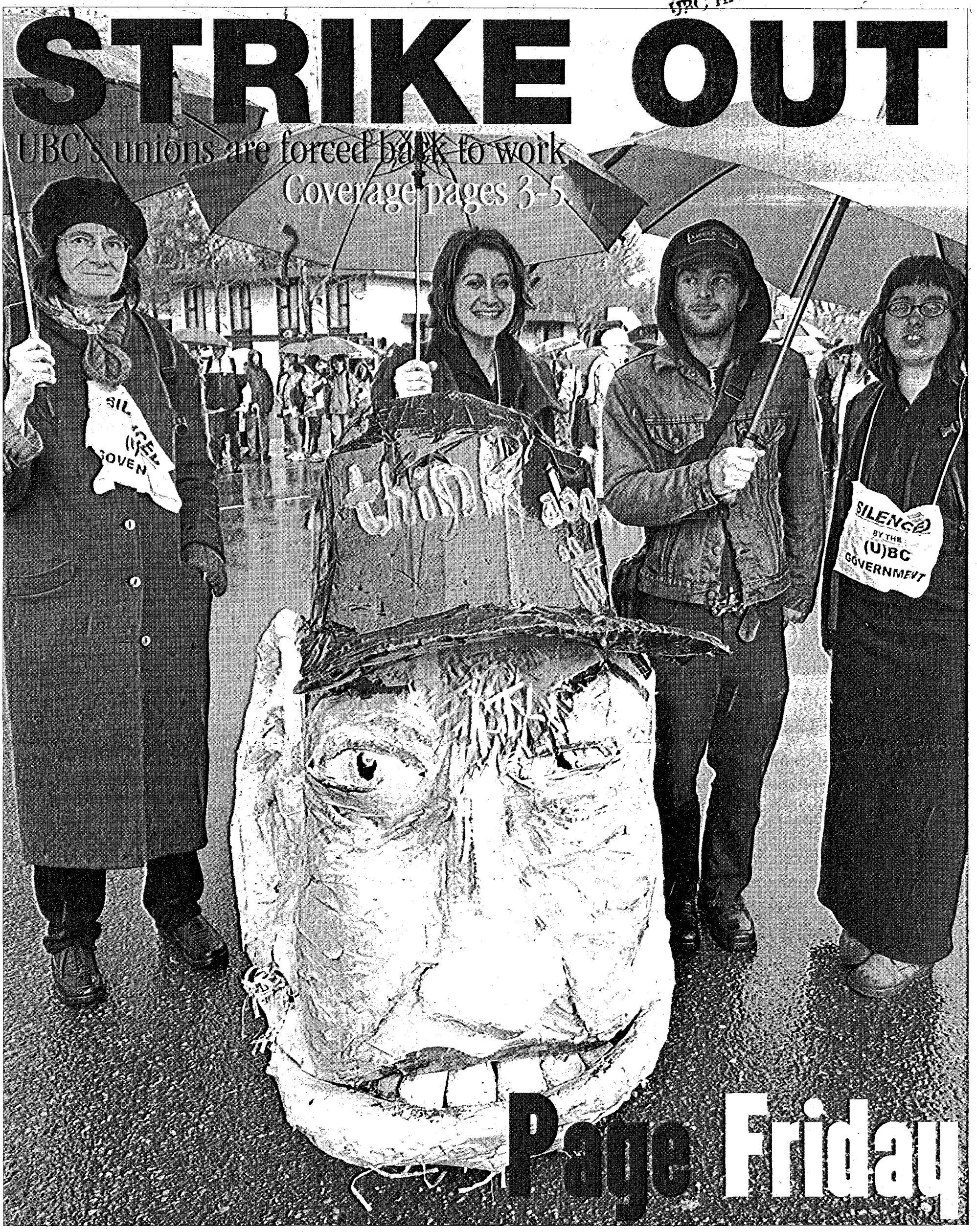
N-42

UBC Archives Serial

STRIKE OUT

UBC's unions are forced back to work.

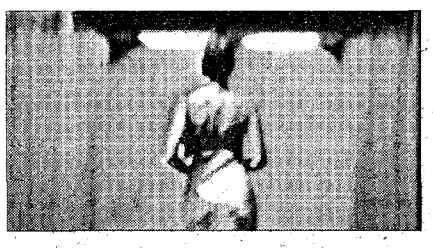
Coverage pages 3-5.



Page Friday

THIS ISSUE:

CULTURE:
Is the violence justified?



Irreversible reviewed and other arts reports. **Pages 6-9.**

EDITORIAL:
Legislating their rights away
The province quickly interferes with union rights. **Page 10.**

FEATURE:
Inclusive education at UBC
New program for the developmentally disabled. Page 12.

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the ubyssey
Volume 84 Issue 42
magazine
Friday, March 14, 2003
The ultimate sacrifice since 1918

CLASSIFIEDS

Announcement

ATTENTION ALL HISTORY UNDERGRADS GRADUATING THIS SPRING: Please take your grad photos at: Evangelos Photography, 3156 W. Broadway, 604-731-8314. Deadline: March 15.

ENGINEERS W/O BORDERS UBC presents a benefit concert to raise money for an overseas internship. Mar 11, 8pm at Mesa Luna (1926 W. Broadway). $7 cover. ubc@ewb.ca.

NIMBLE BELIEVING: MODERN LITERATURE & THE CONFLICT OF INTERPRETATIONS: Mar 17, 4pm, Buch B Penthouse. Speaker: Dr. Roger Lundin, Clyde S. Kilby Professor of English Literature, Wheaton College, Chicago. Sponsored by UBC Graduate & Faculty Christian Forum.

UBC MEDICINE PRESENTS "THE RUN FOR RURAL MEDICINE" Sun, Mar 23. For info & registration details, go to www.ubcmedicine.cjb.net/2005/run

WOMEN'S CENTRE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Mar 27, 5pm. Come out & participate in the women-run, women-oriented resource group!

MAKING PEACE IN A TIME OF WAR" - CUSO's overseas projects. Feat. Olympic Gold Medalist, Daniel Igali. Mar 14, 7-9pm, YWCA (733 Beatty St). 604-683-2099.

BIKE TO WILDWOOD? Are you interested in participating in an earth-friendly, social biking & camping trip? Apr 25-27. For info, contact UBC Student Environment Centre at enviro@ams.ubc.ca

"EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF OFFSHORE OIL & Gas Development in BC" Panel Discussion. Keynote speakers, incl Guujaaw, President of the Haida Council. Mar 24, 7pm, Robson Square, UBC (downtown) Voluntary Donation

Services

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Ski birds represent

The only Canadians at US competition return with arms full

by Jesse Marchand
SPORTS STAFF

Even without coaches or practices, the UBC ski team held their own at the US Collegiate Nationals in Lake Tahoe last week. The men's team placed fourth overall and team member Trevor Bruce took home a bronze in the giant slalom.

His time, along with top-20 finishes from Paul Boscovich and Alex Boedtker, translated into a second-place team trophy in the giant slalom, just ahead of the prestigious Boston College crew.

The women came in sixth overall, with Kim Webber and Stephanie Rodenkirchen taking home the Athletic All-American Awards along with Bruce, Boscovich and Boedtker for the men's team.

The Nationals are a tough competition with 20 teams competing in two events: the giant slalom and the slalom. It is primarily a competition between US schools, with UBC as the only team from north of the border.

The UBC skiers were proud to be the only Canadians competing. "We were probably the team that was the loudest and we have the most school spirit. We were walking around with a Canada flag on a pole," said bronze medal-winner Bruce. "We were getting into it so much that the American teams were getting into it and they were chanting 'Canada.'"

Part of having school spirit was also supporting each other when things got rough. "We're always out there supporting the women's team," said Webber. "It gives us moral support. It helps you out when you have people at the bottom [of the hill] cheering you on."

In order to qualify as a team, three members have to finish the event. Wednesday saw Webber snag the women's best time, and place eighth in the giant slalom. She and only one other UBC teammate placed, so the women were out of team contention.

On Saturday they did slightly better, as Rodenkirchen skied to 14th place and Webber finished 20th out of 120 competitors.

Perhaps it was the cheering that encouraged the UBC team to do so well. UBC's team has no paid coach and while UBC Athletics paid for the team's trip to Nationals this year, funding for the team is usually self-generated.

"All the teams that were around us have full-time coaches, and the full deal," said Boscovich, who was acting as the volunteer coach. "We were joking that if you took the results, we were the best team per dollar. We were there as the underdog, and we don't have a coach or anything, but we were right in the mix."

One advantage that the UBC men's team did have was Bruce and Boscovich's international competition experience, since the courses they raced on in Lake Tahoe were World Cup calibre, meaning they ran about 30 seconds longer than the ski team usually races on in the league.

"The competition was fierce," said Boscovich. "Trevor and I both met some of the guys at the World University Games."

One of those guys was Bryce Craig, a racer from Rocky Mountain College. "He was on the BC Ski Team with me," said Bruce. "I hadn't raced against him in about four or five years and he beat me at Regionals by 13 hundreths of a second...He was four-tenths of a second behind me in the first round and I killed him the second round."

However, Craig beat Bruce in the slalom, coming in fifth place compared to Bruce's 12th. "He's really good," added Bruce. "He's an old rival of mine so we were kind of heckling each other the whole way."

And while the women's team didn't do as well as they'd hoped, they are optimistic for the future of the UBC ski team. "The experience was great," said Webber on her first trip the Collegiate Nationals. "Hopefully next year our team will stay together and with practice it will be better." ❖

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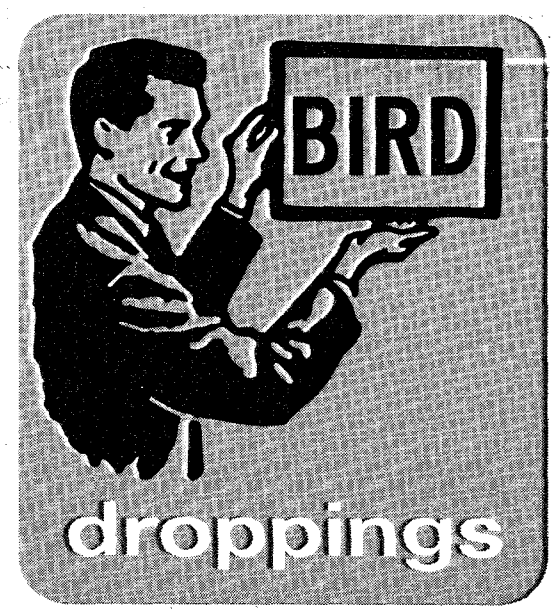


Soaring and bombing

The baseball Birds experienced joy and upset last weekend in two pre-season games in Lewiston, Idaho. They won 10-5 against St Martin's college, scoring four runs and two RBIs in their first inning. They remained fairly stable for the rest of the game, making their final run in the eighth by outfielder Chris Ames, who stole second and ran home when outfielder Sean Dyck hit a single. The second game against Lewis-Clark started fatefully with Ames being hit by a pitch, and ended with a losing score of 1-5. The men currently hold a record of 7-3 in the pre-season and have yet to play a home game. They continue to play in Idaho until March 18.

Something to write home about

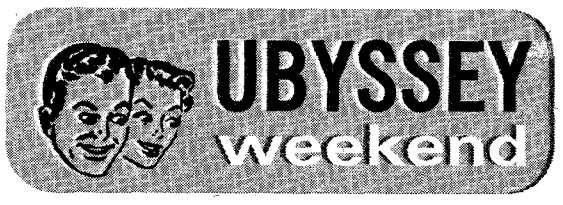
UBC swimmers at the Canada Cup in Calgary last weekend had something to smile about. They took home two first-place positions, first with Mike Mintenko's time of 53.53 in the men's 100-metre butterfly, then again with the cumulative time of 1:45.94 by Caroline Clapham, Caitlin Meredith, Anna Lydall and Kelly Stefanyshyn in the women's 200-metre free relay. The women also dominated the top ten in the 400-metre freestyle, but not by winning. They boasted the most spots for one team by taking up spots three through seven. And while the men's team didn't dominate the freestyle, Mark Johnston took home a solid second. UBC's star at the Cup, however, was Stefanyshyn, who in addition to winning in the 200-metre relay, also swam to third in the 100-metre backstroke and held the fifth place in the UBC-dominated 400-metre freestyle. ❖

EVENTS

ART

***Career Student*, March 10-14, 10am-4pm, AMS Art Gallery. Free.**
Dan Starling's mixed-media visual display contains photographs of graffitti, and authentic sections of wall that have been tagged. Please do not feel obliged to try to add to the collection.

***Coco Love Alcorn's Lego Show*, March 16, 7pm, the Sugar Refinery, 1115 Granville. Free.**
Get in touch with your inner child and check out some great lego art in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. The display is going to be interactive! Hang around for the musical interlude.



MALAYSIAN DREAMIN'

***Malaysia Showcase*, March 15-16, Metrotown Centre, Centre Court. Free.**
Thoughts of finals got you stressed? Need a getaway? Check out the displays for information on one of the most gorgeous destinations in South East Asia. A song and dance performance will take place at 2pm and 4pm each day. ❖

TAs sent back to work

Bill forcing end to strike passes in less than half a day

by Chris Shepherd
NEWS EDITOR

The university's unions were sent back to the bargaining tables once again after the provincial government passed a bill ending strike action and forcing them to return to their normal work duties.

Bill 21, the University of British Columbia Services Continuation Act, was passed by the provincial legislature Wednesday night and made law Thursday morning. It prohibits any union on campus from taking strike action until March 31 and requires that the university and the unions return to the bargaining table by Saturday.

"People are damn angry at what this government and what Martha Piper have done to us," said Teaching Assistant (TA) Union President Alex Grant. "They have taken away our right to protest, our right to strike, our right to free speech."

Scott Macrae, director of Public Affairs for the university, said that the university sees this legislation as having two positive points.

"It's a good thing for students. It'll give them certainty after a long period of a lot of uncertainty," Macrae said. "And we think it's good that it orders the parties to resume collective bargaining, because where there is bargaining and talking there is reasonable hope for a settlement."

Having TAs working again is a mixed blessing, said Alma Mater Society (AMS) President Oana Chirila.

"We're really upset that the government intervened, but at the same time, what can you do?" she asked. "A lot of students are happy that they've been legislated back to work and that their classes can continue and that the library is open."

"It's great that they've come back to work but I think that for the TAs it's going to be a lot harder to get what they want."

The law was introduced by Minister of Skills Development and Labour Graham Bruce to allow a cooling-off period.

Bruce had met with both parties and came to the conclusion that the negotiations had become non-productive.

"It was pretty clear to me that the negotiating process had become somewhat dysfunctional," he said, implying that neither party appeared to have the common goal of coming to a resolution.

Bruce had also received a letter from UBC President Martha Piper via the Minister of Advanced Education. According to Bruce, the letter said that UBC had significant concerns about classes and students' academic year being wasted.

Macrae acknowledged that the university did send a letter to the Ministry of Advanced Education but would not comment on the content of the letter. The university would not provide a copy of the letter to *the Ubyssey*.

Joy MacPhail, currently the only opposition MLA, criticised the bill, asserting that the university had a part in the creation of the bill. "It certainly assists the employer," she said.

The bill deals specifically with CUPE 2278 (TAs) and CUPE 2950 (Chan Centre for the Performing Arts staff and support staff, including library workers) but also applies to any other trade union representing employees of UBC.

The bill was passed by the legislature in under 12 hours. Bruce said it was necessary to pass the law quickly to ensure that the academic year was not jeopardised by the strike action.

"If we don't make the adjustments right now and things are prolonged, then a month or so from now, all of [the term] is lost," Bruce said.

MacPhail was very upset that the government would use what she called a "legislative hammer" to take away the collective bargaining rights from people. She described Bill 21 as a cynical ploy on the part of the BC Liberals to get the TAs back to work.

"The legislation does nothing to actually resolve the dispute," she said.

MacPhail added that this action is postponing TAs' ability to take strike action until final exams in April—a time she believes students would be less supportive of TAs because they're needed to mark exams.

"Frankly, there were other ways that this government could have handled this rather than provoking such a strong reaction from the TAs," MacPhail said of the large protest on Thursday. "I lay it entirely on the government's feet," she said.

MacPhail said the government is responsible for this dispute because it funds the university which in turn pays the TAs.

Chirila hopes the university takes the first step to come forward to the table with a good offer. "I think the TAs have felt so disrespected through this whole thing. I hope in the long term this will get resolved and I hope that the resolution that they come to in the next 20 days will be a long-term solution."

Bill 21 came after the university tried to prevent TAs from protesting on campus. The university appealed to the Labour Relations Board (LRB), claiming that the on-campus picketing had become too disruptive and that the university was private land. The move failed because the LRB decided that the matter did not fall under its jurisdiction. ❖

—with files from Duncan M. McHugh, Kathleen Deering and Mike Laanela

How to make a law in under 24 hours

The provincial government can end strike action by creating a law pertaining to a specific labour dispute. This process generally follows the same steps as any other law created by the government.

A law is presented to the provincial legislature by a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) as a bill that is then debated by the legislature and subjected to a series of readings and possible amendments.

This process generally takes days to weeks so that MLAs and the public can examine the bill and make suggestions for improvements. The MLA moving the bill (in the case of Bill 21, Minister of Skills Development and Labour Graham Bruce) can also request that the matter be dealt with quickly and force the process to happen faster.

It is the duty of the opposition party (currently there is only one member of the opposition sitting in legislature, Joy McPhail from the BC New Democrats) to criticise the bill.

If a bill passes legislature it is then signed by the Lieutenant-Governor and made a law.

Bill 21 orders UBC, CUPE 2278 (TAs) and CUPE 2950 (librarians and clerical staff) to return to the bargaining table and forces union members back to work.

The bill is only in effect until March 31. If no agreement has been reached by the parties then unions can go back on strike.

The bill also assigns Richard Longpre, assistant deputy minister for the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour, to assist in the mediation process.

This type of action has been used in the past against public school support staff in April 2000 and in June 2001 when nurses were legislated back to work and in August 2001 to end the transit strike. ❖

Unions stop the traffic

Campus workers take to the streets to protest back-to-work legislation

by Duncan M. McHugh
NEWS STAFF

Pickets turned into protests yesterday, as members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) locals 2278, 2950 and 116 and their supporters took to university entrances to show their displeasure with back-to-work legislation. The legislation—Bill 21, the University of British Columbia Continuation of Services Bill—was passed under unique circumstances Wednesday night, having been declared an emergency measure.

Reaction was swift on the part of workers. Within minutes of the bill being brought to the floor of the legislature on Wednesday at 2pm, a large, concentrated picket line was formed at the university's Gate 1, at the intersection of Wesbrook and University Blvd. The picket dispersed shortly after 5pm, when members of CUPE 2278, the teaching assistants' (TA) union, moved to the Graduate Student Centre for an emergency union meeting.

By 6:30am yesterday morning, union members were back at Gate 1, as well as at all other entrances to campus, this time under the auspices of a political protest.

"Our understanding is that this is a political protest, we're not to mention the word 's-t-r-i-k-e,'" said a member of CUPE 2950.

"I don't even know what that spells," replied a member of CUPE 116, as protesters began to began to block University Blvd. Because of the protest, traffic, including buses, were unable to pass. Transit service to the UBC bus loop was restored at approximately 2pm, Thursday afternoon.

For most commuters the lasting effect of the protest was traffic stoppage. Only two gates, 2 and 9, were allowing non-essential services vehicles to pass.

The mood at the gates was upbeat, with many supportive honks coming from passing vehicles. Still, the frustration of some drivers was obvious. Many tried to force their way through lines of protesters. Others shouted, while workers tried to explain the reasons for the protest.

"This is fucking ridiculous," shouted a football player, turning around after being unable to drive to practice.

David Dickinson, a third-year Commerce student who was stuck in a traffic jam in front of the Rose Garden parkade, tried to remain optimistic about his chances of getting through.

"I'm going to get in there and I'm going to park, because I can't miss this class," he said. Still, he said he is sympathetic to the TAs' plight. "[UBC] should definitely increase their wages, but I don't believe they should receive free tuition. They should be receiving wages better than those others, such as SFU."

By noon, the protest, now several hundred strong, converged at Gate 1 for a rally. There union and campus leaders gave speeches. The festive rally also featured live music and a papier-maché representation of UBC President Martha Piper's head.

Speakers directed criticisms towards both the university administration and the provincial government. One issue, in particular, was the claim by the government that the protection of students was the basis for the legislation.

"Let me tell you something, [the provincial government] raised tuition 60 per cent for the students, right?" said Jim Sinclair, president of the BC Federation of Labour, sarcastically. "They made $6 an hour jobs for students, right? That was good. What they're doing today isn't for the students, it's for the establishment at this university, who couldn't bargain their way out of a paper bag.

The Alma Mater Society (AMS), the Graduate Student Society and the Faculty Association all pledged their support of UBC's unions and condemned Bill 21.

AMS Vice-President, Academic, Laura Best said "this legislation has serious implications for the right to strike and for freedom of speech for all students on campus, now and in the future." She added that the student union is calling on the university to find long-term and fair resolutions to labour disputes.

The university quickly condemned the protest.

"Well, it's an illegal picket line," said Scott Macrae, director of UBC's Department of Public Affairs. "The university is seeking two remedies to this...The first [remedy] is for the illegal picketing which contravenes the legislation [just passed by the government] and we'll be seeking remedy at the Labour Relations Board. The second action that the university is taking is before the Supreme Court on the illegal blocking of roads."

While workers protested at UBC, a group of eight UBC TAs gathered on the steps of the provincial legislature in Victoria to await the reconvening of parliament. TAs also met with NDP MLA Joy MacPhail, who introduced the TAs during afternoon question period. She also read a brief statement stating the disappointment of TAs with Bill 21.

"[The statement] expressed the reason we were there...We had come out of respect for the power of the legislature to ask that they ensure pressure is put on the university to negotiate in good faith," said Alex Aylett, a TA in the department of English and the group's spokesperson.

The TAs left UBC while Bill 21 was still in debate and arrived at the legislature after the bill had passed. Nonetheless, they found a candlelight vigil being conducted by University of Victoria (UVic) TAs who provided food and morale support for the visiting UBC TAs

UVic's TAs' current contract runs out on August 31. Two other CUPE Locals at UVic took strike votes in February, both displaying overwhelming support for a strike. Local 951, Office, Technical and Daycare workers, voted 85 per cent in favour of a strike, while 917, Janitorial, Housing, Food and Conference Services workers voted 88 per cent in favour of a strike. Both continue to negotiate and neither have called for a strike yet. ❖

—with files from Suzanne Beaubien, Megan Thomas and Chris Shepherd
The Martlet, the Ubyssey *and* the Ubyssey

NOT A PICKET: TA Union President Alex Grant addresses protesters at Gate 1 during yesterday's rally. Martha Piper's head sits in the background. **NIC FENSOM PHOTO**

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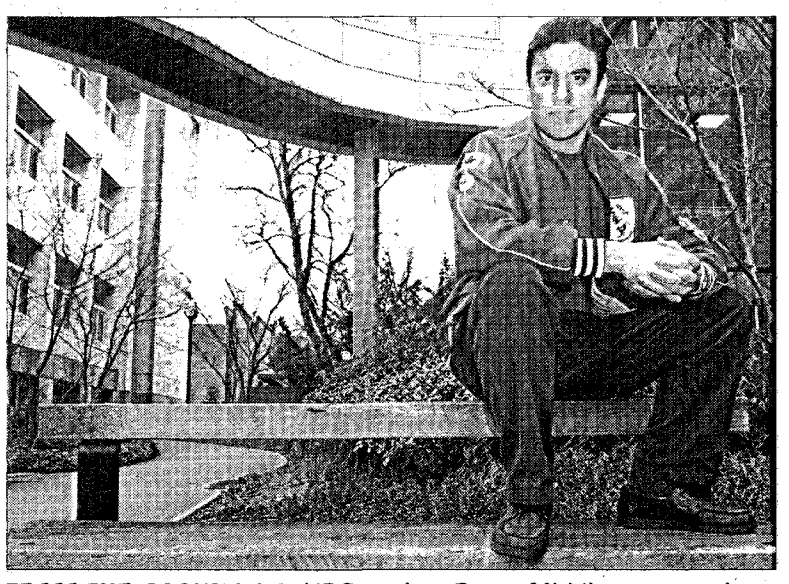
Raising roofs internationally

UBC student spearheads development project abroad

by Alison Bones
NEWS WRITER



FROM THE GROUND UP: UBC student Roger Middleton started a co-op program to build a school in Africa. NIC FENSOM PHOTO

First-year engineering student Roger Middleton felt inspired to make a difference in the global community after listening to a speech made at the Student Leadership Conference in January.

To pursue this task, Middleton developed a co-op program called UBC Global Builders (GB). If the program obtains enough funding, volunteers will be sent to Kenya this August to build a school in a local community.

He said about 20 people would be going, although there is no funding for them yet. They will be able to get credits for the project through a directed studies course.

"The goal is to raise $1 from every student on campus," he said. "So for less than a cup of coffee—which is what, $3?—we can make a lasting difference in the future of children in the host country by giving them an opportunity we take for granted in North America: physically having a school to go to."

He said the only thing in the project's way is lack of funding. "Other than that, we have the expertise, resources and certainly the dedication to make it work," he said.

They received their first donation from Totem Park last week through the Valentine's Day Bachelor Auction. Last week, they received more funds for the Dressing for Dollars benefit. Other events (such as a casino night and wine festival) are being organised to raise more money.

GB will be working in partnership with the UBC chapter of Engineers Without Borders (EWB-UBC), a campus group of students who use technological knowledge to improve the lives of others and encourage sustainable development.

Middleton said once the ideologies of this part of the project are properly aligned, EWB and GB will work in partnership. GB will build the school and EWB will do the engineering aspects such as water purification and electricity installment. Middleton also said it was important to ensure they don't just present the Masai people in Kenya with a Western 'solution.'

The goal of EWB-UBC is to use the knowledge and expertise of engineering students to help other countries. Students can do projects assisting in landmine removal, providing electricity for schools or purifying water for towns.

"We have the knowledge to make a difference," said EWB-UBC President Kahay Law. In response to those wary of a bunch of North American students who think they can improve technology in a foreign country, Law explained that students in EWB UBC don't assume they have more knowledge than the people in need.

"The project has to be incorporated in the community socially, politically and environmentally. Development is not about us having solutions. It's about us asking questions," she said.

Neither GB nor EWB-UBC work alone. Members realise their knowledge is limited and they need to consult a wide variety of people to ensure that all of the gaps in the projects are filled.

Middleton agrees that students need to solicit outside help to be successful. "We will be working closely with local experts and students from universities close to the project site, and together we will create sustainable solutions while simultaneously learning about each other," he said.

For further information about Engineers Without Borders, you can e-mail ubc@ewb.ca. For inquiries about UBC Global Builders, e-mail global.builders@ubc.ca. ❖

Science students support social space, sort of

Science students are on their way to having their own social space, after they passed a Science Undergraduate Society (SUS) referendum, adding $10 to their student fees to fund a new building.

The referendum passed with 50.6 per cent in favour. "As far as SUS is concerned, a majority is a majority," said Reka Sztopa, SUS president.

Sztopa believes that those who voted against the mandatory fee simply did not want to pay the money and that many are happy that the building is going to be built.

It is slated to be built between the Chemistry/Physics building and Hebb Theatre, with September 2004 as the predicted completion date.

The final design of the new building will be guided by a steering committee made up of SUS representatives and AMS designer Michael Kingsmill, who helped design the new Meekison Arts Social Space.

Currently, students will cover around 40 per cent of the costs and the balance will be covered by the university and any private donors that can be found.

Wanna walkout?

A group of UBC students, known as the Coalition Against War on the People of Iraq (CAWOPI), is urging you to walk out of class or work if war begins in Iraq.

Supporters of the walkout at UBC will gather at noon on the day the war begins at the Goddess of Democracy. For those downtown, the US Consulate at the corner of Pender and Burrard is the designated meeting place. The walkout will be followed by a rally at 5pm outside the Vancouver Art Gallery.

If the UBC campus is behind picket lines, everyone involved in the walkout is instructed to meet at the US Consulate.

The walkout is intended as a symbolic act to show that people are willing to drop everything in support of peace. According to Dave Quigg, a CAWOPI member, the aim is "to have no business as usual on the day that war breaks out."

Organisers estimate that the walkout will be supported by thousands at UBC.

CUPE vs. SUV

At approximately 4pm Wednesday, CUPE 2278 member Joshua Caulkins was struck by a vehicle at the main entrance to the university while marching in a picket line.

Witnesses claim that a red SUV with a male driver attempted to breach the picket line that was blocking the intersection, striking Caulkins leg and knocking him to the ground in the process. The vehicle then left the scene.

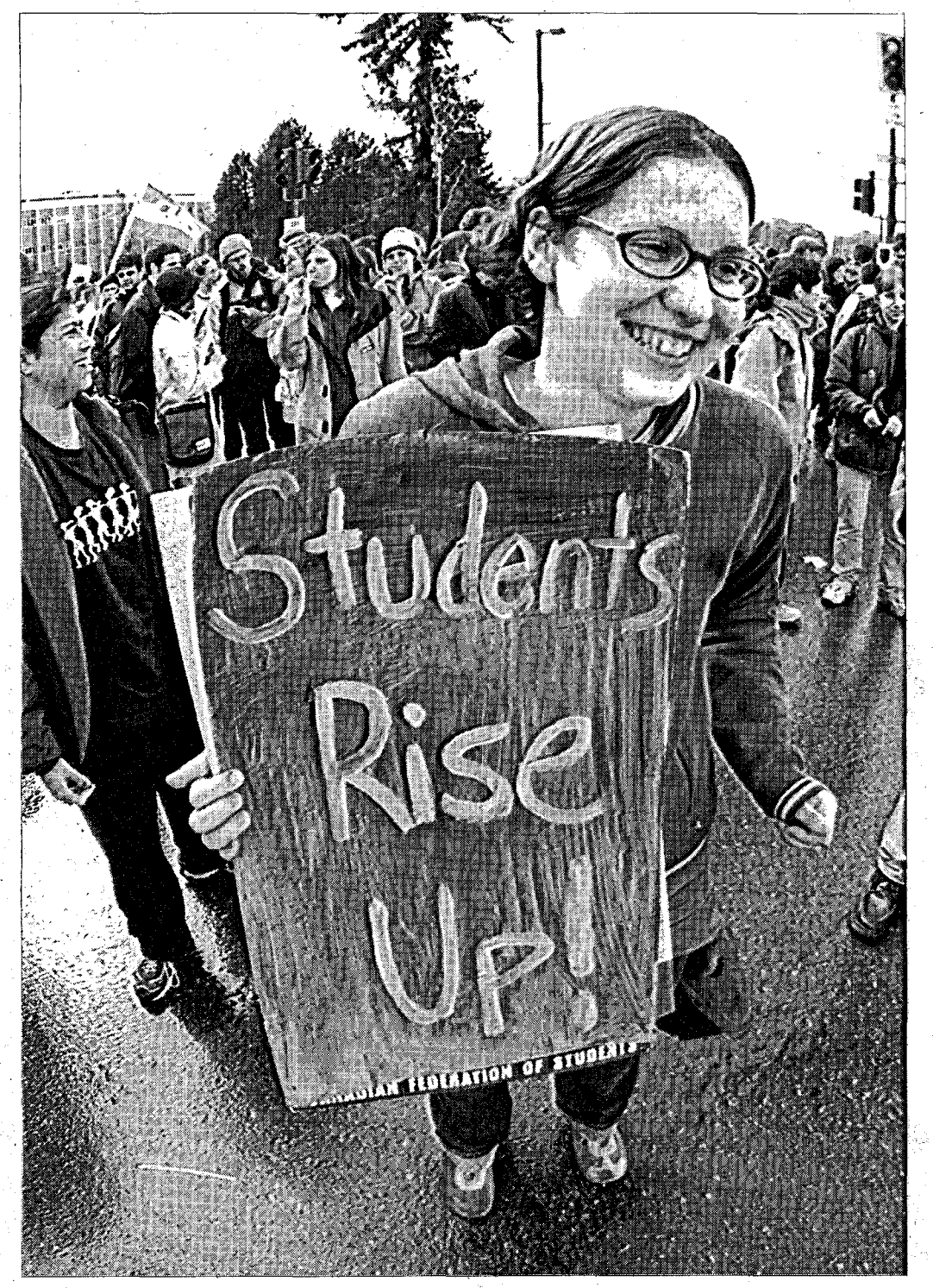
Campus RCMP investigated the incident and spoke with the driver, who claimed to be unaware that his vehicle had struck anyone.

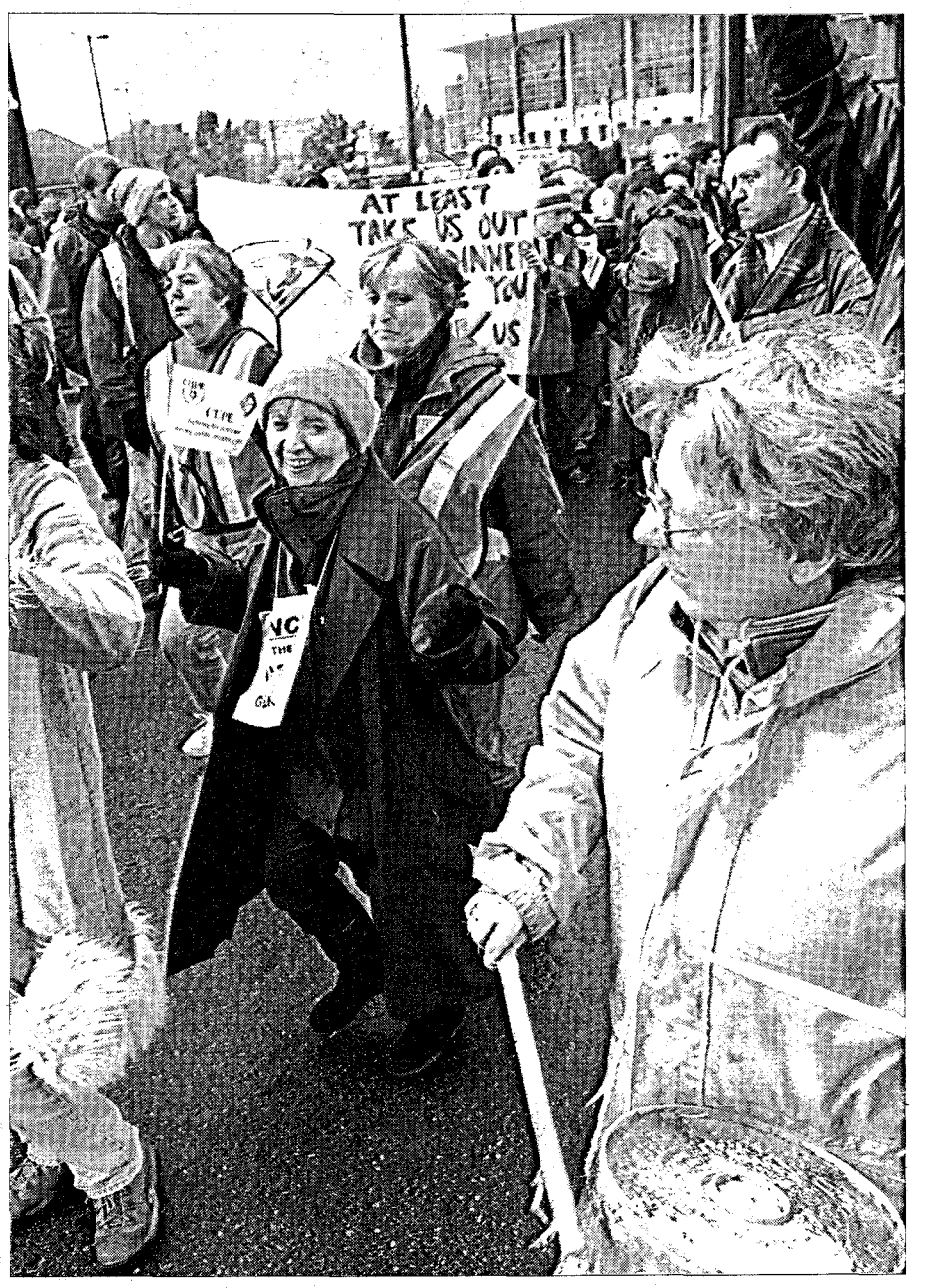
No charges are currently being laid, but Caulkins has said he will be filing a complaint about the incident with the RCMP.

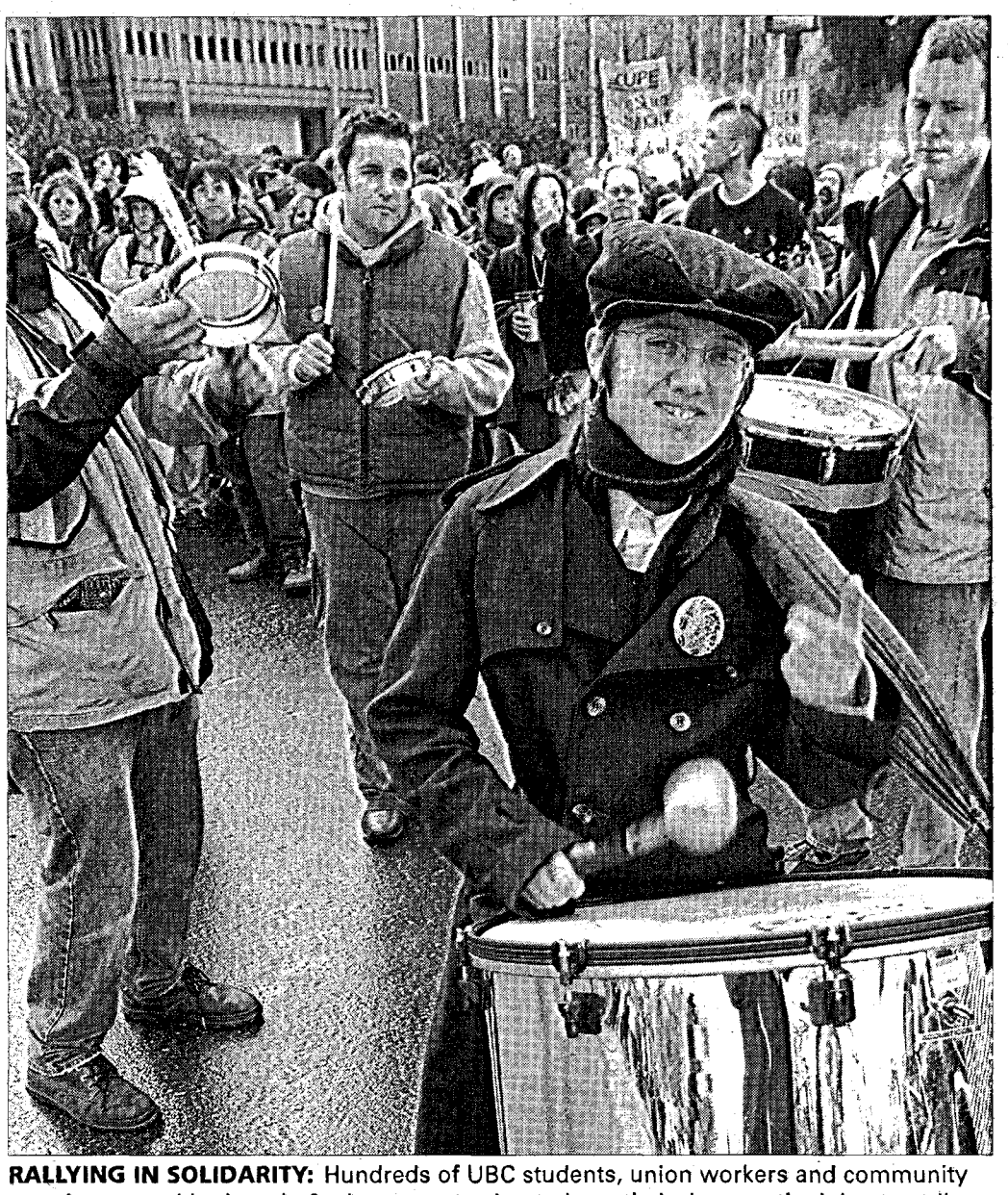
Caulkins is recovering from a minor ankle sprain, but says the pain will not keep him from participating in future union job action.

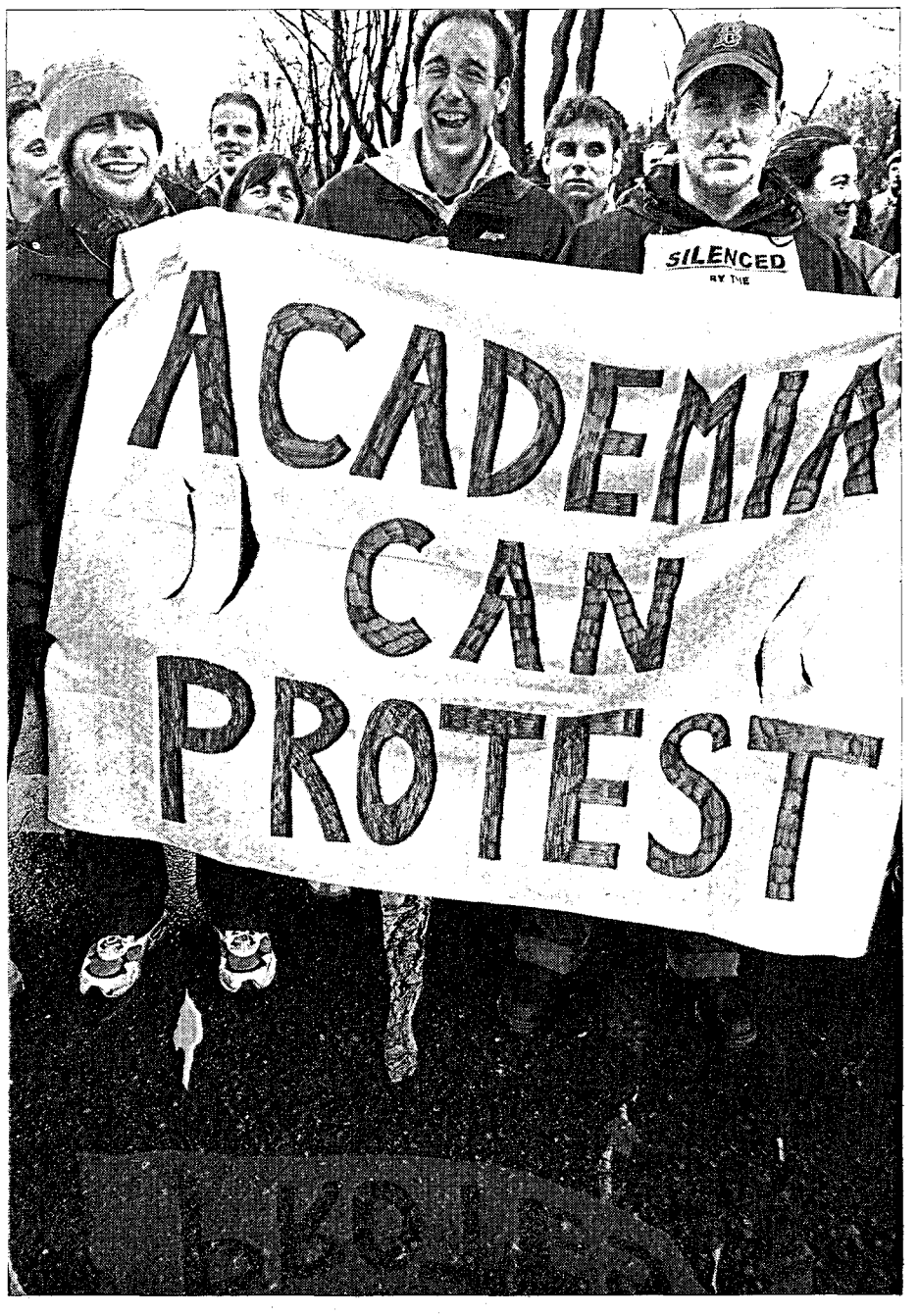
A *Ubyssey* editor was also struck by a car while on assignment at a protest early yesterday morning but was not injured. ❖

Fighting back









RALLYING IN SOLIDARITY: Hundreds of UBC students, union workers and community members stood in the rain for hours protesting to keep their democratic rights to strike on campus. **NIC FENSOM PHOTOS**

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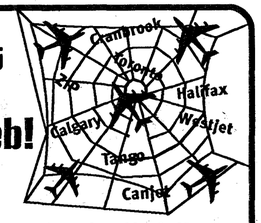

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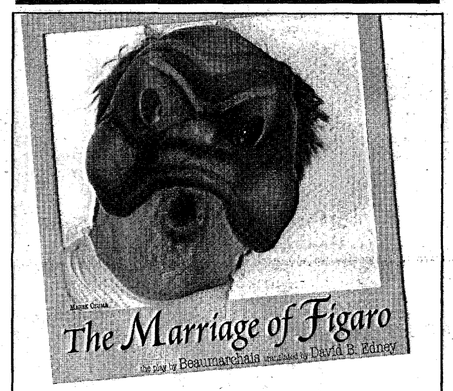

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Pretenders to the stage

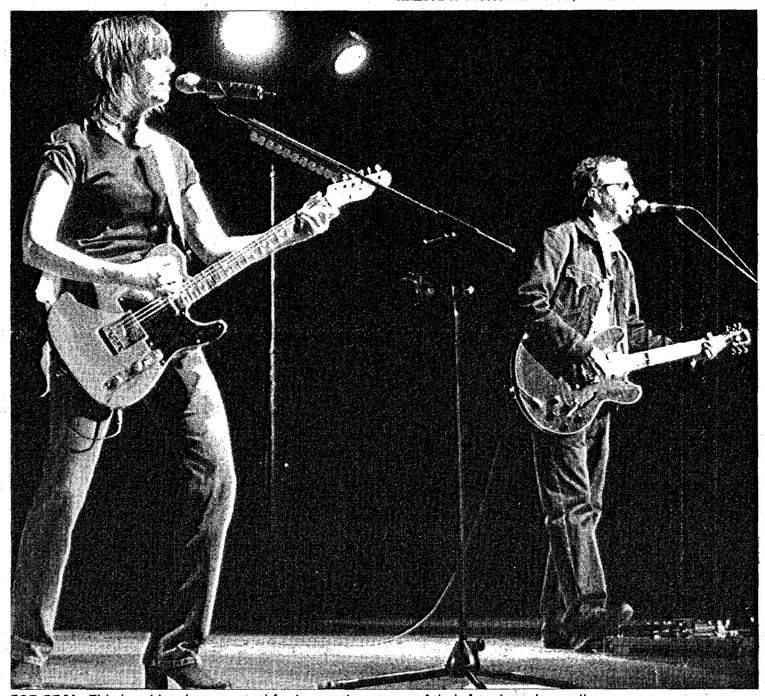
Chrissie Hynde and her troupe can still light up the stage after decades

THE PRETENDERS
with the All-Mighty Senators
at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre
Mar. 7

by Sarah Bourdon
CULTURE WRITER

The Pretenders definitely have staying power. The enthusiastic crowd at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre on Friday night was a testament to this when the group hit the stage to play an energetic two-hour set. I can't say that I was previously a huge Pretenders fan; I was familiar with a few of their well-known pop classics like "Angel of the Morning" and "I'll Stand by You," but for the most part I had yet to really hear a good selection of their music. I was pleasantly surprised by what I heard on Friday night.

I figured I would do a little research before attending the concert. The Pretenders came together in 1978, and first climbed to success in the UK, where the band was formed. Led by vocalist Chrissie Hynde and following the punk and rock influences of the time, they soon gained popularity in North America. Hynde is quite the entertainer and an icon for many female vocalists in the world of rock. Aside from being a very flamboyant, confident stage presence, she has a distinct and beautiful voice, which gives the band a unique character.



FOR REAL: This band has been around for longer than many of their fans have been alive. MICHELLE MAYNE PHOTO

A note on the audience at this particular concert: the majority of people in the crowd were over forty years old, which I guess was to be expected since the band has been around since before I was born. What I didn't expect was the guy in front of me, at least double my age, offering me a swig of his vodka, or the crazy man beside me whose enthusiasm for the band bordered on mania. There were also quite a few people who hadn't quite realised that the 1980s are over and still had their pants tucked into their cowboy boots, like Matthew McConaughey in *Dazed and Confused*. Very interesting. Nonetheless, it was a lively crowd and there were definitely some hardcore Pretenders fans among them.

I'm afraid I cannot say I was terribly impressed by the opening act, a Baltimore band called The All-Mighty Senators. They were unique if nothing else. The lead singer/drummer alternated between screaming out high notes Michael Jackson-style and laying into the drum kit as if his life depended on it. Their set included everything from a tribute to Johnny Cash to a song about spiders on Godzilla's eyelashes. Thankfully they only played for half an hour.

But then The Pretenders came on and things were looking up. Hynde started out the concert joking, "We're going to play all your favourites—and some Pretenders songs too." The great thing about this was that, despite having a brand new album to promote, the band didn't disappoint fans by only playing new stuff. They did songs from their very first album right up to the newest songs, including many crowd favourites.

The high point of the concert for me was their 1980s classic "Don't Get Me Wrong." It was so good; especially when Hynde slowed it down into a jazzy vocal rendition. One of their new songs, a reggae-style melody called "Complex Person," also really impressed me. While they haven't changed their sound drastically to suit what is popular today, their new stuff is fresh and appealing. Overall there was a good mix of loud, guitar-heavy rock songs and melodic, soulful ballads.

While always maintaining the energy that seems characteristic of their music, The Pretenders also showed a darker side. They played a song called "Fools Must Die" which Hynde, who is an American, dedicated to the United States and its foreign policies, which she made clear she doesn't like. Also, they played two songs from *Loose Screw*, their new album. The first one was a song about gambling called "The Losing," before which Hynde remarked, "We like to represent the losers of the world." The other was a song about being a junkie called "You Know Who Your Friends Are."

To end off the evening, in their encore performance, The Pretenders performed "I'll Stand By You," their signature song, and the audience went wild. Unlike so many bands that have faded into oblivion, this band has transcended the years. Their Vancouver concert was a great mix of classics and new songs, and left the audience, including me, quite impressed. ❖

Women of rock and roll unleashed

HOLLY McNARLAND
with Emm Gryner
at the Commodore Ballroom
Mar. 7

by Caitlin McKinney
CULTURE WRITER

I've never really liked Holly McNarland. I actually went to her show at the Commodore to check out the opener, Emm Gryner, whom I'd been hearing amazing things about for months. I ended up feeling slightly let down by Gryner, but incredibly impressed with McNarland's fantastic vocals and ability to put on an awesome show.

Emm Gryner has gone from being basically nobody two years ago to the new darling of Canadian music. She has climbed the Canadian music food chain, creating her fair share of buzz. A look at past tour dates on her website is proof. In February 2000, she was playing a series of concerts in her friend's living room (you had to e-mail her for an invite). Flash forward to February 2002 and she's opening for the Cowboy Junkies in Port Hope, Ontario. This may sound a little more impressive than the living room gigs, but I've been to Port Hope and there isn't much there. At the end of 2002, she played with Andy Stochansky on his Canadian tour. Now she's opening for Holly McNarland across the country, playing in venues like the Commodore Ballroom. She's nominated for a Juno this year, in the Best Pop Album category. Tonnes of people have heard good things about her, but too few have actually seen her play live.

Her set got off to a great start, and I was immediately impressed with her powerful voice. Her band was really tight, and it was obvious that they were having a great time playing together. The only problem was that at times Gryner came off sounding a little too Josie and the Pussycats, falling into really traditional and worn-out pop rhythms. There were a few highlights: the band left the stage at one point and Gryner played a great bass solo accompanied by haunting vocals. Later in the set she covered Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train," which she dedicated to "a troubled boy from the US...George Bush."

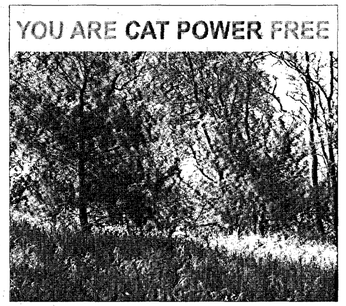
When Holly McNarland took the stage, she announced that she was glad to be back to living in Vancouver, after her recent stay in Winnipeg, her birthplace. She ran through selections from her new CD *Home Is Where My Feet Are*. I should stress the phrase "ran through"—the set was incredibly quick and surprisingly hard-sounding for McNarland. I've always associated her with angst-ridden 14-year-old girls, so I was expecting the show to be a lot of whining and perhaps a few self-deprecating tears. Her solid and versatile voice was to be expected for anyone who's heard her radio singles, but I had no idea that she could put on such a powerful rock show.

She also played the crowd pleasers "Do You Get High" and "Numb" and some older stuff, which thrilled the die-hard fans. The encore featured one brand new and as of yet unreleased song: It was really slow, almost a ballad, uncharacteristic of the fast-paced show. A great song except that McNarland seemed to occasionally forget the words.

McNarland's set was quite short, ending abruptly after about an hour. I found out later that she was actually really sick but had decided to play anyway, and ended up cancelling her show in Nanaimo the next day. ❖

Marshall wants to be *Free*

New York's Cat Power overcomes fear of stardom to produce a masterpiece



CAT POWER
You Are Free
[Matador]

by Duncan M. McHugh
CULTURE STAFF

I don't have great hearing. This is especially true when it comes to song lyrics. Unfortunately, I didn't remember this when I heard Chan Marshall (aka Cat Power, aka indie rock's most jittery performer) sing "Don't fall in love with the autocrat," during "Free," the second track on Cat Power's excellent new album, *You Are Free*.

Don't fall in love with the autocrat? What could it mean? I started thinking of all the implications of that little phrase. Was Marshall protesting the unthinking, unfeeling bureaucracy of modern democracy? The corporate overthrow of Western society? The answer is no, because the line is actually "don't fall in love with the autograph," which neatly sums up Marshall's message on her first album of new material since 1998's *Moon Pix*.

Marshall is a reluctant star. She's much more concerned with honesty and artistry than with aesthetics. Onstage, she keeps her long hair forward to conceal her face. She seems very uncomfortable with her fame, and she makes that known with the first two songs on *You Are Free*. On "I Don't Blame You," the lead track, she tells the story of a shy singer forced to play songs to an unappreciative audience. "They never owned it/And you never owed it to them anyway." "Free" rejects the cult of personality, pleading "Just be in love when you scream that song."

Sometimes Marshall's honesty and seriousness can be a bit overwhelming. "Names," for example, is a repository of child abuse victims. But, for the most part, seriousness gives way to poignancy. When she intones "We can all be free" on "Maybe Not," Marshall puts so much hope and pain into the line that you feel like bursting. It's one of many moments where the awesome potential of Marshall's voice is harnessed, if only fleetingly.

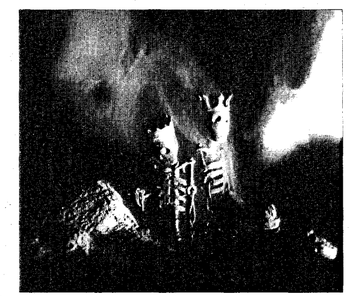
Of course, not all of the album is so emotionally loaded. "He War," the lead single, is a great straightforward rock song and owner of one kickass guitar riff. And aside from the down-with-the-autograph business, "Free," with its weird canned drum beat, organ and power acoustic guitar, is a lot of fun.

There's even a duet with Eddie Vedder, on "Evolution," the album's closer. Despite what you might think, Vedder's voice compliments Marshall's beautifully and the song is a gorgeous way to exit the album.

Whether she likes it or not, Marshall *is* a star and *You Are Free* shows us why. It's the most haunting, exciting and awe-inspiring album I've heard in quite some time. And I'm sure that she's not so keen on autocrats anyway. ❖

Time to *Riot*—be prepared

Seattle survivors still rockin' in the free world



PEARL JAM
Riot Act
[Epic/Sony]

by Weronika Lewczuk
CULTURE WRITER

Pearl Jam has been around since most of the undergrads at UBC were little kids. They never quite rose to the fame and fortune anticipated after their first hit, "Jeremy." Still, over the years they have been successful in building a dedicated audience that continues to buy their albums. Whether a cult sensation or just one of the best bands to come out of the grunge movement, the truth is Pearl Jam makes good rock music with honest and introspective lyrics that don't disappoint.

Riot Act is their latest release. There are more upbeat songs on this collection than on previous ones, and they're weighted with Eddie Vedder's ballad-like singing style. No one instrument dominates the others; every band member contributes equally, making for a very balanced record. Some songs, such as "Can't Keep," sound like classic Pearl Jam, while on the other hand there are songs like "1/2 Full" that have some definite musical experimentation, featuring great guitar work with blues undertones.

Okay, so why "*Riot Act*"? All the songs on the album have a sort of survival premise to them. The general theme of this CD seems to be finding a place in the world through meditations on your own role and situation, and recognising the importance of living truthfully while breaking down the corporate propaganda fed to us in advertising and cultural manipulation. Declarations like "[there is] no white or black, just gray" are common in the lyrics. This righteous-sounding message is underscored by humility in songs such as "Cropduster." The song "Bushleaguer" is a direct comment to the president of the US, with lines like "the haves have not a clue."

The love songs are about helping each other through these tough times and existing together as if in nature. The song "Save You" is a declaration to help a friend whose will has "grown fat and lazy." Finally, the imagery of the ocean and sea through music and word make this album great for anyone who appreciates the ocean.

If you like Pearl Jam's other albums, get this one. It's different but still keeps in line with the band's musical and thematic message. If you have never listened to Pearl Jam before, then go to a music store and have a listen—it's worth the bus fare. ❖

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Laura Blue
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Michelle Mayne
Jeff McKenzie
Jonathan Woodward

Almost staff:

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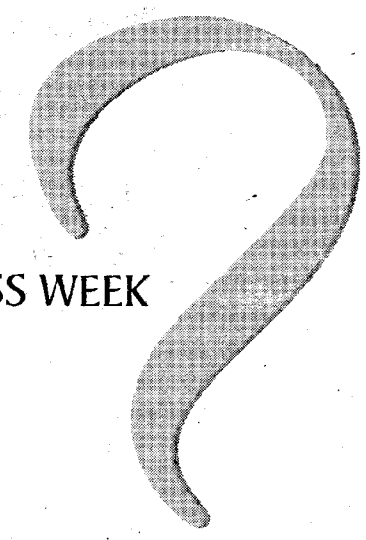
Dan Enjo: needs 2 contributions
Alison Benjamin: needs 2 meetings

What do you know about Islam



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If the slipper fits

UBC graduate thespians in local theatre group dig up dramatic gems

THE CAT WHO ATE HER HUSBAND
presented by Ruby Slippers Theatre
at the Firehall Arts Centre
until Mar. 22

by Anna King
CULTURE STAFF

This season's theatre offerings have been a treat; there are more small and medium-sized companies producing fresh, original work than I can get a handle on. And with at least one local critic pronouncing that the Vancouver theatre scene is currently the best it's ever been, my bet is the rest of the season will be a peach.

I'm not the only one excited. A recent conversation with two actors, both graduates of UBC's theatre program and performing in Ruby Slippers Theatre's upcoming "The Cat Who Ate Her Husband," confirmed that the city's theatre community is equally giddy. Kerry Davidson (class of 1991) and Dawn Petten (1997) talked nonstop about the recent rise in quality homegrown shows, their "absolute satisfaction" with their current lives (satisfied actors?!), their respect for the UBC theatre program, and, of course, their new play, which, they assured me, is "absolutely hilarious."

Both of them actors who live for the stage, Davidson and Petten say the kind of work Ruby Slippers puts on is some of the finest and funniest around. Sharp and audacious, the company has been doing provocative shows since it started in 1989, and is known for interdisciplinary and often feminist work. Ruby Slippers also runs the Brecht In the Park series every summer and frequently hosts premieres of new Québécois theatre in translation.

"The Cat Who Ate Her Husband" fits the Ruby Slipper foot perfectly, according to the two women. It's a satire of 1950s suburbia, where rumours of a night stalker who kills husbands wreck havock on an ostensibly happy community. But Petten says it pushes the envelope way further than movies like *Pleasantville* or *Far From Heaven*. "It has the characters saying what they're really feeling and doing the dirty sexual behaviour they wouldn't really have done. So you see people in their 50s outfits and smiles doing outlandish things."

Petten plays Leslie, the hypersexualised daughter who lives out her fantasies in occasionally crude ways, while Davidson plays Murtha, a freaked-out neighbour obsessed with pulp fiction magazines. Both say, after 14 full runthroughs of the play, they still laugh hysterically at each other's characters. They credit the playwright, Drew McCreadie, and Ruby Slippers Artistic Director Diane Brown, who directs the show, with the show's prickly humour, and praise the company for taking on a script they describe as "risky."

"This script was shopped around to every theatre company in town," Petten said, "and [Ruby Slippers] is doing it. A lot of companies liked it and found it funny, but thought it was a bit too much for their subscribers. In not having a subscription base, I think you have a little bit more freedom."

The actors see Ruby Slippers' focus on performing locally written work as representative of the change that's happening across Canada. "There seems to be a new emphasis on developing new work," Petten says. "There's more pride in Canadian playwrights, and more and more playwrights." She notes that even Stratford, which has always only done classics, is starting to do new Canadian work. With small companies like Ruby Slippers doing edgy and often satirical theatre, it's possible the view of Canadian theatre as primarily a landscape of weighty family dramas will lose its grip.

Both actors praise UBC for giving them practical skills and lots of chance to flex their budding acting muscles and say they don't feel at a disadvantage compared to actors who graduated from professional programs like Studio 58. Although Davidson works as a social worker to supplement her income, she says she likes having a day job that's "in the real world." Petten says she has been lucky enough to work exclusively as a theatre actor for the past year and a half, and has no interest in getting an agent and hawking her wares as an aspiring film star. Both admit, however, that an actor's life is a brutal one. "Some famous person said that looking for the work *is* the work, and doing the show is a bonus," Davidson says. Still, she says she feels "totally blessed."

"If I can create my own shows, or do comedy with Gut-Wrench (the comedy troupe she shares with playwright McCreadie, among others), as well as doing the other work I do, then I'll be totally happy."❖

Love is in the air

Strong set and great acting bring classic story to life

ROMEO AND JULIET
at the Vancouver Playhouse
until Mar. 22

by Parminder Nizher
CULTURE STAFF

We all know the story of Romeo and Juliet; the saying 'star-crossed lovers' is almost a cliché. It's incredibly difficult to make Shakespeare's renowned love story fresh to any audience. Romeo + Juliet = love at first sight. The pen of Shakespeare describing feuding families = bad times and inevitable death. Blah, blah, blah—who doesn't know the story? The Vancouver Playhouse version takes a swing at R&J and avoids any new moves. It is exactly how one imagines a Renaissance era play to be. And that made it a treat to watch.

When I entered the theatre I heard the chirping of nightingales and saw an aged-looking, barren set with pillars and three doors. Words will not do justice to Pam Johnson's set—it is amazing. When Juliet does her balcony scene, separate pillars attached to a stage-wide patio glide downward toward the stage. The changes in the set and design kept me in awe throughout the entire play. I honestly believed I stumbled upon two lovers in the night, the lighting felt that realistic. I could rave on and on about the set (wow), but onwards...

The two leads deserve some raving, too. Childlike innocence, curiosity and excitement woven with an ability to be consumed by love and lost in passion are the essence of Juliet's character. Meg Roe embodies all of these elements and more. Visually she is Juliet; in the beginning she runs around like a child. Her clothing is long and flowing; the absence of cleavage hints that Juliet is very much a child. After Romeo kisses her on the balcony she runs off with a gleeful yelp. That scene is what first love is about: excitement, sweetness and anticipation.

Alessandro Juliani is completely in tune with the portrayal of such love. There is no intensity, no brooding stares, no anger—Romeo is as much a child as Juliet is. Juliani's Romeo is much like his partner's Juliet. He is consumed by his passion and ruled by his love; he portrays the desperation of a man in love and the necessary weakness for his love. Juliani has a boyish mischievousness in his eyes, adding to his character.

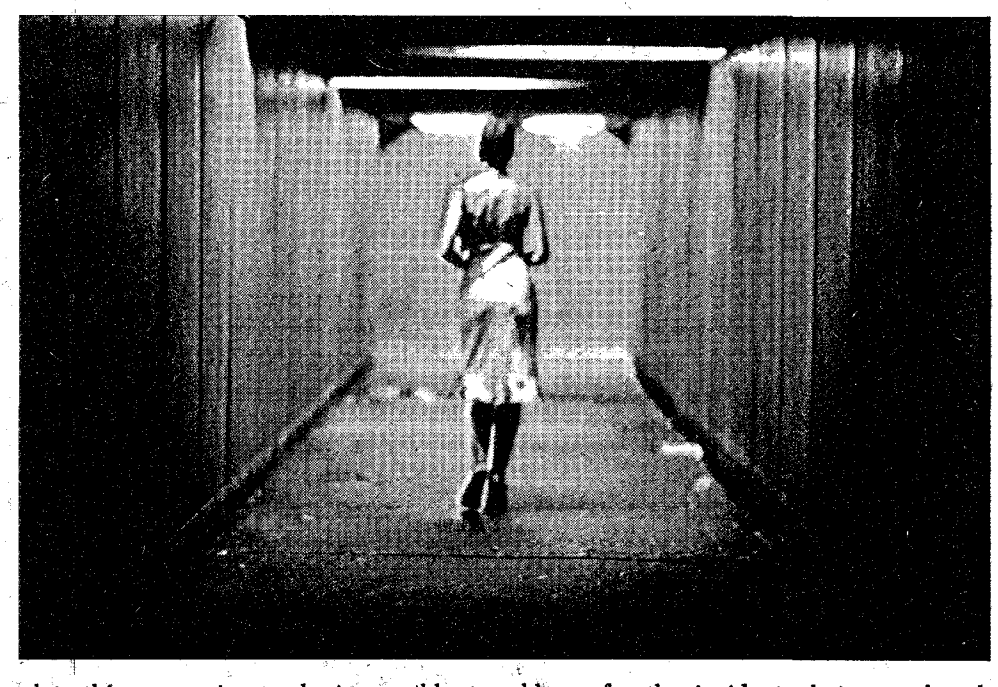
Although quite heavy, the Playhouse's adaptation of "Romeo and Juliet" is also filled with humourous moments. It's definitely worth the money, and I must add again, the set is awesome. ❖

No turning back

Controversial film leaves an indelible impression

IRRÉVERSIBLE
now playing

by Michael Schwandt
CULTURE EDITOR



Among some movie critics, there is an unwritten rule that use of the first person should be avoided in reviews. Special circumstances call for special exceptions, though: I hated watching this film.

People who have seen Gaspar Noé's *Irréversible* seem to engage in two main discussions. First is the trivial one-upmanship over who saw it first and where—earlier this winter in Quebec, last fall at Vancouver's Film Festival, or sometime last summer while visiting France, where it was produced. More important is the debate over whether there can be any justification for the film's horrifically graphic depictions of rape and murder.

From beginning to end, *Irréversible* is a punishing experience, visually, aurally and psychologically. The opening scene is filmed through a manically spinning and panning lens, showing every possible view of a dimly-lit back alley to the increasingly-nauseated audience. The drunken fly's-eye view then takes us into a labyrinthine sex club, where we find a young man (Marcus, played with blind rage by Vincent Casssel), charging through the club's patrons in search of "le Tenia." Upon locating le Tenia (French for "the Tapeworm"), Marcus tries to fight him. His quarry promptly responds by breaking Marcus's arm and attempting to anally rape him. In turn, with the camera finally settling on a single angle for the audience's benefit, Marcus's companion Pierre (Albert Dupontel) reacts by inflicting upon le Tenia perhaps the most grisly act of violence ever committed to film. With a fire extinguisher.

From this point onward, the film's sequences are arranged in reverse chronological order, in similar fashion to *Memento*. With the camera regaining its earlier spasticity, we see Marcus and Pierre's search for le Tenia unfold backward, the location of the furious hunt moving away from the club and through Paris's backstreets. Eventually their motivation is revealed in a shocking but cannily filmed pair of scenes. Leaving a party, the pair finds Marcus's girlfriend Alex (who is also Pierre's ex), severely battered and comatose, being loaded into an ambulance. Seconds later, we see the cause of all of the effects we've already been shown. Alex (played by Monica Bellucci) leaves the same party, descends into an underpass to cross the street, and is raped and savagely beaten by le Tenia.

The rape is filmed in petrifyingly unflinching detail. Again, the camera assumes a static position, and again we are shown an utterly sickening act in excruciating detail. Every one of Alex's attempts to escape and each of le Tenia's moves to contain and degrade her are seen and heard. A turning point in *Irréversible*'s fragmented plot, this scene is nearly impossible to watch.

It cannot be denied that *Irréversible* is an impressive cinematic accomplishment. Its oozing, throbbing score contributes to the unsettling tone set by the maddeningly unpredictable camera angles, filmed in a palette of foreboding black and orange. The actors endow the film with overwhelming emotion—Cassels and Dupontel both show startling range, shifting from animalistic brutality to carefree banter. Bellucci's physical performance in the underpass scene, in many ways the nucleus of the film, is astonishing.

The inverted presentation of the storyline flirts with notions of predetermined fate, while demonstrating the futility of revenge. Were the events of *Irréversible* shown chronologically, we would surely cheer on Marcus and Pierre's vengeful debasement. However, when we are shown after the rape how the two may share some blame for the incident, their search-and-destroy reaction seems all the more worthless in its failure to change things for Alex. As the film continues to move backward through time into the characters' prior bliss, small ironies are laid bare, amplifying the sheer tragedy of the story.

This film's infamy arises from turning a brazen eye on brutality, rape and murder. Nobody will dispute that these acts are by their nature the most abhorrent acts that can be inflicted upon humans, by humans. Presenting them as anything less than such, as is done in most violent films, is a failure to recognise this. By audaciously confronting the audience with brazen detail, *Irréversible* in fact imparts the very harshest condemnation of such attacks. This film is frightening and painful, challenging and very important.

Again: I hated watching *Irréversible*. And I hope that everyone sees it. ❖

All comes in good time

Author of *The Hours* reflects on his rise to fame

by Erik Hers
CULTURE WRITER

Michael Cunningham is surely one of the most polite and friendly authors to have won a Pulitzer prize. But who would be in a bad mood after hitting Hollywood paydirt? His book *The Hours* has been made into a movie starring the crème-de-la-crème of Hollywood actresses: La Streep, La Kidman, La Moore. Hence their faces staring at us from the novel rack at Chapters while the film version leads the charge to the Academy Awards with nine Oscar nominations.

My only disappointment then, during the hour-long conference call interview done in 'round-table' style (besides the girl from the U of T asking why the author had one of the characters move to Toronto) was that he did not admit any desire to having wanted to be a starlet in another life. There are many references in the book to fame and the glamour days of Hollywood.

The Hours tells the stories of three women of three different generations. One of them, you may know, is the writer Virginia Woolf. The other two are a fifties housewife and a Manhattan editor of the present day. Woolf is writing *Mrs Dalloway*, while the housewife reads it obsessively and the editor gets the nickname given to her by her dying friend. "The idea of writing a book about the profound, transforming experience of reading a book is considered sort of abstract. Who cares about that?" asked Cunningham, as he proceeded to answer his own question: "I thought, 'Maybe I do, and if no one wants to write that kind of book, then maybe I will.'"

Cunningham found the task to be daunting. "More than anything, I had to overcome an excessive reverence for the book and I had to come to see it not as a great artifice of Western culture but as a living thing. I had to be willing to dismantle the book." As he dismantled, he fell even more in love with the book.

A love of writing was what led Cunningham as a college student to enrol in the creative writing programme at the University of Iowa. "I went to the writer's workshop with trepidations," Cunningham recalled. "I felt a real writer wouldn't go to writer's school, but would just write!"

By the end of the programme, though, Cunningham had no regrets. "An immersion in the writer's workshop was a great thing. Nothing could matter more there than the attempt to write a beautiful sentence."

Does Cunningham have any advice for young writers? "It's important to understand that you have to be enormously determined," he said. "It took me 10 years of writing to get published for the first time."

As for Oscar night, he'll be there in person cheering on the nominated actresses and director behind *The Hours*, enjoying himself. "I get to have the fun without worrying about the consequences." ❖

Chasing the human condition

by Heather Neale
CULTURE WRITER

Kenyan-Canadian author David Odhiambo sat across from me at a downtown coffee shop, corn braids dancing, profound eyes twinkling, to talk about his second book, *Kipligat's Chance*, and the life that got him here.

There is no easy answer as to where he is from. Moving from Kenya to Winnipeg in 1977, he became smitten with the city's beloved Assiniboine Park, and then moved to McGill for his undergraduate studies. "I remember when I first got [to Montreal], I bought a pack of menthol cigarettes that made me sick. It was very freeing, though: bohemian," he said.

Odhiambo then spent some time working in Vancouver and Ottawa. He currently lives in Massachussets where he is pursuing a Master's degree in creative writing. "It makes sense to be in an environment that facilitates the writing process. Working [with children in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside]—by the time I got home at night, all I could write were a few sentences. I liked the sentences, but it wasn't getting me far," he said.

His new book features a teenaged Kenyan track athlete living and training in Vancouver. It explores his need to escape a past fraught with strife and the challenge of reconciling the difficulties that go along with that. Running away from something, one is always running toward something else; the problem comes when the two get confused.

When asked about his writing process, Odhiambo explained: "I read a Kurt Vonnegut novel and figured, 'that looks easy.' It wasn't easy." From there he evolved into his own routine. "I was aware I could either write something where I showed what I could do using form and metaphor—so that people would go, 'wow this guy can write'—or I could just get the story told. I went with getting the story told." This is in contrast to his first book, which focused much more on lyricism.

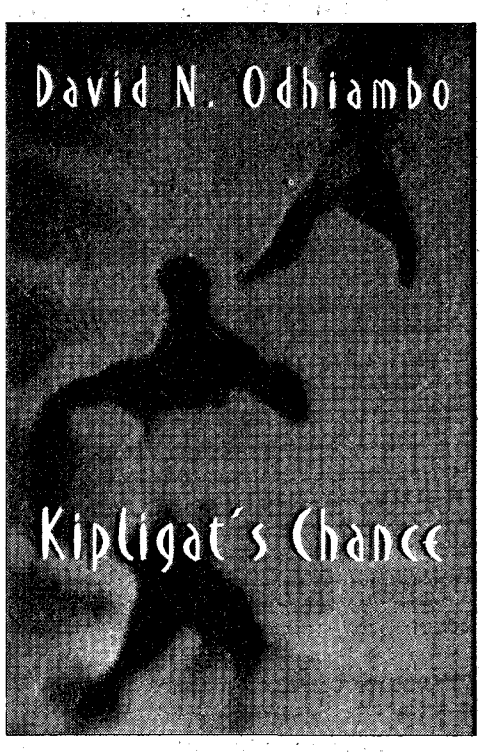
According to this literary talent, a great deal of the book's success can be accredited to his editor. "I have a tendency when things get intimate to go to humour," he said. "Barb was really good at encouraging me to face that anxiety, and in doing so I became closer to my characters."

He also talked about where the book came from on a more visceral level. More than doing book research, Odhiambo values experience. "Being around street kids for as long as I was exposed me to a very particular condition. I wrote about the condition, not the people."

Odhiambo had a job prior to his work in the Downtown Eastside touring British Columbia and talking to high schools about African development issues. He always got the feeling that he was too far outside of the students' reality to really communicate. Working with disadvantaged youth allowed him this communication and the ability to really be inside of what was going on for them.

This goes for language too. "Something I struggle with as a writer, is how to get to a place where I've moved beyond the symbols and surface reality," he said. "I feel that with this book I have started to get inside of what that means." More than anything else, his learning to become aware of his surroundings and the way that he was being translated by diverse groups of people played a big role in this discovery.

Kipligat's Chance is on shelves now. ❖



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Room 24, Student Union Building
6138 Student Union Boulevard
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1
tel: 604-822-2301
fax: 604-822-9279
web: www.ubyssey.bc.ca
e-mail: feedback@ubyssey.bc.ca

BUSINESS OFFICE
Room 23, Student Union Building
advertising: 604-822-1654
business office: 604-822-6681
fax: 604-822-1658
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"Snivelling Cowards!" proclaimed Praetor Alison Bones to the collected military might of the starship USS Duncan M. McHugh, flagship of the Chris Shepherd Fleet. Commanders Heather Neale, Sarah Bourdon and cyborg Iva Cheung straightened their backs, for in the oncoming battle they could smell victory (or was it Bryan Zandberg?) in the air. "You are not Greg Ursic, you are men! It is time to throw off the yoke of Megan Thomas-ist oppression! In the name of King Anna King, we fight!" Clones Celine Asril and Erik Hers boarded their attack cruisers and launched into orbital combat. The enemy was ready, but soon Parminder Nizher was sighted by targeting computers and engulfed in alizarin fire. Kathleen Deering discharged her Nic Fensom-2-Omega, blowing Jonathan Woodward into cool oblivion. Enemy general Jesse Marchand screamed to her lackey Dave Gaertner, "Curses! Foiled again!" while her space pet Michael Schwandt chowed on his favorite food, Kibbles 'n' Caitlin McKinney. Her son, Aman Sharma, and Princess Michelle Mayne eloped in their zero-gravity orbital capsule, waiting for dark star Weronica Lewczuk to rise in violet dawn.

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Not in our name, please

Were you in Vancouver in the summer of 2001? If you were, you probably remember how hard it was to get around. That's because the city was hit with a four-month transit strike, which made life difficult for those of us without access to private vehicles, i.e. most students.

It was a huge disruption and getting to campus for April exams became a major headache. Yet, only after four months did the provincial government step in and order drivers back to work. By this precedent, it would seem that it would take enormous pressure from the government to step into a labour dispute.

Yet, on Wednesday night, the provincial government stepped into the labour dispute between UBC and its unions after only two and a half weeks of strike. It did so with legislation that forces all parties back to the bargaining table by Saturday morning. The legislation, Bill 21, the University of British Columbia Services Continuation Act, also forces the unions back to work and prevents any new strike action from beginning until after March 31, when the law expires.

The extraordinary nature of this bill should not be underestimated. The government, facing the opposition of a single MLA, passed the bill under emergency provisions that allowed the government to circumvent the usual time that a bill must be on the floor, three days, down to less than 12 hours.

Why was such an incredible exception made for Bill 21? The answer is you, the student.

That's right, the same government that opened up our universities to massive tuition increases, that scrapped countless social programs benefitting students and froze core funding to universities for three years, that very same government forced unions back to work because of their tremendous concern for you.

While all students are glad to be able to return to classes, especially at such a crucial time of the year, we have to question the cost at which restoration of classes has come. Is it worth removing workers' right to strike? Is it worth compromising the right to free speech on campus? Is it worth the right of UBC workers to get a fair deal? Certainly not.

Undoubedly, the disruption to students, while a legitimate concern, is being used as a cover by both the provincial government and UBC's administration to conceal their true motivation: the desire to undermine the rights of workers at UBC.

Graham Bruce, BC's minister of skills development and labour, said: "I think it's clear the negotiations have been pretty dysfunctional so far. It's important that both sides get back to the table." To suggest that the negotiations will continue to be anything but dysfunctional after one side's leverage has been entirely undermined is laughable.

In almost all cases when an employee group is forced to cease strike action and return to the bargaining table, any resolution that is reached lasts only one year. Then, the same issues resurface, the same discontented voices are heard and the same thing happens all over again. We doubt the university really wants to deal with another strike at the same time next year. And we doubt even more that students do.

A better solution would have been for both sides to give a little. TAs may never get their tuition waived completely, but with the threat of rising tuition TAs should get some form of tuition compensation that protects them from having their pay cut each year. And neither side has said it will bend on any of the items on the bargaining table. The university still won't talk about tuition and the TA Union still considers it an essential part of a new contract. We hope for a swift solution in the next few weeks that satisfies both sides, but we feel it is unlikely given the interference of the provincial government. We feel that passing Bill 21 will leave a legacy for students at this institution that they would rather forget.

And the hundreds of UBC students and staff protesting against how the new bill suppresses unions' rights yesterday morning sends a vastly different message about how people on campus feel about the university's decision. The AMS in past years has shown a preference for showing dissent through lobbying rather than protesting. But circumstances prompted the AMS to attend yesterday's rally, speaking to the crowd and encouraging students to exercise their rights and act against the university's arbitrary action.

There is no question students have been hurt by the strike. TAs provide a valuable service to students, teaching classes, providing assistance during office hours, marking papers and midterms. But forcing an employee group back to work is not an answer. TAs have been hurt by the strike, too, missing research and valuable time learning how to teach. Members of the TA Union felt like the university wasn't treating them fairly and with respect before they were legislated back to work—now they feel betrayed as well. Disheartened employees do not make the most dedicated of workers. This will hurt UBC students, too. ❖

LETTERS

Why I support the TA strike

It is true that Teaching Assistants (TAs) are fortunate to have the opportunity to earn an income through teaching while at graduate school, and that a wage of $25 per hour seems more than fair. However, here are several things that the skeptics must consider: Most TAs are graduate students, meaning that they already have an undergraduate degree. Many TAs are carrying a debt from this degree. I believe that it is reasonable to make it possible for TAs to complete their gradate degrees without sinking further into debt. The money TAs earn from teaching goes towards this end. With the administration's last offer, a TA who earns $8000 a year would see their salary increase by $240 (3 per cent in the first year). However, tuition rises by $600. Therefore a TA ends up with $360 less in their pocket. This pay cut would be repeated the following year. What the TAs really want is for a tuition increase to be matched by a salary increase, so that we don't have less money in our pockets year after year.

When choosing a university for graduate school, a serious consideration is the cost of tuition, and how much one will earn in TA pay. Certain graduate programs offer graduate students the opportunity to TA, and this is true for all the universities in North America. If UBC doesn't offer a competitive package to TAs, the top graduate students won't come here. This is one big reason undergraduate students should support the TA strike. Many undergraduate students don't seem to understand the importance of graduate students and the research they do when it comes to the reputation of UBC. Without top graduate students, UBC will become a lesser school, and all degrees earned here will sink in value.

—Steve Reid
Graduate student—chemistry

Discuss men's issues

I would like to comment on the Women's Issue of March 7, 2003. This issue was comprehensive and intriguing; however, I think it should have been called the 'Gender Issue' and should have discussed problems that pertain to both genders. By excluding men's concerns, you judge men's problems as less significant or less frequent. Some male issues that would benefit from discussion are violence-related crimes, male peer pressure in schools and gender inequality.

A striking example of gender inequality lurks in the UBC enrolment statistics. In one article ("The women of the Sciences"), you cited the 2001 statistics for women science undergraduates as being less than 50 per cent. However, when I checked the most recent statistics in the UBC Calendar, I discovered that the number of women far exceeds that of men not only in sciences, but in many other professional fields. Some of these fields include Medicine, Law, Pharmacy, Commerce, Science and Arts undergraduates and Education. In fact, one finds few departments where men's numbers are higher than women's. These statistics are of high concern, but I have no knowledge of feminists (who are, after all, dedicated to gender equality) addressing these areas.

In another of your articles ("You've come a long way lady (sort of)"), you emphasise "career women" as highly accomplished females. However, by doing so, you degrade housewives as being less productive women. I believe the decision to remain at home or to have a career should be equally valued, as they are both women's choices and both have their own benefits.

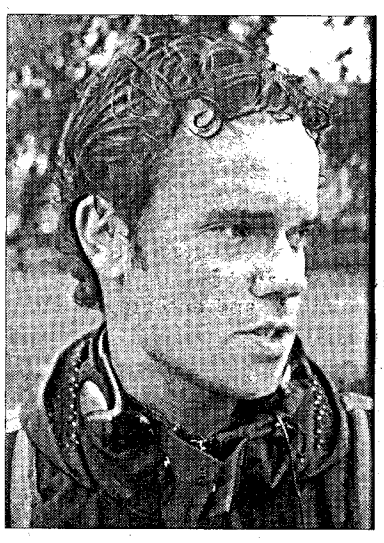
—Kaven Pars
Arts 3

Streeters: How has the strike affected you?

by Kathleen Deering
NEWS EDITOR

"In a way we're kind of losing out, because we paid all our fees already. Today I missed all my classes because they picketed all of Buchanan and they're been picketing Buchanan for what, four days now? I do support TAs because I think UBC is being really unfair about the payment. My Spanish TA has a lot of work to do."

Karen Lee
Arts 2



"I guess I've been less affected by it than some students. I'm in the Faculty of Commerce, which means the building hasn't been picketed so it's not that bad. I supported it at first but now I don't. The more I follow the negotiations the more ridiculous it seems. I think that's the case with a lot of students. Support has dwindled. One discussion group is taught by a TA and that's been affected, but other than that, nothing else. It's getting to be more of a hassle than a compromise to my education so far."

Colin McKerracher
Commerce 2

The Teaching Assistant (TA) Union has not been performing duties for nearly three weeks. It was just recently joined by CUPE 2950, another union on campus unhappy with its current labour situation. While it has been difficult for everyone employed at UBC, many people agree that students have been hurt the *most*.

Margery Fee, associate dean of students for Arts, said students who are particularly affected are those in math and language classes taught by TAs. She listed French, Spanish and Polish as the courses with which students struggle the most. "They are obviously finding it very difficult to keep up by themselves, because to [learn] a language without classroom interaction is quite tough," she said. "So they're feeling quite stressed in their situations."

She said Arts will try to accommodate students who have missed classes because they aren't comfortable crossing picket lines and that some students have joined other sections to compensate for missed classes. "The ones who are most upset are graduating [this year]," she said. "Those are the ones I'm most particularly concerned about."

"A lot of students are out there wondering if we care," she said. "I suppose I just hope that students realise that we are thinking of them."

Associate Dean of Science Paul Harrison said students have been directly affected by the absence of TAs to teach in labs and tutorials and in some lectures. Biology 140 is a lab course taken by 1074 students this term. The elective part of this course has been postponed indefinitely while TAs are not performing duties during the strike. Similarly, Chemistry 123, a lab course that many students have missed in the last few weeks, has 1528 students.

Harrison said he is extremely concerned about the effects of the TA strike on undergraduates. He said in some cases labs are continuing, while in others students have access to labs and materials, although not the structured labs that were planned. In other cases, labs simply aren't operating. He said the university is attempting to compile numbers of students in labs who have been affected.

"My main concern is the students who aren't getting instruction. We are very concerned about how we can minimise the effects of the job action on students who aren't getting the classes that they expect to get," he said.

Associate Dean of Applied Science Bruce Dunwoody said students in his faculty aren't particularly affected by the strike action, except for those taking math courses. "They have a number of sections that are taught by TAs and those sections haven't been taught since the strike began, to the best of my knowledge. And our students take a lot of math courses."

"I consider we're fairly fortunate compared with some other parts of campus in the level of disruption that there has been," said Dunwoody.

Dr Brian Marcus, head of the math department, said students whose section has been cancelled since the strike began should have been told they're responsible for following the course outline and the text during the strike. "They may be going to other sections—almost all the sections not being taught are also being taught by professors," he said.

He is concerned about the long-term effects of the strike on students. "Very important parts of their educational experience are being compromised. They don't have help in the math tutorial centres and they're not getting their [homework] marked," he said. "It's extremely hard for them to do, and I think everyone realises that."

He said there have been many discussions about what to do after the strike and how to help students make up lost classes.

Sameer Wahid is a fourth-year Science student on the Grad Class Council. He is also an undergraduate TA for a first-year chemistry course. "I haven't had classes that have been affected yet," he said. "But I can't stress enough the general concern among everyone about what's going to happen, is the year going to get extended, will I graduate on time—for graduating students, such as myself."

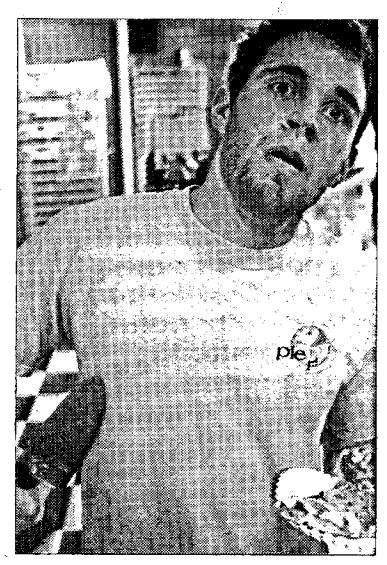
Rosie Wilson is a second-year Arts student who is taking Spanish 100 because she is going to Guatemala this summer to build water filters with a volunteer organisation. She hasn't had class since the strike started. "I'm supposed to teach it to myself, pretty much. I have no real source of information, no one's updating me or anything, so I don't even really know what's going on."

Kate Woznow is a fourth-year Arts student who feels the effects of the strike will be long-term. "A lot of it to me is the lack of respect being shown by members of the administration when we're all intelligent people who should be able to sit down and discuss these issues."

Fourth-year Arts student Cristina Balcazar said even though she has been affected by the strike, she think it has been positive. "I know my education is being compromised. But I think that in order to have things change we have to be willing to sacrifice things. If that has to do with my tuition, so be it." ❖

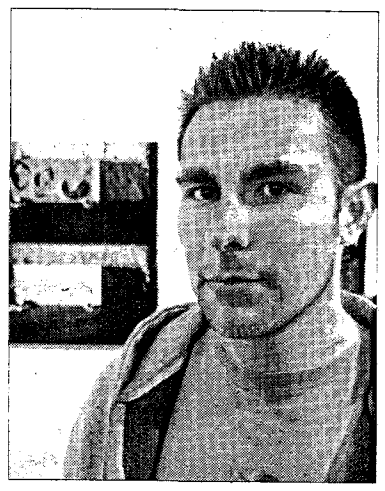
"I'm paying for school and I'm bitter. No, not bitter. My education is not really being compromised yet, but I want [my papers] back and I don't know how well I've done. And also, for my big research papers I need my TA's input and I haven't been able to get it and my professor won't do it because that would be doing the TA's job. I crossed pickets. I didn't want to do it, I felt bad. But I'm paying for school and that's what it comes down to."

Jenni Wood
Arts 4



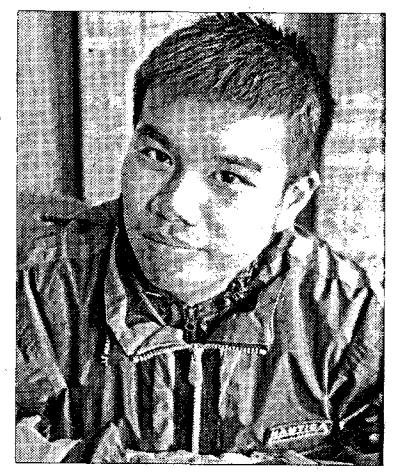
"It's just more or less a pain in the ass. I gotta take the bus to school so I had to walk to school today. So that kinda sucks. But other than that I just walk over picket lines. Losing class time and losing TAs you lose discussion groups and that's a big part of classes. It's definitely a big waste.

Matt Unsworth
Arts 2



"It hasn't really disrupted me getting to any of my classes. Except Tuesday I didn't go to Buchanan because I didn't cross picket lines. And aside from that it hasn't really affected me that much.

Daniel Starling
Fine Arts 4



My math class (Math 101) is cancelled and all my labs in chemistry and physics are being cancelled. And also I'm not getting any help from my computer science labs but the labs are still due. I can work on my own and get stuff done but it's a lot of pressure. It's really frustrating."

Jonathan Ho
Science 1

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Inclusive communities

UBC's STEPS Forward program to create another option for people with developmental disabilities

by Hywel Tuscano
FEATURES STAFF

WORKING AT THE QUAY: Christina Bouce on her first day of work practicum at the New Westminster Quay. She is completing a job preparation program at Douglas College. HYWEL TUSCANO PHOTO

Twenty-six-year-old Melanie Marcott and 18-year-old Katrina Hogg hope to attend UBC next year to continue learning, find friends and develop skills to make them more employable. Both of these women have Down Syndrome and are applying for a pilot program in September 2003 that will accept five students with intellectual disabilities into Arts and Education classrooms to audit UBC courses. The university will develop this program in conjunction with the STEPS Forward Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Society, which will develop, facilitate and fundraise for the program at UBC.

The genesis of the program at UBC is long overdue as similar opportunities for developmentally delayed persons have existed in Alberta for over 15 years at the University of Alberta and ten years at the University of Calgary (U of C).

The program has been a great success at both Alberta universities, offering social experiences usually unavailable to the intellectually disabled. Participants develop friendships, prepare for employment and plan for a future like any other university student, over a four-to-five-year program.

While UBC will mirror the programs offered in Alberta in many respects, there are hopes for more specific learning outcomes not present at other universities. Vice-President, Students, Brian Sullivan has been the main correspondent with STEPS Forward in planning the program.

"I think the social aspect is important, but students who are motivated to do this [program] will, after some consultation, try to identify some learning objectives," he said. "It's my understanding that typically there would be some objectives that students would be trying to achieve."

Janet Mee, director of the Disability Resource Centre, believes UBC's program can be unique in terms of learning outcomes. "We had been talking all the way along about doing something innovative and new to the work that has already been done in this area," she said. "Every time you run a program at an educational institution, you should take full advantage of the fact that it is an...educational institution."

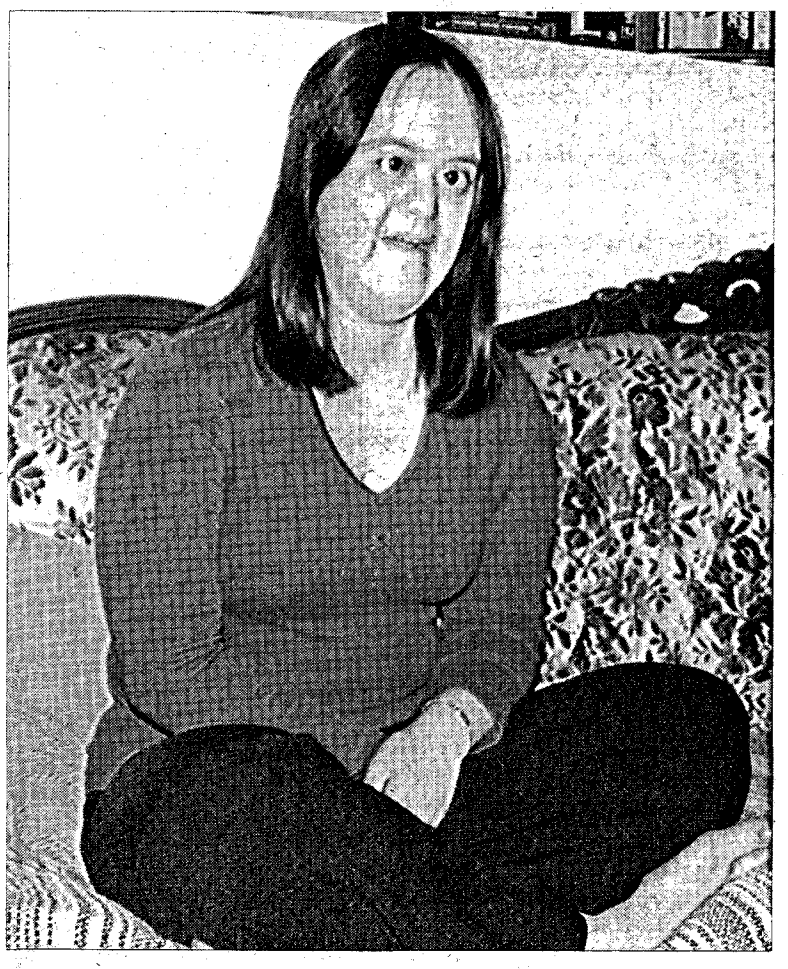
However, Anne Hughson, associate professor at U of C in community and rehabilitation sciences, believes the social experience for participants has a large enough impact without the need for academic guidelines. "If things work out well there won't be a need for outcomes. It will be a positive experience for people wanting to try UBC out," said Hughson.

The success of the program is reflected in the increased self-sufficiency of the participants in developing relationships and maintaining jobs—outcomes of programs without specific learning guidelines.

Bruce Uditsky, executive director of the Alberta Association for Community Living, believes the benefits of including disabled students is invaluable and important to any educational community.

"Inclusive teachers can be taught in an inclusive learning environment and gain firsthand experience," he said.

Increased inclusiveness for those with developmental disabilities means better life experiences and options for the disabled, as well as exposure and increased understanding in communities where they'd like to become more involved.



AIMING FOR UBC: Katrina Hogg hopes to attend UBC in the pilot program starting September 2003. HYWEL TUSCANO PHOTO

Melanie Marcott has worked in a sheltered workshop for the past five years. At 26, she hopes to return to school to pursue her interests in art, French and photography. At the workshop, she works from 9am to 3pm five days a week with about 60 other workers, refurbishing and packaging headsets and polishing salt and pepper shakers for airlines. She's unhappy with the repetitive work.

Elisabeth Wombra, manager of the Fraser Valley Society sheltered workshop, believes the workshop creates a safe environment for those otherwise unable to work.

Melanie's mother, Linda Moreau, believes Melanie is "too high functioning for the job and that is why she is frustrated." Melanie only makes about $100 a month. According to Wombra, this "supplements...pensions according to...capabilities."

Moreau explains that the workshops are sheltered in the sense that, "if it was up to standards in terms of labour and wages then the job would have to be open to everyone and these people could not compete with everyone. So the airlines get a really good deal on this labour and these people are not at home watching TV."

The common belief is that those remaining at sheltered workshops are those of an older generation that did not benefit from the more modern, inclusive programs and so still need these workshops. But the Fraser Valley Society still offers work experience for high school special needs students in Surrey. "Very often we hire these students and provide something for them to do once they graduate," said Wombra.

Melanie hopes to move on from this closed environment where the monitors often walk around and discourage people from talking and interacting. Her mother believes she can be self-sufficient in the future.

"There are people who don't mind sheltered workshops and don't find them boring. But I can see [Melanie] really wanting to learn and go to school, too. It would be great for her to eventually get a job where she supports herself," said Moreau.

Katrina Hogg, 18, is currently enrolled in the Consumer and Job Preparation Program at Douglas College and is doing a work practicum at McDonald's. The program emphasises work and social skills as well as exposure to various workplace environments. Katrina has been involved in inclusive schooling since kindergarten.

EMERSON

While the outcomes of the program seem to focus strongly on work placement and practicums, Jean Emerson, an instructor for the Job Preparation for Adults with Special Needs Program at Douglas College, emphasises that the program also develops important life skills.

"We try to be holistic and prepare people for life in general because not everyone with a developmental disability is going to be able to work," said Emerson.

Similar programs existing at most community colleges in the Lower Mainland usually instruct classrooms of only 10-15 students in a range of employable skills, including food and administrative work. Applicants far outnumber the available seats, with wait lists of up to two years at Vancouver Community College.

Elizabeth Hogg, Katrina's mother, has applied to many of these programs for her daughter to increase her employability and chances for independence.

HOGG

"[She] needs every opportunity she can get to learn and be a contributing member of society," she said. "Every place has so many people applying, you have to apply everywhere and see what you get."

Aside from vocational programs at community colleges, there are also a number of community centres, like the Burnaby Association, where the developmentally disabled can volunteer or participate in leisure activities when work is not a viable option.

Hogg believes her daughter can eventually be self-sufficient, after job training with proper community support and inclusive programs. Hogg did not have to give up her job to be Katrina's caretaker and does not believe she will need to in the future.

She hopes the situation will continue to improve as long as programs keep developing and government funding is not cut. "Our kids have grown up in a world of inclusion. She knows life; she enjoys life. To all of a sudden have that stop, that wouldn't be acceptable to her," said Hogg.

Organisations, other than post-secondary institutions, like the Burnaby Association and Down Syndrome Foundation, will hopefully continue to provide volunteer and job opportunities within the community and keep the disabled outside of sheltered workshops.

While community colleges can offer specific vocational training, UBC can provide the option for developmentally disabled students to continue academic learning beyond the inclusive programs that end at high school.

It seems that by the small step of opening five seats to the developmentally disabled, UBC is making a very meaningful step forward. ❖