# PAGE FRIDAY

THE UBYSSEY

December 1, 2000
Volume 82 Issue 23
Fernie let the dogs out since 1918


# صيام

# תענית

# fasting

**Axed:** 5
**Lloyd Axworthy in public!**

**Waxed:** 12
**Poems about gym boys in private!**

# CLASSIFIEDS

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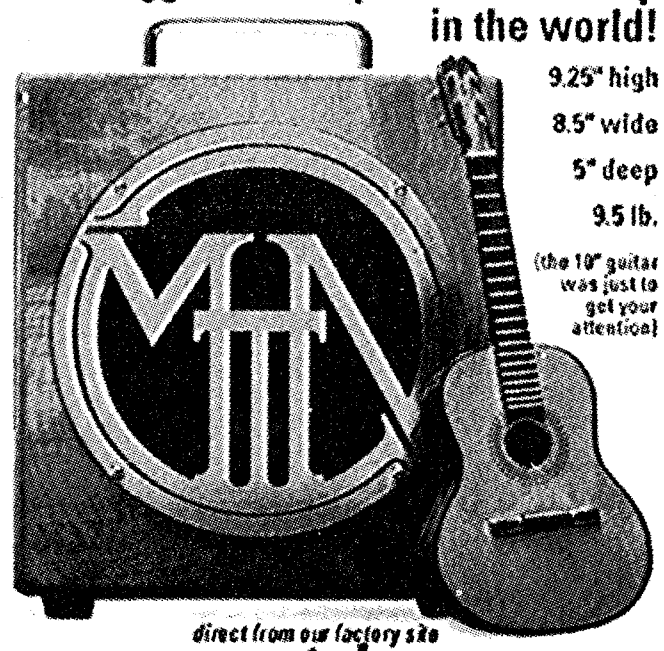

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# The price of a good team

## The CIAU has changed its scholarship policy, and no school is happier about it than UBC

by Tom Peacock

Universities in the CIAU are hoping that a new athletic scholarship system introduced last summer will rejuvenate the league. The changes aren't sweeping, but they're still significant–they show that the CIAU is finally adapting to the increasingly competitive and expensive world of university sports.

The CIAU's thinking is that the change will encourage top Canadian athletes to stay in Canada and play for and train at Canadian schools. Consequently, the logic goes, the league will draw more attention from the traditionally complacent Canadian media and public. Ticket sales will go up, syndication deals will materialise, and the money will start rolling in. But it's a slow process, and there are a lot of naysayers among the member schools.

But last summer, under pressure from UBC and other Canada West schools who threatened to pull out of the league unless the scholarship issue was addressed, the CIAU members agreed on a compromise

Basically, the amount UBC is allowed to give its athletes hasn't really changed all that much. Before, players were allowed to receive an annual $1500 scholarship based on athletic ability. Alumni and private corporations could match that for a total of $3000. Now, players can have their tuition and fees paid for, provided they maintain an average of over 80 per cent in at least 18 credits.

At UBC, fees and tuition add up to a mere $2500. Other schools, however, are more expensive, and so the new rule has an equalising effect among schools. Athletes who might have steered clear of more expensive schools now have no reason to do so, as long as the school or a private source can cough up enough to cover the player's tuition and fees.

Although the numbers don't mean a huge change for athletes coming to UBC, there's a belief now among athletes, the media, and the public that schools are free to support their athletes, says Kim Gordon, intercollegiate coordinator of Athletics at UBC.

"The perception is that we're giving awards, so it's better. And then we can say to someone who's going down to the States, 'If you're getting $10,000, that might not even cover your tuition. Whereas if you stay here we can cover your tuition. So the value is a little more marketable," she explained.

Most universities in Ontario and some in the Maritimes argued against the change–claiming that giving athletic scholarships a higher profile would change the nature of university sports in Canada.

Robert Rosehart, president of Wilfrid Laurier University, was quoted in the *National Post* as saying the school wants the participation of players to be "part of the experience, not the focus."

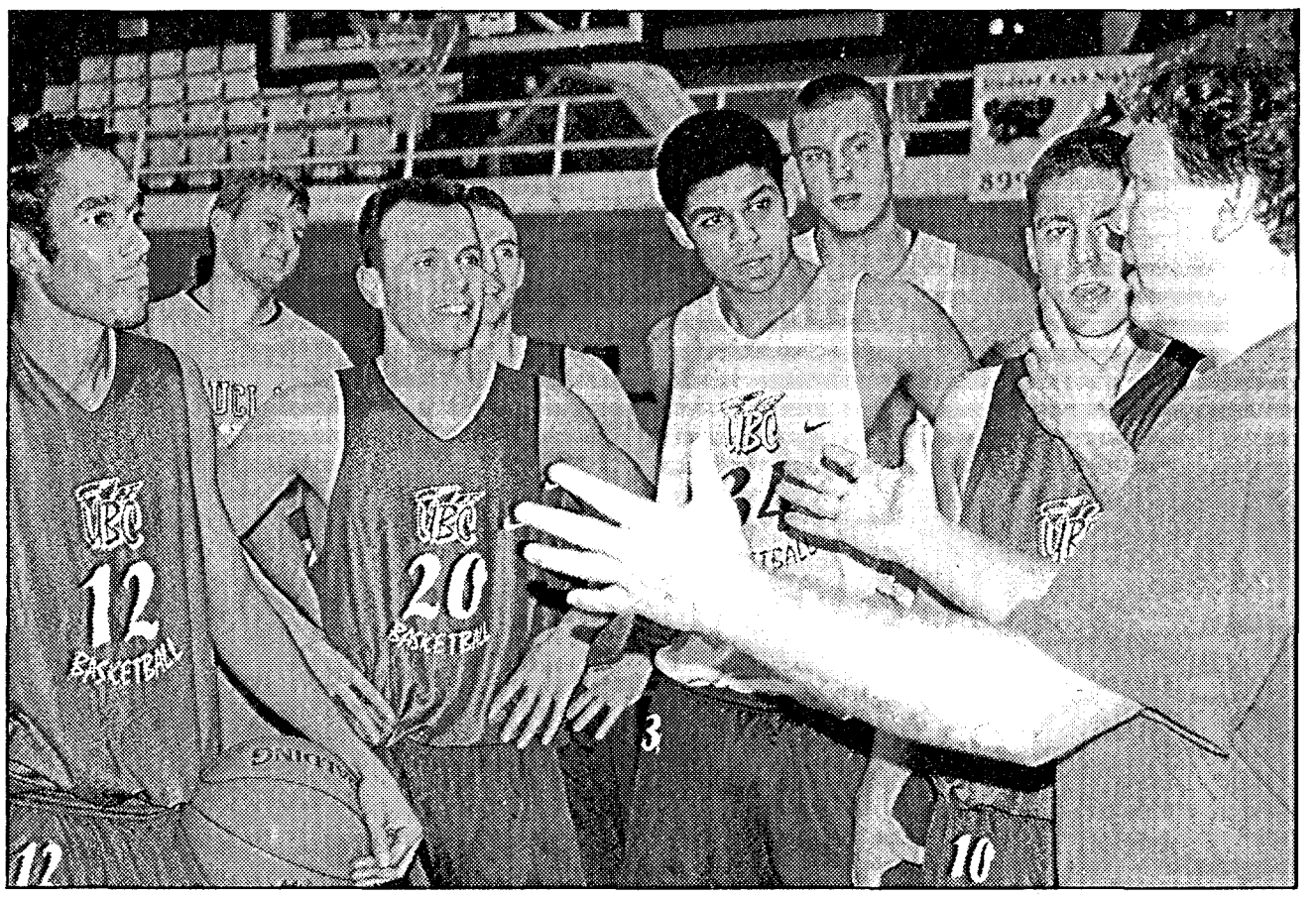
In another summer article in the *Halifax Daily News*, Jack Drover, athletic director for Mount Allison University, also expressed concern.

"If it becomes dollar-driven, then I think we're going to have big-time serious implications on the future of Canadian university sport."

The UBC Athletics department is happy with the change, but the administrators see it as only a small step in the right direction. Ideally they would like schools to have the freedom to offer full scholarships to athletes based on their ability.

"Ultimately, we want to be able to go back and fight for being able to give more money," Gordon explained. "But we're comfortable right now giving tuition and fees, because it equalises it...And now it's a matter of, 'Okay, let's get the resources up so that we have the money to actually give all the money we can.'"

One UBC team that will serve as a model for other CIAU teams under the new scholarship regulations is the men's basketball squad.



BANKROLLED: First-year coach Kevin Hanson (right) attracted scholarship money for his team. TARA WESTOVER PHOTO

Last April, ex-Thunderbird Kevin Hanson replaced Bruce Enns as head coach for men's basketball. Hanson is the man about town when it comes to basketball in BC. He captained the Birds to a CIAU silver medal in 1987, coached the BC under-19 squad to a gold medal at the Canada Games in 1997, and in his most recent post, as head coach of the Langara College Falcons, took his team to six CCAA national championships. As well, he was named BC coach of the year in 1992 and 1994.

Hanson was an obvious choice as Enns' successor.

"I like his vision for the program, not just relating to on-court performance but also for alumni development and community outreach," Gordon said when Hanson was hired. Little did she know just how important Hanson's visibility in Vancouver's basketball community would prove for the team.

During the Frank Knutt Memorial Golf Tournament earlier this year, prominent Vancouver businessman and avid basketball fan David McLean mentioned to UBC's Director of Athletics, Bob Philip, that he was happy to see they had hired a former UBC player for the basketball coaching job. McLean even said he remembered seeing Hanson play during the '80s.

A few phone calls later and Hanson had made a deal with McLean wherein McLean would see to it that the team got enough money every year to provide each player with the full tuition and fees scholarship package.

"You say never burn a bridge. The message I preach to my fellas is always carry yourself in a professional manner," Hanson said. "If I was a horse's ass on the court, it might have turned him off the other way. I was fortunate enough that we had a positive experience on the court, and he obviously took a liking to me."

Hanson admits he was lucky to have secured such a lucrative connection with McLean, but the connections he has in the community and his ability to draw funding from them are certainly no accident.

**"We need that kind of support so we can focus more on our basketball than raising our finances to come back to school."**

***—Ben Sansburn***

***UBC guard***

For Gordon, Hanson's case signals the start of the new era in CIAU recruitment and fund-raising. All the coaches will likely try to get the same sort of funding for their teams in order to attract the best players.

"I think he's setting a standard...There's a competitive rivalry between sports all the time, too. It's like, 'Hey, basketball got that, we should find that for volleyball, rugby or football.' They feed off each other," she explained.

The added freedom that scholarship money would provide athletes with is an integral part of Hanson's game plan. If the players don't have to work for their tuition during the summer, they can train more, they they can go to tournaments, they can gel together as a team.

"I expect us to be even a lot higher than that, a lot better than that. I'm a bit of a perfectionist, and I'm extremely competitive. I want us to succeed. I want us to be number one all the time."

Hanson admits he's a fiercely competitive coach. He says he sees no reason why the UBC team should not be the best team in the country. This year they have a lot of new players. Most coaches would be content to call it a building year, and to say they are just waiting to see what happens. But not Hanson.

"Our lack of experience of playing together is really hurting us. In the summertime, the guys didn't play a lot of basketball. A lot of them didn't come to training camp in shape, which resulted in a couple of injuries. In my style of game, an up-tempo style...it takes its toll on your body when you're pushing that hard every night."

Ben Sansburn, one of the team's veterans agreed that a strong off-season is crucial, but that it would have been difficult had the team not secured the funding from McLean.

"[Having your tuition paid] means you have to spend maybe a little less time working in the summer. If some guy has got to work two jobs in the summer, he doesn't have much time to work on his sport. And that's a big deal. If we want to have the best team here, then we need that kind of support so we can focus more on our basketball than raising our finances to come back to school," he said.

And now that Canadian universities are offering athletic scholarships, playing in the States is not all that enticing, according to Sansburn. His teammate, Tassos Kanavos, agreed.

"A lot of the guys who go to the States are back after a year or two anyway, because they realise that it's a whole different world down there, especially basketball-wise," said Kanavos, who played under Hanson at Langara College before coming to UBC this year.

"It's a different level...Being an élite player in Canada is completely different than being an élite player in the States. But it's really great what Kevin's doing and what the whole CIAU's trying to do now, which is draw money to keep the best Canadian players in Canada, so we don't lose people down to the States," he continued.

But what about other sports that are not so dominated by Americans–sports like hockey or swimming, which have large numbers of young Canadians among the élite ranks? How do you keep those players competing in the CIAU?

A solution which goes hand in hand with the scholarship programs, Gordon says, is to foster partnerships between the school team and amateur athletic organisations.

If more bonds were formed between CIAU teams and national teams, for example, everyone would benefit, Gordon claimed. Money raised at the sport-governing level could support the teams at the university level, and so keep athletes in Canada for their training and coaching.

"It's a model that I think the sport system has to work at...The partnerships would make our programs better...And then the kids will say, if I stay there, I can make it to the Olympic podium."

UBC's swim team is a case in point. The team has strong partnerships with the provincial and national team organisations, and with the Pacific Dolphins Swim Club. Eleven UBC coaches and team members went to the Olympics in Sydney this September.

"Ultimately, I think the sports system [in Canada] has to get their act together to develop athletes," Gordon concluded. But for Sansburn, and the legions of other athletes in the CIAU playing their way through university with slim hope of a future playing career, there has to be other tangible benefits, and a quality free education is right up there on the list.

Besides, as Sansburn put it, "It's great to have the opportunity to stay in Canada." ❖

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# UN global warming talks could resume in near future: Axworthy

by Alex Dimson

Despite media reports that recent United Nations talks on global warming had failed, former Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy told a packed room at UBC's Liu Centre Wednesday that negotiations may resume shortly.

"[The] reporting, in most cases, was inaccurate...or wrong," said Axworthy, who headed the Canadian delegation to a conference discussing the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, held at The Hague, Netherlands, and attended by 182 nations.

The conference called for countries to take specific actions to reduce global warming and to put into effect the commitments agreed to in the Kyoto Protocol, signed in 1997. The protocol demands that countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions to five per cent below **1990?** levels by 2008. The early compliance standards agreed upon in the protocol, for the most part, have yet to be met.

**"Why bother with international stuff when we can do it ourselves?"**

***—David Suzuki, Environmentalist***

While media reports painted the recent conference as a complete or partial failure, Axworthy—who had just flown in from The Hague—said that the sides are close to reaching an agreement on the details of how countries should reduce carbon emissions to stem global warming.

Reports from the conference indicate that negotiators were divided into two factions—the US-led "umbrella" group, which included Canada and Australia, and the European Union (EU).

Accused of putting a greater emphasis on creating loopholes rather than making significant cuts to emissions, Canada and other umbrella nations came under heavy criticism at the talks.

But Axworthy, who is also the new director of the Liu Centre for the Study of Global Issues, told a different story.

"A tentative agreement had been reached," he said, describing all-night marathon negotiations that took place over the last two days of the conference. He said that all the major parties made "substantial concessions."

But Axworthy said that the EU backed out afterward and the deal could not be renegotiated in time. On Wednesday he said that he had just spoken by telephone with an EU official, and speculated that discussions would resume "within a week or two."

"I think what's happening is [negotiations are] going into another gear. There is a willingness to move on international issues," he said.

But Axworthy's emphasis on the intricacies of the negotiations and the importance of an environmental treaty were attacked by an agitated David Suzuki.

"Canada has a tremendous amount at stake," said the prominent environmentalist. Citing the growth of Canada's eco-tourism industry, the warming of Canada's North and "study after study that has shown it is easy to meet Kyoto," Suzuki questioned the usefulness of the conference.

"Why bother with international stuff when we can do it ourselves?" he asked Axworthy to the applause of the audience, stating that Canada should be attempting to lower its emissions regardless of the state of international negotiations.

"If you're going to change, you have to start somewhere," Axworthy replied. He emphasised that countries should begin with the guidelines of an international treaty, so that changes in political atmosphere do not affect a nation's commitment to emission reduction.

Suzuki also expressed frustration at the ten-year process of international negotiations that he feels has done very little to halt global warming.

"I just can't see how you can be so optimistic when your own government failed to meet its [Kyoto] commitments," he told Axworthy.

While an unruffled Axworthy acknowledged Suzuki's frustration, he indicated that the climate talks are the "mother of all negotiations," and that the issue requires an enormous change in thinking.

"What's happening here is monumental. You're trying to change institutions, ideas...that have been around for 300 years," he said. "You can't change an oceanliner on a dime."

The conference comes in light of dire warnings by many environmentalists, including Suzuki, who say that pollutants are dramatically affecting the global climate and are the cause of erratic weather patterns recently experienced around the world.

A recent UN study indicated that the average temperature worldwide could increase by as much as six degrees Celsius over the next 100 years.

At The Hague, talks largely stalled around the exact terms of carbon emission reductions, with umbrella countries insisting that carbon "sinks" such as forests should count as a reduction of emissions. But the EU felt that a country's carbon sinks should not be linked to its limits on producing emissions.

**AXWORTHY:** The new director of the liu centre was on campus Wednesday to speak about recent global warming talks. TARA WESTOVER/UBYSSEY FILE PHOTO

Carbon sinks have been questioned by many in the scientific community who feel that there is no accurate way to gauge their effects on emission reductions.

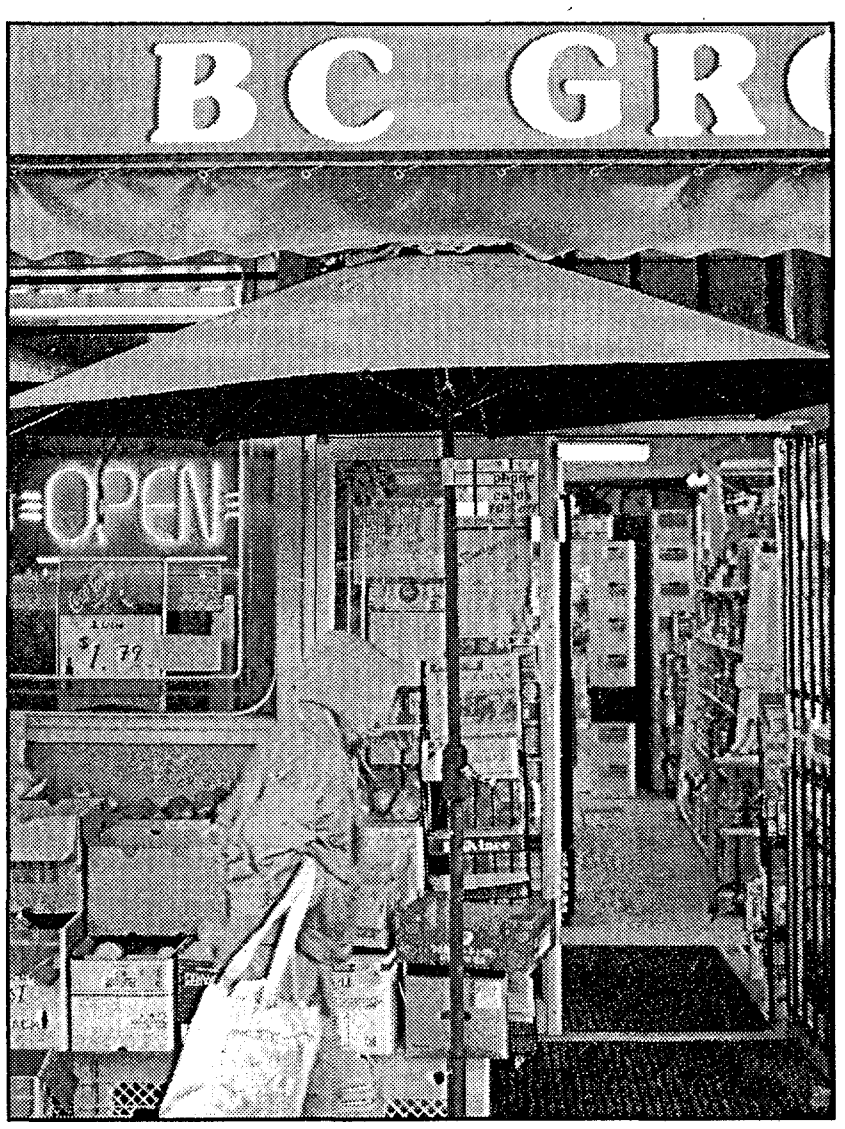
While Axworthy did not disclose many of the details about the near-deal, he said negotiators agreed that logged forests that are regrown could not count against carbon emissions even though these repopulated forests absorb more carbon than older ones.

The conference was also intended to reach an agreement on ways to encourage developing countries to adhere to the Kyoto standards. Over the next ten years, the amount of emissions from developing countries will surpass those in developed countries.

Axworthy said some progress had been made on the issue, but that the sides could not agree on the financial details.

"Over time, I think...there slowly had been an understanding that this is a shared problem," he said. "What was disagreed upon was how to fund it."

The next talks are scheduled for May in Bonn, Germany. ❖




**NAME CHANGE:** The store that is now the BC Grocery. IRENE ISAACS PHOTO

# University cracks down on illegal trademark use

## Two grocery stores have to change names

by Cynthia Lee

Several on-campus business owners were surprised when the university decided to prohibit the use of the abbreviation "UBC" in the names of their stores.

One owner, Insook Kim, was forced to change the name of the grocery store she has managed in the UBC Village for three years from "UBC Grocery" to "BC Grocery" after receiving a letter from a university official earlier this month.

The letter, dated November 1, from Hubert Lai, UBC's senior legal counsel, asked her to refrain from using the UBC abbreviation, which is trademarked by the university. Lai indicated that the store was in violation of the federal *Trade-marks Act*.

"In order to protect the integrity of the 'UBC' mark, we must require that you cease using the 'UBC' mark in any manner," read the letter.

Similar letters were sent to three other businesses, and allows the owners six months to alter the names of their stores.

Kim said that she was surprised by the letter since her grocery store had used the 'UBC' acronym in its name for over ten years, and none of its past owners ran into any difficulty.

Jeff Lee, the current owner of the nearby grocery store formerly called UBC Lucky Mart, has complied with the terms of the letter and has covered the acronym on the store's signs with a sheet of white paper.

"I just bought [the business] the way it is. I just want to know why we cannot use it," he said.

But Lai said that UBC officials were not aware of these businesses until recently.

"The university, in order to maintain that protection, has to police the use of its trademark," he said, adding that UBC must take this action because no external agencies exist to guard trademark infringement.

UBC does not normally license out its trademarks—which include variations of "The University of British Columbia," as well as "Thunderbirds"—to for-profit ventures.

Lai said that licenses are typically granted only if they could benefit the university community as a whole. He offered the manufacturing of official UBC merchandise for the UBC Bookstore as an example.

According to Lai, any application for a license would be considered on a case-by-case basis, but he said that it is unlikely that these particular businesses would be granted permission to use the trademark.

"Quite honestly, I can't see how it would be beneficial to the student body or university community," he said.

Kim said she is upset with the university's decision.

"But what can we do about it?" she lamented. ❖

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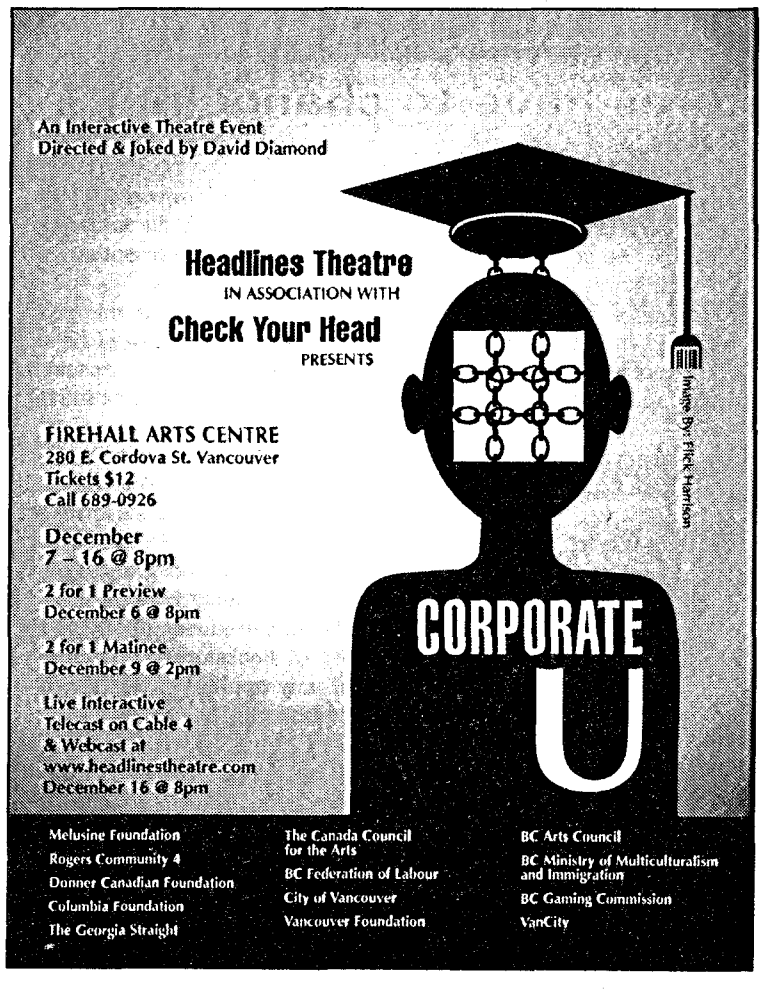
***DEADLINE: January 19, 2001** for nomination letters. Supporting documentation may be submitted until February 2, 2001.*

Winners will be identified in early 2001, and will also be honoured during the Spring Convocation in May.

***For further information about the awards, contact the Dean's Office, Faculty of Applied Science, your Department or School office, or the committee chair at 822-3484 or: evans@mech.ubc.ca***



**THEY HAVEN'T ARRIVED AT THE DESTINATION YET:** Activists on a bus tour advocating the end of sanctions against Iraq make a stop at UBC. CYNTHIA LEE PHOTO

# Activists break the law in hopes of ending sanctions

**by Cynthia Lee**

Seattle resident Bert Sacks is among those who are intentionally violating a US law that they believe is unjust.

Sacks, an activist who travelled to UBC on Wednesday as part of a seven-week bus tour advocating for the end of economic sanctions against Iraq, said that he has participated in trips that illegally bring medicine, school supplies, and toys to the children of Iraq.

"If I would do a year in jail and it would end sanctions one month earlier, I would have had a part in saving 5000 children's lives," he said, citing UN figures that 5000 children in Iraq die every month for reasons related to the sanctions, which have been in place since the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

The sanctions have been maintained by the UN Security Council in hopes of forcing the Iraqi government of President Saddam Hussein to comply with UN demands to destroy weapons of mass destruction in its possession.

But the sanctions have increasingly come under fire from humanitarian groups who assert that the sanctions are taking their toll—including widespread malnutrition—on the Iraqi people.

"Most people really had no idea that the war against Iraq was as total as it is," said Mike Miles, one of Sacks' travelling companions on the tour. "They've disconnected the bombing of the war, which was back in 1990, from the siege part of the war, which has been going on for the last ten years."

Since his first visit, Sacks has quit his profession as an electronics engineer and software programmer to fight for the cause full-time.

He said that he was appalled that even allowing medical "healing" books into Iraq is prohibited under the American sanctions.

"I felt a deep need to do something," Sacks said. He now works as a guide for individuals who wish to travel to Iraq to see the state of the country with their own eyes.

Sacks and the bus campaign are associated with the Chicago-based group, Voices in the Wilderness, which conducts activities that are primarily aimed at violating the American government's Iraqi Sanctions Regulations, while at the same time bringing relief and raising awareness about the issue.

People who violate the US regulations can face up to 12 years in prison and $1 million in fines, in addition to civil penalties of up to $275,000 per violation.

**"If I would do a year in jail and it would end sanctions earlier... I would have had a part in saving 5000 children's lives."**

***-Bert Sacks, Anti-sanctions Activist***

But Danny Muller, who works at Voices in the Wilderness, said that the gamble is worthwhile.

"To get justice on this, people really need to take risks," he said.

In December 1998, Sacks was named with four others in a notice issued by the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

The notice stated that OFAC "has reasonable cause to believe that you...have engaged in certain prohibited transactions...relating to the embargo against Iraq in 1997."

The office also cited that the parties had violated regulations on ten occasions, including the exportation of goods, such as medical supplies, without the required OFAC authorisation. Further, the notice indicated OFAC's intention to issue a penalty of $10,000 against Sacks and $120,000 against the organisation.

Sacks, who has travelled to Iraq seven times in the last four years, told *the Ubyssey* that OFAC has not taken further action against him since he received the notice.

Miles, who has now visited Iraq twice, and Sacks have indicated that they have invited the US to come and prosecute them.

"I was more proactive. I actually went and asked if they would prosecute me," said Miles. "I remember lying in bed for some time after I had done that thinking 'do I know what I'm doing?'"

The bus campaign, which ends in Vancouver today, is aimed at raising awareness about the issue around the west coast of both the US and Canada.

"In our estimation, sanctions cannot stand the light of day," explained Miles, who is a substitute teacher from northern Wisconsin. "We figured the best place to bring...the discussion around [sanctions] was to university campuses. This is where debate takes place."

After an hour-long delay at the Canada-US border, the bus—decorated with slogans and a large painted illustration of an Iraqi child—arrived at UBC on Wednesday to the relief of student organisers.

"We were worried there for a while," said Farah Nosh, a member of the local Campaign to End Sanctions Against the People of Iraq (CESAPI), about the delay while she helped to set up a campaign display in the SUB Wednesday.

An Immigration Canada spokesperson, however, said the delay was simply a routine check.

At UBC, Sacks spoke of his concern for Iraqi children. He fondly remembers Walid, a 10-year-old Iraqi shoeshine boy who he had befriended on one of his trips to the Middle Eastern country.

Sacks discovered that Walid was illiterate when the boy was unable to read an information sheet about Voices in the Wilderness that had been translated into Arabic. Walid was not attending school "because he was shining shoes to earn money for family."

"The consequences of the sanctions are not measurable by medical and scientific statistics," said Sacks, "because of the conditions of this boy's life coming into manhood in a society where he has no future."

"I worry about him." ❖

# UN expresses concern over APEC

by Alex Dimson

Canada is considering ways to address a UN body's concern over events such as the 1997 pepper-spraying of Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) protesters at UBC.

In a recent report, the UN Committee Against Torture expressed concerns that Canada may have violated a UN convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishments.

The report cites "the inappropriate use of pepper spray and force by police authorities to break up demonstrations and force and restore order, notably with regard to the 1997 APEC demonstrations," as one of the ways Canada may have violated the treaty.

To address these concerns the committee recommends that Canada consider creating a body that would investigate any complaints about the violation of the UN convention.

**SPICE IT UP:** A scene from the 1997 protests at UBC against APEC. RICHARD LA/UBYSSEY FILE PHOTO

While the committee's recommendations are not legally binding, Carl Schwenger, a spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, said that the government always takes the committee's recommendations "very seriously."

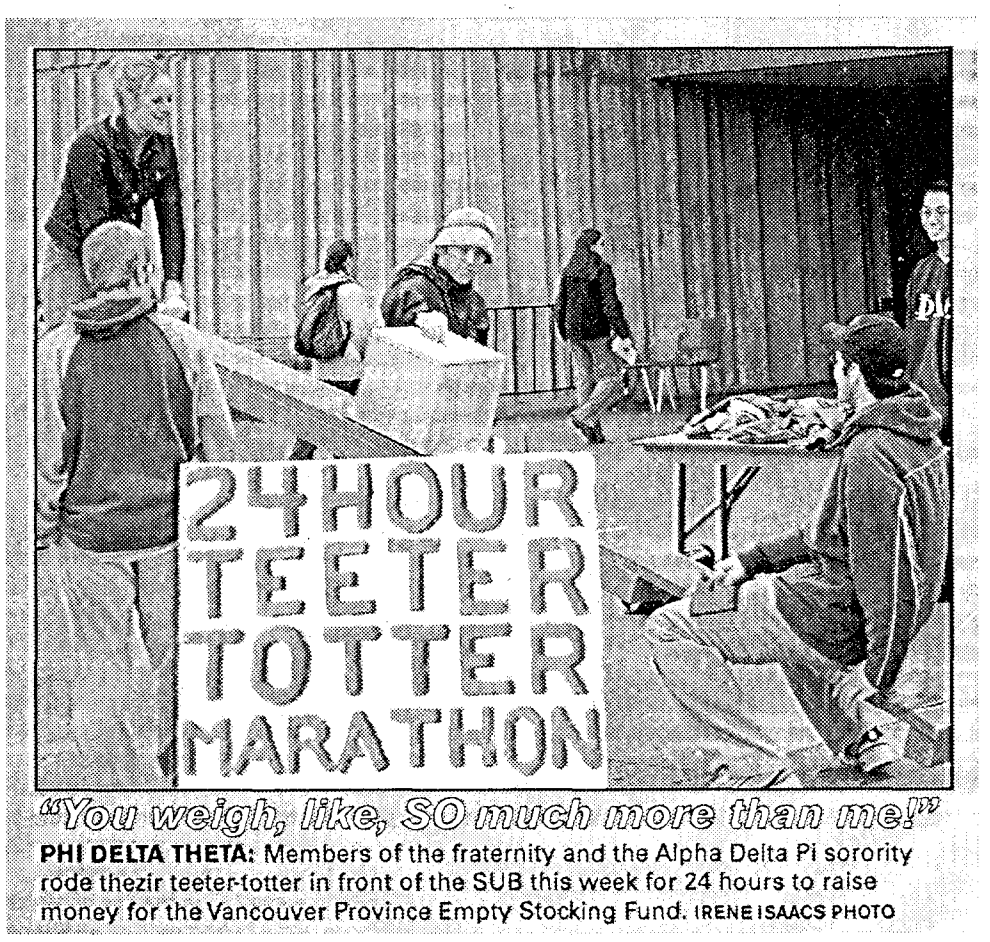
"We're a strong believer in human rights and we're a strong believer in the UN system," he said. "We will do our best to try to meet what's been asked of us within the context of Canadian law."

Schwenger said that Canada is considering the creation of an investigative body, though he's not sure what form it will take.

The committee was formed after the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was implemented by the world body in 1987.

Those countries which have signed the treaty are required to submit periodic reports outlining the ways in which they have tried to prevent the incidence of torture or unusual punishment from occuring, which the committee then examines and criticises.

While the UN's most recent report acknowledged the extensive legal protection Canada has against torture, and the improvements it has made since the last report, the committee expressed concern over a number of Canada's policies.




"You weigh, like, SO much more than me!"

**PHI DELTA THETA:** Members of the fraternity and the Alpha Delta Pi sorority rode thezir teeter-totter in front of the SUB this week for 24 hours to raise money for the Vancouver Province Empty Stocking Fund. IRENE ISAACS PHOTO

The committee felt that there was an "over-representation of aboriginal people in prison throughout the criminal justice system," and was worried that accused torturers from other countries may be granted immunity from extradition and that asylum seekers may not be given a fair chance to stay in the country.

It recommended that Canada create an independent body to assess those seeking asylum and that Canadian military personnel be better educated about human rights.

But Schwenger said that while they take the commitee's conclusions seriously and intend to pursue their recommendations, he said that sometimes they are made without a full understanding of Canada's laws or judicial process.

Schwenger expects Canada to file its next report within a year. ❖

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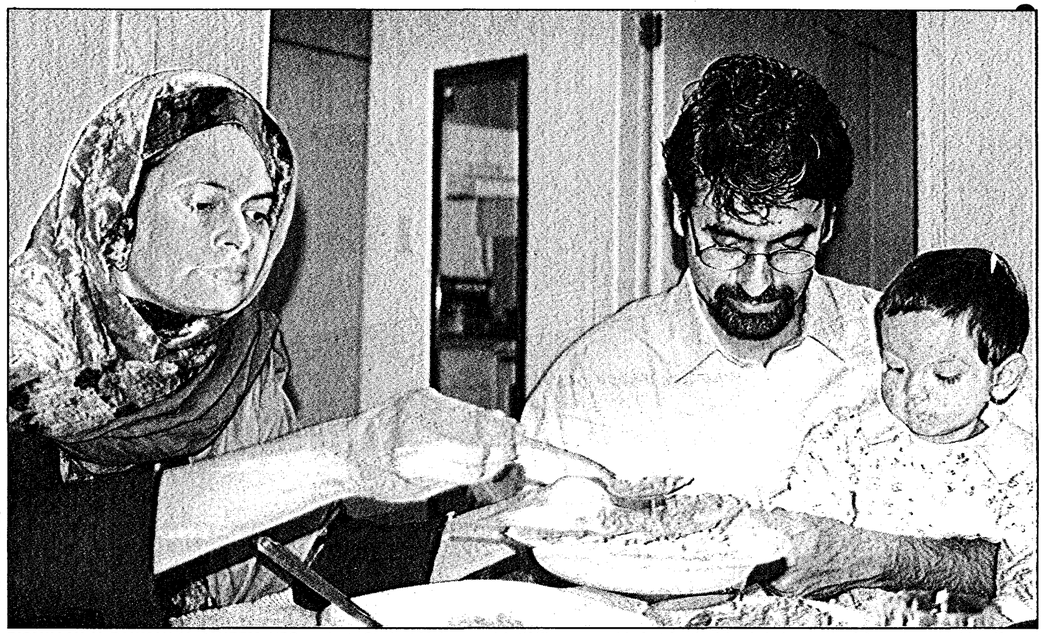
# Fast and Faster

Each day this month, when it's light enough at dawn that a white thread can be distinguished from a black one, Muslims begin their day-long fast. Since ancient times, fasting has been described as a practice of sacrifice, of self-reflection, of hardship, and of joy.

At UBC, students of different religions continue to fast to cleanse and purify their bodies and their minds.

**BY DALIAH MERZABAN**



**BISMILLAH AL-RAHMAN AL-RAHEEM:** UBC graduate Student Mohammad Aatif Khan opens his fast for the Islamic holy month of Ramadan with his wife Ruhi and son Saad. After eating some dates, and performing prayers, the Pakistani family enjoys a meal of curried chicken, rice, and potatos. CYNTHIA LEE PHOTO

**EVERY** morning for about the next three weeks, Arman Rahmim will wake up with his family before dawn. As the recorded voice of a Muslim Imam, a religious leader, recites prayers through the stereo in their North Vancouver home, Arman, his parents and his brother will eat a meal, called *Suhur*, that consists of a variety of foods and drinks, including tea, dates, rice with vegetables and meat, and milk. They will then conduct a morning prayer, the *Fajr*, and Arman, a graduate student in physics at UBC, might read a few excerpts from the Holy Quran before heading off to school for a day of classes and lab work.

Arman is a member of the Muslim student club, Rising Crescent. Like many Muslim students at UBC, he is celebrating the Islamic month of Ramadan by participating in daily fasts from sunrise to sunset. Arman has been preparing for Ramadan for almost two months now, praying regularly and fasting occasionally in order to prepare his body and mind for the month ahead. On Monday, the 21-year-old and the rest of the Muslim community began their annual fast.

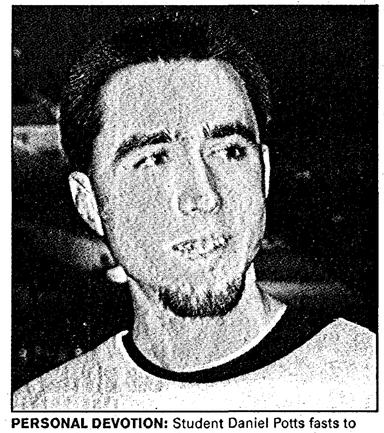
"There's a Hadith, a saying of the Prophet [Mohammed], that during Ramadan the doors of Heaven are open and all the chains of Satan and so forth are not around people," says Arman.

"Fasting during this month really makes you think about what you really are. On a typical day, when we get tired of something that we do, we go watch TV or eat food, or something like that. But you can't do that during Ramadan. You really are stuck with yourself and you really have to be happy with what you are. It's a spiritual event which captures you for the entire month."

**ONE** of the five basic pillars of Islam, fasting during Ramadan is an obligation of able-bodied Muslims. Ramadan falls on the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, and from sunrise until sunset, Muslims may not eat, drink, smoke, or have sexual relations.

Emile Nucho is a lecturer in religious studies at UBC who teaches about Islam. Nucho was raised as a Christian in Lebanon, a predominantly Muslim country.

"It can be a very hard thing to do," Nucho says of the fast.



**PERSONAL DEVOTION:** Student Daniel Potts fasts to achieve what he believes is a closer connection with God. CYNTHIA LEE PHOTO

"And many Muslims will tell you that, at least for a while at the beginning, it's very hard because you are really changing your physical system, and you're not eating anything, or drinking anything, not even a drink of water."

While the fast is obligatory for all adult Muslims, children under the age of 12, the elderly, pregnant women, and those who are ill or on a long journey are exempt from the fast.

Since the Islamic calendar is based on lunar cycles, Ramadan falls 11 days earlier each year. A Muslim will therefore fast at different times of the year during his or her lifetime. This year, it's typical to hear Muslims call the fast 'easy,' since the sun rises around 6am and sets before 5pm.

Nucho explains that the fast can be especially difficult when it falls during the hot summer months, when Muslims must go without food or drink from 3am until 9pm every day. But Ramadan remains the most cherished event in the Muslim calendar. It dates back to the time of Mohammed, Islam's final Prophet, in the seventh century. Muslims believe that it was during this month that the Quran, Islam's Holy Book, was first revealed to Prophet Mohammed by God through the angel Gabriel.

"The purpose of [Ramadan] has always been about thanks, about forgiveness, [and] about commemorating the life of Mohammed," Nucho says. "It gives Muslims a sense of great unity because they all know that, at least practising Muslims are following this ritual at that time of year everywhere in the world."

The restrictions fasting places on Muslims offer Arman a unique freedom. For him, fasting means far more than merely giving up food and drink—it helps him cultivate his spirituality. Like other Muslims, he will often read from the Quran, and attend frequent prayers during the month. Ramadan is meant to be a time of peace, a time when Muslims must be conscious of their actions to prevent any quarrels or foul language.

"When you're fasting, your mind and your sight and your hearing should also be fasting with you or else it's not a complete fast. We're really supposed to be correcting our acts during this month, not just by not eating, but also by fasting our entire body and spirit," remarks Arman.

Sheema Saeed is originally from the Maldive Islands off the southern coast of India. Presently, she is studying to receive her doctorate in Education from UBC. Sheema, who has been fasting since the age of 12, sees Ramadan as a time to help her concentrate on her studies and enhance her spirituality. She says she makes a conscious effort during the month to say each of Islam's five daily prayers and to read from the Quran.

"I see fasting as contributing to my spiritual life, and for me, in a sense, having a whole month of fasting helps to see that my life revolves around spirituality during the month, instead of my spirituality trying to fit into different pieces of my life."

For the past seven years, Sheema has been studying in non-Muslim countries, including Canada, England and New Zealand. In the Maldive Islands, where her family still lives, she says that everyone is Muslim, and the whole community understands the fast as a celebration. Since she's been away, however, Sheema says that fasting has become more of a personal act of self-reflection, one which many non-Muslims misinterpret as a harsh infliction on the body rather than a spiritual reward.

"I think people who do not fast do not really understand the significance of the fast. People see it as a sacrifice. I don't see it as a sacrifice of anything. It's a gift to myself, in fact. It's something I choose for myself and it involves basically self-discipline and it makes me feel good that I could do it. I wouldn't feel complete without it."

**TWENTY-FIVE** hours. No food. No water.

Abstaining from food and drink for this long is a challenge that Gabe Golden, a second-year Arts student, takes part in once every year. During Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, Jews of all disciplines fast for the entire day.

Yom Kippur, which always falls in September or October, is the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, a day when Jews cleanse themselves of their sins by abstaining from food and water, and attending prayers at synagogue.

"It's good every once in a while to have an inner cleaning of yourself," says Gabe. "The fact that when there's no food in there, everything is just being cleaned out, so it's even healthy for your body to fast every once in a while."

Her family gives money to charity as part of the tradition of repentance, and practices other customs which often sound peculiar to outsiders.

"The custom sounds strange," Gabe says as she begins describing one of the ceremonies of sin-cleansing now observed only by the most devout Orthodox Jews. As Jews recite special prayers, says Gabe, "we wave a chicken, a white chicken, over our heads three times, and then it is slaughtered. It's sacrificed to show that whatever sins we have should go into the chicken, and then it's sacrificed instead of us."

But Gabe admits that fasting isn't practised regularly by

**TA'ANIT:** Gabe Golden participates in six different fasts over the course of a Jewish year. CYNTHIA LEE PHOTO

most Jews today. Richard Menkis, a professor of religious studies at UBC who specialises in Judaism, says that many Jews who fast may do so simply out of family or community pressures.

"It's hard to say people are experiencing these things all the time, but I think that there is a certain kind of potent mythology, or potent set of ideals that are involved here that people keep coming back to," says Menkis.

Fasting, he continues, is aimed at focusing the moral being away from material needs and comforts. For those who fully realise it, fasting is a time of self-scrutiny and reflection, particularly on Yom Kippur, which is intended to be a new start each year. "I think that that is a very powerful kind of ability to turn a new leaf. Every year there is that ability to reflect and to try to get that fresh start."

For Gabe, however, fasting is also a way to commemorate and mourn past tragedies. She and her family take part in six days of fasting over the Jewish year.

One of these days is the ninth Day of Av, which falls sometime in July or August each year. This is the day in which two Jewish temples were supposedly destroyed in Jerusalem almost 700 years apart, the first destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, and the second demolished by the Romans in 70 CE. In commemoration of these events, Orthodox Jews will fast from sunrise to sunset. Gabe and her family attend a local synagogue, sit on low chairs because it's a time of mourning, and recite prayers. Gabe says this time of mourning is aimed at keeping the past alive.

"The Temple was the centre of all Judaism in the past," she says. "And it's just something that we really feel that, especially today, we really feel how it's missing. The Temples are still not rebuilt."

Gabe believes that there's a lot of misconception about why Jews choose to fast to commemorate historical events, like the Temples' destruction. "People think we're crazy," she says. "They don't understand why or how fasting could help something that happened so long ago. They don't think it has any relevance nowadays. But it's for your personal self, you go into your own self, and you think about how you're contributing to the whole big picture...It really makes you thank God for what you do have."

**ANCIENT** times, ancient traditions.

Early Christians moved into the deserts in order to escape the cities they considered wicked. They fasted to prepare themselves for an encounter with God. "You don't want the lower senses, which eating is a part of, dragging you down, dragging the body down, dragging the spirit down," says Dietmar Neufeld, a religious studies professor who teaches Christianity at UBC.

Unlike Muslims and Jews, Christians do not fast at specific times. For modern Christians, fasting is an individual action undertaken in an attempt to maintain purity at any point in the year.

"Some people in the Bible fasted for ridiculously long periods of time," says Daniel Potts, a third-year civil engineering student at UBC. "The longest I've ever done is two days." Daniel chooses to fast when he thinks it will enhance his prayers. He began fasting during his first year of university. Last year, he would fast once a week for a day.

"There's a sense in which if you pray when you're fasting it really shows that you mean it more, it seems to be a more effective prayer," he says. "It's a spiritual discipline that...tries to take my mind and my concentration off the things that are to do with my body and towards spiritual things, and sometimes succeeds and sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes I just feel hungry and tired."

Neufeld believes that fasting was practised at a much wider scale during ancient times, when fasting was considered a kind of "personal martyrdom" for believers. But reasons for fasting still exist today.

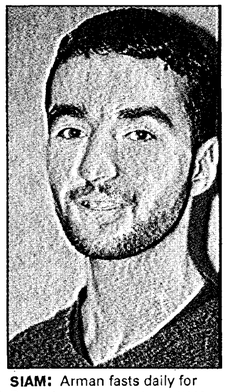
"A big part of [fasting] is to try to mitigate traffic with the world," explains Neufeld. "The world being a noisy place that seduces, that tempts, clutters the mind, and removes the person away from the object of worship.

"In order to unclutter the mind and to remove the person from the traffic the world represents...you engage in a practice that in a sense empowers you by denying the self, focuses your mental energy and your religious energy and your spiritual energy in a kind of razor-sharp focus, and the object of your contemplation and of your belief then becomes much of the focus, mainly [the object is] God."

Daniel, who lives in Gage residence, normally keeps his fasting to himself. He doesn't regularly eat with his roommates, so no one is aware of his fasting. "Jesus did say to his followers," notes Daniel, "that when you fast you shouldn't make a point of letting other people know, you should make a point of keeping it private. Otherwise it's almost like showing off."

Daniel, who lived in Kenya for seven years as a child while his father was working in a mission hospital, believes that fasting is practised much less in North America than in developing countries, where people endure greater struggles, and are more inclined to seek a response from God.

"There's just less drive for that here because we're so comfortable," says Daniel, who emphasises that fasting has coincided with his increased spirituality and faith. Daniel says that people are initially surprised when they find out that he fasts. "People think it's a little strange," he admits. "But there's a general attitude that whatever's good for you, go ahead and do it. You're a little hardcore, but go ahead."



**SIAM:** Arman fasts daily for Ramadan. TARA WESTOVER PHOTO

**"THERE'S** a saying," says Arman as he describes the often elaborate meal—*Iftar*—that Muslims eat to open (or end) their fast, "that the faster is happy at two times. One is when he/she is opening his/her fast. One is on the Judgment day. It is a very happy occurence when you actually open your fast."

Most Muslims begin *Iftar* by eating a few dates and thanking God for having given them the strength to complete the day's fast, a practice they believe Prophet Mohammed adhered to almost 1400 years ago. Then they perform the evening prayer, the *Maghrib*, and meet again to eat a large dinner.

Roasted beef, curried chicken, fried fish, lamb chops, lentils, vegetables and sauce, rice, salad, pita bread, tahina, yams, fruit, pastries, nuts, dried fruit, halawa, baklava, rice pudding. These are some of the many foods you might see on the table if you attend an evening meal that a Muslim family eats during Ramadan. Arman, who moved to Canada seven years ago from Iran, says that in Iran it was typical to see 20 relatives gathered together for a large feast. Here in Vancouver, he admits he normally has dinner with only his family.

In cities throughout the Islamic world, the work and school days are lightened during Ramadan. Loud speakers call people to pray, and Muslims gather at the mosques located in every neighbourhood. Relatives and friends gather together for *Iftar*. After the nightly prayers, the cities come alive, with shopping and public gatherings lasting until the early morning hours.

This experience is fondly remembered by Muslim students at UBC. Mohammad Aatif Khan, a graduate student in experimental medicine, lives in Acadia residence just off campus with his wife Ruhi and one-year-old son Saad. Mohammad moved here from Pakistan two years ago. He says that the atmosphere here is much different from home. "When I step outside it's like any other day," he says.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Elyas, a second-year biopsychology student, says that since he moved to Vancouver from Afghanistan two years ago, "the enjoyment that you get from Ramadan has decreased."

"Back home you're surrounded by Muslims so you have this milieu of fasting, there's a fasting environment which makes it very distinct," he adds.

However, both men agree that Muslims at UBC are still able to keep the spirit of the month alive. Last year, Elyas, who is active in the Muslim Students Association (MSA), lived in Totem Park residence, and during Ramadan he would gather with five or six other Muslim students in the Commons Block to pray and eat. Every night during Ramadan, Muslim students also gather at the Acadia Pre-School for special Ramadan Taraweeh prayers, and on Saturdays, the MSA sponsors collective *Iftar* meals on campus.

**WHEN** the new moon appears this month, sometime between December 24 and 26, a holiday, *Eid-ul-Fitr*, will formally end Ramadan, and Muslims will gather for prayers and celebrations to thank God for the successful month of fasting. At this time, Muslims are obliged to donate money, *Zakah*, to the poor, if they can afford it. Both Arman and Mohammad say Eid is a happy event, which brings Muslims of various nationalities together in celebration. But both agree that the Eid is also a sad time, a time that marks the end of the most important month of the year for them. They both pray on this day that they'll be healthy enough to fast next year.

Fasting is an ancient practice. It's about regulating the self and celebrating as a community. It is a practice that can simultaneously unite people and provide a unique experience for each individual. And its a practice that has remained important for many students at UBC.

But for Arman, the ultimate goal of fasting is personal. It prepares him to face the rest of the year with a pure mind and proper conduct. Like followers of Judaism and Christianity, Arman says that fasting helps Muslims remember the faith they owe to God, at both a personal and communal level. But the bond that develops between the faster and God, he concludes, is difficult to fully explain.

"I feel that I am in a direct relationship with God," says Arman.

"There is a saying that God says that fasting is Mine and I give the reward for it...That feeling of satisfaction that's there is really something that can't be put into words." ❖

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# Pepper on my plate

by Jesse Jackson

***JEAN ET ME: NEW WORK BY JOHANN GROEBNER***
***at The Crying Room***
***until Dec. 17***

This past Monday marked the third anniversary of Vancouver's contribution to globalisation–the Asia Pacific Economic Conference (APEC). Perhaps you remember it as I do, a wandering, wondering and politically underwhelmed undergraduate, who curiously surveyed the crowds on his way to class. Perhaps you remember it better, chanting against the barricades; a little 'pepper on my plate,' if you please.

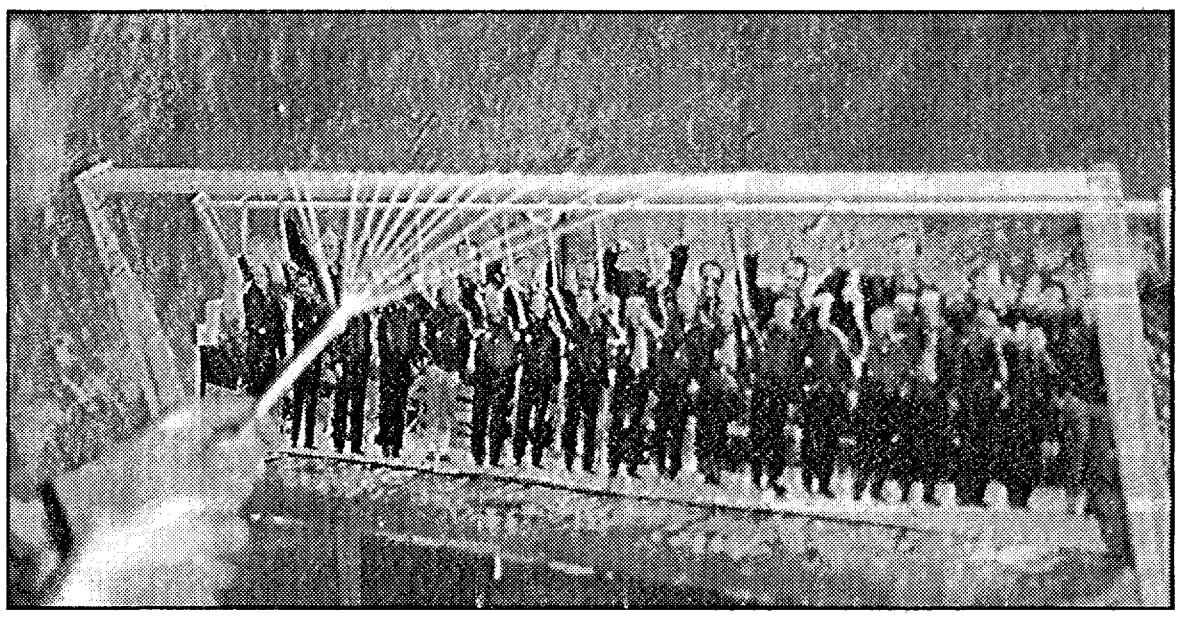
Or perhaps you remember APEC as Johann Groebner does, as a Maclean's poster boy, immortalised on film being dragged away by four officers, under arrest for assault. Pepper sprayed, your rights and righteousness trampled, what's a bitter Emily Carr graduate, community activist, and whiz-bang bike mechanic to do? Open an art show, of course.

Your entrance is greeted by "Ready for the World," a larger-than-life rendition of police snipers peering through their high-powered scopes. The compressed depth-of-field means we peer back at them through an equally powerful telephoto lens. Johann's show, entitled *Jean et Me*, is a collection of work inspired by the media imagery that was produced in APEC's aftermath. Despite the distance, the officers' piercing, bloodless eyes bring us forward–are these mindless militant automatons, or do they conceive the implications of their position?

The third piece, a self-portrait of Johann's arrest, has a different feel–less intensely visual, yet somehow more poignant and personal. Indeed, while all of the other work was produced in the past six months, this piece dates back to 1998, and its genuine emotive qualities make the surrounding pieces seem calculated and one-dimensional. If this show represents closure for Johann, this work was his release.

The final works offer participation, revealing a tongue-in-cheek side to the show. For those who were there, who submitted a complaint, the juxtaposition of a child's "RCMP Activities Book," and the official list of complaints and complainants offers instant gratification. For those who weren't, the diorama of APEC leaders in their government issue Roots jackets provides the same: pull the cord and their arms rise in a Fuhrer's salute.

Highbrow and high budget this show is not. Johann's workmanship is often makeshift, and his brushstrokes walk a fine line between expressionism and rushed. When I mentioned that my editor wanted to make sure I picked up a 'graphics package,' he could barely suppress a giggle. But it's clear that Johann doesn't give a damn, and his stated purpose is clearly achieved. "The news media at the time focused on the protest itself rather than the reason for it," he says. "My work is trying to re-invest the images with the issues that drove the protest..."



**HEIL!** This photograph of nation leaders at the 1997 APEC summit at UBC is just one of the many media images that inspired *Jean et me*. JESSE JACKSON PHOTO

The second piece, "Jean et me–best friends," is the exhibit's centrepiece. A reproduction of a newspaper article, it features our prime minister serving up "french fries in Beijing yesterday at the opening of Annie's, a Canadian fast food outlet." The paintings' ordered array of dots is rendered in an aging ochre, and Chrétien's already distorted face lends itself perfectly to Johann's rapid brush.

If you're at all interested in the growing anti-globalisation movement, or you're burned out on the rhetoric, pay *Jean et Me* a visit. Forget for a moment Seattle, Washington, DC, and the soon to be infamous Québec City, and recall UBC's own moment in the sun. For many, APEC was the event that first expanded our consciousness, and if the ensuing media frenzy has deadened your senses somewhat, *Jean et Me*'s light-hearted damnation will bring it back to life, or at least bring a smile to your face. ❖

# Thought through installations

by Michelle Mossop

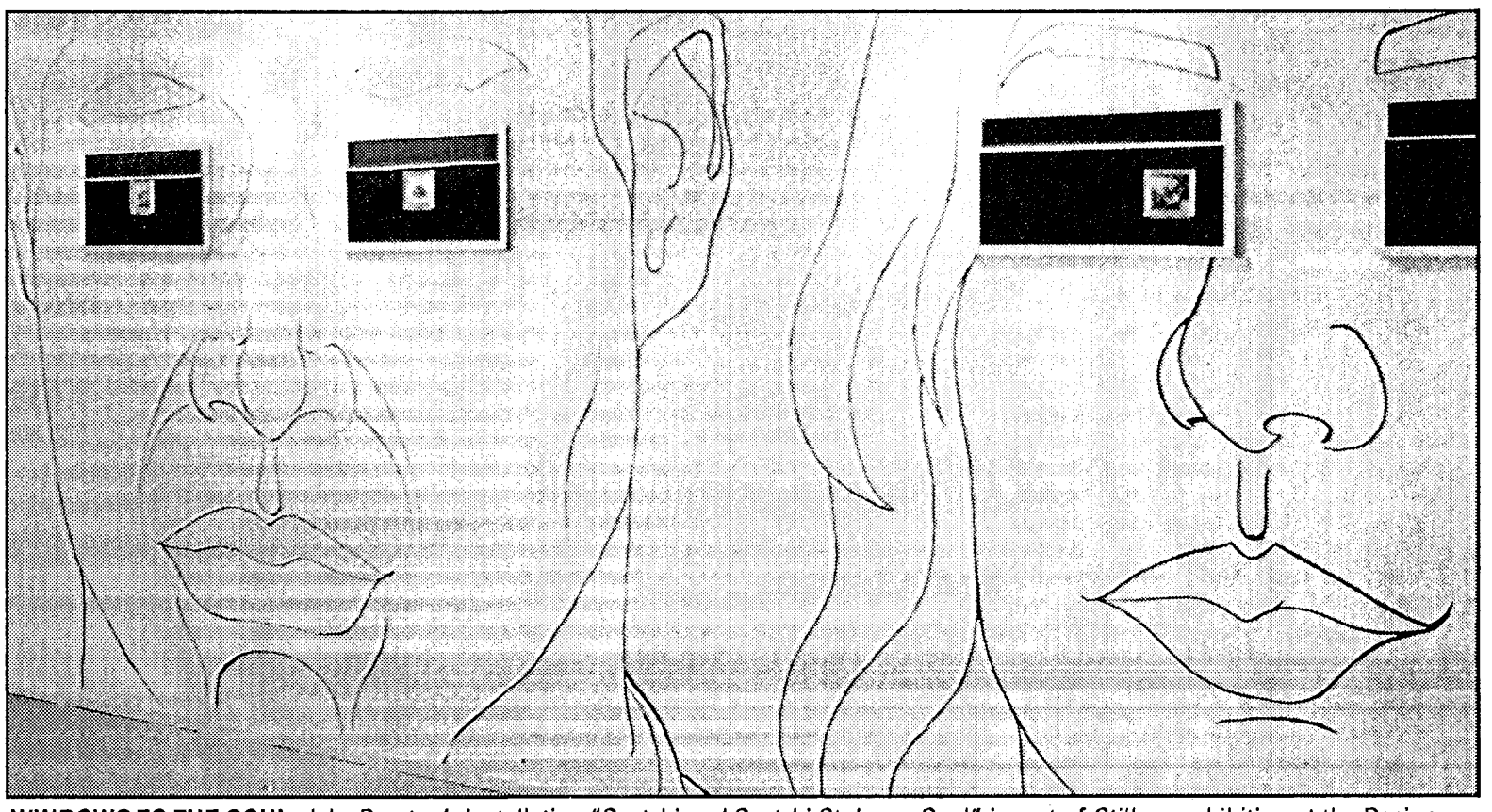
***STILL***
***at the Design Arts Gallery***
***until Dec. 1***

The Design Arts Gallery, located in the basement of UBC's Main Library, has once again ratcheted the definition of contemporary art with *Still*–an exhibition of new work put on by this year's fourth-year fine arts (FINA) students. But this time 'round, the FINA students use installations–the art form of putting different elements and materials together–as a way of expressing their artistic means.

For instance, "Care Instructions" shows Jeff Paulson's frustration with the washing instructions on clothing labels. Using a black T-shirt with white blotches as a canvass, "BLEACHING" captures the humour of the confusing and sometimes conflicting instructions: "Chlorine bleach may be used" and "Do not use chlorine."

Playing upon the cliché of "the eyes are windows to the soul," Jake Brayton's mixed media/wall-painting installation, "Saatchi and Saatchi Stole my Soul," looks at the influences of advertising on the human consciousness. He uses felt markers to outline two large faces that span the entire side of a wall. But the focus of the piece is the eyes–frames made of wood and magonite panel, and pupils made of the Saatchi and Saatchi ads, including one of a Volkswagen Golf and another of a Jetta.

"There is this whole school of thought that says that advertising is corrupting the human soul because the human soul is made up of our experiences and our memories," explains Brayton. "So what you get when you look through the windows is that you get blank space with an ad in it."



**WINDOWS TO THE SOUL:** Jake Brayton's installation "Saatchi and Saatchi Stole my Soul" is part of *Still*, an exhibition at the Design Arts Gallery comprised of artwork by fourth-year UBC FINA students. Brayton's work looks at the impact of advertising on the soul. MICHELLE MOSSOP PHOTO

Other installations–such as Tina Drink's "Installation at False Creek"–offer a forum for multiple interpretations of an artwork. Drink's piece is a series of photographs of a cylinder she made of drywall, wood, plastic, and carpet, that she placed by some of Vancouver's infamous "leaky condos." There, residents were able to vent their frustration in permanent marker saying that the syndrome was a "disgusting example of how people are being ripped off by the powers that be" and that "leaky condos and golf are God's way of getting even."

Michelle Lee's "Cultural Conflict 2000" communicates her cultural conflict of being a Taiwanese immigrant in Canada through acrylic-painted images of totem poles juxtaposed with Chinese scripture. Whereas Jennifer Propp's *How 'bout you?* gives character to her oil painting portraits with small commentaries of each character written out on silkscreen on canvas, making the characters pop out from the canvas.

Although most of the works were installations, *Still* did exhibit an interesting series of acrylic paintings by Virginia Kwan. "Proposals for the Olympics Dancesport Logo" looks at the recent discussion of having Dancesport as an event in the 2008 Olympics. Through five different paintings, Kwan questions how a logo can typify an activity with various genres (like Latin or ballroom) in one single logo. Kwan also looks at the injuries that come with the sport, having a Band Aid on a dancer's elbow, a lightning bolt coming off her back, and gauze on her sprained ankle.

*Still* brings together all sorts of mediums, being an exciting showcase of installation art. My only qualm was the exhibition's underground location, in the basement of Main Library. Although suiting for its contemporary and very underground content, *Still* should be made accessible for many more to see. ❖

# BABY, You Were Born to Run...
## Come run for AMS office

Nominations for the following AMS positions will open December 1, 2000 and close at 4:00pm on January 5, 2001.

Vote
AMS Elections 2001

### General Duties of the Executive
Executives are elected by the student body in February and serve a one-year term in office. Executives will manage staff and student volunteers, and oversee all operations of the AMS: services, events, businesses and student governance. Each executive is assigned duties per his/her portfolio. Please note: As all Executive are expected to commit 30 hours/week to their position, a course load of no more than 3 class/semester is recommended.

### President
Acting as the Spokesperson for the Student Body, the President maintains communications between the AMS and its membership. Coordinates full-time executive support staff team (policy analyst, communications coordinator, exec coordinator of student services) and provides strategic direction for the Society.

### Vice President Administration
Acting as Liaison between the Student Council and the AMS Resource Groups, the VP Admin oversees the 250+ AMS clubs and the undergrad constituencies. This position is also responsible for the management of the SUB building: including its renovations, security and bookings.

### Vice President External Affairs
Acting as Liaison between the AMS and the municipal, provincial, and federal government, the VP External raises awareness and drafts policy regarding government issues such as funding and student loans. This position also represents the AMS to the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations and is responsible for negotiating with the GVTA and Translink on issues such as bus routes and the UPass.

### Vice President Academic and University Affairs
Dealing with issues on student housing, campus safety, information technology, course curriculum, teacher evaluations, the VP Academic drafts AMS academic policy and liaises with student senate caucus.

### Vice President Finance
Drafts the annual $9 million budget and oversees the Health and Dental Plan and its bursary fund. Handles the club and constituency bank accounts and approves grants and loans to student groups. The VP Finance also provides input on the creation and improvement of SUB businesses.

### Senate and Board of Governors Nominations
Nominating forms and further information regarding UBC Board of Governors and Senate Elections only, are available from the Registrar's Office in Brock Hall. 822-4367.

### Student Legal Fund Society Nominations
We're seeking 6 Directors responsible for the overall operations of the society, which administers the AMS Student Legal Fund.

**Nomination forms and candidate information are available in SUB Room 238.**

Campaigning may begin after the close of nominations, January 5th, 2001, 4:00pm. For more information, please contact: Jo McFetridge, AMS Elections Administrator, elections2001@ams.ubc.ca

What does the AMS do? Visit www.ams.ubc.ca and find out.

# changing in mark cochrane's locker room

by John Fenton

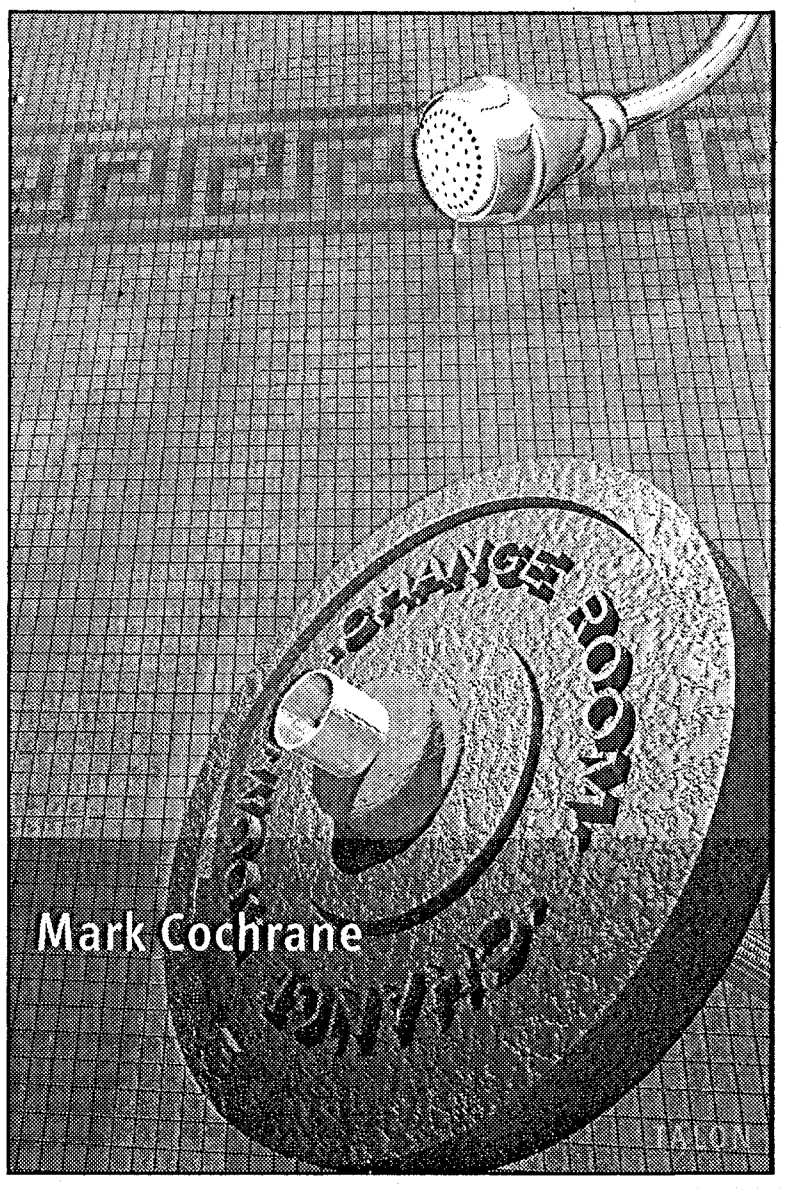
Mark Cochrane's collection of poems *Change Room* opens with a description of a man in a gym, lustfully watching other men:

*"I am a spy/ in this chamber of iron, dance-thump & chains/ & in my book, you boys, I am kneading/ oil into your depilated pecs, in my book..."*

Upon my interview with Cochrane, this poem, inspired by UBC's very own Bird Coop, made me wonder what kind of guy I was about to meet. I did not know whether I was about to be berated by either flowery poetics or sexual aggression. But when the moment finally arrived, I was relieved.

In fact, Cochrane seems to be just a regular guy, "I teach English and Composition at Kwantlen College, review books for *the Vancouver Sun*, and am in second year law at UBC," he says.

But Cochrane's series of poems is far from being just average. With gender-bending as his focus, *The Changing Room* utilises a certain amount of voyeuristic intimacy. His sexual analysis examines all avenues of life, from reflective starry beach nights to those group showers after practice.




Mark Cochrane explains that the most enjoyable aspect of his book is to read to an audience—gay or not—and to see their reaction.

"That's exactly what I wanted to do," he says about using the poem for homosexual shock value. According to Cochrane, many of the men who listen to Cochrane's gym voyeurism appreciate the bold act of reading these illicit thoughts. Some were astonished, and those were the people who Cochrane most enjoyed reading to.

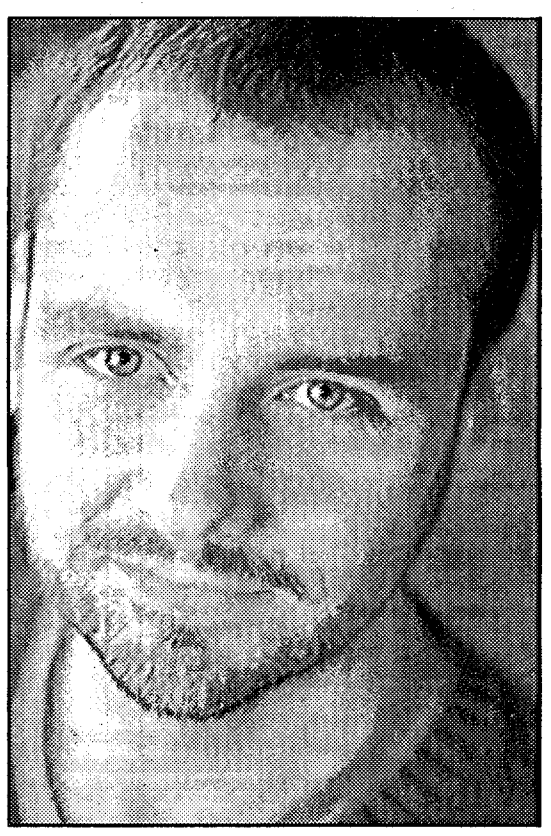
In "Hospital Greens," Cochrane changes gears briefly in order to depict hospital life and sickness. The poetry appears to follow a slightly confused pattern, with an extensive use of technical terminology, as if a patient sitting in the hospital bed, lets all the medical lingo flow by; ignorant to the very information that pertains to their well-being.

While this technical aspect of the book was not the main topic of our discussion, Cochrane says it will be the focus of his future poetry. He says he is planning on following this collection with one that utilises the vast technical language of the law. This seems suiting, giving Cochrane's current studies in law—making it easy to see where he draws his inspiration—himself.

"It is weird, but I rise above," he says about his writing being deeply autobiographical. In fact, in the poem "Game Theory," Cochrane uses his fixation with the athletic prowess of a finely tuned athlete in sexual terms, thus, never taking responsibility for the feelings of his reader. Mark explains that his intention in "Game Theory" was to take beauty to another level; to refuse us the ability for escapism in sports.

In his poems, he lures his male reader in with passionate descriptions of hockey, transfixing any fan. As one reads, one's guard is dropped by the familiar subject matter. However, just as one is expecting to read "He shoots! He scores!" Mark pulls the carpet from beneath the exciting images transforming the hockey into a medium for homosexuality.

Cochrane says his poems are intended to poison the heterosexual purity of professional sports that exists for so many men, biting his thumb at that aggressive red-neck, hockey-playing persona that he confessed was so integral in his growing years. Amidst this description of physical fascination, the author also reveals his more sexless childhood.



**COCHRANE:** Some of his poems are set in UBC's Bird Coop. TARA WESTOVER PHOTO

In "Locker Room," the third section of *Change Room*, the reader is transported back to the days of high school; back to a time of self-consciousness. It is here where the intensity of Cochrane's voyeurism erupts: how to peruse the flesh of others without being noticed.

"I guess it is those guys in high school. You know, the ones who just grew faster than other kids," he says. "I was always aware of those locker room differences"

Cochrane's hindsight openness towards teenage homosexuality is bold with his present day attitudes in place. When discussing this portion of the book, we talked about whether teens today could openly announce their homosexual feelings without severe repercussions. Drawing from his own experiences growing up in rural Saskatchewan (amidst the pick-up truck dream), Cochrane notes that there is still a vast amount of people whose conservative viewpoints still dominate small town-life, making it difficult to be honest about sexuality.

The fourth and final section of the book is entitled "Line Jumpers." It is all about lines, jumping, and bisexuality. But this is something that Cochrane identifies with. "I identify with border breakdowns, those grey areas," he explains.

While many people might not agree with Mark Cochrane's perspective in *Change Room* they will appreciate its innocence. While other poets might worry about being type-casted after such a controversial début, Mark Cochrane is not. He is, instead, simply going to keep keenly observing. ❖

2001 - we were supposed to have taken a manned mission to Jupiter by now. Read about what is actually going on.
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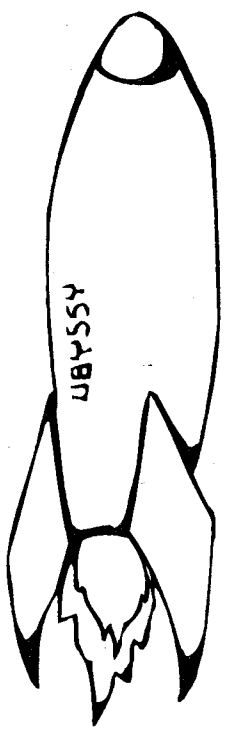


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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2000
VOLUME 82 ISSUE 23



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The mood was decidely festive. Daliah Merzaban, however, wasn't eating. She was fasting. Nick Bradley, on the other hand, was at the other extreme, boozing it up with Holland Gidney, Michelle Mossop and the rest of the crew, much to the amusement of Laura Blue, who split a two-four with Helen Eady. Tom Peacock said that they were lightweights, but he hadn't seen Sarah Morrison yet, who seemed to be tipsy off of the fumes from Tristan Winch's amazingly potent beverage. Cynthia Lee–ever the news hound–asked what it was, but he declined to answer, saying only that it was an unfortunate blend of flavours and hinted cryptically about Duncan McHugh's basement. Alex Dimson was intrigued by the ominous mystery of the whole thing and, despite calls for temperance from Hywel Tuscano, explored the strangely potent brew with uncharactersitic ferocity. Tara Westover knew what was up, so she hid behind Jesse Jackson. Alex began to glow, with some strange and unnatural light that seemed to be coming from inside. George Belliveau stood there, dumbfounded, unable to move or breathe, he nudged Mike Brazao, and whispered. "It's like what happened to John Fenton."


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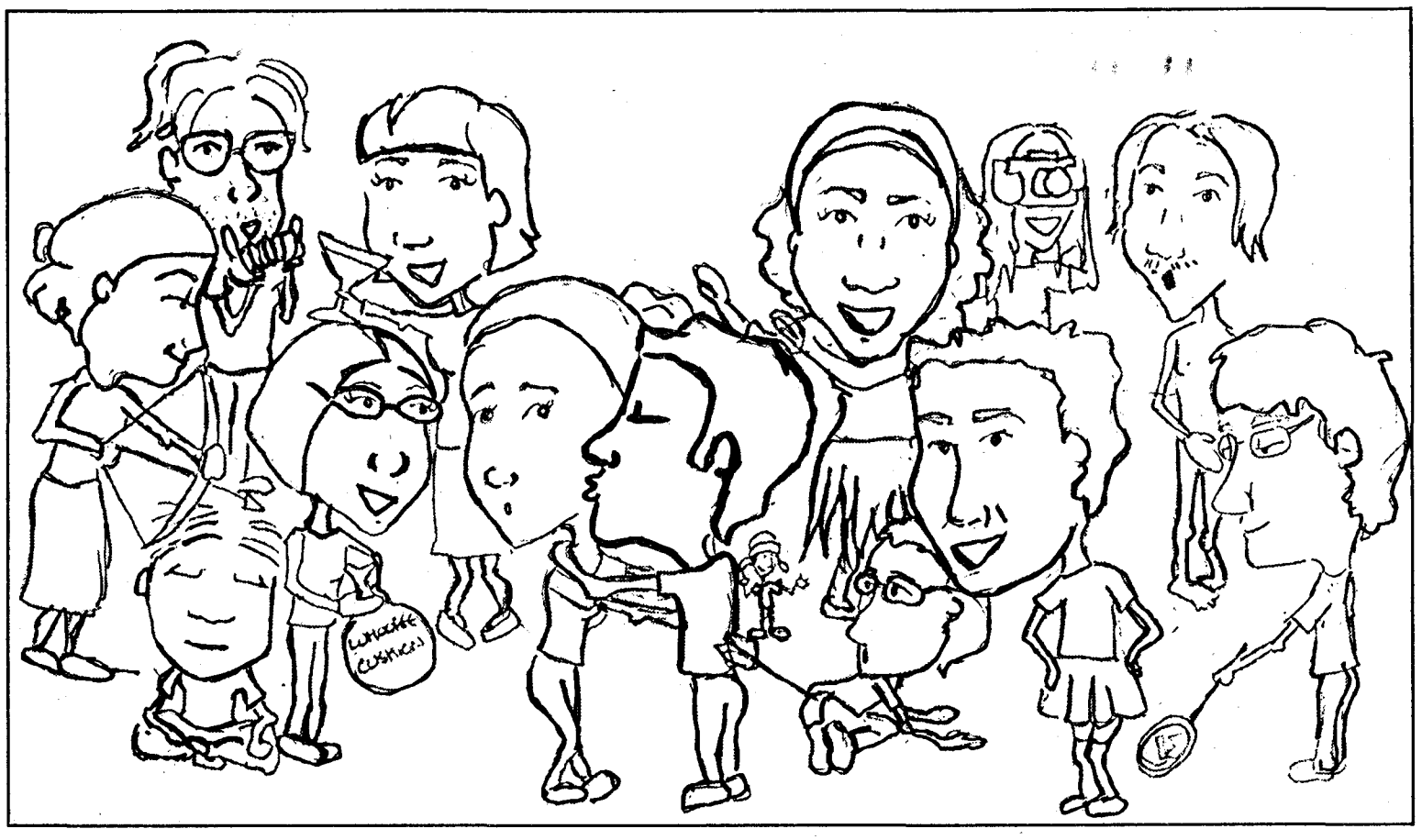


# Happy Holidays

## letters

### Imprisonment of anti-logging protesters is a political sentence

Why are killers and rapists eligible for parole after serving two-thirds of their sentence, but peaceful anti-logging protesters are not? Why is it that I, a seventy-two-year-old great grandmother, when arrested in the Elaho for protesting Interfor's logging practices there, was denied my rights under the Charter by being tossed into a special arrest and charge category? This category is called arrest by injunction and leads to the charge of criminal contempt of court. It is reserved primarily for anti-logging protesters. There is no defence for a charge in this category, under the criminal code, or anywhere else. It's a legal pit, a black hole, if you will, directed by the Attorney General and orchestrated by the judges of this province to protect the logging companies' private economic interest on public land. And the use of this kind of arrest and charge is always a political decision.

A year's sentence to prison without possibility of parole for standing in front of a logging truck is a blatantly political sentence. And one that makes me a political prisoner in a country that isn't supposed to have any. How can our government scold other countries about human rights with a straight face? Is it not readily perceivable that the BC government promotes the right of a rapacious private logging company to accrue to itself all the rights of private ownership on public land without any of the costs? And to ruin our forests in the bargain? And then to swiftly and severely punish anyone who objects with a special punishment reserved just for them? It is certainly clear to me. I live out this promotion every day. In prison.

***–Betty Krawczyk***
***Inmate at the Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women***

### SkyTrain clean and efficient

If many more citizens and news media strongly voiced their support for the extension of SkyTrain–a very clean and efficient mode of transportation–to much more of the Lower Mainland, it's quite likely that a lot more car drivers would leave their vehicles at home and ride the reliable SkyTrain; as well, perhaps then automobile levies would be less, or not at all, necessary ("UBC AMS Bike Co-op supports TransLink vehicle levy" [Letters, Nov. 15]).

Yes, it will cost quite a bit for such an extension; however, the considerable quantity, over an extensive period of time, of fossil-fuel emissions which will be eliminated by SkyTrain utilisation should, in my opinion, take precedence over any fiscal issues. Really, what good is a balanced government budget when people are getting very sick or dying from the fossil fuel exhaust polluted air?

Not only will SkyTrain not emit fossil fuel exhaust, the fact is, it will not force the cessation of automobile traffic, as do regular trains at their many road/track junctures; thus automobile traffic will not be forced to spew out fossil fuel exhaust whenever they are forced to stop, idle and then accelerate once the train finally passes the juncture. Furthermore, SkyTrain cars can be safely added whenever increased ridership requires them, and without the expensive necessity of adding additional human drivers (as are required with alternative modes of public transportation, which may explain why the TransLink union is not too thrilled about SkyTrain).

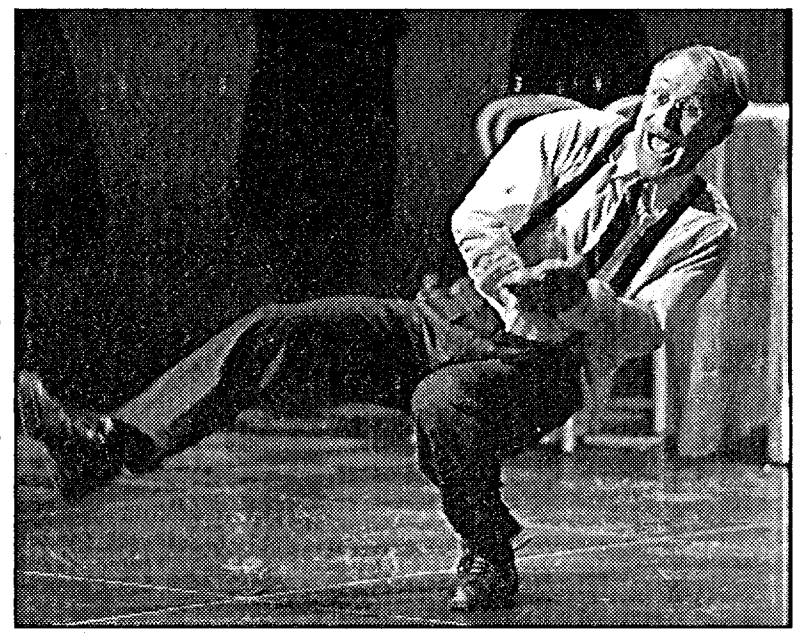
Even though one should take into consideration the pollution caused during the construction of new SkyTrain infrastructure, the recognition of the overall net environmental benefits of SkyTrain over the alternatives (a West Coast Express system, for example) are a no-brainer.

***–Frank G. Sterle***
***White Rock***

# Love is a late riser

by Michael Brazao

***SHE LOVES ME***
***at the Stanley Theatre***
***until Dec. 31***



Somebody forgot to set the alarm clock for this one. Director Morris Panych's musical production of *She Loves Me* stumbles languidly out of the blocks, sleepwalking its way to the intermission. Only thanks to the performance of a crafty cuisinier midway through the show does it manage to pick up the tremendous slack left by its false start, making a serious run for the finish.

*She Loves Me* is the tale of a parfumerie clerk, Georg Nowack (Peter Jorgensen), who is unwittingly engaged in an anonymous romantic correspondence with his colleague and nemesis, Amalia Balash (Katey Wright). In the early goings of this musical (whose storyline is the basis for the Hollywood feature *You've Got Mail*), the obvious aim is for quaintness. It's just too bad this had to be achieved at the expense of creativity.

The overture may have been entitled "Good Morning," but don't let the misnomer fool you–there was little to rouse the audience. Often fighting to be heard over their own orchestra, the seemingly shackled cast couldn't stop dragging their feet long enough to put together some interesting dance steps. Amid all this plodding, we learn that life is simple in the parfumerie, where clerks obsequiously cater to the whims of the local high society as they peddle their meaningless trinkets.

Enter Amalia, who wins a job from the parfumerie's owner Mr. Maraczek (Don Mackay) by successfully hawking a musical cigarette box after George had wagered it couldn't be done. Such a trivial premise for conflict between lead characters is a stretch, and it later seems inconceivable that George could hold such a grudge. This, of course, is poison for the dramatic irony that the cast relies on to drive the story.

We learn that Amalia has been secretly exchanging letters with an anonymous amour she met through a Lonely Hearts Club, who just so happens to be the very clerk she is at odds with. As we progress toward the inevitable meeting of these impossible lovers in a French bistro, the tension of the impending revelation is compromised by the indifference of audience and cast members alike.

It is at this point that the sagging production owes much to James Fagan Tait who, in the role of the French waiter, steals the restaurant scene with "A Romantic Atmosphere," and in doing so, saves the show. His perfect blend of sauciness and the requisite pretence serves as the catalyst that rouses the cast from its slumber. For the first time in too long, the players ditch their leg irons and demonstrate some inspired choreography, an impressive meld of Russian, French, and Latin palettes. The momentum from this scene carries through to the final curtain as the audience, happy to see that the performers had stopped hitting the snooze button, responded to the infectious energy with doles of laughter.

Undeniably, the strongest asset of this musical production is the acting. The leads get their act together down the home stretch, delivering some convincing banter and driving home the humour that sorely lacked early on. All of the supporting players were superbly cast, and although they are necessarily confined to portraying stereotypical and one-dimensional characters, they nevertheless manage to exploit their respective niches.

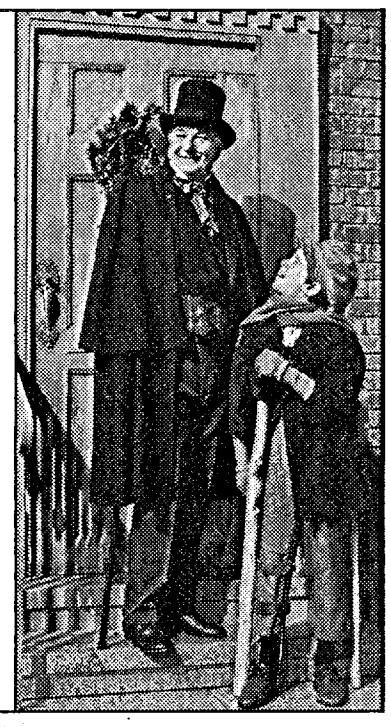
In "Perspective," David Marr offers the first moment of genuine comic relief as Ladislav Sipos, the groveling, bootlicking toady to the parfumerie's owner. Lawrence Cotton drips with sleaze, portraying the philandering cad Steven Kodaly, a character who is matched with equal strength by Ilona Ritter (Leora Cashe). Cashe brings the most complex supporting character vividly to life in a strong performance of a woman who is both vociferous in her contempt toward men, yet doomed to repeat her past romantic ordeals. "Try Me" is the breakout number for Mackay, who uses it to overcome an ineffectual first-half. Todd Talbot was effectively amusing as Arpad Laszlo, the young wetback delivery boy chomping at the bit for a piece of the clerkship action.

When called upon, all the cast members show boundless energy and a genuine ability to please the audience, which begs the obvious queston: What were they waiting for? Ultimately, the music was solid but bland, lacking that quintessential feature of any great musical–the catchy theme you find yourself humming to in the aisles on the way out the door. The set was largely commodious, but showed flashes of inspiration. In fact, in virtually every domain, the play seemed to be a victim of reduced expectations: perhaps by lowering the bar, they felt they could just step over it. ❖

# Another Christmas Carol

by George Belliveau

***A CHRISTMAS CAROL***
***at the Waterfront Theatre***
***until Dec. 23***



Most people are familiar with the story of *A Christmas Carol*, either from having read the Dickens' novel or having seen one of the numerous television and film adaptations. And most theatre patrons in Canada are familiar with Mavor Moore, as he is one of the most prominent figures in musical theatre this country has produced. So you can see how I had certain expectations upon entering the theatre to see Moore's musical adaptation of the classic 19th century novel. Unfortunately, Carousel Theatre's production of *A Christmas Carol* fails to enlighten, inspire, or even entertain.

However, certain elements of the production does succeed in making this a family-oriented piece. For example, the musical's running time is just over an hour long. In this shortened version, many episodes from the original story are, as would be expected, cut or condensed; however, the character development of the wonderful Dickensian characters suffers deeply. We do witness Ebenezer Scrooge's change of heart, from a miserly misanthrope to a generous and caring being, but the other characters are one dimensional, making only brief appearances. The lack of character development diminishes our empathy toward the story, and the goodwill and merry feeling is missing in the end. As for the musical numbers, only "It must be Scrooge" is marginally captivating despite some good voices.

Douglas Welch's Victorian set design is perhaps the most impressive aspect of the production. His set and lighting give the sense and feel of the 19th century, the effective use of the revolve diversifies the locations, and the paint job livens the backdrops. In the title role, Bernard Cuffling has some nice moments, especially in the scenes with Christmas Past where he longs to go back and change his earlier decisions. Cailin Stadnyk's voice shines through in a few numbers, and it's a shame we don't hear her more. Also, director Zain Meghji did a good job creating numerous roles, yet the other actors, for the most part, overplay their roles, often losing their credibility and our interest. And I was uncertain whether musical director Bruce Johnson was playing the music live from backstage or whether it is pre-recorded–either way, a live and visible musician offers another desirable element to a musical.

Several of the younger kids and teenagers in the audience seemed to enjoy *A Christmas Carol*, but I was left feeling let down. I wasn't humming any of the tunes, I wasn't moved by the story, and it didn't theatrically engage me. ❖

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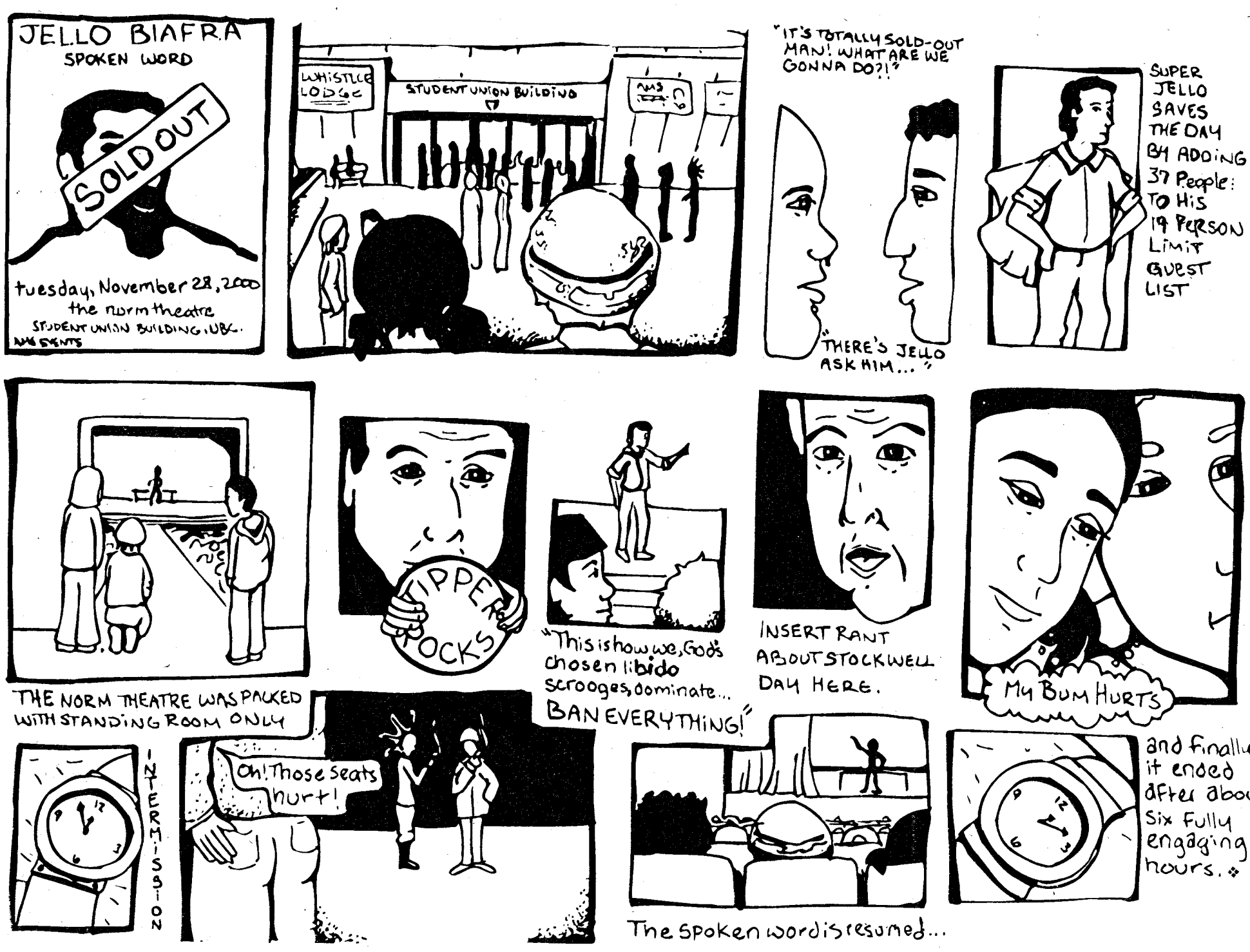
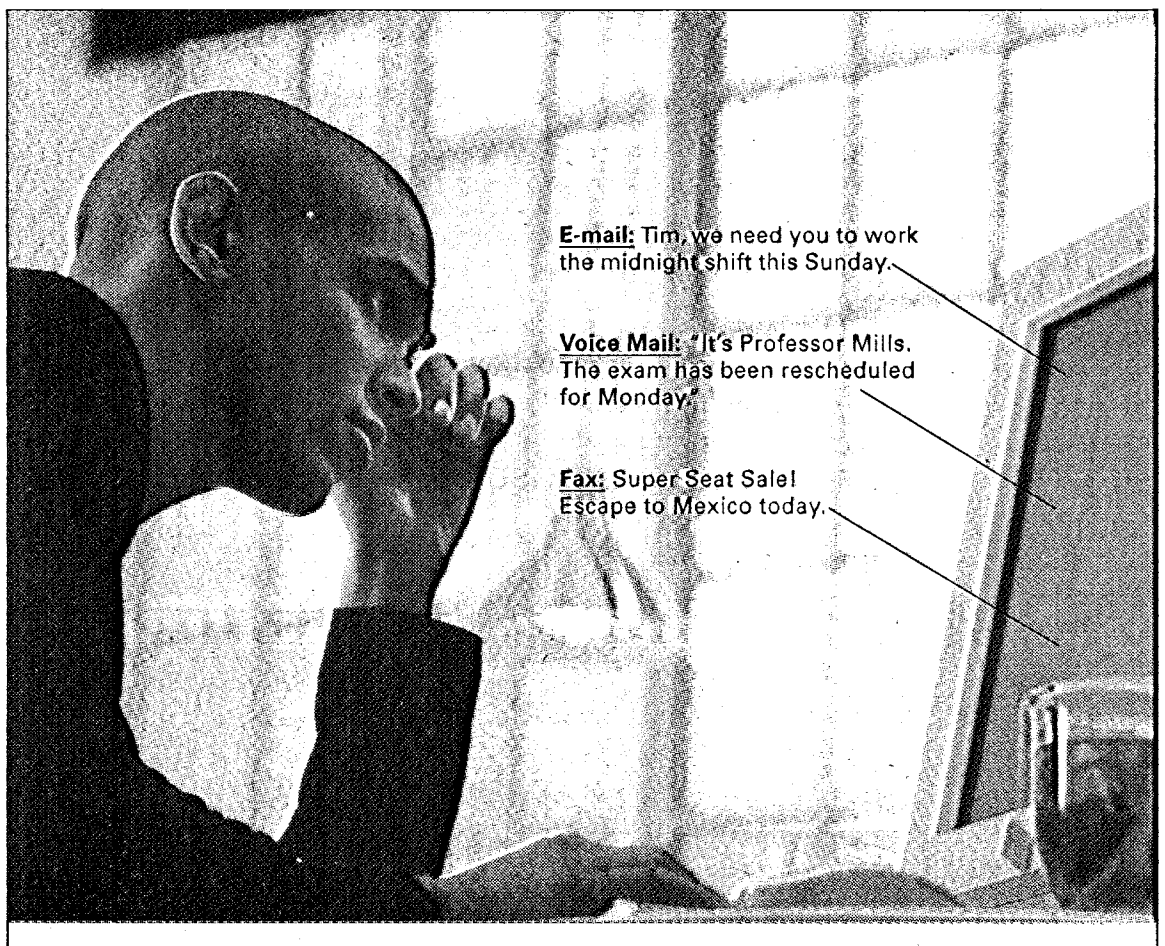
# Jello speaks his mind

*JELLO BIAFRA*
*at the Norm Theatre*
*Nov. 28*

Text and graphics by Helen Eady





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Beginning September 2001, the program integrates computational methods and theories with research and teaching in the humanities.

It addresses the demand for Arts graduates who are proficient in computing skills. Alumni will be able to work both in the realm of humanities research and teaching and in the emerging job markets of information management and content delivery over the Internet.

For more information on the program, or to request application materials, please write to **huco@mail.arts.ualberta.ca.** Additional information is available on-line at: www.arts.ualberta.ca/huco