

# THE **A**UBYSSEY

Vol.LXXXVIII N°53

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THURSDAY, 12 APRIL, 2007

Passing the torch to Allan Choquer since 1918

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Burns gets banned by UBC

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Yay or nay...

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**SCHOOL'S OUT  
FOR SUMMER!**

# Train more nurses to train nurses

## Pilot project to solve nursing shortage

by Nicholas Cheung  
NEWS WRITER

A pilot project totaling \$4 million, funded by both the federal and provincial governments, will aim to solve the persisting problem of nursing shortages in British Columbia. Monte Solberg, the federal minister of human resources and social development, announced this multi-million dollar initiative early last week as part of the BC Nursing Strategy, emphasizing the recruitment and retention of nurses.

According to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, low numbers of nurses correlate with longer hospital stays, patient complications, and even death. In an attempt to solve the problem, the provincial government has spent over \$146 million since 2001 on the BC Nursing Strategy, which includes increasing the number of

nursing spaces in universities, upgrading training for new nurses, and encouraging more aboriginal people to go into nursing.

Nevertheless, health ministry spokeswoman Sarah Plank revealed that there are currently 2000 unfilled nursing positions in BC. According to her, filling many of these positions could be difficult, as they are special nursing positions which require more qualifications and training.

"It's definitely a looming issue," said Plank.

The shortage of nurses has already taken its toll on the current nursing workforce. According to Patricia Weir, communications officer and policy analyst at the BC Nurses Union, many hospitals are running over-capacity; unfunded beds open up and consequently many nurses need to work overtime. "The initiatives that the government has tried to do have been helpful, but the problem is that, in my opinion, they haven't been extensive enough," Weir said.

To address the vacant special nursing positions and the overworking of nurses, some of the funding for this three-year project will be committed to creating 40 new spaces in the graduate nursing masters programs at UBC and UVic—UBC will be given half of the new spaces in their 230 student graduate nursing program. Patricia Weir said that the masters degree will be of interest to mid-career nurses who are keen to become clinical educators. These experienced nurses will have the opportunity to become mentors of new nursing grads and in turn they will get credit toward their master's degrees and reduced workloads.

The project will also continue to create more nursing programs at post-secondary institutions across BC. The implementation of the UBC nurse practitioner program back in 2003 was such an effort to model after.

"With the nursing shortage, there is a need for more nurses to be able to teach nurses," Dr Carol

Jillings, coordinator of the UBC master's program, commented. "The health authorities are really interested in this."

She describes this pilot project as a "win-win situation" because it increases the province's capacity in nursing education, not just in nursing schools, but within health authorities themselves.

The pilot project is certainly addressing the problem of nursing shortages, but there is frustration with other problems in the workforce as well. Said Kim Hubbard, a registered nurse of more than 25 years. "Certain areas are top-heavy, in terms of management."

Jill, a Registered Nurse at the UBC General Hospital and a recent nursing graduate from Ryerson, said that there is frustration with staffing. "We need to also allocate [the] nurses to the right areas" Jill also said better public health education in preventative measures might point to the root of the problem. "I don't think it is a band-aid solution." @



## Sleeping with a Mosquito!

Giselle Portenier spoke yesterday to graduating Arts students on her experiences covering third world abuses such as female infanticide in India and third world oppression of women.

KELLAN HIGGINS PHOTOS

## 'tweens

### Moving the Earth

IRC-lecture hall 2  
April 14th, 8:15pm  
Car Culture and Global Environmental Politics. The Vancouver Institute and Green College present Professor Matthew Paterson from the School of Political Science, University of Ottawa. His research interests include global environmental politics, climate change politics, international/global political economy, global environmental governance, international relations theory and the politics of the automobile. This is a free lecture and everyone is welcome to attend.

### Fundamentals of Communication

423A Henry Angus Building  
April 16th, 9:00 am  
Communication is at the core of all human relationships. This half-day workshop is of special interest to staff who would like to review the way they communicate as part of their day-to-day job.

### Introduction to Process Streamlining

Room 237, Michael Smith Laboratories  
April 17th, 9:00am  
Does your work control you or do you control your work? The goal of process streamlining is to meet (or exceed) client or unit needs by improving an overall process. In this interactive workshop you will learn: what we mean by process and the key concepts of process streamlining the arcane and mysterious vocabulary of "process streamlining".

### "A Partnership of Peoples" Exhibit

Museum of Anthropology  
Ongoing, 12pm-6pm  
In this exhibit, MOA displays its plans for expansion and renovation, a scale model, and samples of architectural details, furnishings, and furnishings. We also open a window onto our Digitization Studio. We are currently digitizing the collections of Korea, China and, of course, the Northwest Coast.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**FORMER 655 RICHMOND** Air Cadets, October is our 50th Anniversary! [www.cadets.net/pac/655air/anniversary.htm](http://www.cadets.net/pac/655air/anniversary.htm)

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## THE UBYSSY

Thursday, 12 April, 2007  
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"Whaaat?" said Eric Szeto to Boris Korby, as he Adrian Presnilla-ed Momoko Price over the fence. Oker Chen instructed Brandon Adams on a bicycle in the background, while Jesse Ferreras attacked Kellan Higgins juggernaut-style with David Karp. Colleen Tang danced it up with Champagne Choquer, then force-feed David Tchir a Lucas Johnson sandwich. Charlotte Nobles watched as Matthew Jewkes presented a Star Wars roleplay, with Gemini Chan and Humaira Hamid. Samantha Jung, bored with all of the action, read the dictionary with Levi Barnett. After the play, Andrew MacRae looked through primary documents to find Paul Bucci, who was swimming frantically to get away from Nicholas Cheung. Justin McElroy, Alison Bailey, and Caroline Chuang laughed at them all, who were oblivious to the fact that Christine McLaren and Myles Estey were kidnapping Kaan Erslan from the shrine of David Harakal. Candice Vallantin called Isabel Ferreras to help, but it was all in vain, for Paul Evans was in on the whole facade.

### EDITORIAL GRAPHIC *Michael Bround*



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# Eccentric exiled from campus

*'He's a weirdo but he's a wonderful weirdo with a tremendous intellectual sense,' says professor*

by Eric Szeto  
NEWS STAFF

Clayton Burns says he's "devastated and crushed" that UBC has banned him from campus.

On April 3, while Burns was at the UBC Bookstore, UBC Campus Security asked him to leave. He was then escorted by Campus Security while he entered the office of *the Ubysssey*. While *Ubysssey* News Editor Brandon Adams was conducting an interview with Burns, Campus Security issued a notice that prohibited him from entering campus premises and was ushered peacefully out of *the Ubysssey* office and off campus.

Campus Security said that after numerous complaints were filed about Burns' conduct at UBC, they had no other choice but to take action against Burns.

"It got to the point where they felt that it be in the interest of safety for themselves...faculty, staff, students, that Mr Burns who is not a worker here, not a member of staff or a student, be asked to leave the campus," said Doug Singleton, associate director of UBC Campus Security.

Singleton admitted that Burns, who had approximately ten to 15 complaints from various members of the University that spanned over five years, posed no immediate danger to the University, however.

"[Burns has] been asked if he

could temper the way he presents his arguments," he said. "At times he does so. However, [with] Mr Burns, after a hiatus and after period of time, there's a fall back of previous behavior patterns.

"And as he falls back into it...it intensifies."

An English tutor and outspoken critic of UBC, Burns feels the University is acting unjustly against him.

"For the university to have made a determination that I had abused people without asking me any questions or attempting to find out about the motivations of the ones making the 'complaints', [they] could not have been more wrong.

"They cannot prove that I acted with malice towards anyone at UBC," he said.

"I lead a very active intellectual life. I have friends in the University, and it's barbaric," he said. "I understand books, and I like to work in the libraries [at UBC]...It's devastating."

Stephen Wexler, a professor at the UBC Faculty of Law who has known Burns for almost eight years, said that he couldn't think of a man who is less of a problem than Burns on a university campus.

"He's a weirdo but he's a wonderful weirdo with a tremendous intellectual sense.

"I think it's ridiculous that they would ban him from the campus,"



**BANISHED:** Clayton Burns receives a summons banning him from UBC property. OKER CHEN PHOTO

said Wexler. "He is more of a scholar than I am. He's the most scholarly man I know."

UBC Bookstore officials said Burns would engage in discussions with staff but when they didn't want to converse with him anymore, he would continue to argue. His presence created a palpable tension that finally reached a boiling point when a shouting match occurred on

March 29 at the bookstore.

"It made the staff very uncomfortable," said Debbie Harvey, UBC Bookstore director.

"My staff...they felt that they were being personally harassed by him," said Harvey.

"I can't condone any of my staff working at a workplace where they feel unsafe, and that was the reason why I expressed some concern to campus security,"

said Harvey.

After the incident, UBC Bookstore contacted Campus Security and requested that action be taken against him next time he entered store grounds.

Burns said he has contacted the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and is currently deciding whether or not to file a complaint against the University with the BC Human Rights Tribunal. @

## Why UBC doesn't quite make the grade

by Alison Bailey  
NEWS STAFF

Choosing a university is a big decision. In the four years or longer you are there, lifelong friends can be made, your career may be decided, and in the end, hopefully you think it was worth it.

To help decide where their post-secondary years will be spent, many Canadian students use both the *Maclean's* University Rankings issue that is published each fall as well as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) distributed by North American universities each spring.

*Maclean's* publishes information gathered from the administrations of Canadian institutions, while NSSE displays survey responses from students themselves on their level of satisfaction with their education. *Maclean's* has also begun polling students and releasing this information in a separate issue published in the spring. The 2007 issue is the second of its kind, and includes not only *Maclean's* results, but NSSE results as well.

Although UBC was included in both the fall 2006 *Maclean's* University Rankings and the spring 2007 NSSE Survey, it did not earn high scores on either. While UBC placed fourth out of fifteen Canadian universities in the *Maclean's* 2006 overall rankings, there are

areas in which UBC is placed near the bottom. Some of these are student retention in which UBC placed tenth, proportion who graduate (eleventh), class sizes for third and fourth year level (fourteenth), and the percentage of the university's budget that is used for student services (thirteenth).

"Relative to Canadian peer universities, UBC Vancouver scores slightly below average," reports www.pair.ubc.ca, the website of the on-campus organization that distributes NSSE. In *Maclean's* most recent publication of NSSE results, they show that out of 18 Canadian universities, UBC scored fourteenth when first year students were asked how they would evaluate their entire educational experience at their institution. For the same question, seniors placed UBC at number eleven, with 20 per cent of seniors polled saying their education at UBC has been excellent, and 53 per cent answering that it was good.

Why does UBC seem to score so low? According to Anna Kindler, UBC vice-provost and associate VP of academic affairs, there are a variety of factors that can explain UBC's results. However, she stated at the beginning of our interview, "I just would like to be absolutely sure that you don't take some of these explanations as excuses or the university dismissing very valid and very le-

gitimate signals that we are getting in terms of the need to improve."

She explained there are many universities included in the same categories as UBC that are in fact very different from UBC in terms of size and the extent that each institution is involved in research. She uses the University of Toronto, McGill, and the University of Alberta as examples of institutions that can be placed with UBC as they are large universities with many of the same challenges that UBC faces as a result of its size.

However, she also contrasted the four institutions, stating, "there is further difference within this group that's quite significant, and that's the difference related to the composition of the student body. Only out of these four schools, Toronto and UBC has this very high level of diversity—ethnic diversity and this is the profile of our students—it's quite different than the profile of students, let's say at U of A, or at McGill for that matter.

"[McGill] attracts more international students but has less of the kind of demographic variation I am talking about...when I talk about this diverse, multicultural, multi-ethnic population...because there's quite strong data suggesting that students from visible minorities and especially students here from very diverse backgrounds, tend to score lower on engagement...so

campuses that have a greater degree of this differentiation tend to generally score [poorly]."

Kindler also raised concerns about a lack of engagement among the large number of students who commute to and from UBC each day, as well as the significant funding difference per student in the US and in Canada.

Brendon Goodmurphy, AMS VP of academic and university affairs, as well as a fourth year student at UBC, agreed with these points.

"I think the size of the institution is one important factor. It's a big school. And I think you can see in the results that the bigger schools are the ones that tend to be lower on the list. I think there are ways to mitigate that, and it's by working through faculties. For example, breaking the campus into sort of smaller groups where you can find a lot of support."

While Goodmurphy agrees that this is a problem and that having a large commuting population can keep those students from being "engaged in the whole campus community," he said, "I don't think that those have to be aspects that are fundamentally debilitating us from engaging students and helping them feel that they have a place here, and are supported here.

"I think there are some basic questions—some bigger basic questions that can be addressed like

classroom size and teacher quality and sure, those would cost more money I think to make a significant difference on, but those need to be addressed, and we can't shy away from those and I still get a lot of hesitation from the university about accepting whether or not that those types of indicators really do affect the quality of education, and I think that's problematic."

Goodmurphy added, "I think really what it comes down to is the university asking tougher questions of itself and demanding a little bit more, actually a lot more from itself about how to address these results."

Another concern that Kindler raised is that of results being reliable. She stated that *Maclean's* data is misleading, and "we have been among the universities that have pulled out of the *Maclean's* rankings, precisely for the reasons of reporting data that is not collected and not presented in consistent and reliable ways."

Tony Keller, *Maclean's* managing editor for special projects, sees nothing "inherently wrong" with the way *Maclean's* collects its data. So, is it a matter of a lack of action on UBC's part? Or is the data presented simply flawed? Although there appears to be no clear answer, there seems to be a general consensus: that education at UBC has a little brushing up to do. @

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## Assault victim at Ryerson claims hate crime

Experts unsure if attack qualifies

by Colleen Tang  
NEWS EDITOR

Justin Trottier, president of the Freethought Association of Canada, was assaulted March 28, at approximately 1am, and is claiming that his assault should be considered a hate crime.

Trottier and a colleague were putting up posters for an upcoming lecture by Victor Stenger, author of *God: The Failed Hypothesis*, when a man whom they thought was interested in their event approached.

"When we looked back and we saw him he was having quite the chuckle about the nature of the event," Trottier said. "He took a kind of offense to it and threw the poster on the ground and sort of joked about it. Then he left the building."

According to Trottier, when the man had left the building Trottier yelled, "Why don't you at least recycle the poster?" which caused the man and his friend outside to start laughing and pointing at Trottier and his colleague.

Approximately 20 minutes later the assailant and his friend came back, said Trottier, and the friend asked, "What did you say to my friend before?" and I told him just what I said about recycling the poster and he's like, "I don't think that's what you said. I think you said that you can believe what you want and I can believe what I want."

"I insisted that's not what I said and he insisted that was what I said and that went on for about two minutes."

After calling the appropriate authorities, Trottier said he was asked to apologise to the man within two minutes because they were not going to wait for the authorities to come. "Basically I held my ground and the guy who had originally thrown the poster down comes up...he slaps me a couple of times in the face and says, 'Watch your smart mouth,' so I grabbed his hand and told him to stop it and that's when he did the headbutting with his hat and then he left and that was basically it."

Regarding his injuries, Trottier said, "It wasn't too serious, I've been recovering pretty well." The headbutting resulted in a cut on Trottier's nose.

According to Trottier, the Freethought Association of Canada is treating this as a serious incident that should be regarded as a hate crime, and are disgusted at some of the media attention that his incident has received from other papers.

"They joked about our belief system. They had 20 minutes to premeditate the attack, [but] the police were saying it was just an escalation from a verbal dispute but that wasn't it at all. There was no verbal dispute. They waited 20 minutes and then they decided

that they wanted to come," he said. "They were very smart about it."

Regarding *the Varsity's* editorial, "Trottier makes a poor martyr"—which disputed Trottier's claims and suggested that his claims are a result of hurt pride—Trottier said, "I couldn't even make sense of their editorial." The feeling he got out of it was that they acknowledged that the incident might have stemmed from him being an atheist "but so what, that doesn't qualify as a hate crime, you should get used to getting punched or something...that was the feeling I got out of that."

Harry Abrams of the Canadian Anti-Racism Education and Research Society said that this incident does not qualify as a hate crime.

"A hate crime happens when someone is on the receiving end of abuse for the things about themselves that they cannot change," he said. "[Trottier] really should expect that some lumps should come his way sooner or later over not just taking this position but for promoting that point of view rightly or wrongly."

"I don't think [atheism] is caught by the Canadian Constitution in terms of being a protected minority."

He added that perhaps if Trottier had apologised, the assault could potentially have been avoided. "He possibly had a way out of this thing and chose to be confrontational rather than apologetic or something consolatory."

Richard Warman, Ottawa lawyer to Canadian Human Rights Commission on internet hate cases, has an alternate explanation for this incident.

"The individuals have got it morally right and the respective police departments have got it legally right," he said. "Heretics have been burned at the stake for centuries but this is the first sort of modern-day Canadian case that I can recall at any [level] that deals with the question of a person being physically attacked on the basis of their atheism."

Warman believes that police did everything they could, however, this points out a missing component in the law.

"I don't know if there is anything the police can do other than say this is an assault and they will investigate it," he said. "Personally I think it's fascinating because it spells out the problems that are in the laws. That you have a group that in effect is simply the flip side of a religious belief and that it's unprotected whereas if they had been any of a hundred religious belief—had been followers of a hundred religious beliefs that were attacked—they would be protected. It points out a hole that exists in the law."

"What would have to happen is that the criminal code would have to be amended it in the same way it was to extend [protection] to gays and lesbians."

Neither Ryerson security nor the Ryerson Student Union contacted *the Ubyssy* by press time. @



TROTTIER

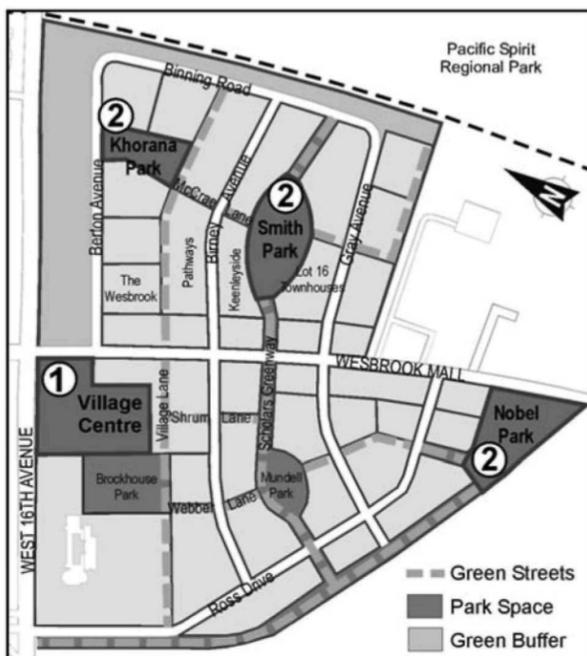
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UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Campus & Community Planning

### Development Permit Applications



#### ① DP 07003: Wesbrook Village Supermarket

UBC Properties Trust proposes to build a grocery store with 3 floors of residential (rental) above, and an adjacent building with restaurant on the main floor, office on the second floor and a third floor of institutional use, all on Lot 48 of Wesbrook Place (South Campus Neighbourhood).

#### ② DP 07010: South Campus UNOS Parks

UBC Properties Trust proposes to install 3 of the 5 UNOS Parks – Khorana, Nobel, and Smith, based on UNA input in a recent neighbourhood consultation process.

Both proposals would remain consistent with the approved Neighbourhood Plan.

More information on this project is available on the C & CP website:  
[www.planning.ubc.ca/corebus/devapps.html](http://www.planning.ubc.ca/corebus/devapps.html)

These applications are scheduled for consideration by the Development Permit Board on **April 18, 2007**, Cedar Room, Ponderosa Centre, 2071 West Mall, 5:00-7:00 p.m.; for directions visit [www.maps.ubc.ca](http://www.maps.ubc.ca)

? Questions: Lisa Colby, Manager Development Services, C & CP e-mail: [lisa.colby@ubc.ca](mailto:lisa.colby@ubc.ca)

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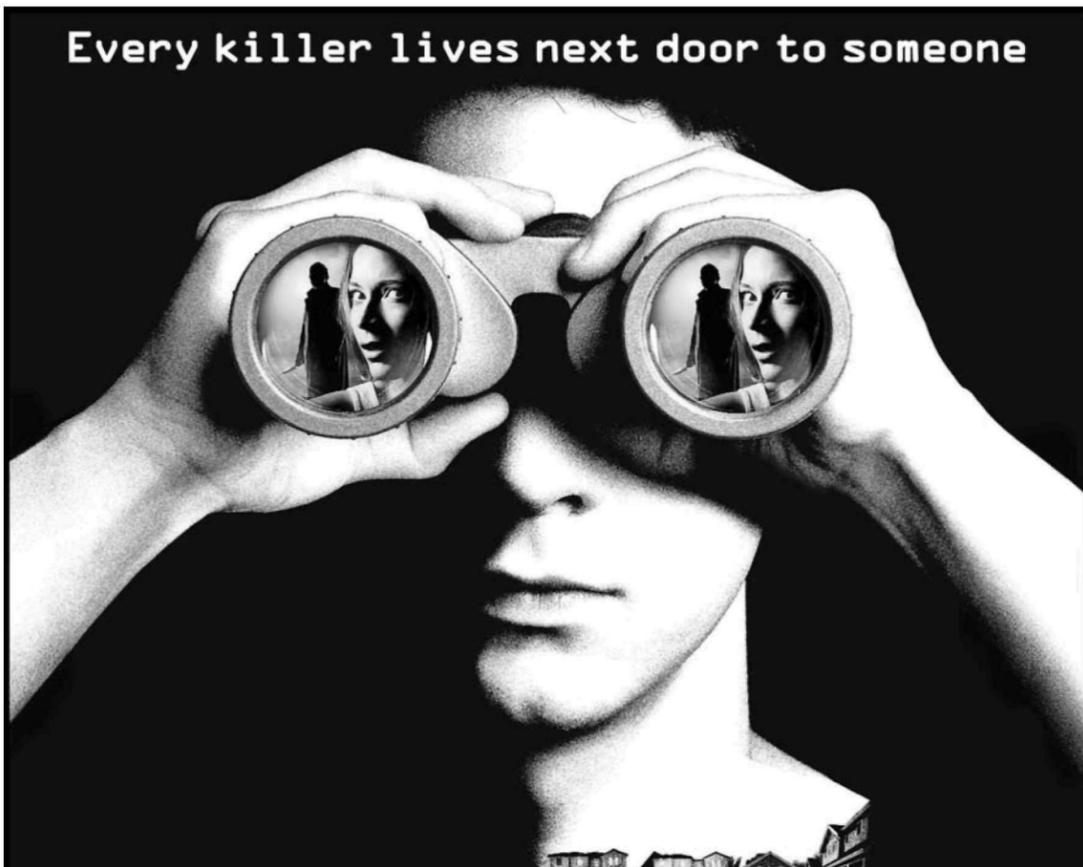
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# Thunderbirds year in review

by Justin McElroy  
SPORTS WRITER

What do you remember about first grade? Probably very little: the teacher, some of the kids in the class, having to write in a journal every once in a while...but specific memories? It's likely you have just two or three; moments that best encapsulate what went on in those formative years, back when Pogs were all the rage.

This is a longwinded way of alluding to the fact that when we try and remember the exploits of our Thunderbird athletes in the future, it is perhaps inevitable that our memory will be foggy. Ten, fifteen years from now, when we look back at the year that was in UBC Athletics (I know very few people will actually do this, but let's conveniently ignore that fact for the sake of this column), there will only be a few choice memories to look back on. Like these ones...

**September 2nd:** On a big, international campus like this one, rare is the event that transforms UBC into a small city in Kansas when the circus comes to town. But when the Arizona Wildcats tangled with our Thunderbirds at War Memorial as a new school year began, it was an event, a small look at the world of NCAA hoops that the big city boys down south play. And with 2,000 curious fans in attendance that evening, UBC fought valiantly, but ended up on the losing side of the 73-59 score. But one thing that struck me that evening was the play of fresh-

man point guard Alex Murphy. Six months previous, he was a big fish in the small pond of BC Basketball. On that evening, he was matching up against future NBA players play after play—and looking pretty good doing it too.

**October 18th:** Enough has already been said about Chris Ciezki's 328-yard, 5-touchdown massacre of SFU, but I'll say one more thing about it: watching that game, it was patently obvious that Ciezki was a man among boys in, playing at a higher level than anyone on either side of the ball was capable of playing. It's the dream of any Canadian running back to make it to the CFL, and in the coming months, Ciezki will try and make that dream a reality with the BC Lions.

coverites will be able to cheer on Ciezki for many years to come.

**October 28th:** The home

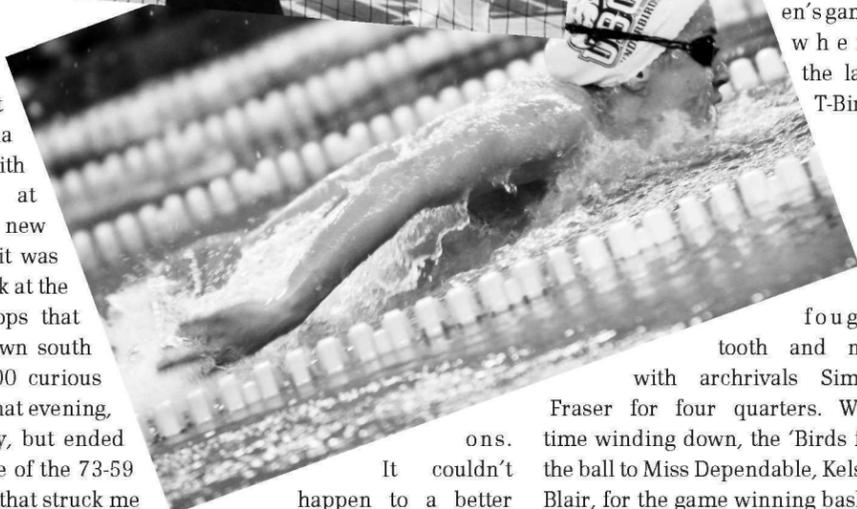
openers for both UBC basketball teams went picture perfect on this evening in late October. Though the men were in probably the most exciting game of their season the night before against Trinity Western (whom they beat 130-128 in triple OT) and comfortably took care of SFU on this day, the main event happened in the women's game, where the lady T-Birds

endings for both basketball teams ended in disappointment this year, the way they kicked off their seasons could not have been better.

**February 18th:** If there is one moment I will take away from the season that was in UBC Athletics, it occurred on this day, at four in the afternoon, at War Memorial Gym.

There, on UBC's seventh match point, Cristoph Eichbaum rose up, blocked the spike of the Manitoba Bisons star player, and sent the Thunderbirds to their first national championship in 17 long years. Coach Richard Schick screamed in jubilation and hugged assistant Cal Wolford. The Thunderbird players immediately mobbed Eichbaum, while the hundreds of fans in attendance screamed in joy at the top of their lungs while pandemonium gripped the gym—and the Bison players turned to corpses. Their season over, their dreams dashed, they could only sit in their seats and watch stone-faced as UBC saw their dreams come to fruition at their expense.

As the legendary Jim McKay often said, sport is about "the thrill of victory, and the agony of defeat." It's why we watch sports, it's why we play sports, and it's why we love sports a little bit too much sometimes. But when those two solitudes come crashing into each other, as they did when UBC clinched its spot in the CIS tournament, it creates an indelible image, a moment that will not soon be forgotten to anyone who witnessed it that evening. @



where the lady T-Birds fought tooth and nail with archrivals Simon Fraser for four quarters. With time winding down, the 'Birds fed the ball to Miss Dependable, Kelsey Blair, for the game winning basket with just seconds left. While the

As the legendary Jim McKay often said, sport is about "the thrill of victory, and the agony of defeat." It's why we watch sports, it's why we play sports, and it's why we love sports a little bit too much sometimes. But when those two solitudes come crashing into each other, as they did when UBC clinched its spot in the CIS tournament, it creates an indelible image, a moment that will not soon be forgotten to anyone who witnessed it that evening. @



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# Roark: fresh talent on the scene

**ROARK**  
*Break of Day*  
Love Minus Zero Records

by Lucas Johnson  
CULTURE WRITER

There's a new talent on the music scene, and for indie/pop fans, he's sure to be a long-lasting favourite. Roark brings a compelling combination of strong vocals, memorable melodies, and intricate instrumentation (from acoustic and electric guitars to piano, cellos, and string sections) to his first album, *Break of Day*.

Each of the songs has a similar feel, but most are different enough to be individually compelling, yet still effective if taken as a whole. Roark's greatest strength is his combination of a melody and rhythm that makes every song catchy, and his obvious musical talent brings to those songs powerful instrumentation that suits the specific style of the song, along with strong vocal harmonies.

The album opens powerfully with the track "Never Felt So Lucky," a song that in many ways exemplifies the rest of the album to come. It's forceful, evocative, full of strong vocals; the kind of song that you can easily sing along to, assuming you can keep up with his formidable range.

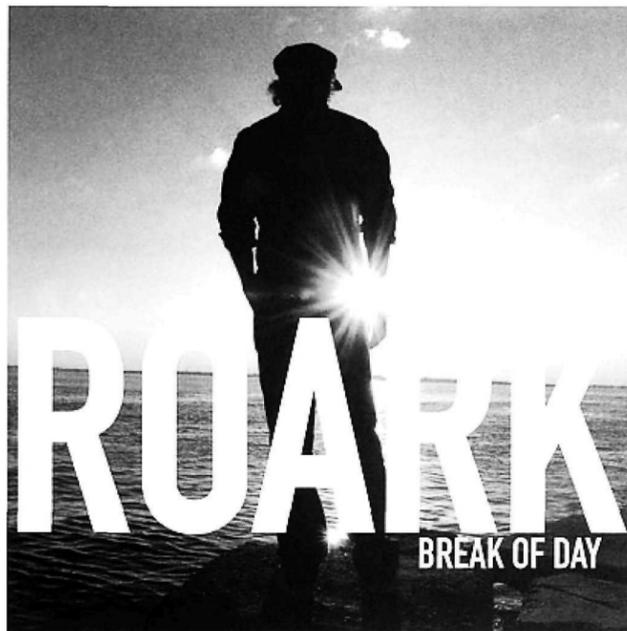
"Today (Perfect)" takes the album in a slightly different direc-

tion, followed by "Letters," which opens with a unique staccato piano progression, progressing in a bouncy, and catchy style reminiscent of Queen. "Broken Smile" opens softly with the intimate addition of a solo cello, and builds near the end.

The next few tracks slipped my ears a little, as there is no doubt that the styles are similar to many of the songs that came before, so they offered little that was new. However, there is enough unique and catchy in each to make them all worth a listen.

"Take It Slow" is another passionate acoustic/cello/string song that makes a good wrap-up track for the entire album. My only issue is that it doesn't end on a tonic, instead leaving the listener hanging a little and waiting for the next song that doesn't come.

*Break of Day* is a plethora of passionate songs combining melody and harmony using varied instrumentation and vocal techniques to create interesting and unique sounds in each piece. For those who enjoy the pop feel and passionate music, Roark is sure to please, and is certain to grow in the music scene. @



# Klimt biopic doesn't show his best

**KLIMT**  
*At the Vancouver International Film Centre*  
March 31

By Caroline Chuang  
CULTURE WRITER

International director Raoul Ruiz's biopic of Gustav Klimt stars John Malkovich as the beleaguered Viennese artist. Malkovich however, seems to be acting the role he played at the height of his pretentiousness—himself, in *Being John Malkovich*. And he is far more convincing at that role than he is as the famed artist. That's the problem with movies based on the ostentatious lives of historical figures—they either enliven their characters with overstimulation coupled with an intriguing plot, or they tank from drawn out, pretentious indulgence.

*Klimt*, as a film, is unfortunately the latter. We might be more interested in the hallucinations of the talented artist if the scenes were cut more effectively. Instead, we get droughts of Malkovich on his hospital bed intercut with scenes of interactions that are figments of his hallucinations, without proper cutting to emphasise that these are indeed manifestations of his warped, creative genius. One might say this is exactly the point, but if you watch the film, you'll know from the first scene that he is suffering some kind of mentally disordered flashback on his deathbed.

Yet, he seems not to suffer much torment over his apparitions. We see his hallucinations

unfold more like moments of daydreaming—this really could be John Malkovich's acting—because he is so deadpan in his delivery. That, and they fuse seamlessly with scenes that take place in reality. This functions effectively on some levels as he portrays the snobby, womanising artist with dry wit and vitriolic arrogance, but it doesn't convey the impact of his visions on his real life. Perhaps they were subsumed in his paintings, but in scenes where he is shown at work with numerous nude models, he is possessed of his wits and selfishness all the same. The many scenes of opulent and theatrical seduction display lavishly the sexually liberated times in Paris and Vienna at the *fin-de-siècle*.

The scenes that reflect his mental disorders are likewise not clearly defined. They resemble scenes that take place in reality, but they come across as staged effects. The problem is not that you don't know whether the scene is one of Klimt's hallucinations or an actual flashback, but rather that neither are convincing. For example, in some scenes we know that he is hallucinating because the people around him say that he just talked to himself and ask if he's all right—but Malkovich deadpans what he just saw and in one scene even holds physical evidence of something he says was given to him by an apparition.

There were some excellent lines about art criticism during one scene set in a high class Viennese café, where Klimt feels affronted by a seemingly crass comment from a gentleman who says

the frame of a painting is merely decorous and therefore beautiful. Klimt responds by smearing cake over his face and says afterwards that the cake has been rendered useful and ugly. Talk about the pretentiousness, snobbery, and arrogance of the salon art world mixed with high society as double edged swords.

Saffron Burrows, who plays the beguiling Lea de Castro, an imaginary figment of Klimt's infatuation, is excellent in her role as the cunning and cloying seductress of Klimt's hallucinatory preoccupations.

Egon Schiele, played by Nikolai Kinski, makes frequent fleeting appearances as Klimt's contemporary, who is much less caustic, and shown with the mannerisms of the artist pat down—separated fingers and intense looks into the twilight zone make him come across as awkward but harmless. Kinski's face and voice are far too modern to be wholly convincing, but his appearances on film are brief and inject a refreshing, lighthearted presence into lengthy periods of dramatic draught. The women in the movie are cast well, but Malkovich and Kinski's performances are too neurotic. It's like Woody Allen playing Napoleon in a dramatic biopic. The actors have the tenacity and intellect to play the parts, but they just aren't naturally suited for them.

Raoul Ruiz's tribute to the famous artist is a valiant one, and anyone who admires his work should come away with insights into the cult of the artist hero and, more likely, the artistic ego. @

# Slow Man veers off in wrong direction

**SLOW MAN**  
by J.M. Coetzee  
Shaw

by Kaan Eraslan  
CULTURE WRITER

JM Coetzee is a celebrated Nobel Prize-winning author who has written some amazing stories such as *Disgrace* and *Waiting For The Barbarians*. If *Slow Man* was the only book of his that you have read, you would seriously come to doubt his award-winning status because, despite starting out as a strong psychological plunge into the mind of a depressed amputee, it turns out to be a cluster of meaningless conversations and relationships.

*Slow Man* begins with a horrifying accident as the aging protagonist, Paul Rayment, is hit by a truck while riding his bicycle through the streets of Adelaide, Australia. After undergoing life-saving surgery, his right leg is taken from him, amputated above the knee. Paul's life is changed forever. Following this terrible ordeal, Coetzee gives us several doses of negativity and darkness as Paul falls into a downward spiral of depression and resentment towards those around him. This portion of the book functions effectively to put readers inside Rayment's mind, feeling the surge into darkness and despair. Coetzee really gives the readers a subliminal preview of what it must be like to lose a limb.

The story then betrays expectations and goes off track, telling a story about a man dealing with his stump of a leg, which he likes to call "le jambon." We are introduced to Marijana Jokic, a middle aged nurse who is hired to look after him. Marijana is an

Eastern European woman from Croatia, and Paul tries to re- his own European heritage. Before long, Paul falls in love with her and tries everything he can to become involved with her life and family. This includes offering to pay for her son's private college fees and bailing her little girl out of trouble after she steals from a jewellery store. This turn in the story still doesn't work too badly; in fact, it's mildly entertaining. The disappointment comes with Coetzee's decision to shift focus away on what is really interesting, which is Paul's mental and physical deterioration.

Coetzee then introduces us to a character from his book *Elizabeth Costello*. The character is (drum roll) Elizabeth Costello, a popular, aging Australian nov-

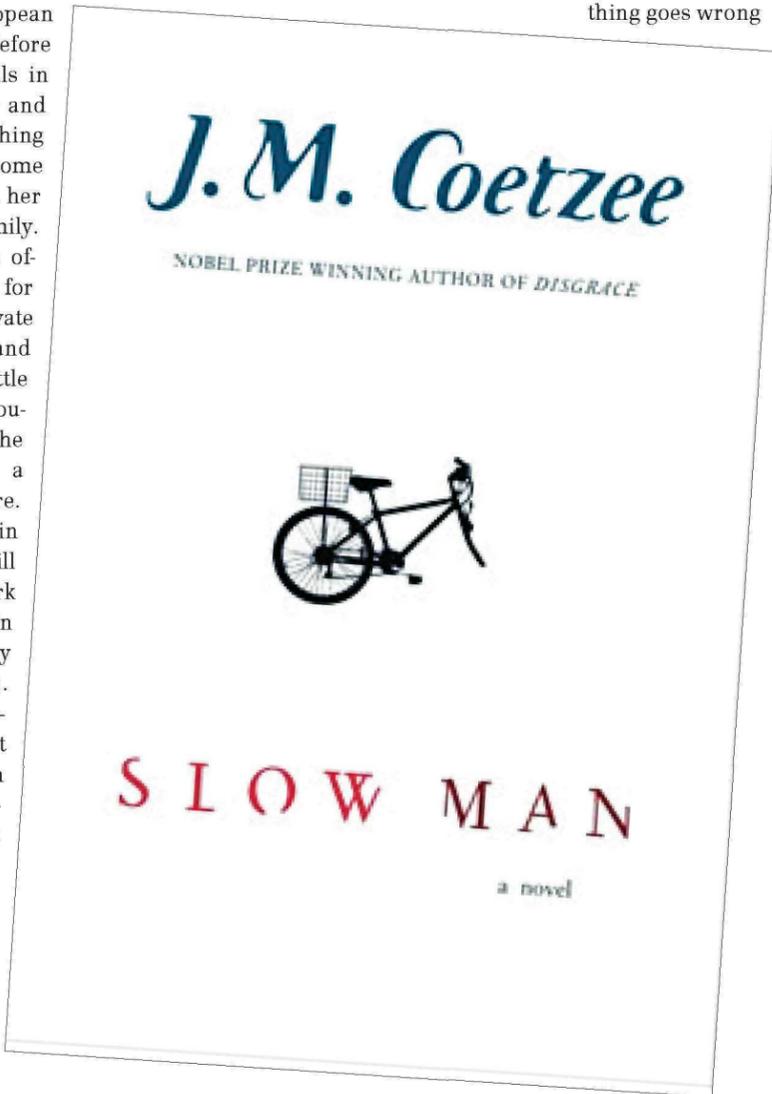
elist, who just appears out of thin air and knocks on Paul's door. This is where every thing goes wrong

analyze him. So she goes about meddling in every aspect of his life and stays at his house, claiming that Paul came to her.

It is assumed, but never explained, that Costello does all of this because she wants to use Paul as a character in a book she is writing. How does she know who Paul is? How does she know about his inappropriate affections for Marijana? How does she know everything about the Jokic family? How does she know everything about everyone? Why does she sleep under bushes in a parking lot? These are questions that will go through readers' minds if they manage to get to this part in the story. The only problem is that there is no answer to any of these questions; and no, Paul isn't just making her up in his mind. She is a real character, and an annoying one at that.

After Elizabeth Costello enters the scene, the rest of the book is filled with long conversations and arguments between Paul and Costello. They argue like an old married couple and these arguments serve no purpose other than frustrating the readers with their length and bickering annoyance. Behind all of this, there is supposed to be a message of passing things on to the future, but nobody will care, and there you have the main problem of *Slow Man*. It's hard to care about anybody involved in the story.

*Slow Man*, at best, is a mess. Everything becomes murky after a strong opening. Although the intro is strong and very intriguing, an entire book cannot run on the momentum of the introduction alone. If readers want to enjoy the work of a Nobel Prize winning author, read *Disgrace* or *Waiting For the Barbarians*. They are much more reflective of what J.M Coetzee can do. *Slow Man* is a tale that is at its best when avoided. @



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# Ishmeal BEAH: A soldier's renaissance

by Gemini Cheng

Sometimes it is easy to forget how lucky we are. Ask average Canadians what they remember from when they were twelve years old, and you will find a range of stories. They can probably conjure up skinned knees on cement sidewalks, bike-riding to a friend's house after school, or just trying to pass their next math test. Ask author Ishmael Beah what he remembers of being twelve years old, and you will hear a story of unimaginable pain and suffering.

Beah, now twenty-six and living in New York, related memories from his recently published autobiography, *A Long Way Gone*, during a UBC sponsored talk on March 29, where he discussed his life as a child soldier in Sierra Leone.

The mood began in lighthearted fashion as Beah admitted to his obsession with rap music and the rhythm of the English language. When he was eight years old, he discovered American hip-hop and became fascinated by how someone could speak English so quickly and rhythmically. Soon, Beah and his friends began putting on local shows, copying the words, and eventually making up their own lyrics. His interest was his salvation—rap music would come to save his life twice.

When Beah was twelve, he and six other boys left their town to go participate in a talent show in a nearby village.

The people of his village cared deeply for one another and could not believe that their culture could go through such dramatic change. Beah, his brother, and their friends were literally "on the run." They ran from village to village with their blistered and bleeding feet, seeking shelter but leaving before war could find them again, or leaving because the village believed they were the enemy arriving early in disguise. They did this for a year.

Hoping to reunite with their families, Beah and his friends returned to their village, one member short. When asked what he remembers of that time, he recalls mainly gunshots and smoke. He learned that his family had been tied up and burned inside their home. Bodies littered the streets.

It was at this time that Beah was conscripted into the army, and his sombre audience truly felt the weight of his story. It was "kill or be killed" from then on; the children had no choice but to obey.

"After you kill somebody," Beah said, "it does something to you as a human being."

To remedy the feelings that arise from cold-blooded killing, they were given drugs to numb the pain. The drugs also served to put children in the mindset that they could do it again and again. It was a vicious cycle.

Although Beah's audience knew they were there for an intimate discussion, perhaps not everyone realised how personally they would be affected by his memories. There were audible gasps when Beah related some of his darkest war stories, like exhibition killings. Young

*In adulthood we often look at children, with their soulful eyes beaming with untouched purity and an insatiable zest for life, and envy the innocence we all think we once had. We look at children and see the beauty of a fresh beginning, the ease of living without worries or regrets, and the freedom that runs wild within their souls. But how would it be, if instead of purity in their eyes we saw hate, or instead of innocence we saw corruption? How would it be if instead of envying children, we feared them? For most, this is insanity. For Ishmael Beah, it was reality.*

—Christine McLaren

OKER CHEN PHOTO



boys learned how to kill someone using just a bayonet; Beah admits that he became "a master of this particular art."

After years of being forced to perform unthinkable acts, Beah was given a chance to escape the brutality when he was rescued by the efforts of UNICEF and other NGOs. The mood was not entirely lifted when he told the story of his rescue. Child soldiers are not easily saved, and Beah's rehabilitation was difficult. Becoming a child soldier is easy, he said. When you destroy everything a child knows, there isn't much else they can do when you force an AK-47 rifle into their hands. Reclaiming their humanity—that's the hard part, he said.

Hearing the words "It wasn't your fault" wasn't what saved him in the end; "Daily compassion rekindled our humanity."

Why has Beah done this? Why did he write his autobiography, and why is he traveling and telling others his darkest memories? It was not only as a form of therapy, he said, but "to put a human face to this experience...The children whose lives have been caught up by this war—they can regain themselves."

Each time he thought about stepping back from his manuscript, he thought about all the children at that moment who were fighting around the world.

"These children can be helped," he told the audience fiercely. "Don't let anyone tell you any other way."

The questions and answers that members of the audience directed to Beah gave him a forum to speak more politically. Awareness and fundraising are good short term goals for civil wars around the world, he believes, but to put a stop to it completely, that must begin with the people. He wishes to see those who want to help out of compassion, not as a moral obligation. As for Sierra Leone, he encouraged the entire audience to visit his beautiful home country.

"There are certain feelings I get there that I will not get anywhere else," he said, adding that we must remember the true beauty of Africa.

"Expose yourself to the world," Beah advised. "It starts with education."

Learn about what is happening around our planet, put your energy into the right causes—because according to Beah, all lives count. @

From best-selling author Douglas Coupland

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**420 should be celebrated**

420 is a symbol that connects marijuana smokers from all over the world to the cannabis culture. You may have seen it, read about it or heard it referred to by someone you know. Most commonly, it marks a time of day (4:20) or a date (4/20). On the date, April 20, hundreds of thousands of Canadians will join millions of people around the world to gather, in private and in public, to celebrate the annual cannabis holiday.

Of course, it is not an official holiday yet.

There are probably as many explanations as to why April 20 has become so significant to the cannabis culture as there are people who observe the day. But, one thing seems to be common among them all: a desire for freedom. From the brashest activist to the closet toker, every marijuana user is acutely aware that they do not have it and that their involvement with marijuana might result in the loss of liberty.

Yet, we continue to do it. And, on April 20, many will gather in public. These gatherings occur in parks and public areas across the country. In many respects, they are expressions of defiance, a defiance of the arbitrary laws that prohibit a plant that so many Canadians use for medical, spiritual and recreational purposes.

On April 20th, I will take my place among the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who, like me, believe in freedom and the right of an individual to control their own bodies and minds. I will venture

to the customary local gathering place—there is one in every city and town across this country—and celebrate the cannabis culture. I will smoke a joint with friends and pray that this is the year we gain our freedom.

Hope to see you there.

—**Moe Brondum lives in North Battleford, Saskatchewan**

**Bill Gates not above society**

Bill Gates is one of the richest men in the world (worth \$56 billion), and he is pursuing governments aggressively to pay for AIDS vaccine research. It shows just how generous Gates is with other people's money. His miserly \$28 million donation to Canada compared to the \$111 million from our government doesn't give Saint Microsoft permission to lord it over us. No one elected him to anything, as he slinks off with his tax-exempt foundation. There is a name for people like him and it starts with a P.

There is little government interference in foundations, while others are taxed out of existence. His charity is no gift—it's called high finance. It's common knowledge that foundations here have benefited sponsors more than they have benefited the world. That whatever foundations are (for good or ill) for self or humanity and so they are for the most part done with publicly conferred money.

Mr Gates didn't leave much of an impression. He's not compulsively gripping. On television, he wore (pardon the word) a rumpled suit which looked like it had been

rolled out of every bar in town. When is he going to get a haircut? He has the makings of a Howard Hughes. Anyone check his nails? (Cartoonists, here's your chance to become famous.)

Quite a contrast: the richest man in the world, and the world's best political leader, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper—smiling, gracious, and beautifully groomed as always.

—**Mary Prinz lives in Vancouver**

**UBC is unsustainable**

While the rest of the world talks of nothing but global warming, UBC remains blithely unconscious, builds parkades, and provides little or no alternatives to Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) use on campus and its "University Town."

Present transit shuttle services are entirely insufficient to provide professionals with a viable reason for abandoning their car. Every event at Thunderbird, Chan, Botanical Gardens, MoA, Belkin, Fred Wood etc. continue to add to the pollution problem. While UBC touts its "sustainability" it continues to behave like a dinosaur when it comes to its own ecological footprint, and fails to curb the constant proliferation of cars. Every visitor, student, and worker on campus should be included in a survey to determine what it would take to leave their SOVs at home. Move forward, UBC.

—**Lenore Herb was president of the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation, 1990-95**



**Rock looks like alien**

Daniel Labossiere found an 'alien' type rock in Point Roberts. He was offered \$14,000 for the rock, but refused. He chose instead to come to the Ubysssey office to get the word out about selling it on Ebay. We didn't capitulate, and he decided to go elsewhere to get his 'rock' sold. Good luck, sir.

**OKER CHEN PHOTO**

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INTERACTIVE

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The AMS is hiring!

AMS Safewalk Coordinator

*Closing Date: April 14th, 2007*

AMS Safewalk is student-run service essentially comprised of a foot patrol initiative that will accompany anyone between points on campus. It employs well over 100 students and also works to encourage safety all across campus through various promotion and outreach booths. Employees are trained in the safety policies of this non-intervention service as well as in basic protocols such as radios, client interaction and knowledge of available safety resources.

AMS Shinerama Co-chair/Coordinator

*Closing Date: April 14th, 2007*

Shinerama is the annual AMS student fundraiser for the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. This event takes place during the first week of September. Your main responsibility will be to get students involved in the cause and raise money for the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation through promotional events and fundraisers.

AMS Insider Editor & Graphic Designer

*Closing Date: April 23rd, 2007*

The AMS is looking for a dynamic Editor and Graphic designer to cooperatively produce the 2007 / 08 AMS Insider; - a student day-timer and information guide with a distribution of more than 24,000. We're looking for creative, innovative and hardworking enthusiasts who can work well as part of a dynamic team and thrives under pressure.

Brought to you by **your** student society



# Year end ol' master masthead



Thanks to: Brandon Adams, Chris Adamson, Chantai Allick, Josephine Anderson, Josh Anderson, Erica Baird, Alison Bailey, Henrique Barbone, Erica Barrett, Levi Barnett, Elena Banfield, Neale Barnholden, Nadia Bell, Nick Black, Emily Bodenburg, Michael Bround, Paul Bucci, Sarah Buck, Mai Bui, Cody Burdett, Carolynne Burkholder, Keegan Bursaw, Laurence Butet-Roch, Barry Calhoun, Aaron Carr, Elliott Chalmer, Gemini Chan, Nicholas Cheung, Oker Chen, Champagne Choquer, Jennifer Chrumka, Elecia Chrunik, Joanna Chiu, Andrew Chang, Jordan Chittley, Caroline Chuang, Peter Clark, Patty Comeau, Ryan Corbett, Benjamin Dalston, Alisha Delgado-Pelton, Alia Dharssi,

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Saunders, Eric Schneider, Jay Shaw, Sana Sharham, Tushna Shroff, Lauren Slattery, Hilary Smith, Vanessa Smithe, Kathryn Stewart, Cleveland Stoidy, Amanda Stutt, Eric Szeto, Colleen Tang, Stephanie Taylor, Shalene Takara, David Tchir, Teresa Terakdidis, Chelsea Theriault, Darcy Thompson, HungTe Tjia, Rachel Topping, Amanda Truscott, Megan Turnbull, Candice Vallantin, Tessa Vanderhart, Francois Villeneuve, Michelle Vinci, Greg Ursic, Yanan Max Wang, Peter Warren, Kate Webb, Angela Wilson, Jonny Paul Witt, Wilson Wong, Vanessa Woznow, Ivan Wu, Howard Yan, Alec Young, Bryan Zandberg, Cynthia Zhao, Ivan Zhao. Good riddance.



## office streeters

Coordinating Editor Eroc Szeto \_\_\_\_\_ ?



—Samantha Jung  
Arts, 1

"...drives a white van. You'd think with interests like his he'd try to be a little bit stealthier. At least he didn't go really obvious and put 'free candy' on the side."



—Isabel Ferreras  
Arts, 1

"...reminds me of creamy folds."



—Andrew MacRae  
Arts, 2

"...once offered me candy; it didn't go well—now my GI gets regular visits and my hair is still all messed up."



—Colleen Tang  
English, 4

"...is the sexiest sex(y) offender in the world."



—Humaira Hamid  
Arts, 2

"...the biggest metrosexual I've ever met in this office."

—Coordinated by Staff

## PERSPECTIVE

### The improbability of God

by Mark Klaver

Few decisions are as important as selecting one's morality. One's daily actions and life direction are structured by this choice. Moreover, one's morality is inevitably influenced by one's decision concerning the existence of God. If one chooses to believe, how one lives follows what one considers God's morals to be.

There are far too many gods in human cultures to accept one version of God without question. Yet, one often finds the belief in God to be like the selection of a hockey team: people cheer for the team from their city without mindfulness of its merits; likewise, many accept the version of God their society has dictated to them with inadequate consideration of the numerous versions of God throughout the world.

Moreover, frequently people maintain a belief in God for no other reason than that they always have. This allows one's culture to determine one's life path; to do so is to deny oneself the opportunity that separates humans from animals: the choice to change one's life to act in accordance with a morality that one has freely chosen.

Yet some people fear this choice. Some people have had their identities so influenced by ideas they were raised to believe that to question or live without that idea is too destabilising and frightening to consider. Moreover, they fear that, without their idea that has guided them towards goodness, they will fall into a realm of permissiveness and profligacy. What they must understand is that countless people live without their belief; manifold societies have distinct and widely varying beliefs; and goodness, love, strength, and enjoyment arise from innumerable beliefs, many of which have no relation to God. If one can withstand the insecurities that accompany questioning one will be able to rise above the dictations of socialisation and select from various sources of belief that morality which most enhances and improves one's own life.

However, many believers question the possibility of goodness without God.

Many see the world's problems to be a result of the suffering patient's unwillingness to consent to the doctor's aid. Yet who is this doctor? What doctor not only does not save those who have not yet consented to him—many of which are too young or have not even heard of the doctor—but actively kills them by injecting horrendous poisons into them? Furthermore, what doctor even kills those who have consented to his authority? It is hard to imagine such a doctor being considered good; yet it seems God maintains his status as not just good, but all-good despite sending murderous pandemics that wipe out non-believers and believers alike. God appears to be actively involved in torturing our world. The world's problems aren't simply the result of sinning humans; we do not cause natural disasters.

Could such horrific events be punishment for human wrongdoing? If we concern ourselves with life on earth, then such arbitration is absurd. The judge that condemns innocents for the actions of perpetrators with equal sentences—death—is unjust and excessively harsh. Those faithful in the traditional God will say that God's goodness means justice will be served in the afterlife. There are problems with this view. God's goodness is what I am directly questioning. To presuppose what's in question is circular and missing the point. Moreover, what makes afterlife justify a good God any more than a diabolical one apparently rampant on earth? Maybe God is just as nefarious there as he is here.

Furthermore, to rest one's belief of the pure goodness of God on such an unknown idea as afterlife is to structure one's life based on an idea that is unreassuringly vague. Such a belief requires a great deal of faith. Yet, what makes having such faith concerning the decision that arguably has the greatest influence on one's life a good idea? In the other blind areas of life we'd never place our future on such faith. Who invests all their funds in a random company without justifying the investment through an understanding of the probability of the company's success? I'm not saying there is no God, or that 100 per cent certainty is needed to believe. I'm saying it's strange to structure one's entire life on a belief like the all-good God that is only as, if not less, probable that its many alternatives.

—Mark Klaver is a third-year Philosophy student

# The Mistakes of America and Britain

WITH EVERY MISTAKE

by Gwynne Dyer  
Vintage Canada

by David Tchir  
CULTURE WRITER

Gwynne Dyer has been a world-class journalist since the 1970s, and his writing shows nothing less. Having seen him twice as a guest lecturer at my high school, I know that his perception of the world is as clear as it is intelligent. I have always had a great deal of respect for his interesting and enlightening perspective, and I jumped at this chance to read about his thoughts on the world today. In his latest book *With Every Mistake*, Dyer paints a vivid picture of the world that we live in, and all the uneasy directions it is taking.

The book is entirely written by one author, so at least it has a coherent structure. However, it is not a complete piece of writing; it is a collection of Dyer's articles from the period between the eve of 9/11 to the present day. The only things linking the articles together are brief explanations written by Dyer, which put the articles into context and reveal Dyer's retrospective thoughts on them. However, save for the introduction and the conclusion—both of considerable length—the book is entirely made

up of articles from the past several years of Dyer's career. As such, it is difficult to analyse the book critically, as it is basically a summation of Dyer's opinion on the events of the past few years, not a straight narrative.

In the first part of the book, the articles are arranged in such a way that the views of Dyer on 9/11 and the War on Terror are displayed in semi-chronological order. Dyer begins with several brief articles that describe the political climate of the international system before 2001. He then jumps into the sudden terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre before piecing together the evidence and making surprising predictions about what would eventually occur, save for a few simply unforeseeable developments.

The second part of the book is perhaps even more interesting than the first. The bulk of the articles are still politically inclined, but they mostly deal with topics outside of 9/11 and the War on Terror. For example, there are chapters dedicated to political developments in Africa, South East Asia, and Latin America which may help enlighten the readers about important historical events that have taken place in the past several years, but have gone largely unnoticed by the Western world because of



the media's general concentration on events in the Middle East. All along the way, Dyer's retrospective and often sarcastic comments help the reader make a comparison between his predictions and what is now history.

The writing itself is as interesting as the content. Over the years, Gwynne Dyer has developed much skill as a convincing writer and speaker. During his speeches, the audience was both commanded and enlightened by his determined

exposition of the truth. Though his writing does not depart from this prolific conviction, the view he holds is distinctly left-wing.

*With Every Mistake* may not be enjoyable in the least for patriotic Americans or Brits: when it deals with American and British affairs (mostly in Iraq), it is usually from an extremely derisive point of view. There are even a few articles which seem to have been thrown in for the sole purpose of humiliating the American or British governments.

However, the book is written from Gwynne Dyer's perspective alone, and his critique of those who control world events is expected. This critical view may show the world to be headed in a bleak direction, but he doesn't end on such a note. He suggests, if those in power act according to common sense and decency, the world won't end up so badly. Finding universal common sense and determining decency is perhaps the greatest challenge we face. @

## One-woman show returns



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID COOPER

**THE SYRINGA TREE**  
at the Vancouver Playhouse  
to April 21

by Charlotte Nobles  
CULTURE WRITER

After a very successful run at The Playhouse last season, *The Syringa Tree* is back, with the award-winning Vancouver actress Caroline Cave performing in this emotional and controversial one-woman show. Originally written and played by actress Pamela Gien, *The Syringa Tree* is partially based on actual events from her life growing up in South Africa. World-renowned director and acting coach Larry Moss inspired the play's composition and was involved with its production.

*The Syringa Tree* is set in South Africa in the 1960s, and focuses on a young Caucasian girl, Elizabeth Grace, growing up on her wealthy family's estate. The events of the play are portrayed through Elizabeth, who acts out the various characters with whom she comes into contact, including her family, the house's servants, and a skeleton

found in her father's clinic. The play is Elizabeth's attempt to explain her experiences in this racially-tense time in South Africa's history.

Beginning when Elizabeth is six, her life is very much focused on her relationship with her African nanny, Salamina Mashlope. Elizabeth forms a close relationship with Salamina's illegal baby, whom the Grace family is constantly trying to hide from suspicious eyes.

All events are portrayed with the innocence and simplicity of a young girl, unable to perceive her own isolation in a country where she and her family are no longer welcome. The play re-creates critical events in her life, such as the birth and, later, the disappearance of Salamina's daughter; the violent murder of her generous and caring grandfather; and Elizabeth's eventual retreat to the United States.

The play deals with a time span of roughly forty years, and questions the ability for change in a country that has been divided through racial discrimination. The deeply controversial issues of racial discrimination are relieved by the innocent comments and reasoning made by a young Elizabeth to explain away certain details of her surroundings that she cannot understand.

Pamela Gien's intricately-woven quilt of personalities and stories is performed flawlessly by Caroline Cave, who tirelessly acts, sings, and dances throughout the nearly two hour performance. Cave's ability to continuously change characters (and subsequently change body language, mannerisms, accent, voice, and facial expressions) is unbelievable, and her performance received a very well-deserved standing ovation. The use of non-specific, timeless clothing and set design provided the perfect space for Ms. Cave to transform herself into 24 different characters that the audience could effortlessly envision as being completely unique from each other.

In sum, *The Syringa Tree* is an outstanding and captivating play, and Caroline Cave's phenomenal performance keeps the audience involved, laughing, and thinking throughout the performance. @

## Praying for locusts to eat the screen

**THE REAPING**  
now playing

by Humaira Hamid  
CULTURE STAFF

A movie incorporating the ten plagues outlined in the Old Testament, *The Reaping* stars Hilary Swank of *Million Dollar Baby* fame. Directed by Stephen Hopkins (*The Ghost and the Darkness*) and co-starring David Morrissey, Idris Elba, and AnnaSophia Robb, this movie left me pretty unmoved on the whole.

The film's plot goes something like this: a Christian missionary goes off to do the world good, only to get royally screwed over and lose her faith in God. She then becomes a credible university professor, known for bursting people's God-fearing bubbles using good old-fashioned rationale backed by scientific facts. Always excellent, she's then faced with the case of the little-known town of Haven, which is inexplicably (or is it?) facing paranormal incidences that parallel the ten Biblical plagues. Starting off with blood, the entire gauntlet is run through sequentially, ending in the climactic last plague, which ironically is pretty anti-climactic.

The opening scenes did quite a good job at setting the mood for the rest of the film; it's one of those hold-your-breath-for-something-good movies, peppered with those scenes we all love to hate, and hate to love. You know the ones I'm talking about: eerie music and slow motion movements leading up to the big scare. Or a big

let-down, depending on how rigid you are. I'm disappointed to report that the majority of them were predictable, since the suspense part was dragged on for too long. The movie did get a good jump or two out of me, though, and I'm grateful since that's all I look forward to when going into a horror/suspense flick. And I can't say I didn't enjoy watching the group of guys in front of me getting freaked out right after they were scoffing at the action.

Memorable performances were Elba's portrayal of the faithful assistant researcher; he's one of those characters that you can't help but like, heroic but not cocky, loyal but not clingy. AnnaSophia Robb as the spooky little Satan-child really stole the show, however; I think it's her eyes throughout the movie—they're coolly creepy. Another little quirk for me was seeing Swank as a blond, which somehow didn't sit right. Call it superficial, but it just seemed weird. Not that it took anything away from her performance—any flaws in *The Reaping* can't be blamed on the blonde.

I would probably recommend this as a date movie for all you guys looking to play protector to impress the ladies. Alternatively, this makes for a good movie to rent on a night in with a bunch of friends, when you're looking for a good scare light enough to still make fun of. I'd say wait until this is released on DVD, though; as much as I willed this to be a great movie, it left much to be desired in the end. And quite possibly because I watch too many movies, I totally called the ending. @

# Persistence Of Vision film festival pushes and perseveres

by Candice Vallantin  
CULTURE STAFF

Halfway through the evening, Ralph's date is abducted by a van full of masked men. This is not a story about your geeky roommate, but rather, a short film about how "a knight in shining spandex" puts a jumpsuit and a toy gun to use in order to save the woman he loves.

Intrigued? Come watch Ralph's ordeal unfold at the 18th annual

Persistence of Vision (POV) UBC student film festival on April 27 and 28, at the Granville 7 Cinemas. You will also be able to catch 12 other student films ranging in genres from comedies with shades of David Lynchian mystery, to spoofs, dramas, a sci-fi flick and some coming-of-age stories.

The POV festival premieres the works of UBC's 32 film production program students in their third and fourth years and

draws a crowd of approximately 1,300 people annually, including filmmakers and other industry professionals.

They come out to the festival knowing graduates of the program have a long history of success in film production. For example, 1990 graduate Mina Shum's first feature film, *Double Happiness*, about a Chinese-Canadian girl struggling with her family's traditional expectations, premiered

at the Toronto International Film Festival and featured Sandra Oh from *Grey's Anatomy*, who won a Genie for Best Actress for her performance in the film.

Despite a long legacy of success, the festival's days might be numbered. The UBC film production program, which originally closed admissions for one year for a re-structuring of the curriculum, has delayed the re-opening of admissions for an indefinite

amount of time as the Arts Faculty attempts to deal with a cut of \$3.2 million related to UBC's larger budget deficit.

As a result, the future of UBC's film production program and the POV festival, which depends on the work of students in the program, is in limbo but festival producer and fourth-year film program student Cat Mills says that "different groups will be coming out to protest this." @

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## Sounds of something great

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM  
*Sound of Silver*  
Capitol

by David Harakal  
CULTURE WRITER

James Murphy returns with his alter ego, LCD Soundsystem, and drops a mammoth sophomore album, *Sound of Silver*. Picking up where his self-titled album ended two years ago, he keeps the heavy analog synths, deep, pounding bass lines, and awkward monotone lyrics to deliver the perfect mix of dance, punk, and funk for another night out to "lose your head."

Deeply rooted in early eighties techno, this new record skitters and throbs like a lava lamp on a desk next to a vibrating bed. "Get Innocuous" opens the album and is anything but. It starts slow and keeps building until everything around you syncs up with the beat. The whole world falls under Murphy's magic spell right from the start and takes about 60 minutes to wear off. "Time to Get Away" maintains that vibe and is one of the best songs on the album, bound to be heard banging in clubs across the globe along with the third track, "North American Scum," which is set to be the first single. This one has Murphy trying to make us realize that "for those of you who still think we're from England, we're not, no."

The album begins to slow down after this track and while still very good, there was nothing that impressive until the title track "Sound of Silver" brings things up to speed again with a chugging locomotive baseline that could blow your speakers if pumped past nine.

No one seems to know what the title *Sound of Silver* actually means. I like to think it's the silver magnesium that audiotape used to have when it was used on recording machines back in the day. And the sound of this silver sounds pretty damn good. This music will move you, probably more so on the dancefloor than in any other way, but whatever. Luckily LCD is playing at the Commodore next month and this show is sure to sell out. Some record stores I called have already sold all their tickets. So get one fast and then get innocuous as you shake it on the dancefloor like there's no tomorrow—because that's what this music was made for. @