A leg up for international engineers

BY AYSHA PARANI

Western is reaching out to internationally trained engineers and qualifying them to work in Canada with a professional one-year master of engineering program. Muhammad Afzal, a father of four from Pakistan, graduated from the program in April and has been working as a full-time engineer ever since. “When I came to Canada in 2003, I tried 30 places but no one responded,” remembers Afzal. “I was working in a factory doing labour work at night for $8 an hour. That was very difficult for me.”

Hesham El Naggar, faculty associate dean, says cases like Afzal’s pushed him to initiate the program. “They have to put bread on the table,” he says. “If they can’t work as engineers, they’ll work at anything.”

El Naggar felt an urgent need to start the program. He applied for funding 16-18 months ago but started it immediately. “I didn’t wait, I just started it. We’re still hoping that funding kicks in,” he laughs. “But the university is endorsing this. They’re very supportive of the initiative.”

The aim of the program is to bridge the gap between the knowledge gained through programs outside the country and knowledge that can be applied to the industry in Canada, says El Naggar. The curriculum provides course work in engineering, English language training, and an internship project that will allow students to gain Canadian work experience.

Professional Engineers Ontario, the licensing and regulating body for engineers in the province, requires both education and work experience in Canada. Western tries to fill those gaps, says El Naggar. Afzal, who was accepted into three M. Eng. programs before he chose Western’s, says the structure of the program according to industry needs is the best part. “The program is marvellous, Continued on Page 8

Med’s Silcox revives love of English

BY PAUL MAYNE

For Jim Silcox, teaching young and eager medical minds has long been commonplace. But, this past year, the tables were turned as the one-time associate dean of Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry found himself a student again, this time earning a Master’s in English. “If I hadn’t been accepted to medical school here I would have been a high school English teacher,” admits Silcox, who graduates Friday morning during Convocation. “When you’re retired, those things you’ve always had on the back burner can now come to life.”

This latest accomplishment just adds to his academic file — MD’67, MEd’94, BA’06 and now Continued on Page 8

Strong library and technology systems are just a few of the areas where The University of Western Ontario earns top marks from today’s students according to a national survey by The Globe and Mail newspaper. For coverage of the survey, see Page 3.
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CONFERENCE

Western’s School of Nursing will host the 15th annual Nursing Network on Violence Against Women Oct. 18-20 at London’s Hilton Hotel. Jacqueline Campbell, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs in the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing will give the keynote address on Violence Against Women in a Global Context: Challenges, Priorities and Success Stories. Other topics to be discussed at the conference include issues in the trafficking of women and children, and saying no to harassment. For more information, visit www.nnvawi.org.

WESTERN HEADS EAST

Douglas Keddy of Research Western and Communications and Public Affairs is in Africa with the Western Heads East program. The homegrown project is seeking to assist with the African HIV/AIDS crisis with an innovative program that helps boost resistance to infection by introducing ‘good bacteria’ into the local diet. Keddy’s blog can be followed at: http://atwestern.typepad.com/dkeddy/.

SCHULICH LEADER IN FAMILY MEDICINE

The Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry is being recognized for leadership in family medicine research with three major awards this month. Dean Carol Herbert will receive a lifetime achievement award from the North American Primary Care Research Group at its annual meeting in Vancouver, October 20-23. Herbert has also been named Honourary Fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners for her work in reviewing its exam process and her years of promoting family medicine. In addition, epidemiologist Moira Stewart has been named 2007 Family Medicine Researcher of the Year by the College of Family Physicians of Canada. Section of Researchers. The award recognizes a researcher who has made original contributions to research and knowledge-building in family medicine. Stewart is director of the Centre for Studies in Family Medicine and holder of the Dr. Brian W. Gilbert Canada Research Chair in Primary Health Care.

WELLNESS SERIES PLANNED

Western Wellness and the campus EAP committee have scheduled a series of presentations for staff and faculty beginning next week.

Nov. 24: Effective Parenting Strategies for School Age Children - Do you sometimes feel at your wits end with your children? This workshop will explore ways of managing behaviours and creating positive coping strategies.

Nov. 21: Bullying in the Workplace - This workshop will describe patterns of bullying in the workplace and provide strategies for dealing with bullies and bullying behaviour.

Dec. 12: Personal Mastery: Being at your best - Feeling stuck in life? This interactive workshop helps participants find new strategies to develop confidence and become more energized and creative at work and at home. Sessions will be in Room 330, Stevenson-Lawson Building, 12 noon - 1 p.m. Registration is limited, sign up at: www.uwo.ca/wellness.

COFFEE FOR CHARITY

The third annual Drink Coffee TODAY for United Way program is on tap for Oct. 22. For every large and extra large coffee (or other hot beverage) purchased across campus, Hospitality Services will donate 25 cents to United Way. Guest coffee pourers will also be on hand at a couple of locations. President Paul Davenport will be at Lucy’s from 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

United Way supports sexual assault education

By Paul Mayne

Fifty-one percent of Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of sexual or physical violence. Among all women who have been sexually assaulted, 69 per cent are assaulted by men they know. According to Statistics Canada, only six per cent of sexual assaults and one per cent of date rapes are reported to the police. “It’s real,” says Louise Pitre, Executive Director of Sexual Assault Centre London (SACL). Founded in 1973 as the London Women’s Resource Centre offering a library and workshops for women about assertiveness and equal opportunity, SACL has grown to more than 70 volunteers, predominantly providing support on the 24-hour crisis and support line (English and Spanish), as well as public education and outreach.

While most of the funding comes from the Ministry of the Attorney General, the City of London, individuals and businesses, financial support from United Way of London & Middlesex drives the centre’s public education program for young women. “We want to be an advocate for women to end the cycle of sexual abuse,” says Western’s Krys Chelchowski, Director of Student Information Services and Administration, and volunteer board member with SACL for the last four years. “One of the ways to begin is to give young women the skills to help them create healthy relationships.” Programs with trained counsellors are now in a dozen high schools across London, as well as in Strathroy, Parkhill and Dorchester. “It comes down to empowerment, to get the issue out in the open and give women the opportunity to break the silence,” says Pitre.

Breaking through the silence is a battle Pitre and her volunteers say they face on a daily basis. A "patriarchal" justice system makes it difficult for women to come forward, she says. “It doesn’t become his issue, it becomes the woman’s issue, which it shouldn’t,” she says.

The work of the volunteers, such as Chelchowski, plays a vital role in SACL’s continued success in helping women get beyond their experiences. “It was volunteers who founded the centre and they will continue to play an important role,” says Pitre. “They are the roots towards our success.”

Sexual Assault Centre London

The Sexual Assault Centre London is a women-centred, feminist organization that provides supportive services to women 16 years of age or older who have experienced sexual violence at any point in their lives. It also works for the eradication of sexual violence through education and prevention. www.sacl.ca

24-hour crisis & support line: 519-438-2272

SACL’s inaugural Phoenix Women Rising Award will recognize Western alumna Sylvia Fraser for her strength, courage and resilience in overcoming the shame of childhood sexual abuse. Tickets for the Dec. 2 event (Grand Theatre, 6 p.m.) are available at SACL (379 Dundas St.); the Grand or by contacting Krys Chelchowski (ext. 82120).
Students give Western thumbs up

By Paul Mayne

From its libraries and residence halls to the campus atmosphere and quality of teaching, The University of Western Ontario has again scored high marks in the annual Globe and Mail University Report Card.

“Consistently earning praise from students for combining a great campus life with top-notch education, Western earned an A or greater on 44 of 78 categories surveyed,” says Davenport. The university has presented and worked through two mock emergencies in the past year, with one major exercise just two months ago, to prepare for a potential crisis on campus.

A number of our leaders, including Gitta Kulczynski, Elgin Austin, Susan Grindrod and others, have taken a leading role right across Canada when it comes to the safety and security of our students, staff and faculty,” says Davenport.

“Laborem Exercens” – On Human Labour

“Imagination, Grace and the Greening of our Buildings”

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Sister Susan Glaab, CSL, 519-963-1477; email: sglaab@uwo.ca

“I’m more impressed than surprised really. Western continues to be the only large university to have great results right across the board. There are very few areas where they have not done well.”

Simon Beck

Editor Globe and Mail University Report Card

Overall university atmosphere and sense of personal safety/security.

The latter doesn’t surprise Beck. The university has been praised as one of the ‘hot five’ universities in Canada when it comes to staying on top of emerging technology issues. Boasting an excellent WiFi network, the university was also identified as providing easy availability to blogs, podcasts and RSS feeds from students, staff and faculty through the university’s web presence.

“For many faculty our technology has allowed them to deliver courses more effectively and, for some, in more unique ways,” says Davenport.

Results are available at www.globeandmail.com/education.
Who wins, who loses in lo-carb food fight?

By Julie Rochefort

When it comes to dieting, carbohydrates are usually the first thing to get cut off or decreased substantially. But why? Why are people so fearful of this wonderful macromolecule? Could it be because of the highly publicized weight-loss successes from low-carbohydrate diets?

Low-carbohydrate diet

Consider the modifications needed to follow one of the popular low-carbohydrate diets. The first step is to reduce your daily intake of carbohydrate to 28 grams per day for the first two weeks with a gradual increase to 128 grams in the maintenance stage. How much is 28 grams of carbohydrate?

One cup of instant rice has 37 grams and that good ol’ macaroni (without the cheese) has 42 grams per cup. Imagine having a burger without the bun or a peanut butter and jam sandwich without the bread. You can also say goodbye to a pina colada cocktail which has 32 grams of carbohydrates. No wonder studies have found this type of diet difficult to follow over the long term.

The research

The current scientific guideline for carbohydrate intake is 130 grams per day for adults between the ages of 19 and 30. This is the minimum amount of carbohydrate required to provide the brain with an adequate supply of glucose. Again, that is the minimum amount for your brain.

What about the rest of your body? You need energy for everyday activities such as getting up from your chair and walking to class.

When your carbohydrate intake is inadequate, you force your body to rely on other sources of energy, such as protein. Diverting protein away from its own functions such as your body’s immune system is not ideal.

An excess intake of protein is not the way to “counterbalance” the missing energy you would normally get from carbohydrates.

Excess protein intake has been shown to have negative effects on your kidneys, leading to serious health concerns. The question may never be about how realistic this diet is, but about its safety.

The Verdict?

When entering a weight-loss regimen there are other things to take into consideration besides weight loss. Studies have shown that the initial weight losses on low-carbohydrate diets are primarily due to “water loss” not percent body fat loss.

And, as previously mentioned, our bodies need carbohydrates to help us work and think. With exams coming up, you may need to feed your mind which is working a million miles a minute to manufacure information all the time. More long-term studies are needed to draw conclusions about the long-term safety of low-carbohydrate-type diets.

Some concerns that have arisen include increased risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, kidney stones, and constipation. For more information concerning the risks of low-carbohydrate diets visit the resource centre at the Dietitians of Canada website (www.dietitians.ca).

Carbohydrates fuel your brain and body. Have your burger with a bun and indulge in a peanut and jam sandwich with the bread. Your body needs more than 130 grams to function.

In other words, put yourself first, not your diet.
Imigrant’s gritty tale an epic adventure

By Joni Baechler

The fifth year of the London Reads program is off to an excellent start with a stellar line-up of books to interest all Londoners. The program promotes Canadian authors and the importance of literacy. The entire community is invited to read the novels along with a team of local celebrity panelists as they deliberate the merits of Canadian fiction at book clubs around the city. Monthly book events will begin this month and will be offered until February, 2008. Each month the celebrity readers, one from Western and one from the community, will gather with their fellow readers to discuss their book.

Michael Coleby, Executive Chef of Great Hall Catering at Western, and Carolyn Doyle, Supervisor of the Landon Branch of The London Public Library, will host the first book event. The first book up for discussion is Peter Behrens’ award winning novel, The Law of Dreams.

The Law of Dreams is an exceptional epic adventure. Inspired by Behrens’ family history, the novel chronicles the perilous journey of Fergus O’Brien. Through the eyes of the protagonist, Behrens weaves a compelling tale that illuminates an important part of history, the struggle for survival in the aftermath of the great potato famine of 1847 Ireland.

The endurance of the Irish as a result of this natural catastrophe is magnified by political callousness and brutal neglect. The story follows O’Brien from his home tenement to a workhouse where he is sent following the death of his family. He then travels with a group of young thieves, learning of love, loyalty and heartache before making his way to Liverpool where he finds safe haven in a bordello. Here he recovers from typhus and learns of the harsh realities of city life. He labours with the railroad where he meets Molly who offers him companionship and the hint of the possibilities that await them in the new world. Hungry and battered, he yearns for a life free of regrets. A life that is more than a constant struggle for survival. Together they immigrate to Montreal by way of an extraordinary Atlantic crossing that tests his endurance and resolve.

“The saga is a brilliant, heart-felt tribute to the capacity of the human spirit, fueled by hope, to triumph in the face of the worst life can offer.”

- reviewer Joni Baechler

Rachel Lincoln for Western News

Michael Coleby of Great Hall Catering at Western and Carolyn Doyle of the Landon Branch of London Public Library will host the first London Reads book event, a discussion Oct. 24 of the award-winning novel The Law of Dreams by Peter Behrens.

London Reads book event

First in a series of events, each focusing on a literary contender for this year’s London Reads award
The book: The Law of Dreams by Peter Behrens
When: Oct. 24, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Where: Michael’s Restaurant, 168 Adelaide St. W.
Complimentary parking details provided at time of registration
RSVP: programs@lplca.ca or 519-850-2548
Learn about the program at www.londonreads.uwo.ca

Is there an information overload on campus?

Kevin Major
BMOS IV

I don’t think that there’s an information overload. University students come here for more information and are able to tune out the excess information. I don’t think it actually causes them any harm as opposed to maybe people who aren’t as well educated or aren’t as well informed in terms of advertising. I don’t honestly don’t notice the information, I just tune it out. I’m usually listening to my iPod or concerned about where I’m going to focus on the advertising.

Ashley Rowe
FIMS II

No, I don’t feel at all that there’s an information overload. It’s a huge campus and a huge student population and unless you’re informed you’re not going to be able to get the true student experience. I’m a bit selective about what I listen and pay attention to but I can definitely say that I wouldn’t know half the things I know about the campus and about student events if it wasn’t for the students and promotion people bombarding me throughout campus.

Jeff Hepburn
Biology II

There’s so many people put together on campus that there can’t be too much information. There’s so many groups putting out information that it’s good that there is something for everyone. The only problem with that is that there’s so much there that it’s tough getting to all the information that you’d like to get to.

Panther Wong
BMOS II

I think it’s just right. I think it’s all controlled by the students’ council. So I think they wouldn’t allow it to be to the point of propaganda, just advertising. I guess, I do find the email quite annoying. It’s like the mass emails. They’re not advertisements but they’re awareness for some societies like Heart and Stroke Foundation or something like that. So many emails in a week.

Jaclyn Haggarty
Environmental Science II

I think there’s information overload but I think that’s a good thing. It’s kind of hard to limit information that you want to get out to help certain people. You have to provide all different kind of media and messages to get around to so many different people on campus. You allow yourself to be drawn to the information that applies to you.
Scholarship and pursuit of social good

BY ANDREA HARTLING

Growing up in Los Angeles, Ajit Pyati, was always able to go to libraries. But when Pyati taught in Kazakhstan with the Peace Corps, he entered a culture where access to libraries was a privilege, not a right.

The experience frustrated Pyati and sparked his interest in global information equity. When he returned to the United States, he began studying library and information science at UCLA.

Now, as an assistant professor at Western’s Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Pyati hopes to build a body of research that will help increase information access in developing countries.

“You have to keep your distance to do your good scholarship but at the same time you can be an advocate for things you believe in,” said Pyati. “I want to see the social benefits of what I do.”

Pyati’s cousin and close friend Dileep Rao, 34, says that working with the Peace Corps allowed Pyati to find his path in life.

“He has this mind and spirit became focused on what he could do for the world,” said Rao. “He realized that academic work is meaningless if it doesn’t make a change.”

This winter Pyati hopes to travel to India, where he will begin research on how libraries act as community technology centres. Pyati hopes his research will lead to a greater understanding of India’s changing information culture.

In addition to his work abroad, Pyati is researching information technology among immigrant communities in North America. He believes that understanding the ways that immigrants harvest information is essential to learning how to help them with the problems they face.

“Do they need?” said Pyati. “We were looking at this in terms of traditional information seeking and how we can include them in the social fabric of Canada and the United States.”

Both of Pyati’s parents immigrated to the United States from India before Pyati was born. His father, who also had a PhD, was an electrical engineer. Pyati’s mother is a retired computer programmer. Looking back, Pyati feels fortunate to have learned about life through his family and close-knit group of friends.

Pyati’s family and friends feel fortunate to have been entertained by him. “He is one of the funniest people I know,” said Rao.

Though Pyati now turns to yoga and meditation in his free time, he used to be involved in community theatre. Before he entered the Peace Corps he was accepted to an acting school in New York. Though he declined, he hopes that he can use his theatrical abilities in the classroom.

“When you teach, you are a little bit of a performer,” said Pyati. “I think that maybe as a teacher and an instructor I can kind of bring in some of those interests of mine.”

He may even treat his students to his impression of President George W. Bush. Pyati, who is passionate about politics, says that doing the impression is cathartic in helping him to deal with the president.

In addition to keeping his classes lively, Pyati hopes to be a good mentor for students. He plans to have an open-door policy and always be as supportive as possible. Pyati says that if it wasn’t for his adviser at UCLA encouraging him to maximize his potential, he never would have attempted a doctorate.

Pyati went on to complete his doctorate in only three years. Now he sees the decision to continue with his education as one of the best that he has ever made.

“It’s opened up a whole new world for me,” said Pyati. “There are many things that I can do now that wouldn’t have been possible without it.”

Oddly enough, Pyati’s adviser, Clara M. Chu, received her doctorate from Western.

“If I can be a mentor to students the way she was to me, then that’s the way it will all come back full circle,” said Pyati.

The writer is a graduate journalism student.
A father and daughter go career shopping

By Bob Klanac

Let me make this clear. I don’t want my daughter to be an engineer. I also don’t want her to be a doctor. Lawyer, too. In fact I don’t want my daughter to be anything in particular when she heads to university.

But I do want her to sample it all. See what a doctor does, ditto for a lawyer, a computer programmer, and the person who makes tim-bits. See what ignites a spark in her 14-year-old cerebellum.

With that agenda she and I made our way to the Go Eng Girl session Oct. 13 at the Faculty of Engineering. Go Eng Girl exposes girls to what the faculty calls the ‘caring profession’.

More than 80 girls attended the Western session. Go Eng Girl is Engineering’s bid to expose the field to girls in grades 7-10. From 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., 80 girls and their parents were invited to become enlightened about what Western Engineering calls ‘the caring profession.’

Typically, engineering has not been on the radar of young girls. With that agenda she and I made our way to the Go Eng Girl session Oct. 13 at the Faculty of Engineering.

Go Eng Girl is Engineering’s bid to expose the field to girls in grades 7-10. From 8:30 a.m. to noon, 80 girls and their parents were invited to become enlightened about what Western Engineering calls ‘the caring profession.’

There were no groups, cliques or part they didn’t know each other. There were no groups, cliques or part they didn’t know each other. That wasn’t the point.

Girls had done this, done it smoothly and done it well. Girls, the very species stereotypically assumed not to have a disposition, genetic or otherwise, for building anything.

At the end of the hour-long exercise, five or six different elevators were raised aloft with pride. Several coin-tosses later, a few of the girls took home these now-priced trophies.

It was a great opportunity for learning - and not only for the young teens. I learned quite a bit by watching my daughter work.

She knew when to move the process forward and when to lay back and let others do the same. Some leadership qualities emerged. She also knew to respect others’ contributions and ideas. In short, she made me proud.

So will she become an engineer? I really have no idea. She liked the morning and it got her thinking about life beyond high school, which is just about right for a Grade 9 girl. What is certain is that when it comes time to make a decision, she’ll have an idea what she’s getting into or passing on.

By that criteria, the only one I know as a parent, applause is due Go Eng Girl.

Bob Klanac is a reporter for Western News.
‘It’s a different vibe now, students are different’

Continued from Page 1

MA’07 – not to mention numerous recognitions during his 32 years as a Western faculty member. An eight-time winner of the Class of 1962 Award; a five-time member of the USC Teaching Honour Roll; a Pleva Teaching Award recipient, among others, Silcox says his time in the classroom teaching students was the best. But was it still the best being back among the students? For sure, says Silcox, noting it was a different classroom experience this time around than it was just over 40 years ago when he was in medical school at Western.

Life as a Western student again was enjoyable and eye-opening, he adds.

“It was a complete change in becoming a student again,” says Silcox. “It’s a different vibe now, students are different, and technology has changed. But it was also a nice position to be in, not having to worry too much about marks or essays – at least as much as you do when you’re a younger student.”

And in the mid-’60s, not being married, it was different atmosphere than today with his wife of 39 years, JoAnn, his biggest supporter.

“A lot of thanks goes to my wife for her patience, what with my nose in my books plenty of times,” he says. “She’s been so supportive of me.”

Also supportive were other students in his class. While he enjoyed his association with students and professors in an entirely different discipline than the one in which he spent his career, Silcox adds his classmates were “very tolerant of having an old codger in their class.” In his class of just 12 students there was also a lawyer and former school teacher.

Silcox’s affable demeanor made the transition to the classroom a smooth one.

“I’d like to think we had a little extra to offer,” he says, noting the mix of young and old. “The classes were great and something I had always wanted to do.”

Looking ahead, Silcox wants to continue teaching. While having officially left his practice in 2003, and position as Schulich’s Associate Dean Admissions and Student Affairs in 2005, Silcox can still be found on campus teaching the new generation of medical students.

“I’m still doing some teaching at Schulich… I just enjoy teaching,” he says, noting it’s been too hard to quit the classroom cold turkey.

“We will control my workload to fit my own needs. Western has treated me well.”

On Friday Silcox will cross the Alumni Hall stage, not as a professor but as a student graduating with his classmates – almost 40 years to the date medicine won out over English.

Statesman, filmmaker, researcher Convocation speakers

Brazil’s 38th President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, award-winning Canadian documentary filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin and Calvin Stiller, a world renowned physician, scientist and entrepreneur based in London receive honorary degrees today and Friday.

The ceremonies will take place on the following days:

Calvin Stiller
Oct. 18, 3:30 p.m.
Doctor of Science, honoris causa (D. Sc.)
Stiller established the Multi-Organ Transplant Service in London and served as the unit’s chief from 1984 to 1996. During this period, he was principal investigator of the Canadian multi-centre study that established the importance of Cyclosporine in transplantation and led to its worldwide use as first-line therapy for transplant rejection.

Alanis Obomsawin
Oct. 19, 10 a.m.
Doctor of Laws, honoris causa (LL.D.)
Obomsawin, a director at the National Film Board of Canada and member of the Abenaki Nation, is one of Canada’s most distinguished documentary filmmakers. Her seminal work, “Kanehsatake: 270 Years of resistance,” explored the 1990 Oka crisis. An Officer of the Order of Canada, Obomsawin is also an accomplished singer/songwriter, engraver and print-maker.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso
Oct. 19, 3:30 p.m.
Doctor of Laws, honoris causa (LL.D.)
Cardoso was president of the Federative Republic of Brazil from 1995 to 2003, winning both elections by an absolute majority. Currently, he is chair of the Club of Madrid and co-chair of the Inter-American Dialogue. A sociologist trained at the University of São Paulo, he has emerged as one of the most influential figures in the analysis of large-scale social change, international development, dependency, democracy and state reform.

Program perfect ‘for people who are older or have very big families’

Continued from Page 1

El Naggar says it’s fulfilling to see students graduate successfully from the program and head out into the workforce.

“I love when I teach and students get that spark in their eye because they understand,” he says. “But when Muhammad Afzal got his job, it wasn’t about understanding. It was about a man’s livelihood.”

Afzal says the program is perfect for people who are older or have big families.

“This program is the best for people with circumstances like mine. We don’t want to lose more time.

“We need an immediate source of income so we can plan for ourselves and our families,” he says. El Naggar, who earned his engineering degree in Egypt, plans to continue seeking out resources to grow the program.

“I’m an internationally trained engineer myself,” he says.

“I know the pains of these guys.”

About 50 students are currently enrolled in the professional M. Eng. program at Western. About 40 of them are internationally trained.
When performance becomes its own reward

A project to bring music performance to adults results in a memorable tour

By Mark Kearney

Sirens of “encore” in Paris, the palpable feeling of dignity while performing at the Vimy Memorial, and a standing ovation in the Netherlands.

My most recent trip to Europe was not a typical one, but like most of the journeys we take in life it had numerous ‘moments’ that overwhelmed any overall sense of destination.

I play second clarinet in the Don Wright Faculty of Music New Horizons Band in London, Ont. It probably sounds more impressive than it should. Essentially, we are a group of a few dozen adult players, many of whom began as beginners only five or six years ago and who perform at about the level of a high school band. But what we may lack in musicianship we more than make up for in chutzpah.

This was our band’s second ‘tour’ of Europe, having played free concerts in Prague, Vienna and Budapest two years ago. If people in Europe are willing to give us a stage on which to perform, then we’re happy to go. This time around we played in Paris, Vimy, Bruges and Amsterdam, and one of those venues included a concert outside the palace at Versailles.

Hey, big or go home.

But as fun as it was playing for the many passersby at Versailles, that wasn’t the moment that resonated most for me. There were three others more satisfying.

The first occurred in Paris’ Luxembourg Gardens where we played outdoors under the threat of thundering clouds. We had a small roof over our heads in the pavilion where we set up, but the audience that gathered was out in the open. We pushed on and managed to stay rain-free for our first few songs.

When the rain hit, I knew I wasn’t the only band member thinking “uh-oh, everybody’s going to leave.” But to our delight and surprise, the audience put up their umbrellas and stayed. They applauded enthusiastically for each number and one man shouted, “Encore, encore.”

That felt good, even though one band member immediately leaned over and said, “don’t forget, the French like Jerry Lewis.” But our fan’s shouts were still music to my ears even when I was told later that he had been guzzling wine throughout the concert and was likely cheering for more musical accompaniment to help him finish the bottle.

Vimy was as solemn as Paris was raucous. It was perhaps the key reason people signed up for the trip this time – to play at the memorial during the 90th anniversary year of that famous battle. There wasn’t much of a crowd to hear us that day, but we didn’t care. We would have played to empty fields in the driving rain, if it had come to that. Instead, we had sunny, windy weather with a smallish audience – some friends of the band who accompanied us on the tour, a few curious onlookers touring the site, and several sheep grazing nearby.

A few band members mentioned afterward how emotional they felt playing in the memorial’s shadow. One song in particular, Nightfall in Camp, which we chose specifically for the Vimy concert, proved challenging for those caught up in its significance.

For me, it was O Canada. I’m not a big fan of anthems being played at virtually every gathering, but this was different. About two notes in I felt my throat clutch and thought, “Jeez, I’m playing O Canada at Vimy. Get it right.”

The third moment came at our concert in Zeist, near Amsterdam. Our audience didn’t consist of people strolling by as we ran through our repertoire. This was an outdoor theatre with bleachers where people came to specifically hear us play. They had put our band’s photo in their summer program with a blurb about how we were coming from Canada to play just for them. They wanted us to play two sets, with an intermission, as if we were, I don’t know, real musicians. They normally didn’t hold concerts on Monday evenings, but for us they made an exception.

No pressure. But we managed. It may not have been our strongest performance of the five concerts but it was solid enough. The audience certainly seemed to enjoy our efforts and, to the surprise of all of us, gave the band a standing ovation.

I know I’ll never be another Benny Goodman, no matter how much I might practise, but the joy comes from those rare times when either the listeners really appreciate what you’re trying to do or the band finds its unity in the sweep of a few notes that somehow sound... exactly right.

That’s my memory of Zeist. Of course, there were many other non-musical moments from this tour that still resound. The poignant feeling I experienced while standing in a room in Anne Frank’s House in Amsterdam, looking up at the attic where she would sometimes seek solace. The gathering of a few band members late one evening on the large lawn hear the Eiffel Tower showering bottles of wine, chocolate, and waggish remarks. Silently strolling through the Canadian cemetery at Vimy Ridge seeing so many graves without names and instead inscribed with the words: “A soldier of the Great War Known unto God.”

But those moments deserve their own stories.

The writer is a lecturer in the program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, formerly known as the writing program.

New Horizons Band

Details about the program, application form and photos of the European tour are at http://www.music.uwo.ca/new_horizon_adult_band.html
**Can nanotubes solve looming energy shortage?**

**By Karen Otto**

Interesting things often come in small packages and it just might be one of the smallest of packages that delivers an important gift for an energy-hungry world - a solution to the world’s impending oil shortage.

You can’t get much smaller than nano and nanotechnology, which is the area under study by Andy Sun, an assistant professor in the Department of Mechanical and Materials Engineering.

“Nanotechnology is the hot topic of the moment,” he says. And what Sun is trying to do with nanotechnology – the creation of useful and functional materials, devices and systems through the control of matter on the nanometre (one-billionth of a metre) length scale and exploitation of novel phenomena and properties at the length scale – is no small undertaking.

“We’re trying to make nanomaterials to address clean energy,” he says. To do this, he’s focusing on combining nanomaterials with fuel cell electrodes, in particular using synthesis, characterization and properties of nanomaterials such as carbon nanotubes and metal oxide nanowires.

As an alternative to oil, protein exchange membrane fuel cells use hydrogen oxygen producing a byproduct of pure water and at the same time, electricity. That’s why, Sun says, it’s good for the environment and also good for energy.

But there’s a problem, especially with using platinum as catalysts, he says, as they are so expensive the technology costs too much to produce. So Sun and his team are experimenting with carbon nanotubes to support the platinum.

Currently, people use carbon powder for fuel cells but, Sun says, “our idea is using carbon nanotubes instead of carbon particles to support the platinum.”

While carbon nanotubes are small, they have huge benefits. One human hair is equal to 50,000 carbon nanotubes. They’re also 100 times harder than steel and four times better than copper for electrical conductivity, he says.

“That means it’s very small. Tiny, but the perfect structure,” Sun says. Unfortunately, there’s a downside to the nanotubes, as well. “(It’s) the perfect material but the problem here is, how to mass produce it. That’s the big challenge.” And a solution on which Sun is working.

The Canada Research Chair nominee for his research into nanotechnology for clean energy is in an elite group of researchers on this topic. Only 20 to 30 labs around the world are specifically studying carbon nanotubes for fuel cells, while in Canada, only about five research groups are using nanotechnology for fuel cells.

Sun is collaborating with the Faculty of Science and Faculty of Engineering on this project and his interest in alternative energy is out of concern for the need for new fuel sources and of a concern for the environment. In 20 to 30 years the demand for energy will have increased yet oil reserves will be low - heightening the sense of urgency.

“So we have to work on this now to find clean energy,” he says. “Nanotechnology and nanomaterials are good solutions.”

His research is attracting big names such as INCO, the biggest mineral company in Canada, Canadian National Defense, Canadian Space Agency and General Motors. They’re all seeing clean energy alternatives and currently, Sun says, nanomaterials offer the best bet. “For the moment, it’s the only solution.”

The writer is a Western journalism graduate and London freelance writer.

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A single-walled carbon nanotube is a one-atom thick sheet of graphite (called graphene) rolled up into a seamless cylinder with a diameter of about one nanometer. Properties include extraordinary strength, stiffness and unique electrical properties. They are efficient heat conductors. High production cost has limited commercial exploitation but numerous academic papers are being written on this novel structure/material every year.

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Student demand high for counselling services

By Aysha Parani

Just over a month into school and an estimated 180 students are wait-listed for counselling services. Most will wait three to six weeks for an appointment.

Every year, more and more students are seeking out mental health services and staff members are scrambling to keep up.

“You can keep building the services indefinitely,” says Director of Student Health Services (SHS), Dr. Thomas Macfarlane. “But we need more space.”

“The problem is the availability of counselling space and the availability of qualified psychiatrists,” he says.

The SHS recruited two new psychiatrists for this year but only one was able to follow through with the commitment.

“It’s a kind of bomb-or-bust economy with healthcare professionals these days,” says Macfarlane. “They tend to go where it’s most lucrative.”

In the meanwhile, some students are left to cope on their own.

Maggie Tulecka, a first year graduate student in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, contacted the SHS in May and was immediately put on a wait list.

“I couldn’t get an appointment anywhere,” says Tulecka. “I was on the verge of a breakdown and I couldn’t get any help. It made me feel really frustrated.”

“Things are tight but I would never want to discourage a student from coming in. That would be the worst thing,”

Dr. Gail Hutchinson

Macfarlane says that although student demand for counselling services is very high, he believes the stats are somewhat inflated.

“We contact students on the waitlist up to three times,” he says. “We’ve found that over 60 per cent of these students have declined the first two appointments.”

Tulecka is one of these students. Two months passed before she received the first phone call. By the time they called, she had been forced to find other ways to deal with her problems, she says.

“They call you with one timestep,” says Tulecka. “If it conflicts with your schedule, they’ll call back three months later with another one.”

In addition to the three to six counsellors available at the SHS at any given time, the Student Development Centre (SDC) also offers mental health services for students.

The wait-list looks about the same but Director, Dr. Gail Hutchinson, says students in distress should always come in to see what can be done.

“If it’s a crisis, we’re not going to send someone away,” she says. “Things are tight but I would never want to discourage a student from coming in. That would be the worst thing.”

The SHS often deals with acute psychiatric problems that require medication. The SDC deals with other psychological crises, although the two overlap. Both services assign priority based on the severity of the problem.

“Some students may never be able to get ongoing treatment,” says Hutchinson. “We try to get through the list but we keep getting more crises coming through the door.”

With more students on campus, and their problems getting more complex, more on-campus assistance is needed, she says.

Students like Tulecka expressed disappointment.

“What if someone is turned away and something happens to them?” she says. “It’s ridiculous to turn school for counselling and they can’t help you. They need to come up with a better system.”

The University Students’ Council has increased this year’s student health plan to include $500 towards psychological services. Students now have the option to book counselling appointments off-campus.

Whither community health?

The campus community is invited to bring along their lunch Oct. 24 and attend the popular Rural Health Brown Bag Lecture Series at University Hospital.

Giving students, staff and faculty the chance to casually meet some of the area’s top medical thinkers, this coming lunch series will feature discussions about the challenges and rewards facing a rural doctor in Ontario.

Ted Losun, a family doctor who practices in Mount Brydges and Strathroy, will share his experiences as a rural physician and how conditions have changed, and his expectations for the future.

IN MEMORIAM

London resident Patricia Dibdale, 68, died October 10. Dibdale retired from the Department of English in 2004 with 34 years of service. A funeral service was held October 13 at A. Millard George Funeral Home, 60 Ridout St. S., London.

Zen Sitting Group

Twice weekly sitting practice with recorded Dharma Talks and Buddhist Courses by Steve Hagen.

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londonzencentre.org
telephone: 519.461.0490
email: londonzencentre@gmail.com

Drew Hayden Taylor
Department of English/Canada Council for the Arts
Writer-In-Residence 2007-2008

For many years, the Department of English has been host to a writer-in-residence. This year, the post of the Canada Council for the Arts and the James A. & Marjorie Spenceley Writer-In-Residence will be held by Drew Hayden Taylor.

Writers-in-residence hold regular office hours, discuss problems and aspects of writing (even their own), and are pleased to comment on any creative writing that a student may submit for criticism. Drew Hayden Taylor will take appointments on Tuesdays between 10:15 am and 4:30 pm.

Please contact Vivian Lavers in the Department of English (Tel: 519.661.3403; email: vlavers@uwo.ca) to arrange an appointment with Mr. Taylor and then submit a hard copy of your writing sample (up to 10 pages, double-spaced), at least one week before your appointment, to University College Room 173.

For more information on Mr. Taylor, and the Writer-in-Residence program, please visit the Writer-in-Residence page of the Department of English web site. http://www.uwo.ca/english/site/writes/writes.html

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Application deadline November 2
By Andy Watson

Soccer goalkeeper Haidar Al-Shaibani has been sensational this season, earning his eighth and ninth shutouts last weekend in a 0-0 tie with Brock and a 2-0 upset over OUA West No. 1 team York. Al-Shaibani, who represented Canada at the World University Games in Thailand this past summer, has guided his team to a second overall finish in the OUA West, helping the team to secure an opening round bye and guarantee at least one home playoff game. The Mustangs have lost just once this season and have a record of 8-1-3.

Western hosts Waterloo and Laurier on Oct. 20 and 21 respectively at Brescia Fields. Both games start at 3:15 p.m. and are the final regular season matches of the season. The Mustangs will also host an OUA West semi-final on Oct. 27, time and location to be announced.

Top 10 Bestsellers
Non-fiction

1. The World Without Us by Alan Weisman
2. Ecooholic: Your Guide to the Most Environmentally Information, Products and Services in Canada by Adria Vasil
4. Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer
5. The Age of Turbulence by Alan Greenspan
6. The Devil in White City by Erik Larson
7. This is Your Brain on Music by Daniel Levitin
8. The Omnivore’s Dilemma by Michael Pollan
9. A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah
10. Giving: How Each of Us Can Change the World by Bill Clinton

Mustangs to Watch
A snapshot of Western’s top athletes

Haidar Al-Shaibani
Goalkeeper, Men’s Soccer
4th Year, King’s University College
Hometown: London

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• Beef Short Ribs w/ Smoked Corn & Smoky Chipotle Glaze
• Tempura Vegetable Platter

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• Pasta Bolognese w/ Spaghetti & Parmesan Reggiano

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Cash boost essential for Ontario universities

By Paul Mayne

The quality of education at Ontario’s post-secondary institutions is threatened without an influx of more government cash, says Brian Brown, president of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA).

Brown, speaking at the University of Western Ontario Faculty Association general meeting, says while the Liberal provincial government will fall back on the $6.2-billion overhaul announced in 2005, the amount is not enough.

“That money is flowing so slowly it has had no impact and has not accomplished what it had intended to do,” says Brown, adding universities need $1.6 billion more annually over the next three years.

“We are poorly funded compared to other provinces in Canada,” says Brown, speaking at the University of Western Ontario Faculty Association general meeting.

Brown says today’s students are at a significant disadvantage compared to when their parents attended university — with enrolment exceeding capacity, the student-to-faculty ratio now is about 27:1 (compared to 15:1 in the United States), and maintenance is being deferred — which means the learning environment is “facing serious problems.”

One way to tackle these problems, says Brown, is through one voice and the advocacy of OCUFA, which represents faculty at 23 universities and has 15,000 members.

While not easily measured, Brown says advocacy is more “a building process that works at a slow pace towards success.”

One area of concern is the province’s goal of doubling PhD and Master’s enrolment and the lack of sufficient faculty to meet those needs.

Without money to hire new tenured faculty, the already hefty burden on current faculty will be too much to bear.

“We must pursue the government to raise support in Ontario to the national level,” says Brown, using the equation of an additional $125 per student per year in operating and capital investment.

“We need more faculty in the classroom, it’s just common sense. If graduate students are to be the future of this province, we need to get the best and brightest faculty to do that.”

He adds OCUFA will also be putting a spotlight on the fact more investment needs to be focused on basic research at the university level, rather than the current heavy focus on commercialization aspect of research.

“There also needs to be a more balanced approach when it comes to research funding,” says Brown.

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“There also needs to be a more balanced approach when it comes to research funding,” says Brown.
Mid-Year Examination Timetable, December 2007
The preliminary mid-year examination schedule was posted Oct. 15 on the Registrar’s website. The Final Schedule will be posted Nov. 12 on the Registrar’s website. Students booking flights for the holidays are advised to book a flight date of Dec. 20 or later.

A student who, for religious reasons, is unable to write exams on a Sabbath or Holy Day, must give notice of this fact in writing to his/her dean by Nov. 15. The application deadline for Need-based awards is Oct. 31. If you have not already applied, visit http://www4.registrar.uwo.ca/financialservices/needbasedawards.cfm for a list of awards and additional documentation that may be required for specific awards. The online application and all supporting documentation, if required, must be received by Student Financial Services in Stevenson-Lawson Room 180 by Oct. 31. Apply as soon as possible. This year, students applying for need-based awards will be automatically considered for bursary assistance as well.

Need-based awards deadline
The application deadline for Need-based awards is Oct. 31. If you have not already applied, visit http://www4.registrar.uwo.ca/FinancialServices/NeedBasedAwards.cfm for a list of awards and additional documentation that may be required for specific awards. The online application and all supporting documentation, if required, must be received by Student Financial Services in Stevenson-Lawson Room 180 by Oct. 31. Apply as soon as possible. This year, students applying for need-based awards will be automatically considered for bursary assistance as well.

Credit Balances
Credit balances resulting from scholarships, bursaries, and donation opting-out will be processed at the end of October. Students receiving refunds will receive an e-mail by Oct. 29 with instructions on how to pick up their refund cheque.

Information Services (Room 190) hours
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 9 am to 4 pm
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Regular hours – 9 am to 4 pm

For more information visit www.registrar.uwo.ca

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Weekly spotlight on volunteering, study abroad and service-learning

Scotland beckons for top students

Studying in Scotland is a possibility for University of Western Ontario students courtesy of the Canadian Jones Foundation, established in memory of legendary golfer Bobby Jones. Any undergraduate student currently in the second year of any honours program at Western in the faculties of Arts and Humanities, Science and Social Science may apply to study at the University of St. Andrews. Students are required to have a minimum average of 80 per cent in their first year of studies. This cumulative ‘A’ average must be maintained until students depart for Scotland.

Contact: The International Exchange Program in Room 200 of the University Community Centre; by email exchange@uwo.ca; or phone 519-661-2111 x 85196.

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October 18
Brescia 6th Annual Breakfast for Bursaries - Guest speaker Valerie Prince, Support Women's Education. $65 per ticket. To order online visit www.brescia.uwo.ca/dining/breakfast.html or call 519-661-3187, or email bresciafoundation@ uwo.ca. London Convention Centre, 7 - 9 a.m.

Organizing the Search for Tom Thomson (continues) - London artist Jeff Willmore re-examines the impact of the Group of Seven on the Canadian approach to contemporary landscape painting and the changes exerted by industrial use and human incursion. To October 28. McIntosh Gallery: www.mcintoshgallery.ca

October 19
Don Wright Faculty of Music - Jazz Ensemble, Babf Plamad, Western News

Babf Plamad, Western News

Donald Hunseberger, conductor emeritus of the Eastman Wind Ensemble, warms up a Western ensemble for an Oct. 12 performance at Talbot Theatre. Hunseberger was at Western as a guest conductor providing students an opportunity to learn under his baton as well as a conducting symposium. His recording of Carnival featuring Wynton Marsalis with the Eastman Wind Ensemble was nominated for a Grammy Award.

Simply Remarkable Staff
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Western staff are simply remarkable in their contribution to the campus community. Recognize the efforts of exemplary individuals and teams by submitting a nomination for: The 2008 Western Award of Excellence Deadline for nominations November 22, 2007 New streamlined online nomination form visit: www.uwo.ca/pyp/recognition

October 20
Don Wright Faculty of Music - Lecture on instrument maintenance, Joel Becktell, von Kuster Hall, 10 a.m.

Women's Fastpitch Softball Team battles the other top 7 finishers (Guelph, Laurier, McMaster, Ottawa, Toronto, Windsor and York) Round robin games Friday 5 and 7 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m., 12, 2 & 4 p.m. Quarterfinals, semfinals and championship Sunday at 10:30 a.m., 1 & 3 p.m. Stronach Park.

October 21
Women's Field Hockey - McGill at Western, 8:30 a.m.

Women's Fastpitch Softball Team battles the other top 7 finishers (Guelph, Laurier, McMaster, Ottawa, Toronto, Windsor and York) Round robin games Friday 5 and 7 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m., 12, 2 & 4 p.m. Quarterfinals, semifinals and championship Sunday at 10:30 a.m., 1 & 3 p.m. Stronach Park.

Women's Soccer - Laurier at Western, 1 p.m.

Men's Soccer - Waterloo at Western, 1 p.m.

October 22
Physics and Pharmacology Seminar - John Pritchard, Chief, Laboratory of Pharmacology and Chemistry, “Control of Drug and Sensory Elimination: Competing Roles of PFC Isomers” DSB 3008, 4 p.m.

October 23
Oncology Grand Rounds - Department of Oncology and London Regional Cancer Program. David Feber, “Sperm Banking for Cancer Patients” Room A3-904ab, 12 to 1 p.m.

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Don Wright Faculty of Music - Early Music Studio, 17th and 18th century music performed on period instruments. von Kuster Hall, 12:30 p.m.

Men's Soccer - Waterloo at Western, 1 p.m.

Modern Languages and Literatures: Comparative Literature Research Forum, Elias Polizoes, “Erich Auerbach’s ‘Elegy for Europe’” UC 104, 5 – 6 p.m.

Modern Languages and Literatures: German Film Series - Der Krieger und die Kaiserin “The Princess and the Warrior” (Tom Tykwer, 2000, UC 101, 7 p.m. Call 519-661-3187 or view www.uwo.ca/earth/}

October 24
Campus Communicators is a Toastmasters club. Develop and improve communications skills, in a supportive and learning environment. SSB 330, 12 noon. Contact Mark Phipps markphipps@gmail.com or Megan Popovic mlpopovic@uwo.ca. Visit cctm.freetoasthost.info

Rural Health Brown Bag Lunch Series - Beverly Leipert, Chair, Rural Women’s Health Research, Faculty of Health Sciences; and Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry invite undergrad, grad students, faculty and community members to attend Ted Osman and Marilena Marignani “Rural Medicine” L HSC, U H, Auditorium B, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. uwo.ca/fhs/nursing/research_interests/ ruralhealthbrown.htm

Modern Languages and Literatures presents “La Tertulia” - Spanish Conversation Group. Anyone wishing to speak Spanish and meet people from different Spanish-speaking countries is welcome. 3:30 p.m. UC 117.

London Reads - Law of Dreams - Alumni West- ern invites the community to read along with and engage local celebrity panelists as they deliberate the merits of Canadian fiction. The Law of Dreams by Peter Benchley. Celebrity read- ers are Michael Coleby, Executive Chef, Great Hall Catering, and Carolyn Doyle, Supervisor of the London Branch Library. 5:30 p.m. Michael's Restaurant, Somerville House. Visit londorreades. uwo.ca


Don Wright Faculty of Music - student com- posers. von Kuster Hall, 8 p.m.

Send submissions to comingevents@uwo.ca