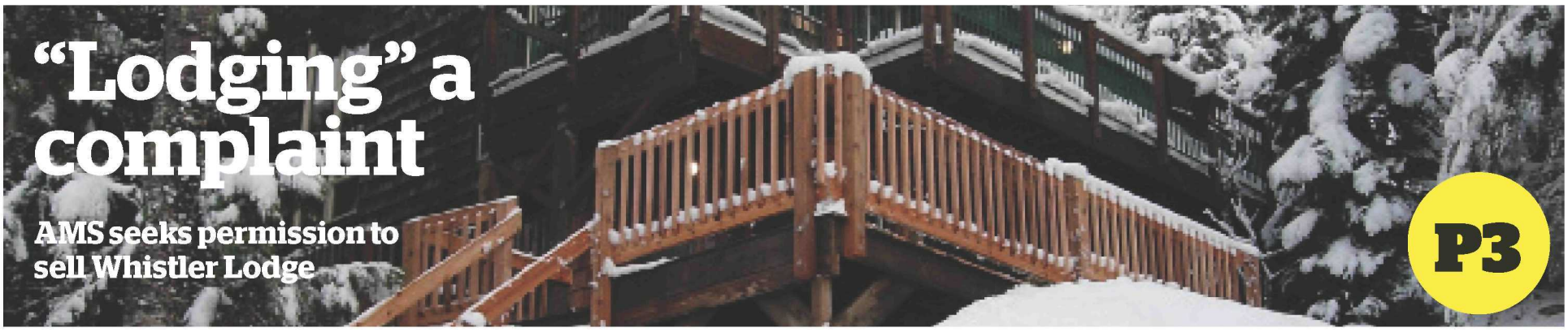


"Lodging" a complaint

AMS seeks permission to sell Whistler Lodge

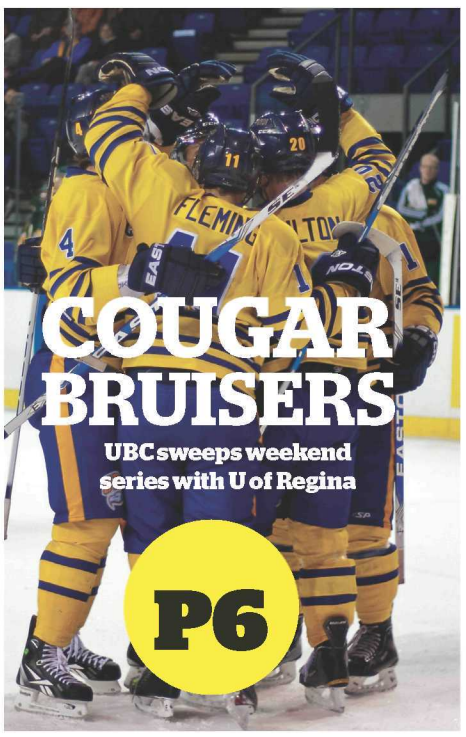
P3

Just one more...

PuSh!

P8

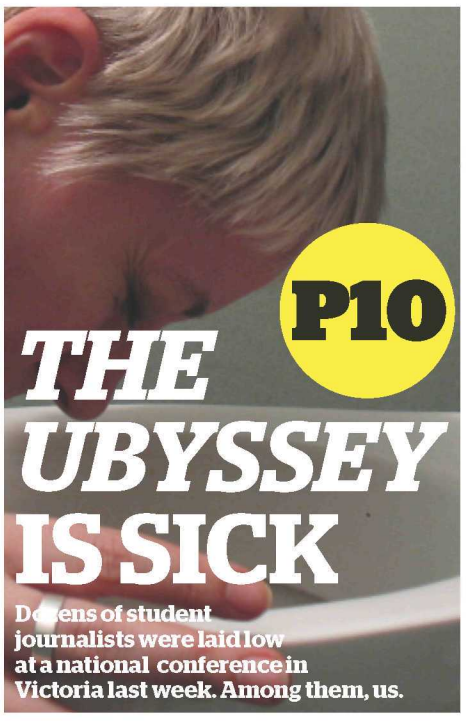
Festival gives birth to great performance art



COUGAR BRUISERS

UBC sweeps weekend series with U of Regina

P6



THE UBYSSEY IS SICK

Dozens of student journalists were laid low at a national conference in Victoria last week. Among them, us.

P10

THE UBYSSEY

STEP BY STEP

January 2012

16 **LET THE GAMES BEGIN** Campaigning starts

17

18

19 **Debate!** President, VP Finance, VP Administration

20 **Another debate!** VP External, VP Academic, Senate

21

22 **ARE YOU NOT ENTERTAINED?**

23 **VOTING STARTS**

24 **Debate #3** President, VP Finance, VP Admin

25 **The last debate!** VP External, Board of Governors, VP Academic

26

27 **Final day to vote**

We walk you through the 12 days, 4 referenda and 36 candidates campaigning for your votes in the...

AMS elections

P3

What's on This week, may we suggest...

16 MON ACADEMICS»

Last day to add/drop classes

This is the last day to drop courses without receiving a W on your transcript.

17 TUE FILM»

Film Screening: *Cultures of Resistance*: 7-9pm @ Michael M Ames Theatre

Directed by Lara Lee, this film explores how art and creativity can be used as ammunition in the battle for peace and justice.

18 WED LIT»

Africa Awareness Week: 4:30-6pm @ Marine Drive Ballroom

Keynote speaker NoViolet Bulawayo—world-renowned author and the 2011 winner of the Caine Prize for African Writing—will speak on the importance of African literature in western higher education.

19 THU DEBATE»

Debate #1: 11am-2pm @ the SUB

Cheer on the AMS candidates for president, VP Finance and VP Admin in the first of four debates for the upcoming election.

20 FRI DEBATE»

Debate #2: 11am-2pm @ the SUB

If you're sick of the whole student politics thing already, too bad. It's another week of students trying to get your vote for local democracy, you apathetic person you.

Got an event you'd like to see on this page? Send your event and your best pitch to **printeditor@ubyssey.ca.**

THE UBYSSEY

January 16, 2012, Volume XCIII, Issue XXXI

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Our Campus

One on one with the people who make UBC

JOSH CURRAN/THE UBYSSEY

The current VP Academic, Matt Parson, is hoping his proven leadership skills will help secure his bid for the AMS presidency.

Presidential Candidate: Matt Parson

Micki Cowan
News Editor

"Channeling the inner Tebow," said AMS presidential candidate Matt Parson.

Parson was referring to his position as quarterback on his fraternity's flag football team, but the idea could easily be applied to his newfound verve for student politics.

He's hoping that given the transient nature of student politics, stepping from his current post as VP Academic and University Affairs to the presidency will not mean that progress is lost.

"It's kind of frustrating to see a lot of good work being done and so many projects started and needing them to have their torch carried on and this issue of continuity."

But though he's willing to carry the team on his back, that's not a position he thought he would be in at the beginning of his time at UBC.

"The AMS was something quite foreign to me in my first two years or so at UBC. [I had] a more typical type of student profile, I would say. Last year, getting involved to be the VP Academic, was a little bit out of left field."

Parson said that a diverse life experience has prepared him for a leadership role. At age 12, he found out that his father was diagnosed with Huntington's disease, a disease that affects coordination and leads to cognitive decline.

"I really had to change my approach to more of a level-headed, leadership sort of role in my family," he said, noting that he took on the role of "sauce boss" in the kitchen back home in Smithers, BC. "I have a particular ability to make really good sauces."

He attributed this ability to his mother's excellent skill in the kitchen, both at home and as a home economics teacher.

When he came to UBC, he found a home away from home in the fraternities, and served as InterFraternity Council President before becoming an AMS vice president.

"I definitely think it's a close-knit community of very involved people that spawns people who look for leadership opportunities. You have the perfect storm to have people gain the types of experiences that you need to acquire to be successful," he said of his experiences in the frats.

"I found that whole process to be a complete blast."

More than anything, Parson thinks it's his everyday student experiences that have most prepared him to represent the student body.

"It's a matter of going through those types of experiences that every student has: the late night study sessions that you have as you're preparing for an exam, the beer gardens. It's Long Boat and Storm the Wall.

"If you are to properly represent the students of UBC, you have to know what it means to be a student of UBC."

Over the next three issues, Our Campus will profile the three presidential candidates for the AMS.

Congratulations!

On Saturday, *The Ubyssey* was up for six JHM Awards for outstanding campus journalism, more than any other paper in Canada.

We came away with two awards: Congratulations to to Kalyeena Makortoff for diversity reporting and Jonny Wakefield for design. And congratulations to fellow nominees Arshy Mann, Alison Mah, Ian Turner, Brian Platt and Geoff Lister.

Let the AMS elections race begin...

36 students announce candidacy

Kalyeena Makortoff
News Editor

The nominations are in, and 36 students are vying for 18 spots in this year's student government elections.

Three candidates—Alyssa "AJ" Koehn, Ben Cappellacci and Matt Parson—are running for AMS president.

"I think that in my experience with the Student Leadership Conference and UBC Rec and Rezlife, I've really become a strong leader figure," said Koehn, who in the last 12 months has helped organize the Student Leadership Conference, AMS Firstweek, and the "yes" campaign in the March AMS referendum.

"I've given the idea of running for the presidency [thought since] probably about seven months ago, once I got a good taste of the AMS and saw what they were capable of achieving," said Parson, the VP Academic and University Affairs.

However, it was the entry of Cappellacci into the race that surprised many. Though he served as VP Academic and University Affairs the year before Parson, he had only recently returned to campus after an exchange to France.

"The AMS is far too important to overlook and ignore and has the potential to have impact on our lives today and for the students of tomorrow. I recently returned from exchange in Paris and with my fresh perspective I decided to do something bold and run in the new year," he said.

Meanwhile, two positions are uncontested, with Tristan Miller running for VP Finance and Kyle Warwick for VP External.

Caroline Wong and Elaine Kuo will be running against each other in the VP Administration race and six candidates will compete for the VP Academic seat: Bahador Moosavi, Carven Li, Iqbal Kassam, Kiran Mahal, Armin Rezaiean-Asel and joke candidate "Party Rock," nominated by Ian Campbell.

Seven students are running for the two student positions on the Board of Governors: Matt Parson, Erik MacKinnon, Justin Yang, Mike Silley, Tagg Jefferson, Sean Cregten and incumbent Sumedha Sharma.

Eight are running for five positions on the UBC Senate: Katherine Tyson, Montana Hunter, Kiran Mahal, Devin Syrovatka, Barnabas Caro, Dawei Ji, Malileh Noghrekar and incumbent Justin Yang.

The Student Legal Fund Society is the only race which allows slates. This year two groups are fielding candidates for the six positions: Students for Responsible Leadership (SRL) and Student Progressive Action Network (SPAN).

Six candidates make up the SPAN slate: Jannel Robertson, Arran Walshe, Nai N. Louza, Alissa Westergard-Thorpe, Arielle Friedman and Gregory Williams.

SRL is running five candidates: Aaron Sihota, Sandy Buchanan, Maria Cirstea, Jordan Stewart and James Pettit.

Debate calendar

Thursday, January 19, 11am–2pm (SUB): President, VP Fin, VP Admin

Friday, January 20, 11am–2pm (SUB): VP Ex, VP Academic, Senate

Monday, January 23, 6–9pm (Vanier): VP Fin, VP Admin, President

Wednesday, January 25, 6–9pm (Totem): VP Ex, BoG, VP Academic

Presidential candidates

Alyssa Koehn

FIFTH YEAR ARTS
Political science major

SLC CO-CHAIR
Helped organize the Student Leadership Conference for 2012, four months after being the chair of AMS Firstweek.

Ben Cappellacci

FIFTH YEAR COMMERCE
Marketing and international business major

FORMER VP ACADEMIC
Served as VP Academic and University Affairs in 2010-2011 before doing a Go Global exchange in France

Matt Parson

FIFTH YEAR SCIENCE
Biology major

CURRENT VP ACADEMIC
Part of this year's AMS executive; was previously president of the Intra-Fraternity Council at UBC

AMS to pose four referendum questions on ballot

Council looks to sell Whistler Lodge and part of art collection

Four referendum questions will join the elections ballot this year. The first question asks to decrease the Student Spaces Fund fee by $3.88 while adding a $1 fee to fund the UBC Ombuds offices—leading to an overall decrease of $2.88 in AMS fees.

The second question asks to entrench the rules of the AMS Endowment Fund as a bylaw, which will mean that any withdrawals by Council from the fund will require permission through referendum.

Currently, the fund is not a bylaw; it is part of AMS Code, which only requires a Council vote for withdrawals.

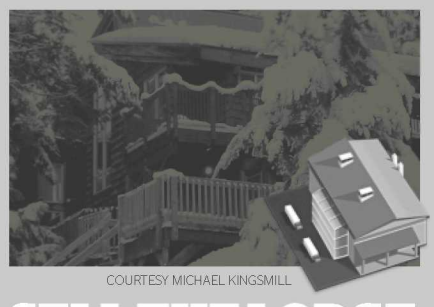
A third question asks to sell the AMS Whistler Lodge and the land plot. The money raised through the sale will go straight to the AMS Endowment Fund.

The final question looks to sell a maximum of three pieces of art from the AMS art collection. The referendum doesn't say which of the pieces will be sold, and the final selection will be up to an AMS Council vote.

The revenue will be used to establish an AMS Arts Endowment Fund to purchase additional art and support other on-campus arts programming and initiatives.

AMS ENDOWMENT FUND

Revenue from the sale of the Whistler Lodge would be put into the AMS Endowment Fund.



COURTESY MICHAEL KINGSMILL

SELL THE LODGE

Lost the AMS $500,000 in repairs in the past 5 years.

NEW ARTS FUND

Money made from the art sale would help establish an Arts Endowment Fund.

SELL 3 PIECES

Art from the permanent AMS collection could be sold next year.

$3.88 REDUCED

Student Spaces Fund fee would be reduced by less than $4 per student.

$1 INCREASE

UBC Ombuds Office fee will increase AMS fees by $1 and help the AMS meet their funding obligations to the campus service.

KELLAN HIGGINS GRAPHIC

COURSES »

KAI JACOBSON/THE UBYSSEY

CIRS is UBC's—and North America's—most sustainable building.

NATALYA KAUTZ/THE UBYSSEY

New solar technology on parking meters means less waste.

A green light for Sustainability 101

Class teaches "greatest hits" of sustainability

Evan Brow
Contributor

UBC is now offering a multidisciplinary course intended to give students from all faculties a chance to focus on sustainability.

Sustainability 101 is offered by the faculties of Arts, Applied Science, Forestry, Land and Food Systems and Science.

Kurt Grimm is an associate professor in the earth and ocean sciences department and one of seven UBC Sustainability Teaching & Learning Fellows team-teaching Sustainability 101. He believes the course creates a multi-faceted "greatest hits" approach to sustainability education.

"If there's monoculture thinking on sustainability, you can be certain that it's wrong," said Grimm.

Only 35 students are admitted into the course, and while there are no prerequisites, undergrads had the choice to fill out an application that asks what attracts them to Sustainability 101, what they might contribute, and what they would like to take away from the course.

"One of my big interests is sustainability education, and this course is on the leading edge of that," said fourth-year student Angela Willock.

Willock is a student rep for the AMS Sustainability Projects Fund. She said she looks forward to learning from the instructor panel to help expand her understanding of sustainability.

"I am really excited about the 'campus as a living lab' and 'students as agents of change' vision. I think there is huge potential for universities like UBC to harness the innovative potential and motivated capacity of students to tackle sustainability challenges."

Grimm said that the difference between this course and others offered at UBC is that sustainability is the single unifying theme, not just an important part of a study area.

Grimm himself will be giving multiple lectures, with topics exploring a wide range of what he said are not-so-obvious environmental fumbles.

"How crazy it is that we poop in our water? I think that's something that's one of the truly crazy things we do, not just here in Vancouver and Canada but we export that all around the world. Water is the most precious substance for life and we crap in it and it's insane. So, I'll stick with that. The insanity of pooping in our own water."

His other lecture topics include "Learn to expect surprises" and "Sustainability equals authentic abundance."

The framework for Sustainability 101 was created from the Sustainability Academic Strategy, a document published October 17, 2009 recommending that UBC offer any student sustainability studies alongside their degree program. This goal was the Sustainability Academic Strategy's first recommendation and part of what led to the creation of the UBC Sustainability Initiative in 2010.

"It became increasingly clear that this first-year shared experience—as kind of a launch pad into various sustainability pathways—was really key," said Jean Marcus, associate director of the UBC Sustainability Initiative Teaching & Learning Office.

One aspect emphasized by both Marcus and Grimm was that Sustainability 101 is an experiment.

"It's a carefully constructed experiment that activates the experience of a very committed team," said Grimm. "It's not just something brainy that we're doing. It's our hearts that are invested in the topic and each one of the people in there, you just know they're invested in the students."

Students wishing to join the course will have to wait until the winter term of 2013, the next time the course will be offered, as it won't be available come next September.

"It's a pilot course," said Marcus, explaining that continuing the course requires going through UBC Senate for further approval.

As for the next step, Marcus is planning to develop a fourth-year course on the framework of sustainability leadership experience that similarly brings together all faculties into one classroom.

"They've had this shared experience here and we hope to bring them back to have a shared experience in fourth year too."

If there's monoculture thinking on sustainability, you can be certain that it's wrong.

Kurt Grimm
Associate professor, EOSC department

UBC housing action plan forum - january 18, 2012

The Community Planning Task Group of the UBC Board of Governors, chaired by Dr. Nassif Ghoussoub, is developing a **Housing Action Plan for the Vancouver campus**, with a **key objective of improving housing choice and affordability** for faculty, staff and students.

Date: Wednesday, January 18, 2012 **Time:** 12:00 (noon) – 2:00PM
Place: Ponderosa Centre, Arbutus Room, 2071 West Mall
Lunch will be provided.

The forum will focus on faculty/staff housing, provide an "early look" at the options being explored and give an opportunity for participants to ask questions and provide feedback about key issues related to the options. Discussion questions for the forum can be found online at **ubcvhousingactionplan.sites.olt.ubc.ca**

Please RSVP to stefani.lu@ubc.ca

For more information on the Housing Action Plan, visit **ubcvhousingactionplan.sites.olt.ubc.ca**

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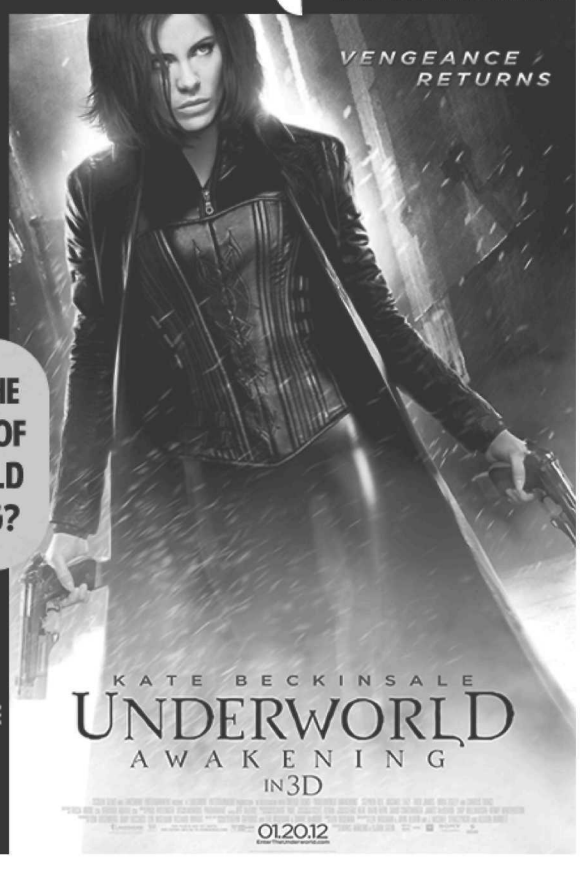


MISCONDUCT »

New non-academic misconduct policy at UBC

Natalie Corbo
Contributor

UBC is taking steps to ensure that its students are conducting themselves properly outside of their studies.

As of this month, UBC Vancouver will be a implementing a new, detailed non-academic misconduct policy, which reexamines punishable activity that has nothing to do with grades, classes or schoolwork. The policy is based on what the university has deemed a successful model from UBC-Okanagan (UBC-O).

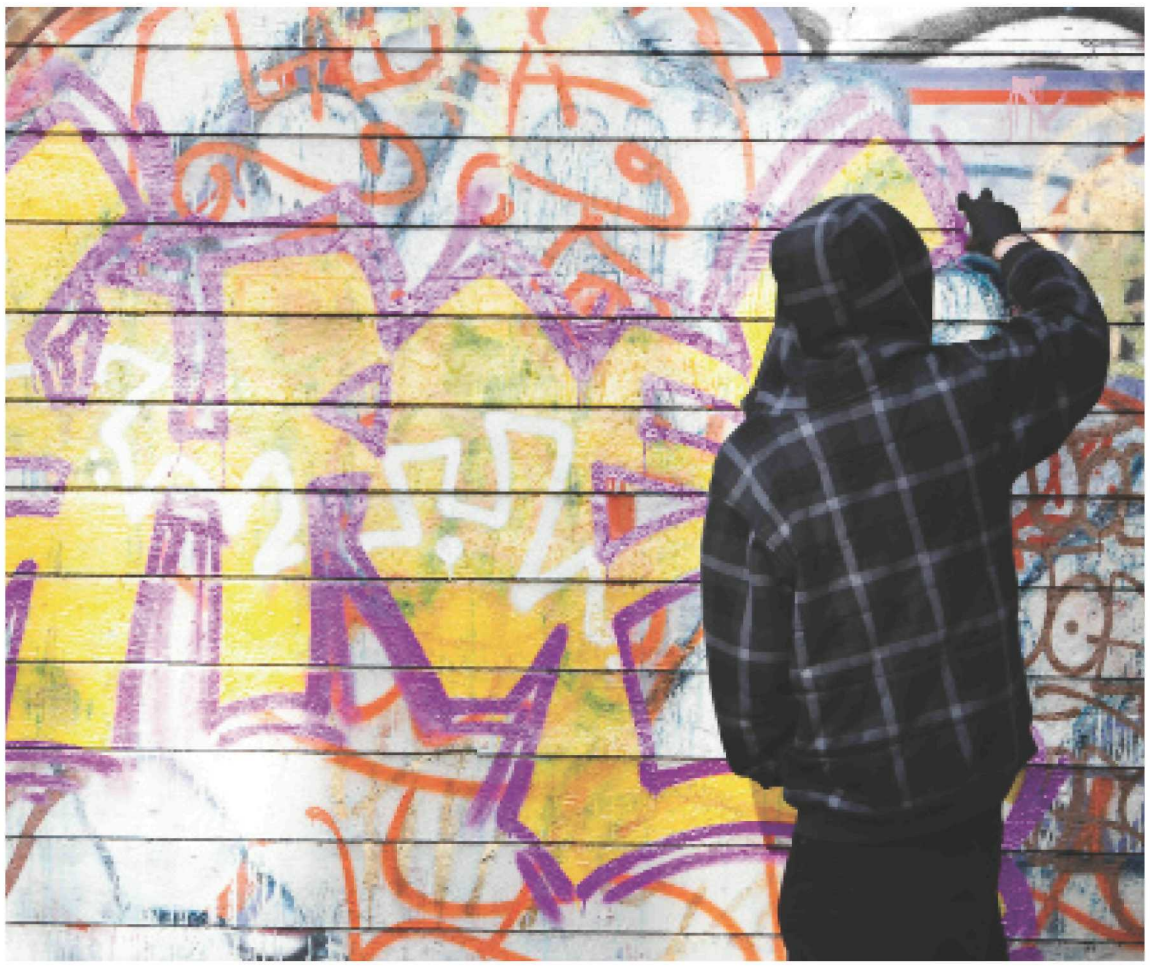
"The goal always was to make sure that...if it was working well we would make the appropriate adjustments to take it to scale at the Vancouver campus," said Hubert Lai, university counsel at UBC.

The policy will involve a completely new process to deal with student discipline, which, according to UBC legal counsel Kimberly Beck, is "99 per cent the same as the Okanagan policy." The process is intended to be more student-centric than the old one, and will provide students with the option to accept responsibility for their actions and avoid a formal hearing.

The new policy is constructed in three main parts.

A detailed student code of conduct, according to Lai, is meant to inform students what's expected of them by their own community.

If a student engages in a punishable activity, they will deal directly with a representative from the VP Students Office, which Lai estimates will be over 90 per cent of cases. At this stage the student may accept responsibility and help decide what they should do to make amends.



GEOFF LISTER/THE UBYSSEY

Internal coordinator at the UBC-O student union, Sarah Martinuik, said the new method of dealing with misconduct seems to have gone well. "[Campus Security] assess in every way, and if they see that the student shows remorse and they feel bad then they're pretty good at not making a huge deal out of it," she said.

AMS President Jeremy McElroy said the new policy helps to clarify and streamline the whole misconduct process. "Previously, the non-academic misconduct [policy] was a big grey area and a very encumbering sort of formal process that actually required the presence of the president in order to oversee anything from being written up in residence to vandalizing a building."

For more severe cases that can't be appropriately resolved by the student and the VP Students Office representative, UBC will create a President's Non-Academic Misconduct Committee, comprised of students and a committee chair. Instead of a "prosecutor and defender" format, the committee of peers will undertake an investigative process. Lai said this process has garnered positive feedback from UBC-O students.

> **The goal always was to make sure that...if it was working well we would make the appropiate adjustments to take it to scale at the Vancouver campus.**
>
> **Hubert Lai**
> University counsel

"Unless it's a really severe incident of misconduct, it will just be dealt directly with the student and security...and usually what's required of students is just to write an apology," said Martinuik.

While fourth-year UBC student (and *Ubyssey* contributor) Henry Lebard was in favour of the policy overall, he expressed concern that the punishment would be lessened if the person showed remorse.

"He or she who displays relative remorse are not to be shown more leniency. Who knows if they will be stimulated again to do exactly what they did again?" said Lebard.

The new policy is set to be fully and formally integrated by September 2012.

Current smoker? Recently quit?

Picture Me Smokefree is a digital photography and social media project for young adults that asks you to show how you "picture yourself quitting."

Eligibility:
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Picture Me Smokefree is a UBC study based at the School of Nursing (Vancouver) and the Faculty of Health and Social Development (Okanagan); Principal Investigator: Dr. Rebecca Haines-Saah

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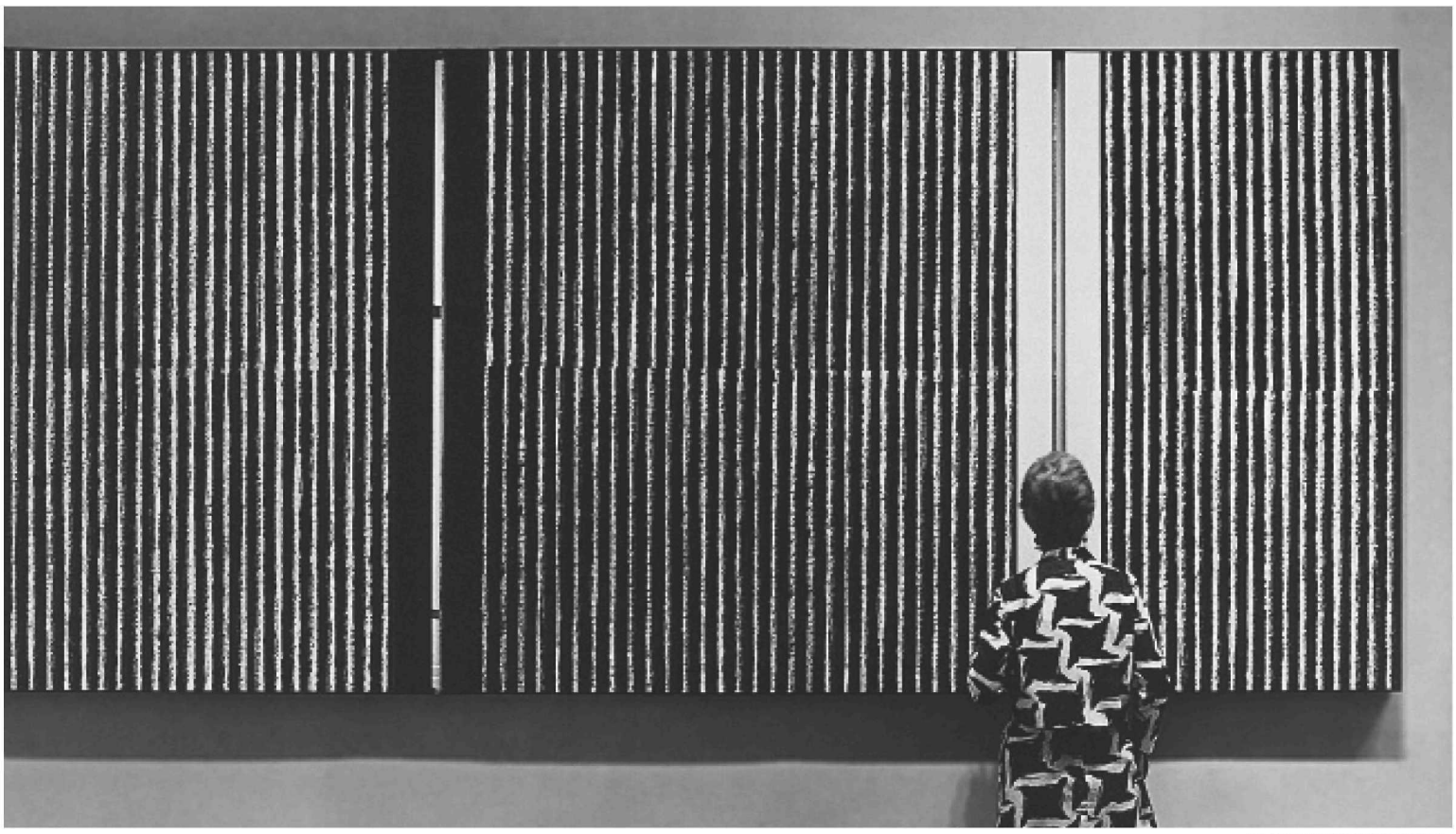

COURTESY OF THE BELKIN GALLERY

Michael Morris's *Letters* series features several large-scale tryptichs. Morris was heavily involved in the concrete poetry movement of the 1960s.

VISUAL ART»

Belkin hosts concrete poetry exhibition

Rhys Edwards
Contributor

UBC students are agents within an international network of education, communication and subsistence—perhaps now more than ever. Underlying this network is the Internet, which allows us to create global relationships and facilitate common understanding.

Less obvious, however, is that a development in the world of art and poetry, decades before the emergence of the Internet, performed an analogous function. *Letters: Michael Morris and Concrete Poetry,* a new exhibition at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, is a survey of this global phenomenon.

Generally speaking, the term "concrete poetry" conjures the idea of letters and words arranged compositionally to form an image (for example, the words "leaves" and "branches" in the shape of a tree). The concrete poetry movement itself is much broader. "As a movement...Its greatest achievement is this incredibly open and generous conversation amongst its participants," said Michael Turner, a Vancouver-based author and co-curator of the exhibition. "The generosity amongst its practitioners, I think, is the hallmark of concrete poetry."

Various examples of concrete poetry have existed in written language the world over for centuries, but it was in the early 1960s when artists and poets across the world began to simultaneously innovate with the form. Every region, from Brazil to Germany, had a distinct style; yet it was only after the emergence of the movement that the artists recognized the international coherency of their work, and began to use it as a new mode of communication.

"I would say perhaps the [Marshall] McLuhan world, that world of communication that McLuhan theorized, may have had bearing on that similarity between independent invention," said Turner. "It was united by communication systems and shared experiences which were becoming more and more common."

Despite the international reach of the movement, Turner feels concrete poetry is under-appreciated in art historical discourse. "As an example of the far-reaching effects of modernism, it hasn't really been given its due," he said.

"There's a curious notion that abstract expressionism, or Anthony Caro's opening of the sculptural object, somehow united the world." *Letters* is an effort to emphasize an alternate art historical viewpoint.

The centrepiece of the show is comprised of the titular *Letters* themselves, a series of monumental colour-gradated triptychs, each one named after a major centre of art in the 60s. The paintings are the work of Michael Morris, who contributed significantly both to the development of concrete poetry and to the Vancouver contemporary art scene.

Morris, who won the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts last year, said the paintings coincided with a sustained effort to promote global interconnection. "I was hoping to address the world... because in those days, it was much more parochial in Vancouver than it is now.

"We were impatient. We wanted to ignore the geography of the country and get on with the world of ideas."

The exhibition is not merely a historical survey, however. *Letters* is relevant to today's world of instant messages and gratification, as a meditation on the nature of language and communication. "You can see it from its time, the materials and stuff like that, but in another sense it points in other directions. It doesn't end in the 60s," affirmed Morris. "[It's] still valid for thought and interaction."

The opening reception for Letters: Michael Morris and Concrete Poetry *is on January 19 at 8pm in the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery. The exhibition runs until April 8.*

Arts briefs

Vancouver Art Gallery aquires 156 new pieces

The Vancouver Art Gallery(VAG) added 156 new pieces to its permanent collection in 2011, including work by Robert Davidson, Gathie Falk, Rodney Graham, Angela Grossman, Lawren Harris, Brian Jungen, Ken Lum, Liz Magor, Takao Tanabe, John Vanderpant, Frederick Varley and Ian Wallace.

Michael Audain and the Audain Foundation donated several First Nations works, including *Fire Rangers Lookout* by Frederick Varley, Etienne Zack's *Inner Works* and an argillite model totem pole.

The Audain Emerging Artist Fund also enabled the acquisition of works by Vancouver artists Jeremy Hof, Isabelle Pauwels and Jeremy Shaw.

Last year's acquisitions now bring the VAG's permanent collection to 10,262 works of art.

Triplett's arts grant review doesn't achieve identical reactions

The impending restoration of some of the cut gaming grants to BC arts organizations has garnered a mixed reaction from advocacy groups.

After the completion of former Kwantlen Polytechnic University president Skip Triplett's review into BC's community gaming grant system, the provincial government announced that it would increase funding for arts group by $15 million and restore the grants for adult arts groups.

Some groups felt the restoration, which makes permanent a one-time increase first made last year, did not go far enough.

"We have consistently said from the very day of the cuts that we should be returned to the full amount, at the very minimum, and immediately. And after two years they still haven't done that," said Susan Marsden, president of the BC Association for Charitable Gaming, according to the *Georgia Straight*.

Rob Gloor, executive director of the Alliance for Arts and Culture, expressed relief.

"While the total funding amount does not reach the levels allocated in 2008, before the cuts occurred, it represents a significant increase to the arts and culture sector compared to where we stood last week," he said in a press release.

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THEATRE»

PuSh Festival pulls in the audiences

Alanna Mackenzie
Contributor

Since its inaugural season in 2003, PuSh, a three-week long performing arts festival, has become a fixture of Vancouver's arts and culture community.

The festival's mission is to showcase local and international artistic talent through original and thought-provoking performances. One of the main themes of this year's festival, according to associate curator Dani Fecko, is "storytelling, and the way that we express stories and tell each other stories."

The text is contemporary and the language is very current, even though the play is set in another period.

James Tait
Director of *The Idiot*

COURTESY OF ROBERTO BLENDA

Amarillo explores the cultural identity of a man who crosses the US-Mexico border.

Opening the festival is Mexico City's *Amarillo*, a production that explores the physical and internal journey of one man who crosses the US-Mexico border and is forced to question his own cultural identity. Fecko called the play "a fantastically poetic piece about the journey of an immigrant crossing borders, and what it is to make the choice to leave your life behind for what you think is going to be a better life."

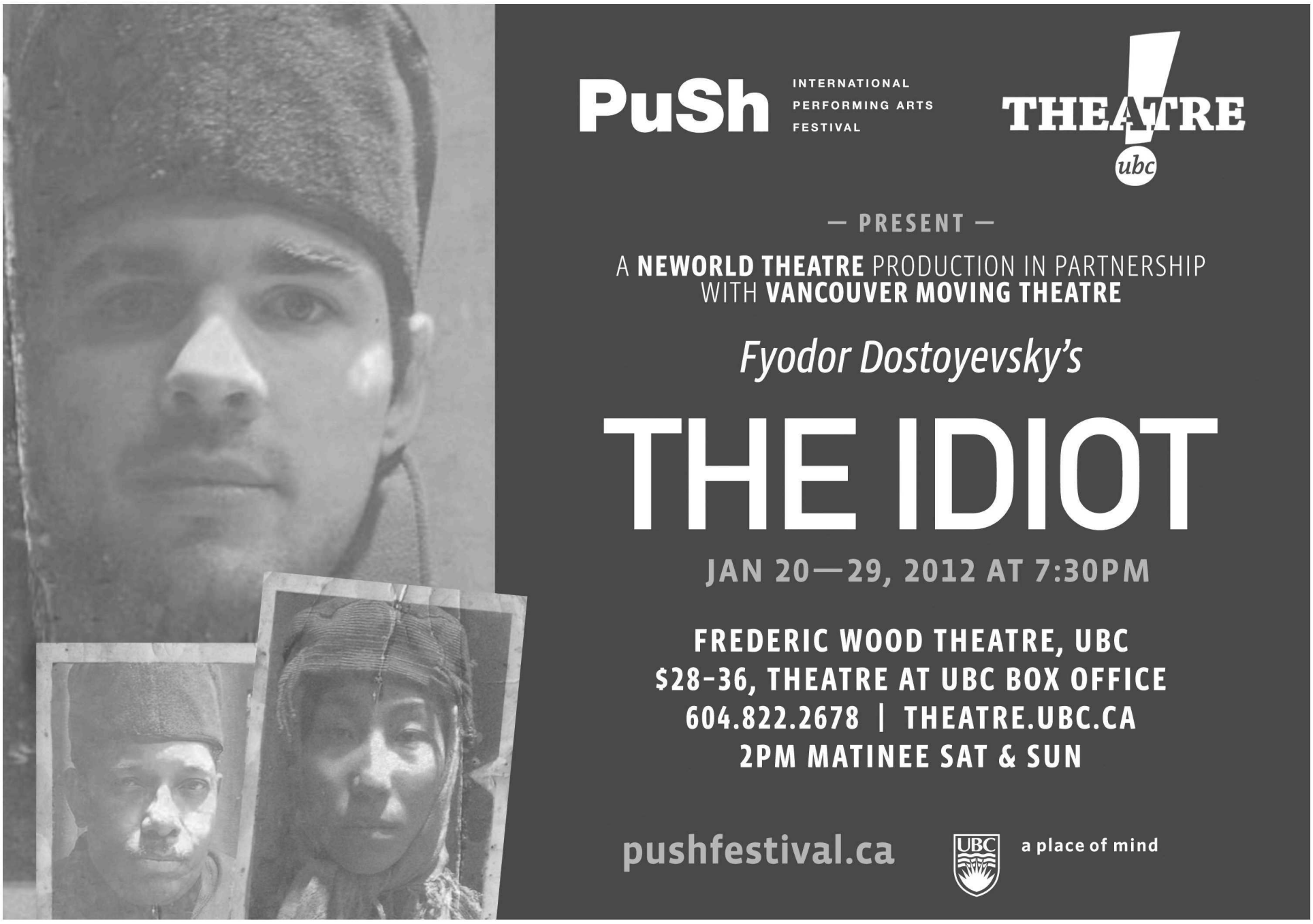
Another main show, flamenco dance by the renowned Noche Flamenca Company, incorporates dance, song and theatre into a dynamic performance. Martin Santangelo, the company's artistic director, described the company's style as "very theatrical, authentic flamenco." Principal dancer Soledad Barrio has garnered international attention for her ability to fuse intense, expressive drama with the nuanced dance technique of authentic flamenco, a dance form which originated in 16th century Spain against the tragic historical backdrop of the Spanish Inquisition.

According to Santangelo, flamenco emerged from "an extraordinary oppression and repression, economic, spiritual and physical." The expression of grief of those persecuted by the Inquisition—their "scream"—eventually transformed into the modern dance form of flamenco. Through their original and multidisciplinary performance, the company aims to tell a part of this story. Santangelo described the effect of the show on audiences as a "catharsis...It helps people to get along with their lives."

Theatre at UBC, in partnership with the festival, will present an adaptation of Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*. It describes the adventures of the innocent Prince Myshkin in the morally corrupt society of 19th century St Petersburg. The play's director, James Tait, has adapted the novel into a contemporary piece, using modern language and humour to communicate themes of modernity and identity.

"The text is contemporary and the language is very current, even though the play is set in another period," said Tait.

This year, PuSh has placed a special focus on Aboriginal performing arts, and includes Aboriginal performers such as Beat Nation, a hybrid collection that focuses on indigenous hip-hop, and Ghostkeeper, a Calgary-based band influenced by Northern Alberta folk music.



Due to overwhelming demand, we present an entire page of sudoku! This page of sudoku is for you, the student who pines to spend their free time unlocking the intertwining mysteries of math and logic. It has absoultely nothing to do with the fact that we have been away for five days at a conference, and came down with a horrible virus.

Sincerely, The Ubyssey

Intermediate

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				6				
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Challenging

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Answers

9	8	5	7	2	1	6	4	3
3	6	4	9	8	5	7	2	1
7	1	2	6	3	4	8	9	5
6	9	8	4	1	2	3	7	2
2	7	3	8	9	6	4	1	5
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8	1	7	2	4	5	9	6	3
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STAFF MEETING AGENDA

1. NASH Debrief
2. Staff restructure
3. ???
4. Profit!
5. Discussion of other lame memes
6. AMS Elections coverage
7. Board of Governors update
8. Endorsement discussion

COME BY THE UBYSSEY OFFICE SUB 24, FOLLOW THE SIGNS

VIRGINIE MENARD/ THE UBYSSEY

The Last Word

This weekend, *The Ubyssey* went to a conference, won some awards, and mostly survived the outbreak of a virus. We hope you'll accept the story of that in lieu of our regular parting shots and snap judgments.

"There was vomit on the roof."

So said celebrated *Esquire* and *ESPN The Magazine* writer Chris Jones to a room of 300 young journalists Saturday night at the Harbour Towers in Victoria, BC.

It was the ending to one of his many hilarious and insightful anecdotes, and an end to four days of great seminars and speeches at the national conference for the Canadian University Press (CUP), the organization that links together most campus newspapers in this country.

By the end of the night, vomit hadn't quite reached any roofs, but pretty much every other part of the hotel had seen some gastro-intestinal mutilation. Close to 80 people over the course of 18 hours came down with what officials believe is a norovirus (previously known as a Norwalk-like virus). During the middle of the night, ten went to the hospital while the hotel refused to give any information. Meanwhile, CUP staff attempted to prevent a city-wide outbreak, let non-vomiting journalists know how to stay safe, while simultaneously dealing with the fact that an Annual General Meeting integral to the running of the organization was definitely not going to go as planned the next day.

It was quite a time. And we were there, two dozen of us, experiencing firsthand an event that will live for 24 hours on the news cycle and in infamy for campus journalists.

What exactly is Norwalk, you ask? In layman's terms, the virus is a fast-acting, highly contagious infection that can take hold in close-knit communities (like a cruise ship or conference). Once you get it, the general form it takes is intense vomiting, fever, nasuea, and other unfortunate toilet-related adventures.

"You feel like you wanna die, it's highly unpleasant," said Suzanne Germain, a Vancouver Island Health Authority spokesperson, a claim that only sounds hyperbolic to those that haven't seen someone with the virus up close.

The conference is a highlight of the year for us, building up to a great climax on the final day. This year was no exception. At 7pm, we were awarded two John H. McDonald awards (one to news editor Kalyeena Makortoff and one to print managing editor Jonny Wakefield), the highest honour a university publication can achieve. At 8pm, we listened to Jones talk about his acclaimed profile of Roger Ebert. At 9pm, we were upstairs, having celebratory drinks and singing "Simply the Best," all while getting ready for the semi-formal dance gala on the other side of town at UVic.

Then suddenly, our feel-good movie turned into a horror flick. There were mysterious reports of people throwing up around the hotel. Then it spread to the buses. Something was wrong—a fast-acting flu? Food poisoning?—but everyone was far too excited about the end of an amazing week to notice the telltale signs of a coming zombie apocalypse/virus.

When the first few reports of vomiting showed up, it was seen as an act of weakness rather than a warning of what was to come. Journalists don't throw up. We had spent the week internalizing this weird mythos, the hard-living reporter hammering out stories in defence of truth. We spent four days immersed in journalism and four nights partying hard, celebrating the profession we want to join, celebrating the idea that we would endure low pay and numerous humiliations because we believe in what we do.

By the time health authorities issued a formal warning asking everyone to return to the hotel, people had been out drinking for hours since the outbreak began, throwing caution to the wind because the last night of a university conference demands dancing and drinking.

This may have contributed to the escalation of the outbreak.

It also didn't help that people found this exciting and terrifying information out when they were drunk and split into groups. But, we got through it. People got back to the hotel, separated themselves accordingly and listened to instructions. Throughout the next day, on the advice of the health authority, people departed the hotel if they were healthy and stayed if they were still ill. WestJet was applauded for offering refunds on missed flights. Air Canada was derided for doing exactly what you would expect Air Canada to do (i.e. nothing).

But what will we take away from the event? We'll remember the abject fear we faced at the possibility that we had a 25 per cent chance of getting affected by this at any moment. We'll remember the amazing work of the conference organizers to manage a crisis about as well as a group of 20-somethings can.

More than anything else, though, we'll remember the Twitter stream. If you ever wanted to see the full power of social media to inform, engage and entertain in real time, if you ever wanted to see how Twitter could work in an apocalyptic crisis, if you ever wondered what the Macho Man Randy Savage would say about Norwalk, check out the #nash74 hashtag. You won't be bored and you may even gain a new appreciation for the medium. Which, even if it took a massive illness, will please many of our colleagues.

Elections bring plenty of interesting races

Editor's Notebook

Brian Platt

We're off to the races again. It's AMS elections time. Last year's was filled with shenanigans, from the president campaigning against his own VP External, to anonymous websites trashing candidates. What fun can we expect this time?

Two of the races are uncontested, which is always disappointing. But both Kyle Warwick (VP External) and Tristan Miller (VP Finance) have plenty of experience in their respective areas, and if you're going to have candidates elected by acclamation you could do a lot worse than this. The other races, fortunately, are going to be fascinating to watch.

The biggest surprise was a third entrant for president, Ben Cappellacci. We knew already that Matt Parson (current VP Academic) and Alyssa Koehn (all things "student leadership") were going to run. Both of them are generally non-confrontational and middle-of-the-road. Parson would have likely been the favourite, given his AMS campaigning experience and former presidency of the Inter-Fraternity Council.

But the entrance of Cappellacci blows this race wide open; he was Parson's predecessor as VP Academic and rivals Parson's roots in the Greek system. Now Parson, Koehn and Cappellacci are going to have to scratch and claw for every vote available, which is good news for voters.

What makes the presidential race especially interesting is that this may be the first time the relatively new Condorcet voting system makes a difference. Under the old system, you simply had to get more votes than the other candidates, whereas Condorcet requires voters to rank candidates based on preference, and the candidates who out-ranks all of their competitors by the highest margin wins.

In other words, the danger of vote-splitting between Parson and Cappellacci is much reduced. This is anybody's race.

The VP Academic race is crowded with five candidates (plus a joke one) vying for the unglamorous position of negotiating land use policies and going to University Neighbourhoods Association meetings. Most of the candidates are well-qualified and serious, so they will have to work hard to start separating themselves from the pack.

The race for Board of Governors has a very impressive field of candidates, and thus all of them are in for a tough battle for the two seats. The most entertaining and possibly controversial candidate is Erik Mackinnon. Visit his blog at *baldtruth.ca* and imagine that person on the governing board of UBC.

There is more, of course, including an attempt by the resource groups to gain hold of the Student Legal Fund Society—but that will have to wait for another column. By the time you read this, the election will be underway. Let's hope it lives up to its promise.

Will AMS candidates show real courage?

Perspectives

>>Gordon Katic

In my four years of observing AMS politics, I have seen some very entertaining political theatre. Constitutional and budgetary crises, incendiary personal squabbles, national scandals—the record is too lengthy to document. To say that the AMS is an institution prone to scandal is a gross understatement.

Despite the fireworks, there is a far more pernicious problem few speak of. Year after year, voter turnout remains dismally low. Since 1986 there have only been three occasions where it eclipsed 15 per cent. We ought to start calling the AMS the Almost Matters Society, because it has made itself virtually irrelevant and invisible to average students.

And the crisis continues: in this year's election, two of the five executive positions are running uncontested. Why the disinterest? Why do so few run, and so few vote? It is easy to reflexively condemn students for their apathy, but outcry over AMS presidential scandals (see: all three of our last presidents) are latent expressions of the passion and conviction of this vibrant student community. Even on less sensational matters, such as land use and governance, there has been popular outcry.

In truth, the AMS receives little attention during election time because students lost confidence in the institution long ago. Most see their student society as an uninspiring and incestuous clique of self-serving politicos, afraid of what real advocacy might entail. The narrow bounds of respectable opinion, the insipidness of campaign rhetoric, the myopia of conventional wisdom, the self-absorbed focus on petty political squabbles, and the impotence of unthreatening orthodoxy: these are the reasons students don't vote.

It doesn't have to be this way. If we have moral and political courage, we can inspire students in our society once again. So here's a little advice for the candidates in this year's election.

Be bold and break convention; don't succumb to the culture of pretend politicians. We're not inspired by neckties, pantsuits and pleasantries; we're inspired by intrepid advocacy.

Be honest about the society's challenges, and specific about your prescriptions. In so doing, spare us from platitudes and euphemisms: tuition has doubled in recent memory, university governance is undemocratic, professors are unaccountable, and crippling budgetary problems endure for the AMS.

Above all, a candidate should aim to inspire by radically re-imagining this society's potential. The AMS has become a small place for small people who persist in thinking small; it must begin to think big, or it will persist in irrelevance. Be courageous enough to tell students what you think we're capable of achieving, and they just might be inspired by your vision.

LIFE »

Learning how to embrace apatheism

Losing religion was one of the hardest processes of my life. Why force it on others?

Melodramatic Musings

Will Johnson

I used to believe in God.

Every day, as I went through the motions of high school, I would send up quick prayers to Jesus. I pictured the Almighty as this warm, mystical wind that was carrying me through life. My relationship with God gave me a sense of purpose, challenged me to be a better person and informed my opinion on basically everything. If I was worried, stressed or confused, all I had to do was send up a quick plea to the Almighty, and everything was better.

I was a part of a vibrant community of believers at my local church. Our youth group did work with the homeless people of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. We travelled to Mexico and Brazil on mission trips. We had worship services, bible studies and games nights. I've never felt so strongly like I belonged somewhere, or like I was doing something important with my life.

Then I grew up.

One by one, I watched my friends "fall away" from youth group. It was always the same story. Someone would start dating a non-Christian or would be tempted into the party lifestyle. It seemed like as soon as anyone went away to university, they would come back after their first semester and announce they had become an atheist. I saw post-secondary education as a poisonous, faith-stealing endeavour that was robbing my friends of their relationship with God.

But then, at about the age of 19, I started asking questions too. I'd held these exclusivist, puritanical views without really questioning them.

Why should I? I was happy and I was surrounded by people who had carefully constructed explanations for their beliefs. I was young enough to know everything then, and like the rest of the people in my church, I had a parable or a bible verse for every scenario. I'd read my C.S. Lewis, my Donald Miller, my Philip Yancey. I had an arsenal of one-liners. What more could I need?

In the summer of 2004, I left my faith behind.

For the next few years, I desperately searched for the answers. I took college courses in Eastern religions. I wandered through Buddhist temples and signed up for introductory classes to the Baha'i faith. I ate a "love feast" at a Hindu temple in Vancouver and even took a personality test at the Church of Scientology. I was intent on making sense of my world.

For a while, I was interested in atheism. I read Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. I watched videos of Sam Harris's speeches on YouTube. Atheism is a seductive religion of its own, mostly because it is just as evangelical and intent on converting the world as any major faith. I loved the audacity and pomposity of these men, and their devotion to science and common sense. I collected atheist parables like I once memorized bible verses. But ultimately, atheism came up short too.

I realized I didn't want to be a bitter has-been, intent on robbing other people of their faith.

One day, I was driving with my deeply religious sister, and I told her one of the parables I'd learned. It compared faith in God to the delusion of having a giant diamond buried in your backyard, and made the argument that most people don't even bother to dig. They're just content in the knowledge that the diamond is there. It gives them hope.

She turned to me and said, "Will, that's really mean."

It had never occurred to me that a belief, that an argument, could be "mean." In my mind, I was just bouncing around ideas. I realized that I didn't want to be a bitter has-been intent on robbing other people of their faith. Ditching religion was one of the most terrifying, depressing and traumatizing things I'd ever done. For years I had been miserable and lost. Why would I wish that on my sister? She was happy, and I want her to stay happy.

These days, my quest for understanding has lost its urgency. I'm pretty comfortable with the phrase "I don't know." I feel like it's the most honest thing we can say when we're faced with the infinite mystery and overwhelming chaos of the universe. I settled on the label agnostic for a long time, but now I've found something even better: apatheism.

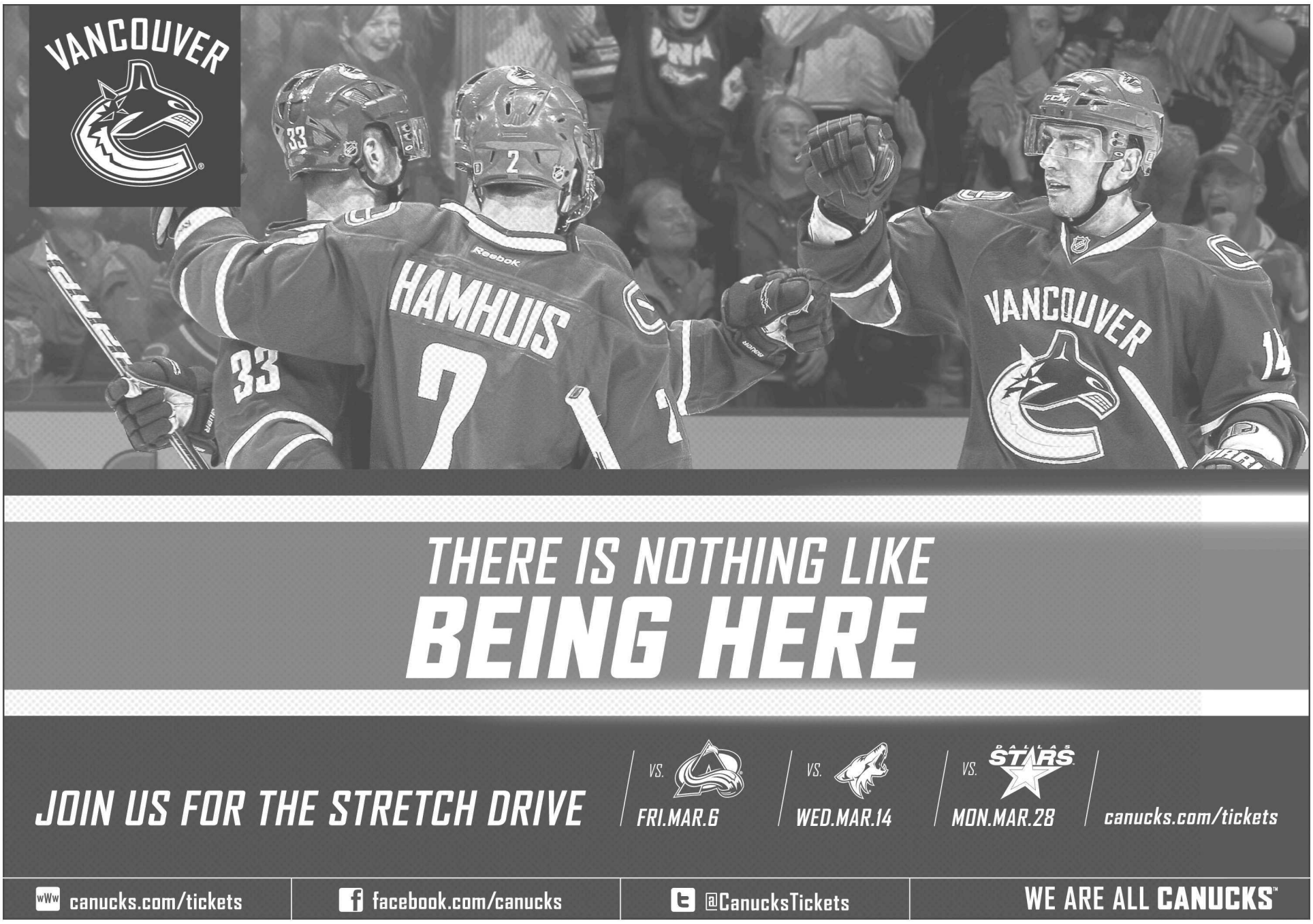
The fact of the matter is, the question of whether or not there is a God seems profoundly unimportant to me. I know it's crucial for some people, but right now nothing interests me less.

Being a better person—a better brother, son, friend, neighbour—that's what's important. And if some people need religion to get them stoked about waking up in the morning, I can't fault them for that.

But if people spent less time thinking about religion, and spent more time thinking about the world we live in, maybe we'd be better off. If more people embraced apathy about the Big Picture and took time to notice the Here and Now, maybe we could make this world a little more worthwhile to live in.

And if there is a God, I'm sure He'll understand.

This article originally appeared in The Martlet *at the University of Victoria in January of 2010.*



Fiscal Sustainability

Referendum 2012

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Lower Student Fees

- Increased funding for student services.

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- A long-term growth strategy.

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To start a Yes or No campaign contact *elections@ams.ubc.ca* to apply for funding.

1. Do you support and approve the following changes to the AMS student membership fees?

(a) The reduction of the current Student Spaces Fund fee by $3.88, effective September 2012.

- The Student Spaces Fund is administered by the AMS Student Council and is used to maintain and improve UBC student spaces including the Student Union Building, the Whistler Lodge, athletic facilities in the vicinity of the Student Union Building and childcare spaces.
- If the reduction is approved, the Student Spaces Fund fee will be $12.25 effective September 2012.
- If the reduction is rejected, the Student Spaces Fund fee will be $16.13 effective September 2012.

(b) The introduction of an annual Ombudsperson fee in the amount of $1 to provide funding for ombuds services to UBC students, effective September 2012.

- This fee will be indexed to the British Columbia Consumer Price Index.
- This fee will be eligible for subsidy.
- Members will not have the option to opt-out from paying this fee.
- This fee will not be pro-rated based on the number of classes taken.

Note: The net effect of these fee changes will be to lower annual AMS student membership fees by $2.88.

2. Do you support and approve the following change to AMS Bylaw 11(2)(a):

2.Funds

(a) The Vice-President Finance shall:

vii) ensure the establishment and maintenance of an endowment fund known as the "AMS Endowment Fund", the maximum limit of which shall remain open. The principal of the AMS Endowment Fund shall be retained as an endowment which cannot be spent. The interest and other income derived from investment of the principal shall be used, applied, devoted and accumulated for the benefit of:

(1) increasing the principal amount of the AMS Endowment Fund from time to time; and

(2) advancing the mission of the Society, including but not limited to funding initiatives in the areas of strategic planning, governance, sustainability, marketing, services, and other programs developed to advance the mission of the Society.

If the Society generates an unforeseen surplus, that surplus shall be deposited in the AMS Endowment Fund. Other allocations of Society revenues to the AMS Endowment Fund and the terms of reference regarding disbursements and continued financing of the fund from part of the income of the fund shall be determined in the Code.

viii) ensure the establishment and maintenance of such other funds as determined in the Code, the limits and terms of reference of which shall also be determined in the Code.

3. Do you authorize the AMS Student Council to sell the land located at 2124 Nordic Drive in Whistler, BC

(legally described as PID: 006-959-831, Lot 56 Except Part in Plan LMP22342, District Lot 7179, Plan 19839) together with all buildings thereon, such land and buildings collectively being the 'AMS Whistler Lodge'?

Note: Proceeds from the sale of the AMS Whistler Lodge will go to the AMS Endowment Fund.

4. Do you authorize the AMS Student Council to sell a maximum of three (3) paintings owned by the AMS at any time prior to February 28, 2013, such paintings to be selected at the discretion of the AMS Student Council?

Note: Proceeds from the sale will go towards an AMS Arts Endowment Fund, which fund will be used to purchase additional art and support other on-campus arts programming and initiatives.