

For the Alumni and Friends of Vancouver Island University and Malaspina University-College



volume 7 | issue 1 | 2014 spring/summer

# Journey

**ONLY A POEM  
WILL DO:  
POET ELIZABETH ROSS  
PURSUES THE WRITER'S LIFE**

**A JOURNEY IN ELECTRONIC  
IMAGINATION**

**EXTREME COLD RESEARCH**

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# Alumni leading the way

Alumni play an important role in the past, present and future success of Vancouver Island University and I'm proud to say that three of VIU's boards are currently led by alumni who are taking time from work, career and family to offer their skills, experience and passion to the University.

Ann Scott (Certificate in Business Management '79) is Chair of VIU's Board of Governors, leading the

(BA in Commerce Transfer '79). As Chair of the Foundation Board, Mike volunteers his time to manage the University's endowment and raise funds to support VIU students. Cathy Dyck (Business Management '82), Rob Grey (Arts '83), Don Hubbard (Heavy Equipment Operator '66), Sean McCue (Associate of Commerce '95) and Nathan Thornton (BA Transfer '90) also currently sit on the Foundation board.

I encourage all alumni to give of your time and talent to make VIU even better. We are always looking for skilled and talented individuals who will bring their field experience back to campus and advise the campus community in a variety of ways. The time commitment is small but the rewards are large. For more information on how you can volunteer please email [alumni@viu.ca](mailto:alumni@viu.ca).

## I ENCOURAGE ALL ALUMNI TO GIVE OF YOUR TIME AND TALENT TO MAKE VIU EVEN BETTER.

15 members who work together to govern the institution. Ann is a Chartered Accountant based in Courtenay, and is joined on the Board of Governors by Vice-Chair Allen Wickenkamp (BSc Transfer '92) and alumnus Bill Yoachim (BA '04).

Leading the Vancouver Island University Foundation is Nanaimo-based lawyer and alumnus Mike Walker

Since 2009, Stephen Little (BA '00) has served as the alumni representative on the Senate, which is responsible for all academic and curriculum-related matters at VIU. Finally, as president of VIU's Alumni Association since September 2012, I have been proud to lead the 10-member alumni board that is working to connect, engage and celebrate all of our alumni.

**Jacqueline Johnson**  
*BSc in Computing Science '04*  
*President, VIU Alumni Association*



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president's  
message

# Be Proud Of Your Impact

As an alumni of VIU, it may sometimes feel your time at the university is a distant memory. I think it's important to realize that even though you've graduated from VIU, you're still an important part of this University.

Last fall we released the first VIU Economic Impact Study, which you can read online at [viu.ca/impact](http://viu.ca/impact). It demonstrates the incredible value of a university education at VIU and also how you – our alumni – contribute to that value.

Let me give you an example. The report takes a look at a group of graduates from just one year – 2012. Assuming half of those graduates found work and maintained their careers in BC, the total value of their education to the province would be \$91.5 million over a 40-year working career. An impressive figure!

The report also talked about a less tangible, but I believe no less important, impact our alumni are having. Thanks

to the skills and expertise you gained while at VIU, you have been able to make significant and positive contributions in your communities, taking leadership roles in your company, starting your own business or volunteering for local organizations. By doing this, you have made a positive and significant impact on the economic, social, cultural and environmental prosperity of the region you chose to live in.

I believe the opportunity to make such a large impact is directly tied to accessing post-secondary education. This is one reason why VIU has such a strong scholarship, awards and bursary program to provide financial aid to enhance student access.

It's also the reason VIU became the first post-secondary institution in BC to launch a Tuition Waiver Program for students who grew up as youth in care. This initiative opens up access to post-secondary education for some

of the most vulnerable people in our communities – many of whom lack the family and social supports that so many of you enjoy. Already 16 VIU students have qualified for the program and more are planning to apply. You can read more about it in our donor profile on page 10 and learn how it's already having an impact on students' lives.

I think all of these examples speak to the impact post-secondary education can have, not only on individual lives, but also on communities. Do you have your own story on how VIU has impacted your life? Or an example that demonstrates the value of a post-secondary education? If so we'd like to hear from you – please email me directly at [viewpoint@viu.ca](mailto:viewpoint@viu.ca).

**Ralph Nilson, PhD**  
*President & Vice-Chancellor*  
*Vancouver Island University*



## VIU – making a positive impact...

... by contributing to the economic, social, educational and environmental prosperity of the region.

Find out more at [viu.ca/impact](http://viu.ca/impact)

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*VIU President and Vice Chancellor Dr. Ralph Nilson admires the VIU Student Ambassadors' entry in the Festival of Trees with (l-r) Joanna Hesketh, Office of Enrolment Management, students Dakota Den Duyf and Kim Brow, and Nicole Martinetti, Office of Enrolment Management.*

## 19TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF TREES RAISES \$85,000 FOR VIU STUDENTS

The VIU Foundation's 19th Annual Festival of Trees marked a glittery start to the holiday season and raised \$85,000 for VIU students. The nine-day fundraiser was a success thanks to the generous support of VIU's Foundation Board members, sponsors, community members and student volunteers.

The funds will support VIU students through newly created bursaries, scholarships and awards, and will help fund state-of-the-art improvements to learning spaces at the University's campuses. More than 3,000 people attended various Festival events, which kicked off Nov. 21 with a reception and unveiling of more than 40

beautifully decorated trees at Nanaimo's Vancouver Island Conference Centre.

The elegant Festival Gala on Nov. 29 provided a valuable opportunity for current VIU students to get real-life experience. Emcees for the evening were current students; Culinary Arts students prepared appetizers and a dessert buffet; Hospitality students served guests; and Criminology students provided valet parking and a safe ride home to guests.

First prize in the Annual Tree-Decorating Contest went to the Young Professionals of Nanaimo, who created a tree dressed as a pure white snowman. ❄️





## NEW FACES ON CAMPUS

VIU's Cowichan Campus welcomed Warren Weir as the new Academic Administrator. Warren specializes in First Nations education, Aboriginal organizations and their management, strategic management, and Indigenous community economic development.



He has worked for various colleges and universities including Cape Breton University, University of Lethbridge, Chemainus Native College, and Royal Roads University. Warren graduated from the University of Victoria with a BA and MPA, and has a Graduate Diploma in International Relations from the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago).



*Warren Weir (from top), Guy Ellis, and William Litchfield.*

Guy Ellis is the new Dean of Trades and Applied Technology at VIU. Returning to his hometown of Nanaimo, Guy brings a diverse combination of post-secondary experience and 20 years of experience working in industry. He was previously Associate Dean, Mechanical Trades at the British Columbia Institute of Technology's School of Energy. Guy holds an MA, Leadership from Royal Roads University and a Diploma of Technology, Operations Management from BCIT.

The University Relations department welcomed William Litchfield as Director, Advancement and Alumni Relations. William joins VIU at the Nanaimo campus from Parkland College in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, where he was Director of Advancement. In that role, he was responsible for leading the institution's first-ever Capital Campaign — a campaign that raised more than \$8 million. William is a graduate of Carleton University with a Bachelor of International Business, and also holds a MSc in Project Management from the University of Liverpool and a graduate certificate in International Development from the University of British Columbia. 🌿



## PEACEFUL OASIS ON NANAIMO CAMPUS

*Tamagawa Gardens*

Tamagawa Gardens are a peaceful oasis on VIU's Nanaimo campus at any time of year. Located in the upper third of the campus next to Building 340, the traditional Japanese gardens offer a tranquil escape and chance to relax by a fishpond filled with colourful koi, or to take a short walk by a variety of flowering trees and shrubs. Azaleas, rhododendrons, Japanese maples, bamboo, and a flowering cherry tree are a few of the plant varieties.

The gardens, which opened in 1979, were designed by Japanese garden specialist Roy Tanaka, and were a gift to VIU from Tamagawa University in Tokyo, Japan. Koi fish in the pond were donated by CUPE Local 1858, Mr. and Mrs. R.H. Sage, and Mr. Joel Southward. 🌿



*Elder-in-Residence Geraldine Manson (far left, front row) joins faculty, students and community members to offer a welcome and blessing at the grand opening of VIU's Child and Youth Centre for Outreach and Community Care in October.*

## FIRST FULL-TIME ELDER

As the first full-time Elder-in-Residence at VIU, Geraldine Manson provides guidance and support to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students at Shq'apthut, the Aboriginal Gathering Place on the Nanaimo campus. She also shares traditional knowledge and practices in the Faculty of Health and Human Services (HHS). A member of Snuneymuxw First Nation, Geraldine has worked in the Elder role with VIU for the past six years, and saw her role expand to full-time when she was appointed as the first Elder-in-Residence for HHS last fall.

"Geraldine has a wealth of knowledge about traditional practices, cultural history and language in her Nation," says HHS Dean Carol Stuart.

Geraldine's work as an Elder for her community, and part-time at VIU for the past eight years, has its roots in her experiences as a child in BC's residential school system, followed by a turbulent young life in seven different foster homes before returning home to her community as a young woman.

Her first cultural teachings came from her beloved mother-in-law, Emily Manson, with whom she lived first at age 15 while still in foster care.

Today, with a full and busy life, Manson can be found welcoming Faculty to a regular gathering, counselling a student at Shq'apthut, or working with new students in a HHS classroom. Manson is one of 10 Elders serving on campuses in Nanaimo, Cowichan and Powell River. ➔

## MARINERS UPDATE

When Mariners fans took to the new bleachers in VIU's gymnasium this year they were benefiting from a 2010 Olympic legacy. The seats were originally in the Richmond Olympic Oval and purchased at a discounted price by the University.

Fans appreciated the new, more comfortable seats, and have been out in force to cheer the Mariners to a successful season which included the men's soccer team taking bronze in the PACWEST provincial championships, hosted at VIU; the women's volleyball team winning the provincial championship and a spot at the nationals; and the badminton team qualifying three players for the nationals.

Other Mariners highlights included the men's basketball team's 2013 National Championship banner being raised at the home opener; Bill McWhinnie named Women's Basketball Coach of the Year, and Shane Hyde named Women's Volleyball Coach of the Year. Fans also celebrated the first time VIU fielded a full women's golf team, with members advancing to the nationals in Quebec. ➔

*Mariners' Women's Volleyball in action.*





## VIU HOSTS CAMPUS-WIDE OPEN HOUSE

A campus-wide Open House at VIU's Nanaimo campus in October opened doors to classrooms, learning spaces and research facilities – and opened eyes to what's on offer for both potential students and community members at their hillside university.

The theme of the Open House was 'Discover Your University, Explore Your Community' with a goal of building stronger connections with the greater Nanaimo area.

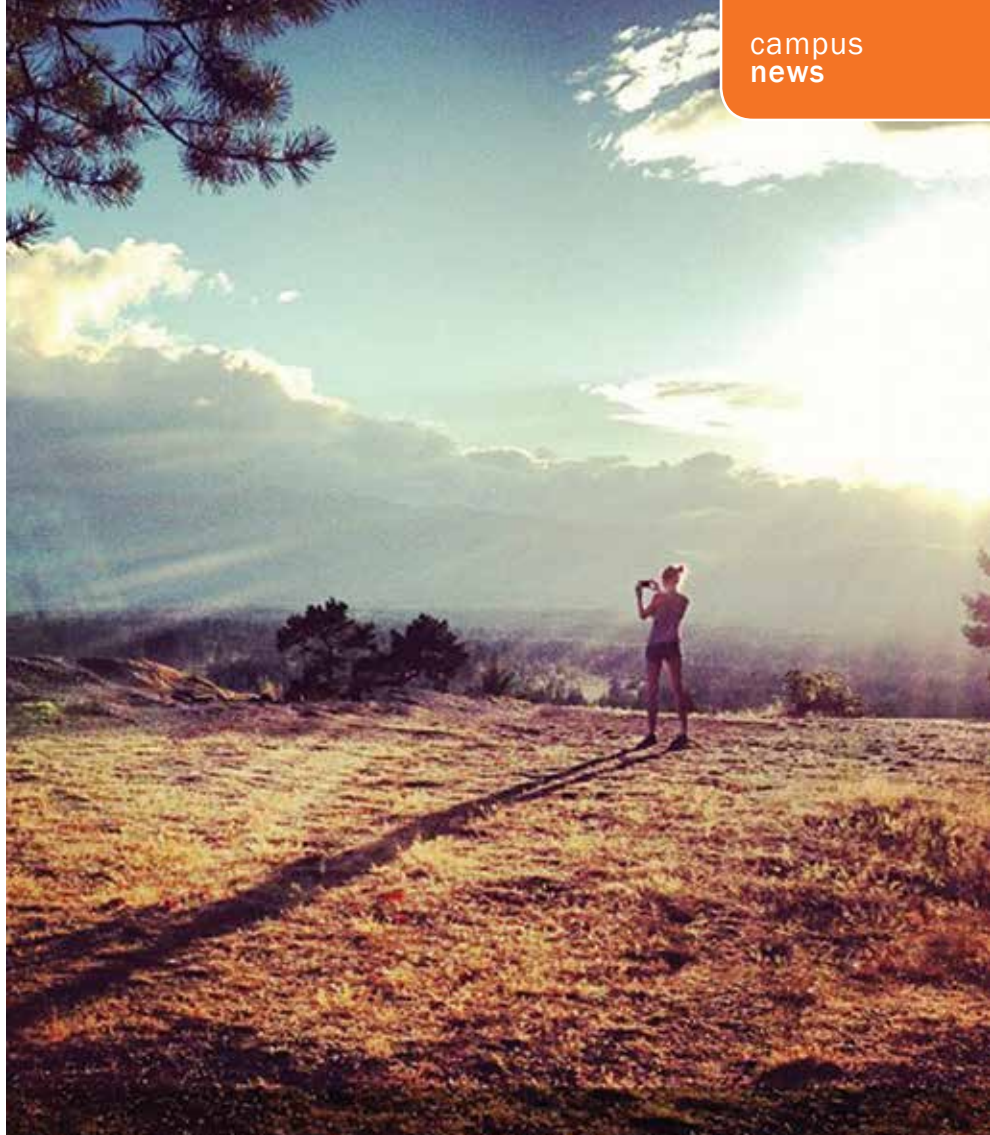
Student Ambassadors and staff from University Relations and the Office of Enrolment Management welcomed community members of all ages to the campus. Guests were offered tours of the campus, and guidance in navigating a full schedule of activities throughout the day.

Highlights of the Open House included displays, free public lectures, a World Café, Extreme Science demonstrations in the Chemistry lab, jazz in the Malaspina Theatre, and a chance to tour the International Centre for Sturgeon Studies and come face to face with a giant fish right out of the Jurassic era.

The same day, visitors were encouraged to attend the Discover Trades event, which highlighted the range of programs offered in VIU's Trades and Applied Technology department.

A steady stream of visitors attended throughout the day, including seniors, families, alumni and prospective students keen to learn more about academic programs and career options for their future.

Alumni interested in volunteering for the 2014 event are welcome! ➔



## TAKE THAT – VIU'S INSTAGRAM CAMPAIGN

VIU's students got creative last fall with their Smartphones, snapping more than 1,600 images as part of a University-wide Instagram contest that ran Aug. 26 to Oct. 6.

Students were invited to submit their best photos of VIU, Vancouver Island and British Columbia under the #ilearnhere tagline to showcase the beauty of where they learn. The winner was Bre Sherwood (BA Major in Graphic Design) and she received an Apple iPad Mini and a \$500 tuition waiver for her Smartphone photo-taking abilities. ➔



*Bre Sherwood took the winning photo above in VIU's Instagram Campaign.*

## A CONVERSATION WITH VIU'S DONORS



*Partners in VIU's Tuition Waiver Program announced in August include (left to right) MLA Parksville-Qualicum Michelle Stilwell; Dr. Ralph Nilson, VIU's President and Vice-Chancellor; Advanced Education Minister Amrik Virk; Minister of Children and Family Development Stephanie Cadieux; Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth, and Bill Joachim, Kw'umut Lelum Child and Family Services, Snuneymuxw Councilor, VIU Alumnus & Governor.*

## ANSWER THE CHALLENGE TO SUPPORT VIU'S YOUTH IN CARE TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM

In November 2013 Nanaimo lawyer David Brooks, attended VIU's annual Festival of Trees Gala fundraising dinner with colleagues from Ramsay Lampman Rhodes. A partner in the company, he planned to extend his firm's financial support to help VIU students.

What Brooks didn't expect – along with his fellow Gala attendees – was to be so moved by a short, emotional video presentation. The presentations told the story of VIU's new Youth in Care Tuition Waiver Program – the first of its kind in BC.

With lights dimmed, Brooks and his fellow Gala guests fell silent to hear from one of the young people in the first co-hort, what it meant to have her tuition waived.

"The Tuition Waiver Program is important because it helps people who have gone through a difficult life, and who don't necessarily have the tools from their family to succeed," the student said in the video. "Being

accepted into this program is probably the biggest thing I've ever been given."

The student said she was taken into care at age 12, and lived in foster and group homes until age 14; she began independent living at 17, the age when most young people are beginning to contemplate a future career or life path.

Today, after a fall spent working at academic upgrading, she is registered in an academic program at VIU and intends to complete her BA.

She's particularly excited about the impact her education and future career prospects will have on her family.

"Going to school makes a big difference for my children – being a role model and trying to further myself and do better really makes them look up to me and feel like we're going to do well as a family together."

Near the end of the evening, Brooks approached VIU's President Ralph Nilson with a \$2,000 donation he is hoping other businesses will match.

"It would be nice to see businesses

that don't usually donate to the University, or who haven't thought of the University, to put some money into this program," he said.

Beyond tuition, students in the program require assistance with housing, food, books, counselling and work study opportunities.

"The program is for people who need to get that second chance," he said. "They may have stepped sideways in their lives for whatever reason, and may even think furthering their education is not going to happen for them."

By matching Ramsay Lampman Rhodes' donation with any level of funding, Brooks said Vancouver Island businesses will be working together to create a better future for former youth in care who want to access post-secondary education at VIU.

For more information on VIU's Youth in Care Tuition Waiver Program, see [viu.ca/waiver](http://viu.ca/waiver). ➔



# FROM SUMO BOTS TO SAVING SNOW LEOPARDS: A JOURNEY IN ELECTRONIC IMAGINATION

By Shari Bishop Bowes



*Dr. James Gibbs (l-r), Greg Carney, Sean Burnett, Sergei Spitsyn and Pavel Aronov meet in Siberia's remote Altai Republic to begin work on an anti-poaching installation.*



It's hard to imagine how two self-professed geeks making electronic sumo 'bots and solar-powered toy boats could find themselves on the forefront of a Russian anti-poaching initiative that is helping save endangered snow leopards.

But it happened and Sean Burnett (Associate of Arts '88), for one, is glad it did.

While his day job finds him in Victoria working as an IT consultant and in economic and policy analysis, it was Burnett's passion for electronics that led to a new business venture called Wildlife Intel.

"Electronics has been my all-consuming hobby for about 10 years," says Burnett, who invited a small group of friends to join in something of a "geek night", where he began showing them how to put together and program a simple microprocessor board.

One of the fellows who showed up was Greg Carney, with whom Burnett developed both a friendship and a healthy competition in

creating electronic devices.

After blogging about how they planned to build and launch a self-guided, self-propelled toy-sized boat, Carney and Burnett received a destiny-altering email. Dr. James Gibbs, a professor at State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry, wanted to learn more about their work. He thought it might fit with a wildlife monitoring project he was working on in a remote area of Russia.

After learning more about Gibbs' project, the two men began work in earnest to develop a remote satellite-monitored, solar-powered anti-poaching system.

Before a year had passed, Burnett and Carney found themselves standing with Dr. Gibbs and their

prototype on a hilltop in the vast wilderness of Siberia's Altai Republic.

"This is an area that is completely restricted to hunting," says Burnett. "It's home to endangered snow leopards, musk deer and Argali sheep. The populations are very low, and poaching is responsible for more than half the population loss."

The task before the three partners was to develop two types of 'smart' sensors to aid park rangers in detecting potential poachers throughout the Altai region. The sensors, carefully concealed against detection, relay signals via satellite to a web-based, secure monitor.

"We developed a vehicle sensor and a cabin temperature sensor, which detects when people light fires in 'poaching cabins', as this is where poachers stay when they're hunting."



Wildlife Intel's remote detectors also help rangers avoid potentially dangerous situations.

"Poachers are aware they're in a protected area, but when rangers go in they are typically surprised when they see poachers," Burnett says. "These are guys carrying guns and there are no witnesses around."

With their Russian trip behind them, and at least one party of poachers caught, Burnett and his partners prepared to install a completely different type of technology in one of the world's best known wildlife refuges: the Galapagos Islands.

Dr. Gibbs had been working with Galapagos National Park for many years, and identified a need for Wildlife Intel's technology. The start-up company saw an opportunity to test their equipment in a different environment.

"It's hard to imagine how harsh the Galapagos environment is," Burnett says. Harsh sun could potentially ruin plastic components in a year or two, he says, while remote monitors installed on trails needed tinkering to ensure they wouldn't be falsely triggered by heavy rains or intense sunlight.

In the Galapagos, Wildlife Intel's work focused on detecting potential threats to various species, including giant tortoises, long a target of poachers. The solution was to install infrared sensors on footpaths, which also monitor the speed and direction of travel for anyone entering the area.

Wildlife Intel's work in Russia and the Galapagos Islands presented two extremes in the application of their technology – both which presented unique challenges, says Burnett. At the same time, these in-the-field experiences also helped refine their product and prepared them to take Wildlife Intel's technology out to a broader market.

Currently they are working at setting up manufacturing and developing distribution agreements for potential partners to help sell the product around the world.

"It's an intense time as this technology could potentially be a game-changer" says Burnett, adding there have been inquiries from South Africa and India, and a connection with the Zoological Society of London.

While he and his partners believe there are a range of conservation issues Wildlife Intel can help address, Burnett takes a moment to reflect on how he took this decidedly different career path.

Completing a variety of Arts and Social Sciences classes at VIU helped Burnett clarify his interests while gaining perspective on future career path.

"Margaret Morrison's economics course is what got me hooked," says Burnett, who eventually went on to

earn a Master's degree in Economics at the University of Victoria.

While developing the technology for Wildlife Intel has involved his aptitude for science and electronics, Burnett has drawn just as much on his background in economics.

"When I'm doing a project like this, I'm glad I went through economics as my undergrad," he says. "A lot of the work centres on statistical analysis."

While Burnett says the path to developing Wildlife Intel has been a "really weird, meandering route," he trusts that he and his partners have developed a product that can make a difference to conservation initiatives around the globe. ➡

**In the Galapagos, Wildlife Intel's work focused on detecting potential threats to various species, including giant tortoises, long a target of poachers.**



*Sean Burnett (l) and Freddy Villalva set up the first ever "crittercam" for remote video monitoring of giant tortoises on the Galapagos Island of Santa Cruz.*



feature

# SCIENCE ON ICE







BY SHARI BISHOP BOWES

THE CONNECTION  
BETWEEN AN  
INFINITESIMAL  
ORGANISM LIVING  
BENEATH THE FROZEN  
SURFACE OF LAKES IN  
ANTARCTICA AND THE  
EXTREME WEATHER  
EVENTS IMPACTING  
THE PLANET MAY  
NOT BE TOP-OF-MIND  
FOR MOST PEOPLE  
FOLLOWING CLIMATE  
CHANGE IN THE NEWS.

But it might be one day, with ongoing research into how microbial life endures the extreme cold of Antarctica led by Dr. Rachael Morgan-Kiss (two years of Biology '92) and students in her lab at Ohio's Miami University.



*Dr. Rachael Morgan-Kiss (left) joins members of her lab on a research expedition to Antarctica.*

The possible connection between studies of microalgae in the world's coldest desert and increasingly extreme global weather patterns gets more interesting all the time for Dr. Morgan-Kiss, whose PhD research set her on the path to field science on the frozen landscape of Antarctica.

scientific research program has focused on the relationship between polar environments and environmental change.

"Antarctic funded research has to have a climate change component," Morgan-Kiss says. "One of our objectives is to predict how climate change is going to affect the organisms we're studying."

organisms known as "eukaryotes".

"Our lab specializes in characterizing these eukaryotes, and understanding what their role in Antarctica's food web," says Morgan-Kiss. "Eukaryotes have been studied for a long time, but in the last 10 years we've realized they're diverse and abundant as well

## THE POSSIBLE CONNECTION BETWEEN STUDIES OF MICROALGAE IN THE WORLD'S COLDEST DESERT AND INCREASINGLY EXTREME GLOBAL WEATHER PATTERNS GETS MORE INTERESTING ALL THE TIME.

As Associate Professor in Microbiology, Morgan-Kiss has taken students on research expeditions to the McMurdo Dry Valleys in Antarctica since 2007. Her first trip there was in 2005 with eminent researcher Dr. John Prisco. For more than 20 years his

The photosynthetic organisms, or microalgae, that Morgan-Kiss and her students study live in isolated Antarctic lakes. The group is working to expand their knowledge of these cold-adapted microalgae as well as single-celled, amoeba-like

as important members of food webs in the world's aquatic environments."

In the McMurdo Dry Valleys – the largest ice free region in the Antarctic – the activity of eukaryotes amidst subtle weather changes has Morgan-Kiss and her team interested in learning more.



"These environments are extremely sensitive to climate change, so it's important to understand them and try to predict how these cold communities of microorganisms are going to change," Morgan-Kiss says.

An increase in summer temperatures that send large pulses of glacier water into the McMurdo Dry Valley has the potential to impact these organisms, and, combined with small changes in temperature, could mean rising water levels as well as a decrease in the ice thickness.

The team also wants to understand how these organisms are impacted when material like Antarctic soil, microbes, and foreign nutrients make their way into the lakes in these "pulse events".

"These organisms are extremely sensitive because they're adapted not only to extreme conditions, but to environments that have been virtually constant for thousands of years," Morgan-Kiss says. Even small changes in nutrient levels could dramatically alter the activity of the microorganisms and permanently change the food web dynamics of these isolated systems.

Findings from their project contribute to the McMurdo Long Term Ecological Research Program, which focuses on monitoring long-term change in Antarctica's McMurdo Dry Valleys. A variety of scientific disciplines are making research contributions to this program.

Studying eukaryotes also brings the Vancouver Island-raised professor back to her initial interest in science: the study of environmental stress on plants, particularly crops. Eukaryotes are the ancestors of all animals, while microalgae are basically single-celled plants, she says.

"At VIU I took a second year Botany course and became interested in plants," says Morgan-Kiss, who completed her BSc at the University of Victoria where she studied plant physiology.

During her doctoral work at the University of Western Ontario she began studying cold-adapted microorganisms

in Antarctica. Offered a position with Dr. Norman Huner, she was inspired by his work studying how winter crop species tolerate the cold.

Dr. Huner, however, had a different course of study in mind for her.

"He told me if he was going to take on a new student he wanted them to work on an organism that always lives in permanent cold. The only photosynthetic organisms that really do that are algae," Morgan-Kiss says. "I was a little put off as I wanted to work on plants, but he talked me into it." She ended up doing her PhD on Antarctic algae.

Morgan-Kiss grew to love studying photosynthetic microorganisms, and now passes her enthusiasm for them on to undergraduate and graduate students as well as high school girls working in her lab. Those who accompany her on six- to eight-week trips to Antarctica are immersed not only in a rare type of field science, but also get the opportunity to travel to a landscape few get to visit.

"There's the science side, and then there's the survival side out in that extreme environment," she says. "The logistics of going there and doing science are unbelievable. We spend 90 per cent of our time doing non-science things, like getting water, feeding ourselves, chasing our tent down the valley!"

A new Antarctic field season is planned for 2014. With funding for her lab's Antarctic project ending in 2016, Morgan-Kiss is working on grants through NASA and the National Science Foundation.

"Even though it was a five-year project, it's really just scratching the surface of these organisms, she says. "It was the first project focusing on the microbial eukaryotes there, and it generated a lot of questions. Now we want to ask more focused questions about these organisms."

In a year when Morgan-Kiss spent

the month of December in her university lab, rather than supervising experiments in freezing Antarctic weather, you might think she would be planning a holiday in the sun with her husband and 13-year-old son.

"I don't actually like the heat very much," says Morgan-Kiss, adding she considers Antarctic trips a holiday. "Summer is my least favourite season -- I like fall and winter." ➔



*Dr. Rachael Morgan-Kiss conducts research with students in the world's coldest desert.*



# ONLY A POEM WILL DO

By JANINA STAJIC

ELIZABETH ROSS (BA IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING '08) LIKENS THE WORK OF A POET TO THAT OF A SCIENTIST: AN OBSERVER OF THE WORLD TASKED WITH HELPING THE REST OF US MAKE SENSE OF THAT WORLD BY UNDERSTANDING IT IN NEW WAYS.



# “I THINK IT’S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND JUST HOW HARD IT IS TO WRITE A POEM.”



It’s her deep understanding and appreciation of that role which has allowed Ross to model ‘poet’ as a viable career path in a world that sometimes would suggest just the opposite.

Her first book of poetry is soon-to-be published by Palimpsest Press; her work was chosen to be part of the Best Canadian Poetry Anthology 2013; she was recently longlisted from over 2,000 applicants for the CBC Poetry Prize; and she’s been hired to share her writing skills and expertise with students at the Ontario College of Art & Design University (OCAD).

She didn’t get to this point just through sheer poetic talent, though.

“I think it’s important to understand just how hard it is to write a poem,” Ross explains. “I feel there’s a perception that writing poetry is this sacred, uncritical act and the poet just sits and strings words and metaphors together and it’s sort of airy fairy. But it’s not like that at all. The technical demands are challenging, combined with listening to where the poem needs to go as well as developing a sense of editorial objectivity.”

When Ross is working on a poem she’ll go through numerous drafts to ensure her language is precise, her words meaningful and that a line break is put in just the right spot. She gives careful thought to choosing the right poetic form

– free verse or prose for example – to express the ideas or feelings she’s trying to communicate. It’s a process that takes time, considerable thought – and work.

“I’ve also come to realize that making the poem work sometimes paradoxically means knowing when the poem isn’t working, and taking a break from it.

“When the poem is working, that still means countless drafts, and then polishing every word, until it’s ready.”

Jay Ruzesky, one of Ross’ former VIU instructors, remembers just how dedicated Ross was to her writing. She was in his Advanced Poetry Workshop in her fourth year.

“In each workshop I have about 20 students,” says Ruzesky. “I know statistically quite a few of them will not continue to pursue writing after they graduate. Right from the moment I met Liz, I knew she was going to be a practicing writer. She was very concerned with the precision of language and spent a lot of time finding just the right word or phrase to describe an image or to tell her story.”

Part of that writer’s life is also learning how to manage the contradiction of being a sensitive observer of the world with having the ‘hide of a rhinoceros’ in order to deal with rejections from publishers.

Ross was rejected for four years straight and has a very clear memory of the day she received an acceptance

letter. It was while she was doing her Master’s in Fine Arts at the University of British Columbia.

“I was schlepping home from work one day and there was a letter from a literary magazine. Usually these letters said, ‘thanks for sending in your work, but, no thanks’. But this one was different – they were going to publish me – and it was actually a poem I’d written at VIU. I remember thinking ‘Oh my god, this is happening.’ It was very exciting.”

Despite those four years of rejection, once she had decided to follow the path of becoming a writer, she never doubted for a moment she was doing the right thing.

That path had an unusual starting point – in a tire shop. As a teenager Ross was more interested in exploring her wild side than a career. She spent a few years exploring that side and for a time in her early twenties took a gig selling tires and brake jobs and doing a bit of bookkeeping.

Ross’ desk was positioned in such a way that her boss couldn’t see what she was working on and she took advantage of the opportunity to write.

“I’d been writing stories and poems since I was about 13. I couldn’t stop. At work I would put all the accounts payable in and then I’d start writing,” laughs Ross, “There I’d be, crouched behind the desk scribbling out bits of poetry in between tire deliveries.”



# I CARRY A NOTEBOOK WITH ME AT ALL TIMES, JUST IN CASE I SEE OR THINK OF SOMETHING THAT I HAVE A HUNCH HAS TO BE EXPLORED MORE DEEPLY.



At some point, she decided she couldn't do it anymore.

"I suddenly realized that if I didn't pursue writing, I wouldn't be okay. I just knew definitively that I had to do it, even though I was petrified of making that shift which included not only quitting my job but also going in to debt by taking on student loans."

The shift transformed Liz. Today, she has a room of her own in a rickety old apartment she shares with her husband and daughter in central Toronto. Her window looks out to an ancient old willow tree and Mount Pleasant cemetery beyond. There, surrounded by shelves of books, and an old futon where she likes to curl up and read, she pursues her passion for poetry and lives a writer's life.

Ross usually finds herself writing about what she knows and observes in the world.

"I suppose I write from a lyric background. I carry a notebook with me at all times, just in case I see or think of something that I have a hunch has to be explored more deeply. For example, as a new mom many of my poems are about motherhood. But it could also be something that I see on my commute that strikes me as so bizarre that it demands to be explored in a poem."

There are subjects and times that simply demand verse, says Ruzesky. "For example, when something really important happens – falling in love, or a tragic event. You can't write a story or an essay about events like this – only a poem will do."

Kate Braid, another of Ross' former instructors agrees. She believes Ross' talent lies in her ability to create images that allow people to understand

life occurrences in a new way.

"It's important for the poet to be able to communicate a fresh way of seeing to the reader," says Braid. "Take the idea of 'softness' which you often hear described as 'soft as a baby's bum'. A good poet wouldn't use that cliché. Rather she would use her tools—precision of language, line breaks, rhythm – to help readers experience softness in a whole new way."

Debra Jacklin is a long-time friend of Ross' and also a fan of her work. She believes part of Ross' success lies in the fact that her ability to deeply observe the world is paired with a goofiness and down-to-earth approach to life.

"She's the kind of person you can just hang out with, share a beer with," says Jacklin. "But she's also funny and intelligent, and so quick – always coming up with witty observations about the world around her."

Jacklin feels that those qualities that make it a pleasure to hang out with Ross also contribute to the beauty of her poetry, as she's able to connect deeply with everyday experiences.

"Liz's work is poignant and beautiful and filled with accurate and eye-opening reflections on our world. When you've read something she's written you come away feeling like you're a better person."

Ross' collection of poetry will be available through Palimpsest Press in spring 2015 and she's already working on a second poetry manuscript she hopes to complete next year. She's also planning on pursuing a PhD one day, starting an online literary magazine and writing a novel. As Ruzesky predicted in class, Ross is fully committed to her writer's life. 🌿



## GRADUATES ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE.

alumni  
in view



*Ernie Gladstone takes part in the historic totem pole raising on Gwaii Haanas' Windy Bay in August 2013.  
Photo: Parks Canada, Jean Shafro*

### CARING FOR A BELOVED LAND

When Ernie Gladstone (Business Management Diploma '92) left his home in Haida Gwaii in September 1988 to begin university studies at Vancouver Island University (then-Malaspina College), he had no idea of the important role he would later play in his birthplace. He just knew he wanted to return to Haida Gwaii, an area beloved by his people and fellow Canadians who have discovered its remote and spectacular natural beauty.

Today, as the first Haida superintendent of Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, and Haida Heritage Site and member of Parks Canada's executive management team, Gladstone oversees a protected area comprising 5,000 square kilometres of forests, coastline, marine reserve, birds, animals and sacred Haida landmarks designated with World Heritage Site status. Located 120

kilometres off the north coast of BC, Gwaii Haanas is located in Haida Gwaii's southernmost region and is an archipelago of 138 islands.

"I became connected to Gwaii Haanas at a young age and I certainly wanted to continue that connection," says Gladstone, who returned home every summer to work, with a goal of starting his own tour company one day.

After graduating in 1992, he headed home to Haida Gwaii permanently and took a job with Parks Canada to further develop his skills.

A year later, the Government of Canada and the Haida Nation signed the unprecedented Gwaii Haanas Agreement. The agreement clearly states that the two Governments disagree on who owns the land in Gwaii Haanas and it sets the foundation for a cooperative, respectful relationship in land stewardship shared by both parties. Gladstone decided to stay on with Parks Canada, and was appointed superintendent in 2001.

It's a job he clearly loves, but as a member of the Haida Nation and the most senior representative of the Government of Canada on Haida Gwaii, Gladstone admits it

hasn't been without its challenges.

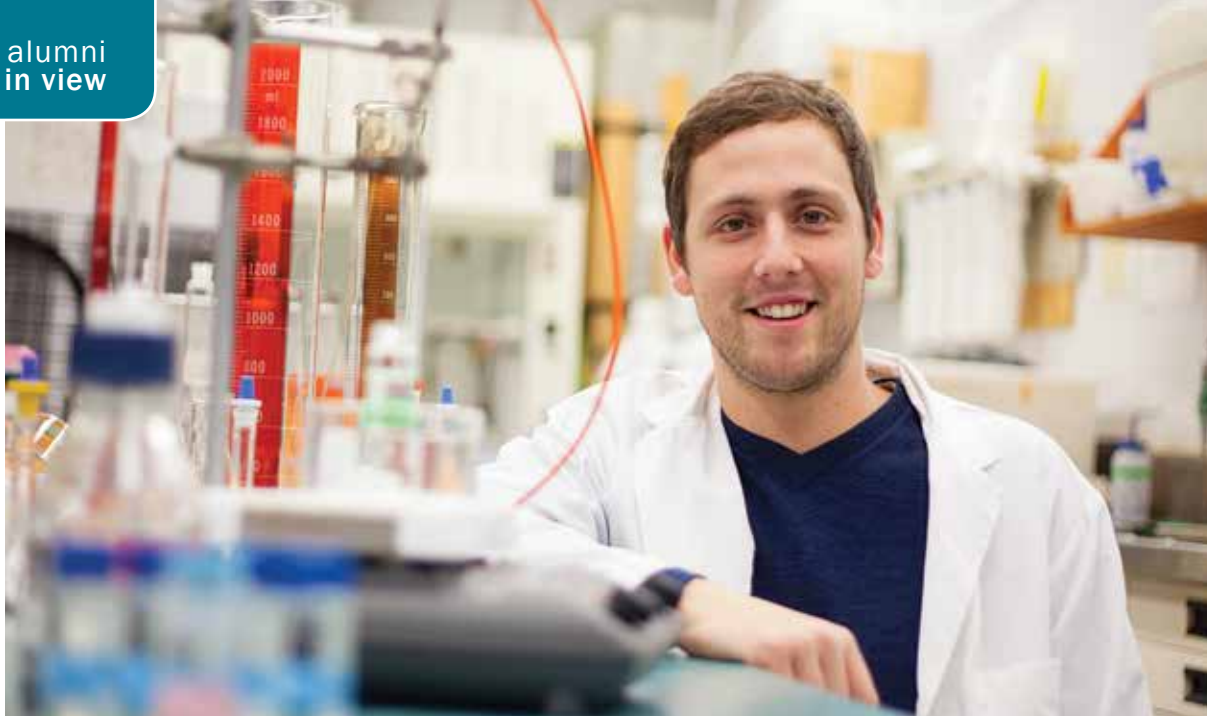
"What I decided right up front was that I'm going to do whatever I feel in my heart is best for the long term interest of Gwaii Haanas," he says. "In that way, regardless of who challenges me, whether it's my community or the organization I work for, in my heart I know I have done what I believe was the best decision."

While he has fond memories of the community celebration recognizing his appointment, Gladstone's most memorable day on the job took place in August 2013 on the 20th anniversary of the Gwaii Haanas Agreement. Together with his community and colleagues, Gladstone stood on Gwaii Haanas' Windy Bay to watch the first Haida totem pole raised in more than a century. The giant pole depicts Haida history and culture, and also tells the story of the conflict over the land, followed by new cooperative relationships that will see this landscape protected forever.

"It was probably the proudest moment in my career," he says.

As the father of young children and a man who is clearly grateful for the opportunity to make a career of caring for a landscape he loves, Gladstone hopes young people today take the time to learn how Gwaii Haanas – "Islands of Beauty" in the Haida language – came to rise beyond conflict to its protected status today.

"It took a lot of really strong and forceful leaders to get us to where we're at right now," he says. "We'd never be where we are today without the people of the Haida Nation and willing people in the Government of Canada, to arrive at such an interesting agreement, a unique way to manage when there is complete disagreement on who owns the land." ➔



## PASSION FOR RESEARCH LEADS TO CAREER IN ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMISTRY

When alumnus Kyle Duncan arrived at VIU straight out of high school, his goal was to become a firefighter but a chemistry class with Dr. Chris Gill and Dr. Erik Krogh changed his career path.

At VIU, Duncan discovered a love of science. His professors, Drs. Gill and Krogh, hired him as a junior research assistant in their multi-million dollar Applied Environmental Research Lab

having to take samples and process them in the lab which can take days or even weeks,” explains Duncan.

The research caught his imagination so much that Duncan is today pursuing a PhD at the University of Victoria, and continuing to focus on the research he started at VIU.

“I’m researching ways of developing a high precision instrument for real-time and continuous monitoring of chemical contaminants, including herbicides, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals in environmental or biological samples.”

Duncan is using a technique referred to as membrane introduction mass spectrometry (MIMS) which allows him to measure contaminants immediately and on-site rather than in the lab.

“Lots of time and money can be saved by learning what is in contaminated

to protect the quality of life and the environment for Canadians.

Duncan says the environmental significance of his research, along with the continued problem solving and constant learning, keeps him engaged every day.

“I feel extremely fortunate that I can continue my research in the AERL lab with Chris as one of my PhD supervisors and Erik as a member of my dissertation committee,” says Duncan. “They are both very welcoming, and continue to ensure there are meaningful opportunities for every level of student to contribute in the lab. I am forever grateful for their open door policy and ability to mobilize knowledge.”

With the support of his mentors, Duncan is expanding his skill-set even more by teaching first-year

## GETTING MEANINGFUL RESULTS FASTER ALLOWS IMPORTANT DECISIONS TO BE MADE SOONER, WHICH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO PROTECT THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT FOR CANADIANS.

(AERL) on the Nanaimo campus.

For three consecutive summers, he worked with a team of researchers focused on developing strategies to measure contaminants in the environment in real-time.

“We wanted to develop a way to measure environmental toxins immediately – in real time, rather than

samples quickly, either in the field or in the lab. Conventional sample analysis can be very expensive, with a long turn around time. With MIMS we can rapidly screen samples and immediately get a great deal of useful information.”

Getting meaningful results faster allows important decisions to be made sooner, which has the potential

and third-year chemistry labs.

As for the future? He graduates in 2015, and the ideal job would combine research and teaching. One thing is certain – he’s doing what he loves and is very thankful he signed up for that chemistry course. 🦋



## CULINARY PASSION ON THE MOVE

It doesn't matter if she's working for one of the world's most famous chefs in London, creating menus for celebrities in Beverly Hills, or helping launch an eclectic new LA eatery – chef Lauren Cartmel (Culinary Arts '98) always finds something comforting and familiar in the passage of any day in a restaurant kitchen.

"I just could not imagine myself doing anything else," says Cartmel, whose career since graduating has taken her from hot restaurants in Vancouver, to Gordon Ramsay's flagship restaurant in London, to LA's posh Beverly Hills Hotel.

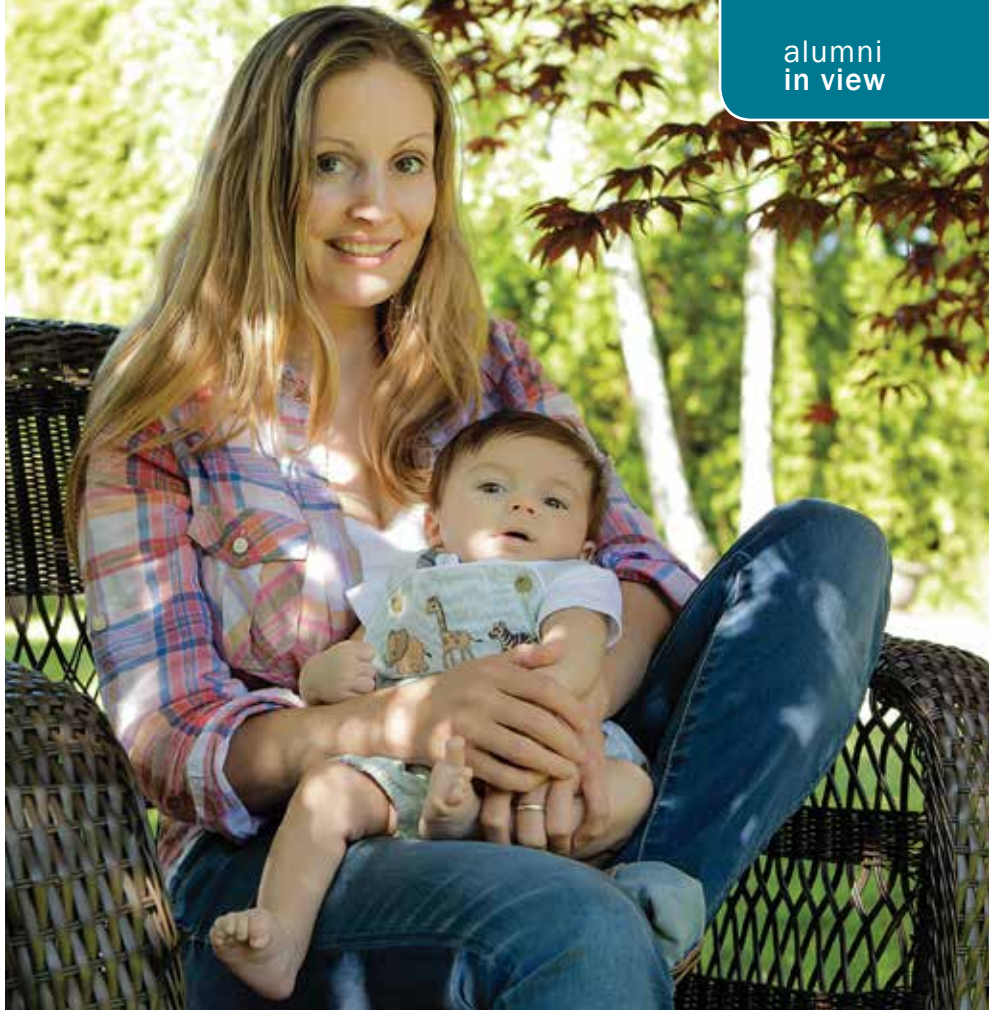
Growing up in Ladysmith, Cartmel wasn't thinking about a future career as a chef until she learned about and applied to then-Malaspina's Culinary program. Once in the program, a passion for food and cooking ignited.

With permission to graduate early, Cartmel started her first job at Vancouver's popular Century Grill. After seven years working her way up in a variety of the city's restaurants, she was spending a rare free moment one day thumbing through a British food magazine.

"I read an article on Gordon Ramsay, and thought this guy is so cool! This was before he was really famous," Cartmel says. She sold everything she owned and hopped a plane to London.

Applying at Ramsay's Hospital Road Restaurant, she was surprised her resume had to be faxed to a head office – evidence to her she would be gaining some good experience with a company on the rise.

Staying with family and working many 18-hour days, Cartmel's experience in London was limited almost entirely



*Lauren Cartmel and her son Michael. Photo by Ashley Marston*

## GAINING DIVERSE EXPERIENCE IN HER TWO YEARS AT RAMSAY'S RESTAURANTS, CARTMEL ROSE TO CHEF DE PARTIE BEFORE PACKING HER BAGS AGAIN.

to work. Even her days off were about food – she found herself returning again and again to the Chelsea Farmers Market to sample and inspect the organic and locally grown products.

Gaining diverse experience in her two years at Ramsay's restaurants, Cartmel rose to chef de partie before packing her bags again.

This time she headed to Los Angeles, where she would further develop her passion for farm-to-table cooking in California's long, warm growing season.

Not knowing much about LA and its culinary scene, she fired out resumes until one landed on the desk of her former boss from the Century Grill. As luck would have it, that association led to a job at the Beverly Hills Hotel where she progressed to sous chef of its iconic dining room, the Polo Lounge. Cartmel

soon became accustomed to celebrity diners enjoying her food. Preparing lunch for Oprah and her entourage, and forming a friendship with Gore Vidal are just a few encounters she's willing to dish.

Cartmel is taking a slightly slower pace today, as she juggles family life with eight-month-old son Michael, shifts at chef David Meyers' LA hot spot, Comme Ca, and running her new catering company, Ma Maison.

While there's a chance she might make her way back to Vancouver Island for a slower pace and closer proximity to family, for now Cartmel is happy to continue her career under California's sunny skies.

"I just love the long growing season and all the farms," she says. "There's tomatoes until late October and even peaches!" 🍷

## ALUMNI UPDATES ON CAREER, FAMILY, EDUCATION AND MORE

### 1970s

**Dan Lines (HD Mechanics Inter-Provincial Red Seal '75)** is a fifth generation Vancouver Islander and did a four-year Heavy Duty Mechanics apprenticeship in 1971/72 at the Vocational Training School. He received his Interprovincial Red Seal Certification in 1975 and worked in the logging, construction and transportation industries along the West Coast before getting hired at VIU in 1987 (then Malaspina College) as an instructor in the Heavy Duty Mechanics program. In 2000 he received a Master's Degree in Education from Simon Fraser University. He took on a series of roles at VIU before becoming Associate Dean of Trades and Applied Technology in 2004. In 2009 Lines retired and now consults with VIU and College of the Rockies as well as working as a training consultant in Mongolia. He's currently a Director for the VIU Alumni Association.

### 1990s

After graduation **Samantha Cochrane (Culinary Arts Certificate '96)** moved to Halfway River First Nation, just north of Fort Saint John, BC, where she worked for several years in the oil and gas industry in a variety of jobs including second cook, baker, and camp attendant. For the past few years she's lived with her common-law partner and their two shihtzu dogs on the Halfway River First Nation, where she also operates a daycare.

**Andrew Oye (Associate of Music – Jazz '95)** has spent the last decade writing music that has been used in some of Hollywood's biggest movies, including *Transformers 3*, in major television shows such as *The Office*, *Dexter*, and *Lost* as well as in current ads for Lexus, Coca Cola and Disney. With a home base now in Victoria, Andrew lives with his daughter and partner running his company [www.directcomposer.com](http://www.directcomposer.com).



**Nolan Vollmer (Music '96) and Patricia (Marshall) Vollmer (BA LBST '96)** were married on June 15, 2013. Although they never met on campus they attended VIU at the same time (Tricia thinks she may have spotted him a few times in one of the practice rooms across from the art building.) They officially met in 2002 when Nolan was home on leave from a tour in Afghanistan, and started dating upon his return to Nanaimo in 2003. They have two handsome boys, Reilley age five and a half, and Erik age three. Nolan continues to tinker at music while working full time with the local Communication's Squadron branch of the 39 Army Brigade in Nanaimo. Tricia mostly stays home raising their two boys while doing web and print publication design for Snip & Stitch Sewing Centre in Nanaimo.

### KEEP IN TOUCH

Let us know about your new job, promotion, wedding, family addition, travels or further academic achievements at [alumni@viu.ca](mailto:alumni@viu.ca).





## 2000s

**Bobbie (Roberta) Buckle (Bachelor of Business Administration '07)** has recently accepted a new position as Controller at Milner Group Ventures and J Milner Trucking. Milner Group Ventures does civil construction work as well as disposal.

**Jesse Crockett (Bachelor of Tourism Management '06)** is the Accommodations/Property Manager at Silver Star Ski Resort. Running three hotels and just under 200 suites and chalets keeps him busy during the day. He's been married to Harmony for four years and they have two boys under age three and are expecting another child. [www.skisilverstar.com](http://www.skisilverstar.com)



*Solomon Crockett enjoys the slopes with his dad Jesse.*

**Richard Crowley (Bachelor of Tourism Management '07 with distinction)** runs a one-of-a-kind business called Earl's Great Outdoors: Adventure Hikes for Dogs. Named after his dog Earl, the business is focused on taking dogs on three-hour adventures offering clients pick-up and delivery of their animal friends from Nanoose Bay to Qualicum Beach.

**David Sumelth Dick (Bachelor of Arts, Major in FNAT '03)** completed a Certificate in Indigenous Leadership and Governance at the University of Victoria followed by a Diploma in Cultural Resource Management. Today, Dick works for Parks Canada as Cultural Program Officer with the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve which takes him to 18 different islands throughout the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. Driving either a zodiac or landing craft, his work involves monitoring archaeology sites, visiting 100-year-old homesteads and identifying sensitive cultural landscapes.

*Richard Crowley gets ready for another adventure hike with Earl, the CEO of Earl's Great Outdoors.*



*David Sumelth Dick.*





**Jeff Eastman (Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Aquaculture '06)** was seconded in 2013 to work on Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Growing Forward 2 Program Development Team. This work involved finalizing negotiations with the Government of Canada on a new five-year agriculture policy framework focused on transforming Manitoba's agriculture and food industry through innovation. The result of the work is a suite of programs that are now available for the agriculture industry in Manitoba.

**Andrew Kolasinski (Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing & Visual Art, with Distinction '04)** has recently published *Guide to Cusco, Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley of Peru* as an e-book, which includes the history and culture of the Incas and other ancient Peruvian peoples. Andrew writes travel and news articles for many publications and websites as well as being the founder and publisher of *Island Angler: Your Guide to Fishing on Vancouver Island*. Details on Andrew's Vancouver Island writing are available on his website at [www.islandangler.net](http://www.islandangler.net).

*Andrew tries on a carnival mask in Olanaytambo, Peru.*



*Kennedy Family Portrait  
by Booshie Photographic*

After many years living in Vancouver, where **Jennifer (Lake) Kennedy (Bachelor of Arts '02)** worked as an accountant and an elementary school teacher, she and her husband Damon decided to leave Vancouver behind in 2008 for the "Island Life". In 2012, Jennifer received her CMA designation, and she secured an Accountant position at Catalyst Paper. In July 2013, they had their second baby boy; their elder son is three. Kennedy is on VIU's Alumni Association Board.

**Jan (Janet) Kretz (Bachelor of Tourism Management with Distinction '04)** is a certified kayaking guide and Paddle Canada instructor and runs Adventure Sea Kayaking in Parksville – which has been rated as number one in "Things to Do in Parksville." An avid traveller, Jan recently spent six weeks in Mexico and also visited France and Switzerland.





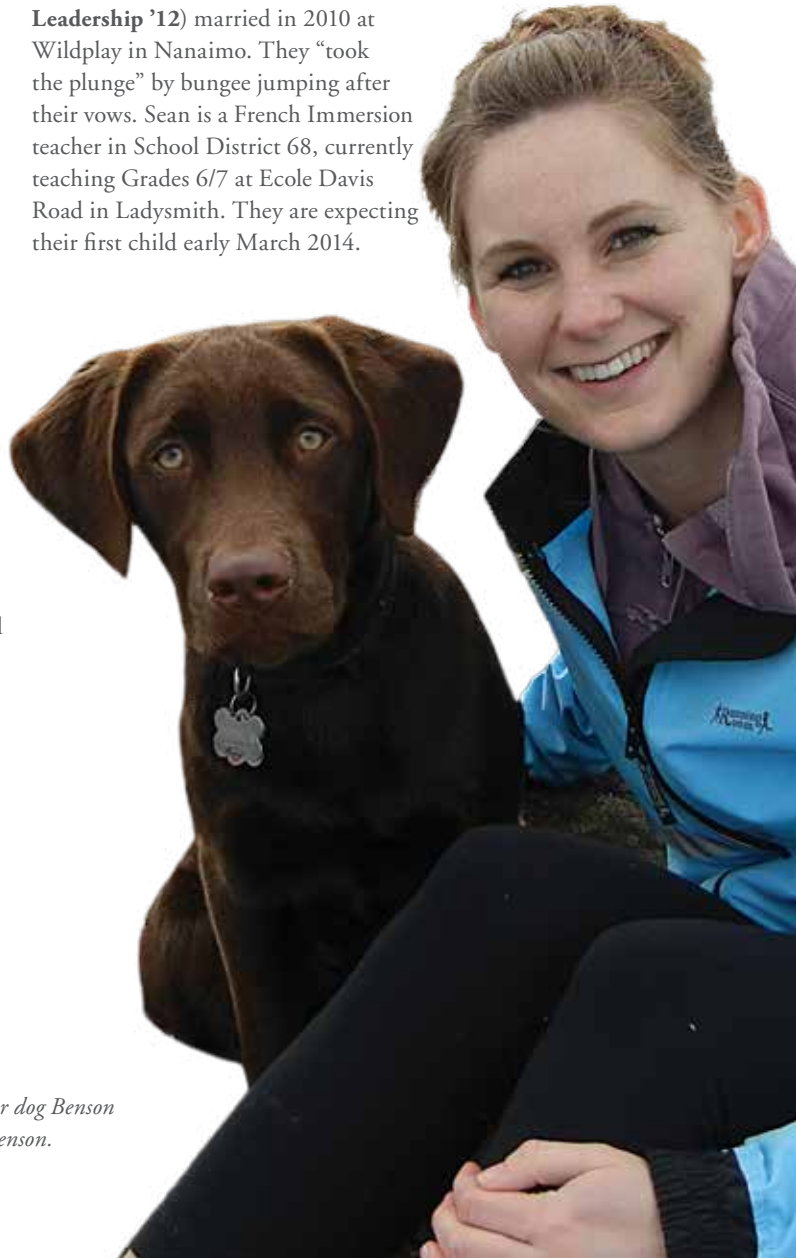
*Diana Pearson.*

**Aimee Newton (Event Management Certificate '07, Bachelor of Tourism Management '06)** lives in Calgary and is currently the Program Manager in Continuing Education Business and Professional programs at the University of Calgary. Newton is working on her GMAT in order to apply for the MBA program at the university in the fall of 2014. She enjoys skiing, golfing, playing volleyball and softball and is actively involved in a number of charities including: BURST (a blown glass fashion show), Parkinson Alberta's Step 'n Stride 5K fundraiser, Special Olympics softball coach, and the Batting Against Breast Cancer fundraiser.

After completing a holistic nutrition course at the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition in Calgary **Diana Pearson (Jazz Studies Diploma '09)** decided to continue her music studies. She is now in a Bachelor of Music program at MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta. As part of her studies she will be visiting Ecuador in spring 2014 to participate in a cross-cultural wellness project working with youth and children.

**Amelia Edgett Szasz (Bachelor of Tourism Management '05)** married **Dylan Szasz (Bachelor of Tourism Management '04)** in 2006 and they have two boys, Nash, age four, and Colten, age two. Amelia is a full-time stay-at-home mom and Dylan works for Acklands Grainger as the District Sales Manager in Kamloops, BC.

After travelling the world, **Kara Walsh (Bachelor of Tourism Management '07, Event Management Certificate '07 and Recreation and Sport Management Diploma '05)** worked for Tourism Vancouver Island for four years before accepting a job with Tourism Nanaimo as Visitor Services Specialist. Kara and her husband **Sean Walsh (BA '05; BEd '06; Master of Education in Education Leadership '12)** married in 2010 at Wildplay in Nanaimo. They "took the plunge" by bungee jumping after their vows. Sean is a French Immersion teacher in School District 68, currently teaching Grades 6/7 at Ecole Davis Road in Ladysmith. They are expecting their first child early March 2014.



*Kara Walsh and her dog Benson on a hike up Mt. Benson.*



*Andrea Bozman is studying jellyfish at Norway's University of Nordland. Photo by Svien-Arnt Ericksen*

**Andrea Bozman (Fisheries and Aquaculture Technology '04)** can be found in Norway at the University of Nordland studying meso-pelagic jellyfish. She is currently working on her PhD in Aquatic Biosciences and shares her passion and research information on her blog "Smack of Science." As a native Vancouver Islander, Andrea has always been drawn to the ocean, so it's no surprise that her field of study involves studying sea life. Although she never mastered the art of swimming, she enjoys contributing to her field of study: meso-pelagic jellyfish that live at 350 metres below sea-level.

Along with working for the federal government full-time, **Kaleena Young (Bachelor of Arts '09, Diploma in Criminology '06)** is enjoying her fourth season playing roller derby for the Harbour City Rollers and recently succeeded in making the newly formed Vancouver Island All-Star team. To help supplement the costs of travel and give her the nutritional boost she needs for the training and exertion involved in this full contact sport, Kaleena works as an Independent Associate for Isagenix International – World Leaders in Nutritional Cleansing. [kaleenayoung.isagenix.com](http://kaleenayoung.isagenix.com)

## 2010s

**Laurie (Kim) Jensen (Bachelor of Interior Design '10)** married Andrew T. Jensen on June 9, 2012 in Laie, Hawaii. In early 2013 she opened a portrait and wedding photography business in Prince George, BC ([www.lauriekjensen.com](http://www.lauriekjensen.com)). She and her husband now live in Edmonton, AB, where she continues to run her photography business.

**Patricia (Trish) Smith (Management Skills for Supervisors Certificate '13)** was honoured Sept. 20, 2013 with VIU's first Co-op Employer of the Year award. She was nominated by Michaela Schluessel, a second-year student in VIU's Tourism Studies who gained valuable work experience working with Trish on coordinating Parksville's Beach Festival last summer. With 30 years' experience in event management, Trish enjoys working with students and sharing her skills. Born and raised in Nanaimo, Trish has held a variety of roles in event management and hospitality at locations ranging from then-CP Hotels properties, Whistler Conference Centre, Victoria Conference Centre, and Royal Roads University. She completed the Certified Meeting Professional Certificate program in 2001 and returned home to Nanaimo eight years ago. Trish works part-time at VIU as program assistant in Professional Development and Training.

In 2012, **Candace Happach (Professional Esthetics Certificate '12; Bachelor in Business Administration '13)** opened her own day spa, True Skin Esthetics, in Qualicum Beach, which has proven to be very successful. Happach also has a three-year-old son.



*Katie Schneider (right) laughs with two women on her Study Abroad program experience in Ghana in April 2013. Photo by Aggie Weighill*

In October 2013 **Katie Schneider (Bachelor in Tourism Management '13)** began a one-year internship with Campi ya Kanzi and the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust in Kenya. The intern role will provide Katie with the chance to work within a program devoted to the promotion of sustainable tourism and the protection of wildlife and habitat. The Trust and Campi ya Kanzi employ 90 per cent local people and a total of 200 people across the region. Katie hopes to continue her education in VIU's Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management program in a few years.



## Festival of Trees

# 2013 Festival of Trees Online Auction in support of the VIU Alumni Association

A huge thank you to all of the alumni and businesses that contributed prizes to the 2013 Festival of Trees Online Auction. This year, the auction raised more than \$5,500 to support VIU students and Alumni Association initiatives.

### 2013 PRIZE DONORS:

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White Spot Restaurants





home  
stretch

by Liesel Knaack

## SHAKE IT UP – TRANSFORMING THE CLASSROOM

VIU is part of a paradigm shift that is transforming the learning experience for students around the world from Kindergarten to university. It's called blended learning where interactive online learning is combined – in a purposeful way – with traditional face-to-face classroom time. Liesel Knaack, Director of VIU's Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, believes blended learning has the potential to transform the post-secondary education experience for both faculty and students.

Imagine a class of philosophy students engaged in a rich discussion. Just as the conversation gets really interesting the class ends. Thanks to blended learning, the discussion doesn't. The instructor reminds students to go online to their pre-set discussion forum and live chat room. Students log in during the days before the next class and take the discussion to a deeper level. Those who were uncomfortable speaking up in class join in the debate. During the week the philosophy students also work on a presentation for an upcoming class by editing notes in a shared document. They access it online as and when it suits them, avoiding having to go to campus to meet as a group. During the discussion and project activity, students are also honing their digital media skills – essential for every graduate today no matter what program they are in.

This is an example of blended learning



*Interactive technologies enrich the learning experience.*

which uses interactive technologies such as blogs, social media, video streaming, web-based conferencing, discussion forums, and shared documents, integrating them within the face-to-face classroom experience. For the past 12 years I've been supporting faculty in designing and developing university-level courses that follow this model.

The key to blended learning is that both the classroom learning and the online learning are integrated with the goal of optimizing the student's engagement in the learning process.

Both faculty and students are embracing this new approach. For many faculty it's opened up new resources and allowed them to experiment with different approaches to teaching. Faculty also feel blended learning helps support the variety of student learning preferences and styles. Students enjoy the flexibility of blended learning, allowing them to learn some of the material at their own pace and in their own place. They've also found it creates a more personalized

educational experience involving greater choices in how they learn.

As with anything new, there are some challenges. For example, blended learning requires that courses be redesigned to take advantage of these online technologies. I prefer to see this less as a challenge and more of an exciting process towards transforming the teaching and learning paradigm.

At VIU we have a robust learning management system (Desire2Learn); a video streaming service (VIUTube), a blogging platform for faculty and students (WordPress) and a desktop conferencing system (Online Rooms) which gives faculty many tools to use in creating a blended classroom. As well, the Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning hosts workshops, resources and 1:1 consultations with faculty who wish to blend their classes. ➔

*Interested in finding out more? Visit VIU's Centre for Teaching and Learning at: [www.viu.ca/ciel](http://www.viu.ca/ciel).*



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