When it comes to winning formulas, the above equation is one that young mathematician Richard Gibson lives by.

Gibson, 21, graduates this month with an honours BSc, a perfect GPA of 9.0 and the Governor General’s Silver Medal as the university’s top undergraduate in all faculties for 2006.

“I was a little surprised,” says Gibson of the day last month when the office of the dean of science phoned to tell him of his achievement. “I was definitely trying to win it, but I knew I was up against some other good students.”

Gibson’s academic record is replete with A+’s, including tough third- and fourth-year courses in combinatorial mathematics, complex analysis and mathematical modelling. He seems slightly embarrassed about an A he received in astronomy and an A- in English. “Maybe I didn’t put full effort into those two or something, I don’t know,” he laughs.

Gibson figures the last time he got a mark below an A was in Grade 5. It’s no surprise, then, that he graduated from Victoria’s Spectrum Community High School at the top of his class.

Mathematics has been his academic passion for as long as he can remember. “Even in elementary school math was my best subject, so I thought I’d just keep doing what I’m best at,” he says. “I think it’s the problem-solving. I like figuring things out.”

Not that it always comes easily. Although he sailed through courses in his first couple of years at UVic, upper-level courses took more study hours—and sweat. “Math takes time to do, no matter what,” he says.

Along the way, Gibson collected enough credits for a minor in computer science and many awards, including a Fairfax Financial Holdings Inc. Scholarship, the Marvin Shinbrot Memorial Scholarship, and a Corporate Express Scholarship.

Last summer, he worked on a research project in mathematical biology with UVic professor Reinhard Illner. The work resulted in a scientific paper that has been submitted to a prestigious journal for publication.

Gibson heads for a master’s degree in math at Simon Fraser University this fall. Next on the agenda is a PhD and hopefully a career in academia or industry. He’ll miss his UVic intramural sports buddies—in floor hockey, especially—and he has some parting words of advice for incoming students.

“Manage your time well and don’t put work off. I’m not a big fan of letting things linger. Get to it as fast as possible. And then have some fun.”
Giroux held a number of senior posts in the federal public service, including secretary of the Treasury Board, commissioner general, permanent undersecretary of state for external relations, and professor of history at Carleton University. He has received honorary degrees from seven universities, including Uvic (in 2004). In other board of governors news, Victoria business executive Peter Cazet has been reappointed for another three-year term beginning July 1. The 15-member board of governors is one of the two primary governing bodies of the university. It includes elected faculty, staff, and students, and eight members appointed by the provincial government.

As a complete list of the board of governors membership, visit web.uvic.ca/uvicsec/governance/governor.htm.

In memoriam

Aboriginal scholar named Trudeau Fellow

John Borrows, the University of Victoria’s Law Foundation Chair in Aboriginal Justice and Governance, is one of five Canadians appointed a 2006 Trudeau Fellow by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation. Trudeau Fellows are selected by nomination, not application, after a rigorous peer review process. They’re appointed for three years and receive an annual stipend of $50,000 plus an annual research and travel allowance of $25,000.

“The Trudeau fellows program recognizes and communicates connections between issues of local and international importance, and it is a deep honour for me to join the foundation in working toward these ends,” says Borrows.

As the Trudeau fellows program grows, it will build a network of creative people working together from a variety of perspectives to address fundamental social issues.

Borrows is an internationally recognized scholar in the field of indigenous legal traditions and aboriginal rights. Borrows is Anishinaabe and a member of the Chippewa of the Nawaosh First Nation on Georgian Bay. In 2003 he was one of four British Columbians to receive a National Aboriginal Achievement Award for establishing university-level aboriginal legal programs and writing extensive legal texts.

Borrows developed programs in indigenous research and teaching at the University of Toronto, Osgoode Hall Law School at York University, the University of British Columbia, and Uvic. Most recently, he served as a visiting scholar-in-residence with the Law Commission of Canada, writing a report on the evolution of aboriginal legal traditions in Canada.

The Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation promotes outstanding research in the social sciences and humanities, and fosters dialogue between scholars and policy-makers in the arts, community, business, government, the professions, and the voluntary sector.

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Canada Research Chairs

“William Shakespeare meets Bill Gates!” UVic English professor Ray Siemens laughs at this cheeky description of the new dimension of humanities computing.

“Well I’m sure some of my colleagues do consider me to be something of a classicist geek,” says Siemens, named the Canada Research Chair in Humanities Computing in 2004. “Certainly this is a difficult discipline for people to understand.”

By way of explanation, Siemens holds up a computer-generated graphic illustration of Paradise Lost. The entire 12 books of John Milton’s epic poem online today. Siemens’ fall from grace are dramatically depicted as a radiating whorl of words. Oft-repeated words like Satan, Adam, Eve, Earth and Serpent pop out as the focal point of the design.

“It’s aesthetically beautiful and a good example of the variety of ways that technology can help students think about and access the classics,” says Siemens, who arts with enthusiastic for the boundless possibilities that can be achieved by coupling the study of humanities with state-of-the-art technology.

Paradise Lost is a case in point, he explains. Over the years the poem considered a masterpiece of the English language, has been “lost” to students unable or unwilling to explore its complexities. New scholars reading computer-version of the texts, armed with a mouse, have explanatory annotations at their fingertips.

“That’s the goal of humanities, to learn from the past,” says Siemens, who believes that a world full of better readers with greater historical comprehension will be “a better place” and that new computing digital tools are a means to take us there. Serendipitously, Siemens realized the potential of linking computers with humanities after he graduated in English and was scouted up to work for high-tech companies during the Silicon Valley boom in the ’80s. Now he’s leading the charge in the digital humanities evolution.

Since he arrived at UVic in 2004, Siemens has been developing models for the electronic scholarly study of humanities and the arts. Among his projects, The Digital Manuscript, a collection of verse, is the first significant example of men and women writing together. Assisted by a team of researchers, Siemens is creating a context for the manuscript by linking it electronically to contemporary and historical texts, historical records, art work and critical reviews. “This resource would be difficult to present in any other form,” he says.

Last fall, Siemens set up the electronic textual cultures lab next to the humanities computer-assisted language laboratory, staffed by eight grad students from various disciplines. Siemens and his team spend endless hours encoding humanities manuscripts and texts to make them accessible to academics and others.

On Siemens “to do” list are the Shakespeare sonnets that he’s working on for the UVic-based Internet Shakespeare Editions, an internationally renowned online resource.

“We should be proud, UVic is definitely at the front of the pack in this field,” says Siemens, who is director of the Humanities Computing Summer Institute and hosts its fifth gathering at UVic this month. The event is a forum for dedicated digital enthusiasts to discuss and develop skills in new humanities and arts computing technologies.

Siemens has co-authored nine books on new technology topics including A Companion to Digital Humanities, which he hopes will serve as a roadmap for others following the digital path. He has presented over 50 papers and regularly crosses North America and Europe to research and promote the latest findings in the digital field.

It’s not all about bits and bytes. Siemens also has a soft spot for Henry VIII and has given several presentations on song lyrics written by the youthful English monarch before he became maligned as the much-wifed architect of the English Reformation.

Young Henry, it turns out, wrote a kind of royal rap, reimagining against the clausrophobia of the court, pleading that being allowed to play games would make him a better king.

Siemens has taken that tenet to heart. One of his courses at UVic teaches students the tools for computer interactivity. New technology allows readers to play an active part in storytelling, to choose a character, interact with the story and even change the ending.

Asked for his favourite interactive role, Siemens picks a character he chose while playing online literary games with his children: Amelia Black in Age of Empires II. “She was the very capable daughter of a Scots adventurer-type with ties to the Knights Templar at the time of the discovery and exploration of the New World,” says Siemens.

No doubt Henry VIII would have approved.

Curious about the results of the campus workforce employment equity survey which wrapped up earlier this year?

The survey was conducted as part of the university’s commitment to equity and diversity and in compliance with the Federal Contractors Program for Employment Equity (FCP). Canadian employers who have contracts of $200,000 or more with the federal government are required to make a commitment to employment equity and implement 11 criteria set out by the program.

According to the federal government, if employment equity is successfully implemented, barriers within organizational systems are removed for all employees, and equitable representation is achieved in all occupations, including positions of authority.

The equity office thanks everyone who participated in the survey. The results have now been tallied. Here’s a brief summary:

Just over 81 per cent of UVic employees participated in the survey, which shows a “picture in time” of the make-up of the university’s labour force.

As of Sept. 30, 2005, UVic employee representation in occupational categories set out by the program (as a percentage of total employees) is female, 54.7 per cent; male, 45.2 per cent; aboriginal peoples, 1.5 per cent; people with disabilities, 5.6 per cent; and visible minorities, 7.8 per cent.

Respondents self-identified as part of one or more categories. Respondents could also self-identify as members of “other minority groups” that they believe are disadvantaged. Examples of other groups are people with a minority sexual orientation, or those who believe they are disadvantaged due to age, race, place of origin, employment history or status of unemployment.

A total of 427 respondents (16 per cent of returned questionnaires) added comments to explain their survey answers. Comments were grouped into three broad categories: self-identified group status and issues, workplace issues, and comments about the survey process itself.

According to Linda Sproule-Jones, director of UVic’s equity office, the composition of the university’s workforce is more reflective of the diversity of Canadian labour markets than it was when the university last reported to the FCP three years ago. In general, UVic’s representation of women and employees with disabilities is above the national labour force availability.

“We’ve certainly made progress, but there’s still work to be done,” says Sproule-Jones, who is responsible for reporting the results back to the government.

For example, while aboriginal peoples comprise 2.6 per cent of the Canadian labour force, there are no aboriginal full-time, part-time or temporary employees in six out of 14 occupational categories at UVic.

The FCP survey results will be used to shape policy and employment systems in line with goals set in the university’s strategic plan.

The report can be found on the equity website at web.uvic.ca/equity.

DIAGNOSIS

An English prof blends humanities with state-of-the-art technology

by Beth Haysom

See the campus from a student’s perspective.

Renew your love of learning with a Continuing Studies course this fall as you meet new people, pursue professional development opportunities, enhance your career qualifications, or just have fun with lifelong learning.

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

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

The Fall 2006 Continuing Studies Calendar will be available on our website at the end of June.

www.continuingstudies.uvic.ca

Campus equity survey results released

The Ring June 2006 Page 3
Students at the University of Victoria will be able to learn from some of Canada’s top working journalists, thanks to a $250,000 donation from one of the country’s leading publishing families. The gift will create a prestigious annual lectureship in the department of writing in memory of Harvey Stevenson Southam, a UVic alumnus who was an heir to the Southam publishing empire when he died suddenly in 1991. The donation was given by Southam’s mother, Jean Southam of Vancouver, who has maintained an active interest in UVic for many years. In 1994 she also donated $250,000 to support students in the writing department’s Harvey Stevenson Southam Lecture Fund in Journalism and Non-Fiction will cover the annual appointment of a journalism and publishing mentorship to young writers and aspiring journalists at UVic. “We’re immensely grateful to Jean Southam for her donation,” says Lynne Van Loven, acting chair of UVic’s writing department. “The lectureship will enhance the teaching of non-fiction in the professional writing minors in journalism and publishing, and will augment the non-fiction major for students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.”

Harvey Southam, the son of Gordon Thomas and Gerardine Jean (née MacMillan) Southam, worked as a journalist at the Win¬¬nipeg Tribune, Vancouver Province, and Vancouver Sun before serving as a director of a number of Southam companies, including Southam Inc., Southam Printing Ltd., and Colas Book Stores Ltd.

Downtown Victoria is undergoing a transformation as new condominium developments invite more people to make downtown their home.

But what if “home” is a ragged sleeping bag on the street or a vacant bed in a shelter? And how do recent immigrants to the city create a new home for themselves in an unfamiliar culture and surrounding?

Serial Catoka, a UVic political science PhD candidate, is examining how the disoriented and newly-arived make a home for themselves. Her research has earned her one of this year’s Senior Women in Academic Administration in Canada (SWAAC) graduate student awards of merit.

Only four of the $1,000 awards are presented each year in Western Canada to women graduate students who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the university or general community while maintaining exemplary academic records.

In addition to her research, Catoka is a board member of the Downtown Residents’ Association and a member of the steering committee for the review of the Downtown Victoria Plan.

The political science department graduate student representative to various departmental and university committees and is involved in co-ordinating and training graduate student teaching assistants.

Teaching award winners stress relevance, openness

by Mike McNeney

The 2006 recipients of the UVic Alumni Awards for Excellence in Teaching are two classroom leaders who focus on “take home lessons” and positive learning environments.

Dr. Ed Ishiguro, retiring this summer after a 25-year run at UVic (including eight years as chair of the department of biochemistry and microbiology) is the recipient of the UVic Alumni Association’s Harry Hickman Award. The Hickman is designated for full-time faculty, librarians or artists-in-residence.

Kelli Fawkes, a senior lab instruc¬tor in the department of chemistry, is the winner of the Gil Sheerin Award recognizing outstanding work by a lab instructor, sessional instructor or limited-term faculty member.

Ishiguro says he tries to give his students “take home lessons”—a phrase he picked up from his PhD supervisor. “They’re things you keep for the rest of your life—not just another set of facts. I have students I taught 25 years ago who tell me they still remember something from my class. I find that flattering because that’s the whole objective in the first place.”

He makes it a goal to cover the basic concepts, using a variety of illustrations and computer graphics to get his points across. “It’s got to be interesting or they won’t listen to you. And you have to describe the implications; you have to make them think about it.”

It’s an ongoing challenge: Ishiguro goes into his office after each lecture and spends 10 or 15 minutes reviewing what worked, what didn’t. “I’m still getting better at it—that’s one reason why I don’t want to retire.”

Former student Anna Buianos, graduating this month with the Jubi¬¬le Medal for Science, says Ishiguro stays on top of the latest discoveries in science and “presents materials in creative ways that stimulate students’ interest. I can easily say that he is the best professor I’ve had the pleasure to be taught by at UVic.”

Much like Ishiguro, chemistry instructor Fawkes tries not to “get lost in the details, instead covering material and topics that students will use somewhere else.”

She’s joined the department in 1997, a year before completing her UVic undergraduate degree with a double major in chemistry and anthropology. Since then, she’s es¬¬stablished a reputation for openness, energy, and innovation.

She’s credited with overseeing the lab/tutorial section of the second year course, “Practical Spectroscopy.” Her efforts have provided more working space, better interaction among teaching assistants and stu¬¬dents, and greater student access to advanced instruments.

Above all, Fawkes is known for being accessible to students, and students can turn to when school work seems overwhelming and con¬¬fusing. The key, she says, is to make sure a friendly learning environment remains in place.

“If students see me as approach¬¬able and friendly,” she says, “they know learning falls more easily into place.”

When the line-ups outside her office door started getting a little too long, she introduced a popular daily drop¬¬-in help centre last fall where up to 30 students gather to work through homework problems.

Her nomination letters speak of an “educator of the highest quality who still understands that students need an approachable and down-to¬¬earth mentor.”

Each Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award recipient receives a $2,000 cash prize from the UVic Alumni Association and their por¬¬trait photos are permanently dis¬¬played in the McPherson Library. Formal presentations of the awards will be made at the Legacy Awards dinner in November.
Law grad “rolls up her sleeves” to get involved

Last fall, UVic law student Jennifer Bond stood outside the United Nations in New York City pitch- ing herself in disbelief. Bond and fellow student Laurel Sherret were about to make a presentation to 60 members of the UN community dealing with the obligation to in- tervene in humanitarian crises.

“It was unbelievable, thrilling,” says Bond, who graduates this month as one of the faculty’s top students. “Mostly we were excited to be there and have the opportu- nity to present something that could really make a difference.”

Bond and Sherret’s report, “A Sight for Sore Eyes: Bringing Gen- der Vision to the Responsibility to Protect Framework,” written while interning at the International Wom- en’s Rights Project (EWRP) through UVic’s Centre for Global Studies, advocated the inclusion of the per- spectives of women and children in the UN’s protection plans.

Their recommendations, well received by the UN representatives, were mentioned in Canada’s submis- sion to the UN Security Council on another report for IWRP this time drawing links among HIV/ AIDS, gender and democracy in southern Africa.

This work will take her to sev- eral high-level meetings in Britain, but Bond is not quite so disbeliev- ing this time: “Now I’m confident in the ability of law to effect posi- tive change,” she says.

As she steps up to the podium as one of UVic’s top fine arts graduates, Joanne Dyck is thousands of kilome- tres and a world away from her dog mushing days in the Klondike.

But a glance at the bracelet tattoo of northern pines and vines encircling her wrist is all it takes to stir her vivid memories of whooshing through the isolated forests and snow-covered Yukon wilderness with the yipping dogs as her only companions.

And then there’s Lucy, the only one still with her from a treasured team of huskies that Dyck left behind when she came to study creative writing at UVic. “I wanted to find my voice, a way to tell the stories about my sled- ding adventures,” says Dyck. “But leaving the dogs behind, that was the hardest thing I ever had to do. It was like abandoning my family.”

Dyck, now 41, is the kind of per- son who has made a point of choos- ing difficult paths. Having grown up in Thunder Bay, Dyck studied diesel mechanics intending to be a long-distance truck driver. But she also loved painting and was evolving a career as a successful artist—until she came nose to snout with a truck driver in town.

“I was hooked. I fell in love with the forested wilderness and occasion- ally falling through thin ice. It was a wonderful place and a great experience,” says Dyck, recall- ing commuting to work via dog sled across the frozen Yukon river. “But I’m not sure where we’ll go next…maybe somewhere hot next time.”

Former musher finds her “voice” in writing

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**PhD is first in indigenous governance**

As a teenager, Jonathan Blasberg was a high school dropout, choosing to hang out with friends in Victoria. Now, the new humanities graduate is passionate about learning and is aiming for a doctorate and a career in academics.

Today’s Blasberg, thoroughly at home in academia, eagerly discusses the challenges of “sentential calculus,” the intricate rules governing sentence structure, and other complex courses he took to complete his BA linguistics honours program.

“I was always independent and stubborn. School just didn’t work for me before,” explains Blasberg, who grew up in Vancouver and dropped out of several high schools in the Lower Mainland before finding his way back to university through an inherent love of language.

After taking catch-up courses, Blasberg attended UVic and realized that he loved coming to grips with the underpinning principles of language. Along the way, he was awarded the Edgar Ferrar Corbet Scholarship for proficiency in English.

For his honours thesis, Blasberg learned American sign language. It takes several minutes and dozens of sign-language gestures for him to explain verbally the crux of his thesis, which looked at how a sign language speaker uses spatially directed verbs such as “look at” to reflect how the mind works in relation to language.

Not content with just learning, Blasberg also helped to revive a UVic linguistics course union, “The Underdawgs,” and became its president. Members address student issues and raise money to support a linguistics scholarship.

Blasberg would like to teach at the university level and start a business. He’ll make a point of looking out for others who have yet to find their calling in life because, he says, “lack of direction should never be confused with lack of potential.”

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**It’s science all the way for microbiology major**

It took several phone calls for UVic science dean Tom Pederson to track down Anna Burianova, who is spending the summer working for the National Research Council in Ottawa, and to convince her that she really is the top science graduate for 2006.

“When he said it was the dean calling, I almost didn’t believe him,” says a delighted Burianova, who will return home to Victoria for convocation to receive her Jubilee Medal in Science and her honours BSc in microbiology.

It will be a fleeting visit as Burianova is thoroughly absorbed in research work, which involves several projects such as developing agricultural vaccines. Her free time is crammed with dragon-boating, playing ultimate Frisbee and softball, and visiting all the museums and galleries in the capital.

Burianova has been soaking up all the experiences she can ever since she arrived in Canada from Slovakia at age 11. The family came to B.C. for her microbiologist father’s research. Growing up, Burianova spent happy hours helping in labs and says it felt natural to follow in his footsteps.

“I love lab work,” says Burianova, who is pondering a career as a human geneticist. “I like the idea of combining science and people, identifying genes that cause disease and hopefully making discoveries that will help people in the future.”

Burianova also enjoys working with people. While studying for her degree, she volunteered in the emergency room and a genetic clinic at Victoria General Hospital, tutored math and science, worked one-on-one with brain injury patients, and coached volleyball.

At the end of high school, Burianova, who competed internationally for Canada’s youth volleyball team, was recruited to play varsity volleyball in Toronto. But for Burianova it was a slam-dunk. “I couldn’t do both at the highest level so my education won out. Science is my future,” she says.

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**Linguistics grad makes up for lost time**

A trailblazer throughout her career, Paulette Regan is now celebrating her achievement as the first student to complete a doctorate in UVic’s indigenous governance program.

“I was looking for an innovative program that would challenge my thinking, give me a better understanding of indigenous perspectives and provide practical strategies for confronting some of the challenges we face,” she says. “The program was all of this. It was demanding, but it worked for me before,” explains Blasberg, who grew up in Vancouver and dropped out of several high schools in the Lower Mainland before finding his way back to university through an inherent love of language.

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Jennifer Gruno, winner of the Max- 
well Cameron Medal in Education at the 
secondary school level, proudly 
calls herself “a Sooke girl.” And while 
many of her peers are heading off to 
work in city schools, she would like 
nothing better than to get a teaching 
job in the Sooke school district in the 
fall. “It’s beautiful here with a culture 
almost all its own,” says Gruno, who allows 
that it’s tough for some young people 
growing up away from city amenities. “I understand where they’re coming 
from, but I loved growing up here. 
I’ve always enjoyed the outdoors, 
hiking, spending time at the beach 
and camping.”

Gruno was part of the original 
class that launched Edward Milne 
Secondary when it opened in 1996, 
and her experiences at the school led 
SEE LIFELONG LEARNING P.8.
Thank you to 157 volunteer speakers!

For 25 years, the UVic Speakers Bureau has matched faculty, staff and graduate students with community organizations and schools throughout southern Vancouver Island. From last September, the bureau has provided speakers for more than 350 engagements. The UVic volunteer speakers offered to share their expertise and enthusiasm on topics as far-ranging as art and architecture, history, Indigenous experiences, world cultures, social and justice issues, wellness, travel, history, employment and world affairs. To see the full list of speakers who have volunteered over the last year, visit communications.uvic.ca/office/news.php. For more information contact Mandy Crocket at 721-8687 or mcrocker@uvic.ca.

Put some bounce in your lunch hour

Here’s your chance to get on the right track to fitness and show a little UVic spirit. The 2006 President’s Float is a quick trip around Ring Road with your colleagues. It starts at noon on Wednesday, June 21 from the University Centre breezeway. As well as being good for the heart and soul, this annual event supports some friendly competition—the Spirit Award goes to the department that brings the most spirit to the parade. The Participation Award will be awarded to the department with the most people participating in the walk. The walk is sponsored by athletics and recreation and this year’s theme is “Change and transition.” If you won’t be able to walk with your co-workers, you can still support your department by registering and walk the Ring at another time. For more information contact Kathy Cameron (athletics and recreation) at 472-4028 or kcameron@uvic.ca.

Another First Nations partner joins CYC program

The Penelakut Tribe on Kuper Island is the latest of nine aboriginal organizations to participate in the school and child care First Nations partnership program, which delivers two years of university-accredited coursework in child and youth care in First Nations communities. Students from the mid-vancouver Island bands successfully completed their coursework and are expected to complete their two-year apprenticeship program in Canada that incorporates the traditional knowledge and practices of the partners with the school’s curriculum. The program has been offered 10 times to tribal students from these provinces and was selected by UNESCO as one of 20 best practices across disciplines from around the world that incorporate indigenous knowledge.

Is that 721 or 472 or 853?

The next time you’re providing a university phone number to someone, put some bounce in your lunch hour, you might need to know which to say. Is that 721 or 472 or 853? Is that 721 or 472 or 853? Is that 721 or 472 or 853?

The hesitance you’re feeling is understandable. The UVic campus is only able to reserve (at the cost of about $1 a month per number) a block of 1,000 numbers at a time. As a result, the telephone companies can assign other blocks within the same prefix to other customers. “Always be sure to double-check the entire phone number. Continued growth of the university has led to a third prefix being added to the campus roster of telephone numbers. In addition to the original 721 prefix, and the 472 prefixes added in 1994, there’s now 853. There are about 4,500 telephone lines in use on campus. Although a prefix should in theory accommodate 10,000 numbers, the university is only able to reserve (at the cost of about 51 a month per number) a block of 1,000 numbers at a time. As a result, the telephone companies can assign other blocks within the same prefix to other customers. ‘Always be sure to double-check the entire phone number. This rule of thumb is especially important to remember if you’re planning to move your office or have different positions through co-op.”

Get the head-start

With relevant job experience under their belts, UVic co-op grads launch into the workforce

Lifelong learning continued from p.7

to her decision to become a teacher: “I had amazing teachers and by Grade 11, I knew I wanted to inspire others with a passion for lifelong learning,” she says.

A soccer player and sports enthusiast all her life, Gruno opted for a major in physical education with a minor in English. During her studies, Gruno coached senior girls’ basketball at Edward Milne and organizes a summer three-on-three basketball tournament in the community. “Getting people involved in sport is vital for our society [which is facing obesity, health and fitness issues]. I’m trying to be a role model, especially for women,” says Gruno, who spends summer Saturday nights in Sooke Basin playing kayak polo—a wild water sport that involves kayak body contact and plenty of spills. Gruno enjoys teaching older students and has no qualms about walking into a class of Grade 11/12s, but her first practicum back at Edward Milne gave her pause. “It was great being back at my old school but it felt really weird going into the staff room for the first time.”

Draginda graduates, this month with a BSc and has already secured his dream job. He’s off to Hawaii after convocation on a two-year contract with the Cana- diana-Prince-Hawaii Telescope project. Draginda is sure he landed this position because of the specialized telescope software he was able to learn at his co-op jobs.

“I learned many invaluable computer skills during my work terms,” he says. “I was able to get hands-on experience that you can’t get in the classroom, at least not in astronomy.”

With so few jobs at observatories for those with undergraduate degrees, he says previous experience is a must and advises other students “you just can’t go into it green.”

Draginda’s co-op career has included work term placements with the Canadian Centre for Climate Modeling and Analysis (CCMa), the Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics, and the Gemini Observatory in Chile. He completed four work terms at the CCMa and was recently offered a job at the Gemini Observatory. With so many career options ahead of him Draginda feels assured he’s on the right track. “I’m 100 per cent confident that I’ll be happy with my new job, because I was able to try out different positions through co-op. I know this job is a good fit.”

As one of last year’s UVic nominees for the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education’s Co-op Student of the Year award, Melissa McCaghey has also taken full advantage of co-op opportunities. She’s worked as a summer events marketing assistant at the North Vancouver Recreation Commission, a fitness instructor for Ideal Fitness for Women in Victoria, a councillor for the YM-YWCA Sun Seekers Day Camp, and most recently as a recreation clerk at CFB Esquimalt. In fact, McCaghey made such a strong impression that she continues to work part-time for two of her former co-op employers.

“Over the course of my degree, there were only about two months that I wasn’t working while I was going to school,” she says. “Ideal Fitness asked me to return to work for them part time as a fitness leader and gym attendant while I finished my degree, and I’m glad I took that opportunity.”
The new director of UVic’s learning and teaching centre is Dr. Teresa Dawson, effective July 1. Dawson is currently director of teaching and learning services at the University of Toronto’s Scarborough campus. Her areas of interest include effective teaching assessment, faculty and graduate student professional development, supporting diversity in the academy, and achieving teaching and learning-related institutional change. Dawson will hold a senior instructor appointment in the geography department. She replaces Dr. Geri Van Gyn, who will take a one-year administrative leave before returning to the school of physical education.

UVic professor emeritus Norman Ruff was honoured by the B.C. Political Studies Association (BCPSA) recently with a lifetime membership in the association and by having the association’s annual student essay prize named after him. The award for the best senior undergraduate paper submitted to the BCPSA will now be known as the Dr. Norman Ruff Prize for the Best Upper Level Undergraduate Essay. The honour were conferred “in recognition of Ruff’s significant contributions to teaching and scholarship in the field of political science and public administration.”

Todd Halpen, a member of the Vikes men’s golf team, was named to the PING All-America First Team following the final round of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) national championships last month. Halpen was the sole Canadian named to the team by the Golf Coaches Association of America. Halpen placed second at the 2006 NAIA championships, missing the title by just one stroke.

Dr. Michael Prince, Lansdowne professor of social policy has been named chair of a national task force co-sponsored by the Canadian Association for Community Living and the Council of Canadians with Disabilities. During a one-year review, the task force will examine how to change policies affecting people with disabilities through better access to and sharing of knowledge. Task force members include the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres, the Nell Squire Society, and People First of Canada, along with community and university researchers across Canada. Says Prince: “The aim of the task force is to build the capacity of disability community organizations/policy research and knowledge mobilization.” For more information about the task force and the review, visit www.cohon.ca/building_capacity_main.html.

Dale Gane (Vancouver Island Technology Park) has been named BC’s 2006 Volunteer of the Year. A chair of the BC Biotech BDIO Conference steering committee, Gane has helped to give BC a significant international profile. “Dale is entirely tireless in doing whatever he possibly can to help build B.C.’s biotech industry,” reads part of the citation from BC Biotech. Gane also sits on the board of the Vancouver Island Advanced Technology Centre and is a member of the municipality of Saanich’s economic development advisory committee.

In 1874 the father of science fiction, Jules Verne, predicted hydrogen as a chief energy resource. Now the founding director of UVic’s Institute for Integrated Energy Systems is being honoured as another visionary. Dr. David Scott has won the 2006 Jules Verne Award from the International Association for Hydrogen Energy (IAHE) for his outstanding contributions to hydrogen physics, and hydrogen energy, sociology and philosophy. Scott is the first Canadian to win the award. It will be presented to him this month at the 16th World Hydrogen Energy Conference in France.

Dr. Elaine Gallagher (nursing) is the Centre on Agings new director for a three-year term starting July 1. Gallagher is internationally known for her research on falls and injury prevention among older people. She’s currently the associate director of the centre and holds an adjunct appointment in the gerontology program at SFU. Gallagher is best known for her work on a project entitled “STEPS” (Studies of Environments which Promote Safety)—the first published study on the epidemiology of seniors’ slips, trips and falls—in public places. Gallagher succeeds psychologist Dr. David Hultsch, who will return to the department of psychology in July.

Peter Zaccour is UVic’s new director of campus security, effective Aug. 1. He comes to UVic from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), with eight years of experience as the manager of maintenance and security services. Prior to his post-secondary experience, Zaccour was a member of the RCMP for 26 years. He takes over the position from Ken Morrison, who retires on June 30. Tom Downie will be acting director in the interim.

Sessional instructor Dr. Harold Kalman is the winner of the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts’ British Columbia Heritage Award for his exceptional contribution to heritage conservation. He teaches courses on heritage conservation in the cultural resource management program, jointly offered by the faculty of fine arts and the division of continuing studies. Kalman’s award includes a $10,000 prize that he can use to a non-profit organization of his choice. He has arranged for the cultural resource management program to receive the funds and the division plans to create an endowed fund to support diploma candidates in international heritage studies. The award will be presented to Kalman at the Heritage Society of B.C.’s annual conference this month.

Fine arts student brightens up Cadboro Bay

UVic student Gedidiah McCaughey is painting the town blue in Cadboro Bay—and the community residents are delighted.

McCaughey, 28, in his second year of a fine arts program, was picked from seven artists who submitted designs for a mural on the side of the People’s Pharmacy in Cadboro Bay. The district of Saanich contributed a grant toward the mural as part of its centennial celebrations.

This is the first commission for McCaughey, who has explored various mediums but never painted an 80-foot wall before. “I’m having a good time doing this. It’s a fun project,” he says.

A headphone clamped to his ear, McCaughey listens to rock music while he paints the background and outlines of the mural, but he also enjoys passersby who stop to peer at the work in progress. The mural, set on a blue background, is an abstract modern piece with some recognizable features. If you look closely, Cadboronatorus is in there, as well as Mystic Vale. A solid line running through the images evokes the first telegraph sent to Victoria from the San Juan Islands.

“It’s fabulous,” says Leah Kinavar, coordinator of the Cadboro Bay Village Business Improvement Association, who came up with the idea for the mural. “It will brighten up that whole area.

Eventually Kinavar hopes to see more murals created by other university artists gracing the neighbour­hood’s walls. “UVic is just up the hill and there are so many talented students there. We were blown away by the quality of the submissions we received,” she says.
Glacier researchers join forces

The University of Victoria is one of seven western universities that have formed the new Glacier Research Network, a five-year research initiative that will improve our understanding of how glaciers respond to climate change. UVic geographer Dan Smith leads a section of the network focused on understanding climate changes over the last 400 years in the Mount Waddington area in southwestern B.C. The Glacier Research Network is led by the University of Northern British Columbia. In addition to Smith, it involves researchers from four other Canadian universities, the University of Washington, federal and provincial governments, BC Hydro, and the Columbia Basin Trust.

The network is funded by the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences (CFCAS). For more information visit http://w22.nh.uvic.ca/.

The Glacier Research Network is an important provincial resource. "Trees produce a layer of wood every year of their lives. Researchers count the number of rings to determine a tree’s age, and measure the width of the rings to learn rates of growth in the past. These trees contain hundreds of annual growth rings, which give us a history of their life before they were killed by the glacier," explains Smith. "By matching that record to the records of living trees in the area we can track how the climate has changed year-to-year over thousands of years."

Smith has found that the glaciers in the coastal mountain range have receded and advanced fairly consistently over the last few thousand years. A major period of glacier expansion that began 3,000 years ago is now ending. "Despite the fact that most of the glaciers are receding we shouldn’t assume this is a major event, especially since 8,000 years ago none of these glaciers even existed."

However, studies conducted by Smith and others have convinced him that humans have played a major role in altering global climate. "The climate on this planet is changing and the evidence is overwhelming that we’re responsible for it. We can negate our influence, we just don’t yet know its ultimate impact."

Funders for Smith’s work include the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research, and the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences.

When it comes to understanding climate change, University of Victoria geographer Dan Smith has found that ancient trees have an important story to tell. Smith and his student team are using forensic-like research to study the movement of glaciers over time and the associated changes in climate. "We’re looking back thousands of years to get an idea of how glaciers in B.C. have advanced and retreated and the conditions that have led to these changes," says Smith. "Ancient tree ring information helps us to predict what our glaciers may look like in the future, and to assess what the impact of their diminished size will be."

Understanding the movement of glaciers provides clues to how they respond to long-term warming and cooling trends. Glaciers are also an important provincial resource. They supply rivers with fresh water, which nourishes ecosystems, fills our reservoirs and provides us with hydroelectric power.

Since 1920, the retreat of glaciers in the coastal mountains has rapidly accelerated. Many of these glaciers are expected to vanish completely by 2100. Every summer Smith and his team travel to remote parts of B.C.’s coastal mountains north of Vancouver and set up camp next to glaciers. Smith has studied more than 100 glacier sites in this region over the last five years, most of them accessible only by helicopter.

Once the team arrives, they search for trees left behind after the glaciers melted and slice off sections of logs with a chainsaw. Back at UVic, a measuring device records an image of the log’s tree ring profile, and computer analysis is used to detect the impact of climate changes on tree growth.

Trees produce a layer of wood every year of their lives. Researchers count the number of rings to determine a tree’s age, and measure the width of the rings to learn rates of growth in the past. These trees contain hundreds of annual growth rings, which give us a history of their life before they were killed by the glacier," explains Smith. "By matching that record to the records of living trees in the area we can track how the climate has changed year-to-year over thousands of years."

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When it comes to understanding climate change, University of Victoria geographer Dan Smith has found that ancient trees have an important story to tell. Smith and his student team are using forensic-like research to study the growth rings of trees buried long ago by advancing glaciers. All over western North America glaciers are melting at a staggering rate, exposing trees that haven’t seen the light of day for thousands of years. These trees provide Smith’s team with detailed information about the movement of glaciers over time and the associated changes in climate.

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Calendar highlights

Wednesday, June 15
Book Launch: 7 p.m. Canadian launch of Child labour: How to Turn This World Around by Raffi Cavoukian & Sharna Olman. MacLaurin Atrium. Sponsored by the UVic Alumni Assoc. 721-6012

Wednesday, June 21
Conference 9 a.m. Creativity in Action: Peace Education and the World We Want. UVic panelists include: Lorina Williams, Tim Hopper and Mary-Wynne Ashford. TBA. Registration required. 721-7706

President’s Film 12 p.m. Walk the Ring road and enjoy the festivities with this year’s theme "Change and Transition." University Centre breezeway. 472-4028

Film 3–4 p.m. A Force More Powerful! Followed by guest speakers from Peace Brigades International. David Lam Auditorium. 472-5164

Thursday, June 22
Conference 8:30 a.m. Deconstructing Empire Peace Symposium. Graduate student symposium focusing on local/global issues for overcoming and war and violence, based on lessons learned, past and present. Hosted by the Graduate Students’ Society, the world history caucus and the centre for studies in religion and society. MacLaurin, room TBA. 215-10, registration required. 472-5164

Tuesday, July 4
Physics & Astronomy Lecture 5:30 p.m. Bayes Versus Frequentism: The Return of an Old Controversy. Louis Lyons, Oxford Univ. Elliott 062. 721-7700

Research aims to reduce impacts from fish farms

by Suzanne Connell

The organic waste generated by fish farms can be used to create direct and indirect employment in coastal communities while at the same time reducing the environmental impacts of the industry, says Dr. Stephen Cross, an adjunct associate professor in geography.

By introducing a combination of scallops, mussels, sea cucumbers and kelp adjacent to the fish farms, these creatures can filter out the waste released by the farm, says Cross.

These products could be sold commercially, creating new employment and business opportunities for coastal communities. The system also helps reduce the environmental impacts of the industry by capturing some of the fish farm’s waste and using it as a food source for other sea life.

"This kind of system, called integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA), has been used for thousands of years in Asia and China (polyculture), but the pilot-scale research that my colleagues and I have conducted in the BC Innovation Council in support of this research. The goal of the award is to support long-term collaborative research that aims to produce environmentally sustainable aquaculture systems for British Columbia.

Cross has received a $200,000 Aquaculture and Environment Innovation Award from the BC Innovation Council in support of this research. The goal of the award is to support long-term collaborative research that aims to produce environmentally sustainable aquaculture systems for British Columbia.

Cross has specialized in the environmental effects and impacts of marine-based aquaculture for over 20 years. He is co-founder of a North America-wide network of researchers studying Sustainable Ecological Aquaculture (SEA) systems and lead scientist on a committee of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) which studies SEA-system research and development.

For more information on Cross’s research visit, www.aquamet-research.com.

Crikey, that’s flat-tastic.

Ceri Thomas

Ms. Thomas is a doctoral candidate in the School of Geography and Earth Sciences at the University of Queensland and is a member of the Environment and Resources Research Group, focusing on issues of economic, social and cultural sustainability of traditional resource use in the Pacific. Ms. Thomas has conducted field research in five countries in the Pacific and has facilitated workshops and training activities in the region. Ms. Thomas is a member of the editorial board of Pacific Affairs and is an expert in the study of Polynesia and the South Pacific.

Butterfield Law

"We’re a child focused, results driven, Family law firm."

"We can help you."
by Beth Harrisom

In spite of their widely differing domains, all three of UVic’s 20th graduate-level medal winners are totally hands-on and enjoy pushing boundaries when it comes to life and their university careers.

Wade Abbott spends days—and often nights—doing postdoctoral research on one of UVic’s biochemistry labs, where he’s experimenting with how sugars and proteins interact. Rachel Hellner, who teaches in UVic’s art education department, has a blowtorch in her art toolkit and believes that you can’t be an effective teacher without paint and clay under your fingernails.

Shawn Litster, an avid mountain biker, went from fixing bike sprockets to studying mechanical engineering. Having completed his master’s at UVic last year, he’s now at Stanford working on the latest fuel cell technology in California’s Silicon Valley.

For their individual achievements, all three graduate students are being awarded medals at convocation this month.

WADE ABBOTT WINS THE GOVERNOR GENERAL’S GOLD MEDAL FOR HIS PHD

The award, earned in part for a high grade point average and for his excellent publication record (11 scientific papers during his PhD), is especially sweet for Abbott, who was once uncertain of which profession to pursue and dropped out of college for a spell. “I didn’t have any direction in my life and I got discouraged. At that time, education didn’t seem like it would be the right route for me,” says Abbott, who credits his religious faith and family support for turning him around.

Now Abbott, who married at age 19, squeezes every moment from the hourglass to balance the demands of his academic career and family life with his wife, Raija, and three children Kaylie 11, Madi, 6, and Levi, 4.

“Quite often I’ve tucked the children into bed and then come back to the lab to work on specific projects or to set up experiments for the next day,” says Abbott. “Fortunately, I live close by [at UVic].” In spite of his hectic schedule, Abbott also makes a point of visiting his children’s local school and demonstrating simple science experiments such as the different bacteria we can find on our hands.

“The kids really love it when I show up,” says Abbott. “I think it’s good for them to see that scientists are not just locked up in laboratories, that they are real people involved in the everyday world.”

SIMILARLY, RACHEL HELLNER LOVES THE ALCHEMY OF TEACHING ART, ESPECIALLY IN A CLASSROOM FULL OF STUDENTS WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES NON-ARTISTS.

“Three students are often people who have been discouraged in the past and they’re quite fearful,” says Hellner. “Gradually, they relax and open themselves to the experience and realize that art is accessible to everyone. It’s really rewarding.”

Hellner has won the Lieutenant Governor’s Silver Medal (other than thesis) for her master’s degree treatise, The Importance of Studio Practice, a suggested methodology book for art teachers. It’s based on her own life and experiences as an artist, using art in therapeutic settings and as an art teacher.

As far as Hellner is concerned, you can’t teach art from a textbook. “It’s not just about the techniques,” she says. “Art teachers need a profound understanding of what it means to be immersed in studio practice, so they can be role models and help their students truly understand the feelings and emotion involved in creating art.”

Hellner, who has been part of several exhibitions locally and in Winnipeg where her family now lives, finds art inspiration and philosophy go hand-in-hand. A series of paintings on “reclamables” picked up around Victoria streets focussed her dismay on society’s throwaway attitudes. Road kill spotted on the Florida turnpike became the subject for another series reflecting on Western society’s car dependence and its impact on animals and the environment.

For Hellner, art has almost always been part of her life: “I’d had a paintbrush in my hand ever since I can remember,” she says. “As a child I’d sit around the kitchen table with my family and we’d be drawing together.”

Now, as well as a pencil, Hellner uses acrylics, oil pastels, graphite—and sometimes a blowtorch—to achieve special effects. She also goes to great heights, even parachuting from a plane to achieve an aerial view of landscapes that she wanted to paint.

SHAWN LISTER DISCOVERED HIS VOCATION JUMPING OFF PRECIPICES AND HURTING DOWN STEEP TRAILS AROUND B.C. WHILE COMPETING NATIONALLY IN DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKE RACING.

“Of course we always had to fix something on the bikes. That’s what got me interested in engineering in the first place,” says Lister from Stanford, where he’s working on a PhD. Google is down the street, Yahoo around the corner and technological dreams become reality in nanoseconds.

Lister is the winner of the Lieutenant Governor’s Silver Medal for his master’s thesis on mathematical modelling of fuel cells for portable devices, a systems that enables companies to experiment easily and cheaply with the potential new energy source, from which the only byproduct is water released as harmless vapour.

Although people are familiar with this research for fuel cell-powered cars, Lister realizes it’s something of a leap to consider we’ll be carrying around mini fuel cell-powered laptops, cellphones and MP3s. But, he says, we’d better get ready to jump.

“The way things are going, I think these [fuel cell-powered] devices will be available in a niche market within the next two years,” says Lister. He envisions a not-too-distant future where the technology is commonplace and we’ll all be picking up our rechargeable mini fuel-cell canisters at convenience stores.

Meantime Lister, who became widely known during his stint at UVic as co-host of “Soundcheck,” a CFUV Friday night show featuring ska and reggae music, has more imminent excitement.

He’s returning home this summer to marry Kristin McLennan, who he met while both were undergraduates at UVic. Eventually, the couple would like to return to live in B.C. “I’d love to come back and teach at a B.C. university,” says Lister. “B.C. still has the best mountain biking