bee-ing in a movie!

by Sally-Ann Jones

A UWA family stars in a full-length documentary directed by Academy Award nominee Markus Imhoof.

“More than Honey” has been feted at the world’s biggest public film festival, the Toronto International, where it screened recently after making its global premiere at Locarno in Switzerland.

In the film, Professor Boris Baer, his wife Dr Barbara Baer-Imhoof and their sons Andrin (10) and Lucien (five) examine hives and allow drones to climb over their bare hands. There’s also footage of Boris’ UWA colleagues scaling a cliff in the Perth hills to collect feral bees which are useful for research.

Barbara is Markus Imhoof’s daughter and Andrin and Lucien are the internationally acclaimed director’s only grandchildren.

“Bees are very important to humans,” Boris said. “One-third of our food comes to us from pollination by bees. And around the world they are threatened by the Varroa mite, hive beetle, drought, fungicides, pesticides and mono-crops.”

Boris and Barbara, who work at the UWA-based Centre for Integrative Bee Research (CIBER) also provided the scientific advice for the film. It came about when they were studying at Berlin’s Institute for Advanced Study in 2005.

“The Institute is an interdisciplinary organisation where science intersects with philosophy,” Barbara said. “We were going to have breakfast with Dad and I suppose thinking beyond science, we recognised that the fascinating story of the honeybee had yet to be told.

*Dad needed to be pushed a little, but he is interested in honeybees because his great grandfather kept bees in Switzerland. He owned a fruit canning factory and needed the bees to pollinate the fruit trees. And Dad has a bee hive too.

*It was a difficult film to make because so much of it involved close-ups of bees. You get very intimate vision of the bees’ lives. There were 105 hours of close-up filming, of which 45 minutes was used. It also meant travelling around the world four times – quite a feat for a man of 71!”

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How deadly is your treadly?

You might be getting healthier cycling to work, but what about your old treadly?

To celebrate National Ride to Work Day, UWA’s transport coordinator, Ruth Balding, has arranged for Dr Bike to visit campus and provide free bike checks.

Ruth, from Sustainable Development in Facilities Management, said Dr Bike will fix minor mechanical problems and give advice on what’s wrong and how to fix it.

“Find out why your bike makes noises, is hard to ride, or why the gears or brakes aren’t that great,” Ruth said.

You’ll find Dr Bike in a marquee alongside Saw Promenade north of the Arts Building from 8am to 1.30pm on Wednesday, 17 October.

Right: Dr Bike and a “patient”
From reluctant chem student to crystallography laureate

“We had a chemistry teacher who was really enthusiastic. In those days, there weren’t the health and safety regulations we have now and he used to do some truly exciting and probably dangerous experiments,” Professor Spackman said.

“We moved to Perth for my final two years of secondary education and I went to Tuart Hill Senior High, where there were also some very good chemistry and physics teachers.”

Professor Spackman was awarded the Aminoff Prize by the 273 year-old Swedish Academy in recognition of his work in crystallography – the science of the arrangement of atoms in solid materials.

Professor Spackman’s work can be described as crystal engineering, which aims to understand how molecules interact to form crystals with a view to making materials with predictable optical, electronic and magnetic properties. Materials in common use that have been produced as a result of research of this kind include most of our modern electronic devices such as mobile phones and computers.

Along with UWA colleagues Dylan Jayatilaka, Josh McKinnon and Mike Turner, Professor Spackman’s work has also led to the development of the CrystalExplorer software, which is now used by researchers across the world to analyse crystal structures. “All aspects of that research program have been entirely original and represent a wonderful example of the importance of serendipity, followed up by many years of dedicated research,” Professor Spackman said.

“The Aminoff Prize has been awarded since 1979 and has some eminent recipients, including many pioneering crystallographers and a Nobel Laureate; to be included among them is very humbling” Professor Spackman said. He added that he was particularly delighted that a statement of the prize included the phrase that “some preference should be shown for work evincing elegance in the approach to the problem”.

The Aminoff Prize honours Swedish scientist and artist Gregori Aminoff (1883 – 1947), The other recipient for 2013 is Professor Carlo Gatti of the Italian National Research Council.
A five-star student experience

Now in its 21st edition, the guide provides information about Australia’s universities, private higher education providers and degrees to help prospective students find the best option.

UWA received the maximum five stars in these areas: student demand, research grants, research inclusivity, positive graduate outcomes and graduate starting salary.

The guide points out that at our University, teaching awards and regular reviews, such as compulsory student surveys of units, have emphasised excellence in undergraduate teaching. It discusses New Courses, our new generation of undergraduate degrees, which feature a simple, flexible structure with communication, research and problem-solving skills embedded within the degrees.

The guide also provides information about our many student exchange programs and alumni chapters across the globe.

Guides such as this are useful as a compass. They help us to ascertain our bearings in a competitive market and to discover whether our bold decision to change courses, to continue a navigational theme, was the right one.

Most of our students are enjoying the UWA experience, according to this guide. But we want to make sure that it becomes an even more enriching one.

One of the ways in which we will achieve this is by continuing to increase our students’ interaction on campus. While online learning is a useful tool, it is also vital that we create a real community where people interact through face-to-face learning, teaching, research, social and cultural activities and sport.

By enabling more students to live on campus, as well as visiting regularly, we will also create an intellectual environment in which students participate more fully in University governance, clubs and organisations, the performing arts and athletic programs.

What students learn from and with each other is every bit as important as what they learn in lectures and tutorials.

And while considering enriching the student experience, we must pay special attention to new students’ first contact with the University, during orientation activities. We are working towards a program of orientation that will provide new students with information about their tertiary education as well as the skills with which to approach it.

Our University does not operate with the aim of achieving endorsements from a range of national and international assessment agencies.

But a recent five-star rating from The Good Universities Guide 2013, a publication by RMIT University in Melbourne, is a useful tool in judging for ourselves where we stand Australia-wide across certain measurable criteria.

A helping hand from Saint John of God Hospital

A group of medical students scored laptops and diagnostic kits recently thanks to the Saint John of God Hospital’s ongoing sponsorship of our Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health.

Graduate entry medical program students Shauna Hill, Mark Sorensen and Veronica Dolman were presented with Mac Pro laptops by Joshua Nipps, who is SJOGH’s social outreach manager. Mr Nipps also gave four third-year medical students an ophthalmoscope and ophthalmoscope kit each. Luke Davies and Jordan Ah Chee were on hand to receive them on behalf of their fellow students.

Left: Shauna, Mark, Veronica, Joshua Nipps, Luke and Jordan at the presentation of laptops and kits
Justice wins Premier’s Prize and opens eyes to Aboriginal history

They were saying, “You-ou”, which the Prosecutor thought was, “Yes, I’m guilty”, but it was meaning “Yes, I hear you.” (Maureen Kelly, Aboriginal JP, quoted in Justice.)

An historian who worked for the Kimberley Land Council for seven years and was commissioned by the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (ALS) to write a book about its 40 years of achievements has won the State’s biggest literary award.

Dr Fiona Skyring was presented with the $25,000 Premier’s Prize, beating 595 other entrants from around Australia including Tim Winton and Ellen Fontana’s screen adaptation of Cloudstreet and Anna Funder’s novel All That I Am.

Dr Skyring’s book, Justice: A History of the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA, published by UWA Publishing, documents the history of a service that has arguably the biggest geographical jurisdictions in the world: the entire State.

It provides an important perspective from Aboriginal people whose story, she says, is often overlooked in the history of the State. “It’s a history of discrimination and survival and the extraordinary achievement of social justice reforms against powerful opposition,” she said.

“The Executive Committee of the ALS wanted to get their story out there partly because today the ALS is so central to the operation of the criminal justice system, that young Aboriginal people don’t realise there was a time when it didn’t exist. It was their grandparents, many now in their 70s, who fought for reform and helped establish the ALS.”

The book reveals the human face of some of the nation’s major social, political and legal reforms of the last four decades. The ALS began by defending Aboriginal people’s right to equality before the law and has been influential in national campaigns to address the legacies of dispossession and human rights abuses.

It played a central role in advocating for reforms to address Aboriginal deaths in custody, land rights and the legacy of stolen generations.

Bringing the story of the people who built the ALS of WA and who continue to advocate for social justice, the book is a readable mix of information from the archives and oral histories. Dr Skyring interviewed more than 60 people who had been employed by or involved with the ALS over the past 40 years. This included a cross-section of people, such as lawyers who went on to have illustrious judicial careers and Aboriginal secretaries who helped to run the regional offices.

“I’m glad the book has been recognised with this prestigious award because it will get the history more widely disseminated so that all West Australians can have a better understanding of our shared past,” she said.

“Hopefully it will mean that when people come to form opinions about mandatory sentencing for example, or the operation of restorative justice initiatives, they can make more informed decisions.”

Her next book – which she will take time out to write from her work as a freelance historian – is a history of returned soldiers and riots at the end of World War I.

In the pink for breast cancer research

The annual Pink Ribbon Fundraising stall that we all look forward to won’t be on campus this year. However, organiser Rani Varathan from the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office is still promoting pink ribbon merchandise sales and online donations for breast cancer research.

Merchandise will be available until 30 October. Contact Rani on email rani.varathan@uwa.edu.au or extension 2807.


Click on DONATE NOW and follow through the prompts.

An official tax deductible receipt will be sent to you as soon as payment has been made.
New take on Nietzsche

A young European languages student, Dušan Zarac, is an example of someone engaging in the kind of critical thinking New Courses is designed to encourage.

Dušan (24) is about to have his first book published online by Fontaine Press. It is an analysis of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) and challenges current scholarship.

In the preface of On Nietzsche: An Explanation of his Literary and Philosophical Activity, Dušan pays tribute to former Vice-Chancellor Professor Alan Robson.

Dušan was a 13 year-old Croatian refugee when he arrived in Australia. From the age of 16 he became fascinated in philosophy. When his family moved from New South Wales to WA, he left good friends behind and his loneliness drove him to the Rockingham library where he read the works of Nietzsche, English philosopher Bertrand Russell and Rumanian philosopher Emil Cioran.

Dušan completed secondary education at Safety Bay Senior High School.

He recently read Nietzsche’s Thus Spoke Zarathustra in English, Serbian, Russian, Bulgarian and French translations and the thesis of his book is that Nietzsche aimed at inspiring war in Europe at the end of the 19th century.

Muscular units for broadening the mind

Male witches, the sexual prowess of aristocratic men as they forged empires in the new world, duels in 18th century London, sports-players and group sexual assault scandals, men in contemporary Japan and the United States...

These are some of the topics covered by a new Arts broadening unit that is proving popular among students from many disciplines.

“Men and Masculinities in History”, in Gender Studies, is coordinated by historian Professor Jacqueline van Gent.

“Students explore changing cultural assumptions about masculinity, the power relations that structure a range of masculinities, the intersection between masculinities, class and race, and historical changes in the relationship between masculinities and femininities,” she said.

“Lectures and tutorials introduce students to key theoretical frameworks for conceptualising masculinities, drawing from feminism, queer theory, sociology and cultural history. Workshops enable students to explore primary documents from a range including court records, medical textbooks, newspapers, clothing, visual arts, how-to-manuals and audiovisual material from a range of societies and time periods.”

Broadening units are an exciting feature of UWA’s new undergraduate courses. They are a requirement of all five bachelor’s degrees and provide students with knowledge beyond the fields in which they choose to specialise.

Students are required to take four broadening units from outside their degree area, including at least one with a global or cultural focus.

Language units are broadening units too – and there are nine languages to choose from, each of which can be studied at beginners, intermediate and advanced levels.

Other broadening units include “Environmental History”, which examines the factors shaping human dealings with the natural world, “Myths of the Greeks and Romans”, “Music in World Cultures”, “National and Transnational Cinemas”, “Popular Music in Global Perspective” and “Reading Creatively, Writing Creatively”.

Dušan Zarac
All the money in the world…

What has a booming economy to do with the fact that some men drive expensive cars, wear expensive clothes, shoes and jewellery and live in expensive suburbs?

Part-time PhD candidate Jason Collins, who drives a beaten up Nissan Pulsar and is married to lawyer Marjorie Collins, reckons he knows the answer.

Jason, who has a UWA Law degree, a Graduate Diploma in Economics from Australian National University and a Masters in Economics from the University of Sydney, is undertaking a PhD in a new field – evolutionary economics. He recently spent four months at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology with the Theoretical and Experimental Biology Group, honing his ideas.

He suggests that the male peacock is a clue, as is the following quote from shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis who had an affair with (among others) opera diva Maria Callas and was married to President John F. Kennedy’s widow Jacqueline: “If women didn’t exist, Onassis said, all the money in the world would have no meaning.

Jason’s thesis is that economic growth is driven by male conspicuous consumption, which in turn is driven by sexual selection. His idea was published recently in the UWA Economics discussion paper series and the associated poster won first prize at the Consilience Conference: Evolution in Biology, the Human Sciences and the Humanities at the University of Missouri.

Jason’s supervisors and co-authors are UWA evolutionary biologist Professor Boris Baer from the Centre for Integrative Bee Research and economist Associate Professor Juerg Weber from the Business School. They are developing a theoretical framework linking human evolution with the emergence of modern economic growth. The framework must be consistent with existing evidence, including that from evolutionary psychology and evolutionary anthropology.

“We develop a model in which males engage in conspicuous consumption to send an honest signal of their quality to females. Females respond to the costly signal, increasing the prevalence of signalling males over time. As males fund conspicuous consumption through participation in the labour force, this gives rise to an increase in economic activity and growth,” Jason said.

He became interested in this subject when, about 10 years ago, he read Geoffrey Miller’s The Mating Mind: How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature. Miller theorised that the human mind is not a survival machine, but a courtship machine developed to attract sexual partners. Jason realised that this shaping of the human mind by sexual selection would also have economic effects.

The peacock’s extravagant tail is an example of a sign of male quality. Only peacocks of high quality can afford to bear the cost. Conspicuous consumption works in the same way, Jason said.

“There are rewards for conspicuous consumption. Twenty thousand years ago, a hunter might have found time to string together some decorative beads instead of going out to hunt. This was a reliable signal of his intelligence and his confidence in his ability to get food another time and would have made him attractive to the opposite sex.

“There are other evolutionary changes relevant to economic growth beyond the theory of conspicuous consumption and they are the subject of my broader PhD thesis,” Jason said.

“For example, with the dawn of agriculture, the men who were able to best adapt to the new sedentary environment, who had the cognitive ability, patience and foresight required for farming, were those who survived and attracted mates.”

Jason said US economic historian Gregory Clark had studied wills in England from 1250 to 1800 and found that the richest people were also those who had the most children. Clark suggested their genes were then spread throughout society, enabling England to become a wealthy nation.

Jason said today’s women were probably still attracted to conspicuous consumption – but that female choice in our species is based on a variety of different factors: good looks, humour and “the whole basket.”

While in the past a woman might have been attracted to a man in a Lamborghini, these days, when there are other ways to display intelligence, a woman might swoon over the guy giving a presentation at a conference.
There’s a bear in there — but he won’t stop the work

Professor Murphy’s interest is in microbes: essential microscopic organisms, such as algae, bacteria and fungi, found in soil and water. By understanding microbial ecology, he hopes to provide information that will be useful in feeding the world’s increasing population, managing greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to climate change, and preserving natural ecosystems.

“Parts of the Arctic and Australia are both deserts: the Arctic has low temperatures and low rainfall and Australia has high temperatures and low rainfall,” Professor Murphy said. “It’s very useful to observe the functioning of organisms at the other end of the spectrum.

“I’m investigating how microbial ecology responds to climate change and disturbance from human activity such as deposition from atmospheric pollution. Specifically, I’m studying the mechanisms for soil-microbial-plant interactions with relevance to the cycling of carbon, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide.”

Professor Murphy said there was growing awareness by land managers and policy-makers of the importance of the soil in delivering many of the crucial environmental goods and services on which society depends. These included food and fibre production; the storage, filtering and transformation of water, minerals and pollutants; and carbon and nutrient cycling.

“The soil is where most of the biodiversity on Earth exists, and it’s a large sink that contains more than the combined total carbon that is in the atmosphere and vegetation,” he said.

“The Polar regions have profound significance for the Earth’s climate, ecosystems and, ultimately, human society. The Norwegian Government has designated Ny-Ålesund as an international base for research in natural sciences and in the spirit of the Svalbard treaty, researchers around the world are given equal rights to carry out research there. Svalbard is where the Global Seed Vault is located. This also stores seed from Australia.”

Professor Murphy said climate change was causing the snow that covers the
tundra to melt faster, and the soil to warm faster and to remain defrosted for longer. Warmer soil meant more microbial activity increasing organic matter decomposition, which causes an increase in the release of carbon and nutrients, including into the ocean. These changes were resulting in changing populations of plants and therefore also animals.

The Arctic ecosystem is sensitive to temperature, rain and nutrients, making it a useful model ecosystem to help understand global climate change. And having data from a cold environment is useful for comparison to a hot environment.

“Another aspect of my Arctic research involves Associate Professors Matt Kilburn and Peta Clode at UWA’s Centre for Microscopy, Characterisation and Analysis, where we’re using the NanoSIMS ion probe to look at microbial-plant root competition for nutrients,” Professor Murphy said.

The Arctic research is one of three programs that Professor Murphy is undertaking during his Fellowship: looking at the management of soil microbes to unlock the soil’s phosphorus bank; determining the mechanisms of carbon storage and greenhouse gas emissions from soil; and examining natural ecosystems as models to study disturbance and climate change.

And the rifle?

“When polar bears get too old to hunt on the year-round sea-ice north of the base, they scavenge on the shores of the islands, looking for dead seals,” Professor Murphy said. “You never know what might happen if one was particularly hungry! Three bears were spotted near the base while I was there last.”

(Professor Murphy is also Deputy Leader of the Land and Water Management Program at UWA’s Institute of Agriculture.)
Job application a fast ride to success

When Dr Brett Smith first applied for a job as a research assistant at the UWA Business School, he didn’t imagine it would lead to a teaching career, PhD, and international research prize.

Brett simply saw the position – research assistant to John Taplin, now a senior honorary research fellow at the UWA Business School – as a means of no longer having to commute between Pinjarra and Perth.

Now, Brett’s PhD dissertation has won him the 2011 Eric Pas Dissertation Prize from the International Association for Travel Behaviour Research (IATBR) and sparked an ongoing interest in transport and logistics.

The dissertation brings together discrete choice estimates and microeconomics, and allows researchers to infer demand response more accurately than ever before.

In the case of Brett’s dissertation, this meant he was able to confirm that when fuel or public transport prices increased, the changes didn’t just cause Sydney commuters to switch from one mode of transport to another. Instead, some commuters also chose to reduce their total travel by a measurable amount.

Previous discrete choice models have assumed a fixed number of trips, only allowing researchers to examine consumers’ relative preferences for different transport modes. Microeconomics, however, incorporates consumers’ budget decisions, and thus accounts for consumers changing their overall behaviour patterns – for example, by choosing to travel less. In this research, Brett found that Sydney’s lowest income earners were more likely to adjust travel patterns in the face of fuel price or transport fare increases.

The blending of discrete choice estimates and microeconomics, according to Brett, will have applications in a range of fields. In future research, Brett and fellow UWA researchers are planning to examine housing choices and how people choose to live and move through cities. Other projects will investigate the adoption of electric vehicles, and consumers’ airline choices in Southern China.

Then, there’s the issue of Perth’s public transport system and its associated ‘risks’. Why do commuters choose to park and ride rather than drive? Would someone rather risk facing a traffic jam on the freeway, or trying to find a parking space at a popular train station?

Discrete choice estimates and microeconomics will – hopes Brett – help researchers to shed more light on why different consumers have different preferences, and how these preferences relate to their values.

With his dissertation winning an international prize, in addition to the UWA Business School’s 2011 BHP Billiton PhD Prize, Brett’s research in demand elasticities has proven significant.

What Brett still hasn’t admitted to Emeritus Professor Taplin – his once employer and PhD supervisor – is that up until seeing Taplin’s job advertisement for a research assistant, he had never even heard of demand elasticities.

Brett – who was then a mathematics and physical education teacher – spent the morning of the job interview in the UWA library, diligently reading one of Taplin’s research papers on demand elasticity. Luckily, he got the job.

Now, Brett has not only gained a job in Perth, but also travelled to New York, Niagara Falls, and the CN Tower in Toronto in July this year, when he received his prize at the IATBR Conference Banquet.

With a prize-winning dissertation, teaching position with responsibilities across the UWA Business School’s undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and pipeline of future research, foregoing his own lengthy commute has proven the perfect choice for Brett.
Gene ID for better schizophrenia treatment?

A combination of new technology that scans the DNA of thousands of people, and a database of 2,000 young men in Athens has enabled a researcher in the Centre for Clinical Research in Neuropsychiatry (CCRN) to come closer to identifying the first gene associated with the formation of paranoid thoughts.

Professor Nikos Stefanis, who was appointed Professor of Psychiatry at CCRN last year, said paranoia, a central component of schizophrenia, can be a disabling condition involving high levels of anxiety and fear. Schizophrenia affects about one per cent of the population.

"People who suffer from paranoia misinterpret their environment," he said. "They transform information that is neutral into something dangerous and personal. For example, they might think they are being deliberately targeted or persecuted.

"For many years, scientists have believed that schizophrenia has a strong genetic basis, and now, thanks to geneticists working on Genome-Wide Association Studies, we have been able to actually identify several candidate genes that may apply to mental illness."

It is the first major study to find a genetic basis for the formation of paranoid beliefs and will be published soon in Schizophrenia Bulletin.

Before joining UWA, Professor Stefanis was Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Athens Medical School, a position he still holds. He developed the groundbreaking Athens Study of Psychosis Proneness and Incidence of Schizophrenia (ASPIS) database. It holds DNA data and information from questionnaires and cognitive tests from thousands of healthy, drug-free young men.

Professor Stefanis' international collaborations, including with the National Institute of Mental Health in the United States, allowed him to link the research by geneticists to ASPIS.

"We designed a study after our friends in genetics suggested that certain variants of the ZNF804A gene might be implicated in making people more susceptible to developing schizophrenia Knowledge on how these variants of the gene may increase one's likelihood for developing the disease remained a mystery," he said.

"Everyone has this gene, but we found out that these variants of it predispose people to experience paranoia, suggesting a route by which this gene may slightly increase one's chances to develop a mental illness such as schizophrenia. Genes for schizophrenia probably increase sensitivity to the environment and ZNF804A seems to be associated with how we interpret, or misinterpret the environment. We found that the young men on the ASPIS database who had certain variants of the gene scored on average much higher for paranoia and suspiciousness than those participants who did not have those variants.

"Because of this finding, we now have a clearer picture of how genes may operate in a person developing paranoid schizophrenia," Professor Stefanis said.

Professor Stefanis has also been a Visiting and Honorary Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Psychiatry at the University of London. He has had a long relationship with CCRN's Director, Winthrop Professor Assen Jablensky.

Water expert publishes important new textbook

Professor Jorg Imberger, Director of the Centre for Water Research at UWA has recently had a new textbook published by Elsevier. It is titled Environmental Fluid Dynamics: Fluid Properties, Scales of Flow, Flow Processes, Equations of Motion and Fundamental Solutions to Environmental Flows.

The concept of the book was born when Professor Imberger was preparing to write a text on physical limnology – the study of standing waters – and realised that the basic foundations and concepts requisite to studying physical limnology were not accessible in any textbook available at the time.

"There was simply no text that either had the right mix of material or included recent results from the field," Professor Imberger said.

On realising this, he put the book on physical limnology on hold. Environmental Fluid Dynamics introduces basic principles, follows with simple applications, and builds to more complex applications experienced in the field. It provides the foundation for the management of both the physical and ecological wellbeing of lakes, rivers, wetlands, estuaries and coastal seas, sufficient for the general environmental engineer and scientist, to a level that will allow the specialist to then turn to advanced texts in the particular special area of interest.

Professor Jorg Imberger has used his experience from more than 40 years of lecturing at Berkeley, California Institute of Technology, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, University of Padova and UWA to organise the text to best facilitate a fundamental understanding of the fluid mechanical processes which control the sources, pathways, and fates of anthropogenic influences in various components of hydrologically interconnected environments.

Copies of the text are available from Amazon and Elsevier Science and Technology Books.
Talk the talk, walk the walk through garden campus

What could be nicer than a Sunday stroll through our beautiful campus after a fascinating discussion about some of its highlights?

If you’re interested in the history of our garden surroundings, then you’ll want to attend a Landscape Talk and Walk presented by noted landscape historian Gillian Lilleyman.

Crawley campus is notable as a place of exceptional cultural heritage significance where buildings and landscape complement each other.

Helping people grow as leaders

A desire to make a difference has driven Ree Jordan throughout her professional life – and has resulted in her being named as one of four finalists in the 2012 Australian Human Resources Institute’s HR awards.

Ree, senior staff developer in Organisational and Staff Development Services (OSDS), is a finalist in the Dave Ulrich HR Practitioner category. She was nominated for the award by Winthrop Professor Sheilda Debowski, who has recently left UWA, where she was director of OSDS, to take up a senior leadership role at Notre Dame University in Fremantle. Professor Debowski is also a finalist in the awards: in the Dave Ulrich HR Leader of an organisation of less than 5,000 staff category.

Since starting at UWA in 2010, Ree has been working in leadership and organisational development with leaders at all levels across the University. According to Professor Debowski, she nominated Ree for this award because of her outstanding contribution to UWA in the short time she has been here.

“The work of leading others through complex and evolving change is always difficult,” Ree said. “I believe that my role is to provide University staff with the best opportunities available to enhance and support their leadership effectiveness, particularly as we are faced with ongoing change. This is especially important as we work to achieve the ambitious goal of being among the top 50 universities by 2050.

“I think my most impactful contribution at UWA has been the introduction of the Leading Transitions Program as this has been a significant program for approximately 100 of our talented academic and professional staff. It is a program that is more about what a person has to offer as a leader rather than what their position is in the organisation.

“Before people are nominated and selected for the program, I ask deans and directors what their challenges are over the next 12 to 18 months and who are the best-placed people in their area to assist them to address these challenges, and then help them enhance their talent.”

“They undergo a rigorous selection process, a three-day residential and then two two-day non-residential follow-ups. By the end of the program, most people say it’s too short!”

Before joining UWA, Ree worked for the Northern Territory Government’s Department of Employment, Education and Training as a senior consultant in leadership development and cultural change.

It was a role that suited her, and in which she excelled.

With Emeritus Professor George Seddon, Gillian is a co-author of A Landscape for Learning: A History of the Grounds of The University of Western Australia and a contributor to the forthcoming centennial history of UWA. She was also responsible for the identification and documentation of the landscape component of the 2008 campus Conservation Management Plan.

Her presentation will be in the Old Senate Room of the Irwin Street Building from 2.30pm on Sunday 21 October.

RSVP to the University Historical Society on 9384 6166 by Wednesday 17 October.
War on weeds conference

Weeds are one of the biggest challenges facing farmers around the world and an international conference from February 18 to 22 next year will provide information about the latest advances in herbicide resistance in corn, soy, cotton, rice and wheat.

A highlight of the Global Herbicide Resistance Challenge will be a field tour to see a demonstration of the Harrington Seed Destructor – a machine developed in collaboration with UWA that targets weed seed during grain crop harvest.

The conference will be held at Fremantle’s Esplanade Hotel and is convened by Winthrop Professor Stephen Powles, Director of the Australian Herbicide Resistance Initiative.

Today (October 1) is the last day for early bird conference registration. Visit www.herbicideresistanceconference.com.au

Tiredness research

Do you want to understand why you feel so sore and fatigued after even light physical activity?

We’re conducting research into this area, examining a recently discovered mechanism to possibly explain the debilitating fatigue felt by people with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. The study involves three sessions where participants will attend the laboratory and have measurements taken before, during and after light, tolerable exercise. Analysing the results aims to shed light on post exertion fatigue and also a possible marker for diagnosing chronic fatigue syndrome.

If you are interested in taking part please contact Brad via email at 20271477@student.uwa.edu.au or via phone on 0431436538.

Elephant stamps for campus child-care

Out of the thousands of childcare centres in Perth, two on our campus were chosen for visits by delegates to the Early Childhood Australia National Conference starting on Wednesday at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Unicare Early Childhood Centre and the UWA Child Care Centre were selected as the best examples of child care centres in the metropolitan area.

Unicare is a community-based facility that caters for 122 children aged from six weeks to six years. It has been operating for 40 years and has recently introduced the children to a “flow program” which encourages the use of adult tools and equipment and exposes them to a bigger variety of learning experiences. This includes looking after chickens and growing vegetables which some of the children eat raw or help to cook.

The UWA Child Care Centre, open since August last year, looks after 100 children a day. It provides a modern, natural environment with an emphasis on child-focused, play-based learning. In the environmentally sustainable design are landscaped adventure playgrounds for each age group and an outdoor art studio for older children.

The conference, Consulting the compass – defining directions, will look at how new frameworks and curricula are changing the early childhood sector.
Bad breath can affect both business and personal relationships as well as the sufferer’s self esteem. But thankfully ‘malodour’ can be successfully treated using new knowledge and techniques practised by Dr Chai Lim and his team.

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RESEARCH GRANTS

Grants Awarded Between 2/09/2012 and 15/09/2012

BAKER IDI EX NHMRC PROJECT GRANTS

Associate Professor Tom Britza, Dr Anna Peeters, Dr Dianna Magliano, Dr Christopher Stevenson, Dr Haider Mannan, Population Health (School of): “Predicting the Impact of Current Obesity and Diabetes Trends on Future Prevalence of Cardiovascular Disease in Australia” — $55,826 (2012-13)

CRC FOR WATER SENSITIVE CITIES

Associate Professor Anas Ghaboussi, Environmental Systems Engineering (School of): “CRC for Water Sensitive Cities - Policy” — $1,382,962 (2012-20)

UWA SUPPLEMENTARY TRAVEL GRANT

Ms Louise Ewing, Psychology (School of): “UWA Supplementary Travel Grants - 43rd National Institute for Physiological Sciences International Symposium, Face Perception and Recognition, Japan 2012” — $750 (2012)


Dr Nadine Kloth, Psychology (School of): “UWA Supplementary Travel Grants - Dr Nadine Kloth - Okazaki Japan - 2012” — $750 (2012)

UNIVERSITY POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Dr Aaron Robotham, Physics (School of): “Weighing Dark Matter” — (2012-2015)

Dr Ivan Maksymov, Physics (School of): “Novel Magneto-plasmonic Nanonantennas for Gas Sensing and Biomedical Applications” — (2012-2015)

Dr Barry Doyle, Mechanical and Chemical Engineering (School of): “Computational Modelling and Aortic Disease” — (2012-2015)

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND EX DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, WATER, POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES DSEWPC/NERP

Winthrop Professor Malcolm McCulloch, A/Professor Jian-Xin Zhoa, Professor John Pandolfi, Earth and Environment (School of): “Characterising the cumulative impacts of global, regional and local stressors on the present and past biodiversity of the GBDR” — $42,857 (2012)

VIC DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Professor Miranda Grounds, Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology (School of): “In Vivo Analysis of the Effect of Dairy-Bioactive Proteins in Young Mice” — $10,000 (2012)

WORLEY PARSONS

Professor Joao Harb Carraro, Assistant Professor Sarah Boukpeti, Offshore Foundations Systems (Centre for): “Nearshore Lab Testing” — $275,000 (2012)

NEW STAFF

22 August to 19 September

Roanne Bagarino, Accounts Assistant, Financial Services

Neviasha Balakrishnan, Finance Assistant, Engineering, Computing and Mathematics

Caryn Bate, Business Development Manager, Library

Dr Pilar Blancofort, Associate Professor, School of Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology

Dr Kate Crookes, Research Associate, Psychology

Kathryn Fitzgerald, Research Assistant Professor, Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care

Courtney Fowler, Administrative Officer, School of Social Sciences

Dr Raphaele Garrod, Research Associate, Arts

Luke Hollis, Field Officer, Facilities Management – Security and Parking

Fiona Li, Accountant Assistant, Financial Services

Shing Hang (Tommy) Lo, Finance Manager, International Centre

Dr Ivan Maksymov, Research Associate, Physics

Linda McIntnes, Study Coordinator, School of Surgery

Dr Markus Neumann, Research Assistant Professor, Psychology

Antony O’Shea, Assistant Manager, Information Services

Rilana Ostheim, Marketing Officer, Engineering, Computing and Mathematics

Assistant Professor Amy Page, Assistant Professor, Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care

Simon Perkins, Strategic Procurement Officer, Financial Services

Dannielle Phelan, Information Technology Manager, Medicine and Pharmacology

Matilda Ross, Administrative Assistant, Engineering, Computing and Mathematics

Gemma Slater, Curriculum Writer, Centre for Learning Technology

Research Associate Emma Snegal, Research Associate, Paediatrics and Child Health

Brian Soucie, Manager, Development and Alumni Relations

Dr Christopher Springob, Research Assistant Professor, Physics

Research Associate Pyone Thu, Research Associate, School of Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology

Briony Williams, Project Officer, Primary, Aboriginal and Rural Health Care

Peckham from one week to three months at very reasonable price from $400. Cleaning fee of $100 and 50% deposit required at time of booking with $280 damage deposit and remainder of rental due before arrival. Contact: melhorn@optusnet.com.au

NOTICES

The UWA Academic Staff Association AGM is to be held on Thursday 18 October 12.30pm in the Seminar/Tearoom, 1st Floor, ANHB. All members welcome.

2013 Raine Research Prize

Closing Date: Monday 8 October 2012

Applications for the 2013 Raine Research Prize are invited from researchers in Western Australia working in the field of medical/health science who have completed their doctoral degree or professional qualification within the last six years.

The Prize consisting of a travel allowance up to the value of $5,000 and mediation shall be awarded for the best scientific paper arising from research undertaken primarily at The University of Western Australia or affiliated institution.

Candidates are asked to please note that a minor modification to the Conditions requires candidates to include a Statement of Authorship (Raine Research Prize Conditions: Eligibility: Clause 1(b), and Nominations: Clause 5(jj) refer). The Statement of Authorship form is available to download in RTF format from The University of Western Australia website and the link is: www.research.uwa.edu.au/staff/research-policy/guidelines

Application Form and Conditions: The Application Form and the Conditions are available to download from the Raine website: www.raine.uwa.edu.au/prizes

Candidates are asked to please provide four copies of their completed application form together with four reprints of their publication to: The Executive Officer Raine Medical Research Foundation Suite 24, The Hollywood Specialists Centre 95 Monash Avenue Nedlands WA 6009 (UWA Internal Mail: MBDP M651)

raine@raine.uwa.edu.au

www.raine.uwa.edu.au/prizes/

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UWA NEWS classified

PARIS ACCOMMODATION

Interested in staying in a lovely apartment on an island in the Seine? Or choose between a range of apartments located in the most famous and favourite districts of Paris. Visit the website www.seeinparis.com and contact Carlotta for arrangements: Carlotta@seeinparis.com

Need a photographer?

Prize nights, book launches, significant visitors and events: most staff want them captured by a photographer.

The University does not have an official photographer, but Public Affairs can provide advice and recommend a range of professional photographers.

Contact UWA Public Affairs for more information: Kate on 6488 7302 or Jeantine on 6488 8000.
Hoping to continue a proud legacy

By Winthrop Professor Nigel Laing

Is it the last word on Western Australian medical research?
I came to UWA in 1981 to continue my medical research career. I research human genetics and my laboratory at UWA has found multiple human disease genes, many responsible for severe muscle diseases in newborn children.

I am sometimes asked by young researchers about the differences between 1981 and now. My response is that it is harder to do medical research in Western Australia now than then. Why is this?

The peak funding body for medical research in Australia is the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Researchers apply to the NHMRC for funding for research projects. In 1981 when awarded an NHMRC grant, you received enough funding to complete the project. You could then concentrate on doing the research. In 2012 this is not the case. In 2012, when awarded an NHMRC grant, you only receive about two thirds of the funding you need to pay the researchers required to complete the project. So, in 2012, you cannot concentrate on the research when you have an NHMRC grant, you still have to find the funding for mid-morning Thursday to Friday evening.

The reason for this is that some years ago the NH&MRC invented its own salary scales: Personnel Support Packages (PSPs). The PSPs increment by about two per cent per year, which is much less than real salaries. Therefore a gap has been steadily growing between NHMRC PSPs and research staff salaries. The gap, now at one third, is continuing to increase towards 50 per cent, 40 per cent, etc.. Obviously, at some point in this decline, medical research in Australia becomes untenable. Perhaps, at 33 per cent, it already is. This year there is a Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research in Australia, the McKeon Review (www.mckeonreview.org.au). If the McKeon review does not develop a workable solution, then the future for medical research in Australia is not good.

So how do you cope with missing one third of what you need?
You write more grant applications. You can apply to the NHMRC to complete another project (obviously you cannot apply for the same project). Then, if you are awarded that grant, you have sufficient funding to complete the first project, but have only a third of what you need for the second project. A medical researcher therefore has to rely more and more heavily on other funding sources (research charities, philanthropists, State Governments), in order to do the research. One's life as a researcher can become an almost endless round of writing grant applications during which one cannot produce the results that are required to keep you competitive nationally and internationally.

What is the future for medical research in Western Australia?
Funding from the Federal and State Governments, UWA and philanthropy is building the new Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR) buildings at the QEII Medical Centre site and Fiona Stanley Hospital. Along with moving the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research to QEII and with the research institutes already at the QEII site, the “Western Australian Institutes of Health” will be a health precinct with the potential to be competitive with Eastern States and overseas institutions.

New buildings however do not make an outstanding medical research institute. It is the caliber of the researchers inside the buildings, and what they are able to do, that does that. There are many immensely talented and dedicated young medical researchers in Western Australia, some of whom I have the privilege of working with. How can we ensure that there is a bright future for them here and not have them go elsewhere? For a successful future for medical research in WA, all Western Australians including the State Government, charities, philanthropists and the general public are going to have to get behind the research. WA has a proud history of medical research, our Nobel Prize winners being just one example. We owe it to that legacy to make sure that in the future we can do even better.

New UWA Alumni Facebook page

UWA alumni? Graduating soon?
Everyone who completes their degree automatically becomes a member of the UWA alumni and joins an extensive network of more than 80,000 people worldwide. Stay connected to your University to develop and maintain lifelong relationships with each other and the rest of the UWA community. If you have a Facebook account and would like to keep up-to-date with alumni news then simply ‘Like’ The University of Western Australia Alumni page - on.fb.me/TgKgFY You may also search for it by typing in The University of Western Australia Alumni.