THE UBYSSEY

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Vol.LXXXVIII N°52 | www.ubyssey.bc.ca | Tuesday, 10 April, 2007

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YOU CAN'T VOTE
New laws have strong implications for students voting.
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GAP display raises protest, questions

YET ANOTHER YEAR: Pro-life and pro-choice groups go at it head-to-head at the SUB plaza last Thursday. **COLLEEN TANG PHOTO**

by Brandon Adams
NEWS EDITOR

Pro-life and pro-choice demonstrators lined up in the lower Student Union Building (SUB) plaza on April 5. The occassion? The arrival of the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP) on campus, which raised serious questions regarding freedom of expression, public spaces, and graphic images.

Put on by Lifeline, an AMS club opposed to abortion, the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP) demonstration centres around four large signs, each with pictures of historic genocides—Rwanda, the holocaust, southern racist lynching—beside images of aborted fetuses. The GAP has been demonstrating at UBC since 1999 and every year has faced counter-protests from a number of student groups.

GAP leaders and UBC students Lorena Plastino and Peter Horner defended the graphic images used on the GAP signs.

"The display itself compares past genocides to the current genocide of abortion," said Plastino. "We put it into the historical context where people can recognise things that they know are wrong with something else that is wrong

see "GAP" page 2.

UBC students advocating for African politics minor

Petition signed by hundreds of students presented to department head

by Amanda Stutt
NEWS STAFF

Due to increasing student interest, an African studies minor has been implemented into the Faculty of Arts. But ironically, while there are classes that have aspects of African politics within them, there are no classes that focus solely on African politics.

To address this gap in the curriculum, the student-activist-run UBC Africa Network presented a petition signed by hundreds of UBC students to the political science department, requesting that a course specifically devoted to African politics be created. The petition, which has over 800 signatures—a majority of which came from students who major and minor in Political Science or International Relations—gauges the support and demand for a course that focuses on Africa.

UBC Africa Network was started in 2002, "by a group of students, faculty and community members committed to raising awareness and advocating for African issues at the UBC community," explained co-chair Jenny Francis. "There's really no mistaking student demand for courses, so the [African Studies] minor was instated, which is great."

Francis said supporting the African studies minor is important because "it's such a key part of UBC's commitment to internationalisation and development of global citizenship."

"But just as UBC's curriculum is really incomplete without [any courses] about Africa, unfortunately the African studies minor is incomplete without any [courses] in political science," Francis continued. "It's impossible to look at African issues in depth without a political perspective... and having a course on Africa will really enrich the poli sci department."

"There is a lot of support for our goals from the student body," she added. "Our support from the faculty has been strong. I'm optimistic."

UBC Africa Network co-chair Tara Cooper said "the most important thing...in this process has been just the dialogue that has taken place between the variety of people at UBC; students, professors, faculty, administrators."

Professor Barbara Arneil, director of undergraduate studies at UBC's political science department, explained that the main reason for the gap is that currently there are no faculty in the political science department who specialise in African politics, but there are those whose work "connects to Africa."

In terms of resource availability, Arneil said, "It is difficult...at this point in time there are a number of economic callbacks."

"Where the resources becomes important, is that you have to be able to hire a sessional to teach a course, and making decisions about sessional teaching has to do with the demands of the students, and who's available to teach, as well as resources.

"To create a course initially, we would have to hire a sessional to teach it," Arneil added. "We are not adding any faculty at this point in time, so that's where it would have to come from."

Political science department head professor Ken Carty said that there is no one within the department whose "principal research interests" are focused primarily on African politics.

"There are opportunities for hiring sessionals, but they come and go. It's helpful to have [them] teaching courses, but it doesn't give any continuity to the program. So we have to think about how we can find ways to build something that's permanent rather than just temporary," he added.

Carty will be presenting the petition to the political science department. He emphasised that they "always care about what the students have to say."

"When we hear the voices of the students, it really moves the department. It's a continuing legacy, to see the gaps and want to fill them," said Arneil. @

Future of film production program in limbo

New budget targets the small department

by Candice Vallantin
NEWS STAFF

The spending freeze caused by the UBC budget deficit has suspended the film production program indefinitely.

Brian McIlroy, chair of the film program, explained that admittance to the production program was suspended last fall originally for a one-year period so that the curriculum could be re-structured, but a $3.2 million dollar budget cut to the Faculty of Arts has delayed the re-development of the film production program indefinitely as the whole Department of Theatre, Film, and Creative Writing goes through a re-structuring process.

Brian Danin, a fourth-year film production student finishing his term as an Arts Faculty senator explains that the Dean of Arts, Nancy Gallini, asked a group of students and faculty to write up separate reports suggesting changes to the current curriculum in the fall of 2006. Danin was asked to chair the student ad-hoc committee whose final report was handed in December 1, 2006.

"The dean wanted to bring the program to a new level," he said. It was decided that the program curriculum should be re-structured following a number of student complaints and negative external reviews rating the film production program poorly.

Despite this criticism, recent graduates have done extremely well in the film industry. Jaime Travis and Amy Belling's graduating film *Why the Anderson Children Didn't Come to Dinner* aired on the CBC, PBS, the Comedy Network, and at over 60 international film festivals, earning them numerous awards including a Leo Award for best production design in a short drama. Travis has since released *Patterns* (2006), a trilogy of short films, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, and Belling was the associate producer of *Mount Pleasant* (2006),

see "Film" page 2.

Between the sheets: Stayin' safe at Arts County Fair

Chair of the film production program does not know if or when the program will be taking in new students

"Film" continued from page 1.

a feature film that premiered at the Vancouver International Film Festival.

But considering UBC's new budget constraints, should the university continue to support a film production program that only enrolls a total of 30 students? Danin says yes.

"UBC is very different and it has an extremely unique program," he said. "This University has a lot of potential extremely in the creative arts and I don't see a reason why we can't have a successful and a really strong film production program. I think it could be highly beneficial not just to the University but to the Vancouver film industry as a whole."

Danin's proposal to re-structure the production program curriculum suggested creating a single film production program that would involve a collaboration between post-secondary institutions such as BCIT and Emily Carr to create something similar to the new master's in digital media being offered at the Great Northern Way campus starting 2007.

"That way you don't have a limited amount of resources being split amongst the universities so that the different programs don't have to fight over what the government has to offer," he said.

The future of the film program will likely remain in limbo until the long-term effects of UBC's $36 million deficit are ironed out, which the University won't get an idea of until next year's budget is announced or discussed in January of 2008. But McIlroy is positive that things will work out.

SAY GOODBYE: Fewer film production students will be roaming around campus fliming. **LEVI BARNETT PHOTO**

"Once there is a realistic plan—given current resources—for a new production curriculum that all the stakeholders can buy into, I would expect things to turn out well," he said in an email. @

If freedom of expression infringes on other peoples' rights and it's degrading it needs to be addressed, says student

"GAP" continued from page 1.

but isn't necessarily portrayed as being wrong."

Created by the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform, the controversial GAP display has been seen at campuses across North America and has often generated strong responses from students and student organisations. The display has caused controversy at most places it has visited—it has been banned from the University of Alberta, Carleton, Capilano College, and UBC-Okanagan campuses.

The GAP display has been banned from Alma Mater Society (AMS) property and the signs are restricted in size and number, explained Plastino.

Pro-choice demonstrator and UBC student Kelsey Patton explained that while freedom of expression is important it must be balanced with other concerns.

"While it's important that groups have freedom of expression on campus," said Patton, "If that freedom of expression infringes on other peoples' rights and it's degrading and offensive to other people there needs to be measures put in place to address those concerns."

Patton explained that she feels the warning signs placed around the plaza are inadequate and that the GAP display needs to be moved to an enclosed space.

"What we're hoping to do is to ask for the display to happen within a confined place such as a classroom so people can choose to go and see it, that way they still have a right to express their opinion and to engage in that dialogue, but there are measures for accountability on the University's part to create a safe environment on campus."

Students walking through the plaza had differing opinions about the GAP display.

"It's definitely pretty convincing, it hits home a lot more," said Kaela, an Arts student who stumbled upon the display while walking between classes.

"Turning away from it doesn't make it go away," Kaela continued. "As a pro-choice person I agree with the other side but this is very convincing."

Some students were not as accepting of the display as Kaela.

"I think that it's horrific," said Kristen, a history student who walked through the plaza during the demonstrations. "I don't think the demo behind this one is congruent with the values of students."

Several AMS officials were present at the demonstration, but declined to comment. @

'tweens

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(3250 Comercial Drive)
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The Ponys
Richard's on Richards
(1036 Richards)
April 11, 9:30pm
Chicago-based rockers with guests Dearhunter from Atlanta. Tickets $14 at Zulu, Scratch, Red Cat, Highlife, and Noize! Records.

Beautiful Child
Havana Theater
(1212 Commercial Drive)
April 11-14, 8:00 pm
UBC Players Ckub presents Nicky Silver's tragicomedy about a family struggling to stay intact when secrets are laid bare. Proceeds to Kids Help Phone.
Tickets $18/15.

Corrections:

The Ubyssey [April 3]:
"Finding lost goods made easy"

The founder of Propercop, David Brierley, is a Vancouver Police Department officer, not an RCMP officer.

[March 30]:
"A helping hand or fuel to the fire?"

Goldis "Chamis" should be "Chami".
The mesh nets were set up in South America, not Africa.

The Ubyssey regrets the errors.

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NEWS EDITOR *Brandon Adams & Colleen Tang*
news@ubyssey.bc.ca

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culture@ubyssey.bc.ca

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COPY EDITOR *Levi Barnett*
copy@ubyssey.bc.ca

COORDINATORS

VOLUNTEERS *Paul Bucci*
volunteers@ubyssey.bc.ca

RESEARCH/LETTERS *Andrew MacRae*
feedback@ubyssey.bc.ca

WEBMASTER *Matthew Jewkes*
webmaster@ubyssey.bc.ca

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EDITORIAL OFFICE
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
e-mail: advertising@ubyssey.bc.ca

BUSINESS MANAGER *Fernie Pereira*
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"This isn't working," Michael Bround thought to himself. He was trying to get Laurence Butet-Roch and Mary Leighton to agree to a capture the flag match with archnemises Amanda Stutt, Alison Bailey and Candice Vallantin. But Humaira Hamid was making it very difficult to get the plans off the ground. Together with Bahram Norouzi, she got Matthew Jewkes and Andrew MacRae to police the puppy-punting practices of Paul Bucci, though Levi Barnett made sure he didn't go through Champagne Choquer-esque withdrawl too often. Meanwhile, Oker Chen was having a ball taunting Momoko Price with promises of Boris Korby's happy dance. Jesse Ferreras was skeptical, though no more than Collen Tang or Eric Szeto. And Isabel Ferreras was simply oblivious to it all.

EDITORIAL GRAPHIC
Michael Bround

Canadian University Press

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Students petition against cluster bombs

Cluster bombs cannot discriminate between child, civilian, or soldier, says lieutenant

by Colleen Tang
NEWS EDITOR

LAURENCE BUTET-ROCH PHOTO

Two UBC students organised a demonstration last Thursday with the help of the Canadian Forces to promote awareness about a deadly killer: cluster bombs, which can be likened to scattered land mines.

According to Stephen Pies, a lieutenant from the primary reserve unit with the Canadian Forces, a cluster bomb or cluster mine consists of smaller submunitions stacked in a case which is then fired or airdropped, at which point the multiple submunitions are scattered over a given area.

Cluster munitions have a five to 30 per cent failure rate and approximately 360 million submunitions have been dropped since the arrival of cluster bombs in the 1960s and 1970s, according to Mines Action Canada.

Any area previously exposed to a conflict generally will have a density of anti-personnel mines, as well as air-scatterable mines and UXOs—unexploded ordnance that were meant to go off but didn't and were left behind, said Pies.

Nae English and Lisa Robbins, students in Richard Price's Political Science 373—Ethics in World Politics—class, decided to organise a demonstration with members of Canadian Forces to educate and create awareness about cluster bombs for their term project by providing examples of cluster bomb fields, equipment displays, and de-mining simulations.

"The point was to do a project on an issue of ethical concern," said English, also president of International Relations Student Association (IRSA). "Obviously cluster bombs are kind of a no-brainer but we feel that this is an issue that has been very prominent in the recent conflict in Lebanon.

"Canada was instrumental in the ban on land mines [and] the Ottawa process in 1997, and this is another initiative that we think Canada should support," she said, adding that having the Canadian Forces at UBC doing exercises made their demonstration visually appealing.

According to English, having the de-mining simulation shows students how complex the issue is as well as how costly it is.

"Depending on the situation we're broken into groups of three to five overlooking a mine field," explained Bryan Tennant, a corporal in the Canadian Forces. One person, the 'prodder,' is the first person that goes into the mine field. "[He will be] checking with a wire feeler for any trick wires that may be in his path and then he gently feels the ground to determine if there's any small anti-personnel mines that have been buried," explained Tennant.

"You're working at such a slow methodical pace because you don't want to miss anything and some of the anti-personnel mines can be no bigger than an inch to two inches, so you're literally prodding the ground at an inch interval," added Tennant.

The prodder looks for tiny little prongs sticking out and when he's satisfied that there are none in his path he uses a prodding device to check the ground for any buried mines which get identified with spraypaint, he continued. "With training you get good at being able to determine what's a rock and what's a mine."

Following the prodder is the section commander, who will confirm any marked mines, then finally the section will be swept with a mine detector as final vertification.

A petition to call on Canada to ban cluster bombs was made available to students at the demonstration, but according to Robbins, also IRSA Internal, it wasn't just about getting students to sign.

"I think what we hope to achieve is just that you [have] greater awareness to have more people understand this issue, be more involved on the ban on cluster munitions or the momentum on the ban on cluster munitions," she said.

"The mine is an indiscriminate killer. It knows no boundaries. Soldiers, civilians, children, and so that is the threat. Once it's laid it stays there until something triggers it or sets it off," said Pies. "Awareness...and education is the best way to combat it." @

UBC Vice-President stepping down to focus on Great Northern Way

by Boris Korby
NEWS STAFF

Dennis Pavlich, UBC's VP External and Legal Affairs for the past 12 years, will be stepping down at the end of June.

But Pavlich, who informed UBC President Stephen Toope of his decision prior to the March 22 Board of Governors meeting, is far from retiring. The UBC professor—currently on leave from the Faculty of Law—will instead be directing his full efforts to expanding the Great Northern Way Campus (GNWC)— where he has served as President since February—before returning to the classroom in two-three years time.

"It's been one of the most exciting segments of my life to be honest," said Pavlich of his time as VP external. "I've loved being a professor, and I intend to retire as a professor, and that is very important to me—that I go back into the classroom and finish up my career the way I started. But having said that, being in a leadership role and being part of central administration and helping lead the university has been very very fulfilling. And certainly University Town and especially the University Boulevard project—the square component of it—has been very challenging but very exciting too."

Pavlich said he has relished his involvement in the venture, *because* of the controversy and community opposition that has become associated with it.

"I feel very grateful to have been part of that process I have to say. I've loved it to be honest. Even the controversy I've loved and dealing with the controversy because the points that have been made [by the UBC community] have been very good ones."

PAVLICH

Pavlich said he'll miss the challenges afforded by his current position, but is looking forward to moving on to another initiative in which the University has a great interest in seeing succeed.

"I'm going to miss it, but the Great Northern Way is another interesting experience, it really is. It's a different kind of higher education experience that we're creating," he said. "It's one that's somewhat different than anything we've seen in the past. To maintain academic values even though the social and commercial construct around it is going to be quite different, but making sure you retain those key, everlasting values is another challenge for me, and I really relish that.

"It has the support of four higher education institutes, and we're really dealing with three or four different cultures, and trying to make that work to advance a segment of higher education presents interesting possibilities."

Great Northern Way Campus

◆ GNWC is a collaborative institute jointly managed by UBC, SFU, BCIT, and Emily Carr.

◆ The 8.9 hectare campus is located on Great Northern Way between Clarke Drive and Main Street.

◆ GNWC seeks to offer a mix of traditional academia and first hand experience within the fields of urban sustainability, transforming arts and culture, and digital media.

For More on University Boulevard and the controversy surrounding the project, ***see page 8****.* @

Nine days in Nepal: climbing the Annapurna Mountains

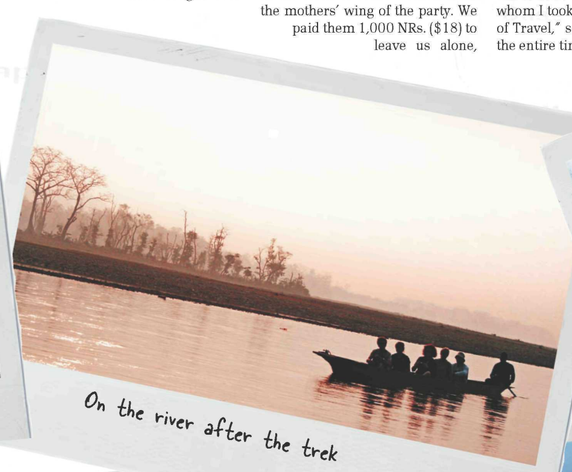
Nepal is a small, landlocked country wedged between China and India. It boasts some of the highest mountains in the world, including Mount Everest. When my mother, the esteemed travel director, began piecing together a plan to trek through Nepal's Annapurna mountain range in March, I consulted the UBC calendar. With our absurdly early "reading week" in February, I saw that I would be stuck in the middle of midterms with not a break in sight. How could I take off for nearly three weeks and still graduate? One word: Arts.

With my books in a duffel, I flew from Vancouver, to London, to Doha (Qatar), to Nepal's capital of Kathmandu, and finally to Pokhara, the city from which we would begin our trek.

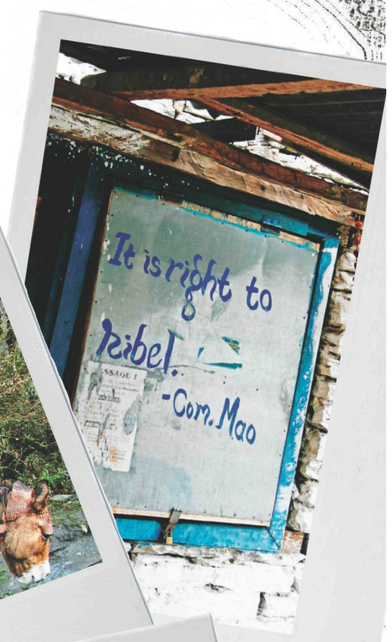
Our group had fourteen members, a hodge-podge of families and friends, even before we factored in our leader Razzu, our guides, and the porters and kitchen staff that made camping possible. We hiked for nine days through an area that had previously been closed to tourists due to Maoist insurgency. The Maoists, since 1996, have fought over swathes of Nepal in an effort to throw over feudal institutions and create a Maoist state—at a cost of more than 15,000 lives. Things are looking up, though, with peace talks, and now a place within the interim government for the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).

On Day Two of the trek, we encountered the Maoists in person, in the form of some women from the mothers' wing of the party. We paid them 1,000 NRs. ($18) to leave us alone, my mother and I handing over the money with bows and the standard greeting, "Namaste."

Travel writing is a funny thing, because it is so surprisingly subjective. I kept a journal, but so did half the group, and they all wrote differently about our trek, based on what filtered up through their senses and down from their consciousness. Janet Giltrow, with whom I took a class titled "Rhetoric of Travel," seemed to be in my ear the entire time, reminding me of travel narrative's place in a history of imperialism and colonialism. "Constructing the other" is a popular phrase in the English department, but it's not just lingo to score class points—it's a process of creating our own realities whenever we make observations. Photography is no more objective than writing. But it makes the role of the lens more obvious. @



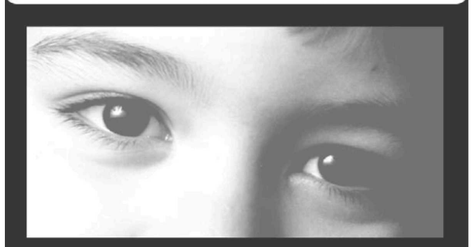
On the river after the trek



"Traffic" in Kathmandu

Text and Photos by Mary Leighton

The Ubyssey
Shameless GIVEAWAY



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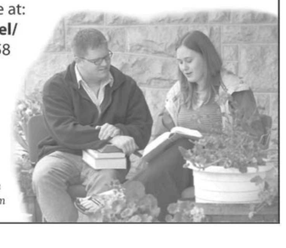

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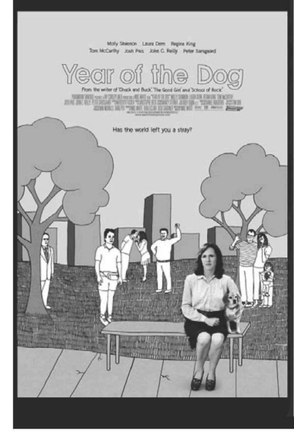

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In Theatres April 27

Our voting, ourselves

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Driving is a privilege, so they say, and this info is needed to insure the safety of all lawful drivers. Buying alcohol and tobacco is a privilege too, apparently. And so whenever the clerk asks you for ID, he is also making sure the government is up to date on your personal info.

Voting though, isn't a privilege. Voting is a right, and it is such a basic right that the government has no place requiring the unnecessary surrender of personal information, and in doing so one's personal autonomy, in order to exercise it.

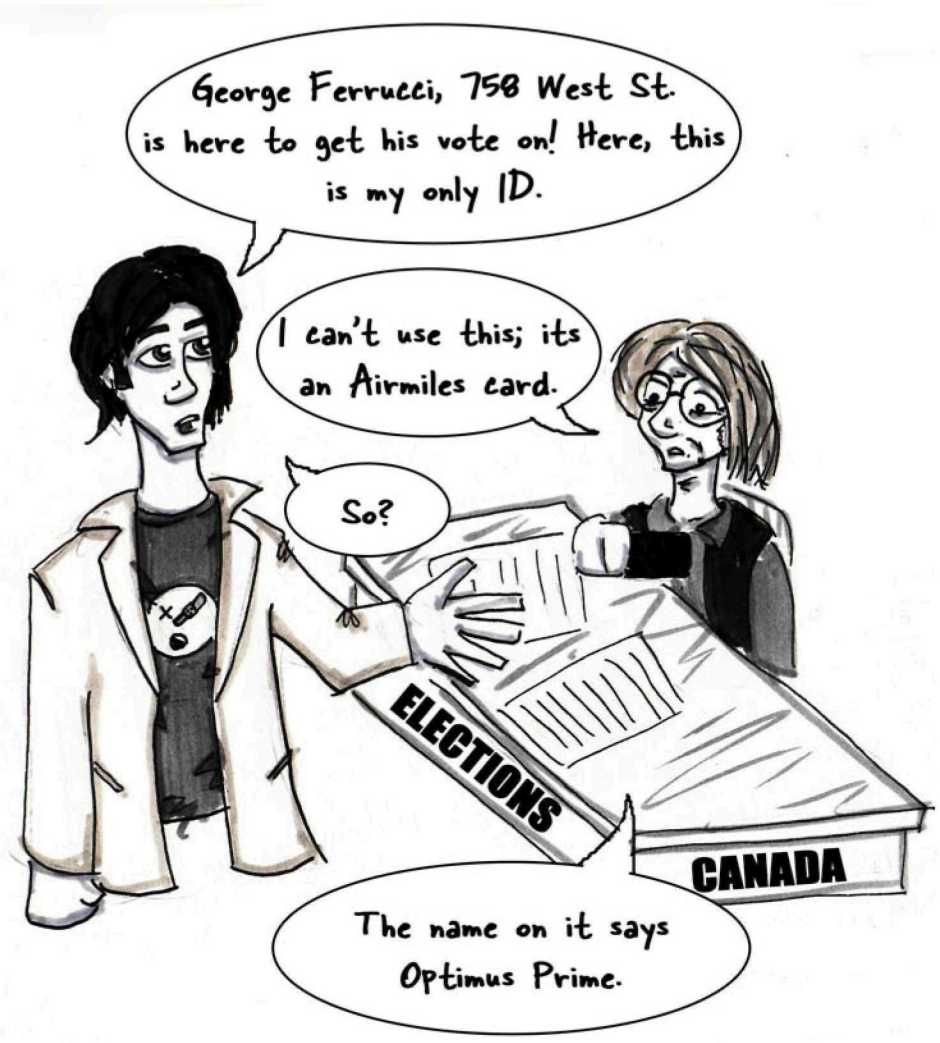
Personal autonomy is a basic individual right which allows citizens to choose how their lives and personal information are controlled and surveilled by the government.

Yet with the introduction of Bill C-31: Integrity of the Electoral Process, we will soon be required to carry government ID with current addresses in order to vote, creating a serious infringement of this fundamental right.

The bill, first introduced to the House of Commons in 2006, is currently in Senate and just a couple meager steps from becoming law. As it stands now individuals can vote with relative ease, even if they don't possess photo ID. While the current process has lots of vulnerabilites which could allow for elections fraud, it has created a situation where students, the homeless, and others who don't posses up-to-date ID can still exercise their right to vote.

Under Bill C-31 the first people who will be affected will be the homeless and other under-represented members of society—those who typically do not have government ID. Without a confirmed address, it will basically be impossible for these people to obtain the ID that this bill requires.

There is a provision in the bill allowing for those without sufficient ID to find someone who does have the sufficient ID to vouch for them. But this extra step is unjust and simply forces someone else to possess what the government deems sufficient ID, effectively creating a situation where only the minority can avoid possessing ID.



Not only is this situation unjust because it forces already marginalised members of society to jump through extra hoops in order to maintain their suffrage; it also creates an environment where individuals must choose between maintaining their personal autonomy and participating in the most fundamental elements of our society.

Furthermore, there is the possibility of identity paper creep. Requiring an updated driver's licence to vote, which includes your name, photo, and current address, combined with the SIN information the government already possesses creates a de facto ID card system. This *de facto* ID will further force individuals who decide to maintain personal autonomy to the fringes of society.

Fortunately several groups including the BC Civil Liberties Association, the Downtown Eastside Residents Association, and the BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre, have decided to challenge Bill C-31 in court. They believe that the bill violates some of the fundamental freedoms guaranteed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Members of the AMS Council passed a motion which will allow them to explore also getting involved in the case, either as a petitioner or a friend of the court.

Students must be able to vote, whether they choose to do so in their hometown or in their newly adopted Vancouver digs. Elections Canada needs to realize that students and many others lead transitory lives, and their identification, if they have any, may not reflect their most current personal information. @

streeters

How much effort would you go to in order to vote?

—Danielle MacKenzie
Arts, 3

"I'd go to a fair bit of effort."

—Ali Rasekh
Civil Engineeering PhD Candidae

"I don't know. Not much because it's not difficult."

—Brendan Takata
Human Kinetics, 4

"I guess it would depend on what election it was, and what it was for. I've never voted for the Undergrad Society but I always vote in municipal, provincial elections."

—Sam Rapoport
Arts, 4

"Undying effort."

—Mike Champion
Forestry, 5

"I went to FedEx to have my absentee ballot shipped in a day to Colorado."

— Coordinated by Alison Bailey and Oker Chen

PERSPECTIVE

Save University Boulevard

by Tristan Markle

The centre of our campus, including the grassy knoll, is slated to be leveled this coming June to make way for an underground bus loop with a mall on top, and market housing on top of that.

This is clearly a space used primarily by students, and should cater to our needs: study space, social space, green space, plazas, and other suggestions made clear by students over the past few years.

Yet students' visions have not been implemented. The process has been flawed, and even deceitful, from its inception, as planning preceded consultation. The private corporation Properties Trust decided that the old bus loop and the grassy knoll occupied prime retail space, and determined that shops *must* go there. Then when studies showed that there was no better location for the bus loop, logic dictated that the bus loop go underground. To maximise returns, market housing units were to sit on top of the mall. An international competition was held, where architects improvised three variant impressions of the underground bus terminal/shopping mall/market housing unholy trinity. A non-binding vote was scheduled, and students demanded that a fourth "none of the above" option be included on the ballot. It wasn't, and the variant that sucked least won the non-binding vote, which created the illusion of consultation since an appointed jury (with actual power) chose the same variant. Since then, the architects quit, the design has been changed, the AMS has not even seen the new plans, and still Properties Trust is trying to get the "final" plan approved at the May BoG meeting in order to bring out the bulldozers in full force by June.

The inverted consultation process is indicative of perverted priorities. UBC Properties Trust makes decisions based on cost-recovery models. Then, after the fact, the problem of "consultation" is tackled. Properties Trust is not a consulting firm, and so the university gets other offices to sell development plans to students, even though the offices do not even know what the latest plans are. For example, the U-Town office is mandated to consult with students about U-Blvd, but even they had not seen the "final" plans as of last week.

What we need is a revitalised center of campus that actually reflects students' needs and vision. Universities are supposed to be model societies. What world-class university has a shopping mall and market housing at its heart?

Some may say that we have wasted so much time tweaking the U-Blvd plan that we might as well go through with it. But just because we have invested our resources into designing a noose, doesn't mean we should hang ourselves with it. In fact, the delays and the skyrocketing costs are precisely diagnostics of the original incoherence of the plan.

Until now, students have been quite polite about the whole debacle, but since the hour is nigh, it's time for us to stand up and say loud and clear what everyone has been thinking all along. This plan isn't about students. It's about money. And that is not acceptable.

Finally there is the question of student empowerment. Some curmudgeons insist that we have no power, and that "the administration" (Properties Trust?) will just do what it wants, and we should just keel over. Ah, if only we were so docile. Talking to hundreds of students this week, I have been so heartened to hear that they do give a shit about their campus, and are itching to see their ideas put into practice.

Let us put the old crusty plan out of its misery, and issue in a new era of accountability, meaningful implementation, and creativity. Let's do it right from the start this time.

—Tristan Markle is a third-year Biology student

Arts County Fair 16: Have fun and be safe

The time has come for another awesomely spectacular last day of classes. If you're reading this, then you're probably planning to attend Arts County Fair 16. On behalf of the entire staff, have a blast. But for crying out loud, be safe at the Fair, and follow our suggestions! Do you want to wind up in the Richmond drunk tank? Do you want to lose your cell phone, shoes, jewelry, and/or sanity? We doubt it, so we've compiled this nice list of things for you to do to stay safe, happy and to have a wonderful time.

1. Don't end up passed out at 3pm. It's quite simple: pace yourself, because the Fair goes until 8pm. That way you won't be tossed out or handed off to the cops. Also, don't show up drunk to the fair: you won't be allowed in, and that would suck. There's no need to worry about drinking before you arrive—we'll have plenty of beverages at the Fair to tide you over.

2. Wear appropriate clothing: it might rain, it might be scorching hot. Be prepared for anything. Avoid sandals or high-heels as you will lose/break them and end up falling over all day. Wear sneakers or other footwear that's firmly attached to your feet. Walking around bare-footed hurts and can cause you a world of trouble and pain.

3. Get familiar with the fairgrounds before you arrive and arrange a meeting point with your friends. Cell phones are great, but they also get lost by the dozens, so keep that in mind. It's best to plan ahead.

4. Eat fooooooood. Food is great, there's no question about that. If you're going to be rocking out for eight hours, then you really shouldn't be doing that on an empty stomach. Why? Because you'll be hungry!

5. Don't drive to the fair if you're drinking. Bring your U-Pass and attach it to your pants. Don't lose either (Pass or pants). Failing that, make arrangements for a designated driver or bring taxi fare and the number of a cab company that you trust.

6. Drink lots of liquids...not just the alcoholic kind. But seriously, drink lots of water before and during the Fair. It will keep you lucid, and besides, it will help avoid a hangover on Friday.

7. For pity's sake, do not urinate on the hill. Lots of good people volunteer to clean up after the fair's done when you're safe at home. Don't make it just that much worse for them. We have many, many portapotties.

8. Have a buddy. Yes, it sounds like kindergarten, but it's a great idea. There's safety in numbers.

9. If you need any sort of help, know where the Safety Tent is in case you have to head there. It's off to the left of the stage. You'll be well taken care of there.

10. Have a good time. When all's said and done, that's what this whole shindig is for. Enjoy the Fair and be safe!

—the Arts County Fair 16 Safety Committee

Why I believe in humanity

What surprised me most about Steven Green's letter ("Why I Believe in God" [April 3]) was its lack of faith. I'm not talking about a lack of faith in God—there's clearly no shortage of that—but in humanity. "Without God," Green writes, "I would not be who I am today." Instead, Green "would be more oriented towards success...care more about [himself]...[and] view women more as sexual objects." The list continues. Basically, a godless Green is a money-grubbing, self-centred, and shallow Green.

I suppose I should be concerned for myself. As a non-believer, is this bleak fate that Green describes in fact mine? However, I am more concerned for Green: without God, he declares, he would be "without meaning...help...love...[or] hope." I worry that a Green without God would be unable to discover the abundant and incredible meaning that life has to offer, and give up on it completely.

Individuals of course have personalized sources of meaning. For me, meaning derives largely from my relationships with other people, rather than with a God who to me is elusive at best. It is also in people that I place my hope. Sure, history has shown that humans possess an enormous capacity for evil, but it has also demonstrated our ability to do good—good that does not have to be attributed to a higher being. To say that "God can enable me to be stop pretending I am good and really be good," reduces human agency and limits the bounds of human compassion.

Green believes that "without God, [he is] not that much different from those who have made the world the mess that it is." Such a statement is not only offensive, but also historically—and currently—inaccurate. In a time where religious extremists continue to wreak havoc in the name of God, it is in humanity I trust.

—Lixian Cheng is a fourth-year English Literature student

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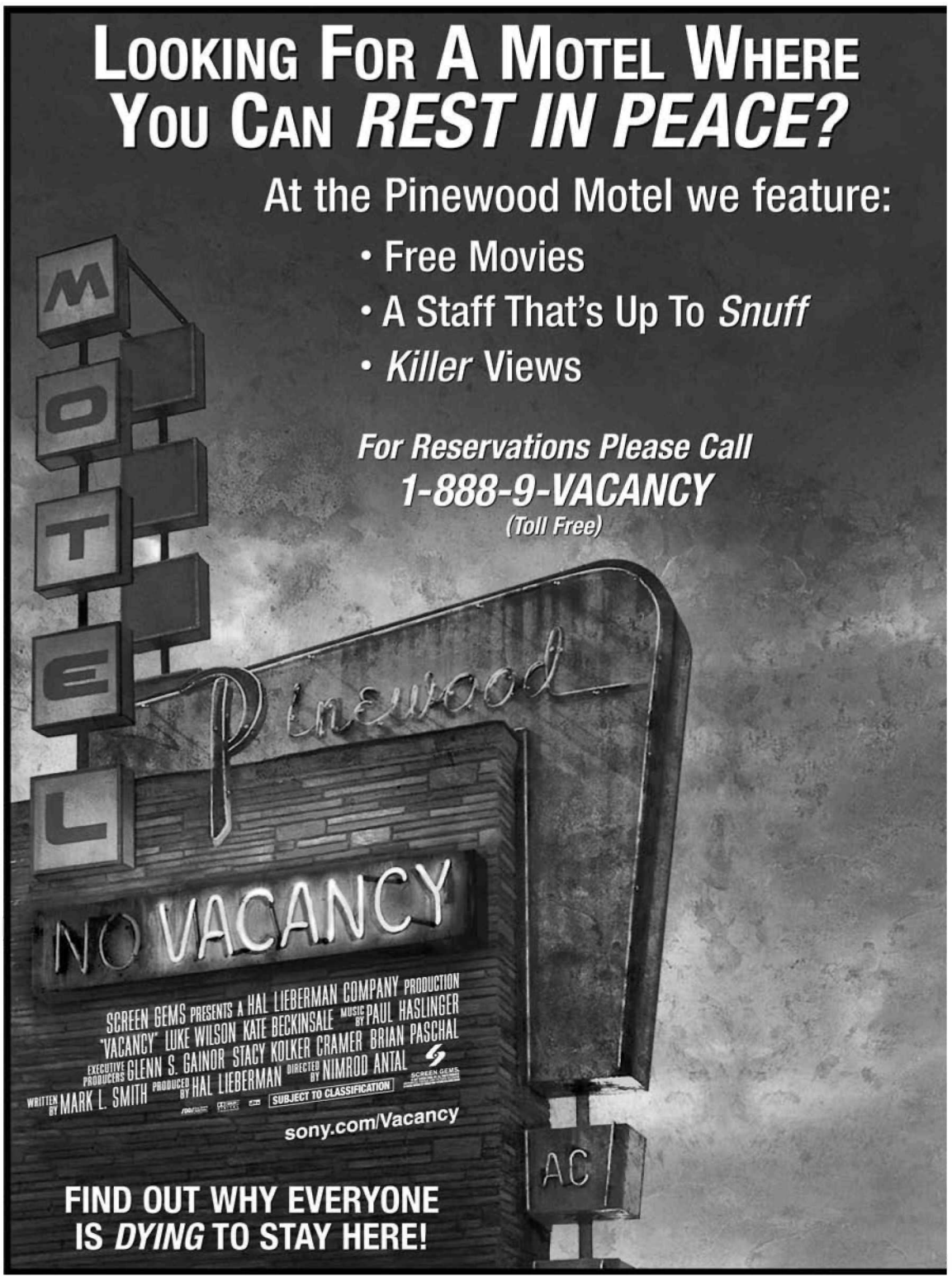

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Students protest and petition against University Boulevard

by Bahram Norouzi
NEWS WRITER

The University Boulevard development project, ten years in the making, is slated for approval at the next Board of Governors (BoG) meeting in early May. Funding has already been partially approved for the first phase, and the next stage of approval will allow construction of the project to begin this June. Members of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) Council have raised concerns over the project, and a student petition is currently circulating to halt approval.

The project began in 1997 with the passage of the Official Community Plan, which designated University Boulevard (the area from Wesbrook Mall to East Mall, including the old bus loop, trolley bus loop, outdoor pool, and the grassy knoll) as a "pedestrian-oriented commercial centre, with the commercial uses to be oriented toward the day and evening convenience needs of the university population." In January 2004, University Boulevard officially became one of University Town's (U-Town) eight neighbourhood plans.

"The overall neighbourhood plan is intended to do a number of things—create a 'heart' for this campus, a sense of arrival, plus provide more student housing, and more shops and services that meet more of the daily needs of the campus community," said Nancy Knight, UBC Associate VP Campus and Community Planning.

The plan's design places an underground bus loop outside the SUB and four new buildings along University Boulevard and outside the SUB. These will have retail on the ground floor and "University rental housing" above, according to the University Town office. Car traffic will flow from Wesbrook Mall along University Boulevard to East Mall.

AMS Council passed a motion on March 28 expressing dismay that the Council had not been shown the latest plans, despite repeated requests since November 2006. The motion calls on the University to make a presentation to AMS Council before any further University Boulevard decisions are made by the BoG.

An ongoing concern has been the lack of student consultation regarding the project. AMS President Jeff Friedrich noted "there hasn't been a place in any consultation process for the type of criticism that questions the fundamental nature of plan ideas."

In an architectural competition in March 2005 students voted on one of three designs for University Boulevard, and there was controversy at the time that a "none of the above" option was not included. Since that time, the plans have been revised twice and the original architects have been replaced, thus altering and removing many of the original plan's features.

AMS VP Academic Brendon Goodmurphy, who said he is concerned about the basic land uses proposed for University Boulevard, asked, "Is this the area, the heart of student social space, where we should emphasise cost recovery and retail?"

UBC Properties Trust plans to take out a 25-year loan worth about $100 million to pay for the majority of the project, which will be paid off by retail leasing and housing rentals.

"We have the unique opportunity among major universities to create a university town in a new urbanised environment and, in the process, create a huge endowment for UBC," said Dennis Pavlich, VP Legal and External Affiars.

The U-Town website declares that "from the perspective of University Town, building the endowment is a principal objective." U-Town profits are expected to generate $800 million for the endowment. BoG student representative Darren Peets stated that "it was never really about what students wanted."

In an effort to make the student voice heard, a group of students has created a petition against the University Boulevard development project. "Students have been against this project since they became aware of it in 2004, and it's high time that we're listened to" states Margaret Orlowski, a graduate student involved with the petition.

On the first day of circulation, the petition was signed by over 400 students, notes Orlowski. "A serious petition will be very powerful at the May BoG meeting," she said. "Students have protested against this issue before and it has at least delayed approval, but the University can't afford to ignore several thousand of their stakeholders' signatures—their reputation is at stake."

The petition itself calls on UBC and the BoG "to refrain from approving any further decisions on the University Boulevard project until land-use options have been revisited, and until meaningful consultation has occurred with students, the AMS Council, and the U-Town Committee." @

NEWS FEEDS

Cuts to honours give more selection to major students

The UBC history Department will offer only two exclusive seminars to their honours students next year, instead of the usual seven. This cut was made in order to provide more seminars to history majors who will have a selection of 22 seminars to choose from next year, a 90 per cent increase from previous years, said history department head Daniel Vickers. The honours history program at UBC is an intensive program with only 15 honours students enrolled each year out of 150 to 200 students.

AMS moves to fight Bill C-31; legal action is a possibility

The Alma Mater Society (AMS) Council passed a motion on April 4 giving the AMS Executive Council the ability to determine whether or not the AMS will pursue legal action regarding Bill C-31.

The bill, which is currently in Senate, would require voters to present ID with an up-to-date residenital address in order to vote in federal elections. While the bill does have provisions for those without a residential address, councillors are worried that students without up-to-date ID will be disenfranchised. @