

Pulez developed content ideas, found contributors, assembled the newsletters and oversaw production and distribution. It’s a role she continues to take as Elements currently reaches more than 700 chemistry alumni.

Her boundless energy and command of organiza-
tional details also made the reunion a “stunning success.” In the midst of the reunion, the faculty of science held its very successful open house. Again Pulez played a central role in the planning and implementation of this com-

munity event.

“Rosemary’s activities these past few years have done more to strengthen our ties to our people and community than at any other time I can recall in 55 years of association with this department,” says Dr. Tom Fyles, chemistry chair. “Her dedication, energy and commitment produced the conditions to allow us to discover this for ourselves. It’s a remarkable achievement.”

“Rosemary is integrally responsible for maintaining and enhancing the sense of community within the chemistry department,” adds graduate student Bry-
an Koivisto. “This sense of community has improved the quality of life and level of education within the department.”

The Ring January 2006 Page 5
Alumnus makes $100,000 gift for science scholarships

by Chris Thackray

A UVic grad who reached the highest echelons of the oil and gas industry is giving back to the place that gave him his start.

Richard Flury, a UVic alumnus and former chief executive of oil industry giant BP (British Petroleum) has donated $100,000 to the faculty of science. Flury graduated in 1970 with a degree in physics and made the donation to provide scholarships for university transfer students entering their third year in the faculty of science.

"Richard's gift is a wonderful vote of confidence in UVic and in the kind of educational experience we're delivering," says Dr. Tom Pedersen, dean of science. "We're deeply grateful for his generosity toward our students."

The recipient of the UVic Alumni Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award at this year’s Legacy Awards, Flury is one of a small number of Canadians to reach great heights on the international business stage. As head of the largest business segment at BP, Flury had responsibility for worldwide gas marketing, trading and renewable businesses.

He had served for 28 years with Amoco before its 1998 merger with BP and held various leadership roles in Amoco’s activities in 100 countries around the world. He retired from BP in 2001 and maintains an active interest in the future of the faculty of science.

Flury’s career took him all over the globe and he feels his education at UVic prepared him well. "The value in a physics degree is that it teaches you to solve complex problems," he says. "It teaches you to look at the variables, bring them together and look for alternate solutions. Business problems aren’t really all that different."

UVic’s quest for excellence places it among the very best universities, he says. "I can’t think of any place better. I’ve had the international experience, I’ve lived all over North America, and it’s helped me appreciate what I had here."

If you know a student who shines both in and out of the classroom why not consider nominating her or him for a 2006 University of Victoria Blue and Gold Award?

The program was established to recognize undergraduate and graduate students who make significant contributions to the quality of life on campus and in the community. These students might demonstrate leadership in a volunteer role with community groups, through participating or coaching athletics or being involved with arts groups or organizations.

Two levels of Blue and Gold Awards will be presented this year—three awards worth $2,500 each and five awards worth $1,000 each. Award recipients will be recognized at a reception in the spring where they’ll receive their awards and certificates.

To be eligible, undergraduate students must carry a minimum of nine units in the year in which they are nominated and must normally have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 5.0. Graduate students must be enrolled on a full-time basis and have a cumulative GPA of 5.0. The nominees’ GPA will be taken into consideration by the selection committee.

All nominations and supporting documentation should be mailed by March 9 to the Blue and Gold Awards Program, c/o Student Awards and Financial Aid, P.O. Box 3025, STN CSC, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3P2.

Nomination packages are available through the student awards and financial aid office in the University Centre or online at registrar.uvic.ca/safa.

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Flury

Business problems aren’t really all that different.”

UVic’s quest for excellence places it among the very best universities, he says. “I can’t think of any place better. I’ve had the international experience, I’ve lived all over North America, and it’s helped me appreciate what I had here.”
Calendar highlights

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

At the Galleries
www.malwood.uvic.ca 721-6951
Art Education Faculty Exhibit Jan. 10–Feb. 1. Recent artwork by art educators in UVic’s faculty of education.
McPerson Library Gallery.
Camosun College Visual Arts Faculty Exhibit Jan. 16–Feb. 21. A group exhibition featuring the works of current visual arts faculty and technical staff at Camosun.
Malwood Art Museum & Gallery.

At the Theatres
www.pentheaterarts.ca or 721-8000
Old Trench Puppet Workshop presents Famous Puppet Death Scenes Jan. 3–Feb. 4. A new production by the theatre company known for its wildly inventive puppetry for adult audiences.

Friday, January 6
Music 12:30 p.m. Fridytastic. School of music students in a program for various instruments. MacLaurin B125. 721-7904

Tuesday, January 12

Thursday, January 17
Linguistics and the Division of Continuing Studies Lecture 6:30 p.m. The Role of the Practicum Teacher and the Supervisor. Shari Corbin, Uvic. Clearihue A206. 721-7424

Friday, January 20
Music 12:30 p.m. Fridytastic. School of music brass students. MacLaurin B125. 721-7904

Geography Lecture 3 p.m. Decooling Geographies: Digital Media, Reparation, and Language Reini- tiation in Northern Athabaskan Communities. Kate Hennessy, UBC. Sponsored by the departments of anthropology, geography and linguistics. Strong C108. 721-7159

Tuesday, January 24
Landsdowne Lecture 3:30 p.m. Plagued by Numbers: The Mathemat- ics of Disease. Mark Lewis, Univ. of Alberta. Clearihue A227. 721-7436

Linguistics and the Division of Continuing Studies Lecture 6:30 p.m. Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Teaching Students How to Improve Their Vocabulary. Veronica Armstrong, Uvic. Clearihue A206. 721-7424

Continuing Studies Lecture 7:30 p.m. New Hardy Plant Discoveries in Victoria and Lille, France. Paul Gild, which helps novice program- mers learn how to program. Storey is being recognized for her work promoting Eclipse, an open- source framework for building software tools. One of these tools is Gild, which helps novice program- mers learn how to program. Storey developed it, and it’s currently being used in several universities around the world. “A lot of the work I’ve done in the community has been to promote Eclipse for use in education and re- search,” she says. She has organized sev- eral workshops across Canada and the U.S. to promote Gild and Eclipse.

Wednesday, January 26
Public Administration Lecture 4 p.m. New Forces Bearing on Cities: Victoria and Lille, France. Dr. Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, UVic. Strong C112. 721-8056

Friday, January 27
Music 12:30 p.m. Fridytastic. School of music voice students. MacLaurin B125. 721-7904

Tuesday, January 31
Linguistics and the Division of Continuing Studies Lecture 6:30 p.m. Drama for Intercultural Interaction and Language Sharing. Cam Callum, UVic. Clearihue A206. 721-7424

By the time the United Way wrapped up its UVic campaign last month, the campus community had raised $203,513.95, or 92.5 per cent of the $220,000 target.

“The campaign went very well and the scientists worked very hard,” says UVic campus campaign chair Dr. Ron Skelton. “The fund- raising events would not have hap- pened without the help of many, many people.”

Skelton reports that there were a lot more individual student donors this year, due in part to online dona- tions. Individual student donations totalled $2,000.

Although pledge numbers were down from last year, their generosity wasn’t. Donations per donor rose by about 10 per cent to $385, he says.

“We realized that contacting someone by e-mail is not the same as getting in touch with them in person,” says Skelton of this year’s electronic campaigning. “I’m really proud of the UVic community’s ability to contribute more than $200,000 to the social well-being of Greater Victoria.”

Computer scientist wins IBM award

Dr. Margaret-Anne (Pagg) Storey’s work with IBM’s Centers for Ad- vanced Studies (CAS) has netted her the organization’s inaugural Faculty Fellow of the Year award.

Storey, who is currently on sab- batical from UVic’s department of computer science, is dividing her time between four of IBM’s CAS labs—two in Canada, one in the U.S. and one in Ireland. She also plans to work with the new CAS lab in Victoria.

The award is given to a professor who has had a positive impact in academia on the goals and reputa- tion of IBM and CAS. In particular, Storey is being recognized for her work promoting Eclipse, an open- source framework for building software tools. One of these tools is Gild, which helps novice program- mers learn how to program. Storey developed it, and it’s currently being used in several universities around the world.

“A lot of the work I’ve done in the community has been to promote Eclipse for use in education and re- search,” she says. She has organized sev- eral workshops across Canada and the U.S. to promote Gild and Eclipse.

Another project Storey is in- volved in with IBM is a visualization toolkit known as Zest. “The tools that IBM builds are very complex,” she says, “and visualization helps with human understanding of the technology.”

Because computer programs are very complicated, programmers must rely on thinking aids to help them understand and mentally “map” the intricate conceptual relationships in large masses of information.

Storey is also working with the National Centre for Biomedical Ontologies. Ontology in computer science is a way of documenting knowledge that is machine-read- able and also understandable by humans—in this case, knowledge about biology and medicine.

“Our role is to develop visualiza- tion tools for biologists and clini- cians, so they can more biological and clinical trial data,” she says.

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UVIC BOOKSTORE
Happy 2006! Wait, not so fast. Should bodies such as planets and stars—ties mechanics—the motion of celestial cian, but his research in celestial history is unusual for a mathemati—wanted to understand why.”

stood as we’re taught in school, and I from ironclad. It’s not as well under—of ancient and medieval times is far deeper into the subject and began to historical chronology,” he says. “I went from people who have read the book. Some people come out of it thinking that those who challenge traditional chronology are right, and others think the opposite.”

Diacu takes great pains to remain objective and reticents that he does not necessarily agree with Fomenko.

“When I did my research, I was sometimes more on one side and sometimes more on the other side. In the end, I realized we don’t really know. I’ve had very different reactions from people who have read the book. Another event is the crucifixion of Christ as described in the Bible. The New Testament describes darkness over the Earth that lasted about three hours. Yet an eclipse that took place on AD April 3, 33, the traditionally accepted date of the crucifixion, lasted only a few minutes.

As with the Peloponnesian War, there is a finite number of possible solutions, says Diacu. Russian mathematician Nikolai Morozov pointed out a lengthy lunar eclipse in 368 AD that matched the one in the Bible. And Fomenko found another eclipse that matched the biblical criteria in all ways but dura—. It occurred AD April 3, 1075. There’s quite a controversy today about whether the Bible is truth or fiction or a combination of both,” says Diacu. “Personally, I don’t think that Christ is a good chronological figure because his life, whether he existed or not, is so tainted in legend. There are other events that have more chronological significance.”

Diacu admits that an interest in these theories was rekindled years later when he read an article in Saturday Night about Russian mathematicians who believed that 2800 AD was actually 936 AD.

“When I first heard about a Russian scholar’s research in historical chronol—Anastasi Fomenko proposed that the Middle Ages were either much shorter than traditionally thought, or nearly non-existent. He also theorized that ancient and medieval dynasties actually overlapped, instead of being successive.

Diacu’s interest in these theories was rekindled years later when he read an article in Saturday Night about Russian mathematicians who believed that 2800 AD was actually 936 AD.

“I read to read Fomenko’s words and discovered he was not the only one who challenged the existing historical chronology,” he says. “I went deeper into the subject and began to realize that the historical chronology of ancient and medieval times is far from ironclad. It’s not as well understood as we’re taught in school, and I wanted to understand why.”

Diacu admits that an interest in history is unusual for a mathematician, but his research in celestial mechanics—the motion of celestial bodies such as planets and stars—ties the two together. “If you look at planets today you can see where they were in the past. We can tell their movements with good accuracy for about 20 million years in the past and the future.”

In his new book, The Lost Millen—ium, Diacu looks at how historical chronology came into being. “I ex—amine how people in the past looked at calendars and how they fix some basic events in history. If you have a document that tells you where the planets were at that point in time, you can date almost to the day when that configuration took place.”

For example, there’s Thucydides’ account of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta—one of few events in ancient Greek history that can be given a precise date. “Thucydides describes three eclipses and how much time passed from one to the other,” says Diacu. “There are few possible solutions using celestial mechanics. 431 BC is the traditional date for the start of the war, but Fomenko has two other solutions: one in the 11th century AD, and one in the 12th.”

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“When I did my research, I was sometimes more on one side and sometimes more on the other side. In the end, I realized we don’t really know. I’ve had very different reactions from people who have read the book. Some people come out of it thinking that those who challenge traditional chronology are right, and others think the opposite.”

Diacu maintains that, given enough research, we could eventu—ally know the truth. “I don’t have the final answer. I tried to write the book such that you can decide for yourself what the answer is. But I know that if we do the right research, we could determine chronology to an accuracy of within 100 or 200 years.”

The Lost Millennium (Knopf) is available at the UVic Bookstore for $35.

Your expired bus passes can benefit needy families

Don’t throw out that expired monthly bus pass. Instead, consider taking it to campus security. BC Transit has a program that allows transit monthly pass users to trade their expired passes for one free admission at a recreation centre, and campus security will be collecting expired passes to give to the family resource centre on campus. “I thought it would be a great idea to collect these expired passes to give students with families a break,” says Pat Shade, an office clerk with campus security. Simply drop your expired monthly pass off at campus security and the passes will be forwarded to the family centre.

Student numbers are up

The University of Victoria’s student enrolment climbed to nearly 19,000 this fall, with the Nov. 1 headcount reaching 18,906 students (16,483 undergraduate students and 2,423 graduate students). That total breaks down to 10,757 full time and 7,256 part-time undergraduate and 2,003 part-time graduate students. In terms of full time equivalent (FTE) students, UVic enrolled 11,861 undergraduate students and 2,027 graduate students. Last year, headcount enrolment was 18,320 graduate and undergraduate students.

Write through the night

Famous French film 1946, The third annual French Writing Marathon is for you. Francophones and francophiles across campus will gather on Jan. 13 to write creatively in a variety of styles for 24 hours. The marathon is open to all French-speaking students, and although participants are encouraged to stay for the whole marathon, it’s possible to join individual workshops only. There will be breaks to eat and go swimming. To sign up, contact Hélène Poulin at Impulsiv@uvic.ca.

Office provides assistance to health researchers

If you’re involved in aging and health-related research, the center on aging is home to the regional office of a network that can assist you. Whether you need advice on how to develop a proposal or you would like to connect with researchers interested in health and aging from universities, government, community and private sectors, the BC Network for Aging Research (BCNAR) can help. This hub is aimed at expanding health and aging research capacity in B.C. and leveraging new research monies. If you or your organization would like to become a member of BCNAR or would like more information, contact regional liaison officer Neba Chopra at 721-4990 or nchopra@uvic.ca.

Lawyer & Notary Public

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721-2441

Vikes Upcoming Events

Jan 13 Basketball vs Simon Fraser U 8:00 PM
Jan 14 Basketball vs U of Saskatchewan 6:15 PM
Jan 13 Basketball vs U of Saskatchewan 6:15 PM
Feb 3 Basketball vs Thompson Rivers 6:15 PM @ EDCC
Feb 4 Basketball vs Thompson Rivers 6:15 PM @ EDCC
Feb 11 Basketball vs Simon Fraser U 6:15 PM

Recreation

Do you know that UVicplus membership purchases and membership along with the purchase of all passes such as Fitness/Weight Centres passes and bowling passes can now be done at the University Ticket Centre? Don’t them at or call 721-4990.

University of Victoria