page friday

In a Nutshell

UBC Engineers go beyond the borders to give foreign aid.

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An editorial bashes everything from Paul Martin to sick chickens. Buck-awk!. Page 10.

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Getting scandalous and bored with Kelis and Kate Maki, respectively. Page 11.

THE UBYSSEY

Volume 85 Issue 33

magazine

Friday, January 30, 2004

bizarro switch world since 1918

CLASSIFIEDS

Announcements

U.B.C. CHAPLAIN'S ASSOCIATION MINI-FILM FESTIVAL EXPLORING SPIRITUALITY IN FILM January 29th, 30th, 31st at 7:00 each night at the Chan Centre Telus Cinema. January 29th Whale Rider 30th Seven Years in Tibet 31st The Matrix. Free Admission. A discussion will follow each film. All are welcome.

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- SPEAKING OF ABORTION...
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THE UBYSSEY
ALL THE COLOURS OF THE GRADIENT SINCE 1918

myVirus

Week of computer attacks burdens myUBC

by Jonathan Woodward
NEWS EDITOR

Over 100,000 e-mails spawned by myDoom and other computer viruses slowed UBC's interchange e-mail service to a slow grind on Monday, causing the worst slowdown of interchange since last summer, UBC officials said.

The e-mail spam caused by the virus is a UBC microcosm of a large-scale infestation across the world that began Monday night and may culminate in an attack on prominent computer companies Microsoft and SCO on Sunday.

"This is a pretty serious attack," said UBC computer science professor Richard Rosenberg. Over 1.8 million copies of the virus have been detected by US computer security firms, sending up to 1200 spam e-mails per second. "When you're under attack, this is in the ballpark."

MyDoom is a computer virus that can be sent through e-mail and file-sharing services such as Kazaa and MSN. Often, it appears in suspicious e-mails with a fake sender address, a random string of characters in the subject line and an attachment targeting unsuspecting users. When the attachment is clicked, it loads a malicious file onto the computer.

That file will then get the computer to connect to the internet and begin sending copies of itself. When multiple computers become infected, the sheer volume of information that has to be processed by e-mail servers can stress systems to the breaking point, even causing them to shut down.

But the climax will happen on Superbowl Sunday, said Rosenberg, when each infected computer will begin sending huge numbers of packets of e-mails to targeted companies SCO, which recently began a lawsuit to stop Linux users from using its copyrighted software, and Microsoft, which is a usual virus target.

But the MyDoom virus is programmed not to attack any government or military websites so as not to be an apparent threat to US security, said Rosenberg.

MyUBC was also hit by tens of thousands of e-mails from a virus called SoBig and some users were duped by a spoof bill collection e-mail, seemingly from *interchange.ubc.ca*. Users were told that they had to open an attached billing notice, otherwise their internet service would be terminated.

If they opened the attachment, the file downloaded would exploit holes in Windows operating systems, allowing an outsider to gain control of the computers. Then, the virus would replicate.

Technicians at UBC constructed filters on Monday night to delete harmful messages, but an e-mail backlog forced them to remove the filters on two of three servers, said Jens Haeusser, interchange Information Security Officer.

The attack was subtle and effective precisely because it was well-disguised as a billing notice, even though interchange does not bill students directly for its services, he said. "It's a good piece of social engineering."

Although the billing information virus appeared to be from interchange, it was probably automated to recognise the name of the e-mail system and was probably not manufactured at UBC, said Haeusser.

Private antivirus software had not created a filter by the time UBC technicians constructed their filters, Haeusser said. But Information Technology Services is examining options to subscribe to a commercially available antivirus product, and will upgrade the two servers that could not handle the e-mail queue in the coming year, he said.

This week's viruses are serious enough that the US government has allied with website *cert.org* to inform computer users of the next attack in the hopes of averting large-scale disaster, Rosenberg said.

"My next expectation is that the next round of hacking will look like it's coming from [*cert.org*]," he added.

Rosenberg stressed that computer users shouldn't open strange attachments, even from people they know. Users should be especially aware of strange file extensions containing '.pif' files as they are often viruses that can cause damage.

Windows operating systems are the prime target of every major virus circling this week, said interchange Assistant Group Leader Skye Chilton. Apple computers and machines using Linux will remain unaffected. ❖

EVENTS

UBYSSEY weekend

MEETINGS

AMS Women's Centre Pleasure Week, SUB Room 205, Feb 2-6

Enjoy the cunt coloring contest? How about the best sex mix tape challenge? It's all part of Pleasure Week at here at UBC. Other events include a breast casting and sex toy workshops, a Bzzr garden, and more. For more information, call the Women's Centre (604)-822-2163.

Fourth Annual Sustainability Conference, First Nations House of Learning, Jan 30-31

Light dinner, keynote speaker and art party with Public Dreams Society between 5-10pm Friday ($5). Workshops, panels, and keynote speaker Helen Spiegelman between 9am-5pm Saturday ($10). Come out and help.

DRINKING

AUS Bzzr Garden: Hip Hop Night, Friday January 30, 7-11pm

Sauce, beats, boys and girls. You do the math. ❖

Board of Governors race declared invalid

Confidential information about "state of the race" leaked to candidates

by Megan Thomas and Dan Burritt
NEWS EDITOR AND NEWS WRITER

Because of leaked information about who was winning the Alma Mater Society (AMS) elections while the race was on, the AMS elections administrator declared unofficial Board of Governors (BoG) representative election results invalid, leaving many questions about when and how next year's BoG representatives will be elected.

With only 26 votes separating second place Students for Students (SfS) candidate Brian Duong and third-place finisher Olivier Plessis of the Student Progressive Action Network (SPAN) slate, elections administrator Anthony Waldron told AMS council Wednesday night that he doubted the BoG results were unaffected because some candidates knew the state of the race as early as Tuesday, January 20.

"In a race separated by 26 votes you have to admit the possibility that SfS may have changed their campaigning behavior because they were hoping to influence other results," said Waldron. "By doing so they influenced the results of the Board of Governors [election]."

Waldron said that an SfS candidate admitted to prior knowledge of the Presidential, VP External and VP Academic races. SPAN denied any knowledge of the results, and the Radical Beer Faction and The Right Choice slates admitted they had limited information.

Independent candidate for VP External, Spencer Keys, brought the information to the elections committee when he was told of the leak.

Two students are selected by the electorate to sit with the Board of Governors, the highest decision-making body of UBC.

None of the BoG candidates are under suspicion, said Waldron.

"Brian [Duong] is not suspected of any wrongdoing, nor is anybody else in the race," he said.

Duong said the announcement at council was the first time that he heard about the information leak.

"I was never notified. I was not part of the investigation," said Duong. "I do think that is a little unfair."

Duong said his slate was already campaigning to their maximum ability and he does not think that even with inside race information it would have been possible to influence the results of any of the elections. He is considering launching a formal appeal against Waldron's ruling.

But Waldron maintains that if any members of a slate have knowledge of race results, it could benefit all members of the slate, regardless of whether individuals have the information or not.

"They go out and they campaign harder," he said. "The results of their actions affect every single race."

Other races may have been affected by the information leak, Waldron told council. But those races had large enough margins of victory or candidates who had knowledge still lost, so the results were not materially affected by the leak.

As to how the information of confidential election results found its way to election candidates, Waldron said he has his suspicions.

"I know some of the sources. I am not satisfied that I know all of them," he said, but declined to comment on the names of suspects.

The password for the electronic voting system from last year's AMS elections had not been deleted, creating a security concern, said Waldron. Whether this was part of the information leak is not known, he added.

Anyone caught tampering with AMS elections could face discipline from the UBC Registrar's office. Sentences could range from discipline letters in permanent records to university suspensions, said Eric Smith from the Registrar's office.

Smith also said that he has complete faith in Waldron and his decisions about the BoG election. But he did say the university will keep an eye on the new BoG race if and when it is run.

The AMS elections committee, the registrar and AMS council is now charged with deciding how and when to hold another BoG election. AMS President Oana Chirila said there should be an "action plan" at the next council meeting in two weeks.

Waldron said he is in ongoing discussions with the BoG candidates to decide the best way to run a re-election.

Third-placed candidate Plessis said he has not decided whether or not he would contest a re-election. But he added, "There is a strong chance that if they re-open the elections I would run."

An election was last called invalid in 1999 when *the Ubyssey* left a candidate out of the elections supplement and gave them an ad in the paper instead. The UBC Senate Elections Committee overturned the results, saying the ad was an unfair advantage, and ordered a by-election. ❖

BOGGED DOWN: Board of Governors candidate Brian Duong, unofficially declared a winner, must now decide whether to appeal the administrator's decision or run again in a possible by-election. MICHELLE MAYNE PHOTO

Elections "chaotic" and "questionable", says elections report

by Megan Thomas and Dan Burritt
NEWS EDITOR AND NEWS WRITER

This year's Alma Mater Society (AMS) elections, plagued by scandal before the first votes were even cast, remains unresolved a week after the polls closed, says a damning 14-page report written by the AMS elections administrator.

Anthony Waldron began his mandatory report to AMS council on the running and results of the elections by discussing the shuffle three days before voting began that saw the AMS council reject the acting elections administrator, Sundeep Chandan, and instead approve Waldron for the job.

Waldron wrote he was informed of his appointment on the morning of January 8, and voting began on January 9 at midnight.

He described many systems as "chaotic" and preparations for running the election "badly incomplete" when he took over literally hours before votes were to be cast. A lack of information sharing from Chandan and a newly appointed and inexperienced Chief Returning Officer meant "errors arose on a daily basis which threatened to increase the chaos of the situation," wrote Waldron.

Next he outlined numerous complaints about the electronic voting system, problems he attributed to the inability of the newly hired elections committee to properly test the system. He reported 32 complaints of inability to vote because of technical difficulties, but suggested that "hundreds" may have not have been able to vote but did not notify the elections committee because they "gave up in frustration."

Waldron also described security issues with the electronic voting system that included a password from last year's election that could still be used to access the state of races during the voting period.

"There was therefore considerable potential for people to access the system without authorisation," Waldron reported.

He also questioned the security of only needing a student number and password, which "for a great many people, the password is simply their birthday," to vote on-line. Waldron reported that it would be easy to vote using another person's name.

But a spokesperson for the UBC Registrar's office, who helps administer AMS online elections, said password security is not considered an issue by the university.

"There is the same level of security that you have for your transcripts and your course registration," said Eric Smith. "We have not had problems with peoples' transcripts being altered by unauthorised persons."

Waldron then reported on issues regarding conflict of interest scenarios, including the appointment of Paula Martz to the elections committee while her sister Sara Martz ran for a Senate position. When Waldron took office he decided to suspend Paula Martz from her duties until the end of the elections. He also questioned the inclusion of current AMS executives, who potentially are members of slates, on the hiring committee for elections officials.

Another recommendation was to end the practice of candidates promising salary donations to various groups as part of their campaigns—something he equated with bribery. The practice has "absolutely no place in an election campaign," he wrote.

Last year two candidates promised $2000 of their executive salaries to the Sexual Assault Support Centre if they were elected. This year VP Academic-elect Brenda Ogembo promised $1000 to an "international student," something Waldron asked her to remove during the campaign.

Ogembo said she did not intend to bribe potential voters.

"It was not my intention to come off as bribing but I understand his position," she said.

The most shocking section of the report discussed irregularities that suggested that "state of the race" information was leaked to candidates during the campaign, beginning as early as Tuesday, January 20.

Waldron was made aware of the leak by independent VP External candidate Spencer Keys, who said he received a phone call informing him of the state of his race. Neither he nor Waldron would reveal the source to the media.

The information provided by Keys resulted in an investigation that led to the disqualification of the unofficial Board of Governors (BoG) results.

Waldron ruled that the other races, including the VP External position in which Keys was defeated by 53 votes, were not "materially affected" by the information leak.

The report said declaring races other than the BoG valid was based on either the margin of victory or the winning parties not having prior knowledge of the election standing.

"I am pleased with the conduct and the professionalism of the elections administrator during the course of this investigation and stand by his decision," said Keys. "Obviously any candidate hopes for that 11th hour change to a decision but it was not exactly something I was holding out hope for."

The report and presentation to council left many with doubts about the election procedure.

"The entire election has been cast into a negative light," said The Right Choice presidential candidate Joel McLaughlin. "The elections certainly seem suspect."

McLaughlin also said he supports running the entire AMS elections again in light of the irregularities.

The clear winner of the ill-fated BoG race, Mia Amir, said she has "feelings of mistrust for the for the whole system," because of the election glitches.

But Amir said the blame lies with the elections system and not with the elections candidates.

"People are going to be pissed but people should not be pissed at the candidates. They should be pissed at the system," she said.

President-elect Amina Rai said that the elections system is in dire need of reform.

"There are a lot of reforms that need to be done to the elections system in the AMS," said Rai. "That is one of the first things that I think needs to be addressed, for sure." ❖

UBC Law professor wins human rights award

by Carrie Robinson
NEWS WRITER

A UBC Law Professor has won the 2003 Renata Shearer Human Rights Award for outstanding contribution to the field of international human rights.

Peter Burns received the annual award in December on International Human Rights Day.

"I thought that his contribution to international human rights was more than significant. It was probably unique in Canada, in terms of Canadians being on major human rights bodies and making important decisions," said Maurice Copithorne, a colleague of Burns.

Copithorne, also a UBC law professor, received the award in 2000 and was involved in nominating Burns for the award.

The Renata Shearer award alternates each year between being given by the United Nations to recognise a person for international human rights work and being awarded by the BC Human Rights Coalition to recognise a person for domestic human rights work.

Exemplary human rights work done by Burns includes being the Chair of the United Nations Committee Against Torture since 1998.

This committee works under the mandate of the United Nations Convention Against Torture treaty ratified by 134 states—one of seven United Nations universal human rights treaties, said Burns.

"[It] receives reports from those states, examines them and makes appropriate inquiries to ascertain whether or not those states are meeting their obligations under the treaty," he said.

This means that when Burns wasn't working the brains of the UBC law students, he was spending a great deal of time in Geneva meeting with different state representatives because Geneva is the location of a United Nations Centre for Human Rights.

Burns made it clear that the jurisdiction of the committee not only examines torture, but cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment. Burns was part of the first Committee Against Torture in 1998 and has been re-elected four times.

Burns said an interesting part of his work is examining individual human rights complaints—a complaint by an individual citizen that a state party has breached the Convention Against Torture. Approximately one third of the states that have ratified the treaty allow the committee to examine individual complaints, he said.

"We have a limited, investigative jurisdiction," said Burns, "But it is unique to the Committee Against Torture. Where there is well-founded evidence to systematic torture, we have the power to investigate and draw conclusions."

Burns has travelled to detention centres, police stations and prisons to interview alleged victims or government officials as part of these investigations.

This type of international human rights work exemplifies why Burns was chosen for the award.

"This type of award is significant because it formalizes and makes public the work of some Canadians," said Burns.

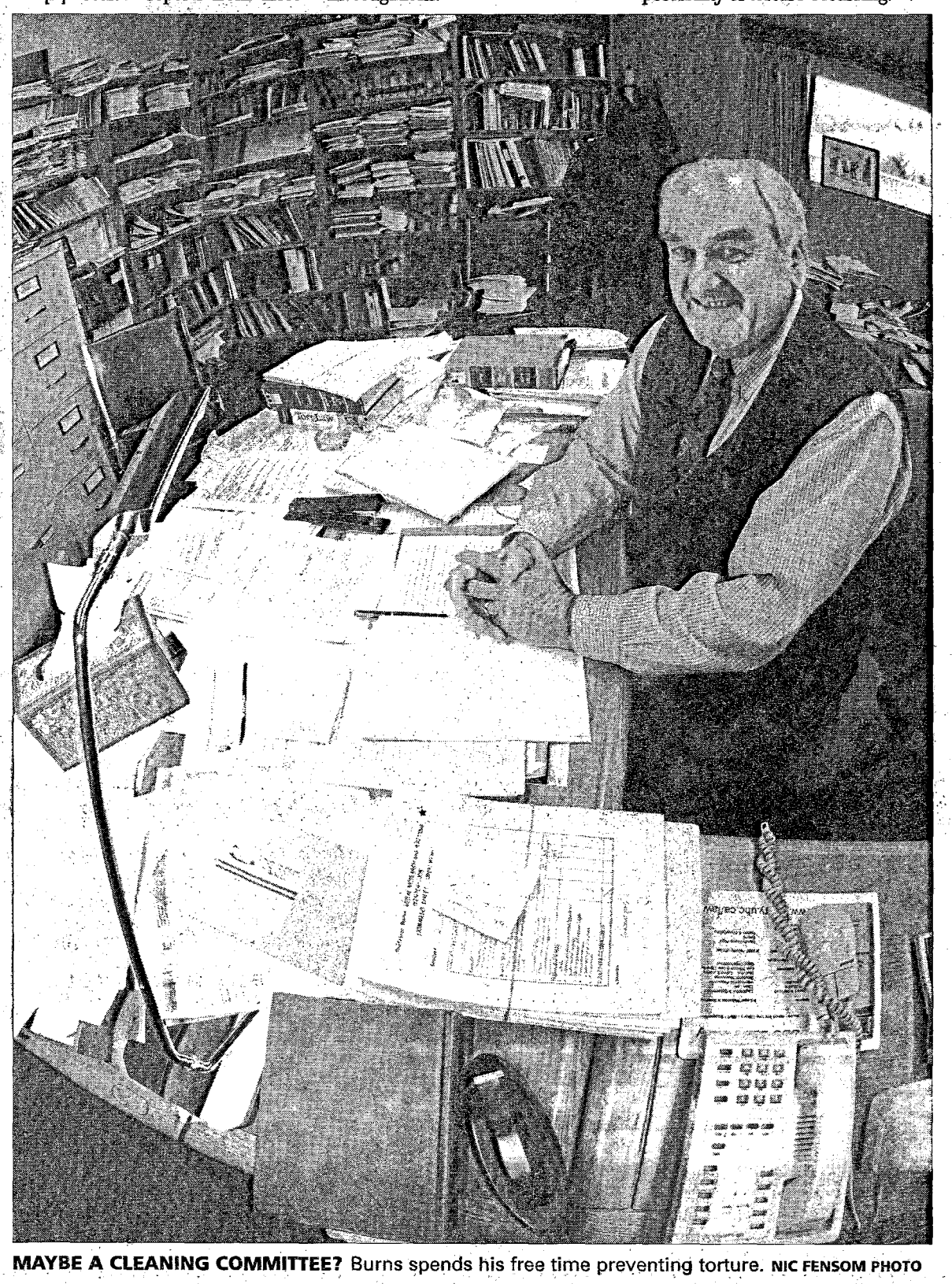
He added that most people do not realize how many Canadians are involved in human rights work and he finds it remarkable that in this field of the UN, "you'll find that there are just an enormous number of Canadians working there."

"A significant number of Canadians in the secretariat, non-government organizations and in government ranks are active on the international stage in the area of human rights," said Copithorne.

"Both Peter and myself have been recognised partly because we're in Vancouver which is particularly conscious of international human rights, being among other things a multicultural or an immigrant-receiving society," he added.

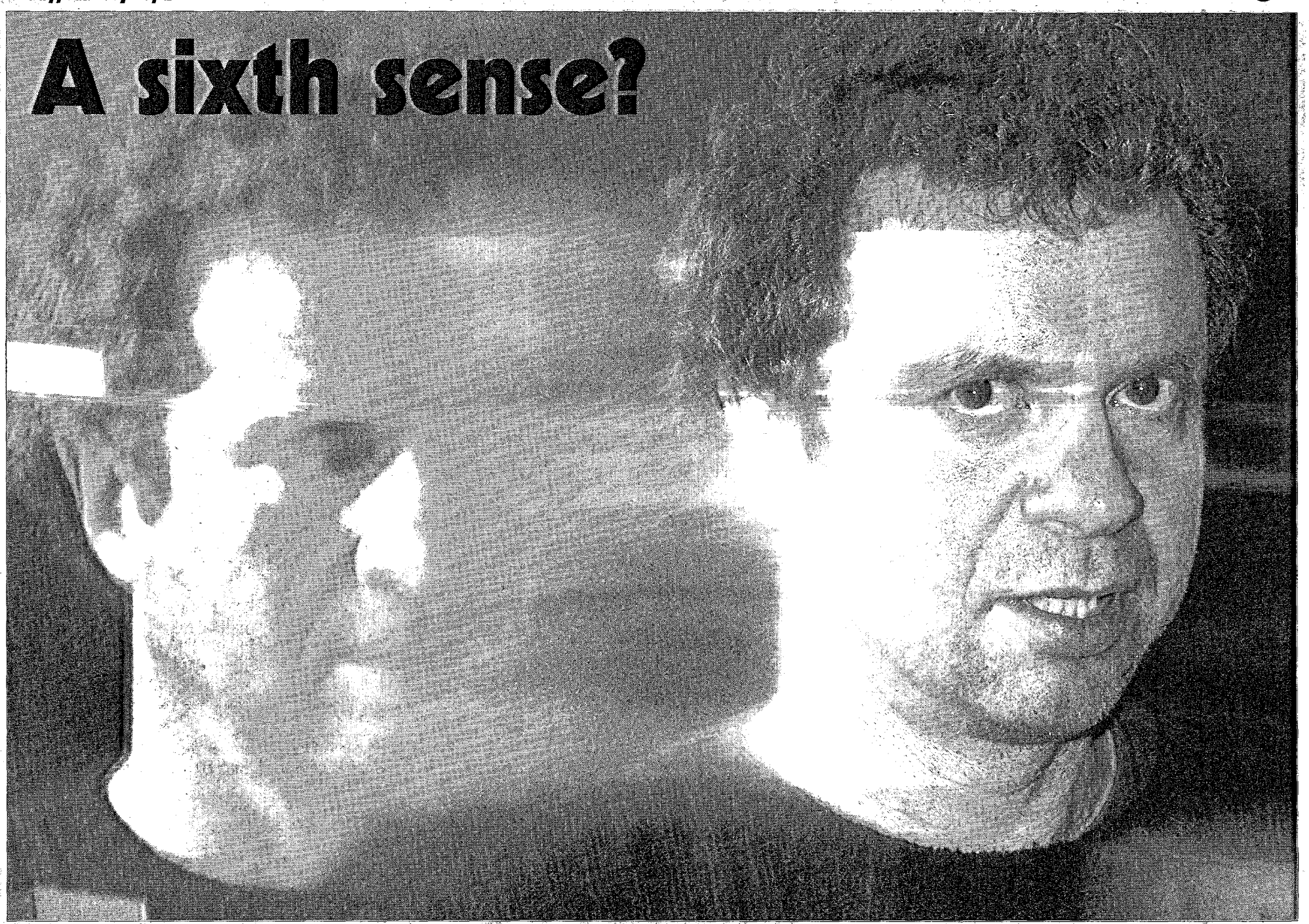
Burns says it is not awards that keep him involved in human rights work. Instead, it is knowing that he is working to prevent torture in the future.

"The subject matter of the work I'm involved in doesn't give a great deal of enjoyment," said Burns. Instead he says it is, "Being involved in a concerted activity designed to suppress torture, punish torturers, and ensure that state parties [adhere] to the Convention create an environment that diminishes the possibility of torture occurring." ❖



MAYBE A CLEANING COMMITTEE? Burns spends his free time preventing torture. NIC FENSOM PHOTO

A sixth sense?



DO YOU SEE IT? Ron Rensink does. MICHELLE MAYNE PHOTO

UBC scientist says there is more to vision than meets the eye

by Patricia Comeau
NEWS WRITER

Though it doesn't mean that you can see dead people, UBC scientist Ron Rensink claims a discovery of a different kind of perception helps to explain the belief in a sixth sense.

"If you have an intuition, take it seriously," he advises.

Rensink has been conducting research showing that about one-third of people consistently experience visual sensing without seeing, which he calls 'mindsight.'

Subjects in his experiments were shown flickering screens which would sometimes change, almost imperceptibly. Sometimes the subjects would report that they saw a change, but other times they would report that while they did not see a change, they *felt* one—and more often than not, they were right.

This feeling is often ignored because for most people, seeing is believing, said Rensink. But, he said, the conscious visual experience may be had without a mental picture.

Scientists have known for some time that perception is not simply an absorption of the outside world. In fact, we consciously pay attention to only a small amount of the vast detail that our eyes pick up.

In the 1990s, experiments sat subjects in front of a similar flickering screen, and they were told to say when they noticed a change. Surprisingly, some subjects became confused, wondering whether the scientists wanted to know when they saw a change, or when they just felt it.

Thus, when something changes, we can either pay attention to it and notice it, or not pay attention and miss it. It became clear that our mind is aware of the change without actually seeing it. This prompted Rensink to further examine the concept of sensing without seeing, and bring attention to the gut feeling of mindsight.

Rensink gets varied responses to his claims. "Some people are threatened by it," he said, "Other people find these abilities rather cool."

"It's nice to think that even though you might not be conscious of something, the information is still getting in there," said Alym Amlani, a fourth-year cognitive systems student and research assistant to Rensink.

A magician by trade, Amlani is very enthusiastic about the study of focus, attention and cognition. One of his tricks is to make a hat 'disappear'.

While it seems like a trick, the truth is that we can only consciously see so many things at one time. Only those things that we pay attention to make up the foreground of our visual experience and Amlani takes advantage of this with flourish.

But there seems to be more scientific evidence to support Rensink's alternate hypothesis: that mindsight is a third, independent type of perception apart from the traditional conscious and subconscious.

Renskin's colleague Brian Christie believes that a person's ability to anticipate future events may have something to do with probabilities and our mind's ability to recall similar situations in the past and their results. In this way, a person could recognise certain details in their environment as being indicative of a certain outcome or change.

Other senses like hearing or smelling may also be similarly affected, as all senses take in vast amounts of information that we do not consciously think about.

Most of the time more auditory information is available to the listener than can be processed consciously. But if the brain notices anyway, "Clearly, some part of your brain has to deal with it," Rensink said.

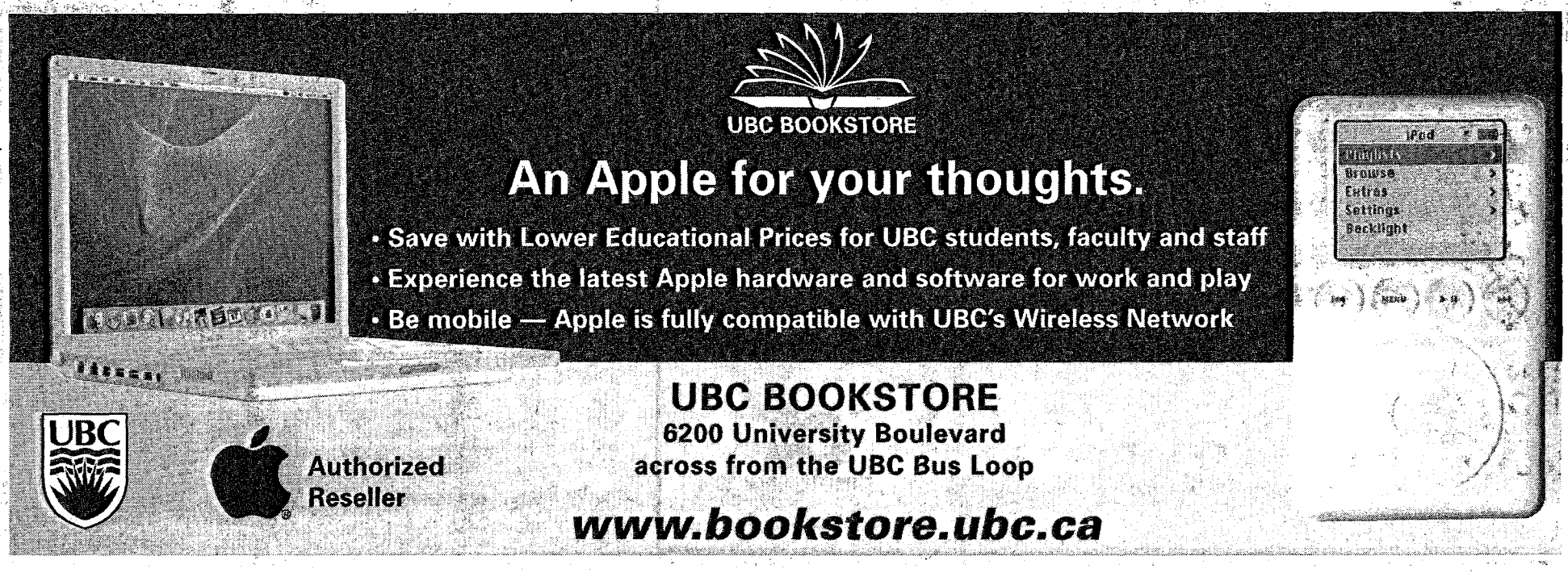
In Rensink's experiments, some people were more sensitive than others, and his research may turn to determine what separates these people from the rest of the population. It might be their personality, their stress levels, or the way they feel about their gut instincts.

"What I'd really like to do is to go after the people who don't experience this, to see first of all if we can convince them it exists," said Rensink.

But it's important to keep a scientist's perspective on superstition.

"People either believe that none of this exists, or they believe that too much exists," said Rensink. These intuitive feelings are no ESP, he said.

"That's going too far," he added. "You have to keep your eyes open." ❖



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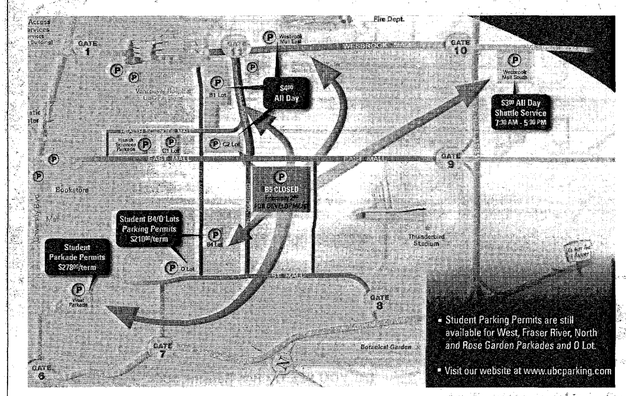
NOTICE OF PARKING AREA CLOSURE

B5 Parking Lot will be permanently closed as of Monday, February 2, 2004. The closure of this parking area is for the development of the mid-campus neighbourhood plan.

Please consult the map below for alternate parking locations on campus.



For more information on alternate parking locations, please contact UBC Parking & Access Control Services at either our website at www.ubcparking.com, visit our parking office at GSAB or call 604-822-6786 during regular business hours.

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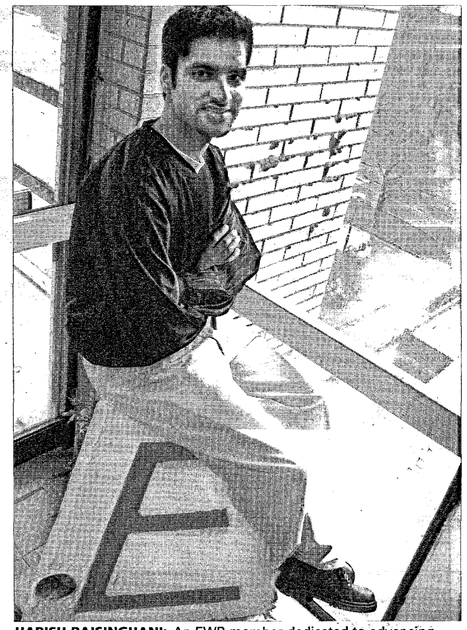
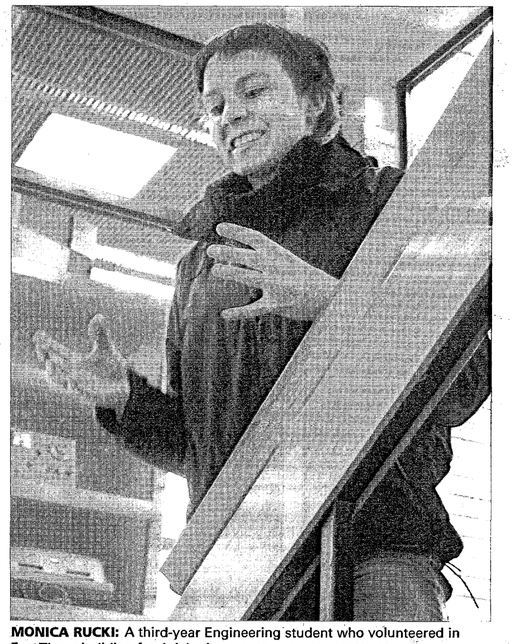


HARISH RAISINGHANI: An EWB member dedicated to advancing technology in developing countries. MICHELLE MAYNE PHOTO

In a nutshell

Engineers Without Borders brings technology to developing countries



MONICA RUCKI: A third-year Engineering student who volunteered in East Timor building food dehydrators. MICHELLE MAYNE PHOTO

by Parminder Nizher
FEATURES WRITER

If you've ever considered an internship in a developing country, devoting your time to cashew nuts probably didn't cross your mind. It definitely didn't cross Brendan Baker's mind.

"Of all things!" he smiles. "I'm going [to Senegal] to try and help improve the technology to process cashew nuts."

As a member of the UBC chapter of Engineers Without Borders (EWB), a human development organisation, Baker will also be doing an internship abroad. In fact, he is headed to Ziguinchor, Senegal as you read this.

"I'm wondering about how effective I'm going to be," he says. "I'll be jumping into a culture that's completely foreign to me and I'll be dealing with cashews, which I've never spent a minute studying in my life."

Groundnut harvestation is nothing new in West Africa. However, the technology that Baker will be working on, with a team of eight local Senegalese, is new to the area.

"The organisation that I'm with develops the technology to make [harvesting] more efficient and practical to process," says Baker. An increase in efficiency will boost the financial returns for the cashews.

"[The Senegalese] find that if they harvest [nuts] in their shells they're not worth a lot of money," Baker continues. "If you can shell and skin them, *then* roast and package them they're worth a lot more."

After investigating what would make farming more efficient and profitable, members of the community then make the necessary equipment and sell it to other members. The buyers in turn use the equipment to process their cashews and sell them to the locals.

"Everyone's making a buck," smiles Baker. "You're able to foster a little bit of economic growth and, consequently, social growth."

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For a fairly newborn organisation, EWB has sent over 60 interns like Baker to 20 countries worldwide. Like many other development organisations, EWB is affiliated with Non Government Organisations (NGOs) throughout the world. For an internship to work, EWB provides the necessary funding for the intern, but the intern is actually working with a local NGO.

A registered Canadian charity, EWB is also sustained by corporate sponsorship. Air Canada Aeroplan is the largest of such sponsors—a clear sign that EWB is one of fastest growing charitable organisations in Canada. Not bad for an organisation that traces its roots four years back to two fresh University of Waterloo engineer graduates.

Formed in 2000, co-founders Parker Mitchell and George Roter developed EWB to make the plight of the poor slightly easier. In a nutshell, the EWB mission is to promote human development through access to technology. This is done not only at an international level, but also within Canada through chapters in major universities.

"We promote awareness on campus and in the Vancouver community on international development [and] global issues, but also on issues within our own community," says Monica Rucki, co-president of the UBC Chapter of EWB.

"Promoting awareness at school is key because you're educating people when they're young," says Rucki. "Professional [engineers] are kind of stuck in their ways."

Although the co-founders have had professionals approach them about membership in EWB, Rucki explains that professionals need to understand that their expertise in a certain sector of engineering does not always apply in a developing community where complex technology and resources can't be supported in the long run.

"You can't even implement that kind of technology into that community," she says. "I'm not saying all professionals are stubborn, but maybe their openness to learn from the community and think of it as a learning exchange might be more difficult for them to accept that and get into it."

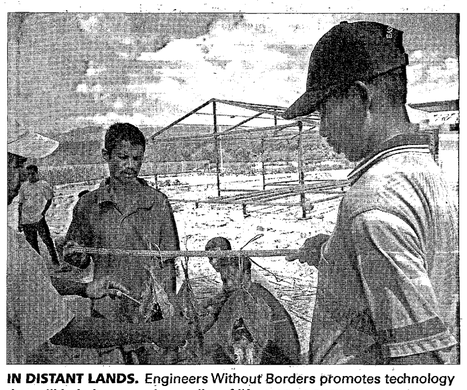
Although mostly students are engouraged to join, a common misconception of EWB is that it is strictly for students.

"It's the name 'Engineers Without Borders.' It's open to absolutely anyone," says Harish Raisinghani, a member of EWB. "It's such a deceiving name. We advertise that it's not just for engineers."

One look at the name of the organisation shows another common mistake that many make: that EWB is affiliated with the human development organisation, Doctors Without Borders (DWB). Similar in name, yes, but in truth they are two completely independent and different organisations.

"With DWB if you're a doctor and you go do a blood transfusion it's no different than here [in Canada]," says Raisinghani.

Raisinghani feels in some ways it is more difficult to enter a developing country and try to convince locals of a new and more productive method of development than it is to give medical treatment. Why should they believe you?



IN DISTANT LANDS. Engineers Without Borders promotes technology that will help improve the quality of life. MONICA RUCKI PHOTO

"You have to develop things like trust," he says.

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Rucki, a third-year integrated engineering student, experienced the difficulty of establishing trust on a personal level when she was an intern in East Timor last year. But by the time that she was completely accepted by the families she was living with, her four months were up.

"The women let me cook with them—I was their sister," she fondly recalls. "It was the wrong time for me to leave. My project was taking off at that point."

The village where Rucki stayed had no running water or electricity. Another barrier was language. Rucki learned to speak Tetun, the language of the Timorese, because very few people spoke English. Although there were many cultural differences, she describes the people as no different than you and I.

"Some people think that there are these barriers between you and these people and you won't be able to relate to them in any way, but they're *exactly* the same," she says. "The women talk about the same things, the men laugh about the same things."

Many EWB projects are grassroots projects—simple, sustainable and easy to use. Rucki's project in Timor is only one example of a development initiative. She designed solar dryers for food.

"I was working in food drying building efficient solar dryers," explains Rucki. "Basically [it was] a big box with a glass roof, and dried foods in just a couple of days."

Rucki describes the big box as "much more efficient than just putting it on your roof where there are so many losses. [This is] simple technology that is sustainable and people can maintain it on their own and develop from it."

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Formerly a part of Indonesia, albeit unwillingly, the people of East Timor voted for a separate nation in August of 1999, ending 23 years of turmoil. However, this was not achieved without conflict. Anti-separationists wreacked havoc on the East Timorese via looting, violence, arson and so on. Many were killed and an estimated 500,000 were displaced from their homes.

Rucki describes the Timorese as friendly and happy people who love to dance, despite the horror they have seen.

"Every single person [I] met, either their mother's been killed or their sister's been raped by the Indonesians," she recalls. "It's sad being there. It's a young population. [Many] of the old people were killed...a lot was lost—a lot of the culture, the traditions, the stories."

The displaced returned to their farms a couple of years later to find them overgrown. After civil strife and no money or equipment, the East Timorese are faced with the difficulty of starting their farms anew.

"I got the impression there wasn't much incentive. If they are used to their government stealing from them, killing them, or used to war, why are you going to start working? Why are

See "Geers" on page 8.

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UBC

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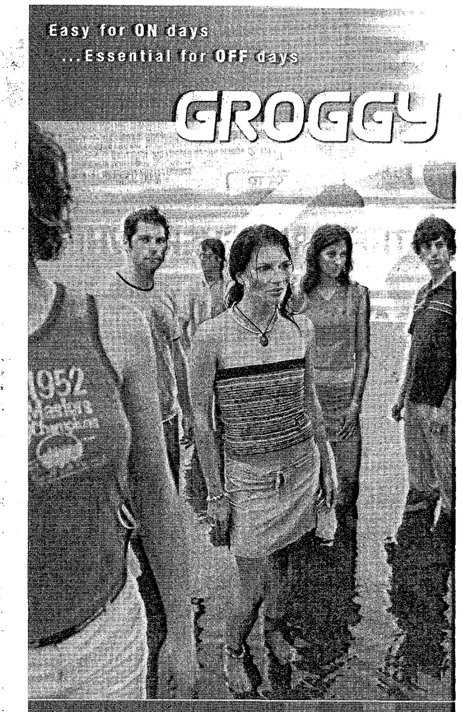

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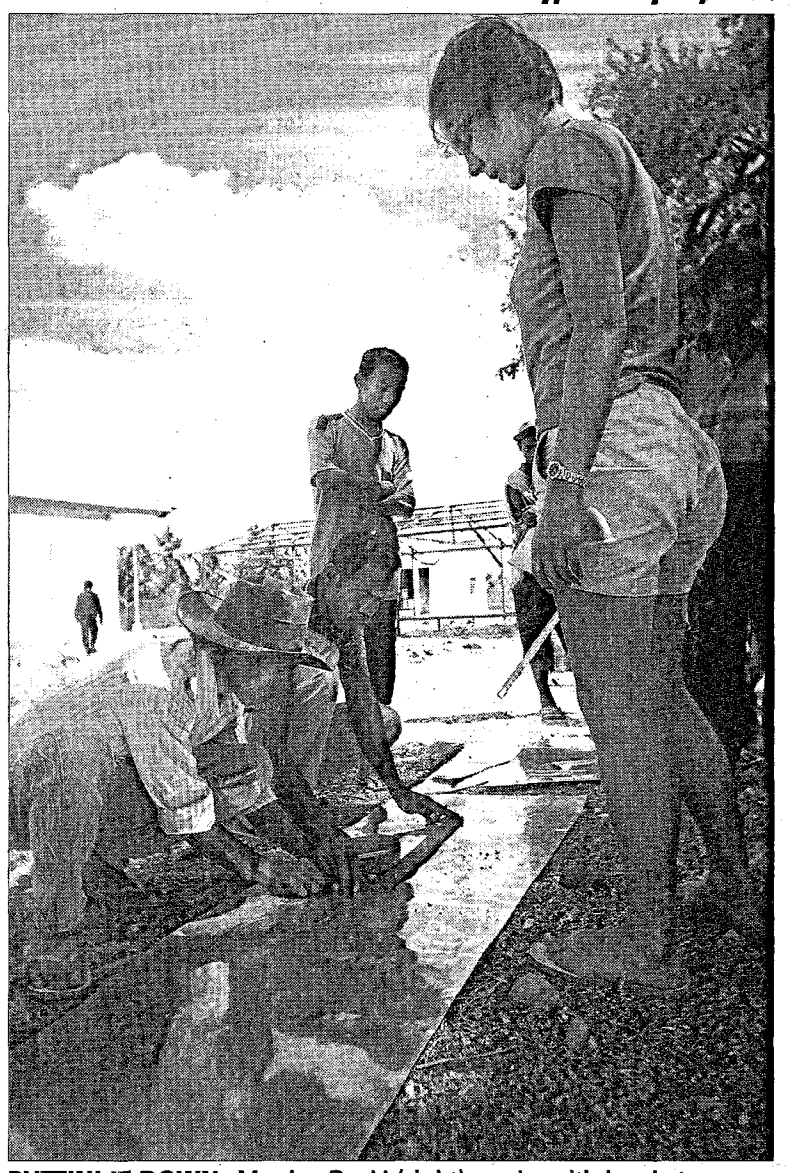

PUTTIN' IT DOWN. Monica Ruski (right) works with locals to improve living conditions. PHOTO COURTESY OF MONICA RUSKI

"Geers" from page 7.

you going to try?" says Ruski.

"A lot of people who go into Timor talk about how they're going to 'save it,' I think get really jaded in the end," she continues. "After 25 years of conflict, I don't think you're going to be like, 'Yes! I'm gonna go to work and I'm gonna try *really* hard!'"

There's no better way to learn the complex troubles of international development than experience it first-hand. Through her involvement, Ruski was surprised by the lack of cooperation between various NGOs.

"Everyone was there—Amnesty, CARE, Concern, and then there are a lot of local NGOs and there's not a lot of work between them," she says. "I almost got the impression that everyone had their own agenda there. Everyone was out to save the day, and nothing's going to happen that way.

"The biggest things I learned were patience and humility, and some confidence," she says.

"It really depends on what attitude you go in there with," says Baker. "If it's a very humble attitude I don't think there will be any problems at all."

Humility is something that Raisinghani also hopes to deepen when he leaves for his internship to the Philippines in the summer.

"It's kind of weird having the conscience that you can return to a better lifestyle—a lot of people really can't," he says.

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Another grassroots project involving information technology (IT) training is developing. Computers will be shipped from Canada and set up to teach people various components of Microsoft Office in other countries.

Known as the Scala Program, there are four pilot Information and Communication Technology (ICT) centres throughout the Philippines to increase computer literacy. Currently there are 45 computers that will benefit over 500 Filipinos annually. The goal is to build ten such centres and reach over 1500 people.

"We're targeting out-of-school youth and middle-aged men who want to gain some skills to gain jobs in the future," said Raisinghani.

While focusing their aid abroad, EWB also have projects more close to home. Similar to the technology project in the Philippines, Raisinghani is co-directing IT training at the Dr Peter Centre in the Downtown Eastside. Over the reading break a handful of volunteers will train with the goal of making the project an ongoing commitment.

"We'll be doing computer skills training at Dr Peter AIDS center," says Raisinghani. "Whoever wants to be trained by us, to improve their skills and [go on] to teach other people as well."

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The largest local project of EWB is the High School Outreach Program. It is designed to promote awareness about global issues through presentations and activities. Implemented in September, presentations have been made at six secondary schools in Vancouver thus far. The focus of these presentations?

"Water," says Ruski. "We do a presentation called 'water for the world.' We talk about water and some of the issues and the problems that arise with water."

A Native outreach program is currently in the works. Additionally, EWB UBC is devoting a fair bit of energy to a push for curriculum change in the UBC Engineering Department.

Members of the chapter feel that the Engineering Department needs to develop a course that makes engineers aware of the role they can play in international development. Currently it is a student-directed seminar that begins next fall.

Ruski feels that education is key in understanding the developing world.

"To make people care, to make people realise what we're trying to do is very difficult," says Ruski. "Once they're in and they start thinking about it, they start to care more." ❖

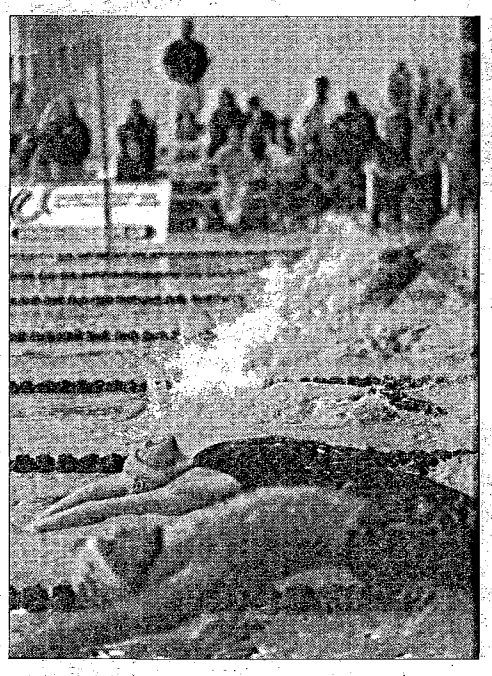
New leaders surface

UBC swimmers dominate because of well-rounded skill

by Jesse Marchand
SPORTS EDITOR

In many sports, the team's successes are often credited to one magnanimous player. The rest of the team is left to follow in their glamourous dust or get lost in the spotlight. But this is not the case with the UBC Thunderbird swim team, whose many equally strong swimmers led both the women's and the men's teams to reclaim first place in the Canada West swimming championships after losing to the Calgary Dinos last year.

Pre-meet talk was abuzz with conversation about the absence of Olympic hopefuls Brian Johns and Brent Hayden and graduated top CIS medal winner Jessica Deglau.



STRETCH BACK: UBC's Robert Miller jumps off with Regina's Jan-Michael Pelechytik in front. MICHELLE MAYNE PHOTO

Last year the team had not only felt the loss of Johns, but they also suffered from too few swimmers competing in the event.

"We didn't have enough swimmers competing in the meet," said swim coach Derrick Schoof. "It became a meet of who had the most swimmers."

With fewer swimmers it is hard to build up enough points to take a first place berth in Canada West. Last year the T-Birds only boasted nine males and 12 females on the team, but this year they brought it up to an even 15 on both.

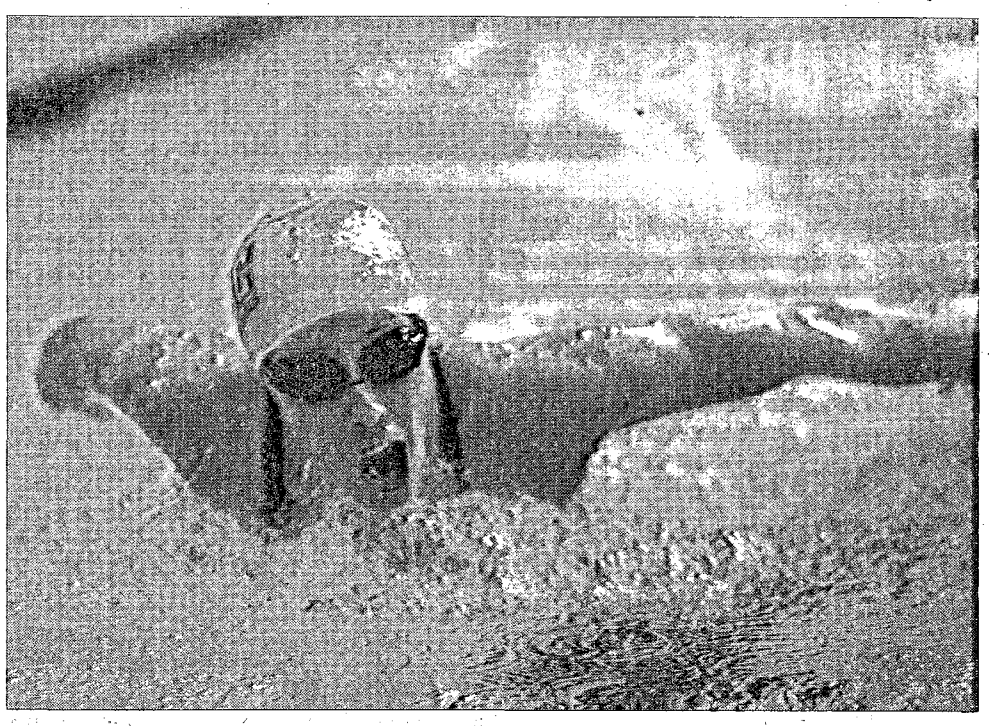
With 15 swimmers on each roster, the loss of key veterans were easier to bear this year.

"It gives other people the opportunity to step up and take on a leadership role," said Schoof of the absence of former leaders Johns, Hayden and Deglau. The fact that they did so well is only "a testament of the depth of our program," added Schoof.

With over 218 combined points above the nearest competition the UBC women were clearly the strongest team out there, getting 20.5 more points than the top men's team, the competing female teams garnered far fewer points.

Fourth-year Kelly Stefanyshyn led the pack for the ladies by breaking the 100 metre butterfly conference record set back in 1996 by former UBC swimmer Sarah Evanetz. Stefanyshyn then went on to break her own Canada West record in the 200 metre backstroke by 14 seconds.

"She really stepped up and did a good job," said Schoof of the women's team captain. But he was also quick to recognise rookies like Stephanie Nicholls, Haley Doody, Mila Zvijeric, and Deanna Stefanyshyn.



BUTTERFLY WISHES: Michelle Landry adds to UBC's strong team by winning several medals for the first place UBC swim team. MICHELLE MAYNE PHOTO

"We have a number of rookies that are adding to the program and keeping it strong for the next couple years," said Schoof.

"If you look at our team two years ago, it's a completely different team now. In the last two years we've had 14 swimmers either graduate or take a year off," added Schoof.

And judging by the other women's finishes there are still many strong members on the team.

Michelle Landry claimed a victory of her own in the 400 metre individual medley. It was a race that looked like a hot competition between two Calgary Dinos, Carrie Burgoyne and Dena Derand. But then in the last 25 metres, Landry picked up the speed to blow the Dinos into pre-history by 1.88 seconds.

Caitlin Meredith also took home honours in the backstroke taking home silver in both the 50 and 200 metre events.

On the men's side, Justin Tisdall took the reign of leadership by claiming gold medals in three individual events and two relays. These excellent finishes also led him to be named this week's UBC athlete.

But it was the breaststroke that was the men's strongest event with Matt Huang, Chad Thiessen and Ian Chan taking first, second and third in the men's 50, 100 and 200 metre breaststroke events.

The win at Canada West puts UBC in a good position to win Nationals for the seventh straight time this year, a win that would put them even with the hosts', the University of Toronto, record that covered seven consecutive wins in the '70s and '80s.

But even with the win, UBC will not be caught off guard. "We're taking nothing for granted," said Schoof. The Birds head to Toronto on March 5-7, to end the 2003-2004 varsity season. ❖

ams Interactive

Comments? Questions? Concerns? Visit us on the web at www.ams.ubc.ca or email us at feedback@ams.ubc.ca.

AMS JOBS

AMS Tutoring Services - Assistant Coordinator

The AMS Tutoring Services office is seeking an Assistant Coordinator for February – April, 2004.

Duties

- Responsible for tutoring programs, tutoring workshops, the tutor registry and other initiatives.
- Assist in long term fund development for the service.
- Assist the coordinator in scheduling and new initiatives

Time commitment: 10-15 hours per week throughout the year.
Term from February to April 2004.
Remuneration $ 750-1000.

Please submit applications by February 10th, 2004 to: Laura Best, VP Academic & University Affairs, Chair of the AMS Appointments Committee. Room 248-6138 SUB Blvd., Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1 (604) 822-3092.

PIT PUB POLICY

New Pit Pub Policy. As of January 21, 2004, the Pit Pub will allow only UBC students with valid student i.d. access to the premises on Wednesday and Friday evenings. Each student will be able to sign in two guests, for whom they will be responsible.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Sign up for our electronic newsletter The AMS Interactive, and we'll send you updates on all the latest events and issues that affect you. To sign up visit www.ams.ubc.ca.

AMS/GSS HEALTHPLAN ASSISTANCE FUND

AMS/GSS HEALTH PLAN PREMIUM ASSISTANCE FUND: Apply by February 13th, 2004 Partial or full subsidy of the health plan fee ($124.67) is available on a need basis from the AMS and GSS for any NEW Term II students beginning their academic year in January who have not opted-out of the AMS/GSS Extended Health and Dental Plan.

If you are a returning student, you are NOT eligible for the bursary. Applications will be considered based on financial need.

Premiums for spouses and dependent children who are enrolled in the Plan are not eligible for reimbursement. If your spouse or dependent children are UBC or Regent College students, they should apply separately.

Application forms are available at www.gss.ubc.ca/health The deadline for application is February 13, 2004.

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To register call (604) 822-8676 or e-mail *enviro@ams.ubc.ca*.

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2004
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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
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"When are you going to shave anyway?" Megan Thomas asked a scruffy Jon Woodward. "Never, as long as I have money to pay Nic Fensom and Dan Burritt to scratch my face for me," he replied with a contented air. "That's disgusting!" shouted Hywel Tuscano as Carrie Robinson and Parm Nizher turned away in disgust. "That can't be very sanitary," mused Bryan Zandberg. Heather Pauls nodded in agreement. "Enough!" cried John Hua, as he dispatched Sarah Bourdon, Ania Mafi and Iva Cheung to the drugstore to buy a razor and some shaving cream. Moments later they made their triumphant return, Greg Ursic in tow. Jon realized what was afoot and headed for the door. But he didn't get far as Jenn Cameron jumped on his back and Michelle Mayne bound his arms with a telephone cord. "The more you struggle the more it's going to hurt," cackled Jesse Marchand while Dan McRoberts applied the shaving foam. Paul Carr lifted the razor and made one swift stroke. Woodward's body shook with sobs as he bade farewell to his facial hair. "What a baby!" observed Patricia Comeau.

COVER PHOTO
Monica Rucki
COVER DESIGN
Paul Carr

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Sometimes it all just hits at once

The natural disasters and constant violence in the news were starting to get us down. We couldn't really come out against forest fires or earthquakes, but all of a sudden we are waist deep in political muck, e-mail spam and bird flu. Here's a look at current events through a *Ubyssey* lens.

Food phobia—a good time to go vegetarian

Beef will kill you with Mad Cow. Salmon is a carcinogen. And the newest food-phobia coined is Bird Flu. The death tolls have already been projected with around 58,000 people scheduled to die in Canada alone.

The virus is currently making its way through fowl in Asia and has not yet hit North America. Here's hoping that an action plan against the possible pandemic doesn't institutionalise more racism into immigration or cause people to scatter everytime an Asian person coughs. The mass production practices of poultry may wipe out huge parts of the industry. KFCs are already shutting down in Asia—the horror.

AMS elections scandal

Oh! Just when we thought they were all over. It just so happens that SPAN will actually get another chance to do a proper sweep of every single elected position. Jeeze. Change your passwords once in awhile will ya? Rumours are flying that some candidates knew election results before they were announced, just a symptom really of an incestuous and flawed election procedure. But then, that really isn't that different than real politics, is it? What? Firing the elections commissioner days before the election? What? Someone who was running had a sister was on the committee? Maybe this election, tainted to the extent of needing a by-election for the Board of Governors positions, will kickstart some action to clean up messy elections practices.

Paul Martin conflict of interest arises

Our worst fears have finally been realised. While everyone initially turned a blind eye to Paul Martin's potentially huge conflict of interest as former CEO of Canada Steamship Lines (CSL)—still held by his two sons—he was busy pulling thousands of times more revenue into his company as Finance Minister. Wow. A whole 161 million dollars. That's not $137,000. That's *money*.

Arar case to go to hearing

It is unclear whether the Arar case is going to hearing because of public outcry or simply to make good after Juliet O'Neill's home was raided to located leaked government documents. This is also advantageous to Martin, who, at this time, would benefit to have attention diverted from the ridiculous revenue pulled in by CSL through government business.

myDoom virus rocks corporations

VIRUS! VIRUS! Idiots opening attachments everywhere are causing networks to slow down around the world. The sensationalising of this by major newspapers with nothing else big to report on, *cough* *the Province*, has technophobes turning off their computers, hiding from executables without knowing what they are and cowering in fear from vacation photos attached to their grandma's e-mails.

The virus is being labeled as a malicious attack by deranged sociopaths; in fact, the virus targets Microsoft and the SCO software group that wants to claim intellectual ownership of Linux—that's like trying to turn a public library into a ChaptersIndigo.

No weapons of mass destruction

David Kay, a former weapons inspector for the UN and advisor to the CIA has testified that Iraq did not possess any of the alleged weapons of mass destruction. At least someone is finally admitting it.

Meanwhile, what justification can be used to enter Iran or Syria? Granted Hussein IS gone. But hopefully people will be a little more skeptical the next time around. You know, because the United States doesn't need a 'permission slip' to attack other countries, according to the state of the union address.

Ah, well. Tony Blair's been let off by the Hutton Enquiry and the BBC's in shambles. ❖

LETTERS

Ain't no Coke conspiracy

If the following story—related to me about two years ago by a UBC official closely involved in the construction of new buildings on campus—is true, we shouldn't expect any new water fountains any time soon. According to the story ["Where's the free water?" January 27], various regulations require water fountains to be accessible, and accessible water fountains that can withstand abuse dished out in our hallowed halls cost more than the University can spend. Cheaper kinds get broken so often that repairing them ends up costing even more. Therefore, it's simplest not to put in any fountains at all.

I don't think there is some kind of Coke conspiracy going on, because many people who buy bottled water would do so even if there were water fountains at every corner, thanks to the insidious marketing. But I don't think the administration can honestly say they didn't notice there were no fountains in new buildings (such as the Forest Sciences Centre (FSC), for example). Plant Ops might not be aware of decisions made during the design phase, but this can hardly be something one "forgets"—it was a conscious choice, and your reporter should have gone to the Forestry department to ask them why they didn't ask the architects for fountains in FSC when the plans were being drawn.

—Davor Cubranic
PhD candidate, Computer Science

Election blues, Part II

When I wrote my last letter concerning the current Alma Mater Society (AMS) elections I was annoyed. Nothing has changed; in fact, it's worse. Since my last letter, AMS candidates *did* visit my residence, and they *did* visit my classes. So what is the problem? They did what I wanted them to do, and they were getting voter support, right? Wrong. They were trying too hard, too late and it happened during the voting week.

Last Wednesday, in my economics class, a representative from Student Progressive Action Network (SPAN) gave a speech about how much SPAN candidates care about the election and about their jobs. They told me to vote. They told me the website to go to where I could vote. It's so easy, they said, I might as well just vote for them right now...

Last Tuesday night, an assortment of AMS election candidates were seen in the Totem commons block encouraging people to vote. They even brought computers with them so we could vote right there. Of course, we had to get past all their pamphlets and signs to get to the ballot...

As I was walking to the bus, there was music pumping from a car in the parking lot. "Come vote for the AMS elections!" The dude with the car waved at me. Apparently, it's 'cool' to vote. Even cooler if I vote for that cool dude who gave me the pamphlet.

In a real election, if candidates are anywhere near the ballots, it is illegal. In the recent AMS election, the ballot was everywhere. UBC is wireless-enabled, you can access the internet from a cell phone, and you could, for a moment, even phone your vote in. There is nowhere on campus, nowhere even in the city that a ballot could not be cast. In a democracy it is against election practice to have candidates campaigning where people are casting their votes. The AMS candidates should not be campaigning at all during election week.

I call for a re-election. If the AMS can not get a good voter turnout without candidates pressuring a vote, it means people are protesting. With less than 3000 votes for each candidate, the results are meaningless. If the Radical Beer Faction (a protest party) received more votes in most positions than The Right Choice (a legitimate effort), you know something is wrong.

The council does not do enough for the average student; it doesn't let students know what its functions are—all we get are slogans and promises to "disseminate information" (Amina Rai). I don't believe any of the candidates are willing or capable of informing the student body of anything, much less the AMS' function. The only time any of them were willing to spend time informing anyone was when their $20,000 salaries were on the line.

—Mike Woodward
Commerce 1

Tastes like dirty

Kelis tries to join the ranks of Lil' Kim

KELIS
Tasty
[Star Trak]

by John Hua
CULTURE EDITOR

Has anyone else noticed that whenever a female artist hooks up with famous male artist, instead of singing about sunshine and lollipops, their lyrics get straight scandalous? Beyoncé got some dirt on her booty once she hooked up with Jay-Z, and now it seems Kelis—who is engaged to baby-faced rapper Nas—is following a similar path. Kelis's second album, *Tasty*, has a little bit of everything: crazy beats, tight collaborations, nasty lyrics and pretty decent vocals. Unfortunately, it seems everyone's jumping in mud puddles these days, which makes Kelis a little bland.

In terms of direction, Kelis is sitting on the fence between keeping it about the music and making it raunchy. And when your image is presented like Lil' Kim (but not quite) or Christina Aguilera (but not quite), you just come looking like you're trying too hard. However, there is a market for singing soulful music about getting it on in public.

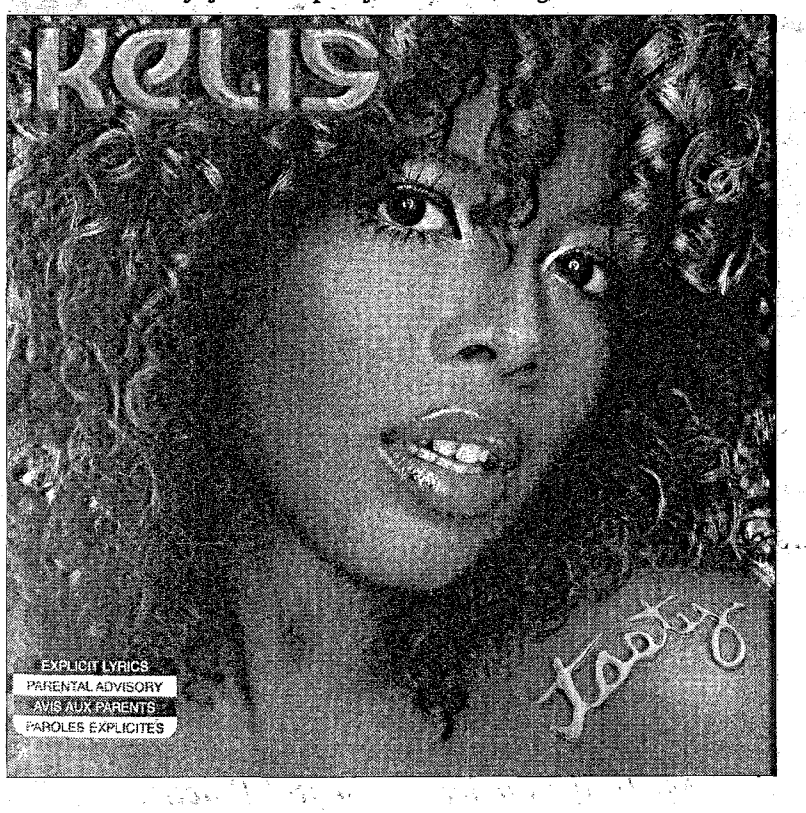
Image aside, Kelis can hold a pretty steady note and has a couple of opportunities on this album to prove that she can sing. "Milkshake" is actually one of the weaker songs on the album for this reason. Despite having that pop-vibe, "Milkshake" does Kelis absolutely no justice, allowing artistic integrity to be overthrown by that raspy roughneck noise she tries to flow in the chorus.

A track sure to get some radio play is "In Public," featuring Nas. Kelis begins by singing about how badly she wants to jump her fiancé and make Paris Hilton-esque home videos and bump and grind on the balcony. Nas comes in midway, rapping out two verbal thumbs up to his boys, going on about how cool it is to have a freaky future wife, all to the tune of Kelis moaning in the background. Kinda like something Lil' Kim or Christina would do right? Well, not quite.

This album, however, isn't without some solid tracks. There's a sick collaboration with Andre 3000 called "Millionaire." The Outkast member had his hand in the writing and production process, pulling the sound straight from his album, *The Love Below*. "Glow" is also worth listening to, proving that Kelis is first and foremost a singer.

If you liked the beat behind Kelis's hit single "Milkshake," you have the Neptunes to thank for it. Being signed under music moguls Pharrell Williams and Chad Hugo's label comes with some definite perks, which is evident with the consistently strong mixes on *Tasty*.

Despite the direction she has taken, Kelis is able to hold it down, providing some surprisingly decent tracks, far surpassing whatever she was doing on "Milkshake." If you don't mind getting a little dirt in your ears, *Tasty* might be worth spinning. ❖



This is one plain Maki roll

KATE MAKI
Confusion Unlimited
[Independent]

by Jenn Cameron
CULTURE WRITER

Kate Maki's soft, mellow sound has been working its way around Ontario since her high school years. Born and raised in Sudbury, Ontario, Maki began writing music at a very young age. When in university, she began to make a name for herself—she worked open-mic nights in Halifax and gained some experience with several country-rock bands. Now at the pivotal stage of her career, Maki has decided to take her craft nationwide with her debut album *Confusion Unlimited*.

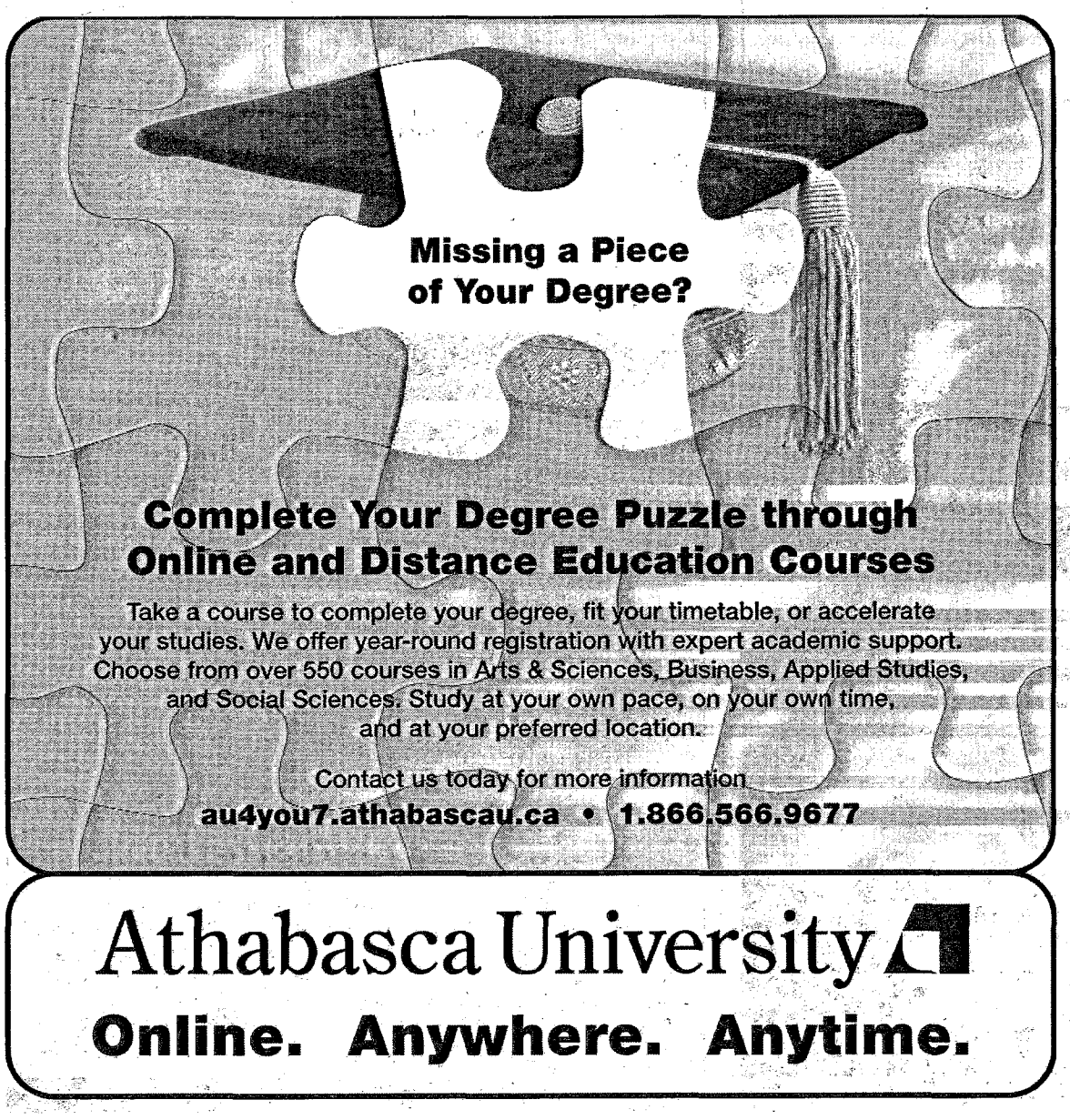
The genre: folk/country, which admittedly is not my cup of tea. It's the type of music that you can see yourself listening to while lying in a grassy field, surrounded by daisies. I would imagine a cow or two might be grazing around as well. That having been said, Maki has a sweet sadness about her. Her songs speak of broken hearts, open fields, friends and lonely travels. Not particularly original themes, but her lyrics are honest and heartfelt.

Maki's best feature is her smoky voice, which is able to make up for the dryness of her music. Her lyrical style can be compared to Sarah McLachlan, although in an entirely different context. Her voice is pleasant and soothing, yet contrastingly raspy, a unique combination, but one that works. Her unassuming tone and laid back phrasing allow for an audience to easily relate to the troubles she sings of. I believe her lyrical approach and unique voice make her distinguishable from others in this genre.

The music behind the voice however, is not so original—it's difficult to tell when one song ends and a new one begins. The entire album blends together in a twangy continuum of melancholy. Although a few songs exhibit a hint of playfulness, the variance between tracks is minimal.

The album opens with "Over," a dark song that, standing alone, could be considered quite decent. However, once again, "Over" sounds the same as the other nine tracks on the album. The only song that really stands out is "To Be Good," which is still not particularly fantastic. Even the vocal range demonstrated is extremely limited.

Confusion Unlimited does not offer much in the area of musical ambition. It does however achieve a bittersweet sound that could be appreciated by some listeners. For those of you who are looking to mellow out, I would suggest catching her at the Main this Friday, and at the Railway Club the following Wednesday. ❖



Call out to the AMS Finance Commission:

Go shorty, it's your birthday!
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Thanks for sending our production manager to Newfoundland for a week. She loves you all. ♥

85 years THE UBYSSEY Still getting picked up at 85.
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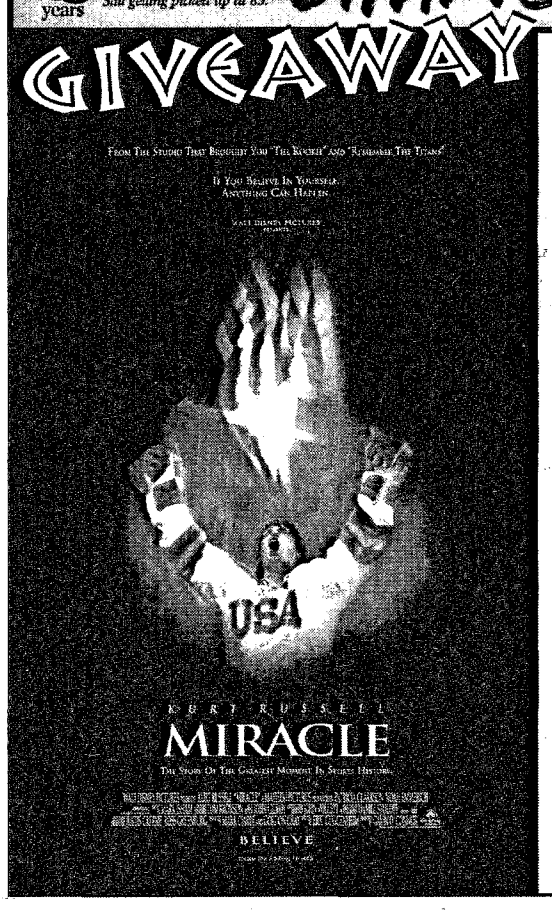
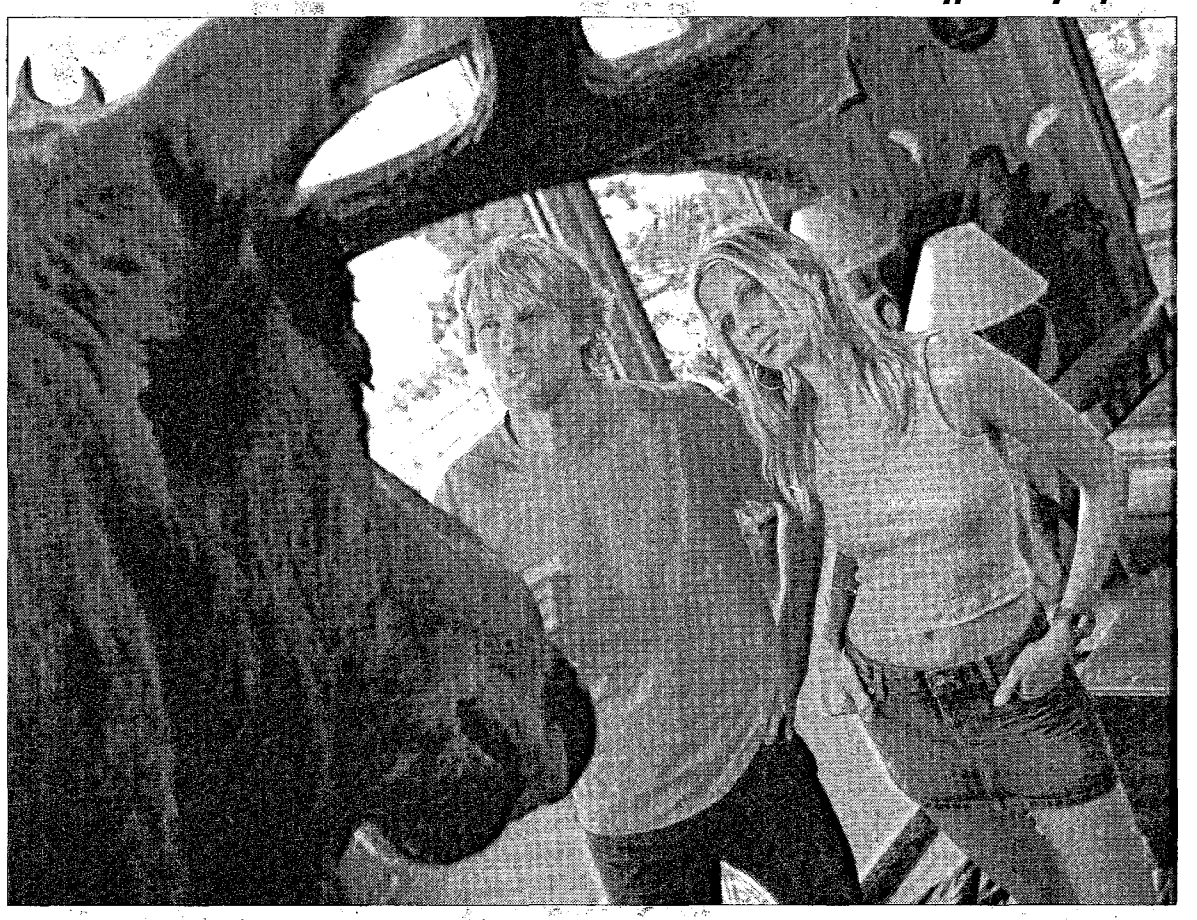


Come to room 23 SUB to recieve a double pass to a preview screening of MIRACLE on February 4, 7:00PM, at SilverCity Metropolis.

OPENS IN THEATRES FEBRUARY 6

The big flop



Movie fails despite all-star cast

***THE BIG BOUNCE* opens tonight**

by Greg Ursic
CULTURE WRITER

Jack Ryan (Owen Wilson) is not exactly what you would consider motivated—even the word has too many syllables for his liking. Not disinclined to petty crime, Jack is the kind of man that would probably pick up money that's left lying within reach, as long as he's not going to waste time or energy looking for it. All Jack really wants in life is to pound some nails, ride the surf and catch a little peace in paradise. But there's much more to *The Big Bounce* than waves and women.

When Jack KOs his boss, he pops up on everybody's radar. Walter (Morgan Freeman), the local judge, takes Jack under his wing and offers him a job, while Ray Ritchie, a snaky land developer and Jack's former employer, wants him to disappear. And then there's Nancy (Sarah Foster), the stunning thrill-seeker with a nose for trouble, an eye for Jack and a larcenous heart. Double cross and dirty dealing can't be far behind.

Everything about Owen Wilson screams slacker—he moves slow, talks low and always seems like he's in a bit of a daze, which makes Jack the perfect character for him. Wilson's "oh-gosh" approach and languorous delivery infuse some much needed humour into the script, and makes Jack a lovable cad that you want to root for. You also realise that his good but naive nature is going to get the best of him.

Nancy's dialogue is even more threadbare, which means that Sarah Foster has to communicate in other ways. Thankfully she is a tantalizing morsel who can say volumes with a sashay and a wink. The rest of the supporting cast is not so lucky.

Gary Sinise's character Ray, the supposed villain of the piece, is a single dimensional character who doesn't get enough time onscreen for the audience to dislike him let alone earn their hate. Walter, through no fault of Morgan Freeman's, is supposed to be mysterious, but comes off as hopelessly clueless due to ineffectual writing.

Even worse off is poor Bebe Neuwirth, who is relegated to spending virtually every scene in a drunken fugue state stumbling around like a buffoon. It's sad and criminal.

Unfortunately, beautiful scenery (take your pick), a spunky soundtrack and few guffaws can't make up for lifeless dialogue, poorly written characters and a transparent plot found in *The Big Bounce*. Instead of wasting your time, you could always rent a 99-cent video, balance your chequebook or get some dusting done. ❖

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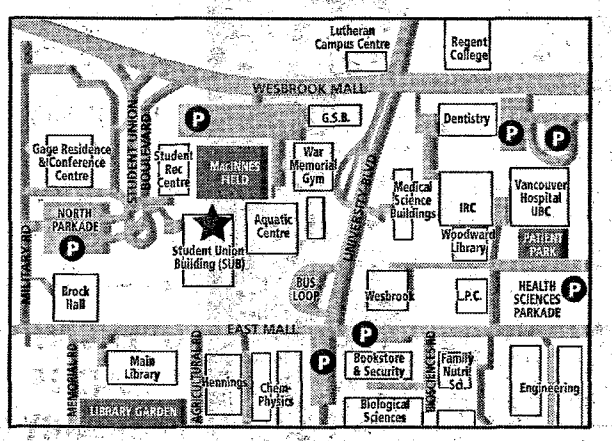
Implementing the Official Community Plan for the UBC area

The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) invite you to attend an important workshop. This workshop is an opportunity for the UBC community and neighbours to identify recommendations for consideration by the GVRD/UBC Joint Committee on improvements to the implementation process for the Official Community Plan (OCP) for UBC.

The conclusion of the GVRD Board from the 2003 OCP review was that no amendments to the basic policies of the OCP were required; the plan's content remained appropriate to guide land use decisions on UBC campus. As a result of the community comments received during the OCP review, staff have been asked to meet with the public to review OCP implementation.



REGISTRATION:
To participate, please RSVP to Kris Nichols by e-mail at kristian.nichols@gvrd.bc.ca or by phone at 604-451-6560.
Please register by Thursday, February 5, 2004.

Saturday, February 7, 2004

Registration 8:30 a.m.
Workshop 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Please pre-register

Student Union Building Room 200
6138 Student Union Boulevard

Transit is available to the UBC Loop (4, 10, 25, 41, 43, 44, 19, 99, 258, 480)

Parking is available nearby at the North Parkade or behind the War Memorial Gym off of Wesbrook Mall.

Greater Vancouver Regional District
UBC

For more information, please visit the GVRD website at www.gvrd.bc.ca/growth/ElectoralAreaA.htm

Or the UBC website at www.universitytown.ubc.ca

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