the ring

University of Victoria

JANUARY 2007 www.uvic.ca/ring

Stars in our midst 4

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Community health is focus of new Canada Research Chair

by Beth Haysom

Healthy eating and lifestyle advice is falling on the wrong ears, says Dr. Aleck Ostry, who joins the University of Victoria this month as the Canada Research Chair on the Social Determinants of Community Health.

"Educated, well-off people can afford to change their habits, but people with low incomes and low education tend to have more difficulty making those healthy changes," says Ostry, who has spent the better part of his career investigating the social and economic factors underlying health, and the damaging health effects of poverty and lack of education.

"This is one area (of research) that has been ignored for too long," says Ostry, a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research scholar and, until recently, an associate professor of health care and epidemiology at the University of British Columbia.

"Greater awareness may lead to a shift in public policy… and addressing inequalities will make a significant impact in terms of healthier people and healthier communities," he says.

Ostry is a Tier 2 chair recipient, which means he is an "exceptional emerging researcher who is acknowledged by his peers as having the potential to lead in his field." The chair provides him with $100,000 annually for five years.

While at UVic, using census data, surveys and interviews, Ostry will examine the underlying factors that make up a strong community social fabric and how these differ between urban and rural communities. He'll also research what happens to a community and its support networks when it gets an economic blow, such as a mill closing, and assess how the current accelerated pace of economic change is affecting individuals of all ages.

Ostry's research complements work already underway at UVic, which has become a leader in community-based health research through the faculties of Human and Social Development, Science, Social, Sciences and Education and in the interdisciplinary research centres in aging, community health promotion, youth and society, addictions

SEE NEW RESEARCH CHAIR P.6

UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

Regan in the new seats.

Farquhar Auditorium sports new look

Have you noticed that concerts and lectures in the University Centre seem a little more comfortable these days?

The 1,233 seats in the Farquhar Auditorium were replaced last August, as the original seating, installed in 1978, had started to show its age.

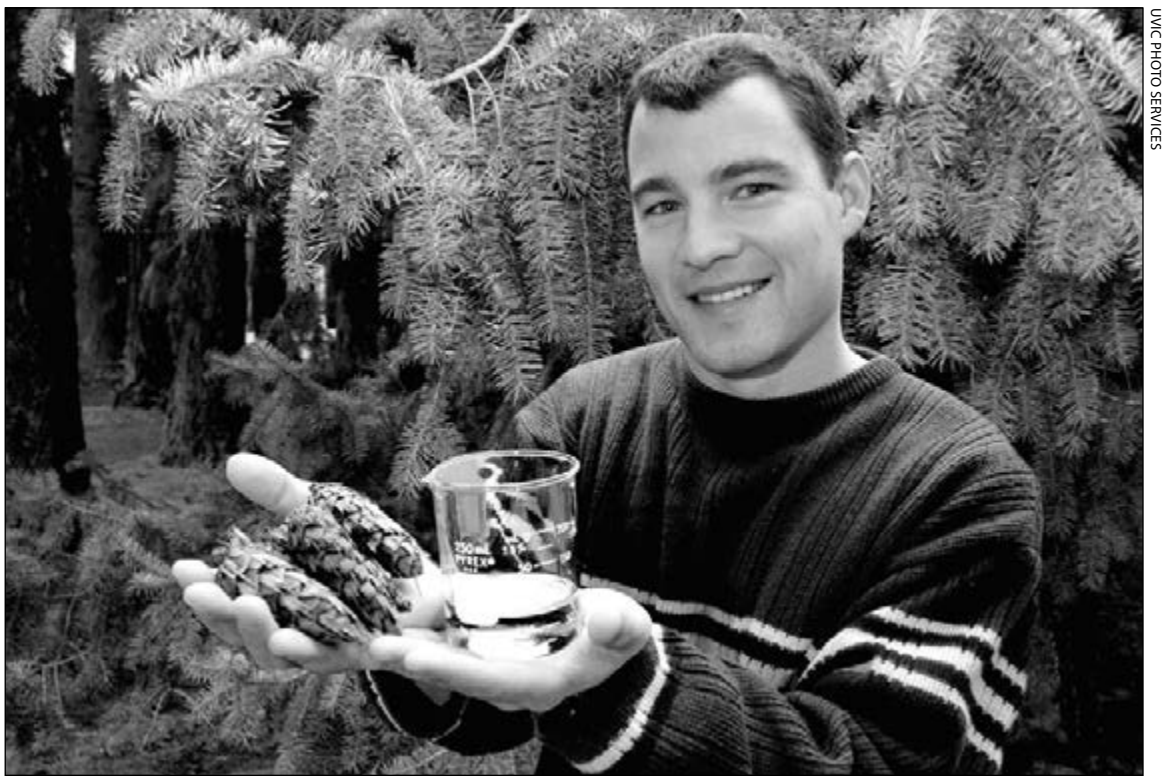
In addition to the improved comfort and appearance of the new seats, the seat numbering system was simplified and seats in the choir loft were stained a dark brown to improve the aesthetics of the stage area.

"This project complements other recent upgrades, including new carpeting and an improved sound system, that are helping us attract higher profile bookings," notes Farquhar Auditorium co-ordinator Heather Regan.

Terry Williams, architect for the University Centre, was retained as a consultant to oversee the project. Williams worked with facilities management and auditorium staff to ensure that the new seats were installed over a tight summer timeline.

Upcoming events in the Farquhar Auditorium include Axé Capoeira in February and the Soweto Gospel Choir in March. For more information visit http://auditorium.uvic.ca/.

UVIC PHOTO SERVICES



Poulis studies how compounds secreted from conifers can benefit human health.

Biologist wins national Young Innovator Award

by Christine Roulston

British Columbians have always had an intricate relationship with their conifer forests both recreationally and economically, but according to UVic research scientist Dr. Brett Poulis, the relationship may become even more intertwined.

Poulis's research shows that conifers secrete beneficial compounds that could provide a powerful antidote against human illness.

His work on the subject has earned him the 2006 Young Innovator Award from the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE), a federal organization aimed at turning Canadian research and entrepreneurial talent into economic and social benefits for Canadians. In December, Poulis attended a ceremony in Ottawa to accept the award from Canada's Minister of Industry, Maxime Bernier.

"These trees are ancient and they have a defensive system that has worked for them for hundreds of millions of years. I believed there were compounds present in these trees that would not only help defend plants and crops, but humans as well," says Poulis, who completed his PhD at UVic in 2004.

Early on during his research, Poulis sensed that some commercial applications may emerge from his work. His hunch came true last February when his research inspired the start-up of a biotechnology company developing innovative medical and cosmetic products.

"My research has always been guided by product-driven discovery and I've really enjoyed transferring my research from the lab into a commercial setting," he says.

The Okanagan, BC, native has had a lifelong interest in forestry, working as a forest firefighter during the summer breaks to support himself through university.

His PhD studies in proteomics focused on conifer ovular secretions. During pollination, plants are extremely susceptible to pathogen attack. Whether the pollen is being delivered by insects, animals, or simply the wind, it arrives at the female cones along with an assortment of bacteria, fungi, and viruses.

To combat these potentially devastating invaders, plants have evolved a unique set of defensive systems. In flowering plants, the nectar produced to attract pollinators contains proteins that produce defensive conditions.

But until Poulis began to delve

SEE YOUNG INNOVATOR P.8

UVic researchers join giant computer grid

Over $4.3 million in new funding will link University of Victoria researchers to a powerful computer consortium that spans Western Canada and connects to a national network providing high performance resources to member institutions.

The grant—awarded by the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council will enhance UVic's existing high performance computing (HPC) facilities.

Current research ranges from simulating the Earth and its climate and probing the fundamental nature of matter and the structure of the universe, to simulating fuel cell concepts for faster introduction of clean energy technologies, and studying the computer grid itself.

"This funding will integrate UVic's high performance facilities with WestGrid, a consortium of seven universities in four western provinces, giving our researchers access to the computational resources of the member facilities," says Nikitas Dimopoulos, chair of the electrical and computer engineering department.

"Through integration with WestGrid we also join Compute Canada, an umbrella organization representing the high performance computing community in the country. We will gain, in effect, 6,000 additional colleagues across Canada who can, in turn, access the significant resources and data now housed at UVic."

The university will receive over $3.1 million for equipment and more than $1.2 million for operating expenses. UVic will use the funds to add significant capability in the computational and storage facilities it houses, and to provide easy and effective access to them.

Over the past several years, rapid developments in HPC technology have revolutionized the way research is done. Capable of performing calculations thousands of times faster than a regular desktop computer, HPC technology can produce results in a single day that would normally take a year or more.

HPC resources have now become essential to advancing research frontiers in all research areas from health sciences and engineering, to natural, social and human sciences.

UVic scientist awarded space fellowship

by Beth Haysom

For UVic space scientist Scott Chapman, the joy of astrophysics has much to do with the possibility of discovery.

"I like being able to find out completely new things about the universe," says Chapman, recently awarded a three-year space science fellowship by the Canadian Space Agency for research on distant galaxies.

The Canadian Space Agency awards two fellowships a year to promising scientists who are conducting space research in an area which is deemed "to promote the peaceful use and development of space through science."

Chapman, 35, has already experienced the thrill of discovery. While working for the Carnegie Observatories in Pasadena and the California Institute of Technology, he led a team of the first few space scientists to observe and pinpoint a new class of galaxies forming stars 1,000 times more rapidly than our own Milky Way. These galaxies are about 10 billion light years away and usually obscured by the dust cocoons surrounding the young, forming stars.

The galaxies, dubbed the submillimetre (submm) galaxies because they were originally identified by the James Clerk Maxwell submillimetre telescope on Mauna Kea in Hawaii, appear to be gas-rich galaxies that are colliding and merging.

"It was really exciting; all of a sudden we were looking at a new population of galaxies during a time in the universe when these galaxies were forming the vast majority of their stars. Studying them may unlock some of the mysteries surrounding the origins of large galaxies around us today," says Chapman.

Now using X-ray and infrared space telescopes (the Chandra and the Spitzer space telescopes), along with radio telescopes on the ground, scientists are able to peer through the dust to see what is going on in the deepest recesses of galaxies, understanding their detailed astrophysics for the first time.

Chapman is using his fellowship award of $180,000 to hone techniques for observing these dusty galaxies from space in collaboration with Canadian Space Agency scientists and NASA. There are plans for one of the submm-wave space telescopes to be placed on an upcoming space mission scheduled for 2012.

From far to nearer, Chapman, who teaches graduate students, is also fascinated by Andromeda, our nearest large neighbour galaxy that is easily visible to the naked eye. Although similar to our own galaxy, Andromeda appears to have been broadsided and blown apart by another galaxy about eight to 10 billion years ago.

"UVic is an excellent base for this kind of research," says Chapman. "It has one of the strongest departments in galactic studies in Canada."

Fish fly, not fry on undersea molten ponds

by Christine Roulston

It may seem like something from another planet but fish that skip across pools of molten sulphur do exist and have been captured on video in the western Pacific.

The newly discovered flatfish, which thrive around sulphur ponds caused by underwater volcanoes, are the subject of research by University of Victoria ocean scientists Drs. John Dower and Verena Tunnicliffe.

"No one has ever found flatfish in a hydrothermal area and no one expected to see them in such abundance," says Dower. "In some cases there were a few hundred fish per square metre sitting on the bottom near the sulphur pools." The team also observed a few fish sitting on the molten sulphur and then moving off unharmed.

The footage was captured during three research voyages, the most recent in May, using remote submersibles along the Mariana Arc, a 1,200 km chain of underwater volcanoes and islands between Guam and Japan. Numerous hydrothermal vents occur in the area, where water becomes hot and mixes with toxic heavy metals.

Dower and Tunnicliffe were part of the expedition sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Ocean Exploration Program, a scientific and educational outreach program.

The UVic team will describe the fish's behaviour and their ecology in a forthcoming journal paper.

"We're hoping to learn more about how they manage to stand the temperatures on these sulphur ponds and also what they eat to support themselves," says Dower. The researchers believe the flatfish live off small invertebrates in the sediment and "deadfalls" of normal ocean fish that are killed by the volcanic plume and fall to the seafloor.

UVic biology master's student Jen Tyler will be focusing on how exactly the fish nourish themselves.

In the spring, Dower and Tunnicliffe will travel to New Zealand to study another volcanic arc off the country's north coast where they believe the same distinctive flatfish resides.

VERENA TUNNICLIFFE

New flatfish.

Strategic plan renewal update

Following the release of the draft renewed strategic plan on Nov. 1, the planning and priorities committee received feedback from approximately 30 individuals and groups. Senators also provided feedback at the Dec. 1 senate meeting. After meeting in December to review and consider the comments received, the committee made a number of revisions to the draft plan. The final renewed strategic plan will be presented to the senate for approval on Jan. 12, followed by the board of governors. Once approved, the plan will be distributed widely within the university and the external community.

DIANA NETHERCOTT

Weaver and one of the school weather stations.

School weather stations expand across Vancouver Island

University of Victoria climatologist Dr. Andrew Weaver is one of the world's foremost leaders on climate change and is among a handful of scientists working on the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's next assessment, due for release early next month.

But on top of his international duties, Weaver is devoted to an important mission closer to home—turning Vancouver Island public school students on to science through an educational network of weather stations.

Since 2005, Weaver and UVic colleague Ed Wiebe have installed the weather stations at more than 70 schools in Victoria, Saanich, Sooke, Nanaimo, Parksville and Qualicum. Over the next few months, Weaver plans to install an additional 12 stations at schools in those areas, as well as in Port Renfrew and on Lasqueti Island.

"We've had requests from schools across the island," says Weaver, who shows students how to use the weather station data and helps teachers integrate the weather stations into their curriculum. "It's really rewarding to see the kids get excited with the science of weather."

Each weather station consists of a series of small, solar-powered instrument packages mounted on the school roof. The instruments provide real-time measurements of temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction, precipitation, solar and UV radiation, and atmospheric pressure.

Wireless technology sends the data from each station to classrooms across the school district and to a central computer in Weaver's lab at UVic. There, the information is compiled and displayed graphically via the Internet at **www.victoriaweather.ca**.

The network is catching on fast with web browsers looking for weather information more specific to their neighbourhood. During last November's snowstorm, for example, the website logged 73,123 visitors in a week—that's more than 10,000 visitors a day.

The Victoria Micro Meteorological Weather Network is funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and NEC Corporation with in-kind support from Davis Instruments Corp and School Districts 61, 62, 63, 68, 69 and 79.

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Aroundthering

United Way campus reaches goal—and then some

The 2006 UVic United Way campus campaign concluded in December, surpassing its goal and reaching a record $229,996. "More people gave this year and donors gave more than ever before. It's extremely gratifying to make this sort of contribution to the Greater Victoria community," says campaign chair Dr. Penny Codding (chemistry). Several individual events contributed to the campaign. The McPherson library book sale raised just over $5,000, and the Engineering Student Society's Bug Push added a further $3,000. According to Codding, groups such as the Chemistry Students' Society, the Commerce Students' Society, the Hearts and Hands Craft Fair organizers, and departments that staged events or organized raffles, went above and beyond to make the campaign a success.

The write stuff, en français

Parlez-vous français? If so, the fourth annual French Writing Marathon is for you. Francophones and francophiles from across campus will gather on Jan. 12 to write creatively in a variety of styles for 12 hours straight. The marathon is open to all French-speaking faculty and staff. To sign up for one or all of the many workshops contact Hélène Poulin at lnpoulin@uvic.ca.

New book describes First Nations partnerships

Supporting Indigenous Children's Development: Community University Partnerships is a new book by Jessica Ball and Alan Pence (child and youth care). The book describes nearly 20 years of partnerships between the school and 10 groups of First Nations in BC and Saskatchewan. The program was recognized by UNESCO as one of 20 best practices in the world that incorporate Indigenous knowledge in education. Partner communities experienced higher rates of student retention, completion and subsequent career development within graduates' home communities compared to any previous post-secondary education for community members. For more information about the book visit the UBC Press website at www.ubcpress.ca/.

UN climate conference inspires action

by Christine Roulston

University of Victoria student Naomi Devine returned last fall from the 12th annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with a mission—to act locally in the fight against climate change.

The conference, held in Nairobi, Kenya, saw 6,000 participants from 180 countries meet to discuss pressing environmental issues affecting the globe. Devine attended the conference as a member of the Canadian Youth Delegation, a group of 21 young Canadians emphasizing education, action and leadership on climate change.

Devine's trip was sponsored by UVic, the Sierra Club of Canada BC Chapter, and the BC Sustainable Energy Association.

"Canada's position on the world stage has slipped since last year's conference on climate change held in Montreal. As youth, we must now fill Canada's climate leadership void and make sure climate change is not swept under the political carpet," says Devine, an environmental studies and political science student.

At the conference, Devine chose to attend the "post-2012" discussions, which involved reviewing the Kyoto Protocol and developed countries' commitment to the protocol after the year 2012. Youth delegates also met with federal Environment Minister Rona Ambrose, representatives from various non-governmental organizations and official opposition critics.

While the conference dealt with global issues, it also emphasized to Devine the importance of national and local actions on a world stage.

"I think it's important to bring what I learned as part of a global process back to Victoria and see how we can effect change locally and send messages back to government," she says.

Over the next year, Devine will be a key player in the Common Energy project, a network of students, staff, and faculty working with community partners to make UVic a catalyst for the development of a sustainable and climate-friendly region. Devine is director of the UVic Sustainability Project, which launched Common Energy in November.

"Climate change is such a complex, pervasive problem. It feels so big, so it's easy to make people feel powerless," says Devine. "Common Energy is one way for people to come together and take advantage of the university's unique resources, talent pool and place in the community."

For more on Common Energy, visit www.commonenergy.org.

DIANA NETHERCOTT

Stockwell

Message in a bottle

Researchers look to alcohol sales for clues to substance abuse in British Columbia

by Jennifer Cador

Ask any roomful of people to stand if they or someone close to them have ever had a problem with alcohol, and you'll likely end up with everyone in the room on their feet.

There's no question that alcohol spells trouble for many, and that's where psychologist Dr. Tim Stockwell comes in. As director of the Centre for Addictions Research (CARBC) at the University of Victoria, Stockwell is examining drinking patterns and their consequences across the province.

It's part of a major pilot project initiated by Health Canada and led by CARBC to monitor alcohol, drug and tobacco use on a national level. Part of that process includes studying liquor consumption habits in BC— as measured by alcohol sales—to calculate per capita rates of alcohol consumption, area by area.

"We use demographic data to work out what the average is per person in each area, and we're putting that up on the CARBC website," says Stockwell.

The information comes directly from liquor licensing authorities and is broken down into 28 colour-coded areas so that it's easy to identify where the heaviest drinking is going on, and how one area compares to another.

Of course, some areas can be tricky to measure. "There are tourism areas where the local rates appear to be very inflated," Stockwell explains. "For example, around Tofino it's much higher than the rest of the island. That's because sales are divided by the number of residents, making it look like a lot of alcohol is being drunk by a very few people. We have to factor that out."

So who are BC's biggest drinkers? You might think it would be people in major centres, such as Vancouver or Victoria. But, in fact, south coasters tend to tipple less than their northern neighbours. "In northern BC we see higher consumption than in the rest of the province," observes Stockwell.

Why? There's no definitive answer yet, but getting to the root of these patterns is one of the main reasons for the project.

There is a need, explains Stockwell, to collect consistent and reliable data to identify where the worrisome consumption trends are. Then policy-makers, health authorities and the public can come up with solutions to persistent substance abuse problems.

CARBC will play an active role in finding solutions by using the data collected to evaluate alcohol and drug policies. For example, if there was a move to privatize alcohol sales, as in Alberta, CARBC could evaluate the implications.

Stockwell is on familiar ground. Until arriving at UVic two years ago, he headed Australia's National Drug Research Institute. It was his successes there that drew Health Canada's interest.

"We used the data to evaluate big policy changes, such as changes in alcohol tax, and they [Health Canada] said 'We need this for Canada.'"

The BC Pilot Alcohol and Other Drug Monitoring Project is funded by the federal and provincial governments, including the Michael Smith Foundation and the Provincial Health Services Authority. Funding for the measurement of BC alcohol use patterns comes directly from the BC Mental Health and Addictions Research Network.

FastFacts

BC alcohol sales data show the Stikine and northern Rockies regions as having the highest alcohol consumption rates. Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley have the lowest. To compare alcohol consumption rates in your area with the rest of the province, visit the CARBC website at www.carbc.uvic.ca/research.htm.

A 2004 CARBC survey showed that almost 75 per cent of reported alcohol consumption in BC was above Canada's low-risk drinking guidelines.

President's

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS 2006

Stars in our midst

by Beth Haysom

Four individuals and a four-member team have won the fifth annual President's Distinguished Service Awards, which were announced at the president's holiday reception in December.

The awards were created in 2002 to honour the achievements of UVic's 4,000 staff members.

"Each of these UVic employees demonstrates exceptional dedication to their work resulting in an enriched university experience for us all," said UVic President David Turpin. "Their contributions make UVic a great place to learn, live and work and generate benefits for the campus community and beyond."

Employees are nominated in two categories. The Award for Distinguished Service honours employees for their contributions to the university's learning and working environment. The Team Award for Innovation goes to a team or group for innovations that improve an educational, administrative or organizational process.

This year, the selection committee received 22 nominations for the Award for Distinguished Service and six nominations for the Team Award for Innovation. Each recipient received a framed certificate.

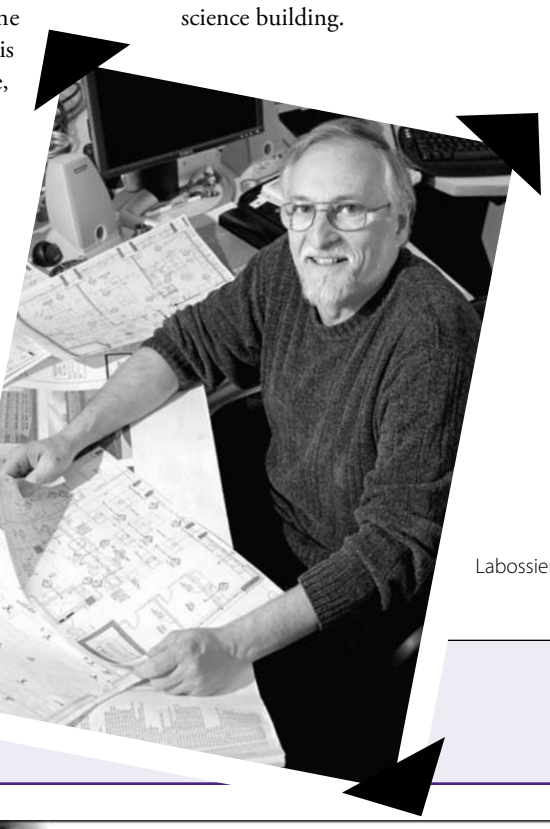
From his earliest days in the UVic army huts to planning the new science building, **Albert Labossiere** has been the behind-the-scenes planner and designer who makes things work no matter what.

"Labo," as he is affectionately known after more than 30 years with the university, is little short of "a magician," say colleagues in the biochemistry and microbiology department where he works as technical services manager.

Labossiere is someone who goes way beyond his electronics technician role, helping researchers or laboratory instructors needing a new instrument to achieve a research or teaching goal. "He always goes the extra mile, quickly and effectively expanding his expertise to meet new needs," says John Hall, the department's administrative officer.

During his lengthy service, Labossiere has kept everything on track, often working well past regular hours to maintain or repair vital scientific equipment. A survey during the '90s estimated that Labossiere and his staff saved the department over $350,000 in equipment repairs, service calls and service contracts annually.

A talented planner, Labossiere is credited with contributing to the successful construction of the Petch Building, the UVic aquatic facility and the future new science building.



Labossiere

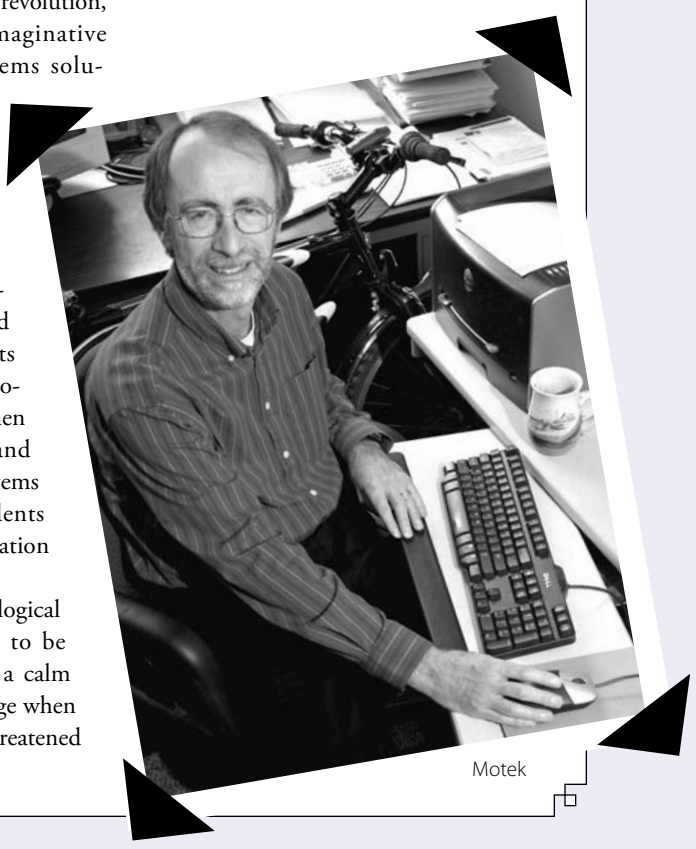
For 29 years **Michael Motek** has been Mr. Technology at UVic where, as software development officer, he has assisted the university to navigate technology as it evolves from its earliest systems to the latest Nova installations.

During this technological revolution, Motek has contributed imaginative and well-constructed systems solutions to address a myriad of UVic business process challenges.

Among "Michael's modules" are: Tel Reg, the phone-in registration system (the precursor to online registration); AutoReg, a sophisticated process for moving students from a class waitlist and automatically registering them when spaces become available; and Convroll and CermRoll, systems that allow graduating students to organize all their convocation needs online.

More than just a technological marvel, Motek has proven to be an inspirational leader and a calm voice in a crisis. Taking charge when a hidden bug in the system threatened to ruin convocation for hundreds of students and their families, he solved the problem in the nick of time.

"We could not have done it without him," says Alison Ducharme, director of university ceremonies and events.



Motek

Distance Education Services Online Help Desk team members Manesh Bhathella, Katy Chan, Susan Doner and Keith Webster are "the invisible people" who help to bridge the technological gap between instructors and students whether they are on campus or thousands of miles away.

The Online Help Desk, established in September 1996, supports thousands of distance students in three undergraduate degree programs, three graduate degree programs, eight certificate programs and ad hoc online distance courses developed by individual departments or faculties.

Dozens of grateful messages are testimony to how much the team's calm, highly-professional and expert assistance is appreciated, especially at crucial times, such as the day they helped to troubleshoot a technological glitch in an online exam program.

"Most of us wouldn't know if we were standing beside a member of this team while we wait in line at the cafeteria to buy our cup of coffee," says Dean of Human and Social Development Mary Ellen Purkis.

"Because of their work, they permit all of us engaged in teaching students to do our work so well; to engage in the exchange of interesting and important knowledge with students and colleagues right here on our doorstep—or living half a continent away."

Left to right: Doner, Chan, Webster and Bhathella (seated).

As a co-op coordinator in the Engineering, and Computer Science/Math Co-op Program, **Toni Garrett** has touched the lives of thousands of students, many of whom believe she was pivotal in their successful careers.

"Everyone has a good Toni story to tell," says student Kevin Garwood, who credits Garrett with saving him from the potentially harmful behaviour of obsessive studying.

Passionate about her role, Garrett has made a point of visiting each student in the program under her care at their worksite, whether in Vancouver, Ottawa, Calgary or beyond. She even took to a snowmobile to reach students working in the Northwest Territories.

"By her devotion to the university and the students, Toni Garrett has provided the university with a human face and that has greatly benefited students as they adjust to their academic challenges," says David Goodenough, senior research scientist at the Pacific Forestry Centre, which regularly employs UVic co-op students.

Recently, Garrett has been focusing her talents on helping international students and has developed a personable and creative technique for helping foreign students improve their language and written skills through regular "pen-pal" correspondence.

Garrett

Manager of counselling services **Joe Parsons** has never been too busy to lend an ear to students, staff and colleagues.

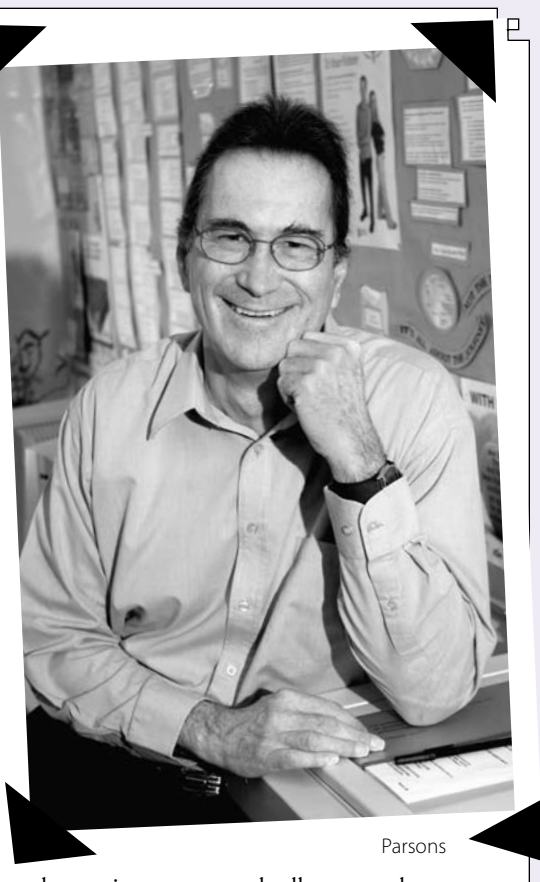
Since arriving at UVic in 1980, Parsons has supported the mental well-being of students through initiatives such as the Peer Helping Program and the BC Campus Project, addressing mental health issues and the impact of substance abuse on campus.

As part of his demanding portfolio, Parsons has also helped to develop and coordinate UVic's Learning Skills Course that helps students become better learners while coping with the challenges of the university environment.

"ThinkFast," a software program developed by Parsons, has helped countless students to develop fluency with basic facts and terms in their courses and has been adopted in a variety of courses around the world.

But it's not just what he does but how he does it, say Parsons colleagues. His ability to "stand beside, rather than teach in front of the learner," has impacted the lives of thousands of students and many staff and faculty members.

However busy, Parsons is always willing to stop and talk to a student, says David Polson, a faculty member in the psychology department. "Joe has never forgotten what it's like to be a student. He's sympathetic to their concerns. He's been on a mission to improve their lives, and he has."



Parsons

All photos by UVic Photo Services

NURSING CELEBRATES THREE DECADES OF EDUCATION

by Christine McLaren

The arrival of 2007 marked the end of a special year for the University of Victoria's School of Nursing, which celebrated its 30th birthday in 2006.

The school was established against all odds on March 23, 1976. It took countless letters to the editor by prominent nurses and sustained pressure from the Registered Nurses of BC to persuade the government to create the school. A budget of $165,000 was decried as "appalling" at a time when $50 million was being spent on the expansion of UBC's medical school.

The first nursing course description was called "eerie, somewhat Pavlovian, clockwork orangy" by senate member David Henn in an article from *The Ring* dated Dec. 10, 1975. But determination prevailed and in 1978, 25 BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) students formed the first graduating class.

No strangers to adversity, nurses continue to hold a vital place in today's changing health care environment.

"Despite all the 'noise' about a crisis facing the health care system, nurses are at the bedside and in the community every day delivering effective care," says Dr. Mary Ellen Purkis, dean of human and social development. "The future of Canada's increasingly integrated health services sector relies on professionals who work well together in interprofessional teams. Our nursing school continues to show real leadership in this area."

The school celebrated its anniversary in 2006 with the introduction of an Alumni Award of Excellence. Darlene McGougan, BSN '98, is the first recipient. She's currently the manager of nursing for Aboriginal health at the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

McGougan

"I don't do what I do alone and I couldn't do it without the education,"said McGougan, who also shared the wisdom that "for Aboriginal people, you are the medicine if you bring a good heart".

Jane Milliken, interim director of the school and master of ceremonies for the anniversary celebration, said in her address: "It's no wonder that we can be proud of what we have accomplished in just three short decades, with so many dedicated people all contributing to our success. Our school continues to demonstrate a commitment to generating knowledge and advancing the nursing profession to improve health for individuals, families, communities, and society."

For more information on the school visit http://nursing.uvic.ca.

New research chair continued from p.1

and Aboriginal people's health.

"I'm looking forward to developing a multidisciplinary approach," says Ostry, who is based in UVic's geography department.

Ostry expects to continue collaborating with leading health researchers in other regional universities. He is director of a Canadian Institutes of Health Research "New Emerging Team," funded by a $1.5 million grant to promote research on the social dimensions of community health in BC. It involves partnerships with scholars at UBC, Thompson Rivers University and the University of Northern British Columbia.

Ostry has also developed international research partnerships with the School of Population Health at the University of Melbourne.

"Canada is something of a world leader in the social determinants of health," says Ostry, who regularly travels throughout North America and overseas to promote greater awareness of his projects.

Another aspect of Ostry's health research is work balance and the effects of workplace stress. "Unfortunately, I don't practise what I preach enough," says Ostry, who is looking forward to redressing the balance by kayaking, hiking and exploring Victoria-area mountains.

To date, UVic has been awarded 34 Canada Research Chairs out of its total allocation of 35.

Calendar highlights

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

At the Galleries

www.maltwood.uvic.ca
721-6562

Touching Ground: Mexico to British Columbia. Until March 30. A collection of works highlighting Mexican and BC landscapes. Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery.

Minutia. Until Jan. 12. Robert Kelly, artist. An installation that demonstrates the beauty of detail in the English language. McPherson Library Gallery.

Art Education Faculty 27th Anniversary. A diverse selection of drawings, paintings, prints, ceramics, sculpture and light displays. Jan. 16 to Feb. 16. McPherson Library Gallery.

At the Theatres

www.phoenixtheatres.ca
721-8000

One-Man Star Wars Trilogy. Jan. 25–Feb. 3. UVic theatre grad Charles Ross returns to with his tour-de-force performance that has enthralled audiences across North America.

Friday, January 5

Fridaymusic 12:30 p.m. School of music students in a program for various instruments. MacLaurin B125. **721-7904**

Wednesday, January 10

Physics & Astronomy 3:30 p.m. *Modelling the Global Climate System: Reproducing History and Forecasting the Future.* Greg Flato, Canadian Centre for Climate Modelling and Analysis. Elliott 062. **721-7700**

Centre for Studies in Religion & Society 4 p.m. *Responses of the Major Religions to Genetically Modified Animals*. Harold Coward, UVic. Strong C116. **721-6695**

Friday, January 12

Learning & Teaching Centre workshop 12 p.m. *Alumni Awards for Excellence in Teaching: Tips for Nominators.* Co-sponsored by the UVic Alumni Assoc. Hickman 128. **721-8571**

Fridaymusic 12:30 p.m. School of music keyboard students. MacLaurin B125. **721-7904**

Wednesday, January 17

Physics & Astronomy 3:30 p.m. *Neurophysics: Unraveling Your Brain's Dynamics.* André Longtin, Univ. of Ottawa. Elliott 062. **721-7700**

Friday, January 19

Fridaymusic 12:30 p.m. School of music brass students. MacLaurin B125. **721-7904**

Wednesday, January 24

Centre for Studies in Religion & Society 4 p.m. *Religion, Suicide Bombing and the Politics of Coercion.* Conrad Brunk, UVic. Strong C116. **721-6695**

When is the next *Ring?*

Calendar items should be sent by 4 p.m. on the copy deadline date shown below to UVic Communications (Sedgewick C149, fax 721-8955, e-mail ucom@uvic.ca) or entered into the online calendar (www.uvic.ca/events). For information call 721-7636.

Publication Date	Copy Deadline
Thursday, February 1	Wednesday, January 24
Thursday, March 1	Wednesday, February 21
Thursday, April 5	Wednesday, March 28
Thursday, May 3	Wednesday, April 25

Business co-op student wows Chinese employer

by Dianne George

DiCastri does a celebratory breakdance in Shanghai's financial district.

Fourth-year business student Nick DiCastri is no stranger to breaking new ground, whether on home turf or abroad.

Here at home, he has co-founded ACE Victoria (Advancing Canadian Entrepreneurship) for business students. He's also the first UVic co-op student ever hired by the Shanghai branch of the Standard Chartered Bank (SCB).

He impressed his employers to such a degree that they nominated him for the UVic Business Co-op Student of the Year award. "I've never met an intern with so much passion, drive and competence," says DiCastri's supervisor John Bowen, head of cash management sales for China.

Worldwide, Standard Chartered employs about 50,000 people. Because of DiCastri's abilities, he was asked to lead the team organizing the bank's participation in the EuroFinance conference, which is attended by more than 170 of the world's largest companies.

In his spare time DiCastri also helped two UVic classmates organize a hip-hop launch party for a charity they had created to help malnourished rural Chinese children.

"I'm honoured to have been selected as this year's award recipient," says DiCastri, who returns home this month to accept his award after completing an exchange term with the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing.

"I'm very grateful for the generosity of the TD Financial Group and would like to thank the members of SCB, the business faculty, and the business co-op office for all their help and support during my co-op placement."

Students are nominated by their employer and evaluated on their contributions to the company, UVic, the business co-op and career centre, and to the community. Each student must also maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 6.5.

To be considered for the award, the candidates must also write a letter describing their work-term experiences. Twenty-four of the nominees wrote letters and DiCastri's was chosen as the best submission.

As the award winner, DiCastri receives $1,000 from the TD Bank Financial Group and is invited to represent UVic in the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education Canada-wide search for its co-op student-of-the-year.

Storm damage clean-up to take weeks

The winter storms that wreaked havoc on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland throughout November and December left their mark on the University of Victoria as well.

The campus was closed for only the second time in its history on Nov. 27 after wet, heavy snow and icy streets brought down trees and made travel treacherous. Facilities management crews plowed out campus roads, parking lot entrances and some pathways but BC Transit buses could not navigate many routes, prompting the closure.

No sooner had the snow melted than a series of windstorms caused more damage, bringing down a half dozen campus trees along with heavy limbs and branches. In the wake of the most serious storm on Dec. 15, the campus jogging trails and Mystic Vale were closed for several days due to fallen debris and the threat that more trees could topple.

Calling the storms "nature's way of pruning," grounds manager Bentley Sly says that his crews will be conducting some post-storm major pruning over the next couple of months for "the shape and the health of the trees."

In the aftermath of the snowstorm, there were concerns about severe damage in Finnerty Gardens but Sly says that the plants "have a way of refurbishing themselves . . . given time and better weather." Sly says the storm aftermath presents opportunities to collect cuttings to start new plants to replace those lost in arguably the worst storm season on record.

Ringers

Pauline van den Driessche has been chosen to deliver the Olga Taussky Todd Lecture at the 2007 International Congress on Industrial and Applied Mathematics in Zurich this July. The honour, sponsored by the Association of Women In Science and European Women in Mathematics, is conferred on a woman who has made outstanding contributions in applied mathematics and/or scientific computation. Van den Driessche is one of Canada's leading applied mathematicians and is known for her work on disease transmission mathematical models. The mathematical tools she has developed have been applied by her and others to multi-city disease dynamics, HIV-AIDS control, and more recently, West Nile virus outbreak predictions.

Dr. **Andrea McKenzie** (history) was recently awarded two prizes by the American Society for Legal History for an article that explores the practice of the peine, the pressing to death with heavy weights of accused criminals who refused to plead to their indictments in 17th- and 18th-century England. It was the first time in the history of the society that an article has won both prizes. McKenzie received the Surrency Prize, which is awarded annually for the best article published in the Society's journal, the *Law and History Review,* in the previous year. She was also awarded the Sutherland Prize, which is awarded annually for the best article on English legal history published in the previous year.

Professor emeritus Dr. **Wolfgang Hoefer** (electrical and computer engineering) will receive an honorary degree from the Technical University of Munich in his native Germany in July. The honour recognizes his "exceptional scientific and technical contributions to the theory of electromagnetic fields." Hoefer was also recently elevated to the rank of "Life Fellow" of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). This honour occurs when the chronological age and the years of membership of an IEEE Fellow add up to 100 years.

Swans Brewpub, the landmark Old Town building left to UVic as part of the Michael Williams estate, has been named the 2006 "Brewpub of the Year" by the Canadian Brewing Association. Swans brewer Andrew Tessier also received seven national awards and medals for his special suds. In a blind taste test, judges bestowed gold medals on Swans' Buckerfields Bitter, Extra IPA, Raspberry Ale and Smooth Sailing Honey Ale. The Appleton Brown Ale and Old Towne Bavarian Lager won silver medals while Riley's Scotch Ale picked up a bronze medal. Over the past four years, Swans has received 16 awards, which contributed to the pub winning national overall honours in 2006. In addition, *Northwest Brewing News* named Swans as the "Best Brewpub in British Columbia."

Young innovator continued from p.1

into this new area of research, it was unknown how conifers protected themselves during these important reproductive events. He discovered that conifers use an array of defensive compounds with antibacterial and antifungal properties. As he purified, identified, and characterized the various compounds, the commercial potential became increasingly clear.

"This was completely novel research," says UVic biologist Dr. Patrick von Aderkas. "Brett certainly deserves this award, as he is singlehandedly responsible for taking the research and developing it for the benefit of others."

Von Aderkas is Poulis' past academic advisor and now business partner in the company FloraPure BioSciences Inc. The company's research to date has focused on developing methods to produce and purify these defensive compounds and incorporate them into cosmetic and medicinal applications such as skin-based therapies and unique and cost-effective antibiotics.

A day in the life

A DAY IN THE LIFE of Graham Donachie is more than pushing a cart to deliver the mail. He's been a mail clerk at UVic for 12 years. Previously he worked for more than 20 years with the Royal Mail in Dundee, Scotland.

Starting at 7 a.m., cages full of mail left by Canada Post are sorted. Customs forms on overseas packages are handled, as are priority, express, registered and COD items. "Sometimes a package arrives with a minimal address for someone who isn't in the directory," says Donachie, "but we eventually make a connection with the correct department."

Once the first delivery is finished, sorting starts again. Mail picked up is metered and packages checked for secure wrapping. After the second delivery, which includes print shop items, they prepare all mail and parcels for Canada Post to pick up in the afternoon.

"I love my job," he says. "I get to go around to 150 different departments and meet a diverse group of people. In Dundee, I worked with guys, mostly Scots, but here I talk with people from all parts of the world … It's broadened my experience."

Donachie loves the quality of life in Canada. "When I was a postie in the '60s, an old lady on my route would give me *Beautiful BC Magazine* to read. That publication and the lyrics of Gordon Lightfoot are just two of the reasons I eventually came to discover Canada."

UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

Donachie

With a passion for drawing and painting, he attended Victoria College of Art. He works in oils and acrylics, and does freehand drawing. One of his paintings hangs in a private Scots Guard museum in Perthshire, Scotland.

He's also a member of the Club Tread hiking group in Victoria. When not hiking or painting, Donachie writes poetry and stories.

If you would like to participate in this ongoing Day in the Life series, or suggest someone to profile, contact Linda Sproule-Jones at 721-8486 or sproulel@uvic.ca.

Supernova smashes theories

Four University of Victoria astrophysicists were contributors to a paper in a recent edition of *Nature* that is causing quite a stir in astronomical circles.

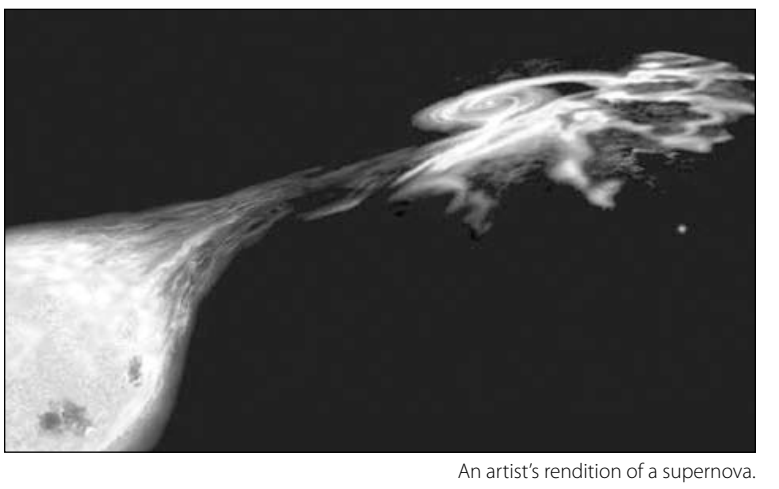
The paper describes how a stellar explosion known as a type 1a supernova is more than two times brighter than accepted theory says it should be. This is significant because these supernovae are used as cosmological beacons—they're very bright and can be seen at large distances—to measure the expansion of the universe.

"These supernovae are the lynchpin in the measurement of dark energy in the universe—arguably the most exciting development in cosmology in the last century," says UVic astrophysicist Dr. Chris Pritchet, one of the paper's authors.

The problem is, no one is sure how type 1a supernovae are born. Two popular theories involve "white dwarf stars"—the corpses of dead stars that have a mass roughly one million times higher than the density of water. Both theories rely on the assumption that a white dwarf star can never exceed the so-called "Chandrasekhar mass"—roughly 1.4 times the mass of the sun.

But now—using software designed by the UVic team—an international group of astronomers has discovered a type 1a supernova that reached a whopping 2.2 solar masses before it exploded.

"There are several possible explanations," says Pritchet, "but the bottom line is that this observation poses problems for conventional theories. This is a really big deal in the supernova community—it's a first clue to the nature of stars that turn into these types of supernovae."



An artist's rendition of a supernova.