



Photo by David Gray

More than 1,000 gathered at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre to launch UBC's fundraising campaign.

# Reports

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.

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## GO B.C. awards Crane \$150,000 for taping

By GAVIN WILSON

GO B.C., a provincial government agency, has made a special award of \$150,000 to Crane Memorial Library to replace badly needed audio taping equipment.

GO B.C. is a capital funding program that distributes proceeds of the B.C. Lottery Corp. The award came after Crane had made an urgent appeal for additional funding.

Equipment failures at the library had disrupted production of taped textbooks,

research material and exams for the university's 35 blind and visually disabled students. The breakdowns also affected services for distance users throughout B.C. and Canada.

"Needless to say, we are absolutely delighted," said Paul Thiele, Crane head.

The funding proposal was submitted to GO B.C. by the Kinsmen Club of Vancouver, Thiele said. The Crane project was recently tied to the university's major fundraising campaign, coordinated by the Development Office.

The funds will help replace duplicators used to make high-speed, multiple copies of texts and other research material on cassettes. The taped texts, called talking books, form the largest part of Crane's collection.

"This new equipment will provide a better product for the students and make better use of the volunteers who contribute their time," Bill Reid, minister responsible for the Premier's Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities, said in a news release.

### \$100,000 annually

## Rotary supports research for deaf

By GREG DICKSON

Financial support from the Rotary Club of Vancouver will help UBC to become a center for research into special implants that help the deaf hear.

The club hopes to raise more than \$100,000 annually through its Rotary Hearing Foundation to support the research of Dr. Dietrich Schwarz, who has been working on improvements in cochlear implant technology.

The cochlear implant device looks like a hearing aid, but the most important component cannot be seen because it is surgically inserted in the inner ear. An external microphone picks up sounds much like a hearing aid, but those sounds are then coded by a speech processor and relayed to the implant which stimulates nerve fibres in the inner ear electrically. The nerves then send sound messages to the brain.

"People who were completely deaf can now receive useful hearing," Dr. Schwarz told a news conference to announce the Rotary funding.

Dr. Patrick Doyle, a UBC physician who heads the cochlear implant team at St. Paul's Hospital, said the implants are a step forward but don't work for everybody.

"At least half (the patients) can understand some speech without lip reading and can use the telephone. About a third

can understand sounds so well that they can carry on in the hearing world," he said.

The sounds heard with the help of the implant have been compared with the sound of a weak radio signal. With the help of funding from Rotary, Dr. Doyle said UBC hopes to refine the technology.

"Our main goal is to see improvements in the machinery that will allow the totally deaf to hear speech in a normal manner," he said.

Ruth Mathers of West Vancouver had the first implant operation in Canada two years ago. The 60-year-old businesswoman lost her hearing in the early 1970s. With the help of cochlear implant technology she was able to attend the news conference and answer reporters' questions.

"I'm hearing your words clearly, but your voice sounds very mechanical. I've gotten used to it," she told a journalist.

Mathers said being unable to hear was frightening. Now she can answer the phone or carry on a normal conversation, even in a noisy restaurant.

### \$750,000 centre will be built at VGH

By GREG DICKSON

Construction will start soon on a \$750,000 UBC Medical Student and Alumni Center at Vancouver General Hospital.

"The centre will be a unique forum for professional and educational development," said Campaign Co-chairman Dr. Curtis Latham.

The facility will include meeting space

See CENTRE on Page 2

# Gala evening kicks off fund raising

By GAVIN WILSON

UBC launched the largest fund raising campaign in Canadian history Monday with news of a \$10-million private donation and \$75-million in additional government funding.

The target is \$132-million, including \$66-million in B.C. government matching funds, Campaign Chairman Robert Wyman announced at a black tie dinner at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre.

See CAMPAIGN on Page 2

## New strategy on education announced by Hagen

By GREG DICKSON

A new post-secondary education strategy that will create 15,000 additional university places, establish full degree-granting programs at three community colleges and lead to the creation of a new university in northern B.C. was announced earlier this week by Advanced Education Minister Stanley Hagen



Hagen

Hagen said the strategy will cost the government \$35.3-million in the first year of operation.

"The Access for All strategy will enable students to earn a recognized university degree at community colleges in Kelowna, Kamloops and Nanaimo," said Hagen.

UBC is completing negotiations with Okanagan College in Kelowna and Cariboo College in Kamloops to offer degrees in those communities.

"UBC with Okanagan College will focus primarily on arts and sciences. At Cariboo College we will focus on arts, sciences and education," said President David Strangway.

See VICTORIA on Page 2

## Hagen gives UBC \$9.6 million grant for new equipment

By GREG DICKSON

UBC will receive \$9.6-million over two years to upgrade equipment under a new grant program announced by Advanced Education Minister Stan Hagen.

President David Strangway said the money hasn't been earmarked for specific purchases, but will be used where needs arise.

"I'm very pleased in view of the serious needs for teaching and research equipment in all parts of the university," he said.

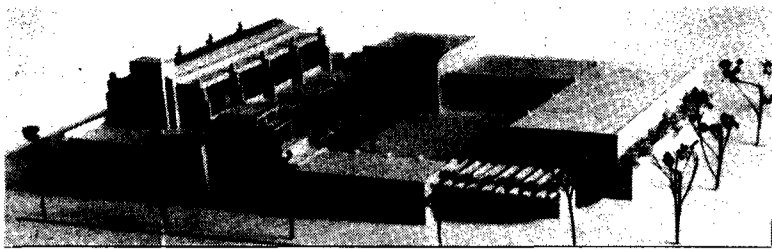
Hagen said a total of \$26.5-million would be provided to B.C. post-secondary institutions under the program.

"The grants represent a major in-

crease in the level of equipment replacement funds," he said. "They will allow post-secondary institutions to acquire the equipment required to train students for B.C.'s rapidly changing technological society."

Hagen said the funds will supplement, not replace, existing equipment spending. He expects universities, colleges and institutes to use the money to provide state-of-the-art instruction.

Post-secondary institutions were encouraged to seek matching contributions from the private sector for equipment purchases. Hagen said he hopes joint-use agreements can be negotiated with related industries.



Architect's model of new Medical Student and Alumni Centre at VGH.

## Centre a component of medical education

Continued from Page 1

for Continuing Medical Education courses and social gatherings, and a dining complex. There will also be a fitness area with a universal gym, showers and lockers for the use of students and alumni.

The building, described as an Oxbridge-type design, will be located at 12th and Heather on land provided by Vancouver General Hospital.

"The centre will provide a key component of continuing medical education

by sponsoring high-profile conferences," said Co-chairman Dr. Richard Beauchamp.

So far, more than \$700,000 has been raised with more than \$40,000 coming from medical students.

Construction of the first phase should be completed by Fall 1990. Eventually, project planners hope to add a state-of-the-art satellite teleconferencing center to link hospitals and doctors in remote locations with the centre for distance education programs.

## Medicine faculty trains doctors from China in treatment of diseases

By GREG DICKSON

UBC's Faculty of Medicine is training Chinese physicians in advanced techniques for treating infectious diseases such as hepatitis.

Dr. Grant Stiver, a professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine, who heads the project, said the Chinese requested help in dealing with Hepatitis B, the leading cause of death due to infection in China.

The three-year exchange program, funded by CIDA, will bring Chinese doctors and health-care workers to Vancouver and will also allow UBC faculty to travel to China where infectious diseases are more common and more easily studied.

Hepatitis is a major health-care problem in China. More than 100-million people carry the virus, and 10-million have developed chronic hepatitis. In severe cases, patients develop liver cancer.

"It's a big problem. Seven to 10 per cent of the Chinese population carry the virus," said Dr. Stiver.

The most common treatment now is rest and traditional medicines. But the Chinese hope to make western drugs and treatments more readily available.

"Vaccines are the real answer," said Dr. Stiver. "But they're costly and China has not been able to produce enough for its huge population."

Participants in the program are examining the effects of two hepatitis vaccines, one developed by the western pharmaceutical company, Merck, Sharpe and Dohm, and another developed in China.

Three senior Chinese physicians, who recently spent a month at Vancouver General Hospital with Dr. Stiver, also studied western strategies for the control and treatment of AIDS.

"We have only four cases of AIDS so far, but we think it's just a matter of time before it spreads," said Dr. Hsin Ho, chief doctor in the Clinical Department at Beijing Second Infectious Disease Hospital. "We're very interested in what is going on in Vancouver in the treatment and prevention of the disease."

Over the three year-span of the project, six junior doctors will be in residence at VGH. They will train at UBC teaching hospitals for six-month periods. One Chinese graduate student will train in Vancouver for two years.

Dr. Stiver said he hoped a joint venture could be worked out between Canada and China to provide a hepatitis vaccine on a wider basis.

## \$44 million raised

# Campaign target \$132 million

Continued from Page 1

Wyman told more than 1,000 guests at the glittering affair that \$44-million has already been raised from the private sector in the initial phase of the campaign, two-thirds of the final goal.

"We are extremely pleased with the response the campaign has received so far," UBC President David Strangway said.

Donations received include a \$10-million gift from a Hong Kong family with ties to Vancouver. The family has requested anonymity.

Gifts contributed during the campaign, which continues through 1990, will go toward new buildings, endowed chairs, scholarships, professorships, facilities and equipment.

Some of the major donations announced at the gala were: \$3.75-million from the Alma Mater Society for the new Student Sports Centre, \$3-million from the Vancouver Foundation and \$1-million from Vancouver businessman W. Maurice Young, who has endowed a chair in applied ethics.

Major corporate donors include: B.C. Telephone, \$1.25-million; Imperial Oil, \$500,000; Maclean Hunter, \$500,000; and Pemberton Securities Inc., \$250,000.

Adding tremendous momentum to these donations is the B.C. government's pledge, made last year, to match dollar-for-dollar contributions made by the private sector.

Speaking at the gala, Premier Bill Vander Zalm announced that the province would provide an additional \$75-million over the next five years in ongoing capital funds for the university.

The funds will help finance three major projects: the Forest Sciences complex that will help make B.C. a world leader in forest management and product development; laboratories for advanced materials and process engineering that will put UBC at the forefront of research into space-age alloys, electronics materials, plastics and superconductors; and a new home for the Centre for Integrated Computer Systems Research.

New construction supported by the fundraising campaign will include a Creative and Performing Arts Centre, with a concert hall that will be used for Convocation ceremonies, an art gallery, studio resources centre and the Walter Koerner Ceramic Gallery; a new Student Sports Centre, which is supported by a \$3.75-million pledge from the UBC Alma Mater Society; and a major new expansion of the library.

"We are proud of UBC and its 75 years of service," Vander Zalm said. "We recognize the important role that post-secondary education has played for British Columbia and the increasingly important role it must play in the future."

Honorary Campaign Chairman Cecil Green, co-founder of Texas Instruments and a former UBC student, also had praise for the campaign's successful launch.

"I'm overwhelmed by the support UBC has received from its friends all over Canada. The levels of individual and corporate giving, especially from western companies, are setting new records for charitable gifts. I am also impressed with the support we are receiving from our friends in Asia," he said.

Campaign Chairman and former chan-

cellor Robert Wyman attributed much of the success to the calibre of people the campaign has been able to attract.

"We have recruited an outstanding Leadership Committee to secure \$66-million in private-sector gifts to the campaign," he said.

UBC alumnus and author Pierre Berton was host of Monday's gala. Pianist Robert Silverman and the University Singers performed a campaign theme song written by Michael Conway Baker and a video highlighting university accomplishments was shown.

Attending the gala were Lt.-Gov. David Lam, Advanced Education Minister Stanleys Hagen, Vancouver Mayor Gordon Campbell, Chancellor Leslie Peterson, Board of Governors Chairman Peter Brown, Alumni President John Diggins and AMS President Mike Lee.

Also attending were provincial cabinet ministers Jack Davis, Howard Dirks, Rita Johnston, Cliff Michael and Elwood Veitch. Other dignitaries included Senator Ed Lawson, Vancouver Centre MP Kim Campbell, MLA Stephen Rogers, Vancouver-Point Grey MLA Darlene Marzari, and Opposition Leader Mike Harcourt.

Another gala evening takes place on March 28 in Toronto to launch the campaign in Central Canada. Berton will again be the host.



Wyman

## French immersion dosen't interfere with learning English, study finds

By GAVIN WILSON

Early French immersion instruction will not interfere with a child's ability to learn to read and write English later in life, says a sessional instructor in the department of language education.

Honey Halpern, formerly an assistant professor at the University of Windsor, bases her conclusion on a recent study she conducted with students at a Vancouver elementary school. Her research will be published in the upcoming issue of the McGill Journal of Education.

"There's a myth out there and it suggests that the very nature of learning a second language such as French is upsetting to English reading skills," said Halpern. "I think this study does much to dispel this myth."

In her research, Halpern tutored six Grade 4 and 5 students who were having difficulties with English classes after taking their first years of schooling in French immersion.

The program aimed to help them become readers as well as investigate the types of reading difficulties encountered by children in early French immersion.

Halpern found a wide variety of reasons for their lack of skills -- physical and emotional maturity, family support, educational programs. But there was no evidence linking the problems with French immersion. They experienced the same range of problems in developing English literacy skills as children not enrolled in the program.

"It's not learning a second language that causes them to have English reading difficulties," she said. In general, these children had problems in French language classes as well.

Halpern said parents of the children told her they had not been reading to their children in English at home because they felt it would confuse the children. Halpern said this mistaken assumption probably added to their difficulties.

She advised parents to relax and have patience if French immersion children are not as advanced in their English skills as others their age. At times, Halpern admitted, they will temporarily make some errors, particularly in spelling.

"A number of parents have said to me that their child is not progressing in English, and then I find out that their child hasn't even had any formal schooling in English. Parents tend to compare their kids with the kids next door. I tell them to be patient and keep reading and writing with them at home.

"Children have their own personal ways of dealing with language. We can't make any oversimplification about the effects of a second language."

## Victoria gives UBC 1,450 graduate places

Continued from Page 1

Strangway supported the new policy which he said would insure wider access to post-secondary education where it is needed. He said the university prefers to see undergraduate opportunities opened up in partnership with community colleges while UBC provides additional graduate-level places.

"We think that is the special role of UBC in this overall package," he said.

Hagen said the 15,000 new, fully funded university spaces will be provided over a six-year period. Of 1,800 new graduate places, 1,450 will be at UBC.

The government's announcement also included a commitment to provide a new degree-granting institution in Prince George.

"The government has approved in

principle the establishment of a self-governing, degree-granting institution for northern British Columbia," Hagen said.

He said the government would provide a special premium to cover the higher costs of providing university programs in the north. A planning group for the project will be appointed within two weeks.

## 50 parking spaces offered for rent

The Department of Parking and Security Services is offering for rent 50 reserved parking spaces at the new North Parkade. The parkade, which will likely be opened after March 31, has a total of 1,000 parking spaces.

To reserve space on an annual basis, phone the department at 228-6786.

### Letters to the Editor

## Recycling costs queried

Editor:

Congratulations are in order regarding the implementation of a recycling campaign on UBC campus, and for the potential savings the recycling venture offers.

It is recognized that there is an additional cost associated with recycling which is referred to in the third to last paragraph (UBC Reports, Feb. 23, 1989) which described how the full cardboard boxes will be emptied into recycling containers. The key sentence is: "Once full, custodial staff will empty them into larger containers located in loading bays of most departments."

My understanding is that there has been no adjustment in the existing work of custodial staff, and in fact the emptying of the boxes will create additional work for staff. The shifting of costs onto the shoulders of those least able to defend themselves is an inappropriate action.

I support the recycling program. I also support the equitable allocation of the costs of the program. Custodial staff need to be involved in the recycling program to ensure that the burden of waste is managed by all in a fair and just manner.

Sharon E. Willms, PhD  
Assistant Professor

*People*

# Cairns wins Killam Fellowship

Political Science Professor Alan Cairns has been awarded a \$53,000 Killam Research Fellowship by the Canada Council.

Cairns, who teaches Canadian politics with an emphasis on federalism and the constitution, is one of 30 Canadian scholars and scientists to win the award.

He will use the fellowship, which is renewable for a second year, to research recent developments in the Canadian constitution and eventually write a book on the subject.

The Canada Council has also renewed Killam Research Fellowships previously awarded to Anthony Merer of Chemistry and Graeme Wynn of Geography.

The Max Bell Foundation has awarded a \$50,000 grant to the Division of Continuing Medical Education in the UBC Faculty of Medicine. The grant will be used to develop continuing education programs for geographically isolated specialists in the Kootenays.

Providing medical education to specialists in remote communities is difficult because they must leave their practices to travel to urban areas where courses are offered.

Dr. Jennifer Craig, an assistant director in the Division of Continuing Education, will work with the Kootenay doctors to help them develop self-directed learning programs.

A clinical librarian will locate and provide journal articles, videotapes and computer assisted learning programs.

UBC pianist Jane Coop can add a Juno award nomination to her long list of credits.

Coop, an associate professor in the School of Music, was nominated for the Canadian music award in the category of Best Classical Album, Solo or Chamber Ensemble, for her recording of "Mozart Piano Pieces."



Coop

The winner in that category, announced during the televised awards ceremony in Toronto March 12, was Ofra Harnoy.

"I think that getting the nomination is almost as important as winning," Coop said. "It means that you are right up there with the best."

The nomination by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences is another accolade for a recording that promises to become Coop's most successful.

Since its release late last year on the independent Skylark label, Mozart Piano Pieces has earned critical raves. Coop is regarded as one of Canada's preeminent exponents of Mozart and she plans to record more of his music.



Froese

Victor Froese, head of the Department of Language Education, has launched a quarterly newsletter Called Comp<sup>2</sup> for writers who use computers.

Named for the first letters of computer and composition, the newsletter is co-edited by Froese and doctoral student Karen Eberdt and partly funded by AT&T Canada Inc.

In the first issue, published in February, the editors say Comp<sup>2</sup> will contain one or two short articles, notices of conferences, abstracts of research and news of products, software and advances in technology.

Five thousand copies of the first edition were printed and distributed to English departments in universities and high schools across the country.

For more information, contact Froese through E-Mail at: CMP2@UBCMTSA or telephone 228-5788.

UBC Bookstore Director John Hedgecock has launched a nationwide gift certificate program for books under the auspices of Book Tokens Canada, a corporate subsidiary of the Canadian Booksellers Association.



Hedgecock

The gift certificates, known as Book Tokens, can be purchased for any amount. The recipient exchanges it to pay for the books. The UBC Bookstore is one of about 300 bookstores across the country participating in the plan.

The program is based on the British Book Tokens system, which has been in place since 1932.

The certificates cost \$1 - 25 cents of which goes to the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation.



Tarrant

Horticulturalist David Tarrant, Education Coordinator for UBC's Botanical Garden, has won an award for his television show, The Canadian Gardener.

Tarrant and co-host Bob Switzer were awarded the TV Week Magazine Viewers' Choice Award in the Best Gardening Show Host category. Their weekly program is broadcast nationally on CBC TV.

Tarrant was host of the popular CBC British Columbia program, The Western Gardener, for five seasons before it evolved into The Canadian Gardener.

A book launch for Tarrant's latest publication will be held April 5 at the Shop-in-the-Garden from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. Tarrant will be on hand to autograph copies of A Year in Your Garden, a month-by-month guide for B.C. gardens.

The Faculty of Education is establishing a memorial scholarship fund in honor of the late Joseph Katz.

A well-known international educator and curriculum scholar, Katz died last November at the age of 77 after a 32-year association with the university.

Katz was also a member of the former Human Rights Commission and an active member of the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C., the main provincial umbrella group for multicultural and immigrant service societies.

The scholarship will be awarded to a graduate student whose interest is in multicultural education. Cheques should be made payable to UBC, designated for Katz and forwarded to the office of Education Dean Nancy Sheehan.

UBC Professor Dr. Tom Perry is the new MLA for the riding of Vancouver-Point Grey.



Perry

The 37-year-old New Democrat, who lectures in the Faculty of Medicine, defeated Socred Michael Levy by more than 7,000 votes.

Dr. Perry made land speculation a major issue in the campaign, calling for a tax to curb the problem.

A byelection was called in the riding after Kim Campbell resigned to seek a federal seat.

## CALENDAR

Continued from Page 4

### Photographic Exhibition

Until Mar. 30. M-F 9-4:30 p.m., S/S 12-4:30 p.m. Jawaharlal Nehru: His Life and Times. Institute of Asian Research, UBC. Organized and sponsored by the Consulate General of India, Vancouver. Free admission. Tracing the life of Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) the first Prime Minister of independent India. Produced by the Ministry of External Affairs, India, the exhibit is comprised of over 160 photographs.

### Musical Performances

Until April 23. 2:30 p.m. The Museum of Anthropology presents a series of Sunday performances, entitled Musica Latina Caliente. For information call 228-5087. Great Hall, Museum of Anthropology.

### Volunteers Needed

We are asking for women 19-60 years old to participate in a UBC research study investigating eye function in depressed patients and control volunteers. Volunteers must not have a past history or family history of depression. Volunteers would have retinal tests done at the VGH Eye Care Centre. The eye tests take about an hour of time and there is no discomfort with the testing. A \$15 stipend is offered. For more information call Dr. R. Lam or Arlene Tompkins at 228-7325.

### Volunteers Needed

Participants wanted immediately for a study of the effectiveness of different coping techniques for managing Public Speaking Anxiety. This is a 3-week training program, offered free through the Department of Psychology, UBC to persons who either avoid or feel very anxious in public speaking situations (e.g. class presentations; public lectures; group discussions). For further information call Aaron at 732-1931.

### Volunteering

To find an interesting and challenging volunteer job, get in touch with Volunteer Connections, the on-campus information and referral service supported by the AMS. Student interviewers are trained to help UBC students, staff and faculty find volunteer jobs in their area of interest. For an appointment to explore the available volunteer options, contact: Volunteer Connections, Student Counselling and Resources Centre, Brock Hall 200, or call 228-3811.

### Reading, Writing & Study Skills

Improve your reading speed and comprehension, composition, speech, study skills and vocabulary. The UBC Reading, Writing and Study Skills Centre is offering 19 non-credit courses this term, including Reading for Speed and Comprehension, Writing Business Letters and Memos, Writing Proposals, Robert's Rules-Demystified, Thinking and Communicating on Your Feet, Media Interview Techniques, ECT Workshops, as well as three correspondence courses. For registration information phone 222-5245.

### Walter Gage Toastmasters

Wednesdays. Public Speaking Club Meeting. Speeches and tabletopics. Guests are welcome. For information call Sulan at 224-9976. Room 215, SUB. 7:30 p.m.

### International House Language Exchange Program

Ongoing. Free service to match up people who want to exchange their language for another. For information call Mawele Shamalia, International House at 228-5021.

### International House Language Bank Program

Free translation/interpretation services offered by International students and community in general. For information call Teresa Uyeno, International House at 228-5021.

### International House

Fitness Classes are now \$5 per term. For information call 228-5021.

### Department of Psychology

Individuals 18 and older are needed for a research project on changes in memory across the adult life span. For information call Jo Ann Miller at 228-4772.

### Parents Wanted

Couples with children between the ages of 5 and 12 are wanted for a project studying parenting. Participation involves the mother and father discussing common child-rearing problems and completing questionnaires concerning several aspects of family life. Participation will take about one hour. Evening appointments can be arranged. Interpretation of questionnaire is available on request. For further information, please contact Dr. C. Johnston, Clinical Psychology, UBC at 228-6771.

### Teaching Kids to Share

Mothers with 2 children between 2 1/2 and 6 years of age are invited to participate in a free parent-education program being evaluated in the Dept. of Psychology at UBC. The 5-session program offers child development info and positive parenting strategies designed to help parents guide their children in the development of sharing and cooperative play skills. For further information call Georgia Tiedemann at the Sharing Project 228-6771.

### Fitness Appraisal

Physical Education & Recreation, through the John M. Buchanan Fitness and Research Centre, is administering a physical fitness assessment program to students, faculty, staff and the general public. Approx. 1 hour, students \$25, all others \$30. For information call 228-4356.

### Surplus Equipment Recycling Facility

All surplus items. For information call 228-2813. Every Wednesday Noon - 3 p.m. Task Force Bldg, 2352 Health Science Mall.

### Badminton Club

Faculty, Staff and Graduate Student Badminton Club meets Thursdays 8:30-10:30 p.m. and Fridays 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Gym A of the Robert Osborne Sports Centre. Cost is \$15 plus REC UBC card. For more information call Bernie 228-4025 or 731-9966.

### Neville Scarfe Children's Garden

Visit the Neville Scarfe Children's Garden located west of the Education Building. Open all year - free. Families interested in planting, weeding and watering in the garden contact Jo-Anne Naslund at 434-1081 or 228-3767.

### Nitobe Memorial Garden

Open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. from April 1-May 31. Admission \$1.25. Free on Wednesdays.

### Botanical Gardens

Open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. from April 1-May 31. Admission \$2.50. Free on Wednesdays.

# Eye injury increase for UBC employees worries safety staff

By GAVIN WILSON

An increase in job-related eye injuries among UBC employees has staff at Occupation Health and Safety concerned.

Year-end statistics show eye injuries up 28 per cent, to 32 in 1988 from 25 in 1987, said David Bell, occupational hygiene officer.

Some of the mishaps occurred when chemicals, battery acid or cleaning fluids splashed into workers' faces, accident reports show. Tree branches, flying glass and other debris also accounted for many accidents. And one clerical worker was accidentally poked in the eye by a co-worker's pen.

None of the accidents was serious enough to cause permanent sight loss, but the potential has safety staff worried.

"Unlike many other types of accidents, the chances of permanent injury are greatest with a serious eye injury," said Bell. "That's why we're so concerned about eye injuries. The tragedy of

eye injuries is that they are so easily preventable."

Use of proper eye protection is important, he said, urging employees to take advantage of a program in which prescription safety glasses can be purchased for as little as \$50.

As well, the university has recently joined a Canadian National Institute for the Blind program that aims to boost awareness of eye safety by rewarding precautions that have deterred accidents.

"If anyone knows of someone who has saved the sight of one or both of their eyes on the job by using eye protection, we'd like to know about it," Bell said.

Employees working with chemicals should know where the nearest eyewash is located, he said. They should also remember that the correct response for a chemical eye injury is to irrigate the eye for at least 15 minutes.

More information on eye protection programs is available from Occupational Health and Safety.

