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Trouble for sessionals' union

by Alex Dimson

The BC Labour Relations Board (LRB) will likely recognise UBC's Faculty Association as an official labour union, according to Faculty Association President Mary Russell.

If the Faculty Association is granted this status, the union drive initiated by UBC sessional lecturers last year will be invalidated since sessionals cannot legally hold membership in more than one union.

This development comes after an LRB panel—organised to assess the validity of the sessionals' union drive—canceled a hearing originally scheduled for yesterday. The panel was slated to hear arguments from lawyers representing the Faculty Association and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) about whether the Faculty Association can be considered a union.

The Faculty Association is an independent body responsible for faculty labour negotiations with UBC administration. All sessional lecturers are members of the Faculty Association. Although it has full negotiating power with UBC, the LRB does not currently recognise it as an official labour union.

But Russell and some CUPE officials believe that the LRB has decided to reverse its position.

"The Labour Relations Board has already indicated in a number of preliminary decisions that their inclination is to see [the Faculty Association] as the appropriate bargaining union," said Russell.

While CUPE officials have said that they are unwilling to speculate about the LRB decision, at least one, who requested anonymity, admitted that "things don't look good."

CUPE has been asking the LRB to recognise an independent CUPE sessionals union, separate from the Faculty Association.

The LRB panel will meet this Friday to read written submissions from each side.

Aaron Doyle, a spokesperson for Sessionals Organising Sessionals (SOS), the group that initiated the sessionals union drive in January 1999, said that even if the LRB rules against sessionals, the union drive shouldn't be considered a failure.

"I believe that the sessionals would be better off with an independent union, but at least sessionals would have a union. Before we started our union drive, sessionals had no representation at all," said Doyle, referring to a 20-year period prior to January 1999 during which part-time sessionals were refused Faculty Association membership.

In January 1999—just days before the union drive began—UBC administration allowed all part-time sessionals to join the Faculty Association. Part-time instructors accepted the same offer in February.

Peter Lane, business manager of CUPE Local 2278—which represents teaching assistants and instructors on campus—is also cautiously optimistic.

"I don't have any difficulty whatsoever with the Faculty Association becoming a union. In fact I would encourage people to vote to become a union. I'm not sure what the sessionals will be able to do within that union because they are certainly a minority, but they will be given some representation," he said.

For her part, Russell believes that the Faculty Association can represent sessionals' interests properly. She said that she regrets that some sessionals don't believe the Faculty Association provides them with an adequate forum for their concerns.

"I would encourage [sessionals] to become active members of the Faculty Association," said Russell, who contends that the Faculty Association has been dealing with a number of sessionals' concerns on an ongoing basis, and has negotiated two agreements for them.

After holding a mail-in vote last May asking sessionals if they wanted to unionise, the LRB was forced to seal the ballot box when the Faculty Association and UBC first appealed the validity of the sessionals' union drive.

Results of that ballot have not been counted pending the LRB decision, which is expected in the coming weeks.❖

He's bigger than the Beatles

MORE THAN JUST A CROWN OF THORNS: This plywood replica of Jesus was found out in front of the Vancouver School of Theology at UBC, and it's got us scratching our heads a bit. The note attached to the piece of art explained that the nine-foot-tall cutout, which is covered in corporate logos and photocopied money, is the result of what the makers have learned about Jesus both from society and from what they have learned at school. TARA WESTOVER PHOTO

Government to fund student loans

by Alejandro Bustos
National Bureau Chief

HULL, QUÉBEC (CUP)—The federal government will once again administer the Canada Student Loans program after some of the country's major banks walked away from the program last week.

Thomas Townsend, director-general of learning and literacy at Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), announced last Thursday that the Royal Bank, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce were no longer interested in administering the national student loan system.

The cost to the federal government, however, is still unclear.

Although federal officials cannot provide an exact cost for the program, HRDC spokesperson Gino Trifiro said that the government will have to raise $1.8 billion in capital to administer the program.

But Michael Conlon, national chairperson for the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), says that HRDC officials have told him several times that the actual cost of the program is $1 billion per year.

Until 1995, Ottawa was in charge of distributing and collecting student loans. That year the program was privatised, however, and the banks became responsible for loans.

The federal government negotiated a risk-sharing agreement with the banks under which Ottawa paid an up-front five per cent premium on every student loan—worth between $50 million and $75-million per year—to compensate banks for high default rates on loan repayment.

The Ubyssey reported in January that while banks projected a 20 per cent default rate on the repayment of loans during the five-year contract, the rate has been a substantially higher 29.7 per cent.

Due to this unexpectedly high rate, Ottawa offered to increase the banks' premium from 5 per cent to 9.75 per cent—a value of $80 million per year.

A few banks declined this offer, demanding a higher $100 million per year.

continued on page 2

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continued from page 1

After reviewing the banks' bids, Trifiro said that Ottawa decided to reject these requests and provide funding directly to run the student loan program on its own.

"There was not enough tenders to guarantee a viable national system of delivery," said Trifiro.

The HRDC will be responsible for administering the loans beginning August 1, when the current five-year contract expires. Some 450,000 students every year rely on the loan program, which has been in place since 1964.

Student reaction to the HRDC announcement was positive.

"Our general reaction is to applaud the federal government for standing up to the banks and not bending to their demands," said Conlon.

Kieran Green, communications co-ordinator for the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, said students will now have more input into how the student loan system works.

"No student could access the negotiations between Ottawa and the banks," he said. "Now we can be involved in the negotiations."

Green added that students should not see the announcement as a sign that the student loan system is in trouble.

"Our key message to students is 'don't panic, this is not the end of the Canada Student Loans system,'" he said. "Come August 1, there will be money for student loans."

The CFS was also pleased with the news. The CFS has criticised the privatisation of the loan program from the start, arguing that the government cannot accommodate the banks' wishes while maintaining student loan distribution as a social program.❖

—with files from the Ubyssey

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New tuition policy put on hold

by Daliah Merzaban

Official approval of UBC's controversial tuition policy proposal will be delayed for at least two months in response to mounting student criticism.

Policy 72, which would regulate future changes in tuition, was slated to go before UBC's Board of Governors (BoG) this Thursday, when it would likely be adopted as official university policy.

But UBC Vice-President, Students, Brian Sullivan said UBC wants to address student concerns before approving the policy, and has decided to table the proposal until May.

"This is a very important issue and it will undoubtedly benefit from some further discussions, taking a little more time to consolidate some of the student feedback and give all parties at the university a chance to discuss it further," said Sullivan, who added that although he supports the delay, he would like the BoG to review the policy soon.

The proposal has come under sharp criticism from the Alma Mater Society (AMS), specifically because it would introduce differential tuition fees at UBC.

During a February Council meeting, the AMS adopted a motion opposing the tuition proposal, and requested that the university refrain from taking the issue to the BoG this month.

Commerce professor Don Wehrung, one of the heads of the tuition policy committee, said that the committee is anxious to have its proposal go before the Board for approval, but added that he understands the need for further consultation.

The policy initially proposed setting undergraduate tuition fees according to the cost of the program per student.

But last week, the tuition policy committee—which has been working on Policy 72 for over a year—modified the tuition fee proposal so that all students would pay the same tuition for a given course, but the per-course fees would vary between faculties. All first-year students would pay a standard tuition fee, regardless of their program of study.

Although many AMS councillors see these changes as improvements, they criticised the committee for revising the policy only one week before the BoG was set to hear the proposal.

"I was surprised that they were planning on trying to submit [the changes] three or four days before as a radically different policy," said Jesse Guscott, an outgoing student BoG representative. Guscott hopes that UBC will use the extra time to listen to students' concerns.

Current BoG student representative Tieg Martin—who supports implementing differential tuition fees because he claims it will make faculties more accountable to their students—also applauds the delay.

Although he believes it would be preferable for BoG to consider the tuition policy in March—while most students are still on campus—he said that he'd like to spend time listening to students' concerns.

"The AMS has raised some legitimate questions and I think the Board has undertaken to pay close attention to those if we're bringing [them] up for a final reading," said Martin.

He noted, however, that because the provincial tuition freeze that has been in place since 1996 may soon be lifted, UBC requires a comprehensive guideline for future tuition changes.

AMS President Maryann Adamec could not be reached by press time for comment.❖

UBC-BCIT team up for a biotech co-op program

by Karmen Ho

A proposal that combines existing co-op programs at UBC and the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) could allow biotechnology students to enhance their competitiveness in the work force.

The purpose of the proposed honours co-op program is to "combine technical experience and training with education in other areas such as management, production, regulation, and intellectual property," according to a UBC Senate document about the new undergraduate program.

Bill Ramey, a UBC undergraduate advisor in the department of immunology and microbiology, believes that the new program could help meet the demands of the growing biotechnology industry.

Ramey explained that while UBC offers the research training that the industry demands, BCIT offers students technical training necessary to excel in the field. UBC students would benefit from more hands-on laboratory work during their time at BCIT.

"Industry consultants have indicated that the program would produce the students that they're interested in. They have a range of experience, both in the areas of science and in the areas of commerce and regulation and writing," said Ramey, who emphasised that writing skills are essential in entrepreneurial development.

Paul Barran, head of BCIT's biotechnology program, agrees that the program will better prepare students for the workforce, as well as offer a unique alternative for students in each institution.

The new program would take five years to complete—the length of a typical co-op degree at UBC. Students would take regular science courses in their first year at any college or university. They would then spend two years at BCIT, and their final two years at UBC, gaining work experience in the process.

Specific details of the program have not been determined. The program has been approved by UBC Senate, and is currently awaiting approval by the BC government and a provincial review committee.

Barran said that although BCIT will continue to offer its traditional diploma program, most students will likely enroll in the joint UBC-BCIT program for the added experience.

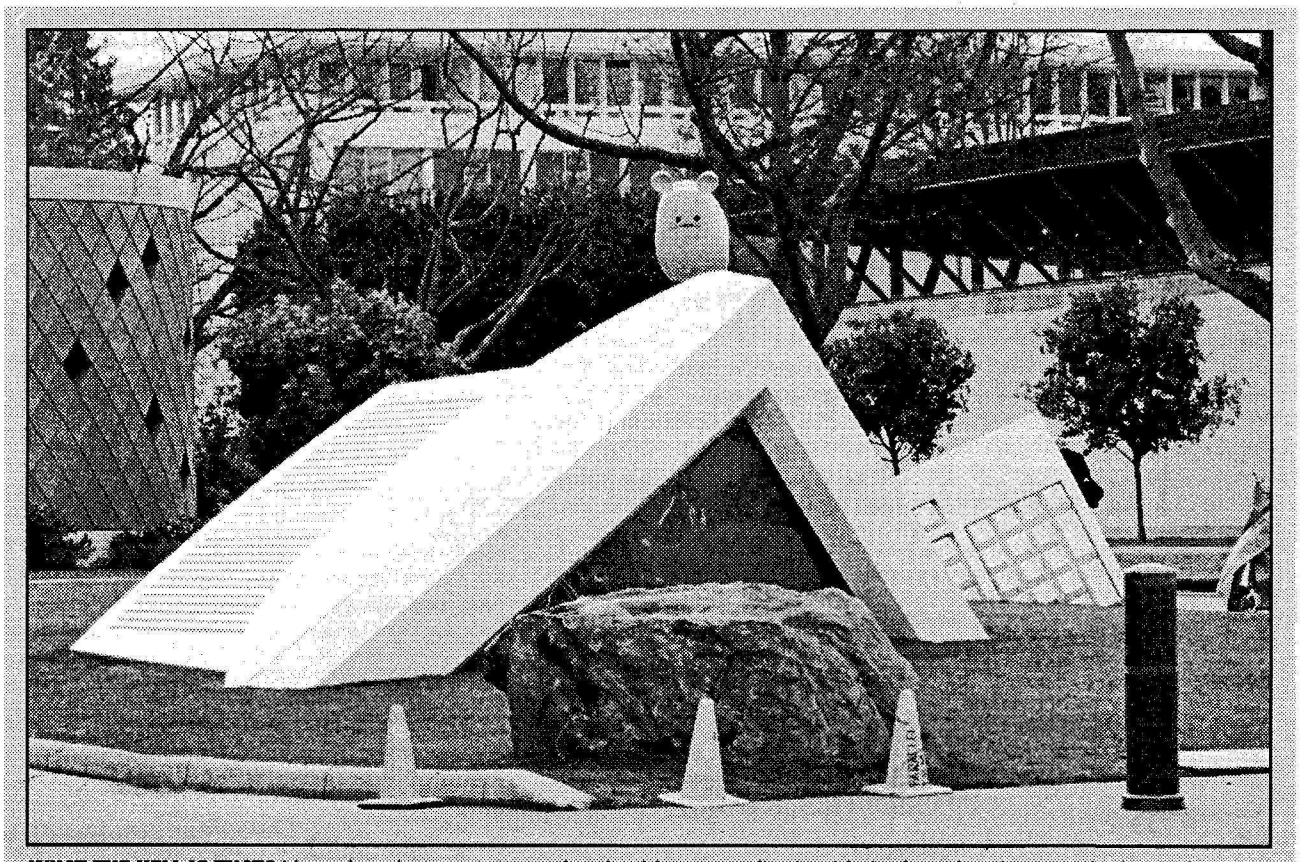
This would be the first program to combine studies at BCIT with any university. But Barren and Ramey agree that this could be the beginning of a future trend.

"Other departments at UBC have expressed interest in what BCIT has to offer," commented Ramey.

"Further collaboration between the two schools would depend on the departments involved, however," added Barran.

UBC students interested in the program would apply through the regular co-op process. At BCIT—which has traditionally served students on a first come, first serve basis—qualified students will also have to have an interview and write an essay.

The program could be available as early as September.❖



WHAT THE HELL IS THAT? *It's a gigantic computer monitor, beside an equally sizeable keyboard and mouse, in the field near the Rose Garden. They are props for the hightech computer movie Anti-Trust, starring Tim Robbins, that is filming on campus this week. The Chan Centre-like structure in the background is actually a daycare. Weird.* TARA WESTOVER PHOTO

Students reject Coke deal

by Jon Bricker
The McGill Daily

MONTRÉAL (CUP)—Students at McGill University have voted against a proposed deal that would make Coke the exclusive beverage supplier on campus.

While over 5000 students participated in last week's referendum during student union elections, 2690 students cast "no" votes.

Following the vote, rumours began to circulate on campus that the student union planned to challenge the legitimacy of the referendum.

But the rumours didn't stop members of the "no" campaign from celebrating.

"We sent a message not only to administration but to Coke as well," said "no"-campaign organiser Phil Gohier. "It's quite obvious we're not extending a welcome mat."

Jim Turk, president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, said he was pleased with the vote.

"The university's response now has to be 'under no condition do we proceed,'" he said.

Students opposed to the deal have questioned Coke's human rights record and criticised the secrecy that has shrouded most of the contract.

But while McGill officials say they recognise the referendum results, they are in no rush to scrap the proposed deal, which has been estimated at $10 million.

"We sent a message not only to administration but to Coke as well."

—Phil Gohier
"no" campaign organiser

UBC and the Alma Mater Society signed a similar ten-year deal with Coke in 1995.

"The students have definitely given us a message," said Alan Charade, McGill's director of Ancillary Services and the administration's lead negotiator in the deal.

He later added that the referendum results need to be taken with a grain of salt.

"A small minority even showed interest in voting on this matter," he said.

Campus student leaders who supported the deal, meanwhile, were focusing on their call for more post-secondary funding.

Andrew Tischler, the student society president, said a funding crisis is forcing Québec universities to look for more money in the private sector.

Tischler said those who supported the Coke deal were only trying to make up for government cutbacks.

In response, Turk said that relying on private funding sends a message to governments that universities can replace money that has been cutback.

"It absolutely does let the government off the hook and at a time when they do have the resources," he said.

Coke officials, meanwhile, say they are willing hear the concerns of students about the proposed deal.

"Our business is just about how do we satisfy peoples' thirst," said Coca-Cola Bottling Vice-President of Public Affairs Sandra Banks.

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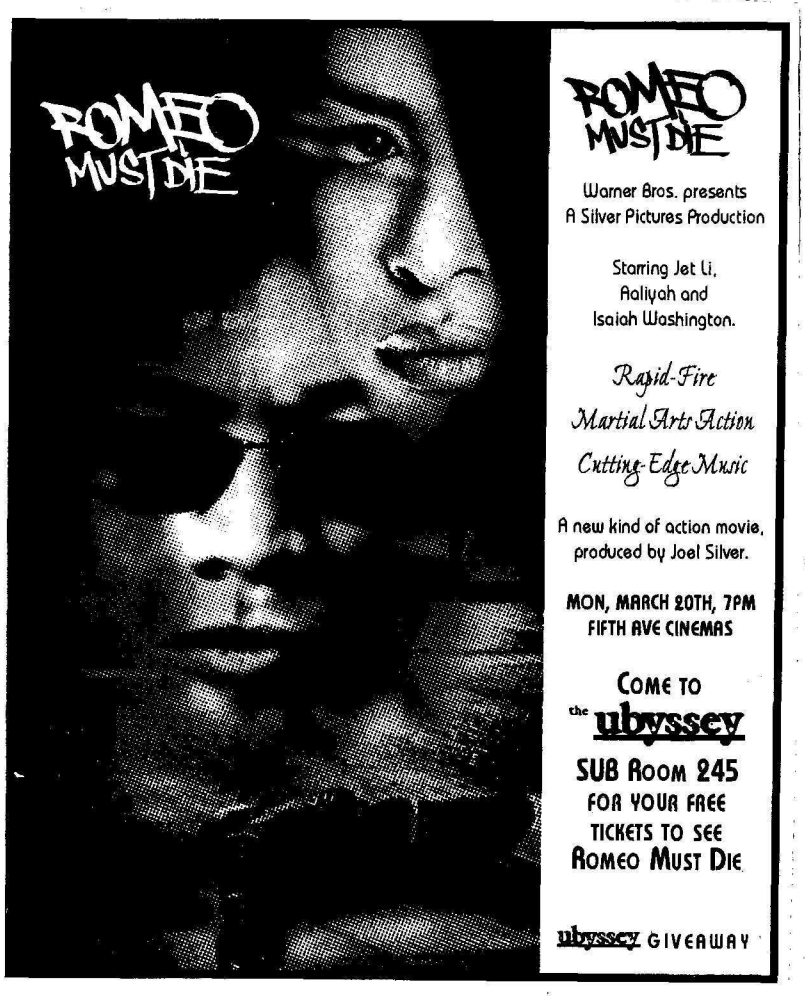


Chief Justice visits

by Michelle Mossop

When it comes to the Constitution, the courts are the referees, says Canadian Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin.

McLachlin, who was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada in January, addressed the role of the courts in a modern democracy before an audience at the Vancouver Institute's public lecture series at UBC on Saturday.

"They blow the whistle when governments play out of bounds, but they aren't the players and they don't call the plays," she said.

"Before the 1980s, the Canadian judicial system was mainly composed of dealings with contracts and torts, settling disputes between private parties," said McLachlin. But she explained that population growth, increases in wealth and industry, and the introduction of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 drastically changed the role of the Canadian judicial system.

The Charter, which incorporated a made-in-Canada bill of rights into the Canadian Constitution, allowed the courts to expand their role in the lives of Canadians.

"Canadians were used to the idea that the courts could strike down law that the parliament and legislature had passed, on grounds that one had stayed into the other one's backyard," said McLachlin.

"But now laws were being struck down on the basis of rights like freedom of expression, liberty, and equality."

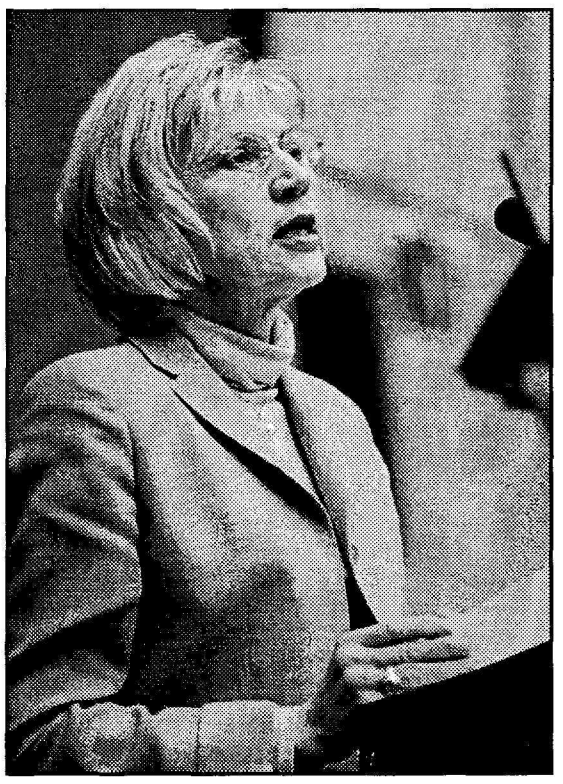
UBC political science professor David Elkins, who specialises in Canadian politics, believes that the public is satisfied with this role.

"I think, by and large, most Canadians think it's good that rights are being expanded and protected by the courts," he said.

But this additional responsibility to safeguard the Constitution created a backlog in the Canadian judicial system.

"Courts were deciding on issues that had never before found their way into Canadian courts: abortion, euthanasia, rights for same-sex couples, aboriginal entitlement—the list goes on and on," said McLachlin.

Different measures were taken to speed up the process of hearing the cases. By replacing the oral process of applying to appeal with a largely written process and with time limits in discourse, the courts of Canada became more efficient.



HERE COMES THE JUDGE: Beverley McLachlin speaks to a UBC audience on Saturday. TARA WESTOVER PHOTO

As a result of these efforts, McLachlin said that by 1990—the year after she entered the Supreme Court—the backlog had disappeared.

Although McLachlin stressed her inability to discuss the particular decisions of the court on the grounds of impartiality, she did address some criticisms of the courts—mainly the notion that since judges are not elected, they are unaccountable.

"Judges are accountable. They operate under constant public scrutiny. The courtrooms are always open other than in rare situations where security dictates otherwise," said McLachlin.

And Elkins agrees, saying that the decisions judges make are public and open to criticism.

McLachlin also emphasised challenges for the Canadian judicial system as it begins the 21st century.

"If I can do nothing else during my time as Chief Justice of Canada I hope that when I leave office I can say that the rule of law in Canada is intact and the justice system is respected."❖

Dean: aboriginal women's equality issues still "not well understood"

by Irene Plett

Sharon McIvor is not afraid to use the word "racism," even when it comes to presenting legal arguments.

McIvor—dean of Academic and Indigenous Studies and dean of Business Administration at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology—spoke to over 100 women at the Women and the Law Dinner held last week by law students in the UBC Women's Caucus.

McIvor, a partner in the McIvor Nahanee Law Corporation in Merritt, BC, is the first aboriginal speaker to address the annual dinner.

"It was important to the Women's Caucus members to have an aboriginal woman speaker, to raise awareness particularly around issues of aboriginal women's equality that are not well understood," said Violet Allard, one of the event's organisers.

McIvor argued the first Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) case in 1992, when aboriginal women wanted to have a seat at the negotiating table in drafting changes to Canada's constitution. McIvor argues that there is a continuing male dominance in Canadian as well as First Nations, political structures.

Gender equality, she claims, is further undermined when established organisations create their own aboriginal women's secretariats, allowing them to compete with aboriginal women's groups for government funding.

McIvor said that the Canadian Human Rights Act must be changed so that it applies to First Nations people on reserves. Currently, women or others experiencing discrimination have no access to the complaint mechanism or the tribunal process of the Act.

"Matrimonial property on reserve is not subject to any kind of rules," she said, explaining that if a husband decides he wants to move in with another woman, he can take his current wife to the edge of the reserve and tell her to go away.

"The husband generally has a huge influence on the band council. He can make a [Band Council Resolution] that you can't come on the reserve or you're trespassing," she said.

McIvor blames what she believes is the male-dominated band council structure on the result of colonial pressures.

"It was against the law for traditional [hereditary] chiefs to be elected chief [of a band council]," she said. "The majority of aboriginal communities were matrilineal or matriarchal. Members of the community had great input, and decisions affecting people were made collectively."

McIvor said that she was seen as something of an oddity when she first argued a case at the Supreme Court of Canada.

But she still has a long way to go, she says, before she gains the respect of the legal establishment.

"We have lost almost every case so far. We have several on the go, and I don't anticipate winning any of those either."

Susan Boyd, Chair in Feminist Legal Studies at UBC, said that there is a diversity of perspectives among aboriginal women.

"It is only recently that mainstream feminist women are taking on aboriginal women's issues," said Boyd.❖

News briefs

Student Court says elections were fair

Erfan Kazemi and Mark Fraser did not violate any electoral rules in January's Alma Mater Society (AMS) elections, the AMS Student Court has decided.

Kazemi and Fraser, who are co-presidents of the Place Vanier Residence Association, won the positions of vice-president academic and university affairs and vice-president administration, respectively. Because the election centred on residence-related issues, however, some of their opponents charged that they were using their positions to campaign unfairly. AMS regulations limit the amount of campaigning permitted within residences.

After the elections, Jon Chandler, former AMS external commissioner and unsuccessful candidate for vice-president external affairs, filed a complaint with Student Court. Last week, however, the court's Prima Facie Committee ruled that there was insufficient evidence to support a claim that Kazemi and Fraser violated any AMS regulation, or acted improperly during the election.

The Prima Facie Committee will meet tomorrow to determine whether any regulations or principles were violated by other candidates, student groups, the AMS Elections Committee, or the AMS Elections Appeals Committee.

Two more arrests made on campus

Campus Security arrested two suspects last week in connection with break-ins on campus.

The arrests, made Wednesday and Thursday nights, were part of Campus Security's efforts to stop a small number of frequently-reported individuals suspected in a number of campus thefts.

Campus Security says that these individuals have used claims of bottle and can collecting to gain unauthorised access to campus buildings. The most recent break-in occurred at the faculty of Medicine's D.H. Copp Building.

The university RCMP detachment has laid formal charges against the suspects, and forwarded them to Crown counsel. The first suspect has been charged with break-and-enter, the second with break-and-enter and breach of condition—the suspect "shouldn't have been at UBC in the first place," said Jeff Bingley, operations supervisor for Campus Security.

Bingley added that Campus Security's biggest problem is with people not reporting suspicious activities.

Drunk? Stoned? Don't drive home

Any drivers among the hordes of drunken students leaving Arts Country Fair will have to contend with RCMP roadblocks on their way home.

AMS Council last week approved the allocation of almost $4000 to fund two roadblocks on April 6, the day of the annual event, held on the last day of classes.

Because the local RCMP detachment is busy providing security at the event itself, officers must be brought in to operate the roadblocks, hence the cost to the AMS.

The AMS, the Arts Undergraduate Society, and Counterattack UBC will be working to develop a long-term funding strategy for future roadblocks.❖

Fair trade coffee in SUB

by Miriam Torchinsky

Caffeine addicts in the line-up at Blue Chip Cookies now have a socially responsible choice.

The Alma Mater Society (AMS) outlet is offering fair trade coffee until the end of classes on a trial basis. AMS Food Services is trying to implement ways to allow students to make ethical choices.

According to Lesley Washington, AMS councillor and a member of the AMS Impacts Committee, fair trade coffee is "grown on cooperatives, and made under conditions where fair labour practices are monitored and guaranteed."

Basically, when you buy this coffee you know that nobody's been hideously exploited in the production of it," she said.

Nancy Toogood, manager of AMS Food Services, says that there has been much interest in fair trade coffee, and that she has received some positive feedback.

"We will continue [to sell the coffee] if the feedback is good, and if we're selling enough of it to warrant keeping it for sale," she said.

However, selling only fair trade coffee is not currently an option, according to Toogood.

"All of the coffee equipment that we use is provided and serviced free of charge from [Nestlé]. It's not an exclusivity deal like Coke, but a small individual fair trade company would not be able to pay for [the equipment]."

"What we're trying to do here is the same thing as with the [green tax]—just offer people who want to make that conscientious decision a choice and make sure that we meet the demands of all our customers. Some people would prefer to make the ethical choice and buy the fair trade coffee, and there are people who don't give a damn, they just want to get the cheapest cup of coffee, and this way we provide both."

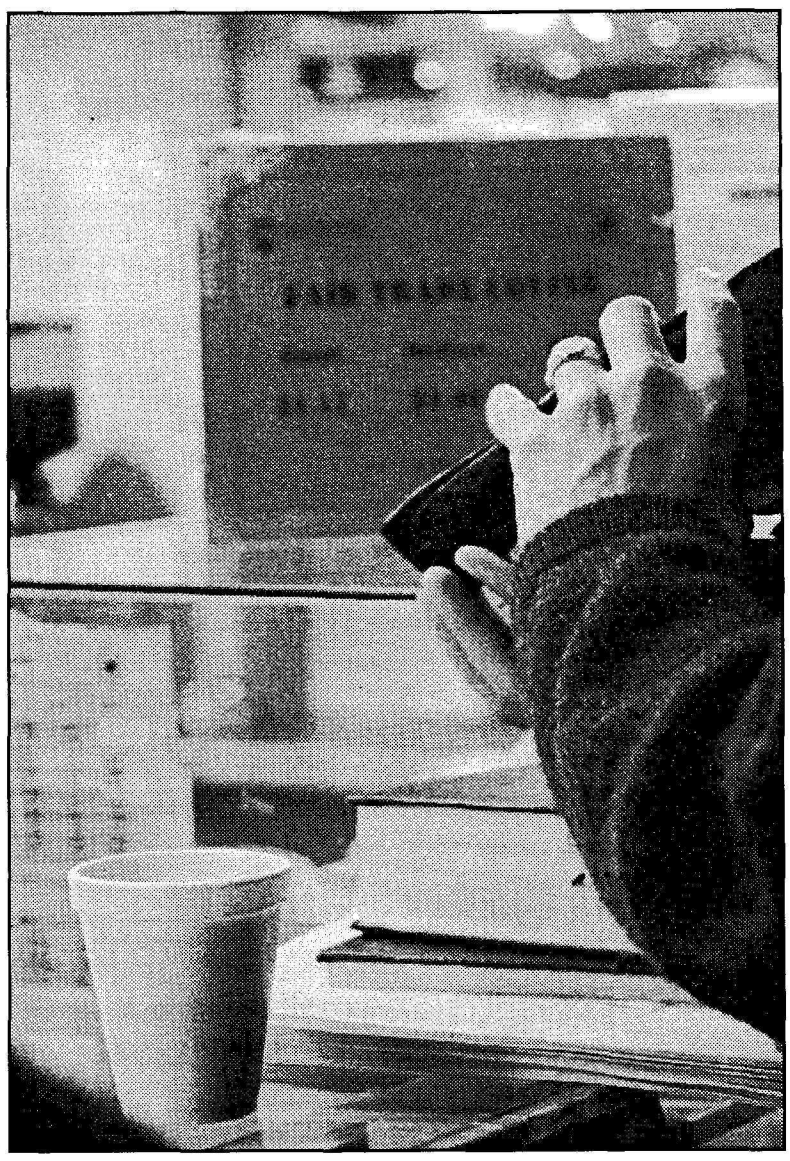
The fair trade coffee costs the AMS about 85 per cent more to buy, and costs students on average 25 per cent more per cup.

Kate Blaszczynska, a Blue Chip Cookies employee, is optimistic about interest in the coffee, but is worried that the AMS administration is not getting a clear picture of how much interest there is.

"I work here five days a week and people seem to be buying it, but I don't think that we're doing a really good trial run. We're not keeping good track," she said.

Impacts Committee member Darren Haines is pleased with the way fair trade coffee, the committee's first project, has been received.

"It's an easy thing to [implement], because it's a consumer choice. The more people we educate about what fair trade is, and the difference between fair trade and other types of coffee, the better," he said.❖



PAY NOW, PAY LATER: Blue Chip Cookies is giving students the choice to by fair trade coffee. This project by the AMS Impacts Committee allows students to choose coffee that has been grown on cooperatives where labour practices are monitored. TARA WESTOVER PHOTO

US school considers Ontario campus

by Jason Maclean
the Varsity

TORONTO (CUP)—Ontario's government is weighing a proposal from a private American university to establish a campus in the province, drawing criticism from the provincial NDP.

"This is a direct assault on Ontario's public universities and colleges by a big box American education conglomerate," said Ontario NDP Leader Howard Hampton said earlier this month.

"We don't need or want a post-secondary Wal-Mart education for our children."

The University of Phoenix (U of P) is the American school in question. It is a private, for-profit institution that has 67,000 students enrolled on campuses across 15 states, and another 10,000 online.

According to Hampton, the school employs three full-time lobbyists whose job is to woo Ontario Premier Mike Harris. And the Harris government appears to be listening.

"We are considering the option to allow private universities to operate in Ontario," said Kerry Delany, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Delany said that government officials have met contacts from the U of P and other private US universities.

Hampton notes that the US Department of Education ordered the school to pay $650,000 in fines after an audit exposed "system-wide problems" in student aid programs. For example, it refused to return public funds even after students had dropped out.

The U of P applied to operate in New Jersey but withdrew its proposal in November 1999 after opponents charged that it failed to meet the state's required levels of library resources and qualified, full-time faculty.

Hampton's real worry, however, is that once established here, the U of P will aggressively seek public funds.

"Once they get their foot in the door, the for-profit institutions become high-powered lobbyists seeking more money from taxpayers," he said.

But the provincial government dismisses this concern.

"If private universities are allowed to operate in Ontario, they would be fully funded by private money with no support by Ontario taxpayers," said Delany.

But the Conservatives' promise not to provide public funds to privatise educational institutions is misleading, says Jim Turk, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

"There are several ways in which private education would end up being underwritten publicly," said Turk.

Students enrolled in private universities would, for example, be eligible for interest-free government student loans.

Private universities, especially in their formative phase, would likely borrow resources from public institutions, including library and laboratory materials and even faculty members.

Donations to private universities, meanwhile, would be tax-deductible.

And zoning changes to accommodate private universities and related real estate developments would produce a huge, non-taxable boom to these institutions.

"All of which amounts to a sizeable and largely unaccountable subsidy," said Turk.

But according to Turk, a greater concern is the local establishment of a private, not-for-profit university in Ontario.

A coalition—which includes local MP Betty Stevenson and former UBC president David Strangway—is attempting to create such a university in Queensville, Ontario, to be called "Wolfe University."

"This proposal is more likely to succeed because it is more politically palatable than the prospect of a for-profit university, but it would be no less of a drain on public resources and therefore no less a threat to public higher education," warned Turk.

"Once the door is opened, there will be no shutting it."❖

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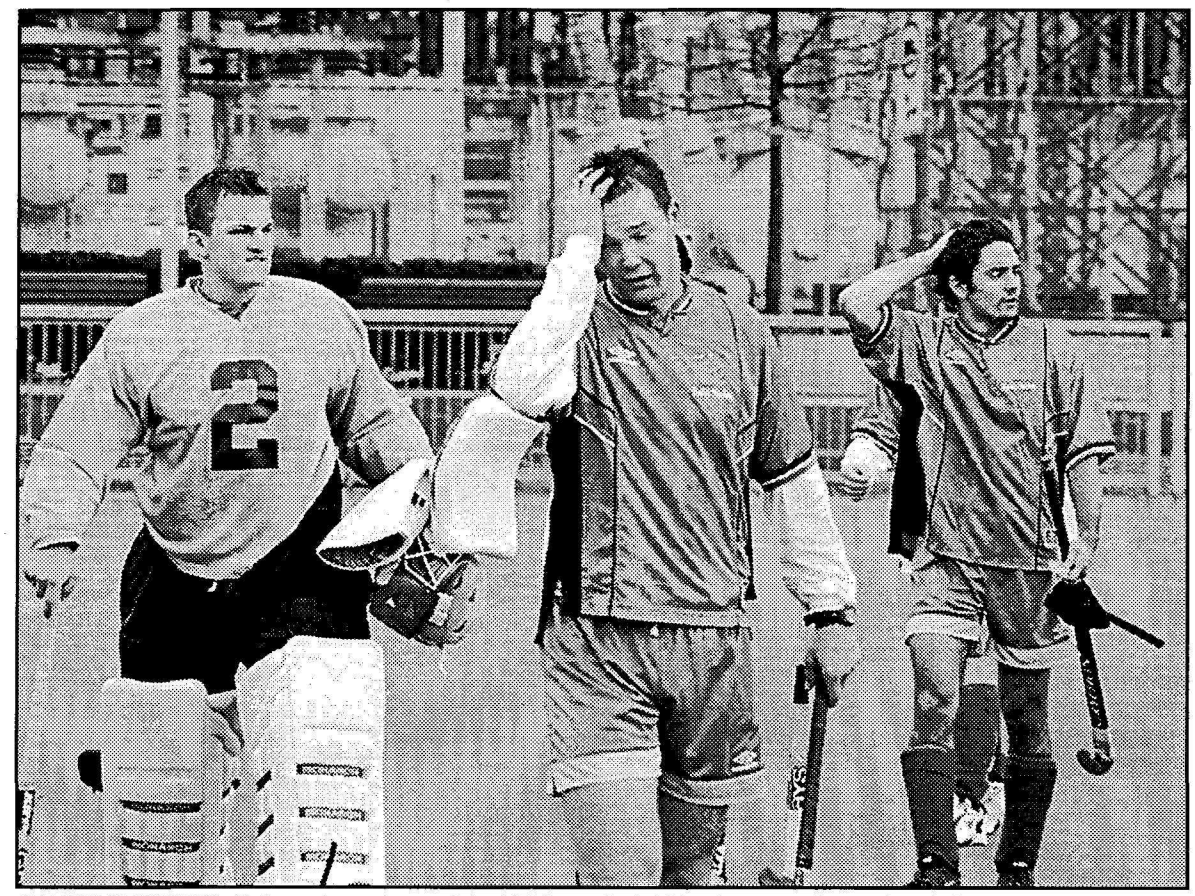

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR: Dejected members of the UBC men's field hockey team leave the pitch after a season-ending 3-1 loss to the number-one Victoria Selects. TOM PEACOCK PHOTO

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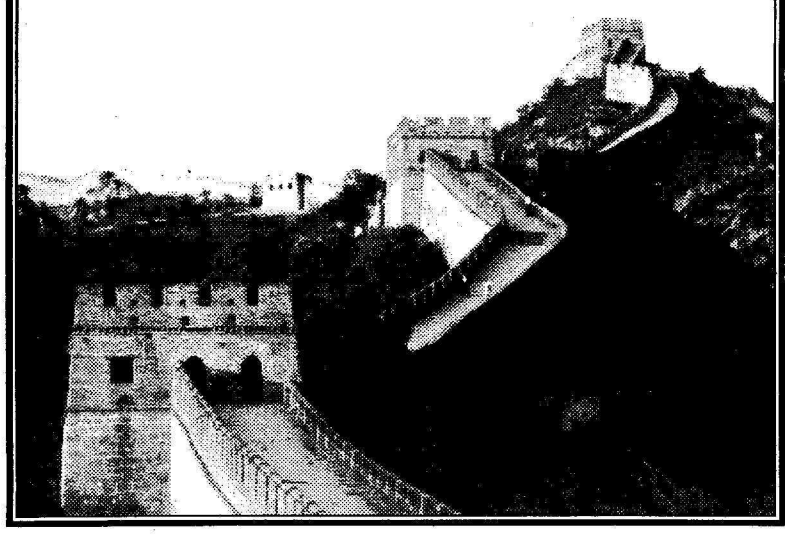

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Men's field hockey year disappointing

by Naomi Kim

It should have been a blowout.

It was a matchup of the first- and last-place teams in the Vancouver Premier Division men's field hockey league. The number-one Victoria Selects—a club team from Vancouver Island—versus the last-place UBC Thunderbirds. In the last meeting between the two teams, in Victoria, the hosts shut out UBC 8-0. And this time, UBC didn't even have its starting goaltender.

In the first game of the league playoffs, UBC's season was on the line. Fortunately for the Birds, their defence defused the potentially disastrous situation. But despite some inspired play in the first half, they didn't have enough and lost 3-1. However, after the game, the UBC team was not disheartened.

"I think we played beyond our expectations..." said UBC co-captain Darrell Yip.

"...coming out to the playoffs and coming out and bringing our best," finished co-captain Dave Morgan.

Playing on their home field, downtown at Livingstone Park, the Birds jumped out in the first minute to score against Victoria, which set the tone for most of the first half. The goal gave the Birds confidence and their strong defence protected their lead.

"We knew that we'd be up for the game just given the fact that it was a playoff game," said Morgan, not surprised that UBC performed so well against a top team.

Near the end of the half, Victoria tied the game at one goal apiece.

UBC goalkeeper Andrew Schouten, in only his second appearance in goal—he usually plays in the left-half position—stopped the Victoria shots with divse and chest saves.

"He did really well in goal," said Yip. "His technique is different—not great for field hockey—but he stopped a few shots from going into the net."

Just into the second half, Yip had a chance off a corner but the Victoria goalie smothered the ball at the doorstep. Three minutes later, as Victoria was pressuring the Birds in their own end, the Selects used a penalty to score the go-ahead goal.

UBC failed to convert on several corners, but UBC's defence held up to the Victoria attacks. On one play, after a UBC corner pass was broken up by Victoria and the ball wound up on a Victoria players' stick in front of a wide-open UBC net, Birds defender Steve Nield dove in from the left in time to stop the goal.

But just a minute later, with time running out on the game, Victoria scored a quick shot from the left side to end the game 3-1.

"[The Selects have] got some really skillful players on their team," said Morgan. "I think the last time we played them we were a bit intimidated by them. This time we just relaxed. We knew we could play really well against them."

"We played way more aggressive, we had way more chances...numerous corners, but just couldn't capitalise," said Yip.

It was the Birds' final game of the season, and Hash Kanjee, the head coach of the CIAU champion UBC women's field hockey team, was there on the sidelines, not as a coach, but as a spectator, shouting out occasional pointers to the players.

"They're a good bunch," said Kanjee of the UBC men's team. "They just need someone to look after them."

For this season, it's mainly been Morgan and Yip heading up the team. Since a substantial number of players graduated from UBC's league championship team four years ago, Morgan and Yip have taken the initiative to lead the team.

"[There has] been a lot of new guys," said Morgan, "and it's pretty much been the two of us trying to rebuild, keep things going."

Morgan, in his fourth year, and Yip, in his fifth, will both be graduating, but believe they're leaving behind a good base of players on the team with a future that doesn't look so bad. Even with a losing record of 2-12-1, Yip admitted that the team "improved a hell of a lot," especially after a positive final game.

"It's never going to go away," said Yip about the men's program, "but sometimes it's a little bit of a struggle to keep it going."

And one of the struggles has been the lack of funding. While the team shares the women's field hockey team's need for an artificial turf field at UBC, the men lack even more than their counterparts.

"We basically don't have a coach," explained Morgan. "Sometimes Hash [Kanjee] comes out and runs our practices and we have another member of the national team who comes out and runs practice sometimes. We'd love to have a coach, but unfortunately the funding's just not there."

"Hopefully we'll have more funding next year," said Yip optimistically.

While increased funding is out of the team's hands, a new season—the Birds will start practicing at the end of the summer—always brings about new goals. A coach would be nice, but a longer postseason wouldn't be so bad for next year either—and that may be well within their reach.❖

BIRD droppings

BASEBALL

The Birds were busy over the weekend, playing four games on the road. UBC was on a four-game winning streak after coming back from a three-run deficit to a 6-4 win over the Western Oregon State Wolves on Saturday. The streak ended in a 4-3 loss, however, in the next day's rematch. Playing against Lewis-Clark State College later that afternoon, UBC lost 8-6 to NAIA's number-one ranked team. UBC's record is now 6-8.

SWIMMING

About 400 swimmers—including several from UBC—representing 85 clubs competed at the Spring Nationals this weekend in Etobicoke, Ontario.

Mark Versfeld was UBC's golden boy, taking first place in the 50m, 100m, and 200m backstroke events. Mark Johnston took third place in the 200m freestyle, and fourth in the 400m free.

Jessica Deglau finished in second in the 200m fly, for which she holds the Canadian record, and won the bronze in the 200m free. Marianne Limpert won the silver in the 200m IM and added a bronze in the 100m free. Kelly Doody finished fourth in the 400m IM.

The Olympic trials will take place in Montréal from May 28 to June 4.

MILLENNIUM SCHOLARSHIP

At the first annual Thunderbird Millennium breakfast, over 1000 athletes, alumni, friends, and family gathered at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre yesterday morning. The event met its goal of raising more than $500,000.

The event is part of a ten-year plan to raise $6.3 million for athletic scholarships at UBC. ❖

UBC strong at CIAUs

by Naomi Kim

The men's side of the UBC track and field team had high expectations at the CIAU championships this weekend at McGill University, but the women's matched the men's pace as UBC brought home a total of seven medals.

The men's and women's team scores together resulted in a fifth-place finish with 49 points—scored individually, the men placed fifth and the women placed sixth.

While the teams placed strongly and the individual athletes competed strongly in their respective events, this year, there was additional incentive to do well.

"There was a huge rivalry between the men's team and the women's team," said UBC head coach Carmyn James. Apparently at the beginning of the year, one Birds assistant coaches made the faux pas of not saying much of the women's team while suggesting that the men's team could place in the top three at the CIAUs. The women's team took that as a challenge, and, according to James, "they were practically more fired up to score more points than the guys as opposed to beating the other schools."

The team of 15 that went to the nationals consisted of nine men and six women. Although the women were outnumbered by their counterparts, and having acknowledged that the men's team—who were also ranked higher—probably had a better chance at a top finish, they were pleasantly surprised with the final results: the men scored 24 points and placed fifth, while the women scored 25 points and placed sixth.

"We just kind of made a competition," said Birds high jumper Sarah McDiarmid with a laugh, "but the girls beat the guys."

And together, the small 15-member team finished strongly, with almost half the squad earning medals.

Despite its lack of facilities, the UBC team worked well with its talent. The sprinters trained at Minoru Park in Richmond, St Georges field, and the Student Recreation Centre—where the team speed trains on a 70-metre-long strip of track. The high jumpers, who last season trained on the rubber floor in Osborne Gym E, trained in War Memorial Gym this year.

And with this training, McDiarmid successfully defended her national title with a jump of 1.80m.

"It's pretty sad, we can only do partial run-ups," explained McDiarmid about training in War Memorial Gym. Essentially, she trained outdoors for only three practices, plus a training camp in Hawaii. "I was hoping to do well, but I wasn't expecting to necessarily pull it off just because of the lack of training that I've had this year"

Kerry McKelvie added another two medals, finishing first in the 1000m and third in the 1500m.

Another strong finisher was Heidi Dunkley in the weight throw. Although finishing just short of a medal in fourth place, her 14.41m toss was a UBC record and a personal best.

The men's side, which was expecting a team finish in the top five, did just that. Since the team was not in top form because of injuries, and sprinter Laurier Primeau's health was in question after he underwent surgery prior to the meet, it was decided that the team would only compete in select races—it would take away potential points, but would also let the team concentrate on finishing well in a few events.

"There was a little bit in question," said team captain Steve Walters, "but when it came down to it, basically everyone put themselves on the line and we came out with a silver [in the 4 x 400m relay] which was fantastic."

The All-Canadian relay team of Walters, Primeau, Alex Inglis and Chris Williams capped their medal-winning performance with a UBC record time of 3:16.83.

Williams added to the medal count with a bronze in the 600m in 1:18.86.

Sprinter Grayson Shillingford also won a bronze medal in the 60m, and impressed many, including his coaches.

"To make it to the final is great, but for him to win a medal was huge," said James proudly. "[And] he also set a new school record." He breezed past the old school record of 6.96 in a new time of 6.89

In the longer distances, David Milne also won a bronze in the 1500m and fourth place in the 3000m.

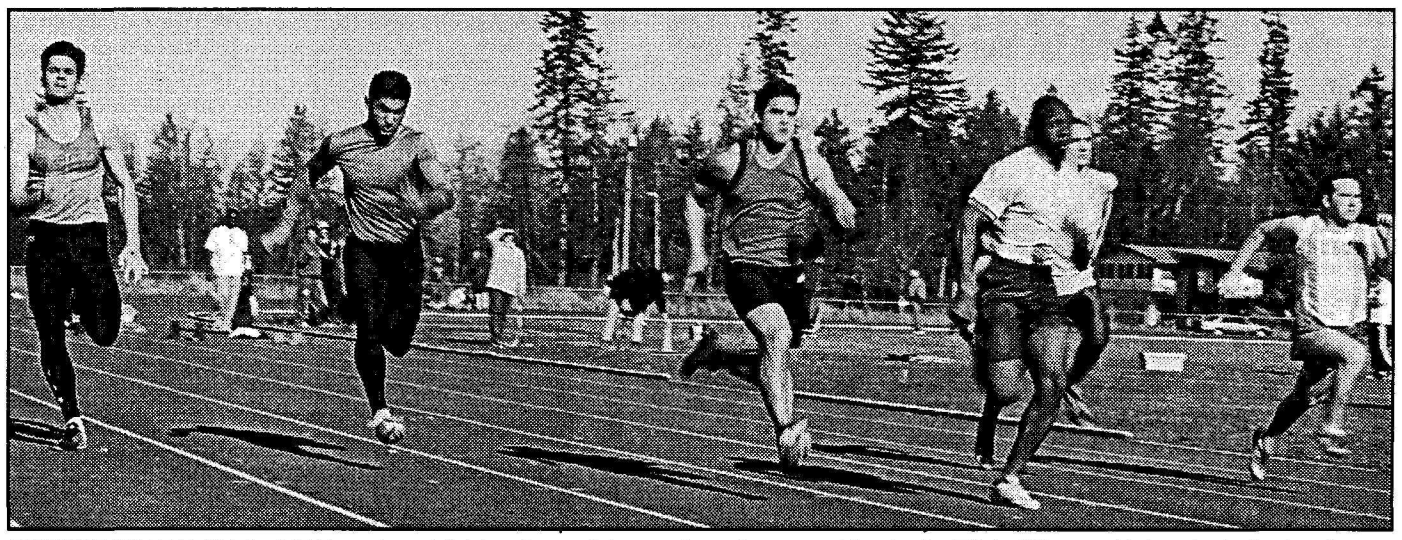
"For the lone numbers [of member on the men's team]," said Walters, "and for the number of events we competed in, [it] was quality."

And as for the women's team—it did well using even fewer athletes than the men.

"It's great because they only had six members themselves and performed extremely high quality...You couldn't ask for anything more from that side either," said Walters. ❖

Cutbacks end track and field team

by Naomi Kim



RUNNING ON EMPTY: The UBC track and field sprinters (shown above in competition in the Trinity Western University Invitational) have had a successful season. But along with field events, this program will be discontinued at UBC. NAOMI KIM PHOTO

After the CIAU championships in Montréal, it took three separate airplanes, 20 hours, and a luggage mix-up to get the UBC track and field team home—and that wasn't even the worst of it.

The worst of it was that the end of the season marked the end of the team.

The 85-year-old track and field program will no longer exist at UBC due to budget cutbacks. The track and field team will be reduced to the track team. But the cuts will go even deeper, cutting the sprinters from the team. What is left will essentially be a middle-distance running team, an unemployed coach, and a teamless national-champion athlete.

For head coach Carmyn James, the end of the team also meant the end of her job. Accompanying the news that the field part of the team would be scrapped was her notification last June about the unexpected termination of her employment.

The UBC Department of Athletics could not be reached for comment by press time.

James' involvement in the sport began when she was a student-athlete on the UBC track and field team in the 1980s. Despite her obvious disappointment in the decision to discontinue half the program—which James has personally worked hard to keep going—she felt a sense of responsibility watching the end of a long-running UBC program.

"Even going back to my athlete days," she recalled, "I've been going to [the CIAUs] for 20 years now and so there were a lot of memories. I was doing a lot of memory lane strolling."

James said that she understands the financial constraints the athletic department faces, but said that cutting back the program would not make much of an impact on the budget. Costs are relatively low because of there are few athletes competing in field events and no training facility costs. James adds that her salary is "peanuts."

Although the last day of her employment under her contract is March 31, it was, in reality, the day after the meet in Montréal. After 12 years of coaching at UBC, she has no choice now but to clean out her office and prepare for the final awards banquet.

"On the other hand," said James. "I've been here for 20 years, which is over half my life, and maybe this is an opportunity to move on to something bigger, better somewhere else."

During the Canada West and CIAU championships, James said it was difficult to hide her feelings about the end of the team—especially considering the situation for some of the athletes.

Of the two athletes in field events, one was graduating. The other, Sarah McDiarmid, a two-time CIAU champion in high jump still has two years of eligibility left.

After winning the bronze medal during her first year of eligibility, McDiarmid took the gold in the two years that followed, but the McGill meet marked the end of her UBC high jump career.

"I was planning on continuing for two more years [of eligibility] at UBC," said McDiarmid. "It's really hard because a major part of my life is track and field...Next year's pretty much up in the air right now."

McDiarmid, along with other track and field athletes, made the decision to stay and support athletics in Canada rather than going to the US. She is unhappy with the decision to "oust" the athletes who remained in Canada.

"It's a really touchy subject...because I think it shows lack of respect," said McDiarmid, who said she felt competing at this year's CIAUs—the team's last competition—was different from other years.

"I think it motivated me not necessarily to win for myself, but to show them that this is what they [will be] missing." ❖

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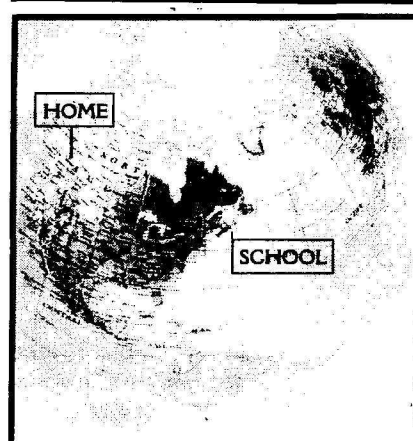

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Sex and time-travel

Communicating Doors at the Stanley Theatre until Apr. 1

by AiSha Jamal

The only gripe I have against *Communicating Doors* is the bland and uncreative title. Judging by the title, you would expect a play about a woman in her late 30s who discovers she was adopted at age three. She sets out to find her birth-mother who is not too happy to hear from her. But slowly her birth mother's curiosity draws her to her "new" daughter. Their re-unification opens up painful memories for both, but, through "communicating doors," both manage to put the past behind them and move on.

Actually Sir Alan Ayckbourn's play is anything but bland. *Communicating Doors* is a mystery/comedy that stars Poopay (Jillian Fargey), a young dominatrix in the year 2020, who arrives at a five-star London hotel ready to set to work with a whip, handcuffs and fake wig. Instead of administrating some pain and domination, she is forced to sign the deathbed confession of her old, frail and wealthy client, Reece Welles (Kurt Max Runte).

In his letter, old Mr. Welles confesses to the murder of his two previous wives. Reece's accomplice, Julian, catches Poopay signing the papers and chases her through the communicating door to another room. Poopay soon discovers she has travelled 20 years back, to the year 2000, to the first Mrs. Welles' room on the night of her planned murder. Mrs. Ruella Welles (Laurie Murdoch) is convinced to go through the "communicating door" herself and she finds the second Mrs. Welles, Jessica (Tiffany Lyndall Knight) 20 years earlier in 1980. Ruella and Poopay take it upon themselves to save both themselves and the second Mrs. Welles from the hands of the man who carries out the murders ordered by Reece Welles, the cold-blooded Julian (played by Ari Solomon).

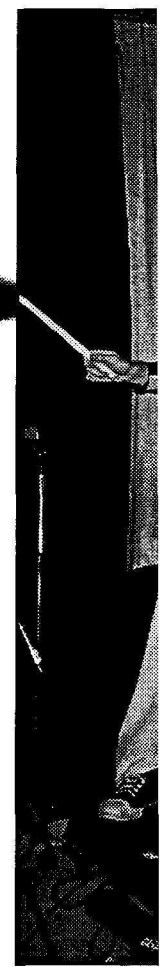
"Julian is definitely terrifying. Out of his stillness comes an explosiveness," says Ari Solomon during an interview about his character. Although Julian spends very little time on stage, it is the constant fear that Julian is one step ahead of Poopay and Ruella, lurking in every decade that gives the play its driving energy. "My character is based on Anthony Hopkins from *Silence of the Lambs*—that sort of quiet and still character. There appears nothing to be going on with him, but there is lots going on inside him. He's also part-Anthony Perkins from *Psycho*."

Ayckbourn's character development is very reminiscent of the great master of the cinema, Alfred Hitchcock. Ayckbourn fleshes his characters out slowly during the play. Although it's a fast-paced play, the characters unveil and develop in their own time. The audience is not fed the motivations and backgrounds of each character right off the bat.

"Ayckbourn intended this play to be an ode to the film noir, to the Hitchcockian genre but still have some of the thunder and lightning of farce," noted Solomon, a big Ayckbourn fan. "He is a very prolific writer and he's had a big influence on me. In fact, my audition piece for Studio 58 was an Ayckbourn piece."

Sir Alan Ayckbourn is Britain's second most produced playwright in the world, only after the Bard himself. The director of the Stanley Theatre's production of *Communicating Doors* studied under Ayckbourn for five months in 1995. In his lifetime, and he is still going strong, Ayckbourn has written more than 50 plays. Most of his work centres around complex themes played out in popular contemporary subject matter. In *Communicating Doors*, Ayckbourn continues his longtime fascination with space, time, relationships and sexuality.

In the eyes of Ari Solomon, the play is not just entertaining, it also has many lessons to teach. "Ayckbourn makes you think and he teaches you something: it's never too late to change. We can't change time but we can change our ways. Don't ever think you have to be content with your station in life." ❖



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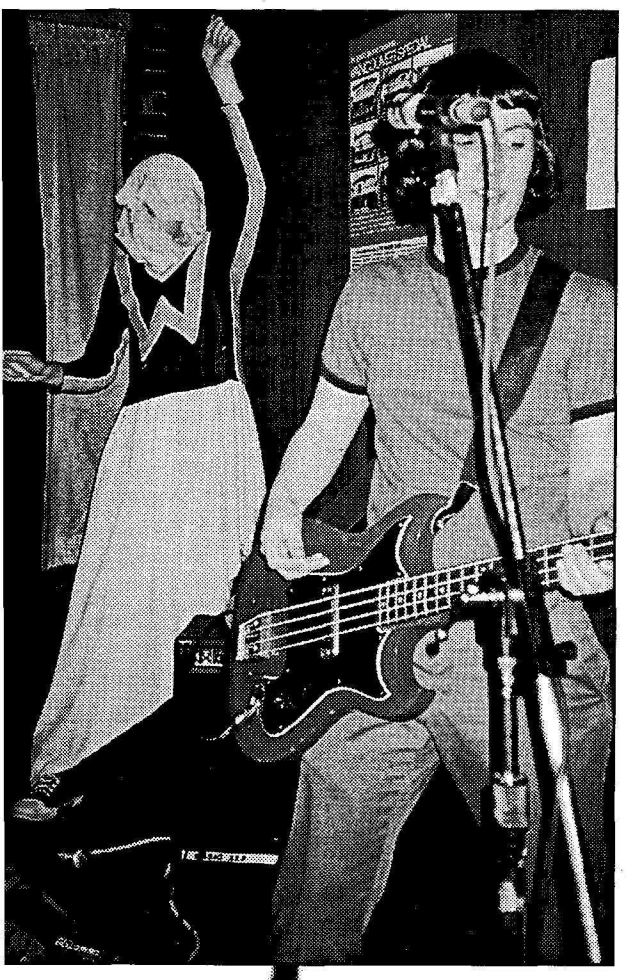
Vancouver Special Part 1 at the Marine Club Mar. 11

by Duncan M. McHugh

Organ-happy and full of sugar. Such were thee Goblins as they kicked off the first of seven *Vancouver Special* shows at the Marine Club. *Vancouver Special* is a compilation of the best in local indie bands, set for release on Mint Records April 1. To commemorate the album, Sean Raggett, the man who brought the album to fruition, put together a concert series. And Friday night's show was a good way to start.

Thee Goblins were fantastic, as per usual, clothed, as always, in white bedsheets and University of Washington cheerleader sweaters. Highlights included a transformation into thee Gothblins (which meant black bedsheets) and thee Skablins (which meant a trombone), a stunning rendition of "Mario Cuomo Works at Domo," and Nardwuar's swan dive off of an organ. Yeah!



BACK I SAY! The holds off a horde of s the Riff Randells e stage at the Club. Thankfully, the the crowd was up on horse tran-s. CAT MOORE PHOTO

Up next were the Riff Randells. Due to my friend's inability to find vegetarian samosas between sets, I missed their intro, but what I saw of their short set was sweet. A marriage of garage rock and the best girly-girl shoutouts this side of the Donnas, the Riff Randells mean Rock 'n Roll.

In what was a very fleeting appearance, the Ewoks, featuring members of Full Sketch and the Riff Randells, made a surprise cameo, kicking out a quick ditty before sitting right back down. Too bad, 'cos the last act of the night couldn't even come close to their eminently cooler openers. Though Pepper Sands did a good job on "So Fine" (their contribution to *Vancouver Special*), they were too reserved and sullen to fit in with the rest of the bill.

Look for Marine Club shows for the next three weekends, with the album launch happening Saturday, April 1, at the Helen Pitt Gallery. Net proceeds from these shows, and from the sale of the album, go to A Loving Spoonful, a local charitable organisation devoted to providing nutritious meals to those living with HIV and AIDS.❖

Life and a Lover at the Frederic Wood Theatre until Mar. 18

by Nicola Taylor

It was rather appropriate that *Life and a Lover*, a play about one of the most renowned female writers of the 20th century, opened at the Freddy Wood on International Women's Day.

In *Life and a Lover*, writer Natalie Meisner imagines the private relationship between Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West as it is conveyed through their life-long correspondences. A vibrant cast of Bloomsbury characters surrounds these two individuals (from which Woolf's husband, Leonard Stephens, is interestingly absent). Though somewhat stereotypical, each of these individuals has a distinct individuality in their representation.

Drawing together Woolf's imaginary and real worlds is the character of Orlando, long-rumoured to be a character sketch of Vita Sackville-West herself. Orlando serves as a metaphor of the women's relationship, and combines Woolf's real world with her literary world. Unfortunately, the somewhat comic portrayal of this character reduces its poignant role in the final scenes of the play.

Luisa Jojic, as Virginia Woolf, is perfect in presenting us with a frail woman who makes up for her physical weakness with her strong intellect and passionate vision of life. Trina McClure is also striking in her characterisation of Vita Sackville-West. Watching her, the audience has little reason to wonder why Woolf may have been attracted to such a strong and sensual woman.

Meisner is a graduate of UBC's MFA program in creative writing and won the Canadian National Playwriting Competition in 1999, for this play. It is easy to see why she won this award. Her play offers intelligent insight into the possibilities of the relationship between Woolf and Sackville-West, while effectively portraying life amongst the Bloomsbury group.

Meisner manages to balance equal amounts of fiction in the concise framework and flowing structure of her play. The acting is natural enough that it does not painfully remind you that you are watching a play. I highly recommend the play to anyone who has ever had a slight interest in the work of either of these women. However, I believe this piece would appeal to anyone, and it is a wonderful example of the talent we are surrounded by at UBC.❖

Stores at Contemporary Art Gallery until Apr. 8

by Liz Magor

ica-Ann Dozois

eezies and rocks. Mere words fail me when I try to escribe the current exhibition at the Contemporary Art allery. This puzzling modern art exhibition includes ieces—a backpack hanging above a small pile of pow- cheese with pieces of elbow macaroni stuck in it, a of plaster and plywood with carrots and potatoes hid- nderneath, a bag and raincoat hanging on the wall, and, , a pile of rocks with some Cheezies peeking out from it.

Magor is an established artist who lives in Vancouver known for her sculpture and amazingly realistic sili- ubber casts of real objects. The exhibition is intended to he issue of storage, why humans stash things away and . Like animals, we have a need for a stash of emergency es, but unlike animals we hide it in man-made struc- This idea explains the use of junk food and root vegeta- stead of nuts and berries and the silicone rubber casts s, bags, and building materials, rather than their real rparts.

eed, once I realised the rocks weren't actually real but er sculpture, the exhibition immediately became more ting. I was shocked at how true-to-life the rocks, straw nd the backpack looked and how easily I had been The food was real, though, as an intended contrast, I still highly doubt that this contrast "renders the man- eality questionable," as the gallery's literature said. In loubt a lot about this exhibition.

ubt the ability of a pile of powdered cheese to represent . I doubt the ability of a bag and raincoat to suggest "narratives and the activity of unknown personae obsessed with squirrelling things away as insurance of survival against anticipated disasters." And I doubt that this exhibition poses any questions other than "what's the point?" Though the idea of storage and our human compulsion towards it is raised, the connection between that and the piles of food and silicone sculptures is too much of a stretch to spur any profound thought on the part of the average viewer.

The pieces do show an amazing sculptural talent in that they look convincingly realistic. However, that's where the interest stops. Regardless of how talented a sculptor Liz Magor may be, that gift is lost in an exhibition that attempts to make serious sociological comments with piles of processed cheese products. Although others may rave about this exhibit, its meaning was lost on me. In retrospect, pass the silicone rubber sculptures, hold the cheese.❖

LONELY PLANET AT THE PACIFIC THEATRE UNTIL MAR. 25

by Michael Ursell

No, this is a play and it has nothing to do with the candid globetrotting television show of the same name. This play is about the Greenland problem. Yes, we have a problem with Greenland. It's too big. At least, it looks too big when we see it on a two-dimensional map. On most two-dimensional maps, it seems bigger than South America. In reality, it's no bigger than Mexico. Everything you thought you knew about Greenland is wrong. The small certainties that disappear too easily are *Lonely Planet*'s concern.

Other than Greenland, John James Hong's production in the intimate Pacific Theatre takes on disease, friendship, and why we remember the wrong things, while forgetting the important ones. It is a subtle and tragic examination of the perishable qualities of modern life. All the action takes place in a map shop in downtown Vancouver. But this is not a Vancouver story. The shop could just as easily be in New York or Saskatoon.

Its agoraphobic owner, Jodi, played by veteran John Innes, contemplates what is to be lost over the course of a human life. His constant companion Carl, played by Kerry VanderGriend, has nothing to do but listen to his pensive friend and add his own brand of manic wisdom.

The two characters are opposites. Jodi loves certainty, the stable and unmoving, hence, a shop that sells the charted and known: maps. The younger Carl's life is without direction; he has a talent for making up elaborate lies about his occupation, when it seems he has none. The unlikely pair's existence is complicated when Carl starts bringing chairs into the map shop without explanation. More and more chairs come, cluttering the shop and making Jodi progressively more nervous and upping the play's absurdity factor. Despite blatant references to Ionesco, the absurdist playwright, the play does follow the laws of logic, and the chairs have a realistic and sad point of origin.

Though the play attempts to lighten its mood with comedy, it is at its best when it trades in intensity. At the moments when Jodi and Carl face the terrors of disease, or reveal their desperate attempts to run away from it, the play is potent. John Innes' professional performance gives a convincing portrayal of the weary and fearful Jodi. Without aspiring to be profound, his simple observation in the midst of disease, "no one can prepare you for the fear," carries great weight. When Kerry VanderGriend brings his Carl down from the usual excited state, he also makes striking observations. "I need my irony," sums up the cynical, distanced world that we find ourselves in at the turn of the century.

The very busy, Jessie Award-winning John James Hong has put together a convincing production. The set itself smacks of attention to detail, a realistic showpiece in its own right. Tight lighting schemes accent the play's more symbolic aspects (i.e. the map of Greenland), while adding to the claustrophobic mood as the play reaches its climax. Even the use of Joe Cocker's rendition of "I Shall Be Released" gives a seemingly absurd premise grounding and focus.

Watching the trials of Jodi and Carl is an attempt to understand modern living. Their philosophising goes past an embracing of absurdity, and instead searches for a piece of stability to hang on to. But it's hard to start looking when our maps can't even make Greenland the right size. In the end, Jodi and Carl have to let go of their preconceptions and put their faith in Ionesco, with the quotation, "We will leave some traces, for we are people and not cities." This intelligently crafted piece of theatre will bend your head and heart around many other moments of wonderful commentary.❖

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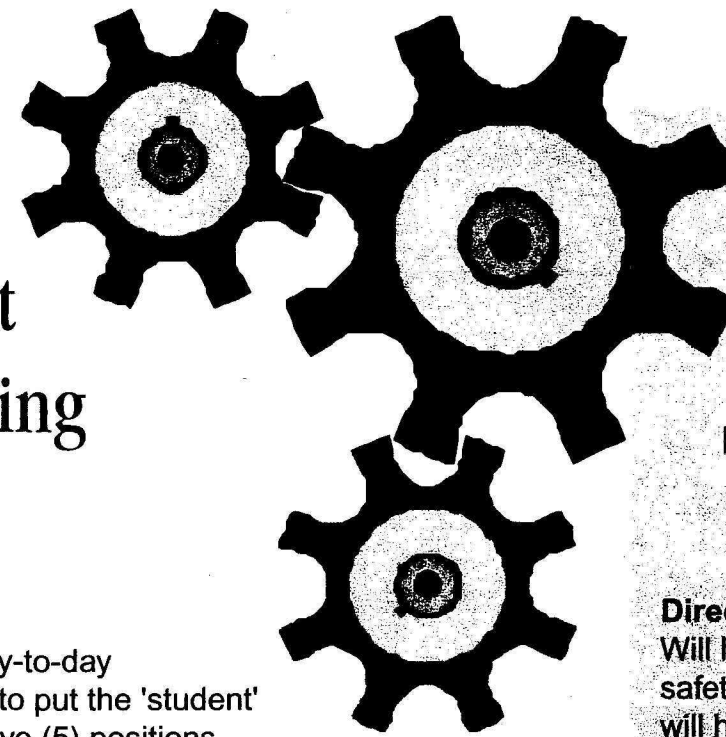

Help keep the wheels of student government turning

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For more information contact Erfan Kazemi, AMS VP Academic and University Affairs at vpacademic@ams.ubc.ca

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Application deadline is March 20.

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Application deadline is March 22

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For more information about the AMS check out www.ams.ubc.ca or email feedback@ams.ubc.ca

"houston: we have a problem"

MISSION TO MARS
now playing

by Greg Ursic

There are many questions that have enthralled humankind over the millennia: What is Truth? Does God exist? What happens to that little light when you close the refrigerator door? But since the dawn of the space age, one question has taken centre stage: are we alone in the universe?

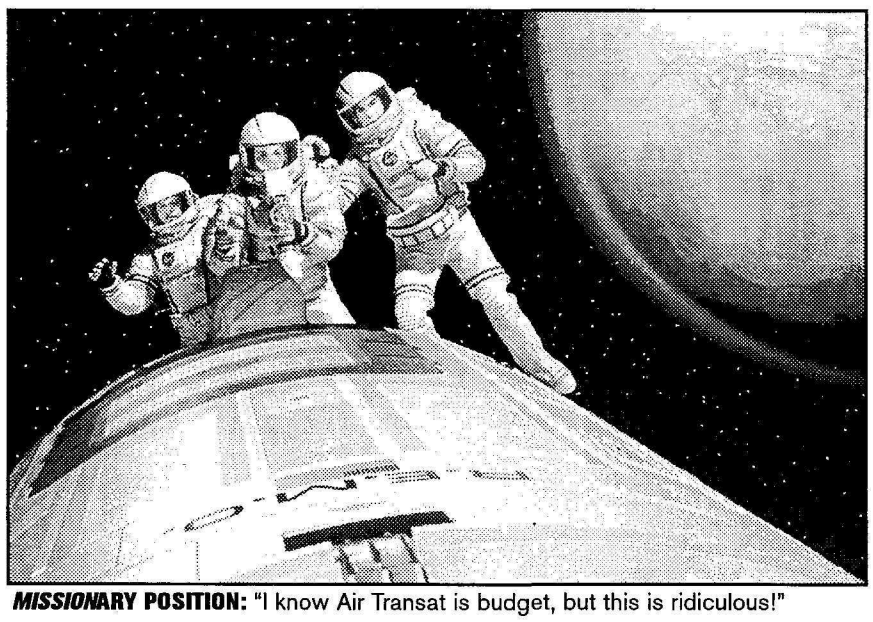
Humanity takes the next big step in space exploration when the crew of the *Mars 1* touches down on the Red Planet in 2020. What begins as triumph quickly turns to tragedy when an unknown force attacks the crew and the Mission Commander only has time to transmit one short, cryptic message before communications are permanently severed. Not knowing what has happened, NASA quickly dispatches another ship, but the nagging question on everyone's mind is whether it will be a rescue mission or a recovery. No one could have guessed what awaited the crew.

The technical aspects of *Mission*—from the crew training, to the space vehicles, to the actual science of space travel—are very realistic, mainly because NASA acted as a technical consultant for the film. Even before the script was written, the producer spent weeks meeting with the people in charge of the future manned space program to ensure accuracy. Too bad they didn't give the plot this kind of attention.

Unlike *Apollo 13*, which had likable characters that the audience could bond with (possibly due to the fact that they were based on real people), the cast here is bland at best. There are no standout characters, the dialogue is clichéd, trite and unrealistic and their interactions seem forced. Consequently, the only thing worth wondering about is how they're going to be gruesomely disposed of. Will they get the centrifuge treatment, be squished by errant boulders or freeze?

Although the underlying premise of the film is interesting, the execution is horrible. Not only does the rescue crew appear to be cursed—I stopped asking myself, "What could possibly go wrong next?"—but you are expected to make colossal leaps of logic, and not only suspend belief, but forget about it altogether. By the time the *Abyss*-style climax rolled around (it didn't work the first time), I was fighting to stifle my laughter. And I'm not even going to talk about the aliens...

This mission crashed and burned in more ways than one.❖



***MISSIONARY* POSITION:** "I know Air Transat is budget, but this is ridiculous!"

this film made me sick

ROSETTA
now playing

by Greg Ursic

Rosetta lives in abject poverty with her alcoholic mother in a trailer park in Belgium. Rosetta's only desire is to get a job so she can escape her circumstances and lead a normal life. However, her desperate attempts to stay employed ultimately work against her; whenever she loses a job (as always happens because of the temporary nature of her employ) rather than accept it, she goes berserk demanding not to be let go, erasing any possibility of being rehired.

It is rare to find a movie that is intentionally repetitious, and devoid of entertainment value or plot, yet several critics have lauded the film for these very reasons. They speak of its Italian neo-realist roots, its unashamed leftist leanings and unflinching views of reality, and argue that the judges at Cannes were right to award it the Palme D'Or. I disagree.

I think it has received accolades because it was the last movie they previewed and everyone was so dizzy from the bouncing camera work (which earned it the Variety headline "*Blair Witch* Viewers Pitch") that they didn't know what they were voting for. I'm only being somewhat facetious—many people (including myself) suffered motion sickness and several audience members actually left because of it. However, that alone is not enough reason to miss this film.

***ROSETTA* STONE:** Belgian trailer-park trash.

A morally bankrupt, hypocritical opportunist—she condemns her mother for selling herself for sex—Rosetta is willing to betray anyone, or do anything (even contemplating murder) to get a job. She is not a heroine or anti-heroine for she engenders neither pity nor hate. Consequently, I felt nothing for her or her situation. And if I had to watch her change her shoes one more time...

Unless you are a masochist or enjoy feeling queasy, miss this film.❖

A race may civilise itself BY LANGUAGE, not film reviews. This paper is filth.
the ubyssey filth

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"ANYONE CAN make claims. There have been others who have claimed to be God. I could claim to be God, and you could claim to be God, but the question all of us must answer is, 'What credentials do we bring to substantiate our claim?'

In my case it wouldn't take you five minutes to disprove my claim. It probably wouldn't take too much more to dispose of yours. But when it comes to Jesus of Nazareth, it's not so simple. He had the credentials to back up his claim.

He said, 'Even though you do not believe me, believe the evidence of the miracles, that you may learn and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.'

What were Jesus' credentials?

First, his moral character coincided with his claims. Many asylum inmates claim to be celebrities or deities. But their claims are belied by their characters. Not so with Christ. He is unique—as unique as God.

Jesus was sinless. The caliber of his life was such that he was able to challenge his enemies with the question, 'Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?' He was met by silence, even though he addressed those who would have liked to point out a flaw in his character.

This lack of any sense of moral failure on Jesus' part is astonishing in view of the fact that it is completely contrary to the experience of the saints and mystics in all ages. The closer men and women draw to God, the more overwhelmed they are with their own failure, corruption, and shortcomings.

We read of the temptation of Jesus, but we never hear of a confession of sin on his part. He never asked for forgiveness, though he told his followers to do so. It is also striking that..."

*The above is taken from the article **Beyond Blind Faith**, which answers the question, "Is Jesus God?" Please email us for a free copy of the entire article.*

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zine exhibit insightful

THE JD YEARS: QUEER ZINE CULTURE FROM TORONTO
at the Helen Pitt Gallery
until April 1

by Aisha Jamal

The first thing that strikes you about the *JD Years* exhibit at the Helen Pitt Gallery is the unconventional way the exhibit of zines is presented. The exhibit is crammed into a space so small it is hard to imagine two people visiting and walking through at the same time. The zines on exhibit are photocopies of the originals tagged to the wall with push-pins. Hanging from the ceiling are five old, worn-out T-shirts on simple black hangers. The exhibit does not look like much, but once you start reading the zines and get a feel of the culture they grew out of, it is hard to imagine the gallery exhibiting this show any other way without losing the integrity and aim of the original artists.

JDS was a hugely influential queer zine produced and distributed in Toronto between 1985 and 1991. The zine was created partially in response to the lack of queer coverage in mainstream commercial magazines. *JDS* was produced by the famous gay underground director Bruce LaBruce and G.B. Jones, a Canadian lesbian artist. The zine was born from the punk do-it-yourself culture of the late '70s and was independently produced with the help of a typewriter and photocopier. LaBruce and Jones drew the inspiration for the zine from the gay porn magazine *In Touch For Men*. The zine's producers stated in *JDS'* no. 5 issue "Homosexuals, old people, disillusioned radicals, and unloved children: that's who *JDS* is made for."

Most of the articles in the zine cover queer punk bands, from interviews to concert reviews, but there are also articles on queer artists in film and art. The zine published a lot of racy photography, the first issue featuring images of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Dead Kennedys and Fad Gadget exposing themselves on stage. Every month, the zine would chose a "Prince of the Homosexuals" from the queer community in Toronto and award them a T-shirt, a hat and a special spread in the zine. The old, gruffy looking T-shirts hanging from the ceiling are the original prizes awarded to the select few.

G.B. Jones, one of the main founders of the zine, regularly contributed drawings in the style of Tom of Finland. Several of his original drawings are included in the exhibit. Jones' drawings are mainly done in soft pencil with tom-girls as the subjects. A book that accompanies this art states G.B. Jones' target in these drawings of dykes hanging out on bikes and in prison cells as "the women-hating, Christian, non-tolerant, stupid, mean world we live in."

On exhibit are also other earlier zines that influenced *JDS*. A personal favourite is the witty zine *Dr. Smith*. This zine only published seven issues in Toronto, between 1984 and 1987. Among its coverage of punk bands, *Dr. Smith* included queer and camp content. A regular section in this zine was the "Smitheen" pages, which featured appropriate articles from teen magazines, such as Donny and Marie Osmond fan mail and articles on Matt Dillon, Boy George and David Cassidy. Mixed in with the gossip, *Dr. Smith* also has useful information on matters such as buying used film equipment and Super-8 film processing.

Surprisingly, as you walk around in the two square metres of space, you will find yourself spending more than the five minutes you initially thought the exhibit would take to read.❖

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VOLUME 81 ISSUE 42

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Jaime Tong and Greg Ursic noticed, in Michael Ursell's copy of an old *Ubyssey*—from even before Bruce Arthur's time—and way before Aisha Jamal's time, a small ad for *Flesh Gordon*. "Oh my God!" Michelle Mossop exclaimed, and began to explain herself to a curious Tara Westover and Alex Dunson. "It's the worst sci-fi-slash-softporn movie I've ever seen." Laura Blue had seen it too, over at Daliah Merzaban's house with Jessica-Ann Dennis at Nicola Taylor's birthday party. They were just switching channels on the TV they'd borrowed from Lisa Denton, before going on to watch Duncan McHugh's new film starring Mel Streich as Todd Silver and Miriam Torchinsky as Flora Graham, when they saw this little paper maché version of Tom "Grand Master No-Stash" Peacock doing some strange paper maché sex thing. It was like *Flesh Gordon*. Cat Moore and Jeremy Beaulne explained the plot, something about some strange sex ray eminating from some planet controlled by Evil Empress Cynthia Lee. So Tristan Winch and Naomi Kim flew out there in their space ship, while Daniel Silverman and Nicholas Bradley try to stop them. It's so low-budget and it's just so bad. And don't even mention that "Morgan spanking Melanie" scene. Who knew a ceramic dragon would smash so easily?

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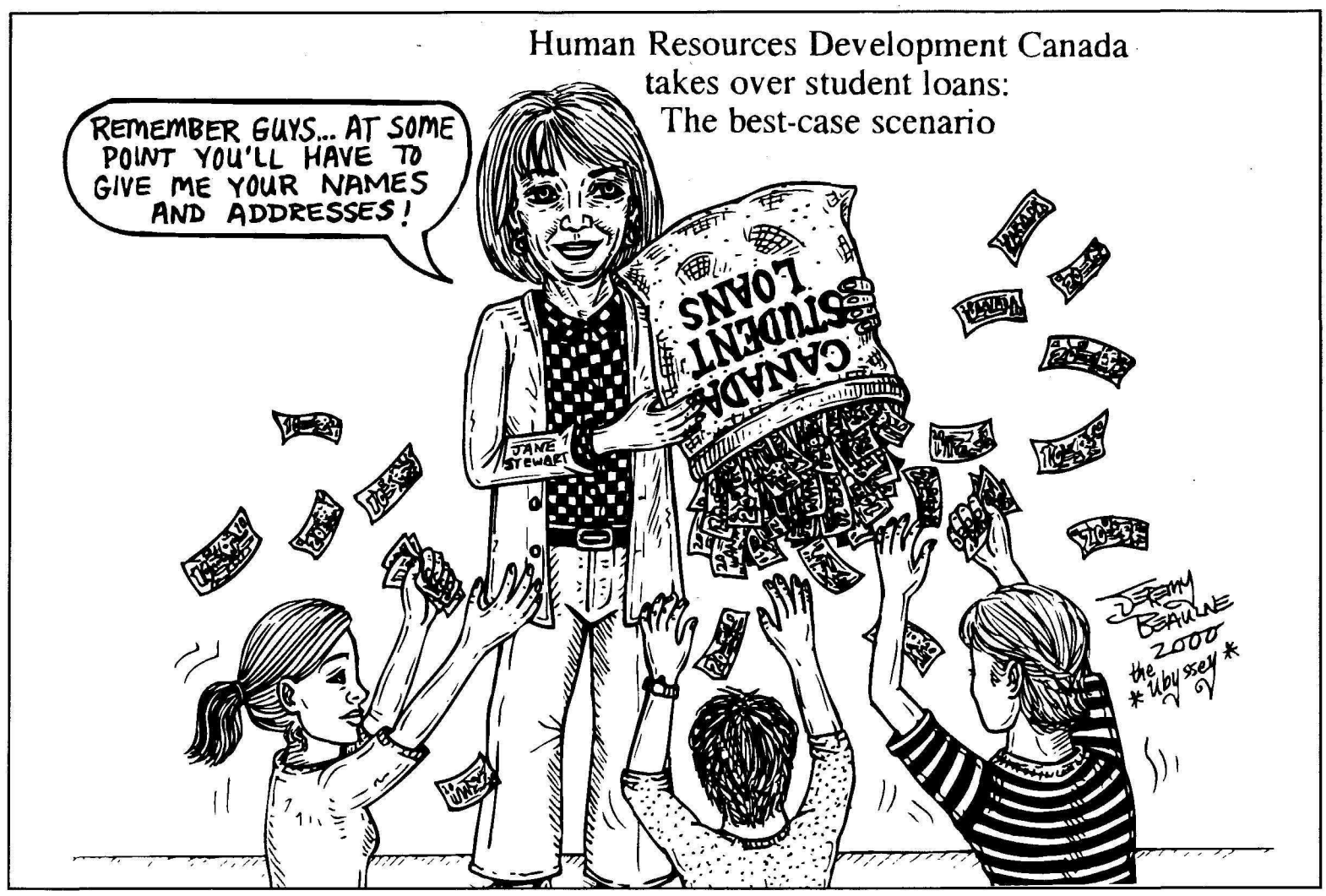


Banks, but no banks

There's something altogether too sinister about banks. In a very limited sort of way, we trust our government and we trust our schools to be looking out for our best interests, in their own misguided fashion. But banks—those colossal, smoked-glass monoliths that post billions in profits while happily cutting jobs—they're up to no good. The whole thing—surcharges, loans, mortgages, RRSPs, you walk up to a machine, and it gives you money, you go to the bank on Monday and it's closed—the whole thing stinks of conspiracy. So is it any surprise that these same banks have pulled out of the no-profit-no-way student loan program? Frankly, no.

Let's start at the beginning. Back in 1995, the government entered into a deal with the Royal Bank, the Bank of Nova Scotia, and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce that essentially privatised the student loan system. Students said that it wouldn't work. Handing over a non-profit, or even a money-losing, program such as the student loan system to the most for-profit institutions in existence was a recipe for disaster. And five years later, the banks have finally figured it out. They're losing money, which, to banks, is just plain unacceptable. So they're pulling out and handing student loans back to the federal government.

This is a good thing. It is, in fact, the only sensible thing to do. Whether or not the program will change drastically under government control is debatable—some argue that the government will loosen the measures placed on students by the banks, such as outlawing bankruptcy claims and the implementation of credit checks—but it's hard to argue that the banks have more incentive to encourage post-secondary enrolment and accessibility than does the government. After all, why should the banks really care if we get an education?

So this is good. Five-year contracts don't work with student loans—the default rates in the short term are high (29 per cent over the last five years) but the eventual repayment rates are excellent (95 per cent). So a long-term approach is pretty much the only approach. The government may not be your best friend, but at least it responds to all those polls citing education as a priority. Splitting responsiblity for student loans with banks—this was never a viable option.

So the government is now in charge. This is good—but it's not perfect. Having the government running the loan program opens the system up to a whole new set of concerns—bureaucratic incompetence (we should point out that the program will be administered by Human Resources and Development Canada, whose embattled leader is one Jane Stewart—who handed out some $1 billion in job grants and lost track of where the money went), funding cuts to the program, and endless squabbling between the feds and the provinces.

Now that the government has the money behind 450,000 students in its hands, we need to make sure that it lives up to all its claims to caring about education. If the government can run the system efficiently and provide students with the money we need, and not "lose" it in a pile of paperwork, then we'll be even happier. Here's hoping.❖

Letters

Statistics are subjective

I was disappointed by what I must assume are shock tactics in your March 7 front page caption. Referring to the Clothesline Project, put on by the UBC Women's Centre, the statistics are given that one out of three Canadian women are beaten *every week!*

While it is important that violence against women (or any minority group) be brought out into the open immediately, I feel that it is irresponsible for a publication like *the Ubyssey* to fan the flames of what, at times, borders on the edge of hysteria regarding "the danger of the patriarchal system."

Through repetition of such extreme (inflated) figures, women are informed of the dangers, but at the same time, often become petrified into powerless victimdom. When female acquaintances complain of the impossibility of walking to the SUB from Koerner Library at 6:30pm because they have had it pounded into their skulls that one in four women are raped in their lifetime. Publications that repeat such figures must take a look at their social responsibility. This should especially be done if the "definition" of rape in the survey actually included in the definition of rape (in the fine print) "verbal sexual abuse" such as, but not limited to, calls of "nice ass, honey."

The fact that such surveys can have such strong effects on the public necessitates that the media examine the exact parameters used by "researchers" who supplies us with these numbers. Newspapers must be sure that the facts and figures they "inform" with are never subjective distortions that support the cause of some special interest group.

So, how about an appeal for disclosure of the exact criteria used in polls that determine rates of incidence of abuse, rape, racism, or what other social ills are caused by (assumably) the white male superstructure? Perhaps I am far too innocent as to what is going on in the world, the naïve product of far-too innocent Westside living. Still, the statistic of 33 per cent of women abused every week in Canada, makes me severely question whether the definition of "beaten" taken by the UBC Women's Centre could be so wide as to include "beaten down by the weather," "beaten down by ambition," or "beaten by the bell."

Ben Ellison
Faculty of Graduate Studies

AMS needs to "quit screwing around"

I think the Alma Mater Society (AMS) should quit screwing around with our student fees and let us make our own choices. I ride my bike to school and I don't need another AMS plan shoved down my throat for a bus pass. (Read: forced dental insurance.)

Maybe they could offer another opt-out program where only people who had cars had a choice of opting out?

Maybe *the Ubyssey* will get off its lazy ass and cover this issue before the referendum is here?

Todd Sorbo
UBC student

BC Lions sign Singh

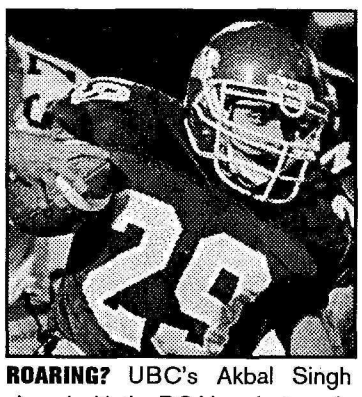
by Naomi Kim

As a young child, Akbal Singh watched the BC Lions and dreamed of playing for them. And as of Thursday, March 9, he is one step away of making that dream a reality after signing with the Lions.

Singh was drafted last year by the BC Lions in the sixth round, 42nd overall, but the organisation felt it would be in his best interest to return to UBC for one more year.

"I really wanted to come into camp last year just to get an idea of what I'm getting myself into, but that didn't happen," said Singh. But he admitted, "it actually worked out [to be better] for me to do that just because I had a better year here than I did the year before."

He put up his best numbers in his four years at UBC with a school-record 1646 yards rushing on 220 carries for nine touchdowns. He leads the CIAU in rushing yards and also broke the UBC record for total offence.



ROARING? UBC's Akbal Singh signed with the BC Lions last week, but he isn't a Leo just yet. RICHARD LAM/UBYSSEY FILE PHOTO

Although Singh has been signed, he is not a Lion yet. He will be one of among approximately 70 hopefuls reporting to training camp on June 10. The Lions will keep about 50 of those players, will travel with a roster of 37 to 40 players, and will keep about five names on the practice roster. But Singh is aware of his chances and is just happy that he has the opportunity to prove himself at a higher level.

"I'm in for some tough competition," said Singh. "The BC Lions squad is a veteran squad...It's going to be really hard to try and make this team but nonetheless, I feel like I can contribute to the team in any way to either be special teams or just playing tailback or whatever they'd want me to do."

But as far as his performance has gone so far, he certainly has done enough to attract the interest of the Lions.

"We know he's a good college player," said Neil McEvoy of BC Lions Media Relations/Football Operations. "Whether he is able to step up to the next level, hopefully he does, but time will tell. So we're bringing him in into camp hoping that he will make the team."

Among the challenges that Singh will face aside from competition is the transition from university to professional football. Learning the extensive Lions playbook—which McEvoy likens to a phonebook—will be a difficulty, but McEvoy said it's partly up to the player having a good attitude, capacity to learn quickly, and of course, ability on the field.

McEvoy is aware that Singh is "very fast, [and] has very good athletic ability," but at 5'7", his stature will make it tougher, although not impossible to succeed. McEvoy pointed to the success of other smaller players on the team, such as Jimmy Cunningham, the Lions' top kick and punt returner.

"[Singh] is a little small but...it's not the size that always counts."

Of advantage to Singh is that he is a Vancouver native. In the CFL, each team needs to have 17 Canadian players on the team. In addition to Singh and four other players, the Lions also signed Simon Fraser University alumnus and CFL veteran Sean Millington as a fullback Monday.

And although the possibility remains that he may not make the cut, as a free agent, Singh—who still has one course left in his geography degree and one year of eligibility left—won't likely be back at UBC.

"The likelihood of me coming back next year [to UBC] is...nil," said Singh. "I think I've accomplished what I needed to do and it's time for me to move on."❖

The Ubyssey

is looking for a few good people to fill the following positions for the 2000-2001 publishing year

editorial board

COORDINATING EDITOR
COPY/VOLUNTEERS EDITOR
CULTURE EDITOR
FEATURES EDITOR
NEWS EDITORS (2)
PHOTO EDITOR
SPORTS EDITOR
PRODUCTION MANAGER

expected time commitment: at least 50 hours per week per position

coordinators

RESEARCH COORDINATOR
WEB COORDINATOR
LETTERS COORDINATOR

expected time commitment: at least 15 hours per week per position

Position papers are due up by Monday, March 20 at 5pm. Voting will take place from Monday, March 27 to Sunday, April 3. Voters must be *Ubyssey* staff members in good standing. Please contact Bruce Arthur at 822.2301 if you have any questions

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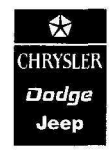

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