



IDOL, EH?

Canadian Idol
finalist
Jenny Gear

Reality television devotees may be
selecting false idols, says professor

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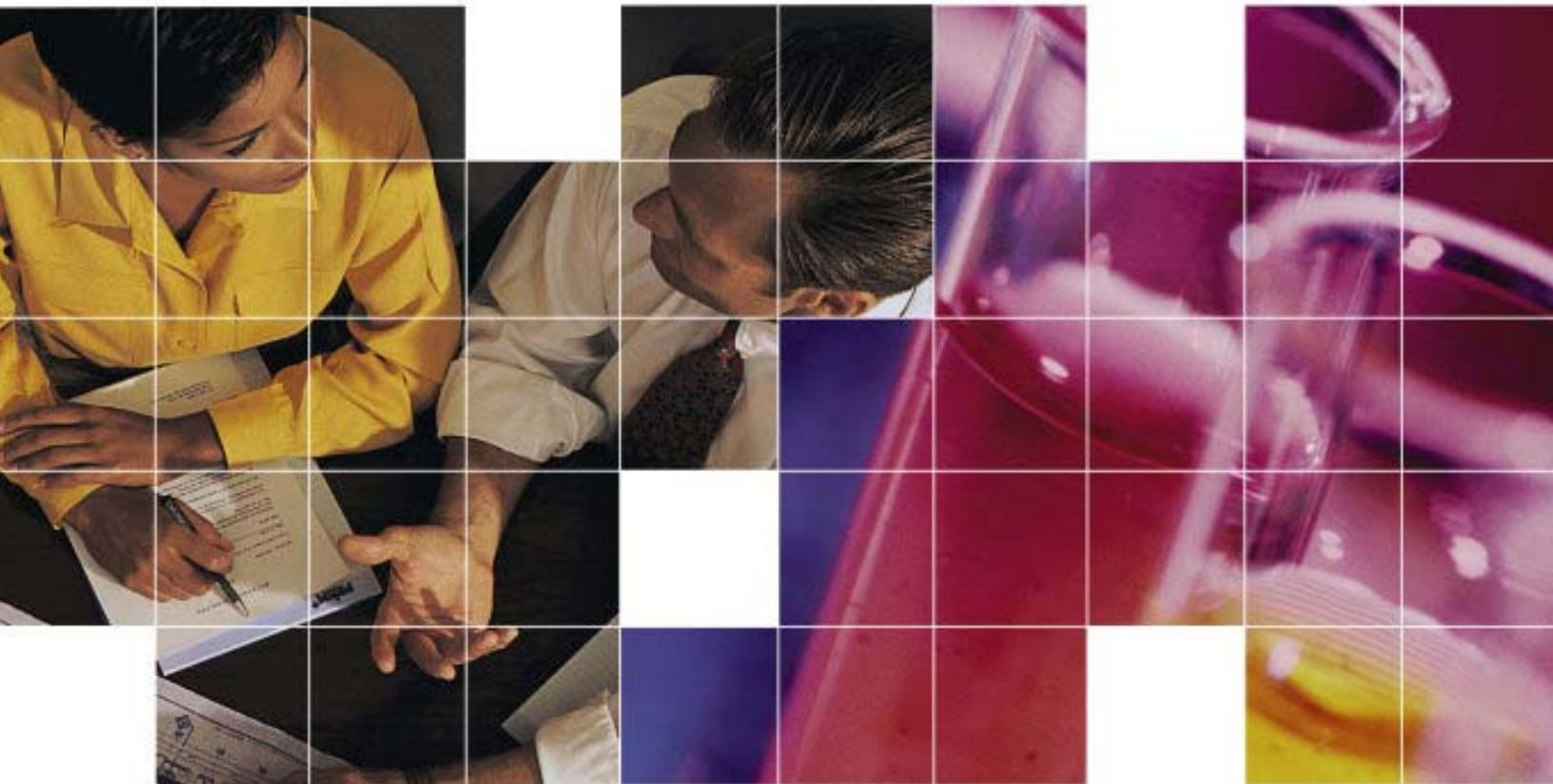
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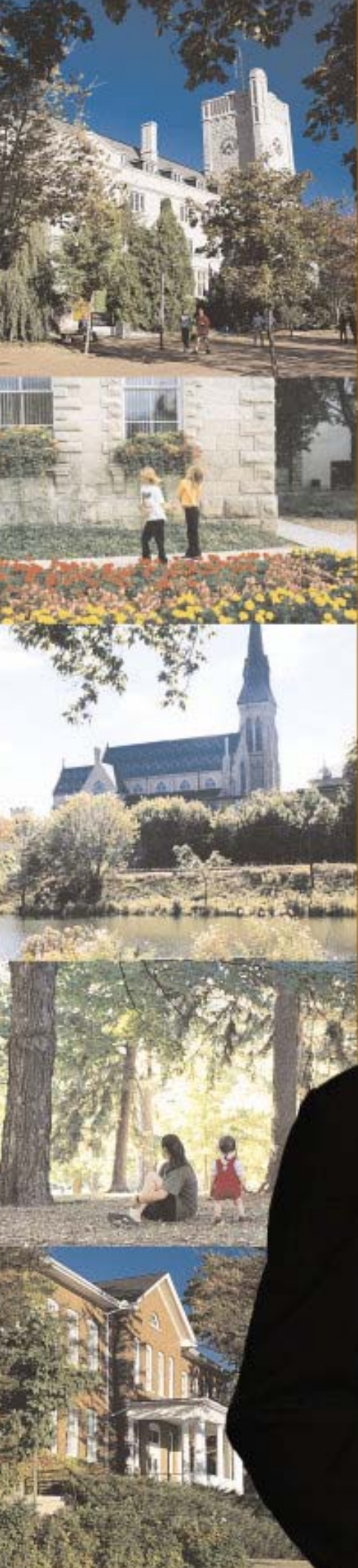
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Executive Editors

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Sandra Sabatini

Editor

Owen Roberts

Associate Editor and Project Co-ordinator

Murray Tong

Co-ordination Assistance

Clare Illingworth

Copy Editor

Barbara Chance

Design

Jay Dart

Advertising and Marketing

Marianne Clark

Financial Management

Dave Reinhart

Address correspondence to:

Owen Roberts, Director of Research Communications

Office of Research, University of Guelph,

Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1G 2W1

Phone: 519-824-4120, Ext. 58278

E-mail: owen@uoguelph.ca

To advertise in Research, contact:

Marianne Clark, Research Communications and Marketing Officer

Office of Research, University of Guelph,

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OWEN ROBERTS

And now, the cultural side of Texas Hold 'Em

We bring focus to *Research* by giving each issue a theme, reflecting one of the University of Guelph's strategic initiatives. At the core of each issue — and each story, in fact — is an overarching question: How does this research make a difference to the lives of Canadians? It's a question former vice-president of research Larry Milligan posed to student writers 15 years ago, when we started Students Promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge (SPARK). That question still resonates today, maybe more than ever, as the competition for news readers and viewers continues to intensify.



The University of Guelph has always prided itself on conducting research that closely reflects and affects the society around it, the society into which we send our graduates. This is the same society that gives universities a special place where academics can gather free from influence, teach what needs to be taught and say what needs to be said.

This environment is enriched by the support and encouragement of research, so that what is taught and said is fresh, grounded and pertinent.

This issue of *Research*, dedicated to society and culture, underlines the connection between researchers and the society they're part of. Researchers help us make sense of cultural phenomena, ones that appear so quickly (then sometimes disappear with equal speed) that we don't have time to fully digest them. Researchers are often called on to be opinion leaders, to offer comment, to help us see what is not evident.

For example, you can't flip channels these days without passing a poker game. Texas Hold 'Em has become part of our vocabulary. Poker players are suddenly media stars. Some people think watching a skillfully played card game on television is fascinating. To others, it's like watching paint dry. But what does it tell us about our society? Paula Bialski reports on how we're affected — and in some cases, manipulated — by gambling, starting on page 14.

Then there's our cover story. Like the rest of us, researchers turn on their television or open a newspaper and get inundated with reality TV, such as *Canadian Idol*. Most of us accept it at face value. But it takes a researcher such as Prof. Suzy Lake to help us pare down the phenomenon to its core and understand what it says about society. Beginning on page 34, follow this professor's journey with the *Idol* entourage and her assessment of the initiative as one big focus group, passionately obsessed with youth. Murray Tong reports at length on her observations and her photo record of the winners and losers.

Speaking of Murray, we're saying goodbye to him after four productive years with the SPARK program. He leaves with our best wishes for a new job as assistant editor at *The Milk Producer* magazine, a publication that regularly features SPARK-written stories about University of Guelph research. Murray, an accomplished pianist with a biochemistry degree, will be well-served at Canada's biggest dairy magazine by the writing, editing and production co-ordination skills he's honed at SPARK. Here's a true example of how such skills are transferable across disciplines — a born-and-raised suburbanite editing stories about dairy, one of the agri-food sector's most intricate and complex industries. We're proud of Murray and acknowledge how his tireless efforts to mentor other SPARK students and produce quality research publications have contributed significantly to SPARK's success and helped our many new initiatives get off the ground. **R**

Owen Roberts
EDITOR

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RIGHT >> Natascha Girgis stars as Lilja in *Mad Boy Chronicle*, a Canadian adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Researchers have created a unique online database of Canuck renditions of the Bard's works, collecting more than 3,000 pieces of text and multimedia. See pages 38-39 for story.

BOTTOM √ Albrecht Dürer, *Nailing to the Cross*, 1509, woodcut.



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Arts and culture mirror society, providing us with fresh perspectives on our world. From Canadian Shakespeare adaptations to *Canadian Idol*, research is exploring the complex relationship between society and culture.

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COVER PHOTO BY PROF. SUZY LAKE



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COURTESY OF THE BACHINSKI-CHU PRINT STUDY COLLECTION/UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Spotlight on SPARK

PHOTOS BY OLIVIA BROWN



The University of Guelph *Research* magazine is written and co-ordinated by students involved in the University's Students Promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge (SPARK) program and Guelph's agricultural communications program.



<< History major **Paula Bialski** is no stranger to journalism. The North Bay native got her start writing a travel column for *The North Bay Nugget* while travelling through Ireland, then went on to host a talk radio show and serve as features editor at the University of Guelph's student newspaper, *The Ontarion*. She's now completing a master's degree at the University of Warsaw, where she documented a piece of the nation's history: Paula broadcast a CBC television news report on the Polish reaction to the death of

Pope John Paul II. Paula reports on the search for a forgotten woman in history, philanthropist Eglantyne Jebb, on page 44.

>> Wherever she goes, **Clare Illingworth** is on the move. The animal biology major from Newmarket has travelled the globe in search of adventure, snorkelling in the Galapagos Islands, training for the modern pentathlon in Mexico and backpacking across western Europe. An accomplished equestrian, she has ridden through Spain and competed in international equestrian events across Canada and the United States. Clare's journalistic travels include a story on Nigerian protests against oil companies on pages 32-33.



<< Outside of the protein lab, biochemistry student **Robert Fieldhouse** of Guelph enjoys exploring the culture and customs of his many international friends, who hail from China, Denmark, Greece and Trinidad. His latest interest is Latin dance, including the salsa, bachata and merengue, which has taken him from local Latin nights to a world salsa convention. See page 12 for Robert's story on how international companies can keep finances on an even keel when natural disasters strike.

>> The country is where it's at for **Courtney Denard** of Belleville, a second-year graduate student in rural extension studies. When not writing her thesis on 4-H Ontario and its transition from a provincial affiliate to a non-profit organization, she enjoys two-stepping to George Strait and the Dixie Chicks, and attending concerts from the GMOs to Jimmy Buffett to the Havelock Country Music Jamboree. See page 13 for Courtney's article on how product label information can affect consumers' choices.



<< The world is getting smaller for zoology major **Leslie Irons** of Mississauga, who was bitten by the travel bug after taking part in the Canadian Field Studies in Africa program, and most recently has visited Argentina and Uruguay. When not travelling, she enjoys sampling the diverse flavours of international cuisine in Guelph, especially Vietnamese, Mexican and African-Indian food. Leslie reports on more internal pathways — the routes in the brain that promote social interaction — on pages 20-21.

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<< Although a math major and history minor keeps **Heather Filby** of Mindemoya, Manitoulin Island, hitting the books, she manages to squeeze in recreational reading too — the epic novels of Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky and her favourite author, Alexandre Dumas. She's also a dedicated flute and piano player, performing duets at weddings with her mother, also a pianist. Heather explores yet another artistic discipline — visual art — in her article on the University's unique print collection on pages 42-43.

>> From film to literature to music, culture and the arts come naturally to **Alicia Roberts**, a drama student from Chatham. An avid movie fan and contemporary literature reader (Anne Rice and J. K. Rowling are among her favourite authors), she also enjoys learning about music's cultural impacts and views of history from different perspectives. Alicia writes about the decidedly eastern influences of the popular western on page 41.



<< Co-ordinating a 48-page *Research* magazine hasn't damped SPARK co-ordinator and biochemistry major **Murray Tong**'s passion for the written word. His favourite authors include England's Penelope Fitzgerald and George Orwell, but he's also interested in Canadian lit. As a contributor to *The Hamilton Spectator*, he has interviewed and written about Canuck authors Douglas Coupland, Barbara Gowdy and David Adams Richards. Murray looks at how literature, film and the performing arts have transformed cultural and gender politics in Latin America on page 40.



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Dairy farmers across Canada look to the pages of *The Milk Producer* magazine every month for updates about research shaping their industry. Students Promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge (SPARK) provides that vital information through our regular research column. This also gives students hands-on writing and editing experience. We're all winning with SPARK.

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ETHICS: A NEW FOCUS

Granting councils' ethics foundation now permeates all research

BY MARIANNE CLARK

Research and ethics have become inseparable. While hypotheses, measurements, observations and conclusions continue to drive the scientific method, ethics now have a specific place in the guidelines that ensure the well-being of human participants in research. In this way, respect for privacy, human dignity and justice is guaranteed.

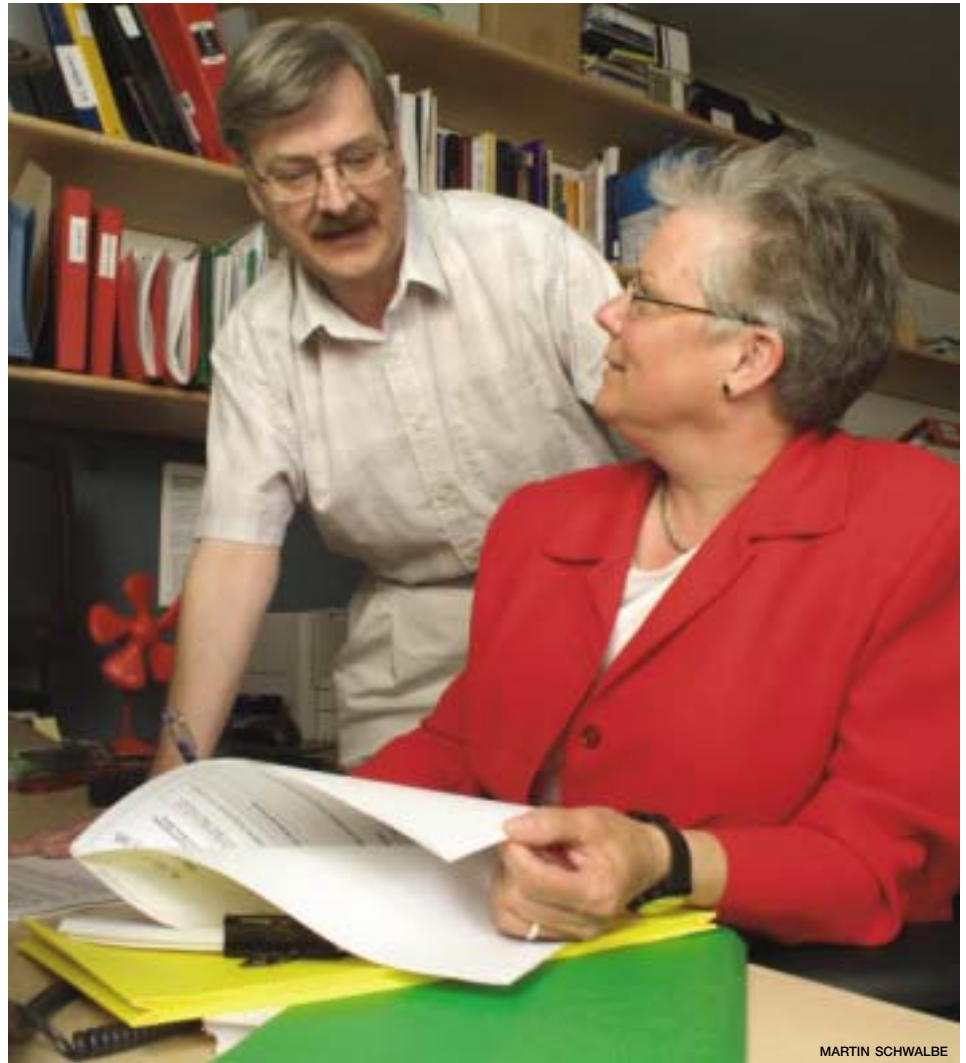
The University of Guelph's Research Ethics Board (REB) makes certain that all research conducted on campus adheres to structured guidelines set out by Canada's three major granting councils.

Science and Engineering Research Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council introduced the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS) in 1998 to guide research ethics in Canada. Universities have entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Tri-Council to ensure that all research taking place at an institution follows the guidelines laid down in the TCPS, regardless of funding sources.

"The Tri-Council manages public funds, so it has a responsibility to the Canadian public to ensure these funds are used in an ethical manner," says U of G research ethics co-ordinator Sandy Auld. The TCPS is an attempt to simplify and regularize the implementation of research ethics across the country.

Research ethics became a part of the public consciousness in the 1950s, after the Second World War. Following the trials of war criminals, doctors drafted what has become known as the Nuremberg Code to direct ethical use of human subjects in medical research. Other documents followed, such as the Helsinki Document, an international statement by the World Medical Association. But serious infractions continued, raising awareness of the need to formally regulate research involving human subjects. This has led to countries around the world introducing documents like the TCPS.

At Guelph, a wide range of research in the social, biological and physical sciences involves human subjects in studies aimed at increasing basic knowledge and benefiting the health and well-being of Canadians. Human participants are crucial to these studies. The REB acts to protect participants through a variety of measures, including obtaining informed consent (in which participants are made fully aware of the nature of the study), what they are being asked to do and how their privacy will be protected.



MARTIN SCHWALBE

Research Ethics Board member Prof. Paul Salmon (left) and research ethics co-ordinator Sandy Auld maintain ongoing dialogue with researchers to ensure their needs are met and human research subjects are treated ethically.

The 12-member REB comprises faculty and community members with expertise in various academic disciplines as well as medicine, law, biohazards, ethics, and alternative health care. Auld says ongoing dialogue between the REB and researchers is important to determine the researchers' needs and how the REB can best help them move forward — while ensuring that the University of Guelph remains in compliance with TCPS guidelines.

"My job as co-ordinator is to support researchers," she says. "The more the office can learn about what researchers are doing,

the more we can help them."

There's also a strong educational component to the REB's activities. Auld's duties include visits to undergraduate and graduate classrooms, where she discusses research ethics and educates students about informed consent, why it's necessary and how to go about obtaining it.

Says Auld: "The students are our front-line workers. They will be the new generation of researchers, and we want to emphasize the importance of ethical research right from the beginning." ■

Research ethics: Where science meets society

Informed consent

ETHICAL ISSUES ARE A SPECIAL CONSIDERATION for University of Guelph researchers dealing with humans.

Prof. Alison Duncan, Department of Human Biology and Nutritional Sciences, is investigating the use of soy-based products in everyday foods as well as the use of natural health products.

“We are continuously aware of the ethical issues pertaining to human research,” says Duncan.

Her research involves both intervention studies and survey studies. In one aspect of her research, she studies humans consuming some sort of soy treatment. The subjects then provide detailed measurements such as food records, anthropometric measurements and blood and urine samples. The other aspect involves them completing a questionnaire that explores their use of natural health products.

With human subjects, a primary focus for Duncan is informed consent — a key component of ethics in human research. The process of obtaining informed consent involves three key criteria. First, it must be voluntary on the part of the subject. As well, human subjects must be fully informed of the research in which they will be participating. And finally, the subjects must be competent to provide consent.

— HEATHER FILBY

Balancing act

EVERYONE’S ETHICS ARE DIFFERENT, BUT institutionally — and to satisfy federal requirements — there are clear guidelines for university researchers. Managing these guidelines is where the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board (REB) comes in.

Prof. Paul Salmon, School of English and Theatre Studies, is one of 12 volunteer members serving on the REB. He’s beginning his second two-year term on the board and says the real challenge with research ethics involves balancing researchers’ needs with those of individual participants.

“We must ensure that the academic freedom of the researcher is in proper balance with the freedoms and rights of those participating in the research,” says Salmon.

The REB meets monthly and reviews all research projects that involve human subjects. Researchers must submit documentation outlining who will participate in their research, how people are to be recruited, how they will be involved and the risks and benefits to both participants and researchers.

The board studies this information, measures it against guidelines set out in a Tri-Council policy statement and, if necessary, makes suggestions for improvement or clarification. The three institutions forming the Tri-



MARTIN SCHWALBE

Council are Science and Engineering Research Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Most Guelph researchers have been receptive to the process of working with the REB, viewing it as an important step for facilitating exemplary research, says Salmon. Across Canada, the University of Guelph is known for its strong research ethics policy, he says.

“The very intensity of research on the University of Guelph campus is challenging us to be a Canadian leader and take research ethics very seriously.”

— KIM WAALDERBOS

Learning from experience

AS A PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCHER AND PROFESSOR, Leanne Son Hing must abide by the Canadian Psychological Association’s code of ethics. Key principles of this code state that research participants must not be harmed and that they must learn from their experience. Son Hing encompasses both these principles in her research.

She deals with delicate issues that require her research participants to answer carefully worded — even disguised — questions. That’s the only way she’s able to receive unbiased and accurate information while providing a non-threatening environment to the participants.

For example, her studies aimed at first-year psychology students involve social injustice, prejudice, discrimination and unethical decision-making. Research ethics require that student participants be made aware of the true intent of the study before consenting to the use of their data, and Son Hing agrees. In fact, she believes revealing the true purpose of the study is one of the most important aspects of the research.

“Debriefing is important to give the students a sense of the phenomenon we are investigating,

and to let them learn from their experience,” says Son Hing. “But it’s also important to prevent the students from experiencing judgment or a lower sense of self-worth, given the sensitivity of the issues.”

Participants in Son Hing’s research come from a participation pool composed of first-year University of Guelph psychology students, who can participate in psychology research studies to receive research credit in certain courses.

— JEANINE WALLACE

ABOVE ^ Duncan: Informed consent is important when working with human subjects.

BELOW v Son Hing: Debriefings allow survey participants to learn from her research results.



OLIVIA BROWN

Workplace loyalty: The new oxymoron?

Psychology researchers look at the changing face of employment

BY MURRAY TONG



Moving forward: Opportunities for advancement in an organization, says a University of Guelph psychology professor, are vital to retaining valued employees in today's working world.

In today's fiercely competitive working world, where the economy is unpredictable, skilled labour is in short supply and people have greater freedom to change careers, the rules of employment have changed.

And so has the idea of "corporate loyalty," says Prof. Peter Hausdorf, Department of Psychology.

"There's a lot more career mobility now than there's ever been," he says. "The total lifetime commitment to a corporation just doesn't exist anymore."

Hausdorf and his research group surveyed nearly 800 managers and professionals about workplace commitment and career mobility, noting internal and external job changes, time spent in different positions and levels of commitment to their companies. By examining the individuals and tracking their job changes both inside and outside their organizations, the researchers determined that people who were more job-mobile and career-oriented didn't feel the traditional sense of company loyalty that characterized employee relations only a generation ago.

For this study, Hausdorf and his team applied the three-dimensional model of organizational commitment developed by Natalie Allen and John Meyer of the University of Western Ontario. This model separates commitment into three components: affective (feeling emotionally attached to the organization), continuance (feeling stuck in the organization) and normative (feeling a moral obligation to stay in the organization).

Hausdorf also examined how managers and professionals felt about their workplaces before and after job and company changes. As expected, people who didn't change jobs had stable levels of commitment over time. But people who changed jobs — either internally or externally — felt a greater sense of acceptance and respect on average after the change. In addition, the researchers found that it didn't take long for people to develop a strong attachment to a new work group.

Just before internal career moves, people felt less stuck in their current jobs, says Hausdorf. That may be because they've received signals that they're valued employees and will have the opportunity to move up the career ladder sometime in the future.

After an internal or external job change, the researchers found, most individuals felt greater emotional attachment to the new company. In other words, the "right" job change is good for both the employee and the new organization.

Hausdorf warns, however, that it's important for employees considering a career move to make sure they're moving to a better situation, rather than simply trying to leave a bad one. New employees, the research found, often feel obligated to stay for a minimal period of time in a new job — good or bad — before looking for something else.

Companies need to recognize that "blind" employee loyalty is a thing of the past.

From an organizational perspective, companies need to recognize that "blind" employee loyalty is a thing of the past, says Hausdorf.

"People must feel valued, and one way to do this is to send positive signals about career options within the organization. If people don't feel attached to their company, they're less likely to stick around."

And although a sense of belonging is vital to having an effective work environment and keeping valued employees, people also need to feel they can move within the organization, he says.

"Managers and professionals want to progress in their careers — they aren't satisfied with staying in the same position. In addition to the financial benefits, the desire for career growth relates to feeling more competent and feeling valued by the organization."

Hausdorf hopes the findings from this research will be used to clarify employment expectations between individuals and corporations, and create more satisfying working relationships for everyone.

He is collaborating with Prof. Karen Korabik and graduate student Tammy Kondratuk of the Department of Psychology and Hazel Rosin of York University. This research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. ■

❓ DID YOU KNOW . . .

Canada was ranked 16th out of 32 countries for workplace loyalty? Colombia was first.

Paying a price for gender

BY PAULA BIALSKI

For more than a decade, Prof. Serge Desmarais, Department of Psychology, has been researching the value men and women place on their own work, and he's found time and again that women set lower prices than men do. Now, he's doing a survey to discover how the balance of pay entitlement — the amount of money a person thinks he or she deserves for a given job — has been shifted in this direction, in hopes of closing the century-old wage gap between genders.

"In all the studies we've done, women not only earn less than men but also feel they deserve less pay," says Desmarais. "We're now analyzing the data to try to determine why this happens."

Working with the University of Waterloo's Kitchener-Waterloo Metropolitan Area Survey, he has gathered information on issues surrounding gender and pay entitlement in the workplace. Now, he's asking survey respondents why they think they deserve the salaries they want, something that's never been done before. It's important in understanding the deeper reasons behind differing views of pay entitlement, he says.

Desmarais believes pay entitlement affects people's work lives, work choices and their attempts to balance family and work responsibilities. For example, people who believe they aren't being treated fairly in the workplace may be less productive, withdraw from social relationships or look for another job.

"Previous research has focused on external comparisons of people's pay," he says. "I want to delve into the internal factors and determine why women and men feel they are entitled to a certain wage."

This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Canada Research Chairs program. ■



BRIAN FRAY

Property ownership law paved way for women's rights, says economist

BY LESLIE IRONS

TO CANADIAN WOMEN IN THE 19th century, marriage meant (among other things) giving up many of their rights, including the right to property they had earned or inherited. The Married Women's Property Act of 1884 set out to change all that by giving married women full rights over property they brought into a marriage.

Still, many believed the law held little more than symbolic importance for women — until now.

University of Guelph economics professor Kris Inwood, graduate student Susan Ingram and undergraduate student Sarah van Sligtenhorst scoured land

Excerpt from Canada's Married Women's Property Act, 1884:

Rights and obligations of a married woman
Subject to this act, a married woman:

- continues to be liable in respect of any tort committed, contract entered into, or debt or obligation incurred by her before her marriage;
- is capable of acquiring, holding and disposing of any property;
- is capable of suing and being sued, either in tort, contract or otherwise.

Rights of married woman in property after enforcement of act

All property that:

- immediately before enforcement of this act was the property of a married woman;
- belongs at the time of her marriage to a woman married after the coming into force of this act; or
- after enforcement of this act is acquired by or devolves upon a married woman belongs to her in all respects as if she were unmarried and may be dealt with accordingly.

registries from Guelph and surrounding area, tracking property purchases, mortgage payments and tax activities throughout the 19th century. They found that the number of married women with their names on ownership documents such as land deeds doubled shortly after the act was passed in 1884.

"The law marked a big victory for women," says Inwood. "It certainly held broader implications than just increased property ownership."

During the 1800s and early 1900s, voting privileges were contingent on owning property. By allowing women to retain ownership rights of their own property, the Married Women's Property Act helped open the polls to many women for the first time, says Inwood. In this way, the law may also have set the pace for the 20th century's gender equality revolution.

Looking through 19th-century wills, the researchers also found an increase in the number of single women and widows inheriting property. Inwood says this is probably because the act gave women more control over the fate of their land, even in marriage. ■



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION // DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Hurricane Andrew devastated Florida's residents and economy alike when it struck in 1992.

Insuring insurers more effectively

Financial diversity will help through tough times, says Guelph researcher

BY ROBERT FIELDHOUSE



PAULA BIALSKI

Sun: Diversify finances to lower risk during disasters.

Tsunami insurance lacking

THOUGH TRAGIC, THE SOUTH ASIA TSUNAMI won't have a severe impact on the insurance and reinsurance industries, says Sun, because many people weren't insured. Global reinsurer Swiss Re anticipates claims, most of them for property damage and business interruptions, will total less than 100 million Swiss francs or \$90 million US. Last year, however, was an expensive one for the insurance industry. Hurricanes in Florida and typhoons and an earthquake in Japan were among the catastrophes that resulted in worldwide claims estimated at \$42 billion.

The South Asia tsunami, a series of hurricanes in Florida, and typhoons and an earthquake in Japan have made the past year one of the stormiest in recent history. Often, insurance companies pay out huge sums of money after natural disasters strike. But one University of Guelph researcher wonders if the mechanism for insuring the insurers is running smoothly.

Insurers usually buy insurance from larger "reinsurance" companies that jack up premiums after disasters strike, says Prof. Yiguo Sun of the Department of Economics. For example, when Hurricane Andrew struck Florida in 1992, insured losses amounted to \$15.5 billion US and several insurance companies went bankrupt. They simply could no longer afford insurance themselves.

Now, with heightened fears about terrorist attacks, there are increasing concerns about possible mega-catastrophes that would further drive up prices. And ultimately, price increases filter down to consumers — who've already told governments they've had enough of spiralling insurance rates.

"Catastrophes are different from everyday misfortunes because a large group of people are affected simultaneously," says Sun. "I'm interested in how insurance companies can prevent excessive losses in catastrophe situations."

Sun examined one type of catastrophe-linked security called future options, which will actually pay off for the buyer in the event of a disaster. Insurance companies can buy catastrophe-linked securities from investors, giving these investors a chance to make money from insurance companies during good times, at the expense of assuming some liability during the bad. Catastrophe-linked securities increase financial diversity by offering insurance companies an alternative to reinsurance, says Sun.

She's developed a way to evaluate the pricing of securities that pay off during disastrous times.

Using a mixture of mathematics, statistics and modelling — a method she calls "high technique" — Sun analyzed catastrophes using Chicago Board of Trade data taken from 1996 to 1999. She applied her theoretical work to catastrophe-linked securities transactions, and discovered that market prices of some of these securities are much higher than their theoretical prices.

Sun believes that a number of factors inflate securities prices. For example, many investors are hesitant to sell catastrophe-linked securities to businesses because the securities are so new — something that makes them especially risky if investors don't have a clear perception of disaster frequencies and loss distribution. So, they charge higher prices for them to ensure they can cover any losses.

The frequency of disasters isn't related to the economy's status, unlike investors' most popular purchases — bonds, stocks and mutual funds — which are influenced by politics and market trends. So, investors may reduce risks embedded in their portfolios by adding a slice of catastrophe-linked securities. If investors are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with securities in the option format, says Sun, then catastrophe-linked securities in the bond format (called CAT bonds) could provide a more prudent alternative.

Sun hopes that her research will make its way to businesses and ordinary investors, and help them make more informed investment decisions, diversify risk and ultimately reduce losses in disastrous times.

"People try to diversify all kinds of risk, but sometimes it's still not enough," says Sun. "The financial market is full of freedom, not like it was years ago. Catastrophe-linked securities offer a new way of diversifying catastrophe risk, and I expect this market will flourish."

Sun collaborated with Prof. Xiaodong Zhu of the University of Toronto on this research. ■



Differing amounts of information on product labels can affect consumers' choices, according to a University of Guelph study.

VINCE FILBY

Saturated with information

New study looks at how product information affects purchases

BY COURTNEY DENARD

Striking a delicate balance between delivering enough product information to satisfy consumers without overwhelming them is an ongoing challenge facing manufacturers and marketers. Now, a University of Guelph researcher is determining how the amount of information on a product can influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

Prof. Towhidul Islam, Department of Marketing and Consumer Studies, says a lack of information creates a feeling of uncertainty. But too much information overloads consumers, affecting which products they choose to buy. So, he's asking: What do you put in and what do you leave out?

"There have been projects looking at what type of information should be given to the consumer," says Islam. "But until now, there has been little research conducted on the impact of the information that isn't out there."

The three-year project is in its second stage, following a successful pilot study of University of Guelph students that involved fruit juice and

pizza. This study showed that products with less information create uncertainty among consumers who are concerned about the value of the products they purchase. But, with too much product information, consumers felt flustered and saturated. The key, says Islam, is finding a balance between the amount of information consumers want about a product and what is considered too much.

With too much product information, consumers felt flustered and saturated.

Results also showed that a different amount of information about a product generates different brand equity (the monetary value of a brand name) and price elasticity (a consumer's willingness to pay for products). But once the uncertainty created by missing information is controlled, says Islam, brand equity and

price elasticity differences disappear to a large extent.

Now, Islam will look at the effect of the amount of presented product information on the public. Using web-based surveys posted on marketing research company sites, he will collect data from participants about the products they purchase and how they use the presented product label information. He hopes the survey results will benefit policy-makers, manufacturers and consumers by guiding how much information should be displayed on common products found at local grocery and retail stores.

If the project is successful with the general public, Islam would like to see further research on an international scale.

"We want to extend the research and do a cross-cultural comparison. For example, we can take the project to places like China and India, to see what effects culture has on product choices and consumption."

This research is sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. ■

ADDICTION



MARTIN SCHWALBE

CTED

From the gamblers to the slot machines to casino design, University of Guelph researchers look at the many faces of problem gambling

BY PAULA BIALSKI AND MURRAY TONG

For problem gamblers, the roll of the dice, the pounding of race horse hooves and the jangle of coins from slot machines are the sounds of addiction, desperation and obsession. The next pull of the lever can mean financial ruin...or the chance to play one more time. According to the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Council, only two per cent of gamblers are considered “problem” gamblers, but given that nearly 15 million people gamble in Ontario each year, the problem is significant.

Ontario legalized casino gambling in 1992. Soon gambling facilities ranging from traditional casinos to racetrack slot machines opened across the province, creating thousands of jobs and changing the face of recreation and tourism in many communities. Gambling revenues in Ontario approached \$5 billion in 2004 and have become an important part of the provincial economy.

But gambling has its downside. Some say the new casino and racetrack facilities are leaving a swath of problem gamblers — and associated social problems — in their wake. In Alberta, a University of Lethbridge study last year suggested that the relatively small percentage of “problem” gamblers in the province accounts for a whopping 35 per cent of Alberta’s gambling revenues. Now, both sides of the gambling debate are studying gambling addiction to get at the truth behind the issues.



Casino design can make gamblers stay longer and spend more and can promote gambling addiction, say University of Guelph professors (left to right) Jane Londerville, Harvey Marmurek, Vinay Kanetkar and Karen Finlay.

The University of Guelph is at the forefront of these studies. Researchers are looking at the entire spectrum of problem gambling issues, from how casino environments influence gamblers to the demographics at highest risk for gambling addiction. Understanding what factors can contribute to problem gambling,



CASEY LESSARD/WOOLWICH OBSERVER

Open-concept casino designs leave gamblers in a more positive psychological state, while the classic maze-like layout can make them feel anxious and trapped — which can lead to wagering too much.

“By identifying these design factors, we can find models for casino design that will help problem gamblers battle their addictions.” — Karen Finlay

says one researcher, is the first step to reducing these risks and protecting society from its grasp.

Rooms without a view

“The number of gamblers is growing, and we now need to focus on problem gambling risks,” says Prof. Karen Finlay, Department of Marketing and Consumer Studies, who’s looking at casino and slot machine design and its effects on problem gambling. “This problem isn’t affecting just individuals; it’s affecting families and communities.”

Finlay says casino design elements such as ceiling height, room size and lighting skew gamblers’ perceptions of time and space, making them gamble more and stay in casino halls longer. She believes this makes addiction even more difficult to control.

“Casino design can provoke higher levels of pleasure and arousal that will keep frequent gamblers gaming longer,” says Finlay. “By iden-

tifying these design factors, we can find models for casino design that will help problem gamblers battle their addictions.”

Working with Profs. Vinay Kanetkar and Jane Londerville, Department of Marketing and Consumer Studies, and Harvey Marmurek, Department of Psychology, Finlay has been comparing casino designs using video footage to test people’s perceptions of the environment.

The first casino design, called the “playground approach,” is identified with U.S. casino designer David Cranes. He creates open spaces with a playful atmosphere using western or circus themes, for example. This open-concept model uses water, vegetation and natural sunlight or simulated blue sky with high ceilings.

The second design is marked by more traditional, classic casino characteristics: tight and confined spaces, low ceilings and a maze-like atmosphere.

Finlay visited Las Vegas to film the two casino types (filming in Canadian casinos is prohibited by law to protect security procedures), then edited the footage to make two separate videos that display the indoor environment of both casino designs. She then sampled a group of 100 problem gamblers, placing each of them in a dark room to view the videos one after the other. The darkness of the room, she says, allowed the subject to strictly focus on the images on the TV screen.

After the screening, subjects were asked a set of questions about the feelings each casino type evoked. Results show Cranes’ open-concept designs are rated the most positively in terms of leaving gamblers in an upbeat psychological state. Maze-like and confined layouts found in the classic design create anxiety and make gamblers feel trapped in the environment, says Finlay. In this kind of environment, gamblers are tempted to linger — which may lead to wagering too much.



CASEY LESSARD/WOOLWICH OBSERVER



PAULA BIALSKI

No coins, please

Finlay isn't just interested in how casinos themselves are designed — she's also studying the design of the gambling machines inside. While she and her colleagues were researching casino environments, they became concerned with how gambling machines could affect gamblers' mentality. In particular, they believe that a new kind of one-armed bandit that's entering Canadian casinos soon could downplay the amount of money gamblers are spending.

It's a newly designed slot machine that lets gamblers use a prepaid card instead of coins. These machines exist in the United States and Canada has introduced them in a few areas.

Here's how it works: Gamblers swipe the prepaid card in the machine and keep on spending until they win or — more often — run out of credit on the card. Gamblers don't have to insert tokens or coins each time they play, and that makes the researchers wonder if the non-participatory machines are lulling gamblers into a false sense of financial security.

"We want to know what the physical difference is for individual gamblers," says Finlay. "Basically, we're attempting to find out how much money a gambler is spending if he or she manually feeds the coins into the machine, compared with automatically spending money with a prepaid card."

In a traditional box-like slot machine, gamblers must physically deposit coins into the machine and pull down an arm-like handle or push a button to make the reels spin. It's

fast and mechanical and doesn't really involve an elaborate strategy. But Finlay and graduate student Dan McGrath believe the act of feeding coins into the machine at least gives gamblers a greater awareness of how much they're spending.

"Playing, whether pulling the handle or pushing a button to make the reels spin, is not really the issue," says Finlay. "The issue is that gamblers may not be aware of the amount they are spending if they are putting in a card or a bill, rather than physically putting coins in for every spin."

Finlay and McGrath are testing this theory by inviting subjects into their lab — a room with four slot machines, simulating a casino environment — and giving each of them basic instructions on how to use the slots. Subjects are given 20 coins to spend and told they can play as long as they like and can go to the cashier for more whenever they like. In a similar test, the subjects are given 20 credits on the machine, with no coins involved.

McGrath will be comparing the 20-coin versus the 20-credit conditions by counting how many times gamers bet at a machine, how much money they spend,

how much time they spend gambling and how much they win. This process will then be followed up by a questionnaire that measures the extent to which the subjects found it hard to stop gambling.

The data from both of Finlay's research projects will be tabulated and included in a comprehensive report to inform the Canadian government and the Ontario Lottery and

LEFT << While traditional slot machines require gamblers to insert coins each time they want to play, newly designed machines that are entering Canadian casinos use a prepaid card instead, which researchers believe may lull players into a false sense of financial security.

ABOVE ^ Peer pressure, proximity to a casino and parents' attitudes are among the reasons university and college students may be drawn to gambling.

Gaming Corporation about the types of casino designs and gambling machines that could be worsening problem gambling. Reducing the risk of problem gambling is high on the agenda for Finlay. She says mental and physical health problems resulting from pathological gambling are becoming a serious strain on the Canadian health-care system, and the government must address the issue.

"Once we have concrete data, our goal is to lobby the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, providing it with evidence that casino design and slot machine characteristics contribute to gambling addiction," says Finlay. "If we are right that these factors make people gamble more, the OLG should know because it will have a negative effect on gamblers."

Gambling away their future

Prof. Gerald Adams, Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition, is tackling another side of problem gambling — he's putting the gamblers under the microscope to see what demographics may be at high risk for problem gambling. And he's found that problem gambling among university- and college-age youth may stem from repressive parents.

The act of feeding coins into a machine gives gamblers a greater awareness of how much they're spending.

Adams had previously studied gambling addiction and young people, and discovered that peer pressure and proximity to a casino contribute in part to why university or college students may be drawn to casino gambling.

But he's found that parents can affect a youth's susceptibility to problem gambling, too.

"When it comes to addictive gamblers, family dynamics can be an underlying problem," says Adams. "Many young pathological gamblers tend to come from similar parental backgrounds."

Strictness at home is a recurring characteristic in those backgrounds. Adams surveyed university students about the type of parenting they received, then followed up with questions linked to problem gambling. At first, he grouped parenting styles into three main categories: permissive parents, who set no boundaries for what their children can or can not do; authoritarian parents, who control their children without giving them much freedom to make their own choices; and authoritative parents, who set boundaries but are willing to compromise with their children.

His study found that children with authoritarian parents are most prone to problem gambling, possibly out of their need to rebel.

This study followed earlier research that looked at whether proximity to casinos was associated with problem gambling among youth. Adams and graduate student Anne-Marie Cantwell, who specializes in addictive behaviours, surveyed students from the University of Guelph, Brock University, University of Windsor and Wilfrid Laurier University. The researchers found 20 times more pathological gamblers at the universities that were located closer to casinos.

Adams cautions that his study doesn't mean problem gambling is restricted to these areas. It simply shows that educational institutions located near a casino present higher risks to youth, and he believes these institutions should implement gambling addiction support and risk intervention programs.

He hopes greater awareness about the risks of casinos and their proximity to universities will help prevent gambling addiction.

"Gambling is a serious issue, and little research has been done regarding certain external factors such as how a parenting style affects an adolescent's gambling mentality," says Adams. "Finding out the exact external factors will help in implementing measures to try to prevent problem gambling from happening."

Ontario's game plan for gaming

The problem gambling issue has lit a fire under many politicians and decision-makers. In January 2005, the Ontario government unveiled the Ontario Gaming Strategy, which aims to make social responsibility a priority in gam-



CASEY LESSARD/WOOLWICH OBSERVER

The new face of problem gambling? Students living close to a casino may be more prone to gambling addiction, according to University of Guelph research.

bling management in the province. Among the new measures: establishing new problem gambling counselling centres inside commercial casinos, investing in public awareness campaigns on gambling addiction, and developing training programs for casino employees to deliver services responsibly.

The government also announced that no additional casinos or racetrack slot facilities will be built, although new slot machine expansions already planned for racetracks in Ajax and Belleville will go ahead.

"The pressure is on the government to be accountable to Ontarians," says Finlay. "This province is expanding several gambling facilities, and we want to know what that means for problem gambling."

These research projects are sponsored by the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, which opened in Guelph's Research Park in 2003. The provincial agency is funded by two per cent of the revenues from slot machines at charity casinos and racetracks, which in 2004 totalled approximately \$1.8 billion. ■

Seniors know when to fold 'em

Gambling offers recreation, companionship — and low risk — to seniors

BY PAULA BIALSKI

Seniors who gamble are often stereotyped as being vulnerable to addiction and financial problems. But Profs. Joan Norris and Joseph Tindale, Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition, say that's a misconception. They surveyed Ontario seniors who gamble and found that most of them keep their hobby under control.

"We live in an ageist society, and there has always been a stereotype surrounding seniors," says Tindale. "People view them as vulnerable, incompetent, in need of help. That's not the case at all."

Adds Norris: "Within the gambling population, seniors tend to have a steady retirement income. They are quite capable of taking care of themselves."

Seniors' homes and clubs organize gambling trips as a break from the daily routine. The bus ride, the excitement of the day and the companionship are really the most significant parts of these outings, say the researchers. Winnings are incidental to spending time with friends. In addition, seniors enjoy casinos because they're usually safe and offer inexpensive meals.

"Casinos offer a getaway from city centres that can have bad weather or high crime — things the aging population worries about," says Norris.

Initially, the researchers surveyed seniors in different southern Ontario communities and found that most favour group bus excursions to racetracks with slot machines. The majority view gambling as a way to socialize with friends and set strict gambling limits of about \$50, which the researchers say puts them at very low risk for problem gambling.

In their newest study, Norris and Tindale are setting out to create a profile of older gamblers in small-town Ontario. Of the 24 casinos and racetrack slots in the province, 21 are located in small or rural communities, where there are larger populations of seniors and fewer entertainment options. The researchers will survey members of seniors' clubs in seven Ontario rural counties with gambling facilities to assess gambling attitudes, practices and risk status.

They're also compiling data to get a sense of how family patterns of gambling affect people's gambling habits and their attitudes towards gambling.

"We're interested in family relationships, and mainly the intergenerational relationship of adult children and their parents when faced

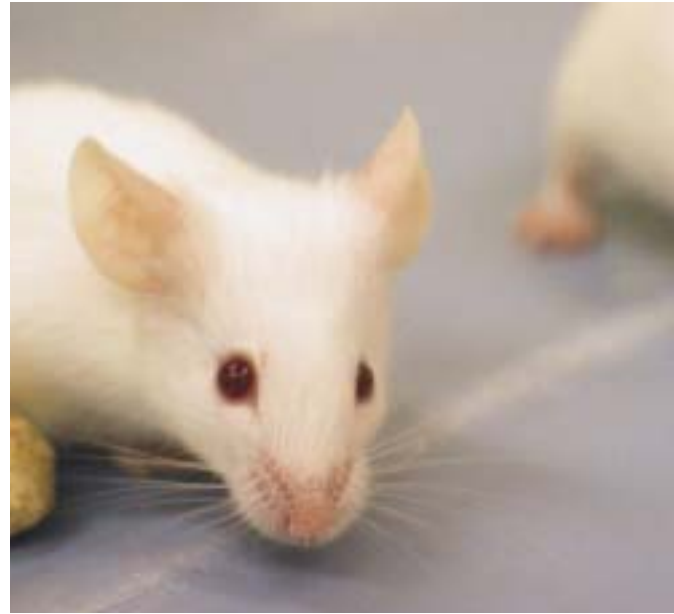


OLIVIA BROWN

with the topic of gambling," says Tindale. "We hope that our study will help us understand whether gambling has a positive or negative effect on these relationships."

This research is being sponsored by the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Council. ■

(L-R): Prof. Joan Norris, Prof. Joseph Tindale and project co-ordinator Jonathan Schmidt have found that seniors who gamble are at very low risk for problem gambling — contrary to public perceptions.



PHOTOS BY VINCE FILBY

THEY'VE GOT THAT LOVIN' FEELING

Being together releases natural 'feel-good' chemicals, says researcher

BY LESLIE IRONS

As social creatures, most of us get positive internal feelings from being around other people. That may be because social interaction prompts an elevated release of natural pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain, according to a University of Guelph researcher.

Prof. Elena Choleris, Department of Psychology, is trying to better understand the neural pathways of these chemicals and to link social learning — acquiring certain social behaviours through interaction with others — with levels of pleasure-inducing

compounds such as dopamine, opiates and cannabinoids.

Her research could provide a stronger foundation for developing treatments for a variety of social learning disabilities, such as autism, that involve disrupted pathways in the brain.

“Cracking the code of these neural pathways could bring us one step closer to improving the quality of life for those living with these disabilities,” says Choleris.

Mice are her models, and they have so far led her to some clear observations about

pleasure-based preferences. In one study, she offered food enhanced with flavours such as chocolate and cinnamon to randomly selected mice. After they'd eaten, she introduced them to other familiar mice for a short one-on-one interaction period.

Later, when the resident mouse was offered similar chocolate- and cinnamon-flavoured food as well as a more neutral choice, it chose the food with the familiar smell from its visitor's breath and fur about 80 per cent of the time.

Friend or foe? Hormones help us decide

RECOGNIZING FRIEND FROM FOE IS IMPORTANT for animal and human survival alike, and psychology professor Elena Choleris is searching for the mechanisms that enable us to identify a familiar face.

Interfering with recognition pathways could impair our ability to relate with others normally. It may, for example, reduce social learning capacity, the ability to pick up on the behaviours of others and learn from them. This could lead to social-specific disorders such as social phobias, autism and schizophrenia. It may also cause psychological disorders such as anxiety, fear and depression.

With that in mind, Choleris is using mice as a

model to study pathways in the brain that increase or decrease their ability to recognize each other.

“Isolating the recognition pathways could lead to solutions to these related disorders,” she says.

Hormones are the transmission signals used by mice and humans alike to send messages to different body parts. Choleris is using a novel synthetic hormone to trace the social recognition pathways in the brains of female mice.

It's known that the hormone estrogen regulates production of oxytocin, a chemical linked to maternal bonding and anxiety regulation in humans. Estrogen regulates oxytocin production by following two separate pathways involving two related hormone receptors (designated alpha and

beta), which may lead to very different cell functions.

Choleris believes social recognition among female mice is regulated by estrogen acting through the beta receptor pathway.

To test this theory, she's supplementing the mice with the synthetic hormone, which binds only to beta receptors, to determine whether or not their recognition abilities improve. If she can identify the receptor involved in this pathway, she'll reveal the brain region responsible for key hormone action, opening the door to more effective research into treatments for psychological disorders.

This research is funded by Science and Engineering Research Canada.



Choleris says that's not just because chocolate and cinnamon taste good. It's because the mice associated the familiar food smell with the chemically induced positive feelings experienced during the social interaction.

Now, she's trying to find the neural pathways that cause this preference development. To test her predictions, she will measure dopamine, opiate and cannabinoid levels in the rodents before and after interaction and feeding periods to determine whether the levels rise — and give mice those positive feelings — after social interaction. She'll then use synthetic antagonists (chemicals that prevent the pleasure-inducing chemicals from acting on the mouse) to temporarily block positive internal feelings, to see how they're linked to social interaction.

If blocking the pleasure chemicals prevents the food preference from developing, it means these chemicals are directly involved in the neural pathways associated with social learning, says Choleris. And they're a limiting factor in the mouse's ability to pick up behaviours from those around it.

"By isolating the chemicals involved in social learning behaviours, we can better understand why some people lack the ability to learn through social interaction," she says.

Choleris hopes her research can eventually lay the foundation for a practical treatment for autistic people that can open up faulty neural pathways and improve social learning capacity.

This research is funded by Science and Engineering Research Canada. ■

Social interaction on the brain: psychology professor Elena Choleris is using food flavouring to see what makes mice interact — and hopes to apply that knowledge to human learning disabilities.



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Mental disorder: The plea formerly known as insanity

Controversial defence goes under the microscope

BY ALISON SCHNEIDER

The defence of mental disorder in cases of homicide is under examination by a U of G criminologist. She's looking at who uses the defence, what happens after it's used and what the public thinks about it.

By learning the fate of Canadian defendants who use the defence of mental disorder — what used to be called the insanity plea — Prof. Myrna Dawson, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, hopes to better understand how the plea is used and what kind of treatment its users should receive.

“The public perception is that those who are found to be ‘insane’ are not punished for their actions,” she says. “The problem is, there’s little information that shows exactly what happens to them.”

No specified therapy or time in an institution is required for “insane” offenders, so their rehabilitation is not assured.

Dawson is studying some 100 Toronto homicide trials between 1974 and 2002 that ended with successful insanity pleas to find out what mental disorders are usually involved. From there, she’ll match individual characteristics such as gender and relationship to the victim with treatment outcomes to see who is acquitted by reason of insanity and why. She hopes to discover whether some offenders are more successful at winning an insanity plea than others.

Dawson notes, for example, that the verdict “not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder” appears to be found most

often in cases involving the murder of a family member. She wonders what makes “insane” cases so distinct from other homicides and what role the type of homicide case may play in successful insanity pleas.

“I want to see if the ‘insane’ verdict is found because it’s more horrifying when someone kills a family member, making the defendant’s actions more conveniently explained by mental illness. These violent offenders may not be any different from perpetrators who are found to be mentally stable.”

Results of this research will be used to design a survey on public attitudes towards the defence of mental disorder in Canada.

This work is funded in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. ■



University of Guelph professor Myrna Dawson is studying the controversial defence of mental disorder — what used to be called the “insanity” defence — and how it’s been used in Toronto homicide trials.



BRIAN FRAY

Your friends are weird

But there's no need to be embarrassed, says Guelph researcher

BY AARON JACKLIN

If you think your friends embarrass you in public, you're probably too self-conscious. Many people, including University of Guelph psychology professor Ian Newby-Clark, worry that they're judged negatively by onlookers for having eccentric companions. But lately, he's been taking a closer look at the social phenomenon he calls "guilt by association," and he's found that we — and he — needn't worry.

"People erroneously believe they may be judged guilty by association," he says. "But we can relax when we're in various social situations and the people we associate with do things that aren't quite acceptable."

Newby-Clark started pondering this phenomenon after suffering through an uncomfortable situation himself, when a friend began behav-

ing inappropriately at a party after consuming alcohol. That reminded him of his post-doctoral work at Cornell University with Tom Gilovich, who had studied what is known as "the spotlight effect," the phenomenon in which people overestimate the impact of their own social gaffes.

It turns out the overestimation of onlooker stigmatization is common to both the spotlight effect and guilt by association. Observers are generally directing their attention — and any negative thoughts they might be having — at the person doing the odd thing and not those associated with the individual, says Newby-Clark.

He hopes this knowledge will be liberating for many people.

"If the data bear my theory out and we're not judged guilty by association, then we

can just say: 'Well, you're going to be judged negatively, but I'm not.' We can stop feeling so uncomfortable."

He has completed three studies so far, all at the University of Guelph and all focusing on how onlookers react to odd situations and how they judge the people involved. Because he's currently running a fourth study, Newby-Clark won't divulge the exact details of how he's performing his experiments. But he and former research assistant Amy Smith presented a poster on the topic at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association. He is also preparing a final report on this research for publication.

This project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. ■

A SIMPLER TIME?

Early Canadians were more complex than people think, say researchers

BY ALISON SCHNEIDER

A barn is raised in Upper Canada (now Ontario) by a work bee in the 19th century.



WORK BEE PHOTO FROM LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

With no electricity, few neighbours and none of the amenities of today's world, 19th-century rural Canadian settlers led a simple, solitary life — right?

Things were more complex than that, say University of Guelph historians. They're taking a fresh look at the lives of those early pioneers and finding that the traditional image of the pioneering family against the world is inaccurate.

Pioneers helped each other with large tasks, such as barn raising and harvesting crops. They worried about what their neighbours thought about them. They went shopping — and even kept their eyes open for the best deals in town.

In fact, say Profs. Douglas McCalla and Catharine Wilson of the Department of History, early Canadians were a lot like today's Canadians.

Working from two ends of the same string — McCalla is studying the economic history of Upper Canada (now Ontario) through rural account books from stores and farm ledgers, while Wilson is concentrating on collective “work bees” in the 19th century — they've come up with a consistent finding: Canadians weren't going it alone.

“The isolation of the rural farm has been overstated,” says McCalla. “If pioneers really were self-sufficient, then why did they have to go to stores at all?”

Contrary to the popular notion that early pioneers stuck it out in the wilderness, McCalla, who holds a Canada Research Chair in Rural History, says the isolation and self-sufficiency of rural families in Upper Canada are often exaggerated. All these families interacted with local communities, providing food and materials such as timber to their urban neighbours. He discovered that rural families depended on town vendors and store owners to provide them with their consumer wants and needs, things they lacked the time or the means to produce.

Rural families regularly bought simple commodities such as groceries (tea, tobacco and sugar) and textiles (especially cotton and wool). Farmers would often pay their bills by selling flour, butter, vegetables or wood, among other things.

McCalla began his look into Upper Canada's rural economy by examining the relationship between wheat farmers and the British wheat market. Although it was long believed that Canadian wheat farmers were growing the cash crop for British markets, there were many years when the British market received no exports at all.

“I asked how there were so many farms in Upper Canada ready to grow wheat in abundance when the British wheat market was opened to them in the 1840s,” he says. “I wondered what the farmers were doing through all the years before that.”

As it turns out, they were trading with their urban counterparts.

And they were savvy shoppers, too, says McCalla. By looking through farm accounts, he found that families bought different items from different stores, often travelling outside their

immediate neighbourhoods for more competitive prices. He believes this promoted more interaction within larger districts than many historians had originally thought, because stores were often the main source of community news as well as goods.

Their consumption patterns make these rural Upper Canadian families “more like us,” says McCalla. “There's a lot of complex variety in a world that most people think of as simple.”

He published an article titled “A World Without Chocolate: Grocery Purchases at Some Upper Canadian Grocery Stores, 1808-1861” in the spring 2005 issue of the journal *Agricultural History*.

Like today's Canadians, early pioneers went shopping — and even kept their eyes open for the best deals in town.

Although life in the bush was based on community participation and neighbourly behaviour, the relations weren't completely “warm and fuzzy,” says Wilson.

Often, these communities were structured like an unofficial labour market, and she has come to the same conclusion as McCalla: the world of Canadian pioneers in Ontario was a lot more complex than people think.

“These early communities and lifestyles may appear simple at first,” says Wilson. “But upon closer examination, they reveal complex informal networks and exchanges that had great practical value to people and changed focus in response to the economy and society.”

She cites the work bee as an example. Work bees were informal labour exchanges that tied communities together in mutual reliance.

Ye olde days of renting

EVEN PIONEERS MOVING INTO CANADA'S wilderness in the 19th century had to worry about rental payments, says history professor Catharine Wilson. In fact, she says, renting was common for early Upper Canada settlers, who leased their farms as early as the 1790s.

Tenants paid low rents for land and held the rights to sell improvements they made, such as clearing fields or building barns. This was an incentive for tenants to open the land and build new structures.

“This offered them an alternative way to become established on the land when they couldn't afford to buy it,” says Wilson.

Renting helped develop communities, too. Tenants had a legal interest in their leases, which they could sell or bequeath, much like the landowners used their estates.

They provided for each family's needs over the settlement period by redistributing labour and resources within the community.

Bees helped individual families with large-scale tasks they didn't have the required skills or combined physical strength for, such as barn raisings, harvests and quilting for the winter. In return, the hosting family was expected to fulfil certain requirements of the community, such as providing meals and entertainment for all those who helped with the task. Families that didn't conform to the community's expectations risked being ostracized and even abandoned economically, Wilson says.

Work bees provided structure to neighbourhoods and gave rural interactions greater meaning, establishing what was then considered to be “good neighbourly behaviour” within the community, she says. The male household head had to maintain social connections to make economic strides forward for the family. And younger members would use the bees for courtship, which would take place under the auspices of the community.

In other words, says Wilson, these networks that helped individual families also helped develop the community.

“These bees defined behaviour and spatial relations between the members of the family and the neighbourhood.”

Wilson, who grew up in a rural community, says there's still much to be learned about early Canadians, but rural history must be understood within its own context. McCalla agrees. He's a strong proponent of studying country store account books and surviving records of farm families to understand the practical and domestic aspects of early rural families. He says it's important to see how pioneers went about their daily lives and to get an accurate picture of how they interacted with local communities. ■

And because the lease was passed through families, tenants would stay on the same land for several generations. This helped build Upper Canada's earliest European settlements.

Wilson is the author of the book *A New Lease on Life: Landlords, Tenants and Immigrants in Ireland and Canada*. It examines immigrant families and their adaptation, focusing specifically on the landlord and tenant relationship and how it changed in the Irish and Canadian context. She's currently working on a scholarly work, *Tenants in Time*, that's based on her tenancy research and challenges long-held notions about pioneer ownership and property relations.

This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Looking at the past to understand the future

Why has Africa shifted into such a poor economy?

BY PAULA BIALSKI

International trade has been affecting society's stability since the days of Christopher Columbus and Marco Polo. Now, one University of Guelph professor hopes that a better picture of 19th-century West African history can help him understand the effects of changes in international trade on governance, social structure, gender structures and political stability in present-day West Africa.

Prof. Femi Kolapo, Department of History, believes that understanding the influence of trade and colonialism in lower Niger River communities will provide a better understanding of the current international economic and political situation in West Africa.

"What we will be able to learn is the impact of international trade on the political stability of a country and how the introduction of a new crop, new product or new exploitation of a resource can affect different sectors and aspects of a society," he says.

Kolapo is the first to link the entire Niger River subregion with different ecological and sociocultural backgrounds, a process he believes will help him uncover the factors that forced each

community to change after the onset of foreign interference.

To identify the particular types of changes that occurred in each society, he will also examine factors such as each community's proximity to the Atlantic seaboard — which provided shipping routes to foreign markets — and the level of each group's participation in new trade.

"I hope to understand why Africa has gradually shifted into such a poor economic condition and what relationship this bears to possibilities for democracy."

— Femi Kolapo

Kolapo says insight from this research can help policy advisers and decision-makers determine the best course of action in West Africa's struggles to develop. It can also help them determine how the foreign "regime of intervention" — aid programs offered by other countries

intended to propel West Africa's socio-economic development — can be optimized.

"I hope to understand why Africa has gradually shifted into such a poor economic condition and what relationship this bears to possibilities for democracy," he says. "I also want to know how these problems relate to the history of interaction between local West African societies and the international market."

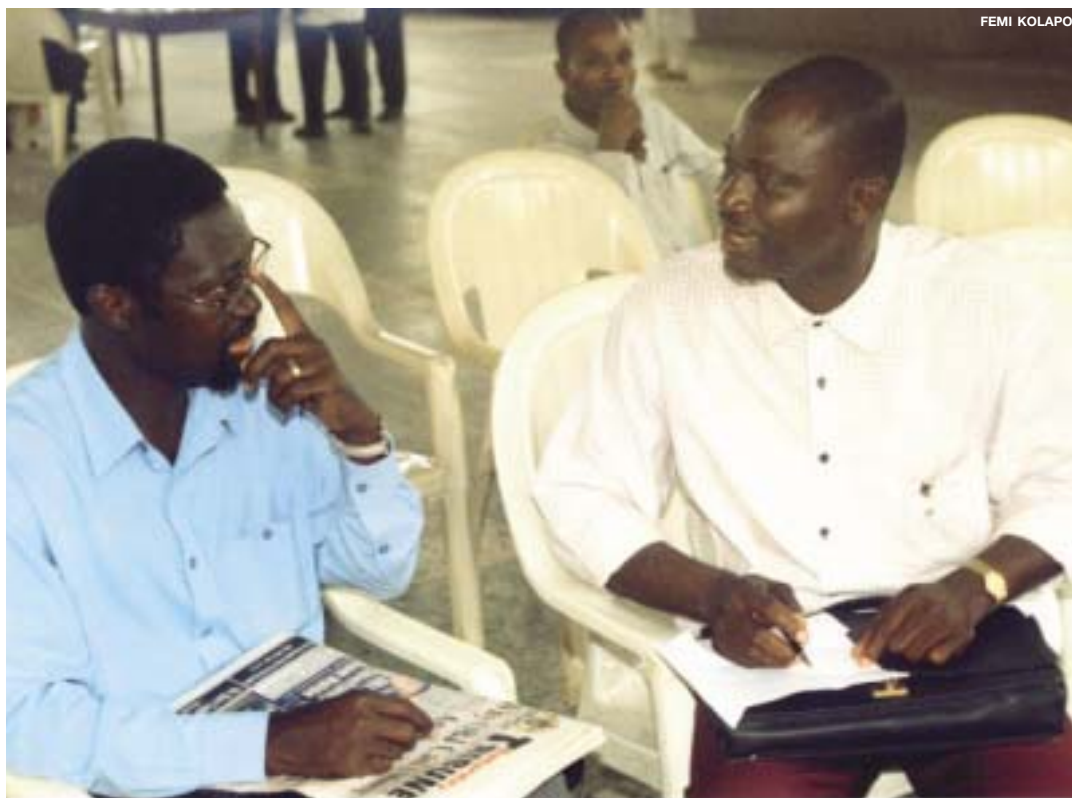
The Niger River provided surrounding communities with a direct link to international trade through the Atlantic seaboard. For example, the slave trade was a large and lucrative market not only for Europeans who engaged in it for over 300 years, but also for the elite Africans who held its control. When slavery was abolished in the 19th century, Europeans began to demand palm oil and other farm commodities instead, and a secure market for West African peasant farmers — who had few opportunities during the slave trade — finally opened up.

The shift to a new pattern of trade deeply affected the stability of the states and caused armed conflicts in some West African societies, says Kolapo. Each community evolved differently to meet the various market demands and pressures.

"As Europe began importing new commodities, it stimulated development in some of these West African societies," he says. "Some communities were able to expand their borders and became more powerful, but some were weakened and fell into crisis. We want to examine the factors that made this so."

Kolapo's research will take him to Nigeria to study the lower Niger River communities first-hand, as well as to archival collections in the United Kingdom and France and to available sources across Canada.

This study is sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. ■



History professor Femi Kolapo (left) discusses how foreign markets have influenced West African societies in order to aid the area's social and economic development.

THE WAGES OF FEAR

Terrorist attacks on food supply would cripple economy, say researchers

BY MURRAY TONG

The ongoing fear of terrorist threats holds much of the world in its grip. But terrorism isn't limited to attacks on human lives, say University of Guelph researchers. They're assessing the potential damage from an attack on North America's food supply.

Prof. Karl Meilke, Department of Agricultural Economics and Business, is part of a team that's predicting the economic impact of an agroterrorist attack, such as the introduction of a livestock disease. They say Canada could be economically devastated if its agricultural industry were attacked.

"There's a lack of legislation in Canada that deals directly with an agroterrorism threat," says Meilke. "And it's important to address the economic implications of an attack, so we're better prepared if one were to happen."

The discovery in May 2003 of a bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)-infected cow in Washington, which was traced back to an Alberta operation, illustrates the disastrous impact that animal health issues can have on the Canadian economy, says Meilke. But he believes a planned terrorist attack of a more contagious animal disease such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) would cause even greater economic damage.

"The BSE episode was isolated and naturally occurring," he says. "A terrorist attack would be co-ordinated, and FMD — unlike BSE — is highly contagious and easily transmitted."

Meilke and his colleagues modelled the economic effects of introducing FMD in Canada, the United States and Mexico, the three countries bound by the North American free trade agreement (NAFTA).

FMD is an easily transmitted viral disease that can cause fever,

appetite loss, tremors and reduced milk production in agriculturally important animals such as cows, pigs and sheep, although it has no effect on humans. It's the same disease that raged through the United Kingdom in 2001, costing the country close to \$7 billion Cdn in losses throughout the agriculture and food-processing chain and a similar amount in consumer- and tourism-related industries.

"There's a lack of legislation in Canada that deals directly with an agroterrorism threat."

— Karl Meilke

A terrorist-staged FMD outbreak in Canada would close borders between Canada and its FMD-free trading partners, including the United States, Mexico, Japan, western Europe and Australia. Meilke says that would be a major blow to Canada's heavily export-reliant economy (not unlike that seen during the BSE border closings). Without the U.S. market, Canada's livestock exports would almost disappear, while meat and dairy exports would fall by more than 80 per cent. Canadian production of livestock, meat products and dairy products would also fall significantly as a result of a deliberate attack and FMD eradication efforts.

Then there's the domino effect to consider, says Meilke. Less livestock production would mean less grain required as feed, which would lower already chronically depressed domestic grain prices. Canada's food-processing industry would also be crippled because meat products make up nearly one-quarter of Canada's food industry shipments and dairy products make up nearly one-fifth. If the Canada-U.S. border were closed after a Canadian FMD outbreak, the researchers believe that could leave the Canadian economy worse off by nearly \$2 billion, without even counting the costs of eradication or consumer backlash against meat products.

Meilke notes that an FMD attack on the United States or Mexico would benefit Canada if it stayed FMD-free, but a co-ordinated attack on the livestock sector in all three NAFTA countries would have disproportionately harmful effects on Canada because 70 per cent of its total agri-food exports (roughly \$25 billion) go to the States. This reliance on exports makes Canada particularly vulnerable to such an agroterrorist attack, he says.

"There would be tremendous far-reaching impacts on Canada if our products couldn't get across the border quickly and painlessly."

Meilke and his colleagues hope their results lead to more in-depth analyses of the economic effects of bioterrorism and help governments, companies and the public determine the best methods and locations to implement food security resources.

Meilke is working with Profs. John Cranfield and Karen Huff of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Business and Calum Turvey of Rutgers University. This research is being funded by the Rutgers Food Policy Institute and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. ■



Canada's export-heavy economy makes it especially vulnerable to an agroterrorist attack, such as introduction of a livestock disease, says a University of Guelph researcher.



TAKING RESEARCH TO THE STREETS

Sociologists look at street kids' survival strategies here and abroad

BY MURRAY TONG

As they weave their way along darkened paths, bar patrons headed for home and early morning prowlers don't pay much attention to the young girls selling flowers on the street. For them, it's just another part of the after-hours world of Quito, Ecuador's capital and second-largest city.

Young children living and working in the streets are an all-too-common sight in many other cities around the world. But for University of Guelph graduate student Vicky Maldonado, who first visited Quito six years ago, it was shocking. Now, she's surveying these street youth about their survival strategies and the social and economic issues they face, to learn more about their lives and to help them get off the streets.

"There are so many children out there who don't have a childhood because they're working when they're so young," says Maldonado, who's studying with Prof. Bill O'Grady of the



Department of Sociology and Anthropology. "I thought to myself: 'How can the government, or anyone else, accept the fact that there are children on the street?'"

After developing an 80-question survey with O'Grady, Maldonado returned to Ecuador — the country of her parents' birth — last summer to hear the stories of these Ecuadorian street children, how they got there and what they're doing to cope. She will use the information she's gathered to compare these experiences with those of Toronto street youth, to see what parallels exist between the street youth of two different continents. From there, she and O'Grady hope to make recommendations to assemble better social policies and outreach programs

Quito's bustling streets are crowded with youth selling fruit, vegetables and crafts for meagre earnings — often not enough to get them off the streets.



STUART MCCOOK



STUART MCCOOK

that can address specific issues to help alleviate this worldwide problem.

Maldonado originally thought it would be difficult to coax answers from the street youth, but she found that most of her interview subjects were co-operative and willing to have their stories heard.

“I didn’t have to ask them to do the survey — they were eager to do it,” she says. “They even thanked me for the opportunity to speak. For them, the reward was that someone cared, that someone listened.”

That was different from their normal day-to-day existence, far from their homes. In many cases, impoverished young people come from rural highlands to Ecuador’s major cities to find greater opportunities for themselves and their families. Some come down from the mountains with vegetables and foodstuffs to sell in the markets. But if their homes are too far away, they often can’t return at night. Instead, they must stay on the streets.

It isn’t so different

from the plight of many street youth in Canadian cities such as Toronto, says Maldonado. She believes they are among the victims of the widening gap between rich and poor that plagues the entire world and hits Latin America particularly hard.

“There’s more of a cycle-of-poverty effect in Ecuador,” she says. “It’s not as easy as many people think to get off the streets. It’s more than a change of clothes.”

“I thought to myself: ‘How can the government, or anyone else, accept the fact that there are children on the street?’”

— Vicky Maldonado

Most of these street youth, she adds, don’t make enough money to get themselves or their families off the streets.

There’s also a significant difference, not always apparent, between individual street children, says Maldonado. In Ecuador, they’re roughly divided into two groups: *niños en la calle* (children *in* the street), who work in the streets for meagre wages but are able to go home at night, and *niños de la calle* (children *of* the street), who work and live on the streets. She is also examining the issues and problems confronting each of these groups to get a broader perspective on how kids from different backgrounds deal with street life.

Despite the problems she sees, however, Maldonado says there’s hope. She’s noticed significantly fewer children living on the streets than she saw six years ago. And for the most part, she’s also found that children have an easier time coping on the streets than adults because they’re adaptable and become quickly accustomed to street life, remaining logical about why they work there. In fact, she observed that many of the children live busy, varied lives, often working in the morning, then putting on school uniforms and attending classes in the afternoon.

The street youth receive some help from agencies and organizations such as the Salesianos (the Salesian Order), an international Roman Catholic organization that builds Catholic schools around the world. One of its schools in

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP << Children play at La Tola School in Quito, Ecuador, a Roman Catholic school established by the Salesian Order. La Tola is one of several Ecuadorian schools that offer special classes and medical services to the nation’s street youth.

LEFT << Children selling fruit are a common sight on Ecuador’s streets.

RIGHT >> Quito, Ecuador’s capital and second-largest city with a population of 1.4 million. It’s been called the most beautiful city in South America, but it also has its share of problems, including large numbers of street youth.

Ecuador, La Tola School in Quito, holds classes in the afternoon to allow students to work in the morning, offers medical and dental services, and provides special education for children who have never attended school.

Organizations like the Salesianos make a huge difference in many children’s lives, but they must continue to grow and expand their services, says Maldonado. By learning more about the experience of street youth in different parts of the world, she and O’Grady hope to find more effective ways to reach out to them.

“This type of research has to get back to the people you’re studying,” says Maldonado. “Hopefully, it will benefit these street children in the form of better social policy and improved outreach program services.”

This research was funded by an international field studies grant from the University of Guelph’s Centre for International Programs and the Richard and Sophia Hungerford Graduate Scholarship. ■

Cultivating young farmers

Honduran youth gain agricultural experience through innovative program

BY ALICIA ROBERTS



Young Hondurans are getting their hands dirty — and gaining practical experience in farm fields — through an international agricultural program that helps cultivate that precious natural resource known as “human capital.”

The program, called “The Role of Participatory Research by Youth in Food Security and Natural Resource Management,” was developed by the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (known by the Spanish acronym CIAT) in collaboration with the University of Guelph and the University of British Columbia. It’s preparing budding farmers, researchers and rural extension workers for productive agricultural careers.

“Everyone is impressed by the skills of the young people,” says Prof. Sally Humphries of Guelph’s Department of Sociology and Anthropology. “They’ve been turned on by research and are now being recognized and valued for their skills. That’s remarkable.”

Humphries has been working for 10 years with Honduran agronomists in a non-governmental organization called Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras (FIPAH), which is dedicated to supporting participatory agricultural research with Honduran hillside farmers. Since the youth program began three years ago, FIPAH agronomists have trained more than 240 young people aged 12 to 19.

The program involves students in experiential field projects such as organic vegetable growing experiments, organic fertilization of fruit trees, research and testing of natural insecticides, comparing different composting methods, forms of local garbage management and the reforestation of micro-watersheds.

The students work together in agricultural research teams in their own communities on weekends. FIPAH works with local teachers to train students to conduct research, as well as share what they’ve learned with local youth whose families can’t afford to send them to school.

“Community research brings youth and adults together to look for solutions to local problems,” says Humphries. “Through the research teams and their interaction with adult researchers, young people are having their ideas and concerns recognized in their communities.”

And these youth have really grown into their research roles, she adds. Their fresh perspectives on agricultural problems and issues have made them leaders in their communities.

“The interesting thing is that young people, who are less burdened by the problems of feeding their families, are really the leaders in innovation. They have the most creative ideas. They are the ones most concerned about their environment. The research teams serve to empower them.”



Honduran rural youth are working on agricultural research projects and gaining valuable field experience, thanks to an international program that aims to prepare the country’s next generation of farmers for future challenges.

The success of the program in Honduras has inspired CIAT to look for funding for similar projects in Nicaragua and Colombia. Meanwhile, the youth groups in Honduras are working with CIAT and the University of Guelph/FIPAH to find new donors to support their work in Honduras.

The youth research program was sponsored from 2001 to 2004 by the Canadian International Development Agency through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research-Canada Linkage Fund. USC-Canada continues to support rural youth through its Seeds of Survival program in Honduras. ■

Haiti's troubled history

Civil strife runs deep in this turbulent nation

BY CHRIS STOCKMAN

Rebellion and unrest in Haiti made headlines around the world in 2004. But one University of Guelph professor says the civil strife has its roots in events and issues long before the violent outbreaks that ousted Haiti's government.

"Haiti is a nation rich in history and culture, and its stability is vitally important to the entire Caribbean region," says Prof. Karen Racine, Department of History.

In 1804, Haiti gained political independence from France to become the world's first black republic, as well as the first independent Latin American country. That was a significant victory at a time when African slavery was still predominant throughout England, Spain and the Americas.

Racine is researching how Haiti was used as a tool for political propaganda in Britain from 1790 to 1830. Many British lobby groups, including plantation owners and abolitionists, hoped to use the new nation for their own economic and political gain — as a centre for manufacturing and trade, as a supply of natural resources and as a way to expand their presence in the Caribbean at a time when French power was waning.

"In the early 19th century, Christian evangelicals and white abolitionists in Britain and

the United States viewed the independent black republic of Haiti as sort of a case study for the redemption of the enslaved African race," Racine says.

These writers and activists tended to emphasize the orderly, humane and progressive nature of the republic's laws, she says. But British plantation owners, who had significant vested interests in the continuation of slavery on British Caribbean islands, vigorously depicted Haiti as a lawless land of baby killers and voodoo worshippers to scare the British public and politicians. British patriots pointed to the Haitian Revolution in 1804 as an example of the failure of France to civilize its colony, and argued that the British were better colonizers and overseers.

"Essentially, the lessons that the various interest groups drew from the Haitian experience reveals something significant about the way elements of British society started thinking about themselves and their empire in the early 19th century," Racine says.

She has consulted dozens of newspapers and journals from the era and has used archival material from the British Library in London, the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, the New York Public Library and the University of Florida's extensive Haitian collection.

Last year, Racine attended an international conference at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad that commemorated the 200th anniversary of Haitian independence. She intends to eventually expand her research into a book about Haiti during the era of emperors Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe (1806 to 1820).

This research is being funded by a new faculty grant from the University of Guelph. ■

The Haitian Revolution

July 14, 1789: The French Revolution commences with the storming of the Bastille in Paris.

August 1791: The Haitian Revolution begins on the French colony of Saint-Domingue with a successful slave uprising. By early 1792, slaves control most of the north.

1793: Britain and Spain declare war on France.

1798: Former slave and guerrilla leader Toussaint Louverture begins a massive military campaign against British forces, which leave Saint-Domingue by October.

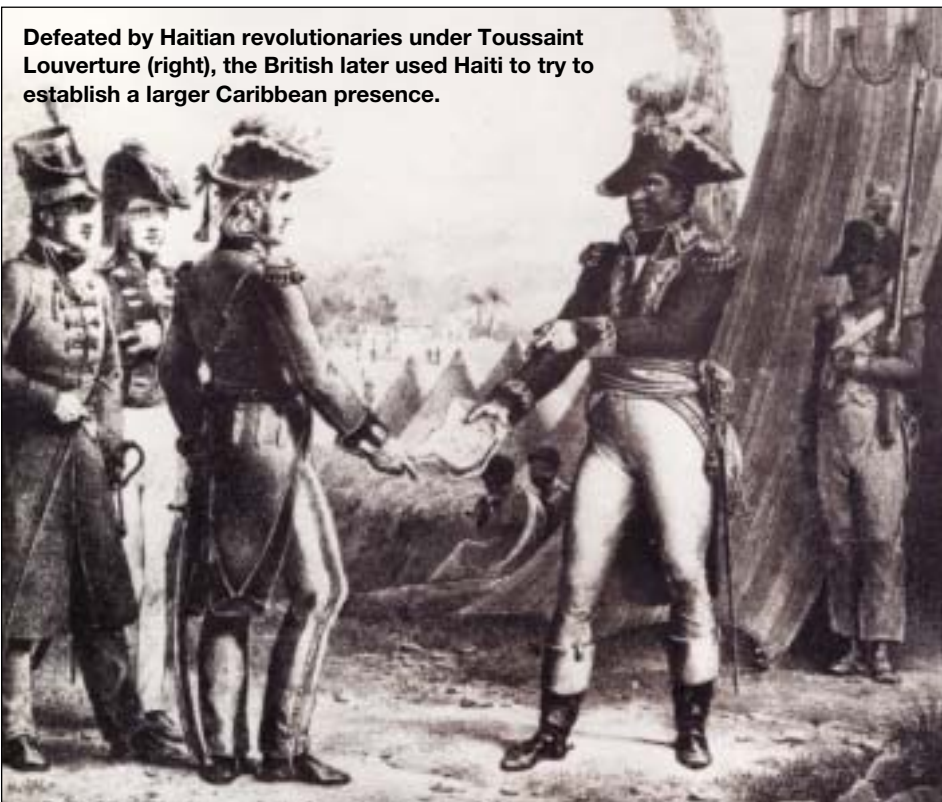
1801: After defeating Spain in neighbouring Santo Domingo (now Dominican Republic) and winning a five-month civil war, Toussaint declares himself governor-general for life of Saint-Domingue and publishes a new constitution abolishing slavery.

1802: Napoleon sends a huge military force to reconquer Saint-Domingue. Toussaint is captured and sent to a French prison.

1803: Toussaint dies in prison. Inflamed by his death, rebels drive French forces from Saint-Domingue.

January 1, 1804: Revolutionary commander Jean-Jacques Dessalines declares Saint-Domingue's independence and is named governor-general for life. He renames the new nation Haiti, the aboriginal (Taino) word for "land of mountains."

Defeated by Haitian revolutionaries under Toussaint Louverture (right), the British later used Haiti to try to establish a larger Caribbean presence.



THE ULTIMATE CURSE

How Nigerian women made war against big oil

BY CLARE ILLINGWORTH AND MURRAY TONG

Revolts led by Nigerian women against the Niger Delta petroleum industry in 2002 and 2003 resulted in a 40-per-cent shutdown of oil production in the area. The women used unusual weapons — their naked bodies and nothing more.

In many cultures worldwide, exposing female genitalia is a way of imposing social death through ostracization, which may in turn lead to actual demise. Nigerian women's radical actions and subsequent triumph have led a University of Guelph researcher to look deeper into the troubles.

Prof. Terisa Turner, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, found that pollution, poverty and the destruction of a way of life sparked the multi-ethnic revolt. Through interviews and historical research, she is now discovering gendered modes of resistance to the hardships suffered by these oil communities.

A panel from "Nakedness and Power," written by Leigh Brownhill and Terisa Turner, illustrated by Seth Tobocman, depicts the protests led by Nigerian women that shut down 40 per cent of the area's oil production. (From *World War 3 Illustrated*, No. 35)



"This revolt represents the first time so many different Nigerian peoples have united from the grassroots to make demands of oil companies," says Turner. "Their success has sparked similar actions that aim to create sustainable rural economies from those ravaged by the oil industry."

Over the past 40 years, oil production in Nigeria's Niger River Delta, she found, has particularly affected women because pollution and fallout from industry affect agriculture, food processing and fishing industries, which are dominated by women in that country. Some 90 per cent of Shell's oil spills worldwide occur in Nigeria. Spills have poisoned fish and shellfish populations, important food sources for many of Nigeria's inhabitants. For example, a particularly devastating spill in September 2003 in Bayelsa State left 10,000 people without drinking water and spoiled the shrimp and lobster fishing season, which brought both food and employment to the area.

With their food supply and livelihoods destroyed by oil spills, women have taken their case directly to the oil companies.

"In Nigeria, food production, processing and marketing are highly labour-intensive industries that are dominated by women," says Turner. "Oil production and its environmen-

tal effects have essentially left women without any alternatives."

On July 8, 2002, about 600 women occupied ChevronTexaco's Escravos oil export terminal — Africa's largest — for 10 days. The weapon these otherwise unarmed women used was what they call the curse of nakedness. They exposed their naked bodies, particularly their vaginas, which is believed to impose social death and demise.

By exposing this part of the body, the women are signalling that "life comes from the vagina, I wish we'd never borne you," says Turner.

Those so castigated by the women — in this case, oil company staff — cannot survive in their society with such a hex: their friends and family shun them and even refuse to feed them. The relative success of this occupation inspired 16 other oil facility takeovers by women and their male allies from many ethnic groups throughout 2002 and 2003. As Nigerians were shutting down production, millions of consumers worldwide boycotted the oil majors to demand an end to pollution, oil wars and global warming.

But the curse of nakedness isn't exclusive to Nigeria, says Turner. In Kenya, cash crop and tourism industries, largely foreign-owned and expanded at the World Bank's insistence, have led to increased land use and environmental damage. These industries also encroached on female-controlled Kenyan agricultural activities such as corn and banana production for local consumption. In response, women used nakedness to stop police from defending unsustainable land use for export crops.

Nigerian oil: By the numbers

WHILE OIL PRODUCTION BRINGS PROSPERITY to some countries, Prof. Terisa Turner notes that Nigeria's economic downturn coincided with its exploitation of vast oil supplies in the 1970s. Over the past 30 years, the number of Nigerians subsisting on less than \$1 a day has nearly doubled from 36 per cent to 70 per cent — meaning 90 million people live in extreme poverty even though oil revenues have topped \$350 billion US over this period.

Instead of being injected back into the Nigerian economy, these revenues leave the country via profit remittances by foreign oil companies, corruption, and military and luxury imports, she says. And the foreign-dominated oil industry is increasingly using out-of-country workers rather than local Nigerians.

Turner is teaching a course called "The Sociology of Power: Oil, War and Imperialism," in which she uses this case study.

Turner says the curse of nakedness has permeated the West, too. A famous example is the Dixie Chicks, the American country music trio who showed their displeasure with the 2003 U.S.-led war on Iraq by appearing nude on the cover of the national magazine *Entertainment Weekly*. And the organization Baring Witness has attracted attention to its anti-war cause through naked protests, where nude bodies are arranged to create the peace sign and spell out words such as “PEACE” and “SOS.”

Nakedness and the vagina, Turner says, have been used throughout history to send powerful messages of life. For example, European women used to walk naked over farm fields to ensure fertile crops that season. And the Nigerian women who brought the curse of nakedness on oil company workers were not only symbolically refusing to give them life, but also refusing to surrender their own lives.

“It’s an affirmation of life in the face of death,” she says. “The undeniable fact is that all life comes from the vagina, and when death looms — from starvation, pollution or whatever — women everywhere in the world throughout history have exposed themselves to fight it.”

In Nigeria, the curse of nakedness worked. The women’s actions spurred a shutdown of 40 per cent of the country’s oil production. Turner estimates that, as a result, the government and oil companies lost \$11 million US and \$2.5 million a day, respectively. And in early 2005, protests stalled a proposed west African natural gas pipeline. Collectively, these citizens’ actions have put Niger Delta oil resources significantly under popular control.

The 2002–2003 protests led ChevronTexaco to negotiate a memorandum of understanding with the insurgents requiring the company to relocate the community, clean up the environment, financially compensate people over 60 and make part-time workers permanent. It did not, however, address the women’s major demand: that ChevronTexaco and the other oil companies leave Nigeria completely.

Turner hopes to bring to light how peasant women and their allies are defending their sustainable subsistence way of life against international oil and the Nigerian government that supports it.

“I want to show that beyond the environmental damage caused by oil production, there’s human desolation as well,” she says. “This planet can continue to thrive only without petroleum. We’ve got to break the oil habit, and in this, Nigerian women are our allies.”

University of Guelph undergraduates Kristy Weekes and Katherine Perrott and University of Toronto graduate student Leigh Brownhill collaborated on this study, which is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. ■

The Irish did their homework

Rural households in 1900s contributed to worldwide markets

BY ALISON SCHNEIDER

Volatile world markets, climate change and global instability are making it difficult for today’s farming families to make ends meet living only off the land. Many must find jobs off the farm as well. But this isn’t just a modern issue, says a University of Guelph professor. Even farming households in turn-of-the-century Ireland worked at other jobs. The twist is that they did those jobs at home.

In rural Ulster, Northern Ireland, textile production by women of the household — wives, daughters and servants — was common in the first decade of the 20th century, says Prof. Kevin James, Department of History. Industrial production in simple farm households — or “homework,” as it was called — not only supplied international markets with goods but also redefined the early 1900s household to include individuals outside the family.

James says this casts new light on the way “work” was perceived back then.

“The primary income within the family didn’t always remain constant; it shifted under the continual relocation of work. Textile production could provide more money than farming and vice versa.”

Even within the at-home textile industry itself, things were more complicated than they first appeared. A single wage was paid to the household, but the work involved many contributors of varying abilities,

including children and servants. In examining the Irish censuses from 1851, 1901 and 1911, James also discovered that this paid work was not enumerated. Although vital to international markets, homework wasn’t considered “true work” by workers or census takers, he says.

In addition, for the purposes of analyzing work activity, it was often more appropriate to consider the household as a whole, rather than just the homeowners. Many non-family members such as servants resided in households and contributed to labour. Non-relatives were seen as important providers and contributed equally to the success of the home.

James’s initial interest in the topic began with the question of whether farming families were principally farming or otherwise engaged. Many people believe these rural households lived exclusively off the land, he says, but rural livelihoods and industrial work often went hand in hand.

He discusses rural Ulster’s textile industry in the article “Merchants, Manufacturers and the Ballymena Hand-Loom Weavers: Market Conflict in the Ulster Brown Linen Trade,” published in the journal *Saothar*, Vol. 27 (2002).

Funding for this research was provided by the University of Ulster’s Institute for Ulster Scots Studies and the Ireland-Canada University Foundation. ■



IRISH TEXTILE JOURNAL

Handfuls make the load: Early industrial production in Ireland often took place in simple farm households like this one in 1880s County Antrim, with everyone — including children and servants — contributing according to their abilities.

COVER STORY

WHATCHA WANT . . . IS A CANADIAN IDOL

Photo exhibit captures the reality behind reality TV

STORY BY MURRAY TONG PHOTOS BY SUZY LAKE



2003 *Canadian Idol* runner-up Gary Beals belts it out for the camera. Fine art professor Suzy Lake explores the relationship between camera and subject in her art installation *Whatcha really really want...*



Ryan Malcolm, the first Canadian Idol.

Reality television has changed the shape of modern entertainment, spawning runaway hits such as *Survivor*, *The Amazing Race* and *The Apprentice*. These shows, and myriad others, throw a spotlight on ordinary people, parading them before vast television audiences and transforming them into instant superstars — a sort of retelling of the Pygmalion myth for our age of reality television, mass media and lightning-paced celebrity.

In Canada, no program has taken the idea as far as *Canadian Idol*, the television sensation that serves up aspiring young pop singers to a panel of music industry professionals (and millions of viewers) for close scrutiny of their talents. After weeding out initial contestants, the panel narrows the field to 32 competitors, who then give their all on national TV. Each week, viewers then vote for their favourites and eliminate hopefuls. Ultimately, a new Canadian Idol is anointed with fame, fortune and a record deal.

During the phenomenally successful show's first season in 2003 (6.5 million viewers watched the two-hour finale), University of Guelph fine art professor Suzy Lake spent six weeks documenting the *Canadian Idol* entourage. She travelled to audition sites in Montreal and Toronto, shooting 15 rolls of film, to dissect this cultural phenomenon and determine what it tells us about ourselves and our perceptions of stardom.

The result of this venture is her art installation *Whatcha really really want . . .*, which provides an on-the-ground perspective of the entire auditioning process, capturing the compulsion for fame, the worship of youth and the glamour of the Pygmalion myth. The title of the exhibit refers to a hit song by the Spice Girls, the former chart-topping U.K. pop music group that was likewise fabricated by talent scouts, judging panels and skilled marketing along the lines of *Canadian Idol*.

The idea of being caught on film and preserved for posterity, the contrast between on- and off-camera personas and the anticipation of instant celebrity are pervasive themes in *Whatcha*

really really want . . . In her photographs, Lake conveys the energy between camera and subject, the sense that candidates knew they were being committed to celluloid.

"What I tended to do was select the photographs where it was really apparent there was a relationship between the performer and the camera," she says. "That could be the relationship between, say, someone obviously posing for me, someone actually posing for another photographer, and someone watching someone else being photographed."

To capture the *Idol* atmosphere on film, Lake followed the candidates through the labyrinthine audition process, from outdoor queues to crowded registration areas to auditions to the

Canadian Idol transcended its target audience and became part of our culture.

sudden-death voting periods before TV cameras and national audiences.

In her shots of the massive audition lineups snaking down city streets, she shows crowds of aspiring stars — unshaven, unshowered, running on little sleep, their enthusiasm undiminished by all-night parties and long waits — as they muster the energy to mug for the camera. She follows them inside, where handlers pin identification numbers on the performers, herd them through makeup and guide them through pre-auditions and auditions. That's when the Pygmalion process begins, transforming so-called normal people into glamorous-looking potential idols.

These images lead to Lake's photos of *Idol* finalists pouring heart and soul into their performances under ethereal blue-purple lighting while camera operators only a few metres away capture the moment, and stage technicians, makeup artists and producers are already preparing the next performer.

The implication is clear: although fame is a lifelong dream for many, it's a mundane manufactured commodity for the industry. In fact, Lake notes, the show itself is really a season-long TV focus group playing as entertainment, gauging what audiences want to hear and see in a pop idol, from voice to looks to musical repertoire to hairstyles.

Although audiences are media-savvy enough to see *Canadian Idol*'s marketing mission, she says, the Pygmalion factor is irresistible, as demonstrated by the show's staggering popularity. But a necessary ingredient to this premise is youth, she adds, pointing out that show contestants must be between the ages of 16 and 26.

"The show is based on the glamour of Pygmalion, the glamour of discovering an unknown and turning him or her into a superstar." A 50-year-old "Pygmalion" would be a lot less glamorous than a 20-year-old one, she notes. "And *Canadian Idol* is about glamour."

Glamour, beauty, gender and image all intersect in *Whatcha really really want . . .*, but Lake's exploration of these themes predates the *Idol* work. Paul Petro, owner of the Toronto-based Paul Petro Contemporary Art, where *Whatcha really really want . . .* opened in September 2004, points to the photographer's earlier shows, including *Beauty* and the group exhibitions *Breakfast of Champeens* and *Christmas Spice*, which communicate the longing for youth and beauty through depictions of middle-aged personas trying to stay young.

The worship of youth takes many forms in Lake's photographs. One image shows hormone pills as breakfast food — an attempt to preserve

youthfulness. Lake herself appears in one life-sized silkscreen, donning leopard-print tights. Images of a middle-aged woman applying lipstick thickly and glamour shots highlighting yellowed teeth and a post-menopausal beard — people past their sell-by date by standards of our fast-moving, youth-oriented culture — are coupled with images of ephemeral peonies, which explode into full bloom early in the season before drooping under the weight of their own beauty.

"Suzy's got that sort of national treasure status in Canada," says Petro, who has exhibited much of her photography. "Her work in the early '70s was so far forward of its time that it's inspiring younger generations of artists to this day."

Lake's highly personal oeuvre, which explores gender politics and self-image — often using herself as a subject — also informs her teaching, in which she demonstrates how conceptual art theory and techniques can be used to visualize concepts and issues.

“It’s important that students start understanding the photograph as something other than just a ‘print’ or a narrative or photojournalism,” she says. “Art can be *about* photography or *about* painting — about the creation of beauty, as in Pygmalion.”

Canadian Idol owes much of its success to the voting process, which involves the audience in constructing its own Pygmalion myth, says Lake. She explores voters’ criteria in *Whatcha really really want . . .* by assembling her own pool of *Idol* contestants — 50 friends, students and colleagues from the University of Guelph and Guelph’s art community. Numbers pasted on their chests and microphones in hand against a glitter backdrop, they were photographed in pantomimed rapture, then Lake invited visitors to choose their favourites. At the end of each week of the three-week show, she tabulated the votes and posted new photos of the winning participants.

Lake hopes to get visitors to contemplate the criteria for their choices and, by extension, what they see as glamorous or beautiful. She believes *Canadian Idol* viewers generally vote for a guaranteed, comfortable sell instead of daring and original acts, even though the latter may be more distinctive and harder to forget. The mass voting aspect of the show means truly original acts can go only so far, she says, and members of the public may be electing their own false idols.

“What we’re seeing is voting for quality, but it’s actually a fairly generic quality, rather than something different. People’s tastes grow. If you’re only affirming what they already know, they’ll just go on to the next pop idol.”

In the first season, Ryan Malcolm walked away with the top prize, but Lake was more interested in some of the other contestants, including first runner-up Gary Beals and fourth runner-up Jenny Gear. She believes Gear, in particular, had star quality in her voice and made interesting song choices, but she couldn’t engage with the TV camera in the same way she could engage with audiences.

“She was singing all kinds of alternative music and really strange song choices, like Leonard Cohen,” says Lake. “A female singing Leonard Cohen has a kind of morose irony that’s really too sophisticated for a lot of people to support.”

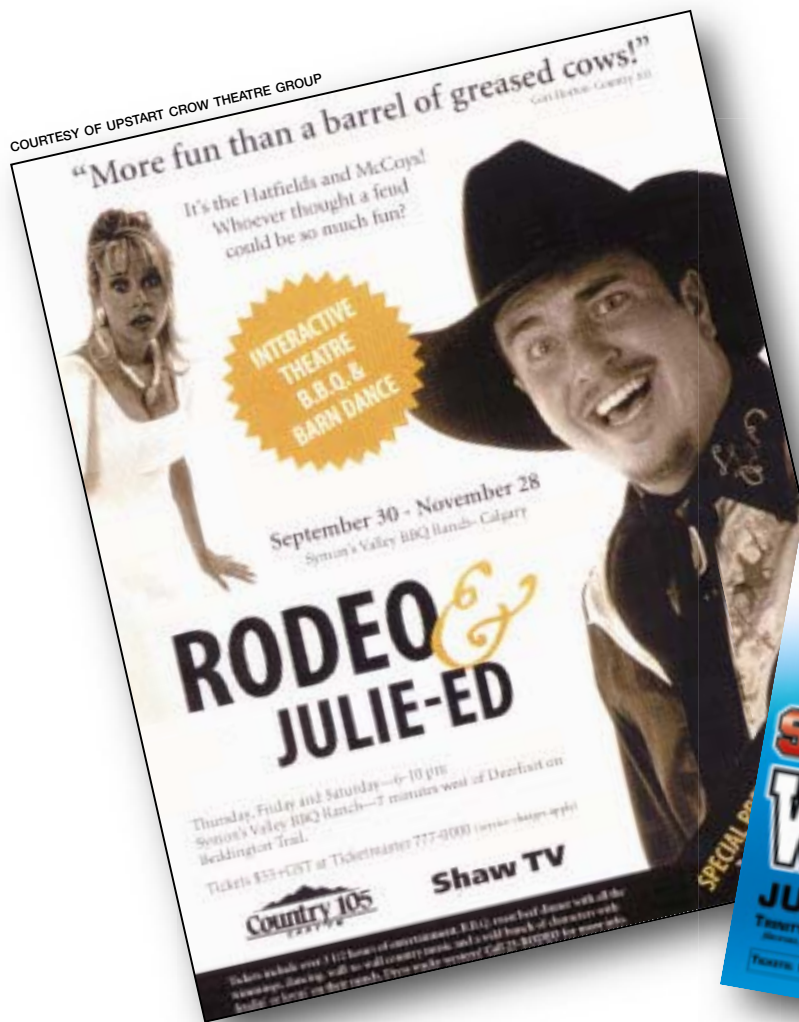
Still, Lake looks forward to future seasons of *Canadian Idol*, which she enjoys watching with her husband and daughter. Although she’s interested in the show’s reflection of celebrity, youth and other modern values, she, too, has been swept up in the glamour and suspense of who will become Canada’s next superstar.

“I think the *Idol* programmers, starting with FOX TV and *American Idol*, assumed they were targeting the youth culture audience. The fact that *Canadian Idol* transcended its target audience and became part of our culture is remarkable.”

Whatcha really really want . . . will also be showing at the Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center in Buffalo and at France’s Centre de Photographie de Lectoure later this year. ■



Thousands of *Idol* hopefuls packed Toronto’s streets during the show’s first season.



THE BARD ONLINE

Canadian adaptations of Shakespeare turn to web publishing

BY PAULA BIALSKI

Along with maple syrup, beavers and hockey, the way we approach Shakespeare helps define us as Canadians, says a University of Guelph researcher.

Prof. Daniel Fischlin, School of English and Theatre Studies, is working on the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP), compiling a unique online database that features hundreds of Canadian adaptations — alterations and rewrites — of the Bard's renowned scripts.

"The way Canadians adapt Shakespeare is a transmission of cultural values," says Fischlin. "We see patterns with how people change the stories or the language to suit the experiences

they're facing in their own communities. This theatrical activity gives us insight into communities across the country."

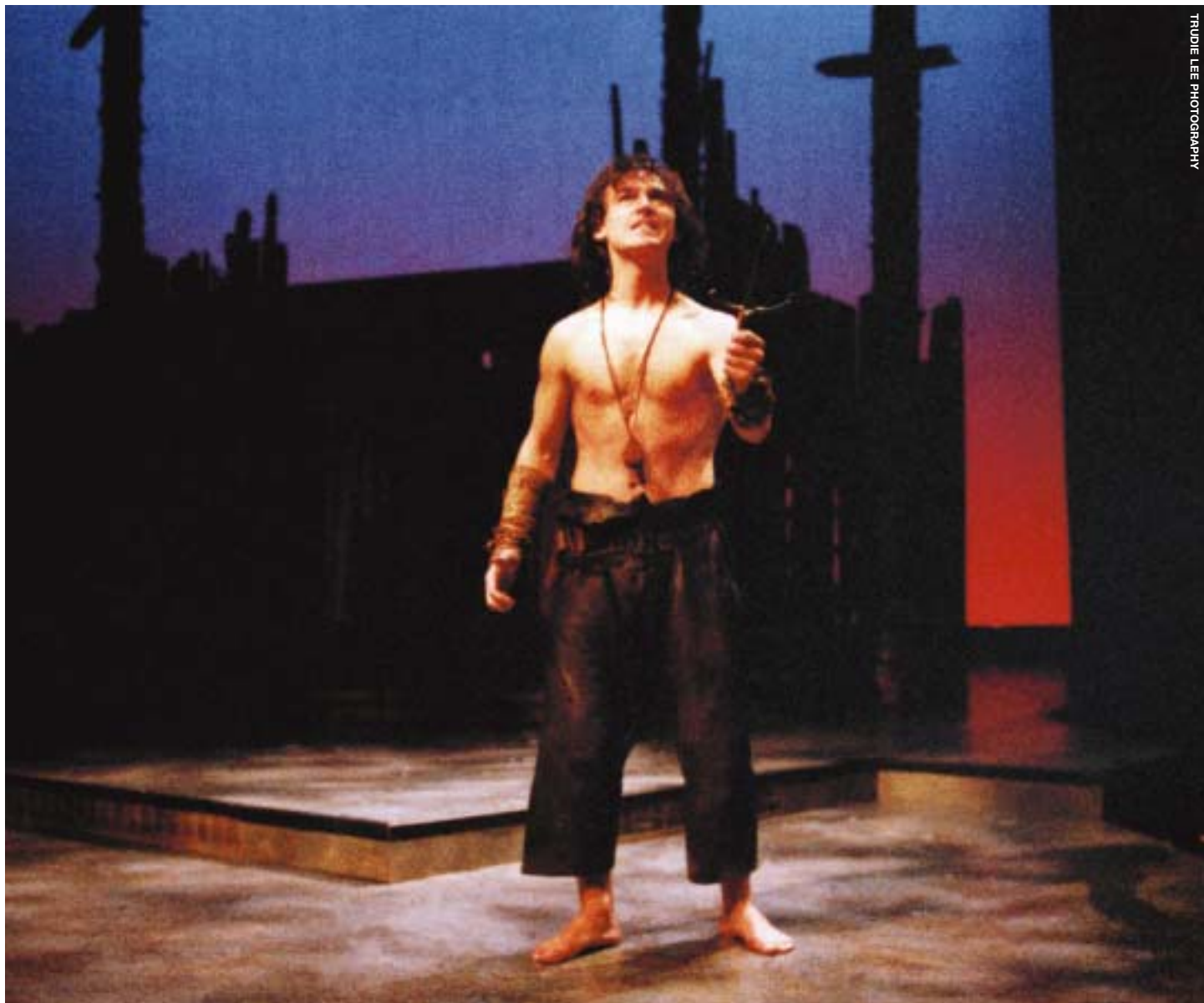
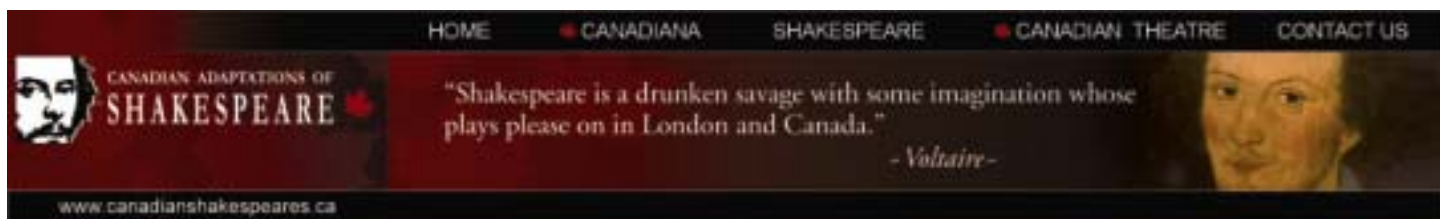
Since 2001, the CASP team, which has employed more than 20 graduate students, has uncovered some 500 plays and filled eight

Sharing information on the web will invite Canadians to explore the many different ways Shakespeare has been adapted over the years.

filing cabinets with texts, films, digital images, interviews and cartoons. Now, they've put all this online so Canadians will have access to the information, which ranges widely in obscurity, history and depth.

"The ways black, aboriginal, female, youth, gay and lesbian and fringe groups have adapted their own versions of a number of the classic plays are an expression of how Canadians define themselves," says Fischlin. "Most of these texts would have been either lost or unavailable without CASP."

Fischlin, Guelph's first arts-based researcher to receive a Premier's Research



TRUDIE LEE PHOTOGRAPHY

Excellence Award (PREA), says some of the scripts CASP holds make more of an impact than others, such as an adaptation of *Othello*, a play that looks at racial differences, produced by an all-black theatre company in Toronto.

He hopes putting the information on the web will invite Canadians to explore the many different ways Shakespeare has been adapted over the years. He and his team have worked closely with computer programmers to adapt a science-based programming language (ColdFusion) for arts-based data.

The website, launched in the spring of 2004, boasts more than 3,000 pieces of text

and multimedia materials. Fischlin says it's easy to search. A specific search function, for example, allows researchers to identify the considerable number of *Hamlet* adaptations written in Canada over the years, then enables them to get more specific details through hot links to the project database describing what researchers have discovered about these adaptations.

Technical support for this project was provided by Bob Creedy and Michael Denny. This research is sponsored by the University of Guelph, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and PREA. ■

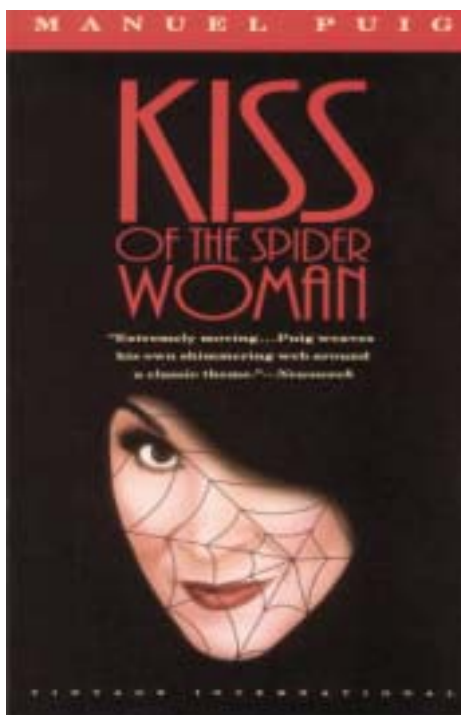
TOP ▲ Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare home page.

ABOVE ▲ Shaun Smyth as the Mad Boy in Michael O'Brien's *Mad Boy Chronicle*, an adaptation of *Hamlet*.

OPPOSITE PAGE << Characters from *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* duke it out in the world's biggest sporting event in Shakespeare's *World Cup* by Chris Colcoluzzi and Matt Toner, while Peter Skagen's *Rodeo* and *Julie-Ed* moves the pair of star-crossed lovers and their feuding households from fair Verona to the Wild West.



PAULA BIALSKI



COURTESY OF KNOPF PUBLISHING GROUP

Bold artistic experiments in Hispanic film, literature and performance art, says Prof. Martha Nandorfy, have fuelled fresh perspectives on gender, race and politics. One of the most famous examples is the Argentine novel *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, which was adapted into a film and a musical, in which two prisoners discuss politics and esthetics within their shared jail cell.

Thinking along the margins

Researcher looks at Latino artists' reshaping of gender, cultural politics

BY MURRAY TONG

From Franco's Fascist Spain to the colonization of Latin America, Hispanic indigenous peoples around the world have suffered and resisted a long history of political and social repression. But still, their cultures have flourished. A University of Guelph professor is looking at how the arts have become a major vehicle for Hispanics to examine human rights issues and think beyond traditional definitions of society, family and community.

Artists are important to the reshaping of politics and human rights, says Prof. Martha Nandorfy of the School of English and Theatre Studies. They can make social and political issues accessible to people of all stripes through their art, provoking discussion and debate that reach beyond the exclusive domain of policy-makers, politicians, "experts" and lawyers.

Nandorfy is interested in Latin American cultures, where artists' bold experiments in literature, film and performance art have resisted repressive norms by exploring multiple views on gender, sexual identity, ethnicity and what constitutes a "family."

"They're experimenting with the representation of sexual identity to subvert and undo the patriarchal structures they were born into," says Nandorfy. "And because they're artists, they play leading roles in envisioning and defining new social structures that break free from this patriarchy."

Many Hispanic peoples, particularly Chicanos (Mexican-Americans) and Mestizos (people of mixed European and African or Amerindian ancestry), have been marginalized and exploited for centuries, says Nandorfy. And many Hispanic artists share a common tendency towards utopian thinking because they are driven by hope.

Given the trans-Atlantic scope of her study, she explores libertarian responses to Franco's Fascist rule over Spain after the Spanish Civil War and to Argentine revolutionary leader Ernesto "Che" Guevara's seminal writings about "the new man." Those writings promote a vision of strong social interests and fair labour divisions while rejecting colonialism, but are blind to gender, racial and ethnic issues.

In particular, Nandorfy is examining the social, political and literary currents that influenced such renowned Hispanic artists as Argentine novelist Manuel Puig, Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa, Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar and Chican performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña.

Puig wrote the novel *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, in which two prisoners — a political revolutionary and a gay man charged with corrupting minors — discuss politics and esthetics within the walls of their jail cell. Almodóvar, perhaps best known as writer and director of the Oscar-winning *Talk to Her*, is noted worldwide for his films that combine issues of sexual and national identity with melodrama and camp esthetics. Anzaldúa is considered a leading cultural commentator and writes on "the new Mestiza" concept, investigating what it means to be on the border between cultures (of mixed ethnicity) and genders (lesbian or transgendered, for example).

"Artists play leading roles in envisioning and defining new social structures..."

— Martha Nandorfy

A recurring theme in Latin literature and film, says Nandorfy, is the blending across what were traditionally thought to be impenetrable borders. She cites Gómez-Peña's "New World Border" concepts, based on his beliefs that multiculturalism really refers to the new realities of people of mixed cultures and diverse gender orientations, as well as other disenfranchised groups. They aren't really "on the border" between traditional schools of thought about culture, nationality or sexuality, according to Gómez-Peña, but they stake out their own territory and, in the process, create more inclusive and democratic expressions of cultural identity.

"A lot of thinking about race and gender comes out of the 'border culture' and the various Hispanic communities," says Nandorfy. "The implication is that communities don't have to follow traditional patriarchal and capitalist paradigms. They can be organized in different ways."

She's taking a fresh look at what these organizations might mean. Currently, she is writing a book-length study on how these Hispanic artists have reimagined ideas about gender, race and politics and created new concepts of family, home and community.

This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. ■

How the West was spun

Easterners have changed the so-called western

BY ALICIA ROBERTS

In books and films about the U.S. Wild West, milquetoast easterners are usually taught a thing or two by macho cowpokes and well-chiselled sheriffs. But in reality, it was powerful easterners who rustled western culture and literature and made it their own, says a University of Guelph researcher.

Prof. Christine Bold, School of English and Theatre Studies, says western novels and stories from the late 19th and early 20th centuries were popularized by easterners, who held the balance of social and literary power. Now, she's on a quest to find some of the stories about the West that were popular in their time but were crowded out by those eastern interests and have faded from popular memory.

"Evidence suggests that all kinds of adventure stories — about African-American cowboys, mixed-race heroines on the frontier, women doctors and teachers and ranchers in the West — had a big following for a time," says Bold. "I want to find out how and why those westerns disappeared."

When East met West in the 1870s, wealthy easterners exploited western lands to further their own economic, political and literary ambitions. Bold believes many "true" voices of western literature were lost in the process. For example, figures such as future U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt, artist Frederic Remington and novelist Owen Wister expounded easternized versions of western ideals and became famous, paving the way for a new set of ideas about what a "western" should be.

"Our vision of the popular western, with the white-hatted hero gunning down the black-hatted villain, has crowded out other westerns of the time," she says.

Her research is bringing into focus the original westerns that first defined the western genre and is looking at their impact on the modern dominant versions we know. She expects to learn how a powerful eastern elite profited by popularizing a particular vision of the West in the late 19th century and how that vision has served academic, political and commercial interests ever since.

Bold says that only in the last few years have scholars — herself included — questioned the dominance of the familiar popular western narrative. Some 20 years ago, she even wrote and published a book called *Selling the Wild West: Popular Western Fiction, 1860-1960*, which accepted the dominant version of the western as authentic.

"When I first worked on popular westerns



VINCE FILBY

in the early 1980s, the reigning assumption was that the masculinist western was the only popular western, and I didn't question that assumption."

Since then, a great deal of recovery work has been done on previously marginalized literatures, such as writings by women and writers of colour, and the lost voices of the West.

Bold hopes the outcome of her research will benefit three audiences. First, she believes her findings may spark new questions about the construction and uses of popular culture among the scholarly community. Second, the general public may be interested in these lost voices, so she also plans to create a database of information about original westerns and their authors, and to develop an anthology for the public. Her third audience is high school and university students. Bringing these different perspectives to light in different age groups could create renewed interest in these stories and make them popular once again, she says.

Over the next two years, Bold will be travelling to many archival locations in search of the lost West. These include the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Wyoming.

This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the College of Arts Research Enhancement Fund. ■

The so-called westerns that we're familiar with are actually "easternized" versions of the real thing, says University of Guelph English professor Christine Bold, who's looking for the lost novels and stories of the American West.

? DID YOU KNOW . . .

- *The Virginian* — the 1902 novel that began the western tradition of the Main Street shootout — was written by Owen Wister, a lawyer from Philadelphia. He moved west on doctor's orders after being diagnosed with neurasthenia.
- Zane Grey, the all-time best-selling author of westerns, was a dentist from Ohio.
- The first dime novel was a western written about a woman by a woman. *Malaeska: The Indian Wife of a White Hunter* by Ann S. Stephens sold well when it was first published in 1860.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT >> Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self Portrait with Saskia*, 1636, etching; Käthe Kollwitz, *Beim Denglen*, 1905, etching; Pablo Picasso, *Deux nus assis*, 1930, etching.



Hidden treasures

Students draw inspiration from Picasso and Rembrandt prints

BY HEATHER FILBY

Rembrandt. Dürer. Goya. Matisse. Picasso. These are just some of the names that leap out of the art densely covering the walls of a small room in Zavitz Hall, home to the University of Guelph's Bachinski-Chu Print Study Collection. Established in 1968 by art professors Walter Bachinski and Gene Chu, it houses more than 2,000 prints, both classic and contemporary.

"The prints are an invaluable resource not only for our students' research but also for teaching the finer qualities of printmaking," says Prof. Jean Maddison, School of Fine Art and Music, curator of the collection.

Although most students see art like this only in textbooks, U of G fine art students taking printmaking courses can access the collection every week to complement their studies and research.

"Slides aren't as good as seeing the real thing," says student Amanda Henry. "If there's a piece I'm working on that's in the print study collection, I can just go see it."

Henry, who's been studying the techniques of lithographer Otis Tamasauskas, says the collection shows how printmaking has evolved over the years. Actually seeing the progression from the Dutch mordant and nitric acid used in Rembrandt's time to the digital technology used today is a real learning experience, she says.

Printmaking is a complex and time-consuming process. The artist etches a pattern into a copper plate with acid, covers the etching with ink, then runs the plate through a printing press. The pressure from the press pushes a special paper made of rags into the crevices in the copper plate,

transferring the ink from the crevices to the paper. Prints made in this manner are extremely valuable because only about 100 copies can be made before the plates wear out.

The Bachinski-Chu collection includes not only works by internationally famous artists — Goya's *Disasters of War* series, Picasso's *Deux nus assis* and Matisse's *Tête à jeune femme*, for example — but also pieces donated by faculty and students.

The contemporary prints in the collection were produced using scanners, sophisticated software and other non-traditional technologies. Several prints, such as *Wasted Youth* by American artist Leon Golub, were created with computer graphics.

"All these works illustrate a certain vision of the artist and an exciting way to use new technology," says Maddison. "They are invaluable for our students."

Fine art students themselves provide much of the funding for the collection through an annual sale of their prints.

The collection isn't just for art majors, however. Maddison encourages anyone to schedule a tour of the Bachinski-Chu Print Study Collection through the School of Fine Art and Music. ■

Beautiful music: It's in the ear of the beholder

BY BETH KENT

Compact discs and downloadable computer files have become the modern currency of music, with performances quickly transformed into digital signals and copied note for note for millions of ears. But there's more to music than recorded or transcribed chords and notes, says University of Guelph music professor Ellen Waterman. She wants to know how performers communicate meaning to their audiences through music and how these audiences receive it.

"Music may be represented by notes on a page or electronic signals, but music really comes alive when those notes are lifted off the page," says Waterman. "And the meaning of the music changes every time it's performed. No performer can create the exact same performance as another. Each audience and audience member will respond differently to it."

Specifically, Waterman is developing new methods to study and analyze experimental music performances in Canada. Her research involves comparing live performances at concerts and music festivals across the country, where she will also interview avant-garde performers (whose work pushes the boundaries of what is considered music), as well as audience members, stage technicians and festival organizers. This, she hopes, will help her gain a better understanding of how people react to music in a social and cultural context.

Waterman's study draws on ethnomusicology (the comparative study of music in different cultures) and performance studies (how professional and social roles, from working to social interaction, are linked to performing before an audience). It's the first in-depth study of experimental music performance in Canada.

But she also plans to examine non-musical aspects of music performance, including costumes and use of technology on stage.

"I'm interested not only in the sounds performers make but also in their body movements and the staging, costumes and audience reaction and interaction," she says. "I want to determine how the performance as an event is influenced by its musical and non-musical aspects, its cultural context, its audiences."

This research is funded by the University of Guelph's College of Arts. ■



Waterman (with bamboo flutes from around the world): The meaning of music changes every time it's performed.

OLIVIA BROWN



The forgotten heroine

Eglantyne Jebb founded the Save the Children Fund, the world's first international child-saving organization

BY PAULA BIALSKI

If Eglantyne Jebb lived today, it might very well be she, not U2's Bono, winning the ears of presidents and kings. Her selfless work for the marginalized has helped — and continues to help — people in all parts of the world.

Jebb, who lived from 1876 to 1928, was the British founder of the international Save the Children Fund (SCF). She also drafted the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, which forms the basis of SCF's work and was endorsed by the League of Nations in 1924. An extended seven-statement declaration eventually became the famous United Nations document *Rights of the Child*.

But history has largely overlooked this important figure, says University of Guelph history professor Linda Mahood. She's trying to revive Jebb's groundbreaking achievements by researching and publishing the first-ever biography of Jebb.

"Despite the fact that SCF was the first international child-saving organization, there

isn't really a lot of information written about Eglantyne Jebb," says Mahood.

And that's a wonder, given her contributions. An Oxford graduate and primary school teacher, Jebb founded SCF in 1919 after the First World War. The United Kingdom had placed an economic blockade on Germany and its allies, crippling Europe's economy and sending the continent spiralling into poverty.

Jebb believed that children, no matter what country they lived in, must be helped — a daring and novel idea for the early 20th century.

"People in post-war Britain found her very controversial because she was sending aid into Russia and Germany, which was a total taboo at the time," says Mahood. "Her organization was the first to donate money to people regardless of their race, religion or nationality."

Prior to this time, charities, like religious organizations, relied on softer methods of persuasion. SCF was the first charitable organization to buy space in newspapers to "advertise" its services and solicit support and donations.

Although the fund was heavily criticized for paying for publicity, today this method is widely used by charities to help with fundrais-

ing efforts. Mahood says SCF was also one of the first organizations to push images in their ads that provoked emotion, such as a picture of a starving child.

Jebb herself also paved the way for other female activists and their work in global charities.

"She had a motto: no child under the age of seven could do any harm," says Mahood. "In her eyes, all children should have a right to proper living conditions, and this message resonated throughout the globe, sparking affiliated organizations."

A Canadian branch of SCF was first established in 1922, and since then, many offices have opened across the country. The University of Guelph established its own SCF branch six years ago. Eighty-six years after Jebb began helping children worldwide, U of G branch president Kirsten Speer is still carrying out the philanthropist's mandate.

"I really admire the way SCF includes the children as participants in their own development projects," says Speer. "This empowerment of children and beneficiaries makes up the grassroots development, which is really the most effective kind."

She oversees U of G's 25 active SCF members in promoting awareness and raising funds for SCF projects under way both locally and internationally.

Mahood, who has been working on this project for the last five years, is planning to publish a biography of Jebb and SCF in the near future. Her study is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. ■



ABOVE ▲ Eglantyne Jebb (1876-1928), founder of the Save the Children Fund.

LEFT << Acquired by the British Save the Children Fund in 1952, Hill House in Essex became a residential home for children aged seven to 11, offering respite from their "disordered and unhappy urban backgrounds."

Her Canada includes babies

Infants make giant strides in Canadian fiction

BY KATIE MEYER

Babies — once ignored in Canadian fiction — are becoming more predominant in literature and developing their own literary identity, says College of Arts research officer Sandra Sabatini, who documents this trend in the book *Making Babies: Infants in Canadian Fiction*.

As society has placed more importance on childhood development and the role of infants in the family, so, too, have contemporary Canadian authors, she says.



PAULA BIALSKI

Sabatini: Literary babies give fresh perspectives on how we imagine ourselves.

make moral choices,” she says. “But the way they’re treated as subjects in fiction can reflect how society sees itself.”

Today, infants are more significant in literature than ever before and are being treated with a whole new perspective, says Sabatini. Infants’ awareness and feelings are being recognized as subjects by fiction authors, and they’re important to other characters’ acceptance into a community.

This wasn’t always the case. In the 1800s, when infancy was so precarious, little was written on the subject. Babies were born and grew up in a sentence or, at most, a paragraph on the page, says Sabatini. But early influences such as the 1913 Conference on Infant Mortality in London, England, brought babies into the public eye and onto the page.

In the 1940s, Canadian authors such as Gabrielle Roy and Sinclair Ross began to deal more candidly with the subject of babies. Writing about abortion and illegitimacy broke social taboos. Attitudes continued to change throughout the 1940s and ’50s.

Sabatini notes that writers started to show some empathy for female characters in compromised positions. “Writers began to write with some sympathy about unwed mothers and illegitimate children.”

Infants were treated in two contradictory ways by Canadian authors at this time. On one hand, they were written about as a desired achievement and a source of great love. On the other hand, babies also represented a restriction on women’s lives and careers. This contradiction grew in later years as the sexual revolution and the feminist movement took hold.

In the 1960s and ’70s, childbirth and child rearing started appearing “in gory detail,” says Sabatini. She notes that these shifts overlap the arrival of the birth control pill and other methods of contraception.

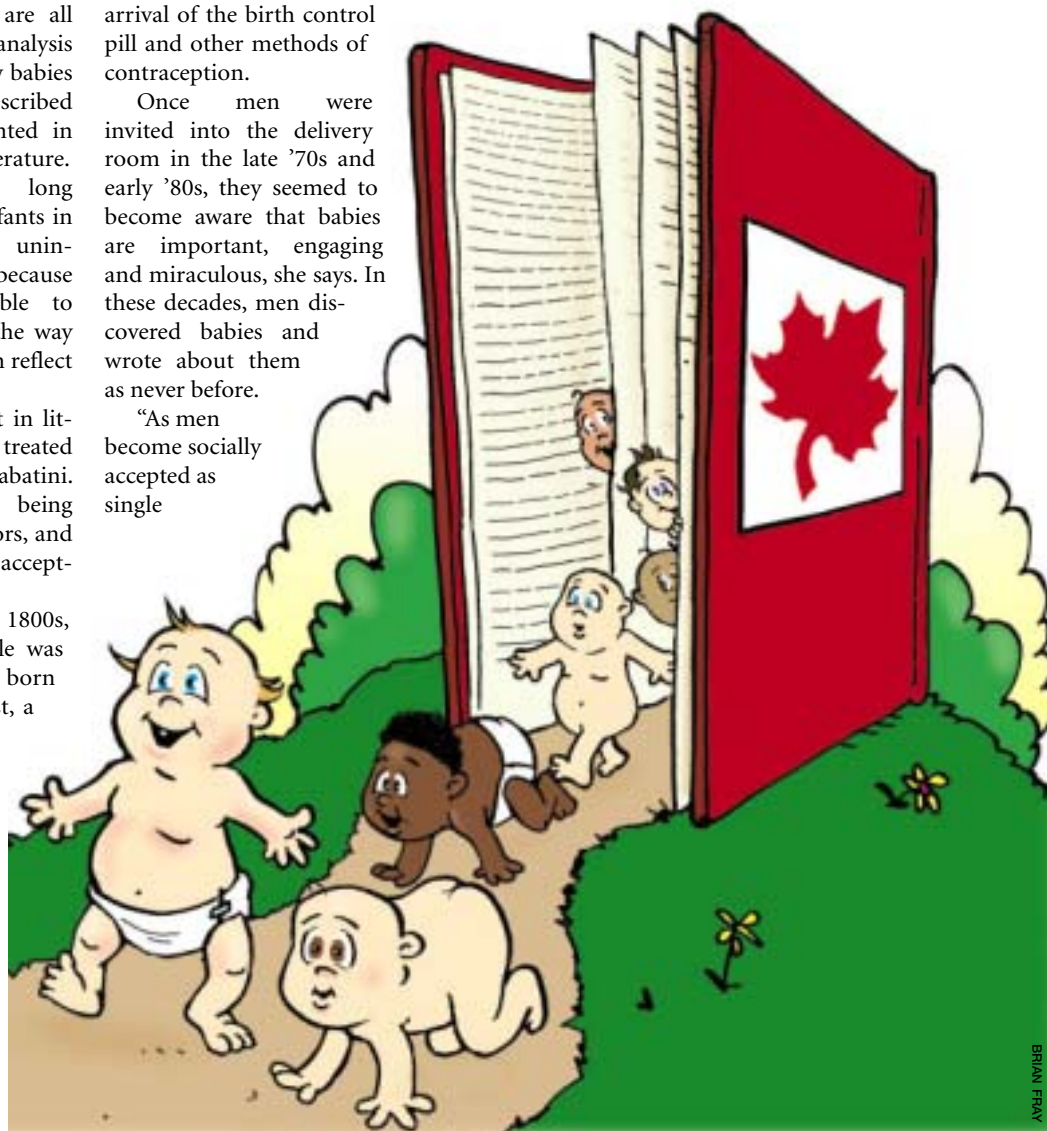
Once men were invited into the delivery room in the late ’70s and early ’80s, they seemed to become aware that babies are important, engaging and miraculous, she says. In these decades, men discovered babies and wrote about them as never before.

“As men become socially accepted as single

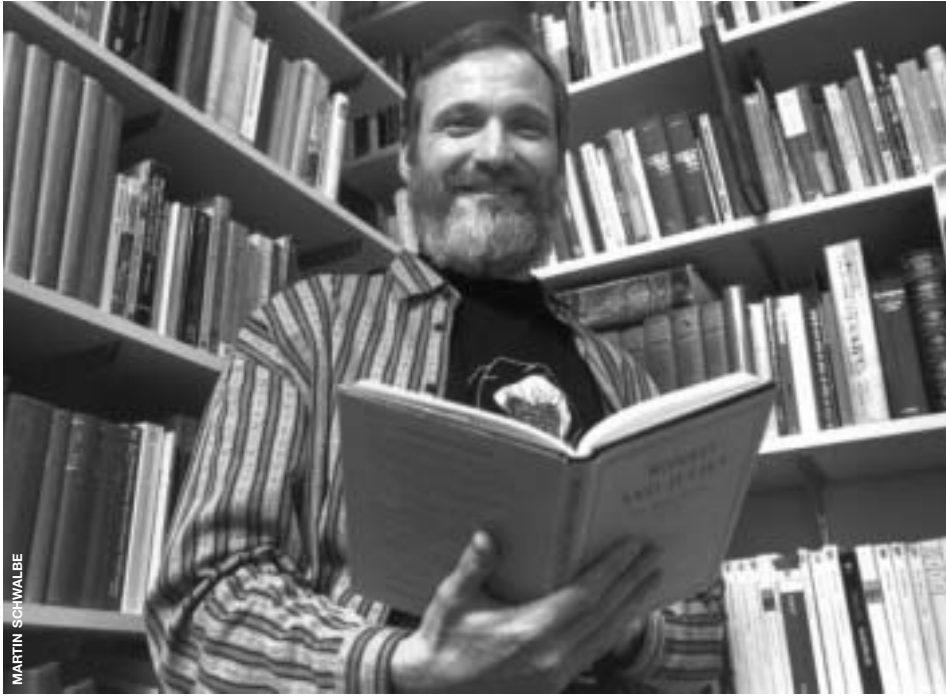
parents, some male writers in the late 20th century start to suggest that their care is superior to the mother’s. This happens while writing by women reveals a sense that babies are, in fact, a source of empowerment because they’re something only women can provide.”

Sabatini says because there’s little certainty about what infants think and feel, a good look at how authors write about babies is important to give society a better view of how we imagine ourselves.

Making Babies: Infants in Canadian Fiction was published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press. Sabatini’s research was sponsored by the Humanities and Social Science Federation of Canada. ■



BRIAN FRAY



Prof. Ric Knowles, pictured here in a photo from a 1994 issue of *Research*, has been studying how theatrical works are influenced by offstage factors for the past decade.

THE PLAY'S NOT THE THING

Theatre researcher studies external factors shaping the Canadian stage over last decade

BY MURRAY TONG

When University of Guelph theatre studies professor Ric Knowles goes to see a new play, he may be more interested in what's going on behind the stage — or even outside the theatre — than he is in the actual onstage presentation. For the past decade, he's been studying the ways the Canadian stage has changed and the outside forces that brought about these changes, to try to develop a more complete theory and method of analyzing theatrical works.

Ten years ago, Knowles was focusing on how Canadian plays present their ideas and politics to audiences. His research into the creative process also included writing and directing plays. Now, he's written *Reading the Material Theatre*, a book-length study of how factors outside the theatre can shape the dramas played out within.

"What a play communicates is shaped by the way it's framed," says Knowles. "My research addresses how events and trends around the world shape the theatre and how the audience responds to these influences."

Understanding a play or performance goes beyond what's in the text or even what's happening on the stage, he says. *Reading the Material Theatre*, based on research he conducted in Canada and around the world throughout the

1990s, looks at many of these factors, such as where actors and theatre technicians are trained, how productions are financed, theatre architecture, rehearsal space for the actors, the city or neighbourhood where the theatre is located, and the type of audience it attracts (local residents versus international tourists, for example).

His studies included Canada's Stratford Festival and looked at seemingly mundane details such as corporate sponsors' logos on theatre tickets, advertisements encouraging corporate patrons to relocate to Stratford and the brass plaques on theatre seats sporting donors' names. Knowles says small details like these paint festival-goers as smart, successful and enlightened people who enjoy the finer things in life. This not only encourages new visitors to come back to Stratford but also influences how audiences see and understand what's on stage, he says.

"Only part of the experience is in the content of any theatrical work. A lot also depends on the context, on factors outside the theatre. Even the food served can influence a theatre experience — whether it's red wine or big cookies."

This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. ■

For further reading

Visit

www.savethechildren.ca to learn more about Save the Children Canada, its mission to enable and empower local communities to improve children's lives, and how to get involved.

Visit

www.canadianshakespeares.ca to learn more about the unique and surprising ways that William Shakespeare has permeated Canadian culture.

Visit

www.gamblingresearch.org to learn more about the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre's activities and recent research on why some people develop gambling problems.

Read

Making Babies: Infants in Canadian Fiction by Sandra Sabatini (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Waterloo, 2003) to learn more about infant portrayal in Canadian literature and how it reflects our nation's attitudes towards babies.



Read

"A Genomic View of Animal Behaviour" by Elizabeth Pennisi in *Science*, Vol. 307, Issue 5706, to see how U of G Prof. Elena Choleris and other international researchers are uncovering the mysteries of animal behaviour.

Read

Catharine Wilson's article "Reciprocal Work Bees and the Meaning of the Neighbourhood" in *The Canadian Historical Review*, September 2001, to learn more about how work bees influenced early Canadian communities and shaped the nation's history.

Read

"Textile Purchases by Some Ordinary Upper Canadians, 1808-1861" by Douglas McCalla in *Material History Review*, spring/summer 2001, for more information on purchasing patterns among 19th-century Canadians.

Read

Reading the Material Theatre by Ric Knowles (Oxford University Press, London, 2004) to see how offstage factors influence what's happening onstage in Canadian theatre.

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