

Inside VIU

Connecting the VIU community

May 2012



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Dr. Lev Idels is passionate about numbers. See page 5.

VIU's Vision

As a leader in providing high-quality learning, Vancouver Island University supports the well being of the people of Vancouver Island and coastal British Columbia by promoting a high quality of life for their communities through commitment to student success, community engagement and associated scholarship.

Adventure trekking in Costa Rica

Dr. Dave Robinson is passionate about community empowerment and planning.

That's why he launched the Heart of Gold Community Empowerment Project eight years ago. Centered in Costa Rica's Los Santos Region where communities struggle with a variety of entrenched socio-economic, environmental and health issues, the project is improving the lives of community farmers and families in rural Costa Rica, while providing rich and unique cultural learning experiences for VIU students and faculty.

"Heart of Gold focuses on profound challenges posed by the globalization of agricultural and tourism production and their impacts on forest, water and human health degradation," says Robinson, who teaches in the Tourism and Recreation Management Program.

The project seeks to influence rural farming policy/practice in a collaborative manner by working with civic, government, business, NGOs and university sectors.

Robinson is currently leading the inauguration and evaluation of an eco-tourism trail business with the Los Santos Farming Families Association and directing the development of niche marketing strategies for this business.

"This world-class 50 kilometre eco-tourism trail through the high cloud forests of Los Santos to the Pacific coast will diversify farming economies through



VIU student interns and Dr. Lauren Styles (centre) with guides and family members on day three of the eco-trail in the high cloud forest of Costa Rica.

home-stay eco-tourism business development," Robinson explains.

A pilot group of seven travellers, including Robinson, Dr. Lauren Styles (who teaches at VIU in Health and Human Services), and four VIU research interns are in Costa Rica now to experience and evaluate the 10-day eco-tour. Their tour involves adventure trekking, Spanish immersion, volunteer opportunities on family farms and research activities in the Los Santos Forest Watershed, and in the communities of Santa Maria, Providen-

cia, and Narajilla.

"My experience is that students who have this kind of opportunity learn a completely new skill set and return to BC humbled and inspired," says Robinson.

For both students and faculty, the project develops better global citizenship, understanding and valuing human diversity, and appreciating and working towards a healthy sustainable environment, he adds.

To read Dave's blog go to viuheartofgold.wordpress.com/

Employees encouraged to stay healthy

There are plenty of opportunities to become fit and healthy at VIU. Let folks in Campus Rec help you count the ways!

Fitness & Lifestyle Technician Karen Alden and her team plan a range of fun, educational events for the entire campus community.

Geared towards students, staff and faculty, Wellness Wednesdays are celebrated during the lunch hour to promote healthy living with a focus on nutrition and exercise.

"In February, we offered free fruit and fruit smoothies to students and employees," says Alden. "And one of our most popular events was a free whole wheat pancake breakfast."

In March students and employees participated in Walk into Wellness –a fun, interactive walk around campus followed by free healthy snacks and prize draws.

"We set up six different stations to remind participants what they can do to stay fit and healthy through proper nutri-



Fitness & Lifestyle Technician Karen Alden organizes Wellness Wednesdays. See page 5 for more photos.

tion and exercise."

International Education loved the idea so much that they asked Campus Rec to organize a similar walk for their new intake of international students.

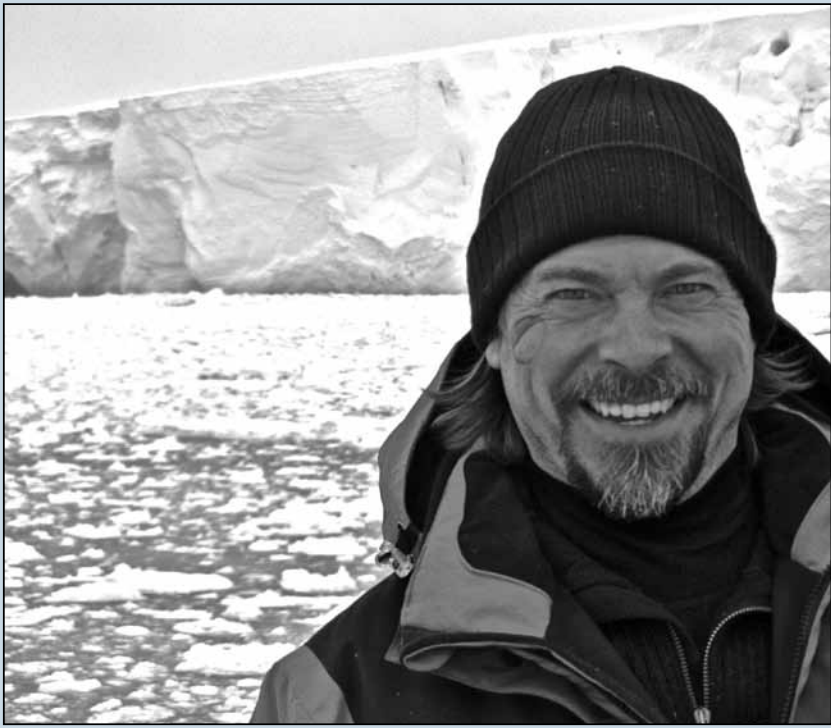
To celebrate Random Acts of Kindness week, Campus Rec staff handed out free fruit and granola bars while encouraging students and employees to treat others kindly.

Wellness Wednesday participants also learned about the benefits of buying local food through an event held recently in collaboration with the Campus Food Strategy/Nanaimo Food Share organizations.

Alden is in the process of organizing a VIU Runner's Forum, a centralized meeting place for runners and walkers. It's a place where students and employees can post their run/walk routes and share information, and connect and converse with other students and/or colleagues.

Plans are also underway for the next series of health and wellness activities in the fall, including the popular Wellness Wednesdays. Stay tuned!

For more information, contact **Karen Alden** at alden@viu.ca or visit viu.ca/campusrec.



Jay Ruzesky in Antarctica.

Researcher follows Amundsen's footsteps to Antarctica

English and Creative Writing professor Jay Ruzesky has had a lifelong fascination with Antarctica.

An "Amundsen" through maternal heritage, he was filled from a young age with stories of his famous ancestor's polar accomplishments: first to overwinter in Antarctica, first through the Northwest Passage, and first to the geographical South Pole on December 14, 1911.

In December 2011, Ruzesky travelled via Santiago, Chile; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Iguazu Falls, Brazil; and Buenos Aires, Argentina to Ushuaia, Argentina - the southernmost city in the world - where he boarded a refitted Russian research vessel, Polar Pioneer, and headed for Antarctica.

He went as a researcher and a tourist and travelled the same waters of the southern ocean that

Roald Amundsen sailed as second mate aboard *Belgica* when he was learning his skills as a mariner. Along the way, Ruzesky posted photographs and stories about the highlights of his experiences among penguins and icebergs on his blog which currently has more than 5,000 readers.

He also presented a public lecture about his experiences at VIU's Cowichan Campus in March. A book-length manuscript about the trip tentatively titled "In Antarctica" is nearing completion. Once it is published, Ruzesky hopes to offer another lecture at the Nanaimo campus in the fall.

To read Ruzesky's blog, visit jayruzesky.blogspot.ca. To view photos of his trip, go to picasaweb.google.com/108210421493309752806/Antarctica.



Nursing faculty member Lynn Rollison and students working with the Canadian Blood Services.

Celebrating student success

Sandy Alexander, professor in Bachelor of Science in Nursing and her colleagues held an end-of-semester celebration to highlight the work of third-year Nursing students. The Nursing 314 class (Community and Societal Health) showcased the great

work and accomplishments of students in their community projects and communities of practice. Keynote speakers included members of Guthrie House, the first Therapeutic Community model implemented in a corrections centre in Canada.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring is finally here on Vancouver Island and nowhere is this more evident than at Milner Gardens. The many trees and flowers in full bloom at Milner and at all of our VIU locations reinforces how fortunate we are to work in such a beautiful part of the world.

As the academic year ends, some of our valued employees are retiring from VIU. On behalf of the University, we wish all of them well and extend deepest appreciation for their service to students and colleagues. We welcome you to always be part of the VIU family.



Dr. Ralph Nilson

Throughout the pages of this edition you will read about select examples of the achievements and contributions of faculty, staff and students, whether it's on the local, national or international scene. We are constantly reminded that VIU is part of the global community whether it's Jay Ruzesky on an Antarctic quest, Dave Robinson in Costa Rica or Dale Wik supporting University of Belize faculty in their efforts to establish a Writing Centre.

The achievements of our students as demonstrated through year-end concerts, art gallery showings, fundraising dinners like Harrambee, poster sessions or end-of-term capstone presentations provide all of us the opportunity to experience the strength of the human capital being developed through the wide range of programs opportunities students experience at VIU. Thank you to all the faculty and staff for

your support of student learning and achievement.

We can all be proud of the Mariners athletes who, as a collective, excel in their academic pursuits, while also pursuing excellence in their sport. VIU's athletics program had the largest number of scholar athletes of any school in the BCCCA. Winning the national championship for the women's volleyball team is just another of the many highlights of excellence achieved by VIU student athletes and their coaches this past year.

As an institution, VIU is adapting to fulfill our mandate based on our mission, vision and values in an era of considerable fiscal constraint. Continuing to engage in integrated planning will ensure that VIU maintains its strength as a high quality learning environment for the students and communities we serve. The evolution of the Office of University Planning and Analysis is one of the initiatives that will help us meet the challenges we face.

We will celebrate the achievements of all our students at June convocation. I'd like to once again thank all members of the VIU community for your commitment and dedication to support students on their educational journeys.

As summer approaches, I encourage you to take some time to relax and enjoy the season and remind you that Milner Gardens and Woodland is at its finest this time of year.

GUEST COLUMN - BY STEVE LANE

It is that time of year again when students are finishing up a course, a semester, a year, or even an entire program. For those in this last category, it is a time of celebration for completion, and, one hopes, for a job well done.

I have been to several celebrations recently, and there are a couple of conclusions I can draw.

At the day devoted to student presentations in the Advanced Diploma in Geographic Information Systems (ADGIS for short), I caught one student's presentation of her practicum projects. Working for the Cowichan Valley Regional District, this student had, among other things, assessed a number of software applications. She mentioned the fact that doing a good job of software evaluation requires much more than she had experienced in the way of understanding the setting, the context, the required uses of the software, and so forth.

At the end of her presentation, one classmate asked about the presenter's comment on software evaluation: "did you think it was a more valuable experience because it was not just an exercise?"

This got me thinking about one important dimension to an undergraduate education: **experiential learning**. Experiential learning can take many forms - internships or co-op placements with employers, undergraduate research with a faculty mentor, practica in a professional work environment, study abroad of various types, among others - but the basic premise is that a student applies his or her learning in a "hands-on" way.

But beyond the "hands-on" applicability of many tasks and learning outcomes, it seems to me the primary objective here is relevance - the student must feel that the material is meaningful to her or him, whether in an applied way, or in an intellectual or emotional way.

I think VIU faculty do a particularly good job of looking for and providing this relevance angle, thereby strengthening faculty-student engagement and facilitating authentic learning. We could do even more in order to ensure students' programs provide such enriching opportunities,

further strengthening VIU's commitment to student success and distinguishing our identity and reputation.

The other observation I made at some of the recent ceremonies - the one for Aboriginal students and one for the Resource Management Officer Training program - was the value of **social integration**. Some of this is built on program structure, for example by creating cohorts of students in a program; or by providing student supports such as the Gathering Place. In either case, the results are the same: a sense of connectedness bordering on *family*, sometimes including the students' own families, with students and faculty and staff open to learning from one another.

It seems to me that **relevance** and **integration** are two key features of students' success. As an administrator, my real challenge becomes "how do we extend and enhance such experiences to all students?"



Steve Lane, Associate Vice-President, Academic and Provost

Researcher fosters interdisciplinary approach to address coastal resource issues

Dr. Grant Murray is looking forward to his second five-year term as a Canada Research Chair in Coastal Resource Management.

Reappointed recently by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and federal Ministry of Industry, Murray welcomes the opportunity to continue his work on Vancouver Island and internationally.

Murray and his team work out of the Institute for Coastal Research (ICR) on the fourth floor of the Library building at the Nanaimo campus. He's developed an interdisciplinary approach to focus on a range of

issues, from impoverished families on the edge of protected areas to enhancing the value of British Columbia seafood.

"It's a major goal for me to have the ICR recognized as a hub of excellence in interdisciplinary research and dialogue on the human dimension of coastal resources

and issues," says Murray.

In addition to public symposia and workshops and a range of research projects, the ICR has established an ICR Fellows program to support scholarly activity at VIU. (See story below)

As co-director of Protected Areas and Poverty Reduction: A Canada-Africa Research and Learning Alliance, Murray is part of a team that is examining the relationship between protected areas and adjacent communities in Canada, Ghana and Tanzania.

It is a complex issue that involves inquiries into areas such as human-wildlife encounters and the costs and benefits of tourism development in protected areas.

Murray has worked closely with the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in Clayoquot Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island and the First Nation's initiative to establish Tribal Parks that are managed

according to ancestral teachings to integrate the well-being of humans and the ecosystem.

Indigenous communities, whether in Canada or Africa, face significant challenges as they pursue higher standards of living while protecting natural habitat.

"People who are worried about shelter or putting food on the table or sending their kids to school often find it difficult to deal with environmental concerns," says Murray. "It's not always the case but it complicates the issue."

He adds that a degraded environment contributes to economic problems. "If you don't have an accessible clam beach or you can't eat the fish, if you can't hunt or gather fire wood, it leads to food insecurity and contributes to poverty."

"My research is trying to address the question, 'Can we demonstrate that environmental conservation pays off in terms of poverty alleviation?'"

Murray has placed a strong emphasis on building relationships, externally and within the University community to foster an interdisciplinary approach to coastal



Canada Research Chair Dr. Grant Murray

issues. He values a broad range of perspectives on resource management in addition to those based in natural sciences such as ecology and biology.

"So much of resource management is values-based as well as science-based. We need other disciplines involved to help understand the values at play," says Murray. "There's a growing recognition that we need social sciences. We really need those in the humanities – artists and writers – people who change minds."

On the web:
Institute for Coastal Research: viu.ca/icr/
Research and Scholarly Activity at VIU: viu.ca/research/index.asp

"It's a major goal for me to have the ICR recognized as a hub of excellence in interdisciplinary research and dialogue."



VIU's Institute for Coastal Research (ICR) is working on socio-ecological research in Vancouver Island communities and beyond. The team includes (left to right) Dr. Carleigh Randall and Dr. Linda D'Anna, Post Doctoral Fellows; Michelle Patterson, Program Lead, Aquatic Foods Initiative; and Dr. Grant Murray, Canada Research Chair in Coastal Resource Management and Director of the ICR.

Post-Doctoral Fellows provide food for thought

BY MICHELE PATTERSON
VIU Institute for Coastal Research

Did you know that six Post-Doctoral Fellows are conducting research at VIU?

Two of the Post-Doctoral Fellows, Dr. Linda D'Anna and Dr. Carleigh Randall, are part of VIU's Institute for Coastal Research (ICR) and are working on socio-ecological research in Vancouver Island communities and beyond. Socio-ecological research looks at the relationships and impacts between people and the environment. Post-Doctoral Fellows are graduated PhD students who are moving to the next stage of their academic career by doing further research in their areas of interest.

Under the direction of VIU's Dr. Grant Murray, Canada Research Chair in Coastal Resource Management and Director of the ICR, Dr. D'Anna and Dr. Randall focus on projects linking ecological health and community wellbeing. They are finding ways to better incorporate community values into decision-making and ensuring protected areas provide benefits to local communities.

This fall, D'Anna and Randall will contribute to a new ICR brown-bag lunch hour series in the ICR Lounge on the Nanaimo campus where employees can hear presentations about their work and interesting work being done by other VIU Post-Doctoral Fellows. (Watch for further information in the September issue of Inside VIU)

D'Anna recently came to Vancouver Island from North Carolina where she completed graduate studies in ecology at the University of North Carolina. In her PhD project, she looked at how perceptions of oysters and oyster restoration efforts differed across stakeholder groups.

For her post-doctoral project at VIU, D'Anna's research is focused on Baynes Sound, an area of about 8500 hectares on the east side of Vancouver Island across from Denman Island. This area of Vancouver Island produces half of BC's cultured shellfish. It is also the home of the Deep Bay Marine Field Station.

Baynes Sound, like many other BC coastal communities, is facing complex questions about how to balance development and conservation to ensure both ecological health and community wellbeing. D'Anna is using unique methods such as participant-employed photography and photo-elicitation to find out how residents and stakeholders value the area to determine what they think about the shellfish aquaculture industry.

Dr. Carleigh Randall has been living and working on Vancouver Island for many years. Among other things, she has worked in wine marketing, tourism destination management and in the leisure travel sector. She has also worked as a sessional instructor in VIU's Tourism Management program, and is an alumna of the same program.

Randall's PhD is from the University of Otago, New Zealand. Her Post-Doctoral Fellowship is part of VIU's Protected Areas and Poverty Reduction Canada-Africa Research and Learning Alliance project. The project involves looking at how to reduce rural poverty and ensure environmental sustainability with a focus on protected areas and adjacent communities in Canada, Tanzania and Ghana. Research in Canada focuses on the west coast of Vancouver Island with the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Parks Canada and other partners.

Research Chairs

Did you know there are four research chairs at VIU? In addition to Grant Murray (above) the others are:



Dr. Sarah Dudas
Canada Research Chair in Shellfish Aquaculture Ecosystem Interactions
Website: viu.ca/csr/staff/Dr.SarahDudas.asp



Dr. Linda McDonnell
BC Regional Innovation Chair in Aboriginal Early Childhood Development
Website: viu.ca/chairaecd/



Dr. Nicole Vaugeois
BC Regional Innovation Chair in Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development
Website: web.viu.ca/vaugeois/

AERL alumni shine on world stage

Some of VIU's notable science alumni have gained valuable hands-on research experience in the Applied Environmental Research Laboratories (viu.ca/aerl). Here's a sampling of successful students:

Michael Lynch held a nationally funded Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) in 2004 and worked in the AERL that summer. He completed his honours degree in Chemistry at the University of British Columbia (on scholarship) and is now completing his PhD in Chemistry at the University of Washington, Seattle.

Alexander Thompson completed his senior thesis project in 2004, worked as a technician in the AERL in 2005/06 and is employed as a Lab Manager in a modern wastewater treatment facility after completing his Master of Science thesis in 2010.

Derek van Pel and **Owen Stechishin** held USRAs in 2005 and 2006 and spent two summers working in the AERL. Van Pel is now completing his PhD at the University of British Columbia (funded by an NSERC post-graduate scholarship) and **Stechishin** is completing a combined PhD and MD at the University of Calgary funded by the prestigious Centennial NSERC post-graduate scholarship.

Skye Creba and **Jason Devlin** also held several USRAs over the period 2005 to 2007 and were employed in the AERL. They both completed medical degrees at the University of Calgary and Toronto, respectively. Creba is working as a locum in Quesnel, BC while Devlin has started his five-year residency at the University of Calgary.

Jacob Etkorn is a former undergraduate student research assistant who worked as an AERL Research Associate in 2007 and 2008. After working as a Project Scientist with Environment Canada for several years, Jake took up a position with Living Oceans.



Jacob Etkorn

Christine Stokes and **Michelle Lamarche** were USRA holders in 2007. Stokes now works for an environmental consulting firm in Nanaimo and Lamarche has just completed graduate school at McGill University.



Carol Bob

Carol Bob worked as an NSERC Aboriginal Ambassador and USRA grant holder on an Environment Canada project. She is currently completing her Education degree at the University of Northern British Columbia and working as a part-time researcher on a federally funded project monitoring contaminants in aboriginal food supplies.

Nick Davey, **Cameron Newhook** and **Kyle Duncan** worked as research assistants in the AERL while completing their undergraduate degrees at VIU and are now graduate students at the University of Victoria conducting their research in the AERL. Duncan is working on his PhD developing rapid screening methods for the detection of pharmaceutical compounds and drugs of abuse in wastewater and biological samples. Newhook is just finishing his Master of Science and is investigating the mechanism of a certain class of drinking water contaminants known as disinfection by-products.



Cameron Newhook

Megan Willis is currently working as a research assistant in the AERL. A recipient of multiple NSERC scholarships, Willis was recently accepted into graduate school at the University of Toronto, Canada's leading graduate program in environmental chemistry.



Martin Angelstad

Martin Angelstad is currently enrolled in a Master of Science in Chemistry program at Simon Fraser University while working within the AERL group. Co-supervised by VIU professor Dr. Chris Gill, Angelstad will be applying Membrane Introduction Mass Spectrometry to help better understand chemical components of particulate matter in the air and help to relate them to health issues.



VIU grads Jason Devlin (left) and Michelle LaMarche returned to VIU to visit their former AERL professors and mentors, Dr. Erik Krogh and Dr. Chris Gill. Devlin has just completed medical school in Toronto and is working on his five-year residency at University of Calgary. LaMarche just completed graduate school at McGill.

International spotlight on AERL research

Big things are happening in a small research lab on the second floor of Building 360.

Room 210 is home to an internationally recognized state-of-the-art research facility known as the Applied Environmental Research Laboratories (AERL).

Led by chemistry professors Dr. Chris Gill and Dr. Erik Krogh, the lab conducts pure and applied research in the application of mass spectrometry to problems in environmental chemistry. A group of 16 students, faculty and collaborators work to develop new and improved strategies for real-time measurements of determinants of environmental and human health.

"The research we are doing enables chemical analysis to be resolved with unprecedented spatial and temporal resolution which we think will revolutionize how environmental assessments will be conducted in the future," said Krogh.

"We are on the leading edge of developing new techniques that bring high precision measurements to the sample rather than bringing samples to the lab.

"The central innovation in this work is the development and use of semi-permeable membranes, which interface real-world samples to the vacuum requirements of a mass spectrometer," added Gill.

Some recent projects are receiving international attention. These include the development of new membrane sampling interfaces for the analysis of pharmaceutical contaminants, monitoring dynamic changes of contaminants in drinking and waste water, and on-site field measurements of air-shed pollutants using mobile mass spectrometry for real-time, continuous monitoring.

Their work is supported by a Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada Discovery Grant and involves collaborations with regional, national and international partners in academia, government agencies and the private sector. The facility supports the training of a wide range of highly qualified personnel from undergraduate

students to post-doctoral fellows.

"Our aim is to do 'real-time' analysis in the 'real-world' enabling solutions to problems that are both regionally relevant and globally significant," said Gill.

Ten years ago, the AERL was the first BC university-college lab to receive Canada Foundation for Innovation funding which was matched by contributions from the BC Knowledge Development Fund. The research facility has attracted millions of dollars in high tech instrumentation, including substantial acquisitions for the Chemistry department teaching labs.

Students also benefit from Krogh's and Gill's collaborative partnerships with researchers around the world. VIU faculty have supervised over 100 undergraduate

student research projects in the AERL. "We provide numerous learning and research training opportunities as well as year-round employment for undergraduate students," said Krogh.

"Students become fully engaged in the discovery and creative process of research. They develop skills in environmental sampling, chemical analysis, method development and data

interpretation. Most importantly, students are able to learn through the process of 'doing' the science that they learn about in the classroom. It is exciting to see these authentic learning experiences inspire and motivate students."

The outcomes of this work have been significant. Students gain valuable experience disseminating information through conference presentations, technical reports and peer-reviewed publications, often as the lead/presenting author. Many students have been featured in local and national media, including CBC Radio, CTV Vancouver Island, and Maclean's magazine.

"The experience provided through a directed research course or summer internship in the AERL has been directly responsible for the success of numerous VIU undergraduate students in obtaining scholarship support, pursuing advanced degrees and meeting their career goals," said Krogh.

"We provide numerous learning and research training opportunities as well as year-round employment for undergraduate and graduate students."

VIU faculty strengthen ties with University of Belize

BY BRUCE PATTERSON

Dale Wik had a strong desire to complete an important task before retiring from her position as co-ordinator of Vancouver Island University's Writing Centre. This spring she travelled to Central America with support from VIU Faculty Association professional development funding to assist faculty at the University of Belize in their efforts to establish a Writing Centre at the main campus in Belmopan.

Wik's connection to the University of Belize (UB) evolved through her friendship with Vicky Macfarlane and Larry Wolfe, a Nanaimo couple who divide their time between their homes on Protection Island and Belmopan. Doctors Wolfe (Geography) and Macfarlane (Psychology) have taught at VIU's Nanaimo campus and led VIU field projects in Belize in 2007 and 2009. They have also hosted Global Studies interns and hosted or assisted visiting faculty from VIU.

VIU has had a long-standing relationship with Belize, having had field schools (and student internships), through VIU departments of Biology, Global Studies, Geography, Tourism, Education, Physical Education, and Psychology.

In addition to being members of the faculty at the University of Belize in 2002-2003, Wolfe and Macfarlane have been involved in gathering and shipping donated books to the UB Library, helping with special events such as facilitating conferences and evaluating educational upgrading projects. Wolfe has also helped to develop the University's Strategic Plan, approved in 2011. Wolfe and Macfarlane have been working with several other agencies across the country as well on environmental management, community development, training and facilitation, planning and evaluation projects.

When Wik learned that the University of Belize was looking at the possibility of opening a Writing Centre, she knew she could provide some guidance on the obstacles the proponents might expect as well as support from colleagues at other institutions. Wik has linked UB to the Canadian Writing Centres Association



From left to right: Dale Wik, VIU Writing Centre Co-ordinator (now retired), Sarita Lewis, Lecturer, University of Belize Regional Language Centre, Rosemarie Modera, Director, University of Belize Regional Language Centre, Tracey Sangster, Lecturer, University of Belize Faculty of Education and Arts, Ivory Kelly, Lecturer, University of Belize Faculty of Education and Arts.

which enables those involved in establishing a fledgling centre to learn from the experiences of others who may have faced similar challenges.

“My goal is to have other faculty members get keen and excited about supporting educational initiatives in Belize.”

“It's a privilege to consult with our colleagues at UB, but ultimately I know they will succeed on their own merits. I have the highest regard for the knowledge and professionalism of the faculty I met there.”

While Wik is retiring this spring, she intends to continue supporting UB staff and faculty as they consider options to

establish a Writing Centre and promote literacy in the country of 345,000 people.

She is also supporting initiatives such as VIU's offer to refurbish computers for use in Belize and a major project by Wolfe and Macfarlane to implement a disaster mitigation project for four villages in the Belize River Valley. That project is a direct spin-off from the 2009 VIU field school, which explored disaster mitigation options for these villages. The project is funded by the Canada Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Fund, which brought \$90,000 CAD to support the Belize villagers.

Wik is inspired by her friends' dedication to Belize which faces many challeng-

es common to a developing country. “They tell me that because it's such a small country, anything you do can have a significant positive impact. My goal is to have other faculty members get keen and excited about supporting educational initiatives in Belize.”

Wolfe and Macfarlane have found their experience extremely rewarding.

“After working for the University of Belize for a year as faculty members, we became inspired by assisting in the great work of building a new university,” says Wolfe. “It is the national university, the intellectual centre of a new nation. It seems a good place to make a career contribution.”

“We love working with the villages,” says

Macfarlane. “This is helping people on the ground. You can see things happening and people's lives improving. Few things can be more rewarding. And, the villagers are really proud of what they have accomplished. We work as volunteers, but the pay is excellent.”

Dr. Larry Wolfe's Belize projects: web.viu.ca/wolfel/projects.asp

Photos of Belize River Valley disaster mitigation work: flickr.com/photos/vancouverislanduniversity/sets/72157629497048714/

VIU Bachelor of Education students 2012 practicum in Belize: sites.viu.ca/belize2012/

Want to help? Here's how:

- Belize can use self-funded skilled or educated volunteers or student interns who want to be involved for a few weeks or longer on village or university development work. Opportunities are there for economic development work, social services, education, crime prevention, agricultural development, disaster mitigation, business planning, governance and capacity building, arts and cultural development and more. E-mail LDSWolfe@gmail.com for more details.
- Donations of laptop computers for villages. Most villages have only a few if any computers. Belizean kids are losing out on the computer/information revolution. We could also use some computer trainers to teach villagers how to use the computers.
- Donations of children's books and shipping costs if possible to get books to Belizean village children. We have a circuitous route for getting them there cheaper.
- Fundraising or grant writing for village development.

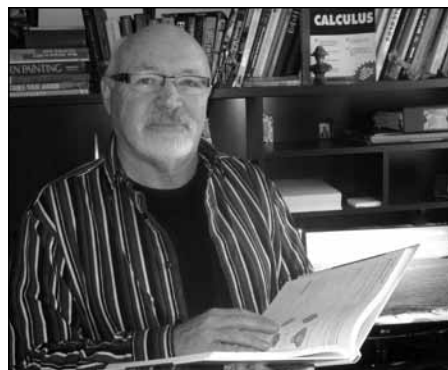
Math prof marries successful teaching career with research

Is it possible to combine a high-quality research career with a regular 16-hour per week teaching load? Dr. Lev Idels says “absolutely.”

By staying connected with active researchers in his field and planning his time wisely, Idels excels at both of his passions with ease.

A Russian immigrant at age 55, Idels began teaching in VIU's mathematics department in 2001. His aggressive research career was launched two years later, including international collaborations with professional colleagues in Israel, Norway, Argentina and France. He has also collaborated with VIU Biology professor Dr. Allan Gibson and Dr. E. Braverman of the University of Calgary.

Over the years, his contribution to VIU's math department has been



Dr. Lev Idels is passionate about numbers.

nothing short of remarkable. Idels created and taught five new upper level courses in mathematical modeling and mathematical biology, designed a new department webpage, and spearheaded the University's first international math conference, Differential Equations and Applications in Mathematical Biology,

which attracted delegates from all over the world.

Idels has served on multiple committees, reviewed numerous research papers and textbooks for colleagues, and published 23 research papers in an eight-year period. Five of those articles were published in 2011 in Elsevier journals, including titles such as Qualitative Theory of Functional Differential Equations with Applications to Mathematical Models of Marine Protected Areas and Angiogenesis, Leukemia, Respiratory and Population Dynamics.

The articles were written in collaboration with Professor P. Amster of the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina, and Professor L. Berezansky of the University of Negev in Israel. The papers were devoted to the mathematical

analysis of tumor growth dynamics. One of the articles received 14 citations in six months.

Idels' research has focused on developing new mathematical models that can be used in a variety of applications from predicting the most efficient times for fish harvesting to optimizing treatments and protocols in cancer patients. He is grateful for the funding support he's received over the years from VIU's Research Fund and from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

“Research keeps my mind sharp,” he says, “and creating new courses keeps the job interesting for me and for my students. That's my driver. It helps me grow professionally as a teacher and a human being.”



Cowichan Campus earns design awards

VIU's new Cowichan Campus received an Excellence Award in the education category at the 5th Annual Vancouver Island Real Estate Board Commercial Building Awards.

The distinctive facility which opened in September 2011 on University Way in Duncan has also earned a citation from the Canadian Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute.

The Roy Willwerth Precast Concrete Architectural Recognition Award will be presented to Garyali Architect Inc., of Victoria for design of the 3,500 square metre campus.

The award recognizes outstanding contributions to the Canadian Precast/Prestressed Concrete industry in architectural design, sustainability, innovation and change, and for positive leadership and industry-altering development and expansion.

Cowichan Campus features state-of-the-art health and science labs, computer labs

and several multipurpose classrooms, a 110-seat lecture theatre, cafeteria and kitchen, library commons and many areas for students to gather and study.

It has been designed to meet the gold standard for LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design).

"We're proud of the recognition that Cowichan Campus has earned," says Ric Kelm, Executive Director, Infrastructure and Ancillary Services at VIU. "With features such as rooftop gardens, geo-exchange heating and cooling and rainwater collection, it is one of the most sustainable facilities on Vancouver Island from a design, construction and operational perspective."

The new campus serves students enrolled in career and academic preparation and employability skills programs, university degree, business, health and human services, and trade and applied technology programs.

Partnership with Stz'uminus First Nation



The Cowichan Campus Carpentry program, led by instructor Mike Braun, signed a partnership agreement with the Stz'uminus First Nation to build a house in Chemainus, using the skill set of the Level 1 Carpentry Foundation class. The house will replace one that burned down, leaving homeless one of the band's elderly couples. Stz'uminus Chief, John Elliot, expressed his gratitude to VIU and sees great benefit for an ongoing partnership for an annual program to build much needed First Nations housing. Left to right are: Keith Chicquen, Cowichan Campus Instructional Director, Glynis Steen, Associate Dean, Trades and Applied Technology, Mike Braun, Carpentry Instructor, Stz'uminus First Nation Chief John Elliott, Glenn Boyda, BladeRunner Co-ordinator and Loretta Hopkins, Stz'uminus First Nation Housing Manager.

Powell River Campus News

Supporting ESL students

With 25-plus years as an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor, **Wendy Thomas** has created a new ESL bridging program. Starting in September 2012, a unique package of courses called English Academic Skills Education (EASE) will help meet the needs of local ESL residents while offering international high school students the chance to continue their education in Powell River. It's a partnership program with School District 47,

VIU's English Language Centre and local agencies.

Success at OysterFest

VIU and School District 47 Culinary Arts students served 160 people during the 27th annual Oysterfest held in Powell River in April. VIU Chef instructor **Chris Gray** and 25 students helped prepare the four-course meal featuring oysters prepared in six ways. Proceeds go towards new equipment for the Culinary program.

VIU PEOPLE

Creative Writing instructor **Susan Juby's** novel, *The Woefield Poultry Collective*, was shortlisted for the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour. "I'm proud to be associated with our fine tradition of funny Canadian writers," says Juby. *The Woefield Poultry Collective* is her first book for adult readers. Her highly successful Alice MacLeod series, set in Smithers, BC, was written for young adults. *Alice, I Think* was turned into a TV series. Juby's new novel, *Bright's Light*, will be released by HarperCollins in August.



Susan Juby

Creative Graphic Design instructor **Nancy Page** designed a new logo for the Port of Nanaimo. The landmark logo will be attached to the side of the beautiful new Port of Nanaimo building.

Visual Arts instructor **Gregory Ball** was one of five BC artists featured in *Throw Down*, a show at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria January to May which used satire and humour to spark contemplation and critique of socio-political issues. The multi-faceted installation featured a wall-mounted light box illuminated by stark images of a character ranting to express rage against environmental degradation, consumer excess and social inequity. A short film of that rant was projected onto a disc hanging above a battered oil drum and a stack of wooden pallets. The installation was inspired by the 2011 strike at VIU when Ball's colleagues gathered around an oil drum, built a fire to keep warm and shared stories and dialogue.

Tourism professor **Dr. David Robinson** received a 2012 Australia Endeavour Award to facilitate his study, research and collaboration with Southern Cross University in New South Wales, Australia, from August to November 2012. Robinson will create an Australia - Canada Community Planning Alliance and engage local planning departments and grassroots/civic community planning groups to learn and share on "public participation processes" in local contexts.



Dr. Rachel Moll

Dr. Rachel Moll, a professor in the Master of Educational Leadership program, also received a 2012 Australia Endeavour Executive Award. She will be hosted by the University of Wollongong (U of W) in New South Wales, Australia from June to August, 2012. Moll's collaboration with U of W will facilitate an exchange in best practices around technology integration in science classrooms. The

collaboration will benefit Australian and Canadian educators and pupils, and contribute to an ongoing effort to improve educational opportunities at a global level.

This year's Vancouver Island Short Film Festival showcased VIU talent from Festival Director **Johnny Blakeborough**, a Technologist in Information Technology, to film entrant **John Gardiner**, a Videographer/Photographer in Communications and Public Relations. Gardiner's film 'One Last Thing' was screened at this year's festival along with twelve other short films from local filmmakers.



Johnny Blakeborough

Festival awards coordinator was **Arwen Wallington**, VIU's Learning Technologies Support Specialist for Innovation and Excellence in Learning. Theatre professor **Leon Potter** acted in two different films (including Gardiner's).

Matt Jamont, Graphic Designer in Communication and Public Relations, received an Award of Merit from the International Higher Education Marketing Awards. He was one of only two Canadian recipients. Jamont's creative work was also included in a chapter on digital marketing in a new textbook called *Integrated Advertising, Promotion and Marketing Communications* published by Pearson Canada in March.

Retired VIU couple enjoying BC/California sunshine

Living is easy in the California and BC sunshine for John Lund and Marianne van Toor.

John and Marianne retired as Writer/Photographer and Director of Media Relations & Publications at VIU (formerly Malaspina) in 2006. For many years, among other things, they produced the popular employee newsletter *Mainly Malaspina*.

Today, John and Marianne enjoy a healthy lifestyle half time in Indio, California and half time in Nanaimo, keeping fit with activities such as golf, cycling, hiking, and travelling. They squeeze in freelance travel writing assignments for magazines and consulting work in Canada and the U.S.

"Having two small homes in Nanaimo and Indio requires some organization but it is totally worth it as we live in perpetual spring and summer," said John.

John and Marianne mapped out their mutual retirement plan six years in advance. At 55, John was tired of cold, damp, dark northwest winters and suggested that they explore southwest USA to find a warm, sunny place to spend their retirement winters.

"Once we found the Coachella Valley, with its 354 days of sunshine and 125 golf courses surrounded by mountains, that was it," said John. "Out of the Valley's nine cities (including Palm Springs), we settled in Indio for its Hispanic cultural mix. Overall, we love the diversity of art, culture, food, shopping and outdoor recreation."

"We frequently wonder how we ever had time to work full-time," added Marianne. "There are simply not enough hours in the day to do everything we want to do."

One of their greatest pleasures is socializing with new and old friends, including many from their days at Malaspina. "It's great to have my former assistant, Marilyn Burnett, staying in our RV resort in Indio," she said. "Rich and Pat Johnston live a 15-minute drive from us as well. Several former colleagues have visited the region since we retired, so we never get lonely."

Lund started his career at VIU in 1987 as Director of Public Relations. He left in 1989 but returned in 1994 to work as a Writer-Photographer reporting to Roger Prior.

Marianne started her career at Malaspina College on Kennedy Street in 1972 as secretary to the Humanities department. Eventually she became a secretary to Peter McMullen, Director of Information Services. When McMullen left in 1981, Marianne worked with Donna Reimer, Director of Communications, and she was offered the Directorship of the Media Relations & Publications department in 1989.

While both John and Marianne love retirement, there's a certain aspect they miss about VIU. "I miss the people," said John. "I loved exploring the campus photographing faculty, staff and students and telling their stories."

Marianne offers some sage advice for anyone contemplating retirement: "Plan for what you want to do, where you want to go, what hobbies you want to pursue. Work with a financial advisor on future cash flow projections/expenditures if you're not sure of your finances."

As John and Marianne are proving, combining a dream with a solid plan for the future pays off in a big way.



VIU retirees John Lund and Marianne van Toor are enjoying life in California and Nanaimo.

Riding the rails/European tour part of professional development

Marian van der Zon never dreamed she would be singing her way across Canada.

Her band, Puzzleroot, performed on a Via Rail train from Vancouver to Toronto in April, followed by a two-week tour in Ontario and a debut tour of Europe.

Puzzleroot is an "eclectic, genre-bending and blending band" consisting of van der Zon, her partner Gary Eugene and Shelley Brown.

"We've been labeled everything from roots, altfolk, altcountry, bluegrass to punkgrass," says van der Zon, who teaches Media Studies and Women's Studies at VIU. "Our songs are political, funny and poetic."

Puzzleroot began in 2007 and released its second CD, *Square Pie*, in April.

van der Zon is a self-taught musician who developed her own style on a five-string banjo. Her partner Eugene plays guitar and is the band's primary songwriter. Brown, who joined the band in 2012, plays upright bass. They all sing.

van der Zon and her husband heard about the Via Rail opportunity from a musician at one of their regular house concerts.

"Gary and I applied to Via Rail and were offered a gig to perform twice a day in the dining car," explains van der Zon.

In exchange, they got a free train ride to Ontario and meals. Once in Ontario, the band embarked on a two-



Puzzleroot band members (left to right) Shelley Brown, Marian van der Zon and Gary Eugene.

week tour in Ontario and Quebec.

In May, van der Zon and her husband will continue on to Hvar, Croatia where she'll attend an international conference on radio drama.

"I'm incorporating even more professional development into this trip," she says. "I'll present a 47-minute

radio drama I wrote and produced with VIU professors Daniel Burgoyne and Robin Davies, and student Alison Pitcher. It was originally a live performance that involved shadows, acting and sound presented at an Arts and Humanities Colloquium in 2010. Robin and I produced the piece which will be broadcast at the conference."

From Croatia, van der Zon and her husband will launch a European tour of France and Holland, playing at several cafes and busking. "This is a great opportunity to see family, enjoy Europe and do what we love to do," she says.

van der Zon has created a website (<http://www.puzzleroot.com/>) for the tour and plans to forward news releases to various media outlets along the way. She also plans to record interviews with media practitioners for future broadcast on *Be the Media*, a radio show which she co-hosts on CHLY.

"The show focuses on media and media production so I'm excited about meeting media people who have historical knowledge about radio from a European perspective," says van der Zon.

"It will be easy to turn the microphone around and talk to musicians and broadcasters about the way they use media. I'll also produce audio monologues to document our experience as an independent band from a grassroots perspective on what it's like to tour and perform, and the pleasures and challenges that go with that."

WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS

Fitness & Lifestyle Technician Karen Alden and her team in Campus Rec organized fun, educational activities for the entire campus community during Wellness Wednesdays.

1. Les Mabon and Lindsey Malbon promote healthy eating at one of the Wellness Wednesday stations.

2. Karen Alden stamps passports of Walk into Wellness participants.

3. Lynda Robinson and Janeane MacGillivray won magic bullets during the Walk to Wellness event.

4. Lindsay Malbon (background) and Cam Frenette serve Shane Hyde a free smoothie during a Wellness Wednesday event to teach employees about healthy nutrition.

5. International Education staff were on a mission to win first place during the Walk into Wellness event.



In Memorium – Mike Matthews

The VIU community lost one of its long-time members, Mike Matthews of the English department. Matthews passed away on Saturday, February 25, after a brief confrontation with cancer.

Matthews is survived by his wife Carol, who has strong connections of her own to Malaspina/VIU having served as Dean, and their daughter Alison, who has also taught for VIU few years ago. Matthews was 74.

Matthews joined Malaspina College at the old Kennedy Street campus in 1970, a year after it opened. Over the years until his retirement in 2002, Matthews taught hundreds of students English composition or Canadian literature in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

“This man kept students engaged the old-fashioned ways: through passion for

his subjects, gusto, and not a little dash of theatricality,” said long-time colleague and friend Steve Lane. “Mike would walk into a classroom carrying his trademark music stand as a portable lectern, and if you walked by that classroom you would hear Mike in full flight. No technology required; in fact, Mike’s struggles with technology are a legend unto themselves.”

Matthews helped to develop the department’s expertise in and connections to Canadian literature and writers, and helped develop the community through literary and theatrical productions and performances. After his retirement, Mike returned to teach a few courses for the English department, and got involved in the ElderCollege project.

Friend and retired Dean, Ross Fraser, who knew Matthews for more than 40

years, said the phrase ‘born to teach’ comes to mind when thinking about Matthews.

“It wasn’t just his knowledge of his field,” said Fraser. “It was his inherent love of the teaching process, the passion to help his students, the patience and honesty that informed everything he did. He had the universal respect and affection of his colleagues because even when he was riding horseback full-tilt for a cause, we all knew that he was coming from a place of absolute integrity.

Donations in Matthew’s memory may be made to the SPCA, in honour of his love of animals; a VIU Mike Matthews Scholarship Fund in honour of his passion for teaching; or the Palliative Care Unit at the hospital in recognition of the care and support Mike received while there.

The following VIU retirees also passed away recently:

- Sam Bailey, Heavy Duty instructor from 1977 until his retirement in 2000, was well-known in the community as a restorer of classic cars and an active member of the Nanaimo Yacht Club.

- Chuck van Antwerp was a member of the Philosophy department and an advisor at Malaspina College from 1974-2003. Chuck’s longtime department colleague, Bob Lane, posted a tribute here: episylogism.wordpress.com/celebration-of-life/.

- Lucy Whittam worked in the ‘Personnel’ office at Malaspina from 1987 to 1991. Former co-worker Ardith Conlin says Lucy’s bubbly personality was loved by all who knew her. *Condolences to family, friends and colleagues of these former VIU employees.*



VIU Women’s Volleyball team beat Mount Royal University Cougars for the gold medal in the Canadian Colleges Athletic Association Women’s Volleyball Championship held on home court at VIU in March. Congratulations to the players, coaches and staff for an exciting and memorable event.

New Innovation Lab hosts first public event

Thursday, May 24
4:30 to 7 pm, Cowichan Campus

VIU Cowichan Innovation Lab presents a public lecture by Dr. Lynne Siemens on the ways in which “creative clusters” of individuals with a common goal and a desired outcome has lead to success for many small Island businesses. Dr. Siemens will present “Developing and Supporting Creative Industry Clusters: Role of Regional Universities” as a way to engage in conversations with community members about the Innovation Lab.

This Innovation Lab is a new initiative to link the regional community with VIU scholars and researchers, mobilize knowledge and address regional challenges. For info contact Sally.Carpentier@viu.ca.



Employees Venessa Sheehan and Deirdre Godwin participated in the CUPE CARES event.

Cupe cares for the environment

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) members at VIU got their hands dirty for a good cause. About 40 workers with CUPE Local 1858 volunteered to clean up garbage along Nanaimo River and Harewood Mines roads in March. Their efforts were part of an event called CUPE Cares.

Tara Mitchell, CUPE Local 1858 president, was impressed by their members’

response when the call when out to help clean up the neighborhood.

“It is pretty amazing when 40 members come out, and in many cases bring partners and children to spend a Saturday morning cleaning up garbage,” she said, “Our members really care about the community that so generously supports VIU. Thanks to everyone who took part and helped organize this event.”

Inside VIU

Connecting the VIU community

INSIDE VIU is produced quarterly by Vancouver Island University’s Human Resources (HR) and the Communications and Public Relations (CPR) departments.

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Contributions are welcome.

Call Local 6559 or email Marilyn.Assaf@viu.ca

PEER TO PEER ACCOLADES

Would you like to recognize a colleague for a job well done? Send your Peer to Peer Accolades to insideviu@viu.ca. Here are a few examples:

“**Lisa Sworts** (Lab Resource Nurse, Health and Human Services programs) consistently goes the extra mile to promote student success. She is an invaluable resource for instructors and students alike in the Practical Nursing program (among others) and her willingness to pitch in and help out at a moment’s notice is a Godsend. Thank you, Lisa. We appreciate your collaborative approach and contributions to our program.”

“**Joanne Noble** (Medical Supplies Clerk) keeps our program going by ensuring that the equipment and supplies for our learning activities are readily available. She works constantly in the background of several Health and Human Services programs tidying up, reordering, and organizing supplies, and generally keeping the nursing arts lab running efficiently. She is well-organized, dependable and is willing to help the moment we need assistance. Thank you, Joanne for your ongoing support.”

“Thank you **Joanna Hesketh** (Recruitment Services) for the fabulous job organizing the New Student Orientation. Our student residents are better prepared and more connected because of this well-organized event.”

“**Leslie Bakjov** (Manager, Accounts Payable) and the **cashier’s office** have assisted me so many times with questions about money, fees and registrations. Your help has been so appreciated.”

“Having just received a permanent position in the Applied Business Technology program, I would like to say thank you to **Helene Viau** (Records Clerk). You really make a difference. You are a team player and have been so patient and kind.”