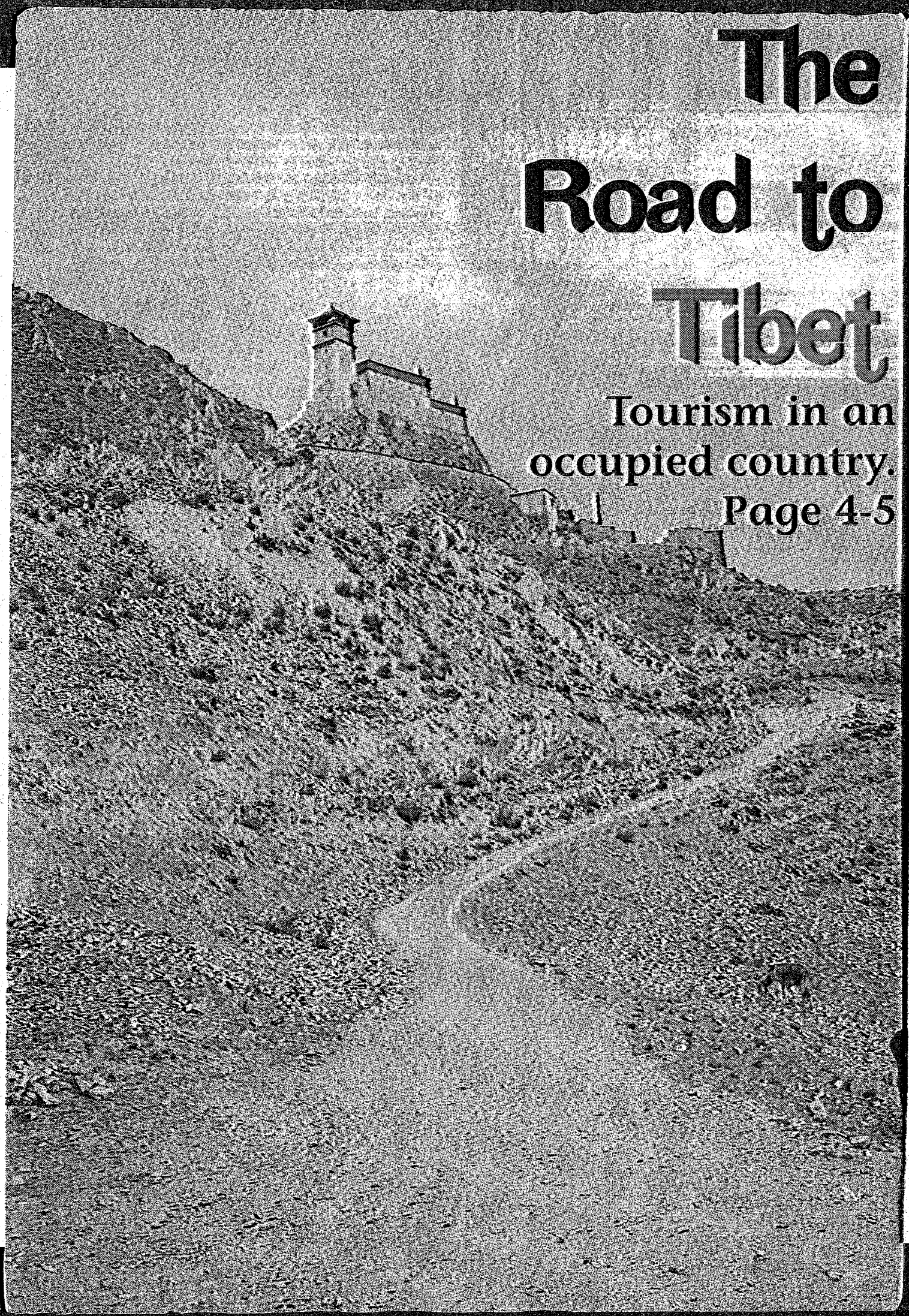
UBC Archives Serial

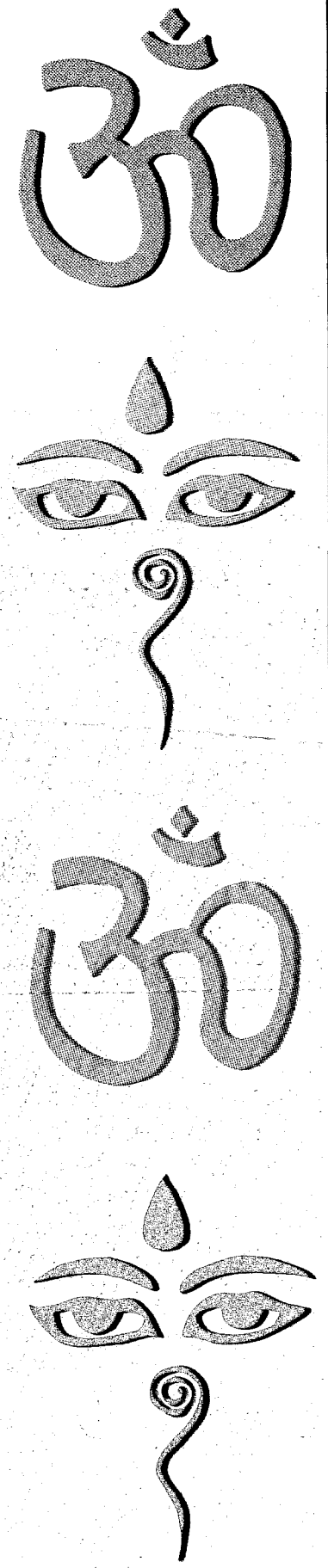
PAGE FRIDAY
The Ubyssey Magazine

The Road to Tibet

Tourism in an occupied country.

Page 4-5





RANT

The Ubyssey Literary Supplement inside

Volume 83 Issue 46 March 22, 2002 24! since 1918

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Announcement

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PEACE IN THE CITY: SUN MAR 24, 7:30PM, Canadian Memorial United Church (W.15th & Burrard). Julia Butterfly Hill, author of "The Legacy of Luna" & "One Makes the Difference" will speak. Celebration of peace featuring music, scripture readings, & reflection.

MUSSOC PRESENTS: A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM. At the NORM Mar 18-23, 8pm. $12 Students $15 Adults from SUB Box Office

ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS. TUE MAR 26, 6pm, CEME Rm1202. Allan Dakin, a local Hydrogeologal Engineer, tells of his exp. in Swaziland, administrating a 6-yr CIDA funded survey of groundwater resources. Info: jtoews@interchange.ubc.ca

ATTN: PSYCH GRADS OF 2002! Come out to the Psych Grad Banquet on Sat Mar 23, 6pm-midnight @ The Westin Bayshore. Tix $45 on sale M-F 11am-2pm Til the 22nd at South SUB & in front of AUS. Info: Janela & Cheryl gradcoordinators@hotmail.com

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FORUM ON REFERENDUM ON TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: Sat Mar 23, 5pm, Maritime Labour Centre (1880 Triumph St) Speakers incl reps of Native Nations, unions & community org'ns. By UBC Marxist-Leninist Study Group & Investing in Health B.C. Discussion: Co-Op Radio CFRO, 102.7 FM, Wed 7-8pm, discussion@telus.net, call in: 604-684-7561.

Announcement, cont.

CHECK OUT HTTP://WWW.BCPOLITICS.CA. New media critic of "new error Gordonomics."

Services

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Sport teams in tiers

Teams may be organised into three tiers; some designated club teams

by Scott Bardsley

Varsity sports teams may soon be categorised into first, second and third tier teams if a proposal under consideration by UBC Athletics is passed. The change will affect resource allocation and fundraising and will formally recognise some teams as clubs.

Currently all teams are referred to as varsity, but under the new proposal, level three teams would be clubs. Level-one teams would be those with full-time coaches and level two would have part-time coaches.

"It's a matter of giving people a clear indication of where they stand and setting down some criteria for how they can go to the next level, rather than just have people have expectations in some sort of box," UBC Athletics Director Bob Philip said.

"We already sort of have a tiering system in the varsity area," said Philip. "Right now we call everything varsity and we treat [all teams] the same way in that sense, but...some get much more money. Some get full-time coaches."

Teams' budgets and support vary dramatically: in 2001-2002, the football team received the most funding with a $303, 265 operating budget and the Nordic ski team received the least—$1600.

Philip said that the system will not discriminate against teams that are not in national leagues such as the CIS or NAIA, because that would hurt sports like rowing and rugby, which are traditionally strong sports.

However, the proposal is not yet close to being implemented: all coaches contacted by *the Ubyssey* were unaware of the plan's details.

"I don't know too much about it," said Paul Boskovich, the manager of the alpine ski team. "But so long as we maintain our budget and our varsity status, it'd be alright."

Mike Pearce, the men's rowing coach, also didn't know much about the proposal, but he agreed with the concept. "I think it's a good idea,"he said. It might mean a shift in traditional mindset, but with the limited resources that we have at the moment, it might be a good time to analyse those things."

However, with UBC Athletics' limited resources, fundraising will become more important for all teams in the future.

"We've had...more and more success in getting outside support from the community...Our baseball team is funded 80 per cent off campus," Philip said. "We would like to help raise 25 per cent of the teams' budgets over the next few years. They can do it through community sports camps in the summer; they can do it through gate receipts in some sports, they can do it through fundraising, donations and sponsorship."

Fundraising and financial support such as scholarships from Athletics would remain the same for both tier one and two teams. But tier three teams would not receive these benefits, Philip explained, but they would still get administrative support from Athletics. ❖

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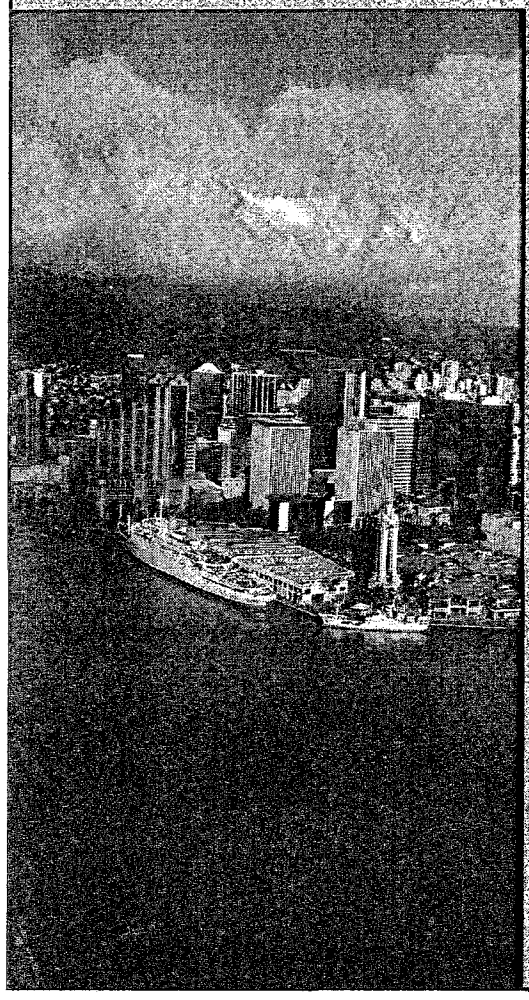

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UBYSSEY PICKS weekend

MUSIC *Clinic* at Richard's on Richards, Sunday at 9pm

Clinic, Clinic, Clinic. Lots of people are talking about this band but, despite the hype, they really are good. The songs on their latest album, *Walking with Thee,* are dirty and dark—and, in all likelihood, will sound awesome on Sunday night when the Liverpudlian quartet play Dick's on Dicks. And Cat Power plays the next night. How cool is that?

Tickets are $14.25 at Zulu, Scratch, Noize! and Highlife

ART *Hu Jieming* at Centre A, opening Friday night

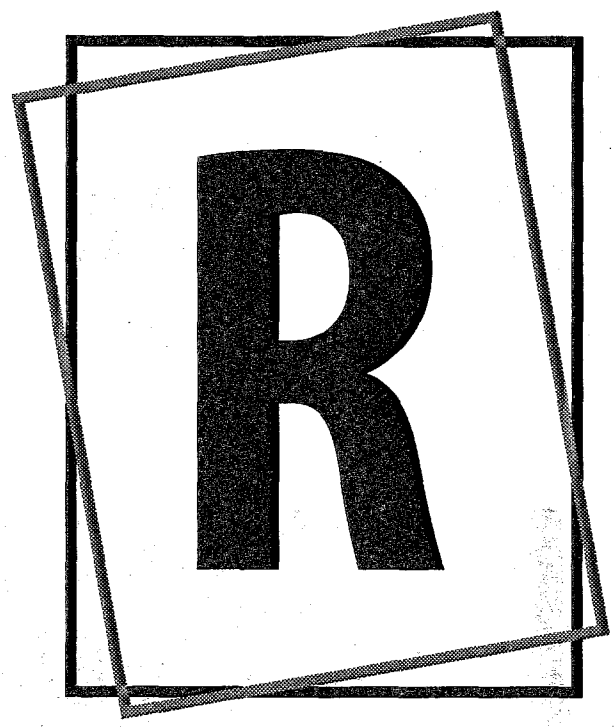
No propaganda here. Inspired by Géricault's famous painting "The Raft of the Medusa," Hu has taken the French artist's work and digitally manipulated it, replacing the sailors and shipwrecked survivors with images of consumer culture (Coke cans, rock stars and more). The end result is a comedic, tongue-in-cheek commentary on contemporary Chinese culture.

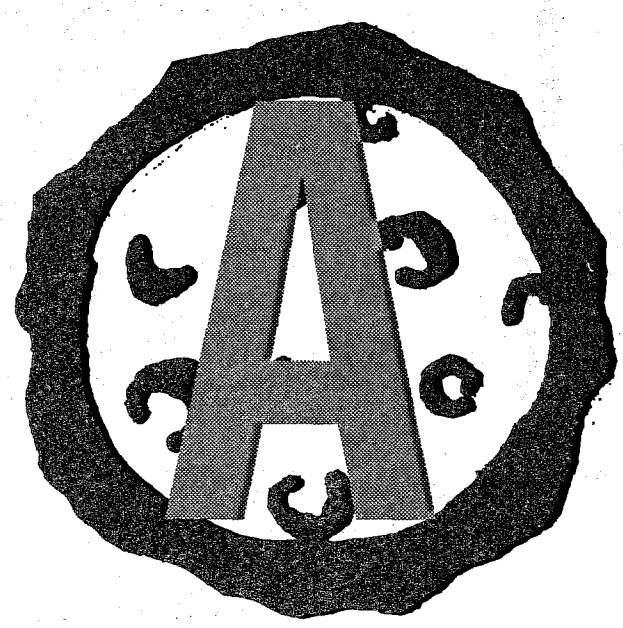
Admission is free.

THEATRE *Thirsty* at the Roundhouse Community Centre, until Apr. 7

Water, water everywhere? Not according to pundits and environmentalists, who claim that water will soon be just as precious as oil. "Thirsty," a new play by Headlines Theatre, explores the frightening spectre of water privatisation. Interestingly, the play's set incorporates some 1000 square feet of water—kind of ironic for a play addressing its scarcity.

Tickets are $16 (plus charges) at the Arts Centre box office





new writing by

Julie Lees
Chris Fraser
Larissa Buijs
Kat Kinch
Erin Gough
Erik Hoff
Andrew Matovich
Kate Bond

NT

THE UBYSSEY LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

RANT

The Ubyssey Literary Supplement

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Today is RANT's fourth birthday. In other words, this is the fourth issue of *the Ubyssey*'s annual literary supplement. Its content is gathered through a contest challenging UBC students to send in their written works. The winning entries are now in your hands—enjoy!

Ubyssey staff read and discussed the merits of the numerous submissions, finally deciding upon the top five in each category, which were then sent to our judges to select the winners and runners-up.

While previous issues of RANT have had common themes apparent in the works submitted, this year's contest drew writing on a variety of topics, reflecting the diverse experiences that have shaped the lives of the equally diverse students here. You can read about almost everything in the following pages.

In the snap non-fiction category, learning the value of living in the moment while riding a bike can be compared to a deep and thoughtful reflection on beliefs. The poems range from a dark and evocative piece, to one that brings the imagination to lazy summers on the coast. Snap fiction produced a couple of intense stories that focus on the inner mind, both the fear in being alone with it and the grief at having it betray you. Long non-fiction includes two provocative pieces—one about the value of getting away (and getting dirty), the other taking hard look at the exploitation of Australia's Aborigines. Long fiction touched on both the amusing and the disturbing,with one piece looking at the risks of getting caught up in an illusion, and another discussing the danger and allure of self-destruction.

Enjoy it. Hate it. Read it. Eat it. Burn it. Share it.

—RANT Coordinators.

Judges

Long Non-fiction

After serving as a fighter-pilot in World War II, Eric Nicol wrote humour columns for *the Ubyssey, The Vancouver News-Herald,* and *The Province.* He has written over 30 published books, comedy for radio, musicals for TV, and four professionally produced plays. He has been awarded the Stephen Leacock Medal three times, the UBC Alumni Merit, the BC Gas Lifetime Achievement and the Order of Canada.

Long Fiction

Brian Kaufman is the editor of the Vancouver alternative literary magazine *subTerrain* and the publisher of Anvil Press. He is a published and produced playwright and is currently working on a novel, *Slush Pile.*

Snap Non-fiction

Marion Crook has written 12 published books of non-fiction, the most recent being *The Face in the Mirror: Teenagers and Adoption,* and ten published novels, most recently *Cutting It Close.* Crook has a PhD in Nursing and teaches the subject at Kwantlen University College. She also teaches occasionally in the publishing program at SFU.

Snap Fiction

Sara O'Leary is a graduate of UBC's creative writing program, and a literary columnist for *The Vancouver Sun.* She is also a novelist, the author of *Wish You Were Here* and *Comfort Me With Apples.*

Poetry

When John Donlan isn't working as a reference librarian at the Vancouver Public Library he's writing poetry. He has published three collections of poetry and is the poetry editor at Brick Books. Donlan also gives readings and lectures in English classes at UBC and SFU. ❖

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Rant Winners

Julie Lees
Winner, snap fiction: "Single, First Person...Natasha on Wendy"

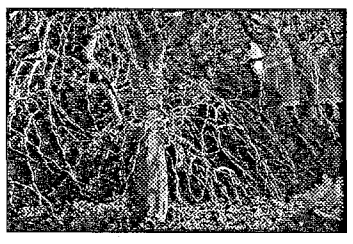
Julie Lees is an M.F.A. student, and also a classical singer. Her first published piece, an article about 18th century picnics, ran in 11 Toronto area newspapers in 1991. Lees is currently writing her thesis in creative writing: a full-length play based on the disappearance of theatre owner Ambrose Small. She is also at work on a children's novel.

Andrew Matovitch
Runner-up, snap fiction: "Bliss"

Andrew Matovich, an English Literature student at UBC, cites Raymond Carver and Ernest Hemmingway as large influences. Although he is a long-time avid writer, his successful entry to RANT is his first submission to a literary contest. Matovich also has an interest in music, and he operates his own recording studio: Pig Belly Recording.

Erin Gough
Winner, long fiction: "Jump"
Runner-up, long fiction: My Life as a Freeze-Framed Action Hero

After spending six and a half years in university (mostly at the University of Sydney), Erin Gough is currently in her final year of a law degree. She has had two stories published in Australian literary journals, and has also worked as a magazine editor. Gough is unsure as to what she will be doing next year, but counts journalism, law and creative writing among the possibilities.



Erik Hoff
Winner, snap non-fiction: "A Conversation"

Erik Hoff is a second year classical studies student and a lifetime resident of Vancouver. He is an editor for Veritas, the UBC Poetry Club's literary supplement, and he organizes that club's biweekly campus poetry slams. He has written a book (Goddess: Meditations on Life), and more of his writing can be found on his website.

Larissa Buijs
Winner, long non-fiction: "The Dirt Mentality"
Runner-up, snap non-fiction: Learning the Obvious In Ridiculous Ways

Larissa Buijs started writing seriously as a high school student in Mississauga, Ontario, before coming to UBC. She is currently attending school part-time, and will graduate with a B.F.A. in creative writing this May. Having started out as a poet, Buijs enjoys experimenting with many different writing forms, and has tried her hand at dramatic writing and screenplays as well.

Chris Fraser
Runner-up, long non-fiction: "Please Take a Number"

After completing a unique four-year high school creative writing program, Chris Fraser moved from Ottawa to Vancouver. She is now in the fourth year of a history degree at UBC, and enjoys photography and travelling. After graduation, she is considering pursuing a career in film or journalism. Fraser is a previous RANT winner, in the snap and memoir categories.

Kate Bond
Winner, poetry: "Midnight in Wonderland"

A second-year arts student with a passion for both creative writing and mathematics (she has not settled on her major yet), Kate Bond has enjoyed previous success with RANT. In addition to her excellent placing in this year's contest, Bond was the winner of the epic fiction category in RANT 2001 with her story "The Price of Perfume." Bond enjoys "all good literature," but has only recently delved into writing poetry.

Kat Kinch
Runner-up, poetry: "Rock-Skipping on Harrison Lake"

Kat Kinch, from Hamilton, Ontario, is in her first year of law school at UBC. At the age of 11, she submitted some of her writing to Archie comics, where her first published work soon appeared. Since then, she has been published by *Insite Magazine* in Hamilton, *In2 Print,* and *Esoteric,* a UBC law school literary journal. Right now, she is very excited about being a new aunt. ❖

Single, First Person... Natasha on Wendy

by Julie Lees

(winner, snap fiction)

She asked me how I could sit so quietly for so long.

After talking my ear off for an hour she finally decided to ask me a question. And, the question was why I was able to sit without saying anything.

She asked me why I held no opinions.

I told her I did.

She asked me why I wasn't voicing my opinion.

I told her I wasn't asked for it.

She asked me if I spent my whole life waiting to be asked my opinion.

I said yes.

She asked me why.

I said it was because I didn't feel it necessary to enlighten other people to my way of thinking. I told her it was important for each individual to come to their own conclusions on life and it was impossible for one to do that if someone like me, like anyone, was sitting across from them providing them with ways of thinking. I told her that that was too easy. Opinions were hard work. They involved a lot of thinking and contemplation and a lot of reasoning as to why such an opinion was the best one for that person. I said if it was easier than that then it wasn't someone's personal opinion, it was someone else's.

She said she could prove me wrong—that she'd spent the last hour desperately trying to make conversation with me and trying to fill in the silence.

I asked her why she wanted to fill the silence.

She said it made her feel uncomfortable.

I asked her why.

She said it made her wonder what the other person was thinking.

I asked her why that was uncomfortable.

She said she presumed the other person was thinking about her and about why she didn't have anything better to say.

I asked her if she usually presumed people were thinking about her.

She said yes.

I asked, isn't that a little self-centred?

She said no. She usually thought people were thinking belittling thoughts of her.

I asked her if she felt that way because she held no opinions of her own and therefore couldn't back up anything she said and therefore was more of a bore than something to be belittled.

She started to cry. I sighed. I sat beside her on her deck chair and placed my hand on top of hers. I asked her why she was crying.

She said it was maybe because I was right. Maybe she didn't have any opinions.

I asked her if she had ever spent any time alone.

She said she didn't like doing that.

I asked her if she might be willing to try.

She said she'd only try if I did it with her.

I said she would no longer be alone if I was there.

She asked me how I spent my time alone.

I said I spent it under an old cedar tree on top of dead pine needles by the lakeshore.

She asked me why I did that.

I said it helped me centre my thoughts, come into focus, form opinions.

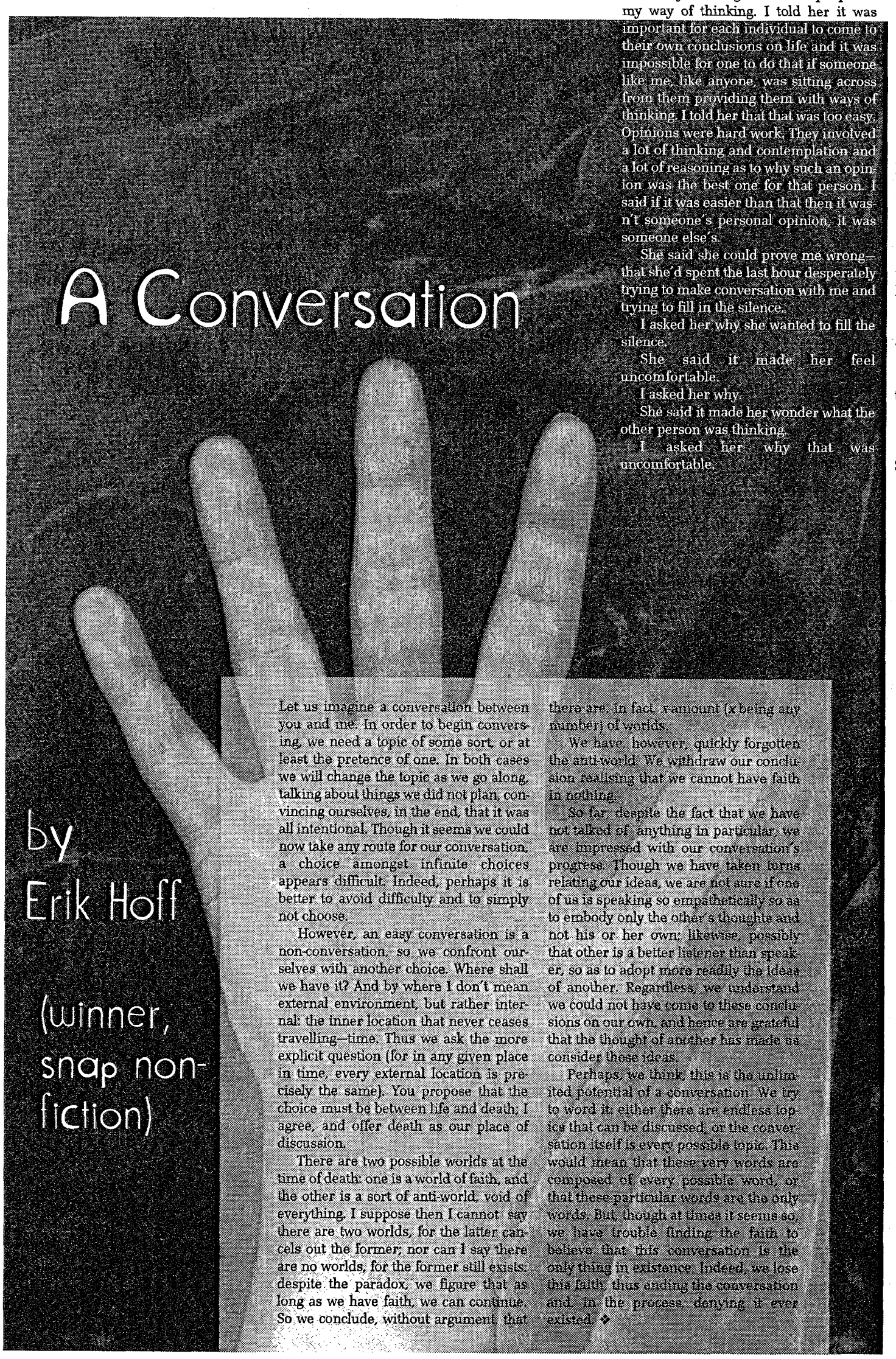
She said oh.

I suggested again that she find a place to be alone, even for eight minutes.

She interrupted: why eight?

I responded, why not?

She said she'd try but not just yet. She liked the feel of my hand on hers. ❖



A Conversation

by Erik Hoff

(winner, snap non-fiction)

Let us imagine a conversation between you and me. In order to begin conversing, we need a topic of some sort, or at least the pretence of one. In both cases we will change the topic as we go along, talking about things we did not plan, convincing ourselves, in the end, that it was all intentional. Though it seems we could now take any route for our conversation, a choice amongst infinite choices appears difficult. Indeed, perhaps it is better to avoid difficulty and to simply not choose.

However, an easy conversation is a non-conversation, so we confront ourselves with another choice. Where shall we have it? And by where I don't mean external environment, but rather internal: the inner location that never ceases travelling—time. Thus we ask the more explicit question (for in any given place in time, every external location is precisely the same). You propose that the choice must be between life and death; I agree, and offer death as our place of discussion.

There are two possible worlds at the time of death: one is a world of faith, and the other is a sort of anti-world, void of everything. I suppose then I cannot say there are two worlds, for the latter cancels out the former; nor can I say there are no worlds, for the former still exists: despite the paradox, we figure that as long as we have faith, we can continue. So we conclude, without argument, that there are, in fact, x amount (x being any number) of worlds.

We have, however, quickly forgotten the anti-world. We withdraw our conclusion realising that we cannot have faith in nothing.

So far, despite the fact that we have not talked of anything in particular, we are impressed with our conversation's progress. Though we have taken turns relating our ideas, we are not sure if one of us is speaking so empathetically so as to embody only the other's thoughts and not his or her own; likewise, possibly that other is a better listener than speaker, so as to adopt more readily the ideas of another. Regardless, we understand we could not have come to these conclusions on our own, and hence are grateful that the thought of another has made us consider these ideas.

Perhaps, we think, this is the unlimited potential of a conversation. We try to word it: either there are endless topics that can be discussed, or the conversation itself is every possible topic. This would mean that these very words are composed of every possible word, or that these particular words are the only words. But, though at times it seems so, we have trouble finding the faith to believe that this conversation is the only thing in existence. Indeed, we lose this faith, thus ending the conversation and, in the process, denying it ever existed. ❖

Bliss

by Andrew Matovich

Snap fiction
Runner-up

My memory has been failing me. I'm standing in front of the bathroom mirror in my underwear and I can hear the TV and the boys arguing about hockey downstairs. I think the World Cup must be on. I catch bits about Swedish and Finnish players. What's troubling me most this morning is the tuxedo laid out for me on the bedroom chair. Clara must have something planned but I have no idea what it is.

"Clara?"

There is no response. I notice the boys' argument break off downstairs. Clara must be making breakfast. I put on my housecoat and slippers and shuffle downstairs.

Sarah and her husband Steven are also in the kitchen with Mark and Anthony. She glares at me in my housecoat and I feel the need to look away. It seems I am always looking away under her heavy, penetrating stares. I don't see Clara and know better than to ask with Sarah's stern eye watching over me.

There are cereal bowls with bits of Cheerios and milk, coffee cups and coffee paraphernalia scattered around the table. Their discarded remnants do nothing but highlight the morose faces around the room. It seems I have missed breakfast. Sarah is dressed nicely and the sun through the sliding glass door illuminates her hair and the blue dress she is wearing. I can see the snow on the ground behind her.

"You look nice, Sarah," I say hoarsely.

"Thanks Dad."

"You guys look smart too."

Steven, Mark and Anthony really do look good in their tuxedos.

"Dad? Ah, shouldn't you be getting dressed?"

"Yeah, sure. Yeah."

The boys' faces have no colour and I wonder if they are eating properly. Their eyes scan me with concern and possibly apprehension. Have I been away? I try not to let the confusion find its way to my face. I head back upstairs.

I turn on the shower and shave while I stand under the meagre stream of water from the energy-conserving showerhead. I can't even remember how old Mark and Anthony are, 13 or 16, and who is older and by how much. Shit, I don't even remember when their birthdays are. Sarah and I, however, are old adversaries. I caught her smoking pot in the garage when she was 12 and I sent her to boarding school. When she was 13 she called me an "absentee father" when I forgot to phone her or send her a birthday gift at Saint Catherine's. I think I did the same thing the next year as well but I don't remember that well. My memory has been failing me lately. I turn off the tap. The water is getting cold.

I dry myself off and stare at the tuxedo laid out on the green plush chair. I don't want to put it on. I know whatever occasion this tuxedo is required for is one I don't want to participate in. I don't want to go. I'd rather not know what the whole thing is all about. The phone is ringing. Maybe it's Clara. She probably ran out for some flowers or a card or something at the grocery store and is calling to see if we need anything. I could use some cigarettes. I answer the phone.

"Clara?"

"Ah, Mr. Bradley?"

"Yes?"

"This is Memorial Limousine service. The limousine will be by to pick you up in 20 minutes."

"Yes, that's fine. Thank you."

There is nothing to do now but put on the tuxedo. A sigh escapes me like the last breath of a dying man and I resign myself to it. Underneath the suit is a bouquet of flowers in plastic. I remember Clara telling me that Sarah brought her a similar bouquet every day until she came home from the hospital when the boys were very young. I know Clara is not sick. Where the hell is she? Jesus, what is the limousine for? What have I forgotten now? Is it Mark or Anthony's wedding? Christ no, they're too young and Sarah's already married. Christ, I hope no one's dead. I wish Clara would show up to tell me what the hell is going on. I need a drink.

Sarah is calling me. Now, she's coming up the stairs. I know I can't go through with this. I have to tell her. She is standing in the doorway. Christ, she looks like Clara but I can't look her in the eyes because I know her stare will bring on all the guilty memories that I have no strength to face. I look at my hands.

"I'm not going, Sarah."

It's so silent I can hear the sound of my hands turning over each other. Please don't bring up the wedding again. I couldn't bear it, please.

"The limousine is here, Dad."

"I can't."

The pause goes on for a long time and the silence is tense. My nervousness forces me to clear my throat.

"Dad. Look at me," her voice is taut with restraint of anger. I can't look at her.

"Sarah, I can't face this," I'm grasping for words and I stutter. "I don't know what's wrong with me but I know I can't do this today."

"Look at me. Look at me! You are not copping out again, you spineless bastard. What the fuck would Mom say? I'll be waiting in the limousine with Mark and Anthony. Hurry up."

I look up in time to see her head disappear down the stairs. God, I wish I felt like trying. There is nowhere to go after this latest confrontation with Sarah. There is nowhere to run but out the front door to the dread appointment with the limousine. Why can't I remember what the hell this is all about? I know from the sombre look on all their faces in the kitchen that this is not a celebratory engagement. I wish Clara were here.

I take a deep breath and I look myself in the mirror. I look good in the tuxedo even though the cummerbund doesn't fit. It looks like the tuxedo Anthony wore for his high school graduation ceremonies. How old is he then? I wish I had gone.

I pick up the bouquet and head downstairs again. Mark is still in the kitchen sitting at the table. He is white and he looks sick. I think he has been crying. He is older than I'd like to remember. I get some flashes of him as a baby but that's all.

"Are you alright, Mark?"

"Are you?"

"I don't know, Mark. I don't know"

"Where have you been?"

"I don't know. Shall we go, then?"

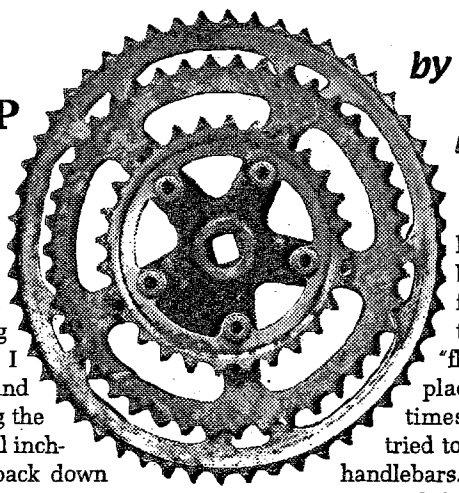
"Okay, dad."

There is fresh snow outside and the sun is too bright. The limousine's exhaust is pumping a stream of grey cloud into the cold air. The deep cold makes the neighbourhood sound like a fantasy world and the snow makes the suburban street look like the most beautiful lie I've ever known: Everything is okay. I shield my eyes from the sun with my hand and I can see Clara sitting in a beautiful blue dress in the back seat of the black limousine. Everything is okay. ❖

Snap non-fiction
RUNNER-UP

Learning the Obvious in Ridiculous Ways

by Larissa Buijs



The day I accomplished the unexpected, I began to understand one of life's simple contradictions. I was on my bicycle. It was sunny and hot. I was staring down at the bright grass. I approached a burp in the ground and my weight fell back, causing the front tire of my bike to lift several inches. Seconds later, it slammed back down and I was hit with eureka.

I felt like a tinkering teen, messing around on my mountain bike in the mid-afternoon, doing tricks, hopping logs, thinking about nothing in particular. We had one week away from the city and my partner and I decided to camp near Tribune Bay, just a few pedal strokes from the non-motorised nature park that covers a third of Hornby Island. Waiting for my partner to finish some minor repairs, I rode away from the tent with sandals and no helmet, looping figure-eights around the trees and shuffling across dips and bumps.

When I first took up mountain biking, the 'manual,' among other tricks, intrigued me. The skill required to do it, however, eluded me and eventually I gave up trying. The online tips and how-to guides didn't make much sense either: "During a manual, the front wheel floats while the rear wheel tracts underneath the rider, whose body acts as the counterbalance that keeps the angle of the front end of the bike in relation to the amount of weight placed over the bottom bracket."

I knew how it looked but not how it felt. How does the front wheel "float" in the first place? So many times I tried and tried to yank up on the handlebars. It was like trying to pry a stick from the mouth of a bulldog.

Anyway, a grown woman has better things to do. So I practiced the trackstand and the bunny-hop. I wore leg pads and full-fingered gloves and rode around the alley behind my house. I tried not to remember the time a friend attempted to impress me by drifting down a long hill on his rear wheel, glancing back once or twice to throw me a proud smile. And I don't know how many times I watched with awe as my partner pulled his bike up into a wheelie while discussing dinner, the weather, or provincial politics as we gradually made our way to the trailhead.

With not much planned and nothing urgent to do, our week on Hornby Island was gloriously empty. We spent hours talking over breakfast and picking blackberries from the bushes. One afternoon we brought our musical instruments and books to the beach and settled into the sand. At night we would hop along the long, smooth rock at one end of the bay and examine tiny creatures in pools exposed by the low tide. One night, we even brought our bikes and turned the quiet shore into a playground.

I was very relaxed when it happened. The afternoon was hot with little more than an inconsistent breeze sweeping into the campsite. I felt the pivot beneath me like a horse rising to take a fence. I pedalled away in disbelief, turning around as if to ask the ground for answers.

That slight incident was most certainly a manual. Without any thought or attempt, it had finally happened, an alignment of the unknown. At once I understood the vague descriptions of balance and counterbalance from the tip guides. Everything they said indeed supported my experience. I had found the 'sweet spot' between rolling on one wheel and falling back onto my tailbone. So that's what it means to let go of expectation.

It's a funny paradox. Try and try and don't succeed and then, when all conscious attempts are abandoned, the secret itself creeps right up, taps you on the shoulder and runs away laughing—leaving you, most likely, staring dumbfounded at the settling dust.

The key to the manual, now that I've stumbled upon it, is intuition. It may have happened by accident the first time, but the single most valuable skill required to do it again is having a sense of what it feels like.

So I went out to an open space, mimicked my previous moves—and nothing happened

After a few tries, however, my front tire again came off the ground. This was amazing, certainly not a fluke, I thought. I laughed stupidly and kept going. On another small incline, I timed my pedal stroke perfectly with the rise. My bike lifted more than two feet off the ground and I slid back, landing square on my feet, holding the inverted bike before me. Soon my partner joined me and I was bouncing around the grass, up and down, up and down.

Letting go of expectation is no small thing. But trusting that whatever you seek will show its face when it's ready, when you are ready, is a necessary step in learning. What a backward approach to progress.

I suppose that I had acquired a whole collection of information about the manual before it happened, information that was pushed somewhere into my subconscious when I realised that, for me, it was impossible to do a manual. At some point, this melded with the desire to prove to myself that it could be done, to experience the joy of doing something so different from my habits and daily tasks. I was thrilled when my front tire left the ground, and, somewhere in the back of my head, wondered why it had been such a big deal to begin with. ❖

RUNNER-UP: LONG FICTION

My Life as a Freeze-Framed Action Hero

1. Tina Machina in cinemas November 3

Standing six metres high with scarlet hair and harlot shoes, she is a dazzling dangerous two-dimensional technicolour wet dream coated in leather and traffic fumes and flooded with light. Tina Machina. Movie-star-poster-girl slapped on a billboard strapped to a footbridge above the highway—a soundless Siren, a machete maiden—captured in a moment of Kung Fu flight.

We drive beneath her one night on our way to the city, and then Jules takes the car around the block so we can drive beneath her again. Each of us has a head out of a window, craning our necks to get a better view.

"She is so goddam sexy," Sylvia is saying, breathless, whilst George chants her name like a mantra: "Tina Tina Tina Tina Tinaaa." I stare up at her wide-open eyes that are fixed on an invisible target. "She looks like she could crack a skull with her bare hands." Then George says to me, "I reckon that she looks a bit like you."

2. twelve items or less

In Safeway on a Tuesday I am engaged in the business of buying a sandwich in seven parts.

The queue for the ham counter stretches all the way down the toiletries aisle. In my hand is ticket number 63, and the 15 year-old wearing the see-through gloves and the paper-boat hat has just called 62, when a girl some way behind, beside the shampoos, shouts out to me.

"Hey," she cries. "You with the wholemeal bread."

I turn around. She is pointing at me with a packaged toothbrush. "You look so much like that girl in that movie," she says.

Everyone in the queue has begun to stare, except for number 64, who is making his way towards the ham counter. "You know—that action-flick chick," the girl continues.

The woman beside her pipes up, nodding furiously. "Demi Moore. Spitting image."

"Nuh uh," corrects the girl. "Tina Machina."

Then in the fruit barn on the way to get lettuce I am caught pinching grapes by a pair of untidy teenagers wanting my autograph. "That is so like Tina," says one, watching me guiltily swallow my mouthful. "It's her anarchistic-anti-capitalist-vegan-activist streak that makes her so awesome."

"That, and the way she can wield a Makita P7000 double-action chainsaw."

"I'm sorry, but I'm not Tina Machina," I tell them.

The teenagers smirk in unison. "Of course not. People think that kids these days can't separate movies from real life, but we're not stupid. Tina's just your character name."

Then the shorter of the two takes out a disposable camera from an anorak inside pocket. It is made of green cardboard and has a flash. In fact, it looks very much like the ones they are selling on the features tray in aisle 11. With the camera in hand the teenager becomes, all of a sudden, a stealthy photographer. Just as I am about to turn—

SNAP

—into a keep-sake, a show-and-tell, a diary-entry pin-up girl, a trophy, a pout, a paparazzi poodle, into the shadow of a later self, into kitsch, cult, fetish, into an amateur impersonator of a living action-movie star, and for all intensive purposes into Tina Tina Tina Tina Tinaaa.

3. freeze-framing

I turn inside out, after that. That is, I begin to see myself from the outside in. I uncover, with some surprise, my sharp fast hyperreal action-hero alter-ego.

Next morning, for example, after showering, I find, upon inspection, a samurai swordswoman in my wardrobe mirror. Dressed in my bathrobe, with her wet hair in an Oriental knot, she is flexing her muscles and looking dangerous. She stands there for some time in silence, the mirror sides framing her like the edges of a screen.

That is the day I discover performance art.

If—in front of the Air Canada poster at the bus stop—I strike a pose with feet s p l a y e d and hands stretched above my head, it is possible to imagine (when viewed from the correct angle) that I am hanging off the tail end of the pictured aeroplane.

I achieve a simpler yet more effective stance (arms crossed, feet splayed again, and head to the side for profile shot) in front of the painted planetary wall (the earth, sun and moon in irregular orbit against a black backdrop) beside the local shopping centre.

This is the way I come to move around the city: in a sequence of spectacular/superstar/stills.

4. topography, cinematography, polygamy

For authenticity I shred my woollen duffle coat and buy a leather jacket. I begin to wear nail varnish. I slick back my hair. I read up on Cindy Sherman. I enrol in a martial arts course. I watch *Rambo One, The Karate Kid Two,* and *Die Hard Three.* I practise pre-and post-violence repartee.

I acquire a power ring, an eyebrow stud and an audience. At the local park, where I like to use the rocket ship climbing frame as a backdrop, my onlookers are five years and under. I learn that I have the effect—with my fists suspended mid-punch, and my head erect—of inciting terror in youths and infuriating parents and guardians.

In the city bars, when I sprawl over poker machines in a mock commando roll, the crowd is more responsive still. Here I learn about out-of-bounds places and positions, about public nuisance legislation, and to always consider who is watching.

I acquire an addiction to peril and contortion. I become something else altogether. A hungry puppet. An audience junkie. A spectator slut.

5. anti-freeze

It is crowd-pleasing that finally forces me out of freeze-frame. That, and a violation of personal property law. While I am at the markets on a Saturday, hovering precariously in mid-karate-kick splendour, a passer-by takes a fancy to my patent-leather single-strap shoulder pack.

Market dwellers halt awestruck to watch me vault over tables of second-hand CDs, to see me streak in and out of focus as I skid between stalls. I blade-run through mingling shoppers, striding in streamline onto the highway, my pulse beating in my ears in rapid fire bursts.

Just ahead of me the reprobate mounts the footbridge. I leap up the stairs, taking them in threes, and reach the top to find him with his arm outstretched, swinging my pack and—

WHACK

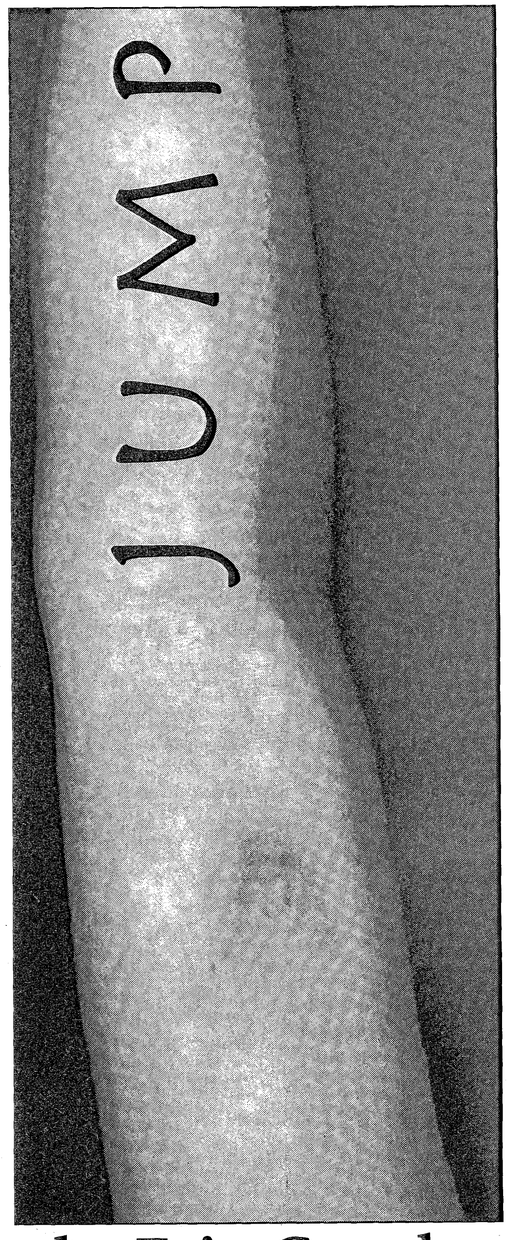
—I am floored, fading out, freezing in the shadow of a six-metre-high, unswerving harlot in reverse, hard as a board against the wind, against the trickling sun, against the world that is spinning now like a roulette wheel or a vinyl 60's soundtrack.

Red, red, red, red

Black. ❖

by Erin Gough

long fiction winner



by Erin Gough

1. jump

Like a fever breaking. Like being shaken awake. It's the moment of whiplash in a car crash. It's inertia finally slapping you in the face.

There's the black sky, the black surface below and you with your toes on the railing between. When jumping at night you can feel the water even before you meet it blind. The fall from the bridge to the canal is never far, but it's far enough for you to know the buzz of hollow air and the cold of what's to come and to ask the questions that can send you more numb than the water ever will: What if it's not deep enough? What if I fall too fast? And almost before you've asked these things you're heavy in the depths of it and already choking and spitting and lashing your way to the surface.

But you get there, eventually, and you say, "Christ," and "God Almighty," and haul yourself out with mud on your clothes.

And after that, you do it all again.

2. hot baby wild

The night I meet Cushla is the night I get fired from the Q Store, and it's hot, so hot I'm having trouble moving down the street. The salt and chips air is thicker than pub smoke; the footpath is cracking under my toes, but despite it all, there I am, walking shoeless in the dark, with the exhilaration known only to those who have been recently made redundant.

Half an hour ago under fluorescent lighting, I discovered that you can't swear at a customer and not lose your job; that this is especially the case when the customer in question is married to your boss; and that if that's the way it's going to be, then there's space enough in the security camera's blind spot at the end of aisle three to stash half a dozen videos into your backpack and make off with them without ever being caught.

And so it is that I come upon Cushla in the writhing summer heat on the slow way home an hour before my usual finish-up time: with stolen goods harboured in my bag, and a desperate urge to do something wild.

She is walking in front of me, water dripping from the ends of her hair and down her back. She has a long-sleeved shirt with jeans that meet heavy boots at her ankles. From the way she is stopping at corners, I can tell she is lost.

What I cannot tell is that she will become my distraction. That for almost two months, in place of boredom, she will be the thing I live and eat and breathe. Right now all I am certain of is that I have never in my life come across anybody wearing more clothes on such a crazy-hot night, than this damp and dizzy girl, this trick of light.

3. the neighbourhood

But first of all, the neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood, you need to know about, because it is part of the endless heat, the long days, the water-logged nights that follow. The neighbourhood is what makes things dull enough to fall out of.

The neighbourhood must come first because it was here first, only by a short while, but by enough to make all that comes afterwards contingent upon it. For two months it is our nature and our nurture, Cushla's and mine. What we are, and will become, has everything to do with it.

With its broad, open streets and three-storeyed houses, first of all, most of them built by car retailers, or jam manufacturers, or magazine magnates simply to shift merchandise:

This stunning, classically modern Roman-Scandinavian villa with fully landscaped gardens located less than half an hour from the world's most spectacular beaches could be yours. Just buy ten bottles of your favourite tonic water to enter the draw and begin your new life in paradise on the Australian Gold Coast.

In between the prize-homes are the manufactured greens that the brochures call *parklands* or *common gardens*. There are roundabouts topped with bonsais. There are ornamental fountains. Then snaking right through the middle of everything in this neighbourhood that breeds us—through the greens, between the houses, through the broad, open streets—are the waterways. These come to shape us above everything else.

The canals we make our own, because nobody has claimed them yet. They are the space between other places, there to provide that shimmery real estate ideal known as the 'water-view.' Mere accessories to this greater cause, not things in themselves. Not to anyone, that is, but Cushla and me.

A street away from one of these waterways, near the corner of Havana Road and Sanctuary Drive, Cushla finally turns around on that sweltering night, and asks me where she is. She hasn't a clue. She's lost herself entirely. The streets go around in circles, it seems to her. She smiles at me, and wipes the damp hair out of her face with the back of a sleeve.

"Where do you need to go?" I ask.

Her eyes turn away for a moment. "Cargo Street," she says finally.

I can help her with Cargo Street. I know it because my brother works as a nurse in the hospital there. But just before we reach it, as we are crossing the bridge on Killinger Road, she stops. I turn around to see her leaning on the railing looking straight at me.

"Have you ever jumped off one of these bridges?" she asks.

I laugh. It's a long way down.

I watch her lift herself up and climb over the railing, onto the narrow stretch of concrete on the other side. With her hands holding tight she swings back until the length of her body is stretched out over the water. I watch as her fingers slip gradually from between the vertical bars.

Standing on the bridge, wanting to know what will happen next, I do nothing, at first. I wait for her to disappear. At any moment I expect she will be gone, that the water will collect her, that she will drop away as if she were never there at all. But the more I wait for her, the more, it seems, she waits for me.

"Come on," she says at last.

The railing is almost too high to get over. I push myself up with my hands, and then haul my legs across, until I am finally on the ledge beside her.

She grins then, and almost at once I am watching her leap into the heavy air, her arms outstretched, the wide sky against her back.

4. days

I wake to the sound of engines. Outside the sun is beating the landscape white. I shift my head in half-sleep, feel the dampness of the pillow; remember.

There are trucks on the street; they are building another mansion. I go out into the garden to watch the men lift ceramic basins, cane lounges, peach-coloured carpet in double-jointed rolls. When they leave, I climb through a window and into the living room. I run my palms along the lacquered pine table-for-four. I take off my shoes and stretch out on the settee, pressing my toes into spotless cushions. The house feels gutted, the air stale; once outside again on the checkerboard lawn I am dizzy and unsteady on my feet.

My summer, now lacking the certainty provided by regular work hours, becomes imbued with this rhythm—a series of suffocations and resurfacings: empty houses followed by wide open streets; wakefulness followed by afternoon sleep; hot days followed by night, and everything that night brings with it: the cooling dark, the water, Cushla.

Having lost the Q Store job I begin spending time following my brother in and out of hospital wards carrying thermometers and bed pans, or simply butting my toes against the slippery linoleum. This is where I find her again. In the steel-framed bed she looks limp, and paler than I remember, her expression disengaged. I stand beside my brother as he talks to her and she glances about without listening. I search for recognition on her face; I find none.

But when my brother turns away momentarily to read her chart, she looks straight at me, arches her head against the pillow, and grins.

"Any new aches or pains to report?" my brother asks her, glancing up from his clipboard.

Her face becomes sullen. "Right here," she tells him, pointing to her nose. Right on the bridge.

As she says "bridge" her eyes flit back to meet mine. She bites at her bottom lip. My brother writes it down with the stub of a hospital pencil. I stand beside him, wanting to laugh out loud.

5. nights

We agree to meet on Palm Street, where the bridge is concrete and steel and two lanes wide; where the cars roll past anonymously, their headlights leaving you blind at intervals.

On the first night I wait there over an hour. My house key is heavy in my shorts pocket; it is on a ring which I've safety-pinned to the inside. Under the togs beneath my clothes, my skin is damp. By ten o'clock, she hasn't come. I turn to peer at the dark water below, and think about going home.

Five minutes later she appears from nowhere, grinning and panting. Five minutes after that she has already leapt into the water, and is shouting at me to get a move on. "Does the hospital know where you are?" I hear myself ask, but the cars are roaring by, and she is splashing and ducking, and doesn't answer.

"Come on," is all she yells.

I laugh into the noise of my racing blood, into a mouthful of water that finds me in the quiet world beneath the surface, until I pull myself up through the fog to meet her shrieks of delight. She swims over to me and pushes me down further, her hands firm on my shoulders, my face against her neck. She holds me like this until I need to draw breath. I struggle against her grip. She holds me a moment longer. Just in time she releases me, and I gasp for air. Then she is at the edge, heaving herself and her raining clothes onto the embankment, ready to go again.

The bridge at the end of Haven Street, or the one in the middle of Tropical Road; night after night we fall off the edge of every place we can. Sometimes the levels seem too low, but Cushla doesn't appear to care. She always jumps first, and I know that if she didn't I would lack the courage, and probably the inclination. Part of me wants the thrill of the fall, but mostly I need to follow Cushla; to take the water into my mouth to belong to it, to belong to her.

Afterwards we sit along the edge of the road rolling pieces of gravel under the palms of our hands. When she stretches for more pieces, out of her long, damp sleeves, I notice scars on her arms, her wrists; streaks of silver. I wonder how they got there and what the skin feels like at those places, but I never ask. We talk instead about the best bridges to jump: the ones where there is the least traffic, or where the water is clearest. On the way home we follow the canals past the rows of mansions, standing so huge and silent that we submit to their speechlessness. At these times we carry our thoughts like secrets along the steady dark ribbon, to the beat of the crickets and the sound of squelching shoes.

6. houses

It is a heat-soaked night in January and we have jumped three bridges in a row, but still it doesn't seem enough. I am awake and energetic, and decide to keep Cushla from disappearing.

"I've got something to show you," I say to her.

I lead her through the flat empty streets. We are still dripping wet as we climb through the window of the vacant mansion, into the stale air and a room full of unused furniture.

"How do you know about this place?" she asks as we feel our way through the darkness.

"I've walked past it," that's all.

Cushla jumps onto the lacquered table and swings her legs over the edge. She looks around. "This house is huge," she says, grabbing my hands. We should have a party here.

"Yeah, right," I say. "Like no one'd notice."

"Are you serious?" Cushla grins. "Nobody cares. We can do anything we want."

"What do you want to do, then?" I ask.

"Oh, anything," she says. "It doesn't matter to me."

That's when I touch her face with my hand, letting my fingers rest on her cheek, the silence of the room beating around me. She laughs, and asks me what I am doing. Then she pushes herself off the table, and I stumble backwards to let her pass as she moves towards the door. It opens with a siren sound; the house alarm. Cushla shrieks against the noise. "Come on then," she cries.

I stand there drenched, as she races down the street.

7. into the water

The last night I spend with Cushla is a Thursday at the end of summer. Running out of bridges, we head to a place we have never been; to a street that leads to the city. The road is high over the water. From the bridge we can see its surface deep down in the bunker of the canal.

Cushla takes off her shoes, bending into the shadows with the water beneath her, and slides through the narrow bars. "Hurry up," she calls to me, or I'll lose my nerve.

Looking at the waterway, crusted at the edges and muddied with silt, I can tell it's not deep enough. "What are you waiting for?" she asks me from the ledge.

I stare at her, incredulous. It's too dangerous.

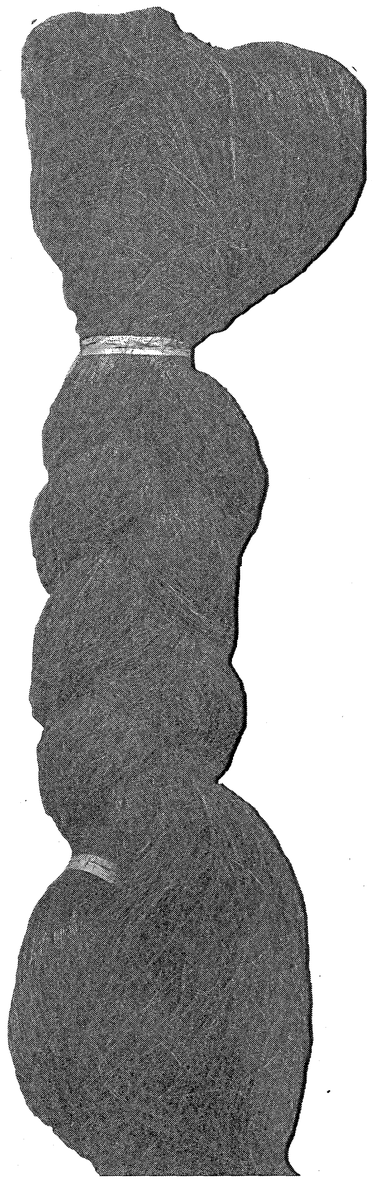
She considers me for a moment, and then lets her gaze fall back upon the water. "I'm doing it anyway; I don't care," she says at last, and that's when I realise that she doesn't.

She turns around to face it, her hands freed, balancing on her heels. I want to shout out, but she is already in the air.

The water shimmers, licking itself black and sounding like thunder that strikes the moment she arrives, the moment it welcomes her. I stand back from the edge with my breath caught in my chest, barely wanting to see.

The water is a still mirror. There is only the sound of cars on the road. Cushla is nowhere at all. I hear a splash, and she is hauling herself up to the surface beneath me; she is under the bridge in the shade of the already dark.

The surface of the canal rolls and shudders. I hear her laughter resonating between the concrete walls. She calls out to me. I do not answer her. High on the bridge, with the cars roaring past on their way to the city, I am bending down with my hands on my shoes, untying the knotted laces, carrying them home. ❖



Please Take

AN ESSAY ON APPROPRIATION

"Aboriginal studies, hey?" The mustard-blond Aussie heaved sideways to face me in his narrow seat. The coffee and complimentary peanuts on his breath raised hairs on me. "Yeah, yeah I could tell ya' few things about Aboriginal studies."

I thought: God. Eighteen hours across the Pacific and the last thing I need is this Croc Dundee look-alike lecturing me on my future education. I took a deep breath.

"See, there are two kinds of Aboriginals." He threw back another handful of peanuts. "There are the real ones, who live way the hell out there, eat worms and bark. They're still around; my buddy dated an anthropologist and got in with them and lemme tell ya has he got some stories. But then there are the fake ones, all bloody wasted on a street corner living on dole money. It's the real ones you want to find."

I looked at him, astonished. Was he serious? Was he typical? Having spent the previous two years in a bubble of UBC liberal arts academia I couldn't believe that people still thought and talked like this. Didn't he know that Aboriginal society was a complex interplay of hundreds of cultural groups all with their own traditions, songs and folklore, mixing with European culture in thousands of individual ways? I couldn't believe he could render all this complexity into two simple images. My optimism toward my exchange year waned.

As it turns out, we were both wrong. In Australia there aren't two kinds of Aborigines, nor are there thousands.

There are five.

✦ ✦ ✦

Aboriginal #1: *The Artifact*

Museums love him. The pale archivist gives tours by the hour passing case after case of arrowhead and stone tool. "The Aborigine used clay to paint his face before going on the hunt." "The Aborigine would eat insects like the one pictured here." "The Aborigine was very proud."

If you shut your eyes, you will probably find him there. It seems we all have a shadowy image of the Australian Aboriginal in the back of our minds, scratching his eyebrows and hunting for kanga. This Aboriginal is dark and primitive, close to the soil, in touch with the rhythms of the moon and his own pre-modern pulse. He is dim but dignified. He is not entirely clean.

Anthropologists have been feeding our images of him wildly for decades. People have lived and died interpreting and explaining the Aborigines, poking and prodding, measuring skulls, dissecting corpses. They write paper after paper. There are more journal articles and PhD dissertations than there are Aboriginals alive today, page after page, black ink on flat white. For decades they told us that the Aborigines were at the bottom of the Great Chain of Being: Angles, Saxons, Eastern Europeans and then Australian Aborigines.

Has anybody progressed?

Aboriginal #2: *The Tourist Attraction*

Every year tourists by the Airbus-load add educational excursions to their days of surf and sun. "Take a walk on the wild side in Australia this summer!" "Original inhabitants frozen in their Stone-Age state!" "Watch an authentic Aboriginal hunt and taste some bonafide bush tucker!"

This Aboriginal is the actor in face paint on the glossy brochure; this is the underpaid artist who made the dot painting you'll package up and send home to Dad; this is the original owner of that cartoon didgeridoo on your airline ticket. He is warlike but handsome, primal but harmless, at one with nature and himself. He is very hip.

In Alice Springs, this Aboriginal can be found behind glass all along the main streets in Genuine Aboriginal Art for $700 a canvas, while another kind of Aboriginal vomits boxed wine onto the asphalt outside. You can listen to him on CDs of re-mastered authentic indigenous chants, while the noise of fistfights and police sirens wail below your hotel window. You can take home one of his boomerangs, $9.99 on special; buy two get the third for half price.

The Australian tourist bureau couldn't have made him up if they tried.

RUNNER-UP: LONG NON-FICTION

a Number

Aboriginal #3: *The Derelict*

Street corners are full of them. "They've lost their culture." "They're a black mark on the city." "I'm not racist but I cross the street when an Aboriginal person is there...You just never know what they will do."

This is the Abo, the Boong, the Koon, the Blackie. This is the receiving end of all your charity and all your anger. This is every scapegoat you could ever need.

Why isn't the budget balanced? Where do my tax dollars go? Why aren't the parklands safe at night? This Aboriginal carries all of Australia's mistakes on his or her tired back, he is every mugger who was never convicted; she is every heroin-hooked single mother you have never met. This Aboriginal is assumed into all the dark corners that no one wants to walk down, but everyone needs.

Aborigine #4: *The Conversation Piece*

Every civilised person should add one to their list of dinner-party repertoire. "Oh, we just love our Aborigines." "We all attended the reconciliation day parade. A real one-up for Australia." "Their stories are just glorious. I have two collections."

This Aboriginal takes many forms, depending on the company and the conversation. This can be the ear-to-the-ground hunter living in his unspoiled habitat, or the hardworking single parent in a Sydney suburb, or the dozen or so children packaged off to a Christian boarding school. This Aboriginal creeps into the everyday banter of anyone who wants to look concerned, engaged, informed.

There are a few rules. Conversation-piece Aboriginals do not complain. They don't campaign for equal opportunities or official apologies. They don't get confused about choosing between cultures. They don't remember or remind anyone about atrocities. They don't say the word atrocity, or genocide, or massacre. They generally appreciate everything the Europeans brought. They generally get on.

Aborigine #5: *The political campaign*

It's the 21st century and the Aboriginal issue is on the top of every campaigner's list. "If elected, I will promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia." "If elected I will clean up the city square and provide adequate resources for those Aboriginal people living there." "If elected I will raise the Aboriginal standard of living by 30 per cent...Without of course lowering anybody else's."

This Aboriginal is the bar on the graph and the bell on the curve. It is the six-year-old smiling with the Cabinet minister for a photo op. It is the Labour Party's love child and the Liberals' cranky teenager. This Aboriginal is silk-screened and stream-lined, average, token and representative in every way.

The rhetoric runs high. The prime minister won't apologise for past wrongs but the opposition might. The local Liberal MP wants to clean up the streets but the Labour MP down the block insists it's her jurisdiction too. This Aboriginal lives and dies in election campaign speeches, front page news stories, journalistic awards. It is 30 per cent less employed, 40 per cent less educated and will die 15 to 20 years younger than the average Australian. It is somewhat empowered, somewhat doomed, somewhat dying out and somewhat blossoming into a new cultural reality...depending on who's in power.

On my flight home a year later I sat beside another broad-shouldered Australian, skin leathery tanned and neck as red as an outback sunset.

"So, what did ya study here, dear?" he asked, throwing back some peanuts. This time I was prepared.

"Colonialism."

by Chris Fraser

Winner: Long Non-Fiction

the dirt mentality

by Larissa Buijs

A lot of people are irritated that I talk about bikes so much. There're better things to discuss, they say, like the current state of our society, the ulterior motives of network television or the government's latest brainstorm. Pick one. I'd be happy to engage in an argument, but the fact is that my bike makes me happier than does the rest of the world.

Before I took up mountain biking, I was stuck in a deep rut of emotional turmoil. I was anxious and bored and really quite sick of thinking. I know, this is normal. But when it came to parents, friends, ex-boyfriends and employers, there were heaps of putrid problems. The resolution—if ever it was in view—could be reached only by navigating through a perplexing maze of issues with two fingers snapped tightly onto my nose. There was never an obvious route and I usually ended up on the ground, mouth open in a pile of dung. I had an incredible need to do something simple, something straightforward, something instantly gratifying even.

One summer day while unemployed, I went out for a jaunt on an old steel Triumph. I was riding along a paved path in a nearby park and saw something which, in all my teenage years of wandering the pedestrian and bicycle routes that linked together the limited green space in the drab borough of Meadowvale, I had never noticed before. It was a half-hidden track leading into a little clump of trees between older suburban developments. I looked around cautiously, as if leaving the pavement was a crime, and pedalled into the forest.

A canopy of deciduous trees masked the surrounding houses and I imagined that I had just driven 30 kilometres north into the rolling hills of Caledon and stood among a quiet neighbourhood of oak and ash. On the ground, a complex system of man-made bumps and stunts scavenged the earth of this secret boon. The image of weathered trees, bushes, dirt and decaying logs was sharp in the shade of the late afternoon: a refreshing change from the strip malls and six-lane traffic routes that defined the rest of Mississauga. I rode along the curved path, laughing and jumping off to catch my balance. When the light began to fade, I raced home, beaming.

That was it. Within weeks I had a brand new bike and a trail map of southern Ontario. In the fall I returned to Vancouver for school and the world of downhill mountain biking drew me even further into the woods.

I'll admit that one of the reasons I can afford such a sport (equipment, upgrades, more equipment, more upgrades) is because I've been pampered and babied into a middle-class lifestyle, somehow inheriting the privilege to spend money on leisure. An entry-level mountain bike is over a thousand bucks.

My justification? It keeps me grounded, though not always with the rubber side down. It keeps me focused when I know that yet another conversation about the newest cuts to social service will result in a back-and-forth of juggled jargon and misdirected anger. It keeps me focused when I'm guessing which province is next in line for a right-wing soap and wash, when I am overcome by an irreversible feeling of hopelessness that begins to affect my daily tasks, my relationships—my very words. I head to the forest when I want to talk to the trees, when I know that their simple presence and casual perseverance can teach me to stop, listen, realign.

While demonstrations serve to build community and strength for collective resistance, our bodies beg for attention, for nurturing, day after day. We owe it to ourselves to listen.

Though I sometimes wish I could escape it all and spend my days with the moss and loam, I don't. I am, for now, a visitor to the country. I am a resident of the city dreaming of an impossible lifestyle. I am attached to the convenience of community swimming pools, independent film on the big screen and designated bike lanes.

IT KEEPS ME GROUNDED, THOUGH NOT ALWAYS WITH THE RUBBER SIDE DOWN.

There are people who devote their entire lives to recreation, to being outdoors on a regular basis. Sometimes they're roaming hippies, sometimes professional athletes. Some push their bodily limits far enough to engage the so-called 'extreme' aspects of sport, making money by modelling for commercial ads. Okay, this is it, my pet peeve. An extreme athlete feeds on adrenaline and, unlike the average folk, she focuses on getting faster, higher, deeper than we could ever imagine—sometimes going right over the edge from a lack of self-control. Then she gets famous. She gets snatched up by sponsors because her desire to defeat the unknown is appealing to advertising hogs that spend their entire existence digging obsessively through the muck for the next human emotion capable of netting capitalistic profit.

If I may indulge in a little bit of casual psychoanalysis, why must the extreme athlete go to such lengths for physical satisfaction? Which comes first: the desire to jump off a cliff or the appeal of fame for doing it?

Once upon a time people were naturally fit. Women and men were always outside, always working to sustain the family, the community, the land. Even the élite had to

The Dirt Mentality Continued....

use their physical selves: in war, exploration, crusades. Humans across the globe were strong and durable. Then we progressed.

White man conquered all and wrote books about it. Simple tasks were replaced by machines, efficiency, and more machines. We built roads from here to the gold mines. Columbus made his ill-planned trip. Eventually we turned our focus inwards, developing an intangible sixth dimension called 'cyberspace.' The human assembly line is no longer the most efficient method of production and, leaving the discussion of genocide for another day, the explorers have done their exploring.

It's no wonder extreme athletes have been popping up by the herd over the last half a century. With all the emphasis on having a big brain, we often forget about our muscles. In an effort to save them, we play sports, have sex, walk the dog around Stanley Park. People must make a deliberate attempt to exercise in the urban playground.

Physical activity is, in turn, encouraged primarily as recreation. And who has the money to spend on a new sea kayak, scuba gear or a full-suspension mountain bike? That's not a rhetorical question. The back-breaking and necessary evils of auto mechanics, plumbing and construction are reserved for the working class.

HE HAD ALL THE CLASSIC PERSONALITY TRAITS OF THE NO-LIMITS ATHLETE

Okay, back to the point.

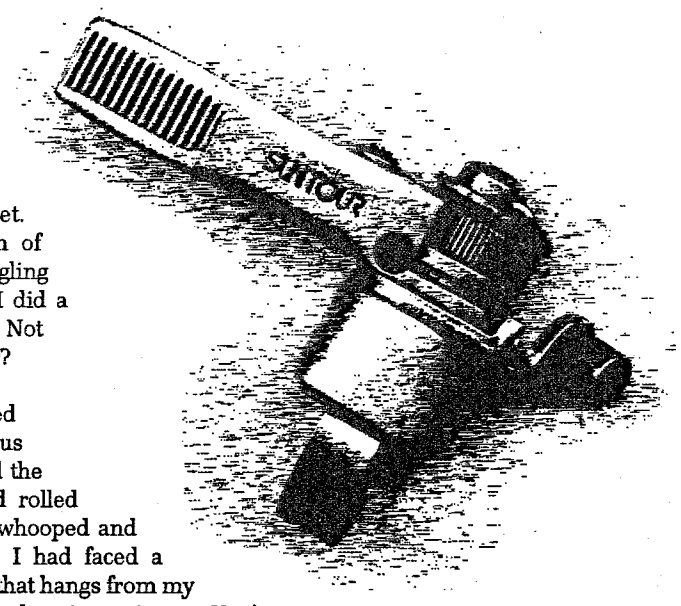
So there are thousands of people, suddenly, with an eye on outdoor activity to help stimulate relaxation. Add two cups of corporate media: with persistent greed for the bigger and better, television and magazines idolise and celebrate extreme-sports athletes, those super-human people who represent something to strive for and daydream about. What's more eye-catching than a snowboarder throwing himself 200 feet in the air from a plush, untouched peak on the inside flap of your magazine? One million other people are thinking the same thing. Perhaps extreme athletes will fill the history books as the explorers, crusaders and pirates once did.

I used to date a man who thought he was an extreme mountain biker. Now that's the worst of both worlds. His appetite for adrenaline leaked into almost every other aspect of his life, including future planning. He wanted a degree in mountain sports, a self-built home in Whistler, a solid mortgage investment plan and an apprenticeship in furniture building within three years—having begun none. I realised very quickly that even his memory of personal accomplishment was exaggerated; his friends had filled me in on the details, which, of course, were far less exciting. He had all the classic personality traits of the no-limits athlete, which they're now saying might even be linked up with an 'extreme gene.'

I definitely digress. I'm not exactly building a positive argument for riding my bike down a mountain in the name of personal fulfillment. Okay, I'll admit: I am sometimes pulled into extreme mountain biking propaganda. I went to the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival to watch *Dirt Divas* and *Ride to the Hills*. I scour the racks of specialty bike shops and fantasise about having the money to buy fatter tires. I know what an extreme athlete eats, breathes and thinks because I read adventure magazines.

But my goals are meagre. If I hop over a wet log without slipping, I'm happy. Winding through trees and drifting over roots with my eye on the ground and my brain in hibernation helps sift out the litter. As they say, that's all that really matters.

Haven't I convinced you yet? Well, it's not all fun and games and fat tires. I realised recently that I was so afraid of falling that I would get upset and discouraged every time I was thrown—even after landing on my feet. Standing there on a cushion of autumn leaves, my bike dangling from a log a few feet away, I did a quick inventory of body parts. Not even a bruise. So why the fear?



I hopped back on and tried again. It took several nervous attempts, but when I pedalled the entire length of that log and rolled back onto the muddy trail, I whooped and hollered as loud as I could. I had faced a demon, the little red monster that hangs from my shoulder and tells me again and again to give up. You're always scared, it hisses. Women are always afraid of something.

I whipped that demon like lightning across the forest.

Driving back to the city that day, there was something different about the road, the overcast sky and the cars weaving gently along the highway. A mystical soundtrack might as well have been playing in the background.

It's addictive, you know, the desire to overcome a busy-body mind. Eventually I found other ways to explore the serenity brought to me by this simple vehicle. Oh, the great surprise! Commuting around the city on an old Apollo bicycle has become a vital part of my daily activity.

There are others who quietly enjoy this mental cleansing. They are on the streets and in our parks. They drift from curb to curb, zigzagging along a deserted alley in the orange light of night, opening themselves to the moon.

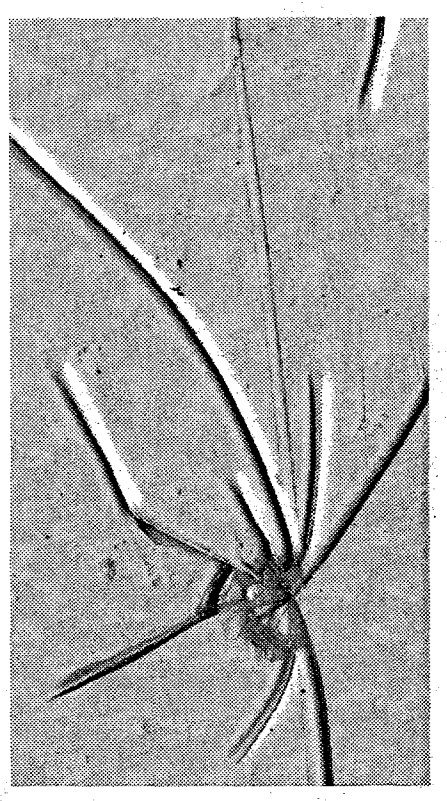
I pulled up alongside a car the other day and watched a tired woman sitting in the driver's seat. She lifted a cigarette to her mouth and, with glazed eyes, rolled slowly through the intersection. Stuck in the mindset of technological advancement and all-round convenience, we would sooner gather a guaranteed retirement pension than fresh blackberries.

What a shame it would be to miss out on the pie. ❖

winner poetry

MIDNIGHT IN WONDERLAND

by Kate Bond

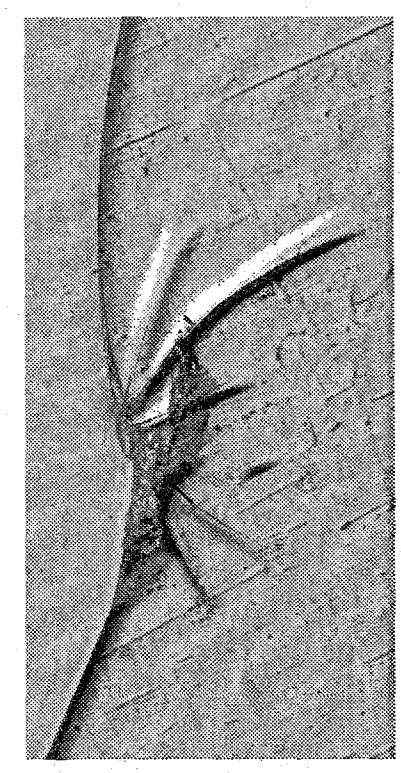


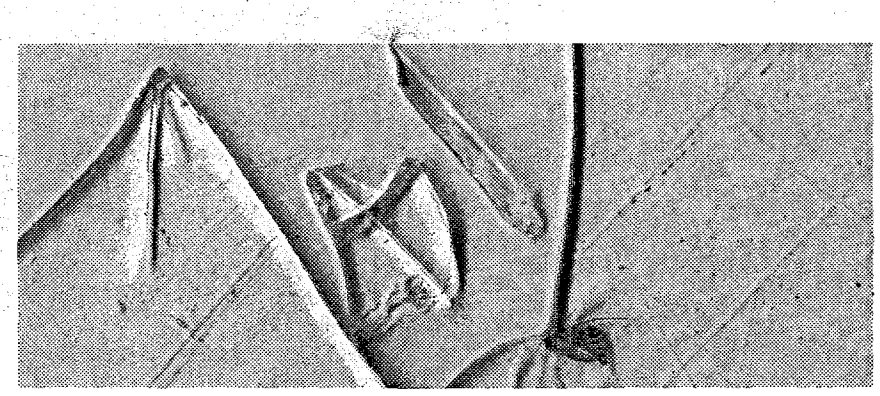
You've come into this garden, Alice;
here, under the porcelain madness of the moon,
will your crocus eyelids be moistened,
your waxing skin embroidered;
here will the whisper Drink me mist your ear.

I am inside the glass bottle;
I am inside cold licked candy;
I am parched by you, Alice.

We could paint the roses black, you and I,
in this midnight garden of lacquered shadows.
I could crush these rose petals and raspberry tarts
and smear their blood on your newly tinselled throat—
in the spasms and the March madness—

Off with your head, my quenching Alice;
I am the Queen of Hearts, of thirst and petals.

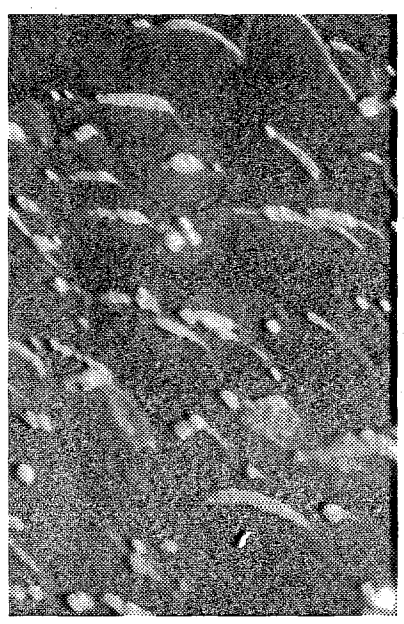




runner-up poetry

ROCK-SKIPPING AT HARRISON LAKE

by Kat Kinch



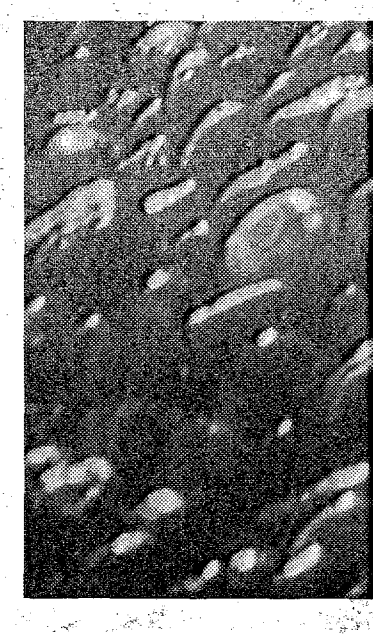
There are spiderstrands, mercury bright, bridging the stones beside my feet.
I remember my child palms that knew which stone curves had forcefields surrounding
and could bounce the breadth of the waves between us and the boat,
us and the ducks, us and the opposite shore.

Even the clouds stop here, snagged by the mountains and the spiky pines.
They turn pink and blue in the lazy ripple of the sky and they sink
into the valley below the lowest reaches of snow.

And the small, smooth stones, in multitudes, pave the lakefloor
and the ducks navigate the layer, chill and clear, between rock and air.
Seals come in, shiny and slick, from the salt water, to flop on the jagged beach.

I remember to count time in the proliferation of moss, the unfolding
of young ferns, the shift from rain to sun and back again
and the bloom of heavy, hot mist under gleaming cedar.

Count time in the soft expansions of the lungs while sleeping
under snowbright stars, and in the interval between
the skip and the plop of a rock returning to its bed.



NEWS briefs

Transit fares go up April 1

If you are tired of wasting toonies because you don't have enough quarters to pay $1.75 for bus fare, never fear. Next month, the cost of a one-zone fare will go up to $2.

Last November, to make up for funding shortfalls, the Board of Translink, the Lower Mainland's transit authority, voted to increase fares, to ask the provincial government to raise fuel tax, and to ask the Greater Vancouver Regional District to increase Lower Mainland property taxes.

On April 1, one-zone fares will increase by 25 cents to $2, while two- and three-zone fares will increase by 50 cents to $3 and $4, respectively.

The cost of Faresavers will also increase. A pack of ten one-zone fares will go up from $16 to $18, while the cost of two-zone and three-zone Faresavers will go up from $22.75 to $27, and from $32.50 to $36, respectively.

Originally, the costs hikes were expected to target bus passes too, but as a consolation to transit users paying increased fares and to encourage regular transit use, Translink decided not to increase monthly bus-pass fees at this time.

Anti-poverty groups have criticised this decision, however, stating that by increasing only the cost of cash fares and Faresavers, Translink is unfairly targeting those who can least afford to pay.

The cost of monthly bus passes will not increase until a full review of fares is completed this fall. ❖

GAP returns to campus illegally

Yet another Genocide Awareness Project (GAP) display was set up illegally yesterday. But this time, organisers of the display were protesting a different issue.

Christine Thompson, president of Lifeline, the organisation that set up the display, said her group was protesting what they see as an infrigement of academic freedom.

Lifeline is only permitted to put up their controversial display once a term. This restriction, said Thompson, contradicts UBC's academic freedom policy.

The policy stipulates that members of the university have the right to pursue areas of opinion and discussion and that behaviour which obstructs those rights will not be tolerated on campus.

Thompson said her group purposefully did not seek permission for the display as a protest of the restriction.

Lifeline set up its banners around 12pm outside Koerner Library, while Students for Choice, a pro-choice group, quickly responded to the Lifeline display by putting up its own banners close to Lifeline's an hour later.

Under a UBC rule, the two groups are required to maintain a distance of 30 metres between displays. Today the two groups were less than two metres apart.

Hannah Roman, a member of Students for Choice, said that because Lifeline chose to ignore the university's rules, they did not feel they had to follow the rules either.

"I think this shows disrespect to students to put up hurtful displays in high-traffic areas without warning," she said.

The two groups demonstrated without incident until 2pm, when Lifeline took down its display. ❖

Med enrolment to double

Liberals acknowledge physician shortage

by Kathleen Deering

Admission to UBC's medical school will nearly double in the 2004-2005 academic year as the provincial government tries to ease BC's doctor shortage and encourage students to work in underserved regions.

"The major thrust is BC stepping up to the plate and educating the proper number of physicians," said John Cairns, dean of UBC's Faculty of Medicine. According to Cairns, BC has half the number of medical-school spaces per capita than any other province with a medical school.

"[We're] excited and pleased that BC is showing leadership and coming to terms with the shortages in the medical field."

Currently, 128 students graduate each year from UBC's medical program. However, according to an Angus Reid poll conducted in 1999, over 300 doctors either retire or leave BC each year. This leaves the province sorely lacking doctors, especially those specialising in geriatrics and Aboriginal and rural health.

The new funding will provide spaces for 96 additional medical students each year, meaning a total of 224 students will graduate with UBC undergraduate medical degrees in 2009.

Provincial Minister of Advanced Education Shirley Bond announced the funding for the $134 million extended medical program last Friday. $110 million of this money will be used to expand UBC's medical facilities and build a new Life Sciences Centre (LSC) on campus. UVic and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) will both receive $12 million to launch satellite medical schools.

"We made a...commitment to train more doctors in this province in the next five years, and by expanding medical facilities to include the universities of Victoria and northern BC, we're developing a collaborative model that will be unique in Canada," said Bond in a government press release.

The government hopes that expanding BC's medical program to UVic and UNBC will boost the numbers of doctors in less-populated areas.

"By training them in an environment where they can do clerkships in communities, they will develop links and interests that will encourage them to go back and settle there," said David Turpin, president of UVic.

All BC medical students will spend their first term at UBC, but 24 students from each class will continue their studies at the Northern Medical Program at UNBC and 24 will go to the Island Medical Program at UVic. 176 students will study at UBC.

Some of the new money will be used to equip all three universities with audio-visual facilities that will allow transmission of lectures between universities.

"From a provincial perspective, this is big. This is a bold initiative for the three universities to work together," said Turpin. "Not only is it good for the province, it says to the people of the province that these three universities can work together to solve problems in this society."

Cairns said the increased number of graduates will also help stimulate BC's economy, and bring more research dollars to the province. Although 15 per cent of Canada's population lives in BC, currently the province only sees nine per cent of the federal government's research funding. Alberta recieves 15 per cent of federal research funding for only nine per cent of the total population.

Students seem pleased with the plans for medicine education in BC.

"I want to stay in BC," said third-year undergraduate student Melissa Tiggelaar, who plans to study medicine. "[Med school] is so competitive, and there are a lot of people who would be really good doctors who aren't getting in."

From a rural town herself, Tiggelaar says she would like to practise in a smaller community where she feels she could make more of an impact.

Tiggelaar said she feels the new program will help students since it allows those already studying at UVic and UNBC to stay there for medical school and because it encourages BC students to study in areas beyond urban Vancouver.

The new LSC, a 40,000 square-metre building to be built south of the Vancouver General Hospital at UBC, will house UBC's medical school, as well as some Science departments including biochemistry, physiology and microbiology.

"It will bring together people from all areas of the health sciences and life sciences," said Cairns.

Construction of the LSC is expected to begin this summer. The building is slated to open in August 2004. ❖

UBC receives $1.4 million from HSBC

by Deborah Santema

This week, the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank of Canada (HSBC) announced a gift to UBC of $1.4 million, the largest donation the university has ever received from a bank.

Seldom do we see a gift that reaches so many university and student priorities," said Stephen Shapiro, an associate director of UBC's Development Office. "Communities will feel this too; it reaches beyond the university."

The donation will be matched by the university to provide $2.8 million to make UBC more financially accessible.

The donation allocates $1 million to UBC's new downtown campus at Robson Square, $200,000 to the Learning Exchange program in the Downtown Eastside, and $200,000 to create a visiting lecture series run by the Liu Centre for the Study of Global Issues.

The rest of the money—$1.4 million—will go to scholarships and bursaries for undergraduate and graduate students.

Martin Glynn, UBC Board of Governors (BoG) member and President and CEO of HSBC, announced the donation on Tuesday at a reception at UBC's Robson Square campus.

Glynn said that one of the bank's priorites is to ensure that students can afford to go to school.

"We wanted to make sure there was a focus on students and on the needy, and so that's where the primary amount of money has gone," he said.

Glynn, who received his MBA from UBC in 1976, said that the decision to contribute money to UBC had nothing to do with the university's recent decision to increase tuition fees for next year. He added that the donation, instead, reflects a strong relationship between the two institutions.

"We have a lot in common. We're a strong local player, as UBC is. We're a strong national player in Canada, and we also have a global vision, as does UBC," he said.

Byron Hender, UBC's executive coordinator of the vice-president, students office, said HSBC's donation for scholarships and bursaries will be a significant bonus on top of the financial support promised by UBC.

"It's a very significant addition to the student support which the university is putting together for the fall," he said.

Last week, UBC's BoG voted to increase tuition fees. The new tuition fee schedule stipulates that 20 per cent of the funds from increased tuition fees will go towards student financial support.

But some students are concerned about the financial implications of this donation.

Julie Devaney, a master's student in Women's Studies, is concerned that the donation will cost the university and taxpayers more than HSBC, and questioned the university's decision to match the contribution.

"What will have to be cut in order to match these funds? UBC's reason for increasing tuition was lack of funds."

According to Devaney, while $1.4 million is a lot of money, last year, HSBC made $206 million in profit. Because the donation is tax deductible, she said, taxpayers will actually lose out on $300,000 in public funding, and as UBC is matching the funding, they will lose even more.

"Tax deductions and fund-matched donations actually cost the public money," she said.

The last major donation HSBC made to UBC was in 1989, when it gave $1 million to help establish a professorship in Asian Commerce, a professorship in Asian business, and an HSBC visiting chair in international business.❖

FOAM FRONTS: Mesh backs. It never went out of style in the prairies. NIC FENSOM PHOTO

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BC Ferries sued

Tsawwassen First Nation files for environmental damages

by Mohamad El Masri
the SFU Peak

BURNABY (CUP)—Following the Haida nation's precedent-setting court victory earlier this year, the Tsawwassen First Nation has filed a lawsuit in BC Supreme Court against the Vancouver Port Authority and the BC Ferry Corporation.

The suit charges the two corporations with "nuisance and interference" of landowner rights the environmental damage caused to the Tsawwassen First Nation Reserve shore on Roberts Bank.

The Tsawwassen reserve is situated between the causeways leading to the port and the ferry terminal. The Tsawwassen people allege that the foreshore and mudflats have been damaged by industrial operations and that altered tidal flows and siltation are disrupting the flow of freshwater from the Fraser River.

The nation is seeking a legal injunction that would order the Roberts Bank Superport and the Tsawwassen ferry terminal to remove their causeways or alter them so that the water flow and tides are not affected.

"We've tried to talk about these issues to the port and at the treaty table," said Kim Baird, Tsawwassen First Nation chief for three years and a treaty negotiator for 11, "but no one is prepared to deal with us." She said the lawsuit was a last resort.

Baird is hopeful the Haida's court victory in February—when the BC government and Weyerhaeuser were ordered to consult with the Haida before cutting down any trees on the nation's land—will help her nation's case against the port authority and BC Ferries.

The lawsuit, however, is not an assertion of Aboriginal title, but is based on British and Canadian common law, under which waterfront landowners have the right to natural water flow to their land and to unimpaired shore access. The Tsawwassen allege that because of altered water flow from the port's and ferry terminal's causeways, seaweed has clogged the shore preventing the nation from performing its traditional sea-gathering activities.

The Tsawwassen's legal counsel Greg McDade stated in a press release, however, that the suit relies on the status of the nation's land as a reserve.

According to McDade, the lawsuit has been extended to include the federal and provincial governments because the First Nation feels that Canada breached its fiduciary duty when it allowed a port to be built so close to the reserve.

Because of its traditional use of, and reliance upon the Roberts Bank resources, the Tsawwassen nation has been heavily affected by the government's construction.

"This damage has been ongoing for years, for the benefit of others, to the detriment of our community," said Baird. "We should have the same legal rights as any other waterfront landowner to seek justice for the damage to our lands. This is the only reserve of the Tsawwassen First Nation."

Port authority spokesperson Jon Hicke and BC Ferries spokesperson Beth Wilhelm both refused to comment on the lawsuit since the court proceedings have not yet begun. Neither party has given an official statement. ❖

Canada stalls Kyoto

Canada's delay could kill global environment treaty

by Jeremy Nelson
Environment Bureau Chief

TORONTO (CUP)—A treaty that many scientists say is essential to preventing massive environmental destruction faces big problems, and many environmentalists believe that, as the South Park song says, it's time to blame Canada.

The Kyoto Protocol, if implemented, would decrease global greenhouse-gas emissions by 5.2 per cent from 1990 levels by the year 2012. This would not stop global warming, but would prevent some of its more dire consequences, like flooding of coastlines around the world.

But there's a catch: in order for the treaty to take effect, the industrialised countries responsible for producing 55 per cent of the world's greenhouse gases must each ratify it. The top two producers per-capita of greenhouse gases—the United States and Australia—have backed out of the deal, and now the number-three per-capita producer, Canada, has stepped back from its earlier promise to ratify the deal by June.

"We want to ratify; we hope to ratify; our goal is to ratify; but ratification will not take place until we've had full consultation with the provinces, the private sector, companies and the general public," said federal Minister of the Environment David Anderson.

But environmentalists say that the time to talk is over. It took more than a decade to build Kyoto and if the pact collapses, they claim, global warming will be out of control by the time a new agreement emerges. They worry that Canada's delay will influence the decision of two other big countries—Russia and Japan—to ratify the treaty.

"Russia and Japan have been very close to Canada, and we remain very close," Anderson said. "There's no question what we do would be influential on those countries."

Unlike business and manufacturing lobby groups, which claim Kyoto will cost $40 billion and result in 450,000 lost jobs, both Anderson and the environment lobby believe that scientific evidence supports the possibility of global warming and that the cost of inaction is more serious than that of implementing the treaty.

But the similarities stop there.

"This is not a government that is serious about reducing pollution," said Greenpeace spokesperson Jamie Heath, noting that greenhouse gases have been allowed to rise significantly from 1990 levels. "We're more than a decade into this. It's not like it came up last week."

> ***"It's not a choice we have to make between the environment and the economy; the choice is if we are going to put our economy back on a sustainable path"***
>
> ***—David Anderson***
> ***Federal Minister of Environment***

Anderson says greenhouse-gas emissions have increased over the last decade largely because of economic growth. He noted that emissions have risen only a fraction of GDP.

"There's no reason to hesitate. Let's just get on with the work," said Matthew Bramley of the Pembina Institute, a climate-change think tank.

"The difference between an ice age and the present day is only four or five degrees in global average temperatures," he said. "That gives you a sense of the kind of magnitude of changes you can expect if the earth's temperature rose by three to four degrees, which would be in the middle of the range that scientists predict."

Anderson says Canada will only ratify the Kyoto Protocol after accurate cost estimates have been determined by all levels of government—a process likely to be completed next month—and after plans showing how Canada will meet the treaty obligations are made.

"We would not ratify until we had a good expectation of a plan that would ensure that no part of the country would be unfairly forced to bear a larger part of the burden," Anderson said.

But Heath wonders why the government didn't have these plans prepared earlier if Canada was serious about adopting the agreement in June, as initially claimed.

"It's not a choice we have to make between the environment and the economy; the choice is if we are going to put our economy back on a sustainable path," he said.

Heath noted that many municipalities have already made changes to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. Calgary, for example, powers its light urban transit and its biggest shopping mall by wind. Toronto uses methane from its dumps as fuel. ❖

New shuttle vans for summer

Natural-gas vans will be available on campus to students

by Deborah Santema

As part of an initiative to make UBC a more environmentally conscious campus, the UBC Trek Program plans to have two new natural-gas shuttle vans running by the summer.

Trek Program Manager Graham Senft hopes the Trek's natural-gas shuttles, which will be used for transportation at special events and Intramurals games, and to transport international students for special events on campus and to and from the airport, will set an example for other campus departments and organisations that buy gasoline or diesel vehicles.

Although natural gas vehicles are slightly more expensive to maintain than those powered by other fuels, Senft argues that natural gas is the cleanest-burning fuel available at a competitive price.

"Although [natural gas] is still a fossil fuel, it's definitely a step up from before," he said.

And Gordon Lovegrove, UBC director of Transportation Planning, feels the new shuttles may help to reduce the number of vehicles on campus.

> **"[Single occupant vehicles]' intrusion onto the campus puts pedestrians at risk, and increases noise and air pollution."**
>
> ***—Gordon Lovegrove***
>
> ***Director of Transportation planning***

"Many and varying events on campus—athletic, cultural, academic, political—[are] producing an inordinate amount of single occupant vehicles [SOVs]," he said. "SOVs' intrusion onto the campus puts pedestrians at risk, and increases noise and air pollution."

The shuttle vans will not replace the security bus, which will continue to be managed by Security Services. Senft said the new vehicles will differ from the security buses as they will be used on a per-event basis.

The vans will, however, be used to improve after-dark transportation options on campus, as the current security buses are frequently full, do not come very often and have inconvenient routes.

Although the shuttles will be paid for by the university, Lovegrove said the Alma Mater Society (AMS) will most likely run the service. Trek and the AMS have yet to agree over the details of operation.

The service will start as a pilot project, according to Lovegrove, and the vehicles will be leased while the pilot study is in progress. Lovegrove said that if demand for the proposed shuttle vans is sufficient, they will become a permanent service available to students and, if the AMS chooses to run them, a source of revenue for the student society.

"At the end of the study period, the AMS and Trek will sit down and determine whether the programs should continue, be modified, or be dropped completely," Lovegrove said.

AMS Vice-President, External, Tara Learn, said although the shuttle service might be run more effectively by the AMS, she was unsure if the AMS wants the responsibility.

"I think that that it is great environmentally, and I think that it is a good thing that the university has taken the initiative, but we're unsure at this point," she said. ❖

Students rewrite UVic budget

Alternative budget drafted as response to proposed tuition fee hikes

by John Thompson
the Martlet

VICTORIA (CUP)—Morgan Stewart had one simple reason to draft an alternative budget for the University of Victoria.

"30 per cent tuition hikes," he said. "That's it. The alternative to 30 per cent tuition hikes is rewriting the budget."

Stewart is a student representative on the UVic board of governors, the body responsible for decisions such as increasing tuition fees. On Monday, the board will vote on a budget, which currently proposes a 30 per cent increase in fees next year.

But Stewart says substantial increases in tuition fees are unnecessary and argues the university has low-balled its revenue and exaggerated its expenses.

To prove his point, Stewart has drafted an alternative to the university's current proposal.

"According to this budget, we can still keep tuition fees low," he said.

Stewart consulted with other board members while drafting the budget and worked with the current student association chair, Jaime Matten. But so far the alternative budget has university administrators unconvinced.

"These are basically arbitrary reductions," said Jack Falk, the university's vice-president of finance. "He doesn't understand the details behind them and nor would I expect him to."

Falk said the alternative budget is technically balanced, since the expenses and revenue equal each another, but said the alternative budget's drop-in revenue would hurt the quality of education at the university.

"He's balanced it by taking $5 million out," Falk said.

Stewart said he believes increased funding in areas like student financial aid is counterproductive, since the increase would be unnecessary if tuition fees did not rise.

"All increased costs have to be paid by increased tuition fees," he said.

He also said the university could invest more aggressively, and that its projected figures are out of synch with the steady increase in investment revenue in recent years.

Falk said the university budget shouldn't be dependent on the marketplace.

"You don't change your fundamental budget based on investment income flows, because every year you're jumping up and down," he said.

Falk said he looked at the alternative budget to understand how it differed from the version the administration will present to the board of governors, but still believes a tuition increase is unavoidable.

Stewart believes students can still prevent a tuition fee increase if they act now.

"This is the last chance for them to save about $700 next year," he said.

If Stewart's alternative budget is ratified by the board, the cost of tuition for a full-time arts degree will increase from $2152 to $2425 by 2004-2005. That would mean an increase of two per cent this year and a five per cent increase over the next two years, to counter the rate of inflation.

In January, a leaked university proposal stipulated that tuition would increase by 90 per cent over the next three years. This proposed three-year plan was recently voted down by the finance committee, which decided to commit to changes for the following year only. ❖

FIRST ATLANTIC ANTI-SWEATSHOP POLICY UNDER NEGOTIATION

by Meghan Negrijn
the Muse

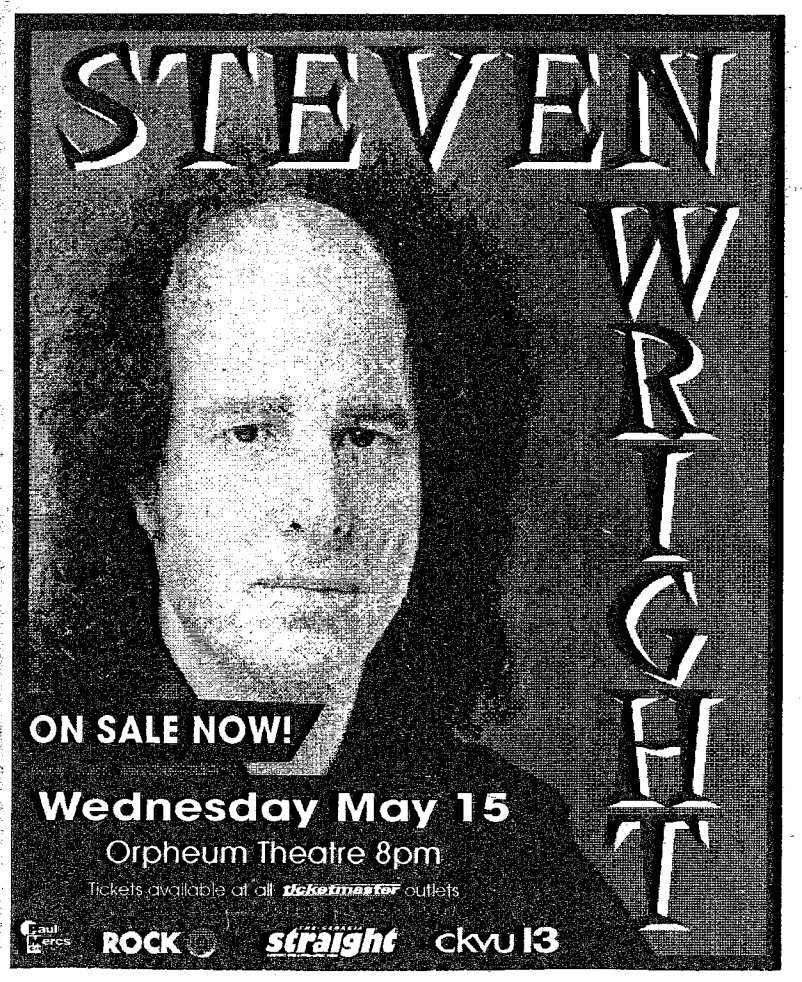
ST. JOHN'S (CUP)—Memorial is soon to become the first university in Eastern Canada to approve an anti-sweatshop code, the university's Oxfam student group announced last week.

Josh Mansfield, a representative of the campus group, said his organisation and Memorial's student union are wrapping up negotiations with the university over the sweatshop policy.

"On Tuesday, we had a meeting and we put forward our concerns in a code," Mansfield said. "The administration agreed to take that code and pretty well adopt it. They said a few editorial changes and...then they're going to put it through senior administration.

"If they agree to adopt it, our university will be the first Atlantic Canada university to have a campus sweatshop policy."

If the code passes at Memorial, Mansfield says, the campus Oxfam group may organise a campaign to encourage other universities to adopt similar codes. If the group can get other universities committed, he believes they could eventually effect change in the university clothing industry. ❖



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The search for Dharma

A student's journey to Tibet

Art, photos and text by Tejas Ewing

Travelling to Tibet is controversial. In 1949 China invaded Tibet, illegally occupying a country with a history of independence dating back to 127 BC. This was done for strategic military reasons, to provide a 'buffer zone' between democratic India and communist China. Today, over 300,000 troops and one quarter of China's nuclear missile force are in Tibet. The London-based Free Tibet campaign estimates that over 1.2 million Tibetans have died since the beginning of the occupation and over 6000 monasteries have been destroyed. Because of outbreaks of violence and human rights violations ranging from censorship to torture, many groups that advocate a free Tibet are encouraging a complete tourism boycott of the area, because they believe tourism supports the Chinese regime and its actions.

Despite all of this, I decided to travel to Tibet.

I didn't make the trip because I have no sympathy for the plight of Tibetans. I like to think I'm a socially conscious traveller. The treatment of indigenous populations concerns me. I believe that people should have self-government.

I went there anyway.

'What kind of a hypocrite is this guy?' you might ask. Well, I don't believe that I am a hypocrite: I'm just not an idealist. After living in Asia for 12 years, I don't really believe that China will give Tibet up in my lifetime, tourism boycott or not.

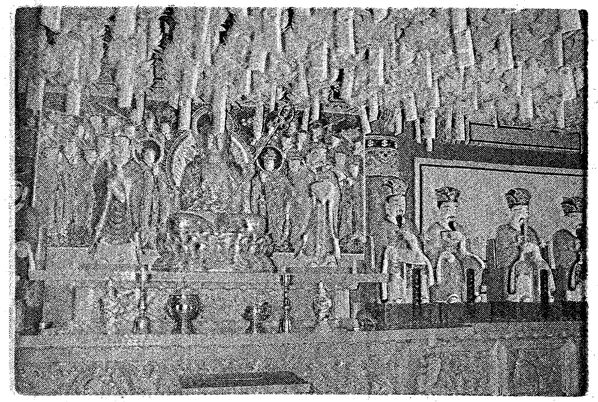
A lack of idealism, however, doesn't mean Chinese actions in Tibet are justified. What the Chinese government has done, and continues to do, in Tibet is a blatant denial of human rights. Planning for my trip, I often wondered whether the voyage would do the opposite of what I intended—provide outright validation of the actions of the Chinese government.

But perhaps the key to change is in the future, not in the past. Travelling to Tibet showed me that tourism can actually help, rather than hinder, Tibetan attempts to raise awareness of their plight in the world and gain leverage in their struggle for equitable treatment by the Chinese government.

Despite urges for a boycott from some sympathetic groups, most human-rights advocates encourage visitors to make the trip. The Canada Tibet Committee holds this position, stating in its travel advisory pamphlet that "most Tibetans support tourism because it constitutes a means by which the outside world can learn of the conditions in Tibet and the aspirations of Tibetans." In fact, the first travellers to Tibet after the border opened in the 1980s began the large scale 'Free Tibet' movement when they returned home. The Dalai Lama himself strongly encourages tourism, as long as it involves a conscious involvement in and understanding of the situation, rather than a glossed-over package tour controlled by Chinese tour guides.

It is relatively easy to get to Tibet by going on a Chinese government-sanctioned tour, run by a government travel agency. However, this kind of trip achieves nothing. Instead, it does the serious harm of solidifying China's claim to the area since you see what the Chinese want you to see and hear what they want you to hear. On his website (www.ciolek.com), Australian Dr Matthew T. Ciolek, an Asian and Pacific Studies professor at the Australian National University in Canberra, informs readers that many tour guides will falsely say that the *extensive damage to Tibetan monuments is a* result of the 1904 British invasion. Or, if travellers witness a protest, guides will say it is a religious ceremony, calmly assuring visitors that Tibetans are allowed to freely express themselves as the tourists are ushered away before the police arrive.

Tours organised by the Chinese government bring travellers to places that present Tibet as a peaceful, harmonious colony of China, places that



prevent you from talking to the local people and seeing what life is really like.

By making a bit of an effort, however, a traveller can see the other side of the story and bring this information back to his or her home country, perhaps helping to increase support for a free Tibet. All foreign journalists are prohibited from entering Tibet. Even tourists who behave too suspiciously can be harassed. However, if observations are discreetly made, the Free Tibet Campaign suggests that "such reports by responsible travellers can be an important source of information to support organisations outside of Tibet."

You don't see many news stories about the state of Tibet. Instead the most common source of information is from travellers who return home and feel compelled to share their observations and spread the word. However, discretion is the key. There are Chinese spies in many areas, and tourists have been arrested and detained for unnecessary contact with Tibetans. Similarly, those Tibetans you speak to can be arrested. While having a private conversation with a Tibetan guide, restaurant or shop owner is not suspicious, acting like a journalist is.

So, what other efforts should a traveller make? I'll use my own experience as an example. First of all, choose a Tibetan travel agency. There are a number of Tibetan-owned agencies in Kathmandu, Nepal. One of the only convenient flights into Tibet is from Nepal, and using these agents gives you the chance to spend a few days in Nepal. Try to plan a trip as an individual or with a friend or two; this gives you the greatest amount of flexibility. I travelled with my father and we were allowed places that tours never go. Finally, make sure that the agency you choose uses Tibetan guides, even if you cannot find a Tibetan travel agency. Many different travel agencies in the Vancouver area will make an effort to fulfill your request, and each request you make reduces the chances of the Chinese banning Tibetan guides. Such guides cannot be easily censored, and they provide an honest perspective to each place you choose to go. The risk of interference from Chinese spies is also limited, as they can't possibly eavesdrop on your private conversations. These guides can also help you plan a trip that takes you away from the controlled travel areas created by the Chinese government. Our guide was not shy about telling us his thoughts on the current situation. In fact, many Tibetan guides see it as their responsibility.

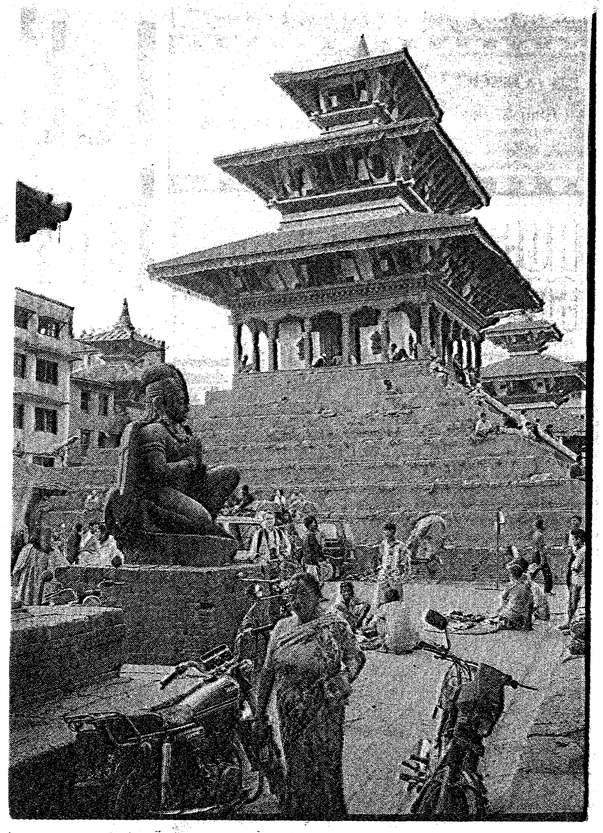
Without a Tibetan guide, I would never have learned about Chinese attempts to overwhelm the Tibetan population with Chinese migrants. Our guide explained that the entire area of downtown Lhasa is now populated by ethnic Chinese who have displaced local Tibetans, including himself and his family. He explained that Chinese now outnumber Tibetans by over a million. He told us that his son was now in Dharamsala, India, where he could finally learn Buddhism and the Tibetan language, unhindered. "What I earn as a guide allows me to visit my son," he told us. While Chinese tours claim that Tibetans are allowed to learn about their own culture, our guide informed us that the Tibetan language is banned in schools.

Our guide fed our interest with his personal stories, and seemed truly pleased to find an attentive audience keen to do something when they returned home. Tourism in Tibet provides local people with perhaps the only safe way to tell others about their situation. Based on the friendship we formed with our guide, I believe that guides take a great deal of pleasure in their work and the opportunity it affords them.

Each place we visited was accompanied by a description from our guide of the widespread abuse by the Chinese. Our guide told us how, everywhere—even in the Potala, the Dalai Lama's former palace—overt acknowledgement of the spiritual leader's existence is illegal. Our guide talked about the destruction of Tibetan cultural monuments, a systematic attempt to rid Tibet of Buddhism. He told us about the current manifestation of that aim—the arrest of the six-year-old Panchen Lama after the Dalai Lama proclaimed him to that high position.

Our guide also explained to us that tourists are making a difference through their presence alone. He said, "With each and every tourist that enters the Tibet, it becomes more and more difficult for the Chinese to oppress us." The Chinese government realises that it cannot have a lucrative tourism industry while continuing to stifle the culture of Tibetan people. Many cultural sites have been recently reopened for the benefit of tourists and Tibetans alike. Other sites are being steadily rebuilt and repaired. When China first occupied Tibet, the removal of Buddhism from Tibetan society was the primary goal. Now, partly thanks to tourism, the Chinese government has eased its grip a bit. Our guide told us that many of the sites we visited were completely closed during the imposition of martial law in 1987-1988. Due to the increased tourist interest, however, these sites are now open even to Buddhist pilgrims. Once again, Buddhists are allowed to make their lengthy and arduous pilgrimage to the Dalai Lama's palace. In this practice, Tibetans walk the entire route, prostrating themselves flat on the ground with every step, subsisting on donations from passers-by. This is no longer banned because the Chinese understand that it is good for tourism.

My father and I consciously wandered off the usual tour-group route. Away from the overt Chinese control, you can experience the richness of Tibetan culture while actually making a discernible difference. When visiting such attractions outside of Lhasa, you can tip the Tibetan workers, rather than putting your money in a jar that gets taken by



Chinese officials. For this reason, any tourist should make an effort to plan excursions as far from Lhasa as they are allowed. You can do some research and stay in Tibetan monasteries or Tibetan-owned hotels. Again, the Chinese government has seen the benefit of Tibetan ownership for increasing tourism. By making a point to support this, you reduce the chances of any sort of crackdown on local ownership rights.

In straying off the beaten path, you can also meet a number of foreigners working to make a difference. A gentleman from the Red Cross explained to us that the increasingly open borders, attributed to tourism, now allow him to work in rural areas, improving the conditions of the indigenous population. Similarly a French graduate student told us about her experiences with a charity organisation, cleaning up the trash dumped near an important monastery in Lhasa.

"I would not have been allowed to do this ten years ago," she said, "Opening up to tourism means opening up to everything else as well."

We learned a great deal from these people about possible ways to help, mainly because we made an effort to travel beyond the attractions listed in the glossy travel brochures. It is impossible to learn anything if you only go to the easy places. The attractions in Lhasa and its vicinity are interesting and worth seeing, but for the most part are under increased government control. Even the monasteries just outside of Lhasa, such as Sera, provide you with a scene that is carefully controlled by an 'invisible' police presence. Leaving the city allows you to support Tibetan businesses and Tibetan people, so that all of your money does not go into Chinese hands.

In two of the locations we visited, we stayed in the local monasteries. In the Tibetan countryside you can see monasteries as they really are—including a constant military presence and ever-present threat of force. Witnessing monastery life, yet knowing it is at risk, truly brings home the consequences of China's actions.

Hearing the monks play their longhorns at dusk or seeing them practice a traditional song and dance, yet knowing that this is luxury to them, makes a person feel the need for change. This is why the Dalai Lama and so many others support tourism that promotes conscious involvement in and understanding of Tibet's plight. Tourism can be a positive force in Tibet, not only because it can benefit local Tibetans, but also because of the desire it can spark inside every visitor to see a free Tibet. For a people who remain censored, tourists offer the possibility for more Tibetans to speak to the world. ❖

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Let's get ready to rumble...

by John Moon

Blood, sweat and raffle tickets: *The Ubyssey* goes ringside at the ECCW

ECCW MARCH MADNESS
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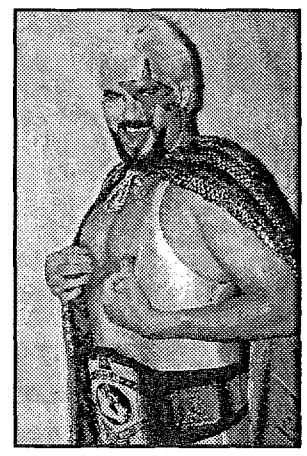
I wasn't sure what to expect when I arrived in Surrey, that cosmopolitan capital of culture, to watch wrestling. Two great, heaping portions of Surrey manhood stood at the door, staring blankly. Seeing me approach, one of them commented helpfully, "The gay wrestlers went that way," pointing toward the entrance. Expelling a wet snort from his snout, he added, "Sorry. Don't mean to be so mean. I'm mentally retarded."



Indeed.

The wrestling arena, of course, is not only a showground for athletic and aesthetic feats, but also a place, to put it crudely, for 'checking out the crowd.' Several connoisseurs of the fine sport examined the mats of the ring, carefully noting the material, consistency and firmness. One may have even tasted it. I don't know.

What was surprising was the good turnout of youth. It's always pleasant to see youth involved in 'culture' and wholesome sports. The few adults who accompanied the budding sport-lovers eagerly joined in the frenzy of excitement.

> The wrestling arena, of course, is not only a showground for athletic and aesthetic feats, but also a place, to put it crudely, for 'checking out the crowd.'

One wrestler from the SCUM clique, Bam Bam Bambi, was frantically selling raffle-tickets; the prizes were a pair of autographed photos and a fine 100 per cent cotton T-shirt with the word SCUM spray painted across the front and back. But the crowd seemed to get really pumped when Bulldog Bob Brown Jr, the commissioner of Extreme Canadian Championship Wrestling (ECCW), was introduced by the ring announcer.

"Thank you for the popular introduction," the commissioner shouted.

The excitement, of course, was only beginning. Over the next three and a half exhilarating hours, the audience was graced with seven extreme wrestling matches: one three-way bout, two tag-team matches and four individual matches. There were also two verbal confrontations between new and old enemies, two raffles, a concession stand, a merchandise table, four calls by the ring announcer urging the audience to visit the merchandise table—all culminating in one extraordinary evening of fine culture and entertainment.

The event, for me, really began with the fourth match—a grudge match between Johnny Canuck and Sweet Daddy Devastation. The Sweet Daddy himself, a man of great athletic ability and an even greater pot belly, flaunted his 'sweetness' all throughout the match. His trademark attitude quickly made him a crowd favourite. His opponent, Johnny Canuck, gimmicked as a 'big, burly homosexual,' graced the audience with squirts from his water bottle, and was sure to maintain direct interaction with his fans, not allowing celebrity to cloud his sport.

The match started in Canuck's favour, but soon, Rockford, another wrestler, appeared (out of nowhere! I swear it!) to the Sweetness' defence. Of course, 'Gorgeous' Michelle Starr couldn't just stand by and watch so, he, too intervened, coming to Canuck's defence. Canuck and Starr, after ejecting Sweet Daddy and Rockford from the ring, finally engaged in a dialogue after a period of estrangement.

The audience had the privilege of hearing Starr's confession, that he had missed Canuck—not only as a tag-team partner, but also as a tag-team lover.

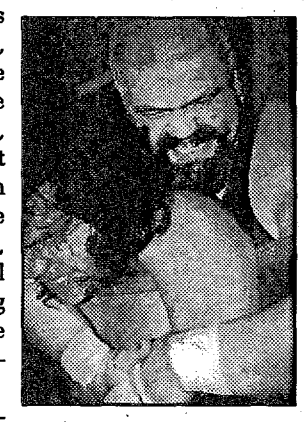
"I stood by you, and I stood behind you," Starr said.

Starr seemed oblivious to the fact that Canuck was a big slut. Canuck had shown his sluttiness all through the night, simulating fellatio on Rockford, anal sex on Sweet Daddy and grabbing the buttocks of every single man who dared venture into the ring.

I sat quiet, despondent, until intermission.

When the wrestling began again, the audience was treated with a Hardcore Tag-Team Match between Moondog Manson/Prince Alladiin and Killswitch/Wrathchild. Wrathchild, however, had fallen ill from some kind of dreadful disease. Moondog had a conflicting account of Wrathchild's condition: he claimed that Wrathchild had turned into some kind of cat, a pussy. This exploration of past events and the faultiness of memory was intriguing but the show had to go on. Fortunately, the commissioner found an eager understudy in no time. Cheechuck was chosen as the best candidate and joined the fray.

This match took wrestling out of the ring and onto the aisles and streets. The distracting details of the ringside action, the quick-paced, plot-developing events, not to mention the frenzy of shifting locations (the match, at one point, was taken outside to the parking lots), forced us to keep up. But I'd hardly call the match revolutionary. The wrestlers, no doubt, would've done this all over again the following day for "Warehouse Warz," happening somewhere in Langley.



Amidst the screaming, the excitement, the chairs, the ladders, the blood, the trashy women and sweaty wrestlers, I found myself on the floor, flushed and convulsing with excitement. It was as if someone hit me in the back of the head with a chair. The crowds were far, far away, cheering, all around me. What had happened? Something real, something true had taken a hold of me. Culture, my friends, culture. ❖

TALKING ABOUT A REVOLUTION

BY RON NURWISAH

ART OF THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION
at the Belkin Gallery
until May 26

"A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another."

—Chairman Mao

While the Cultural Revolution might not have been a dinner party, the arts were an important part of Mao's attempt to indoctrinate the Chinese people. During the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, the government strictly controlled the arts and profoundly distrusted intellectuals and the educated. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese were 're-educated' and persecuted as a result, but a lucky few were enlisted for the revolutionary cause to make propaganda posters and paintings.

Some of this work can be seen at UBC in the Belkin's current exhibition, *Art of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*. Dozens of pieces, including posters, sculptures and even an artist's personal sketchbook, try to capture the frenetic and frightening revolutionary fervour that gripped China from 1966 to 1976.

Images of Mao Zedong dominate the show, just as Mao dominated China's political and popular consciousness for decades. The chairman is simultaneously seen as a man of the people, speaking to peasants and greeting children, and as a messianic figure. One poster has Mao, the 'rightful heir' to Marxist-Leninism, next to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Brezhnev, the Soviet leader at the time, is notably missing, a testament to the hostility between China and its former communist ally.

Mao's life is also the subject of a number of stirring images. One depicts young Mao atop a mountain, soon to be master of all he surveys. Another has him among the people, teaching communism. Some are even less subtle in their praise. In a number of works, the chairman appears to have a halo around him, not unlike the Buddha. Others show Mao as the sun, the source of enlightenment and life.

Like all good propaganda, the art in this show is effective. The works have a strong visual impact and are riveting: full of strong, clean-faced, smiling peasants working together to build a new, better, communist China.

In hindsight, however, it is clear what these works leave out. Paintings of China's revolutionary war against the Japanese and the Kuomintang nationalists are suspiciously free of carnage, although millions died in the war which lasted two decades. The mass starvation during China's Great Leap Forward is ignored, as is the cruelty and violence of the Cultural Revolution.

It is this tension between the sanitised, utopian images presented by this show and the darker, bloodier history of China that makes this exhibit not just a worthwhile historical review, but also a riveting and enjoyable show. ❖

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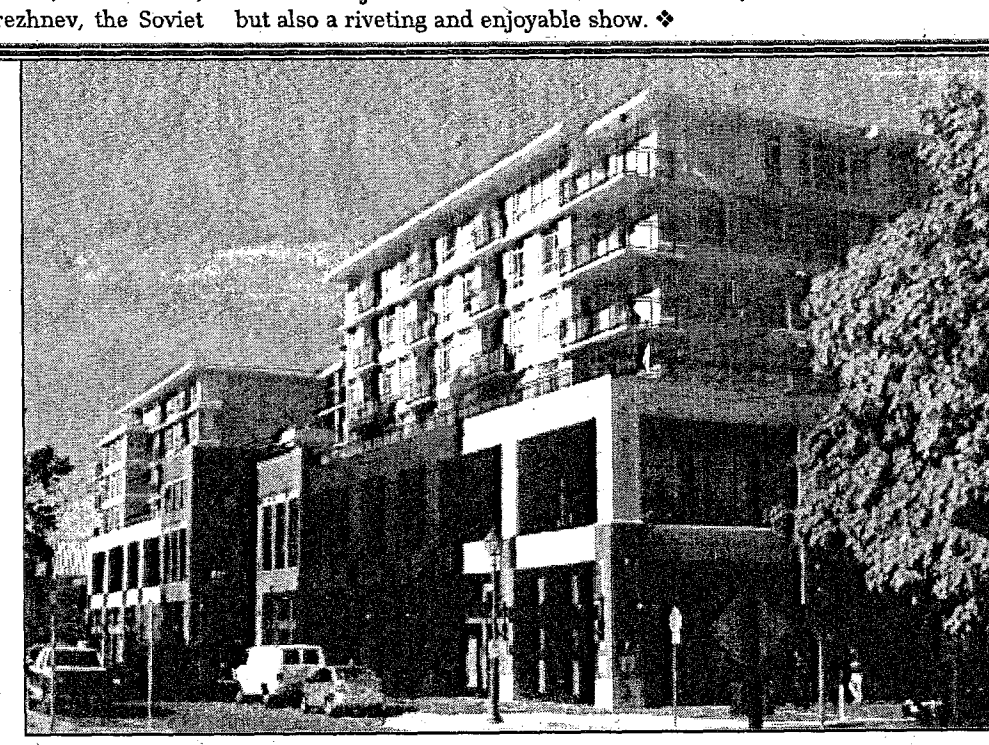

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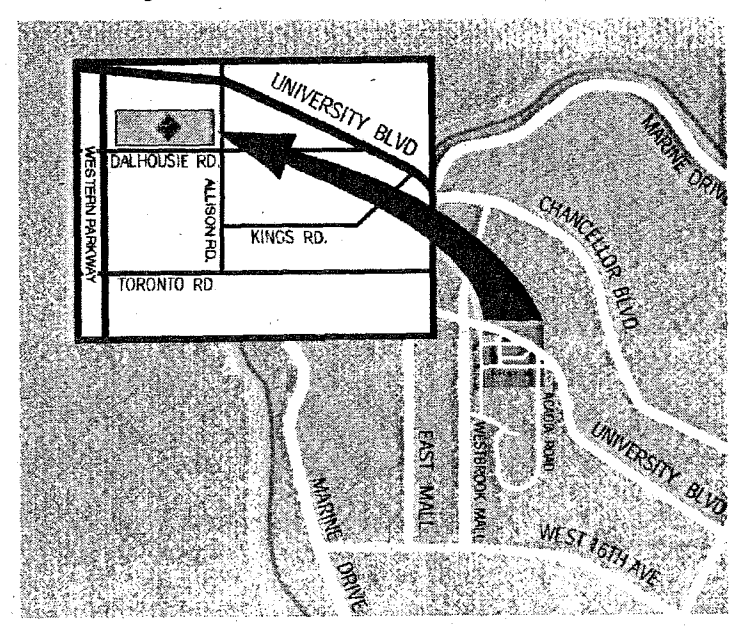

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Hywel 'Field Hockey' Tuscano looked up to find that he'd followed her up the stairs and over to the supply room across from the bio lab. Alicia Miller opened the supply-room door and stepped in. "Get in here," she said with a mischievous smile. Ron Nurwisah hesitated. "I don't think we're allowed–" Julia Christensen groaned, grabbed his arm, and yanked him into the room, closing the door behind him. Mike Schwandt leaned against a wall. "So what did you think of Alexis Roohani?" he asked. "Think I have another psycho stalker?" "Besides me?" Sarah MacNeill Morrison asked. She used her body to press him up against the wall. "I don't know about you, but the smell of formaldehyde...it makes me crazy." Duncan McHugh just looked at her, his brain a cluttered fog. "Crazy?" Kathy Deering put her hands on his shoulders and kissed him on the lips. Instantly the fog started to clear. "Oh," Nic Fensom said when she pulled away. "Crazy." Graeme Worthy smiled as he tucked his hands under the hair that felt like a thick, silky curtain around her face. Chris Shepherd pulled Ai Lin Choo closer, releasing a long exhalation of breath as her warm, soft body pressed against his. How could Tejas Ewing have allowed his worries to interfere with getting his minimum daily requirement of Deborah Santema? Donald Prime was so stressed, he hadn't even been thinking about kissing Carly Hollander, and that was wrong. Deeply wrong. Scott Bardsley's lips found Laura Blue's again, and he opened himself up to the intense passion of their kiss. Justine Saelneng tasted sweet and deliciously alive. John Moon could hardly believe the kind of crap that Pocket Books printed in kids novels these days.

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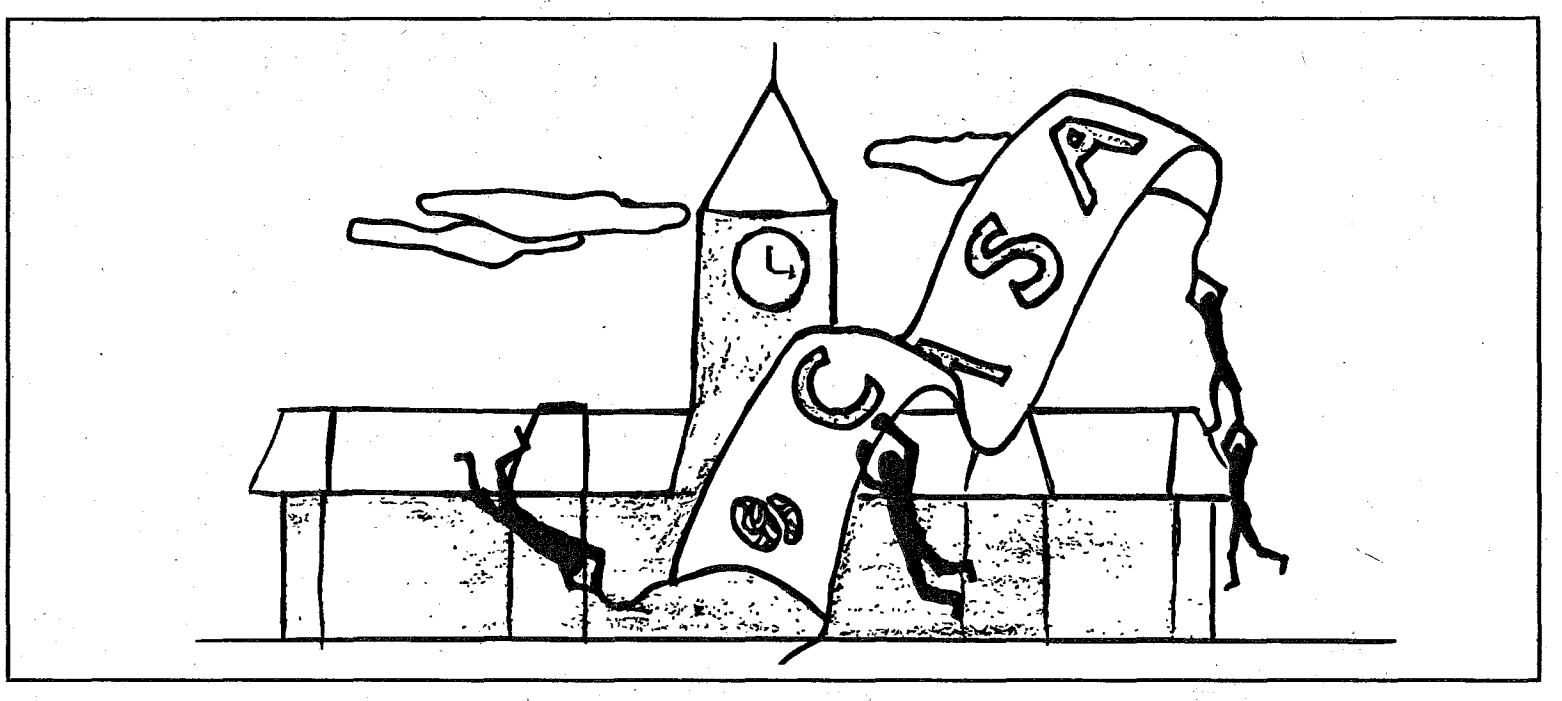

Better watch out, "O-Town"

$5306.82 is quite a lot of money. For most of us, it would be enough to cover a year's worth of rent or the cost of a fantastic vacation. But according to a statement released by the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) this week, $5,306.82 buys something much "bigger" and certainly much "badder": it buys a huge banner.

CASA, a national student lobbying organisation (of which UBC's Alma Mater Society is a member) is in "O-Town"—or, as we like to call it, Ottawa—to lobby the federal government to improve student financial aid. This is important work and we are glad that CASA is speaking out on an issue as important as financial aid for students, but at a time like this, when students all over the country—especially those in BC—are facing massive cuts to programs and rising tuition costs, we have to question the effectiveness of a $5306.82 banner unfurled on Parliament Hill.

This question is all the more timely given the events at UBC last week when students occupied the President's Office to protest tuition increases. Those students didn't have a banner, but they did have pins and placards, as well as help putting out a press release to publicise the occupation. These resources did not come from CASA, though. No, the $25,500 that the AMS pays in annual dues (on top of the $13,000 it paid last year for 'Conference and Official Business') does not pay for pins and placards. No, the students who protested the tuition policy UBC's Board of Governors eventually approved had to get that support from elsewhere. They had to get it from the Canadian Federation of Student (CFS).

But wait a minute, is not UBC a member of CASA? Why is it that CASA didn't even offer to help students out then? There are a few reasons. First, CASA has avoided protesting in the past. Its approach has always been to lobby, instead of protest, preferring to meet with high-ranking government officials, rather than, as CASA would probably see it, yelling at them from far away.

Another reason that CASA did not help out UBC students who occupied the President's Office last week was because CASA, like the AMS, did not agree with the protesters' demands. CASA takes a 'realistic' approach to the cost of post-secondary education. It disagrees with demanding a reduction of fees, which the CFS advocates.

But should we even be surprised to find out that CASA didn't offer support to these student protestors? While the AMS did a lot of work during the tuition consultation process, it did nothing to help the students who occupied the President's Office. It didn't provide them with financial assistance. It didn't provide them with technical assistance. And the AMS Council didn't even acknowledge the student protesters at last week's Council meeting. Are the people who spent last Wednesday night in the Old Administration Building not students? They certainly speak for a lot of students when they say they don't want tuition fee increases. Is the AMS not supposed to represent the interests of all students?

It is shameful that students, dissatisfied with the tuition policy, had to rely on the CFS (an organisation that receives no funding from students at UBC) for support, instead of CASA (which costs students at UBC $38,500 a year) or even the AMS.

Why did CASA not provide leadership last week, when students here could have used the experience and influence of an organisation of its size and importance? Where were its directors? Were they too busy painting the banner? Were they playing with the CASA brain, star of the CASA 'Education Builds A Nation' tour of last year? Who knows. Maybe they were resting up for this week.

And this week *is* important. CASA representatives, including AMS President Kristen Harvey and AMS VP External Tara Learn, are meeting with several federal ministers and MPs, calling for substantial changes to the Canadian Student Loan Program (CSLP). Their proposal includes several things: the harmonisation of loans (i.e. a 'one student, one loan' system); changes to the effect parents' income can have on students' eligibility for financial assistance; and the inclusion of book costs, non-tuition student fees and regional cost-of-living differences in the needs-assessment criteria. These are all tremendously important initiatives and CASA is right to be fighting for them, with or without a banner to back them up.

So let's hope that the "masterpiece" displayed Wednesday on Parliament Hill was worth all the money CASA spent on it. It's just too bad that last week, when a huge banner could have done some good at UBC, the students CASA is supposed to represent turned to the CFS instead. ❖

letters

AMS president's comments on occupation offensive

As one of the students who took part in the occupation of the Old Administration Building last week, I was deeply offended by Kristen Harvey's comment that the Alma Mater Society (AMS) "has done the best job that we could have in this situation" ("Students attack AMS inaction" [Mar. 19]). Other student unions across the country recognise that 'lobbying' the university and the government with nice, polite reports at the last possible minute does not do students any good. The AMS represents almost 40,000 students, and it has let every single one of them down. Harvey clearly has no idea that she is the beneficiary of a hundred years of student activism and that she stands within a long and respected tradition of progressive and powerful student leaders who have fought for accessible, open and democratic universities. If she did, she would have been there with us, demanding that the university remain accessible to poor and working-class students. Instead, she plaintively asks, "Why are you turning on your fellow students who are working on behalf of you?"

The truth is, Harvey and her fellow AMS executives, not to mention Board of Governors representative Tieg Martin, who voted for the tuition increase, have done nothing effective for students facing massive tuition hikes. It is they who have turned on their fellow students and they deserve the anger that was expressed by the students and staff who marched into the AMS offices on Thursday, March 14. To dismiss that group of protesters as "a mob of union members and some students" is to turn a blind eye to the fact that it is union members, not the AMS, who have joined in the fight for lower tuition. Harvey has made her contempt for UBC students and staff clear by refusing to take any kind of activist role in this fight and for that she deserves our contempt in return.

—Josh Bowman
Arts 3

Work with, not against, UBC admin

As I awoke March 13, I found that I had been cordially invited to one of many rallies to protest the university's decision to increase tuition. After the initial anger at the organiser's misunderstanding of the issue passed, I realised that it was completely understandable that some people fail to see the whole picture. The simple fact is that education is suffering at our fine institution. Labs (the first victims of budget shortfalls), for instance—the core of a science student's education—are now biweekly, no longer weekly as they once were. Classes in all faculties are full past the brim, reducing the amount of time available to each student. There are countless other examples; the point is that we are the ones who suffer when such shortfalls occur. Those who ask the university to reduce tuition overlook the simple fact that it has an obligation to raise funds so that it can continue to provide us with the quality of education that we enjoy.

For those unfamiliar with the system, universities have two ways of funding a student's education: government subsidies and tuition fees. With the cost of education rising and subsidies at a fixed level, we are left to bear the burden, save a change in government policy. Put another way, we are wasting our time asking for reduced tuition. If the university agreed, nobody but us, the students, would suffer. A different approach, however, could be beneficial to both us students and the administration. It is a little known fact among students that our president, Dr Martha Piper, has a very impressive record in lobbying Ottawa to provide such funding. What is there to suggest she couldn't do the same with Victoria? Instead of pointlessly fighting the university administration, striving towards an end that will hurt only us, we should instead stand beside them in their quest for further government funding. Only by working together can we hope to achieve our common goal of more accessible post-secondary education. For all students.

—Gabriel Mastico
Science 1

Accidental discoveries

SMALL ACCIDENTS
[Raincoast Books]
by Andrew Gray

A wife sleeps alone in a tent in her backyard while her husband lies alone in bed, reminiscing about the way they made love in that tent years ago. It is just the first of many touching scenes in Gray's collection of short stories, *Small Accidents*.

In the first story, "Outside," we are introduced to a couple who live in separate quarters--the house and tent. The couple was recently in a car accident, leaving both mildly injured. The wife accepts the blame and is racked with guilt. But the accidents have more than just a physical impact on these characters; they also bring to the surface previously existing but repressed problems. It is these accidents, both small and large, that link all of Gray's stories.

The accidents trigger change, exactly what is needed to motivate Gray's characters to find what they truly desire. In "The Fallen," the narrator inherits his father's home, the house where he spent his childhood. Rummaging through his father's possessions he begins to comprehend his father's eccentricities and understand the man. In the story, "The Land His Mother," Neil, a young traveller in New Zealand, sees a poisonous snake and fails to warn his traveling companion and long-time friend, whom the snake bites. This incident sparks Neil's desire to leave his friend and girlfriend to travel the country by bike.

This montage of characters, brought together by accidents, is reminiscent of Joyce's short stories: we receive partial glimpses of characters, yet they remain unforgettable. The characters we meet are so vivid, and are found in a setting so familiar to Lower Mainland readers that they, too, seem familiar. The image of the man who hasn't slept in four days because of his medication in "Feeding the Animals," or that of the man abandoning his life at home to live on an island paradise in "Nasty Weather," are real and honest.

The characters acknowledge the impact these 'accidents' have on their lives. Gray's characters realise these events occurred to lead each person onto a different life path or to change the attitudes. *Small Accidents* brings well-constructed characters together in a light-hearted, yet touching collection of lives unexpectedly changed. ❖

—Carly Hollander

Bag 'o' fun

by Justine Saelieng

BAG BABIES
at the Havana Theatre
until Mar. 23

"Bag Babies" is a satirical play, produced by UBC's English Students' Society, not actually about bags or babies; but the gap between the upper and lower classes. It takes an amusing look at social stereotypes and attempts to break down the artificiality of a person's public image to see what lies beneath.

Dick and Jane Jones (James Dai and Angela Ferreira), both public relations agents, welcome their newest clients: a rich, married couple named Rick (Olivier Plessis, in one of his three roles) and Elaine (Amy Peradenic). Rick and Elaine just can't get away from society's judgments and so begin the search for a new, more appealing image. Enter Jane's Uncle George (Alex McMorran) with an exciting new idea that will mutually benefit the rich and the poor.

Canadian playwright Allan Stratton goes to extremes to illustrate his point. Towards the end of the second act, however the story begins to lag and Stratton practically beats the audience over the head with his already obvious interpretation of society. Perhaps the only symbolic distinction he makes are the rhyming couplets of the élite and the common prose of the poor and homeless. By having the narrator (McMorran doing double duty) address the audience directly, Stratton acknowledges some of the weaknesses of the play. This little theatrical device works and doesn't detract from the plot. In fact, much of the humour comes from these moments.

In general, the high-energy cast is strong and helps to redeem the script's flaws. Particularly impressive is Bria Hooper as newswoman Katie Hughes. It was McMorran, however, who provided the highlight of the night when he beatboxed to the Bag Babies Rap. Yes, that's right. Beatboxing and rapping—who knew? In fact, there are two unexpected but unobtrusive musical numbers, both well performed by all the actors.

Despite some flaws, this play is fun to watch. You may be wondering why this play is called "Bag Babies." The audience had to wait until the end of Act I to find that out. You'll have to wait, too. ❖

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Ubyssey Elections

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Chris Shepherd, Sara Young, Lisa Denton, Laura Blue, Sarah Conchie, Lars Goeller, Jesse Marchand, Alicia Miller, Rob Nagai, Parm Nizher, Natasha Norbjerg, Michael Schwandt

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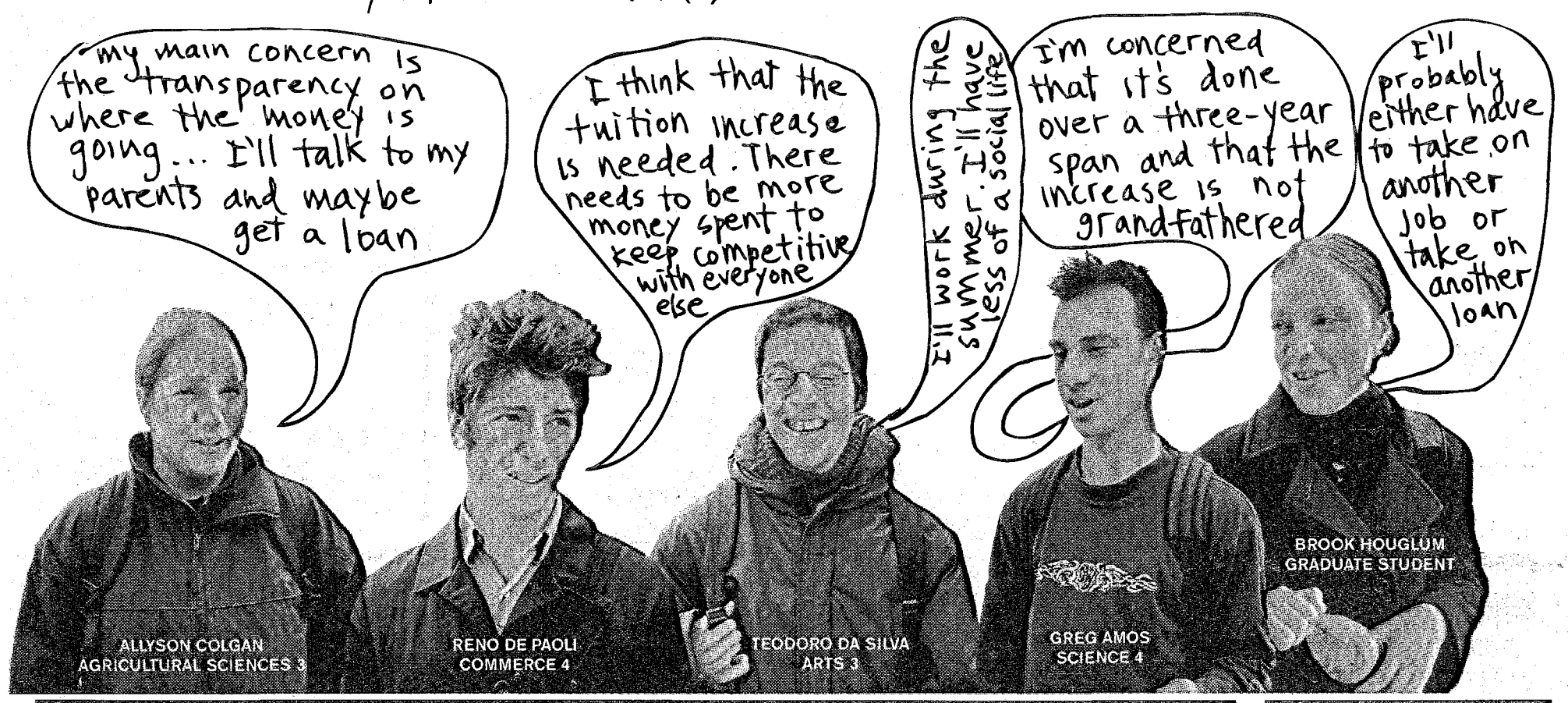
STREETERS

Are you concerned about the tuition increase and does it change how you plan to finance your education?



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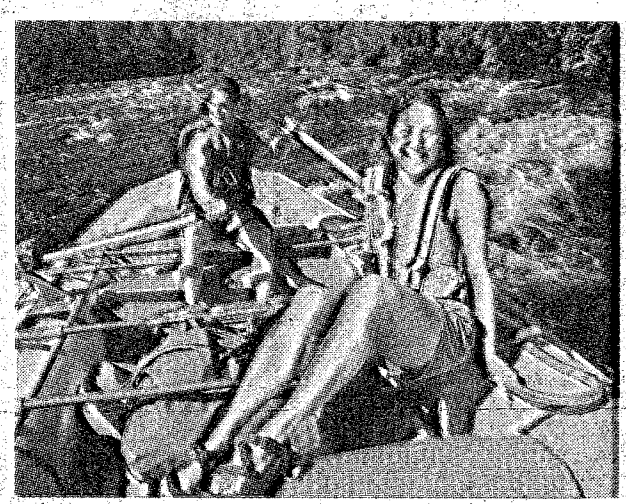

Snake River, Wyoming, 2002

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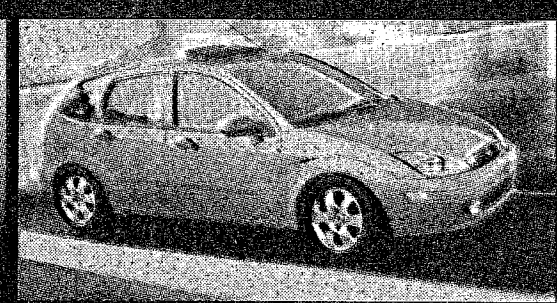

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