



PEOPLE TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

V4.1 2010

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EMAIL
ETIQUETTE
15 THINGS
YOU NEED
TO KNOW

**JUST
WATCH
HER**

ATHLETICS
DIRECTOR'S
BOLD PLAN TO
BOOST THE
OOKS

**NATION
BUILDER**

CHIEF JAMES AHNASSAY'S
MISSION TO BRING PROSPERITY
TO HIS REMOTE NORTHERN
COMMUNITY

PLUS,
AS PRESIDENT
**SAM SHAW
RETIRES,**
WE REVISIT THE
PAST 13 YEARS
pp. 11 & 66



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Your success in focus

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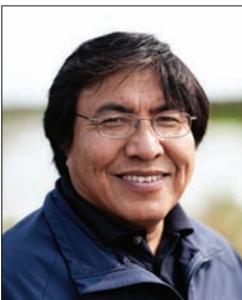


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40 **People** **Declaration of Independence**

James Ahnassay's journey to becoming chief of the Dene Tha' First Nation required a solid focus on his own education. Now, he's certain his community's path to self-reliance depends on nothing less.

By Scott Messenger



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By Jason Ness

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Given what he knew about NAIT Athletics and Recreation director Linda Henderson prior to meeting her, Edmonton writer **Michael Hingston** wondered how her take-charge mentality would manifest in her office decor. Would she have rows of thick binders, each meticulously organized? Faces of rivals taped to a dart board? Unfortunately for Hingston (who has also written for the *Edmonton Journal*, *Alberta Venture* and *McSweeney's*), the place was covered in tarps due to renovations. But the situation still offered insight into Henderson's character: she did mention having to scold one of the workers for not wearing his protective goggles.



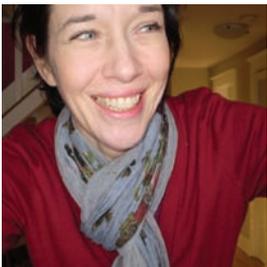
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One of **Scott Messenger's** earliest impressions of NAIT alumnus James Ahnassay is that of a man who knows how to mobilize available resources. An interview with the chief of the Dene Tha' First Nation came with a catch: help serve breakfast at the band's annual cultural and educational assembly, an event that drew hundreds this June to Chateh, in northwestern Alberta. When he's not tasked with buttering hundreds of pieces of toast, Messenger is a NAIT communications specialist and writer whose work has appeared in magazines like *Canadian Geographic* and *Alberta Venture*, as well as newspapers across Canada.



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Photographer **Jason Ness** has recently taken on a new role at NAIT, joining the communications and marketing team. "It's great to be able to work not only behind the camera, but also to be involved behind the scenes in production and coordination. It's a different challenge and I'm enjoying it immensely." Biggest challenge for this issue of *techlife*? "Shooting in remote locations while dealing with the unpredictable summertime weather of northern Alberta. My off-road driving skills have greatly improved!"



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Former editor of *Food for Thought* magazine, **Mifi Purvis** maintains an interest in Alberta's food business, from field to fork. Especially fork. For this issue, she sank her teeth into a profile of Sally Vaughan-Johnston, enjoying snacks in Vaughan-Johnston's cheery kitchen, and talking to some fantastic NAIT instructors about food. She found Vaughan-Johnston's no-nonsense, fun approach to food refreshing. Purvis's work has appeared in publications including *Avenue*, *Reader's Digest*, the *Financial Post*, *Saturday Night* and *Up Here*. She highly recommends Vaughan-Johnston's muffins.



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VISION. THE OXFORD DICTIONARY defines it as *statesmanlike foresight; sagacity in planning.*

In this issue of *techlife*, we look at individuals whose vision defines them, whose compelling no-holds-barred leadership and ability to make things happen not only embodies Oxford's definition, but makes for an inspirational read.

As chief of the Dene Tha' First Nation, alumnus James Ahnassay sees the future in terms of opportunities for his community (p. 40). The Alumni Award of Distinction recipient is determined to use education to halt the cycle of hardship and poverty and provide the means for independence to upcoming generations. His vision of independence shuns the trappings of oil and gas reliance and instead, embraces the potential – and uncertainty – of ecotourism.

Athletics director Linda Henderson's vision for NAIT includes championship banners – lots of them (p. 36). She's already earned 12 – four national and eight provincial – and she's still warming up. Her refreshing confidence in her plan to make NAIT a force to be reckoned with in Canadian athletics prevents her from getting sidelined by her naysayers; besides, she'd rather let the results speak for themselves.

Former president Sam Shaw's bold vision was responsible for taking the NAIT story beyond Alberta's borders and around the world, setting new benchmarks for the institute along the way (pp. 11 & 66).

His 13-year leadership established an applied research agenda for NAIT, forged partnerships with business and industry, spearheaded the development of 10 world-class training centres and developed a strategic planning process that will serve the institute for decades to come. His legendary passion for NAIT will be remembered by all who know him.

Our vision for *techlife* is to continue to tell great stories of the people, the technology and the innovation that defines NAIT. Let us know what you think of this and past issues. If you'd like to give us your feedback in a more formal way, take our short semi-annual reader survey at techlifemag.ca/survey.htm.

Sherri Krastel,
Editor
editor@techlifemag.ca

FEEDBACK

I enjoyed this magazine and you deserve the awards. The composting bit (The Dirt on Composting, p. 19, V3.2, spring 2010) was great for me also. Keep up the good work.

Barb Cockrall

2001 Distinguished Friend of the Institute and 21-year volunteer (including one-time chair) with the SS Benefit NAIT Cruise fundraiser

TAKE THE TECHLIFE READERSHIP SURVEY AT TECHLIFEMAG.CA/SURVEY.HTM.

SURVEY SAYS

182 readers took our survey following publication of the spring issue. Here's some of what we heard:

- The top three topics of interest to survey respondents are stories about people – staff, students, alumni and friends (71.5 per cent), news and events (60.2 per cent) and how-to/expert advice features (52.7 per cent).
- 89 per cent of respondents rated the overall quality of the magazine as good to very good.
- 11 per cent of respondents read *techlife* cover to cover, while 87 per cent skim the magazine and read what interests them.

WIN ONE OF THE BOOKS FEATURED IN READING ROOM!

We want to hear from you. Provide your feedback by Feb. 28 in any of the ways mentioned below and you'll be entered into a draw for one of the books featured in Reading Room (p. 17).

With the launch of our redesigned website, you can now comment on the stories that appear online at techlifemag.ca. Or, as always, you can send feedback by email to editor@techlifemag.ca, via Twitter to @NAIT or by mail to Sherri Krastel, editor, *techlife* magazine, 11762 – 106 St. N.W. Edmonton, AB T5G 2R1. Published comments may be edited for length, grammar and clarity.

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His ambitious vision for the institute was pivotal in the development of a major applied research and innovation agenda for NAIT, most notably the creation of *novaNAIT* – the institute’s centre for applied research and technology transfer – and the Duncan McNeill Centre for Innovation, NAIT’s business incubator.

Calling the NAIT presidency “one of the best jobs in Canada,” Shaw considers raising NAIT’s profile across the province, the country and around the world his proudest accomplishment, adding that what he will miss most is celebrating the achievements of staff, students and graduates. “I am very proud of the NAIT stories,” says Shaw.

Board of Governors chair Doug Goss describes Shaw as “one of the most focused, driven, energetic and enthusiastic people I have ever

SAM SHAW RETIRES FROM NAIT

After 35 years in the post-secondary system – the past 13 years as NAIT president and CEO – Dr. Sam Shaw retired on Oct. 1, 2010.

During his tenure, Shaw led NAIT through a period of unprecedented growth and fostered strong relationships with business and industry (see p. 66). He also established new benchmarks for NAIT, including the completion of two successful fundraising campaigns: the \$24-million Opening Doors campaign (2001-03) and the \$80-million Building on Demand campaign (2005-08). He spearheaded the development of 10 world-class training centres, including the NAIT HP Centre for Information and Communications Technology and the NAIT Shell Manufacturing Centre.

worked with,” adding that Shaw’s ability to foster relationships with business and industry has been essential to the growth of the institute.

“Industry has embraced NAIT as their institute of choice for producing talented, skilled people for their workforce,” says Goss.

Shaw became NAIT’s fifth president on Oct. 1, 1997. A search for his successor is currently underway. In the interim, David Janzen, vice-president administration and CFO, is acting president and CEO.

— *Sherri Krastel*

OFFERING SOON: ALTERNATIVE ENERGY DIPLOMA

Solar power. Wind energy. Geothermal, biofuel and carbon capture technology. These hot topics are subjects in NAIT’s newest diploma program, Alternative Energy Technology. Launching in fall 2011, the two-year program will provide technical knowledge of alternative energy principles, design and system applications, as well as an understanding of the economic and environmental factors at play in this emerging sector. The program will be housed in the NAIT Alternative Energy Centre, currently under construction on Main Campus.

— *Kathy Frazer*

NEW ACADEMIC LEADER NAMED

NAIT has announced the appointment of Dr. Paula Burns to the role of provost and vice-president academic, effective Nov. 1. Burns, who has served as associate vice-president, academic affairs since April 2008, replaces Dr. Berry Calder, who is retiring after more than five years at the institute.

Burns has worked in post-secondary education for more than 16 years and has extensive experience in teaching, curriculum and faculty development, academic administration, organizational development and change leadership.

She holds a PhD in Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto and recently completed an MBA in Executive Management with a specialization in leadership from Royal Roads University.

As provost and vice-president academic, Burns will continue to champion student success and applied research, and will lead a program review process, with the goal of ensuring the institute offers a strategic and sustainable mix of programs.

— *Kristen Vernon*



Dr. Paula Burns

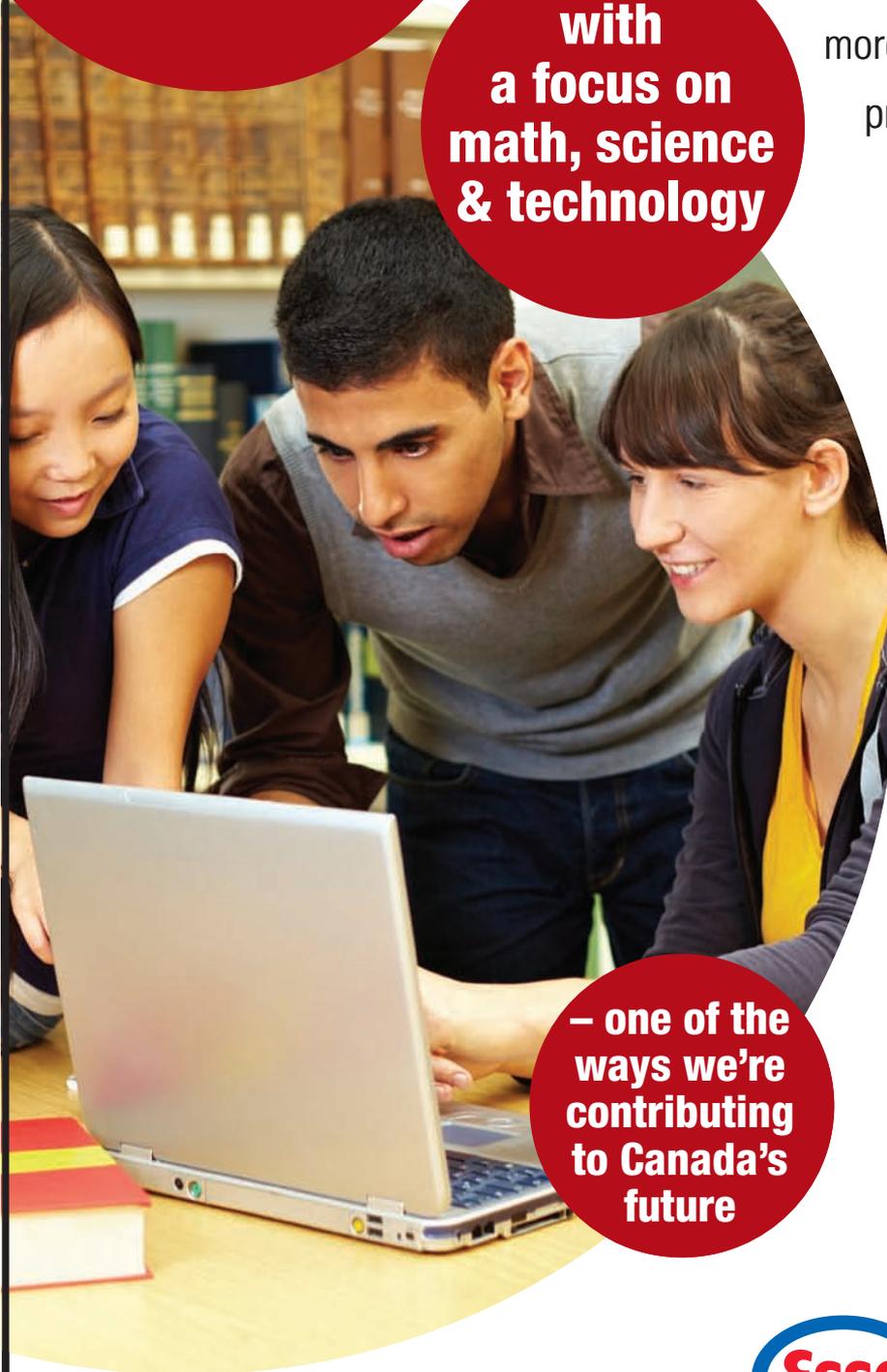
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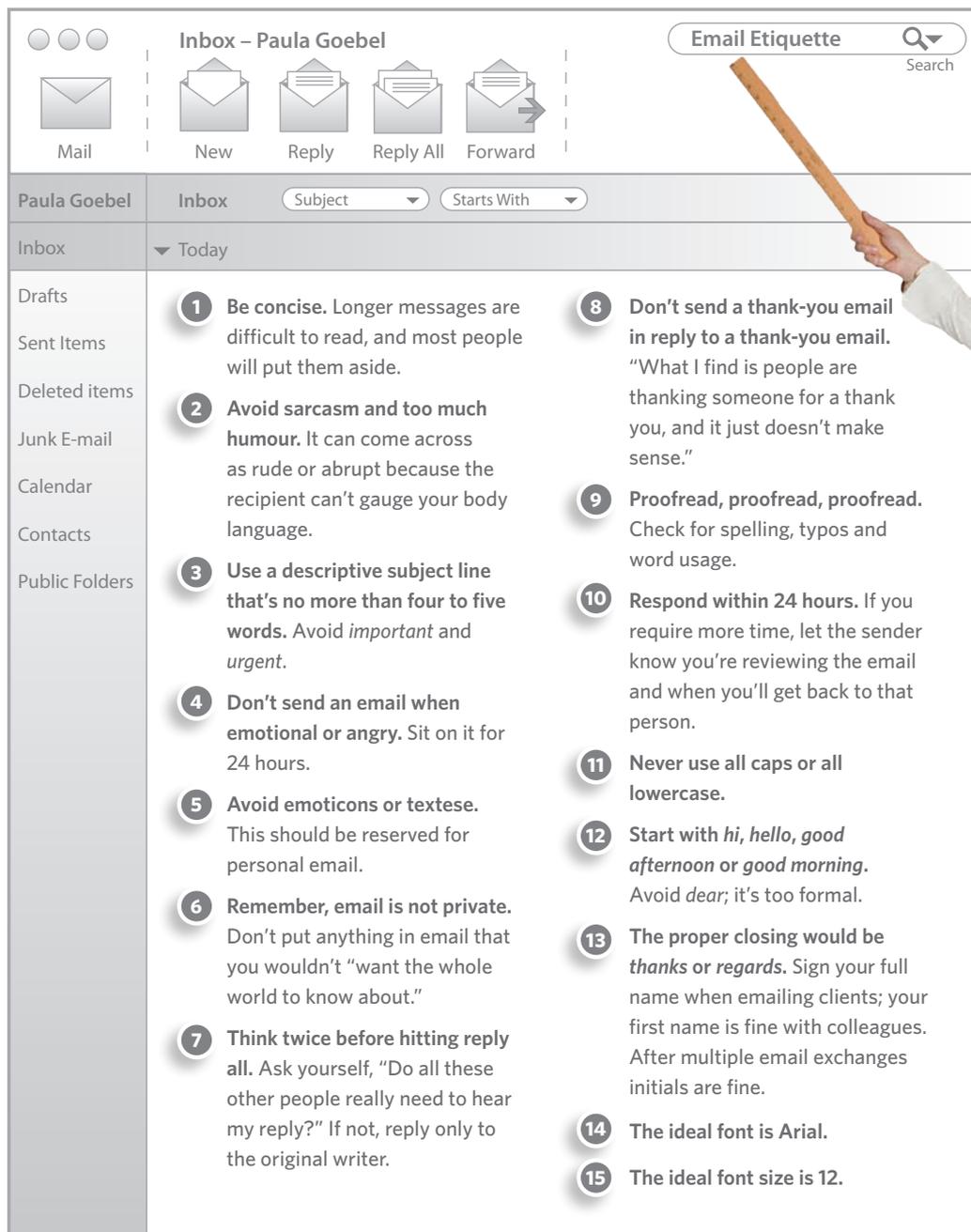


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BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

15 tips for better workplace email

People treat email very casually, says corporate trainer Paula Goebel, but in the workplace, "Your credibility, professionalism and competence will be judged based on how you communicate online." Be perceived as a professional by following these tips from Goebel. — Kristen Vernon



1 Be concise. Longer messages are difficult to read, and most people will put them aside.

2 Avoid sarcasm and too much humour. It can come across as rude or abrupt because the recipient can't gauge your body language.

3 Use a descriptive subject line that's no more than four to five words. Avoid *important* and *urgent*.

4 Don't send an email when emotional or angry. Sit on it for 24 hours.

5 Avoid emoticons or textese. This should be reserved for personal email.

6 Remember, email is not private. Don't put anything in email that you wouldn't "want the whole world to know about."

7 Think twice before hitting reply all. Ask yourself, "Do all these other people really need to hear my reply?" If not, reply only to the original writer.

8 Don't send a thank-you email in reply to a thank-you email. "What I find is people are thanking someone for a thank you, and it just doesn't make sense."

9 Proofread, proofread, proofread. Check for spelling, typos and word usage.

10 Respond within 24 hours. If you require more time, let the sender know you're reviewing the email and when you'll get back to that person.

11 Never use all caps or all lowercase.

12 Start with *hi, hello, good afternoon* or *good morning*. Avoid *dear*; it's too formal.

13 The proper closing would be *thanks* or *regards*. Sign your full name when emailing clients; your first name is fine with colleagues. After multiple email exchanges initials are fine.

14 The ideal font is Arial.

15 The ideal font size is 12.

WEB EXTRA

Goebel on cellphone etiquette in the workplace.

techlifemag.ca/cellphone-etiquette.htm

ABOUT OUR EXPERT

Paula Goebel, founder of Goebel Communications Group, is a professional speaker and corporate trainer specializing in business communications and leadership. She graduated with a Marketing Management diploma from NAIT in 1985 and a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Alberta in 1987. She has worked in human resources and taught at NAIT and, currently, Grant MacEwan University.



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GADGETS



40%

Smartphone ownership is forecast to reach 31 per cent of the Canadian wireless market by the end of the year and 60 per cent by the end of 2014, according to a new report by The Convergence Consulting Group. So it's little surprise the smartphone is the most sought after of these four gadgets, with 40 per cent of respondents ready to do more than talk, text and take the occasional photo with their mobile devices.



30%

Since the launch of the iPad in April - Apple sold 3.27 million in the 85 days that followed - every other tech company wants in. That provides lots of options for the 30 per cent of voters who put the **tablet** at the top of their wish lists. Technology and market research firm Forrester Research forecasts the tablet will outsell the netbook by 2012 in the U.S., and by 2015, it will be the second most popular type of PC sold, after the notebook.



18%

E-book sales continue to grow - U.S. sales were up 150 per cent in July over the previous year. Despite the entrance of the iPad to the gadget marketplace, analysts see a place for a dedicated **e-reader** that appeals to the serious reader, including 18 per cent of our survey respondents. Fierce competition has prices dropping and certain e-readers could hit the \$99 mark by the end of the year.



12%

Even as Alberta MLAs debate legislation that could ban talking on a hand-held cellphone while driving (and despite the fact Strathcona County already prohibits such distracting behaviour), only 12 per cent of voters are in the market for a **hands-free, voice-activated headset**.

As the season of giving approaches, we decided to ask NAIT staff and techlifemag.ca readers which technologies top their wish lists.

Here's what we heard.

— Kristen Vernon



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BEDTIME STORIES

While some cookbooks end up on a bedside table destined for nighttime reading, we're quite certain "Bravo!", the latest Best of Bridge cookbook, by Sally Vaughan-Johnston is actually meant for the kitchen. But it made us wonder – what's on the bedside tables of some of the people featured in this issue of "techlife"?

LINDA HENDERSON (p. 36)
Director, NAIT Department of Athletics and Recreation

I have James Patterson's *The 8th Confession* (just finished), Jonathan Kellerman's *Deception* (next to be read) and Sidney Sheldon's *Mistress of the Game* by Tilly Bagshawe (which I am currently reading).

I like all mystery books and read at least one book a week. Some of my favourite authors are Patricia Cornwell, Sue Grafton, Sidney Sheldon and Mary Higgins Clark, to name a few.

WEB EXTRA

Check out which books Dene Tha' First Nation chief James Ahnassay is reading. techlifemag.ca/ahnassay-reading-list.htm

WIN ONE OF THESE BOOKS

Tell us what you think about *techlife* and you could win. Details on p. 9.

SALLY VAUGHAN-JOHNSTON (p. 52)
(Cook '10) Author of *Bravo! Best of Bridge Cookbook*

Bill Bryson is always beside my bed. His travel books are hilarious, informative and addictive. I am re-reading *Notes from a Small Island* (for the umpteenth time), in which he captures the idiosyncrasies of my native England and its inhabitants so well. My husband says he always knows when I am reading Bryson because "You go 'Ho, ho, ho' out loud. Very annoying."

Also on my beside table is Anita Shreve's latest, *A Change in Altitude* (I've read all her novels but I prefer her earlier works), Paul Theroux's *A Dead Hand* (a bit plodding but my husband bought it last year, and I thought I'd give it a try) and a big stack of *Olive* food magazines, which my mum mails to me from England. It has terrific articles and recipes. I drool with nostalgia over the quintessentially English ingredients – broad beans, smoked haddock, toffee, Lancashire cheese – alongside the melting pot of ingredients from its ethnically diverse population. Did you know that tikka masala, not fish and chips, is the favourite British meal?



"DECEPTION"

by Jonathan Kellerman

A woman is dead, her 18-month ordeal of abuse caught on a DVD that leads investigators to a prestigious Los Angeles prep school in the latest in a series featuring detective Alex Delaware.

"A DEAD HAND: A CRIME IN CALCUTTA"

by Paul Theroux

Washed-up writer Jerry Delfont falls under the spell of an American philanthropist, who lures him into the case of a child found murdered in a Calcutta hotel room.

"A CHANGE IN ALTITUDE"

by Anita Shreve

A tragic accident while hiking Mount Kenya leaves newlywed Margaret struggling to comprehend what happened on the mountain and what the events mean for her and her marriage.

"NOTES FROM A SMALL ISLAND"

by Bill Bryson

Before moving back to the United States, Bryson takes a seven-week tour around Britain, exploring what he loves best about the land he called home for nearly two decades.

"THE 8TH CONFESSION"

by James Patterson

San Francisco's rich are being killed one by one, a street preacher is dead and an unexpected romance threatens the Women's Murder Club, a team of crime-solving friends.

"SIDNEY SHELDON'S MISTRESS OF THE GAME"

by Tilly Bagshawe

This sequel to Sheldon's *Master of the Game* finds members of the rich and devious Blackwell family fighting each other for control of a multibillion-dollar international corporation.

BBA: THE DEGREE THAT DELIVERS

ALEXANDRIA MAH,
Auditor, Revenue Canada,
BBA part-time student

Alexandria Mah works full-time as a Revenue Canada auditor, plays intercollegiate soccer for the NAIT Oaks, and is pursuing both a degree and a CGA credential. She needed a degree program that delivered flexibility and results - and found it in NAIT's Bachelor of Business Administration.

The BBA builds on Alexandria's previous JR Shaw School of Business diploma, allowing her to finish quickly and work toward her accounting designation at the same time. And the choice of full-time, part-time and online course options means she can tailor her studies to fit her busy schedule.

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3 QUESTIONS

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WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE NHL PLAYER (PAST OR PRESENT)?

KEN BURROWS

(Marketing Administration '72)
Defence, 1968-69 and 1971-72, and assistant coach, 1973-74
Director with the Ooks Hockey Alumni Association

NHL PLAYER

Retired Toronto Maple Leaf and Hartford Whaler Dave Keon

INSPIRATIONAL ATHLETE

Lance Armstrong

HOCKEY LESSONS FOR LIFE

The old clichés: teamwork, sportsmanship and not everything turns out as you hope or expect.

JAMIE BARNES

(Finance '95)
Right wing, 1994-96
President of the Ooks Hockey Alumni Association

NHL PLAYER

No single favourite today. There are so many exciting young players – Sidney Crosby, Alex Ovechkin and hopefully, Taylor Hall. I grew up watching the cast of the Oilers glory days led by Wayne Gretzky and Mark Messier – it doesn't get much better than that.

INSPIRATIONAL ATHLETE

The underdog (no matter what sport or level).

HOCKEY LESSONS FOR LIFE

Hard work + determination + passion = success.

MEGHAN CUFF

(Geomatics Engineering Technology '08)
Left wing, 2006-08

NHL PLAYER

Wayne Gretzky

INSPIRATIONAL ATHLETE

My younger brother, Kevin. He's good at soccer, boxing, football, pretty much anything he remotely takes an interest in – except for hockey.

HOCKEY LESSONS FOR LIFE

To determine what is most important in life and pursue that goal to completion. And, although there is much more to life than hockey, it will always play some part in my life.

WHAT ATHLETE INSPIRES YOU (A NON-HOCKEY PLAYER)?

ANDREW HORE

(Marketing '99)
Centre and right wing, 1996-99. Founder and past-president of the Ooks Hockey Alumni Association

NHL PLAYER

Mark Messier

INSPIRATIONAL ATHLETE

Lance Armstrong

HOCKEY LESSONS FOR LIFE

Playing hockey at NAIT taught me about tradition, hard work, passion, discipline, friendship and community.

KERRY HILL

(Office and Records Administration '04, Graphic Sign Arts '05, Graphic Communications '06)
Forward and defence, 2002-06

NHL PLAYER

Sidney Crosby

INSPIRATIONAL ATHLETE

New York Yankee
Derek Jeter

HOCKEY LESSONS FOR LIFE

Playing hockey for the Ooks taught me about working hard and balancing my life.

WHAT DID PLAYING FOR THE OOKS TEACH YOU ABOUT LIFE?

MALLORY MATHESON

(Personal Fitness Trainer '06)
Centre, 2004-06

NHL PLAYER

Joe Sakic

INSPIRATIONAL ATHLETE

Jon Montgomery, skeleton racer and 2010 Canadian Olympic gold medalist

HOCKEY LESSONS FOR LIFE

Hockey taught me about respect, responsibility, teamwork, the ability to contribute and being passionate about what you love, as well as the hard work, determination and motivation required to succeed.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JASON NESS

Read about the Ooks Hockey Alumni Association's \$200,000 donation on p. 5 of *A Report on Giving*, inserted into this issue of *techlife*. Over five years, the money will fund scholarships for NAIT men's and women's hockey players, and will be used to send children, who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity, to NAIT's summer hockey school.

Former Ooks men's hockey players are welcome to join the alumni skate every Saturday through March 19 from 4:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. in the NAIT arena. As well, men's hockey alumni are invited to register for the Alumni Cup Tournament, Feb. 4-5, 2011. For details on this and membership in the association visit oaha.ca.



MAKE YOUR OWN TRAY

This breakfast tray was modelled after twelfth-grader Isabelle Semple's award-winning design. Semple won a NAIT wood-working competition that challenges high school students to build a project using one two-by-four.

Take an afternoon to make the tray with these plans provided by NAIT's building trades technician Allan Brown and cabinetmaker Joel Freitas. Consider involving your children: "Kids would have fun with this because it's easy to do with hand tools," Brown says.

Inspired by her love of assembling Ikea furniture, Semple signed up for construction technology in Grade 10 and, after a somewhat disastrous first attempt at making a puzzle, found her groove. Now a cabinetmaker apprentice through the Registered Apprenticeship

Program for high school students, Semple would eventually like to design her own furniture and, possibly, even steal her construction teacher's job. She also dreams about appearing on *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

Winning second place in the two-by-four competition, she says, confirmed "that I'm not actually half bad. It's probably worth pursuing."

— Kristen Vernon



1 With the backsaw, cut eight 12-inch long pieces from the one-by-three. Six of these are for the bottom of the tray. The other two are for the sides.



2 Next, cut 10 1/2-inch pieces. These will be used to space the slats that form the bottom of the tray. (You can space the slats closer or farther apart by cutting smaller or larger pieces.)



3 Assemble six of the 12-inch pieces along the carpenter's square separated by the 1/2-inch spacers.



4 The distance across the six spaced slats should be 17 1/2 inches. Cut two 17 1/2-inch pieces from the one-by-three or cut to your measurements.



5 Glue these two pieces lengthwise across the six slats, each one three inches in from the edge. This forms the bottom of the tray.



6 Wait a few minutes to let the glue get tacky, and then nail the boards. Use 24 nails.



7 Remove the spacers. Flip the piece over. Glue one of the remaining 12-inch pieces to the widthwise edge, ensuring it is flush with the bottom of the tray. Nail the board. Repeat for the other edge.



8 The tray should measure 19 inches. Cut two pieces from the one-by-three for use on the lengthwise edge. These pieces should be 19 inches or, if your measurement differed, cut to that length.



9 Attach each lengthwise edge, first with glue, then nails. Use 10 nails.



10 Attach the cabinet handles. Or, follow step 11 to make your own.



11 To make handles

- Use a table saw to cut two pieces that are 4 1/2 inches long by 1 1/2 inches wide. Next, cut four pieces that are 1 1/2 inches by 1 1/2 inches.
- Glue two of the square pieces to each 4 1/2-inch piece. Nail the pieces in place.
- To attach, centre the handle along a widthwise side. Align the handle flush with the lip of the tray. Glue it. Nail it (use four nails).
- Repeat on the other side.



12 Finishing

- Sand the edges to smooth (and remove any pencil marks). If you've used a hammer, sink the head of the nails below the surface with a nail set.
- Fill the nail holes with plastic wood and sand.
- Alternatively, use a dab of carpenter's glue (smear it on your finger and then rub it over the hole) and sand. The wood flour will pack the hole.
- Optional: stain or paint the tray.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- One one-by-three, about 10 feet long (less experienced builders could buy two eight-foot boards to allow room for error)
- Two cabinet handles, with hardware required to attach them (alternatively, you can make your own)
- Backsaw
- Carpenter's square
- Carpenter's glue
- 72 finishing nails, 1 1/2-inch
- Hammer (or nail gun)
- Measuring tape
- Pencil
- Bench hook
- Sandpaper (anywhere from 80- to 150-grit)

Optional

- Table saw or jigsaw (if making your own handles)
- Safety glasses (if using a nail gun or table saw)
- Plastic wood
- Nail set
- Stain or paint



BEST CASE SCENARIO

The machine in the black box, invented by instructor Ian Pappin (pictured), mimics a patient's lungs and can be programmed to simulate any number of conditions – from asthma to cystic fibrosis to emphysema.

The black metal box hooked up to a ventilator in NAIT's Respiratory Therapy lab looks nothing at all like a patient's lungs, but it certainly behaves like them.

Invented by Respiratory Therapy instructor Ian Pappin, and developed through *novaNAIT*, the institute's centre for applied research and technology transfer, the automated test lung simulator operates on compressed air and can be programmed to simulate healthy or sick lungs.

"What this teaches is not only the technical aspects of running the (ventilator), but how to respond to a

breathing patient," Pappin says, adding that his machine gives students experience they would otherwise only get with a real patient.

Pappin, who has a patent pending on his invention, hopes to build five beta prototypes. These will allow students not only to train on the devices, but to evaluate the test lungs as he prepares to take his product to market, targeting other post-secondary institutes and even hospitals, where it could be used to test new ventilators. He is also developing a smaller prototype to mimic infant lungs.

— Kristen Vernon



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SUMMER IN HIGH LEVEL, 800 kilometres northwest of Edmonton, and the evening sky is bright with lightning. It's a common sight, and, here in the boreal forest, it can be like a lit match to tinder. Little wonder why a wildland firefighter at the Upper Hay Forest Protection Area might take a reductive point of view.

"Everything out there is fuel," says air attack officer Pat McIlwaine (Forest Technology '06). "That's how we think."

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE

IN ALBERTA'S FIRE-PRONE BOREAL FOREST,
CONSERVATION IS THE CALL OF DUTY.



Above, this air tanker – a converted passenger plane – can drop approximately 7,000 litres of liquid fire retardant.

Middle, Lauren Harper, whose summer job was to load aircraft with retardant.

Right, Alberta's answer to Smokey the Bear, Bertie Beaver offers a quick risk assessment.



Opposite page: top, helitack wildland firefighters Jonathon Swick (left) and Matthew Patmore.

Bottom right, view of a blaze from the helicopter initial attack crews use to access remote sites.



Far right, more than 1,700 fires burned roughly 850 square kilometres of forest across Alberta this year.

Up here, McIlwaine works with many of the 24 initial attack wildland firefighters – the first on the ground at a blaze – who spend summers living and working out of this remote station. This year alone, more than 200 fires burned nearly 50 square kilometres in the area. To crew members, each one represents a test of endurance at least, and a tempting of fate at worst.

Conservation-wise, there's also a lot at stake. Besides the industries and communities sustained by the 381,046 square kilometres of Alberta's boreal forest, the region's ecological significance is immeasurable. Stretching across the country, the forest is a massive carbon sink. Within the province, it's home to diverse wildlife.

"We hit fires hard," says McIlwaine, "but we're going toward the wildfire management side now where we assess the values, talk to the stakeholders. Especially in this area and just south of us, it's pretty important caribou habitat."

That management begins with an assessment of the situation from the air. With a pilot, McIlwaine coordinates aircraft loaded with fire retardant and directs the four-person initial attack crews that arrive by helicopter.

Though crews move throughout the district – in this case a section of northern Alberta the size of the Czech Republic – on this June day, Zach Fraser, Matthew Patmore, Ernest Schellenberg and Jonathon Swick await the call in High Level. At a moment's notice, they'll suit up, grab equipment, including a tarp, food, sweater and toque in the event of an overnight stay, a 20-kilogram portable water pump, a shovel and an axe. They'll carry the gear from the landing site to the fire, which can be more than a kilometre-long slog through soaked, knee-high muskeg. Once a blaze is under control – and if the initial attack crew is needed elsewhere – an eight-person sustained action crew will be called in to finish the job.

It's important work, but the thrill of it tends to make the strongest impression on staff. "I remember the first really good fire," says Schellenberg, a 19-year-old rookie and Forest Technology student. "I was a little nervous and extremely excited. We flew in with the helicopter and as we got closer it looked like a column of smoke in the air and individual trees started flaming up. It's really sweet," he adds, smiling. "Then we landed, got our boots wet and went after it."

— Scott Messenger



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SPARTAN CONTROLS



Technical researcher Catherine Lowe (Biological Sciences Technology '10) collects water for testing from a sampling site in the Sturgeon River.

WATERSHED CHECKUP

Winding 260 kilometres from Hoople Lake, an hour and a half west of Edmonton, through the city of St. Albert and ultimately emptying into the North Saskatchewan River, the Sturgeon River once teemed with its namesake fish. Now, with the waterway marred by rooted plants and algae and, in parts, barely deep enough to float a canoe, sturgeon are rare.

Laurie Hunt, associate chair of Biological Sciences Technology and a senior faculty researcher, wants to see that change.

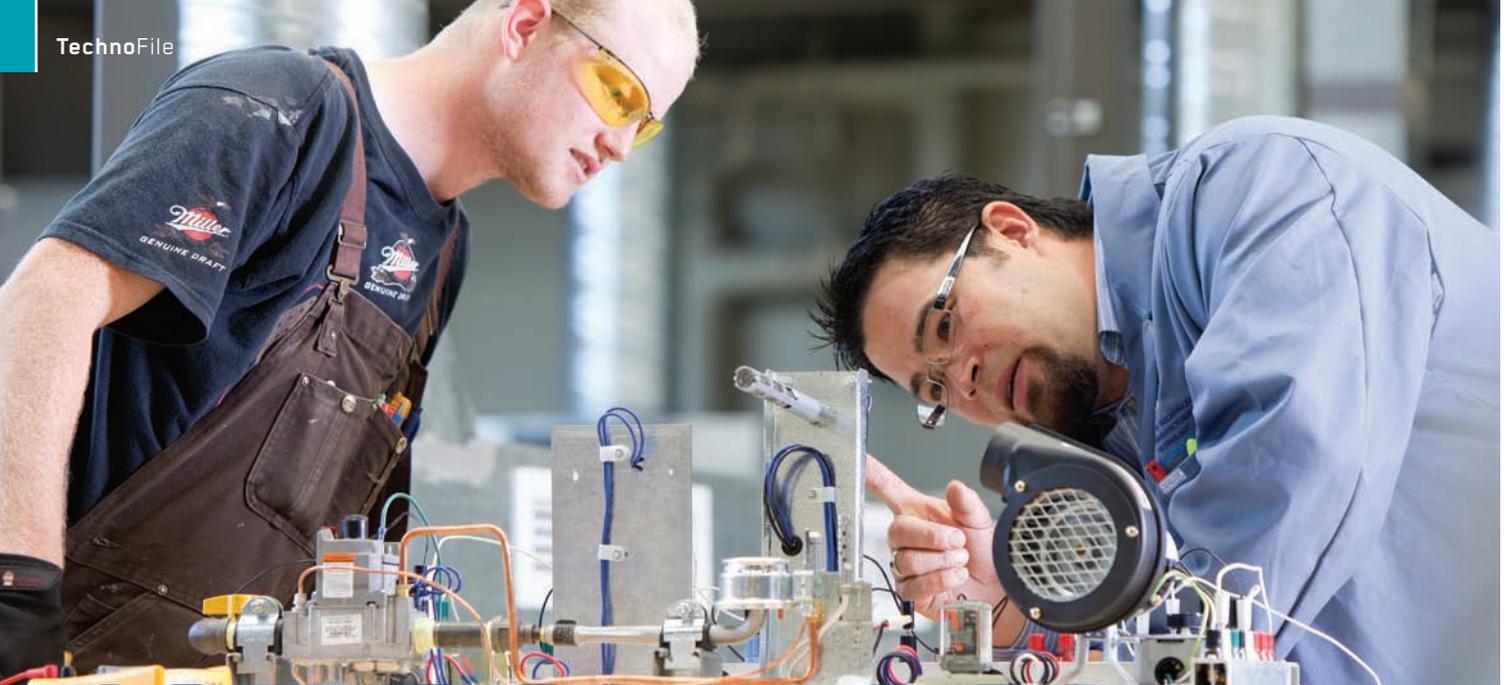
Hunt, fellow instructor and senior faculty researcher Debbie Webb, summer staff and students are conducting a two-year applied research project in the watershed (funded by the Alberta Conservation Association, North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, *novaNAIT* and, through a court penalty stemming from the Aug. 3, 2005 train derailment and oil spill at Wabamun Lake, CN).

They have set up 40 permanent water sampling sites to gauge the health of the river and to assist in planning and decision-making in the watershed.

The team will also determine whether bridges and culverts are impeding fish movement or contributing to sedimentation, with the intent that this data be used by surrounding counties and the provincial government to prioritize repairs.

"This watershed is in peril," says Hunt, "but I don't think it's too late."

— Ruth Juliebo



ICE COLD GOLD

Apprentice Sean Donnan (left) and instructor Todd Matsuba

While his competitors plunged into the Refrigeration event's main project – building a working freezer from the parts provided – Sean Donnan kept, well, his cool. He made his plans, drank some water and carefully considered the challenge before tackling it.

“On my jobsite I’m a bit of a perfectionist,” says Donnan, a NAIT Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic apprentice. “I say: Take time, pay attention to detail and get it right.”

That approach paid off – though it meant finishing just 20 seconds shy of an 11-hour limit. Donnan won gold at the 16th annual Canadian Skills Competition, the national trades and technology skills event held last May in Waterloo, Ont., earning a spot in the largest event of its kind – WorldSkills 2011 in London, England.

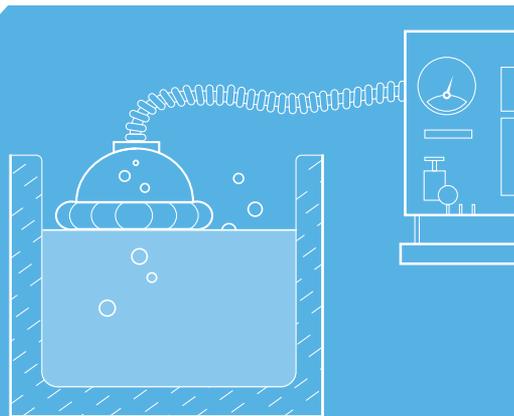
“It was pretty good to watch him not sweat about the little things,” says Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic instructor Todd Matsuba, Donnan’s coach. “I was more nervous than him. I was twitching.”

Besides the prestige, Donnan picked up \$10,000 in scholarship money. Already, he’s got a plan for that, too.

“I’m going to burn up that 10 grand on anything I can find at NAIT,” he says, “like management courses or instrumentation and business courses. This really opens my future up.”

— Scott Messenger

A SERIOUS EMISSION



Vapour rises off a tub of effluent into the dome-shaped chamber and travels to the instrument panel, which measures nitrous oxide emissions.

While carbon dioxide is the primary target of Alberta’s emissions reduction strategies, nitrous oxide (N_2O) is 310 times more effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere, making it a significant greenhouse gas. With the help of three NAIT students, Edmonton’s Gold Bar wastewater treatment plant recently made progress in monitoring its N_2O output.

To measure N_2O emitted from a pilot-scale wastewater treatment facility at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre of Excellence (EWMCE), located at the Gold Bar plant, Bachelor of Technology students Ryan Ibbotson, Georgina Greuter and Bill Yang built a dome-shaped chamber and analytical instrument panel. The work served as the group’s eight-month capstone project, which pairs students with sponsors requiring solutions to real-world issues.

“From our perspective this is really leading-edge research,” says Ryan Litwinow, technology development specialist with EWMCE. “The ability of the students to build this invention from scratch and collect data for us is truly remarkable.”

And while the technology remains to be scaled up to large, open-air facilities, it lays the groundwork, says Litwinow, for not only detecting N_2O but ultimately reducing it.

— Raquel Maurier

BTech: THE DEGREE WITH DIRECTION

TYLER MOWBREY,
Software Consultant,
BelMar Consulting Group,
BTech grad, 2010

Tyler Mowbrey earned a Bachelor of Technology in Technology Management degree in just two years, building on the strength of his previous IT diploma. Now he's pursuing an MBA on the west coast, while employed as a consultant for a leading software provider.

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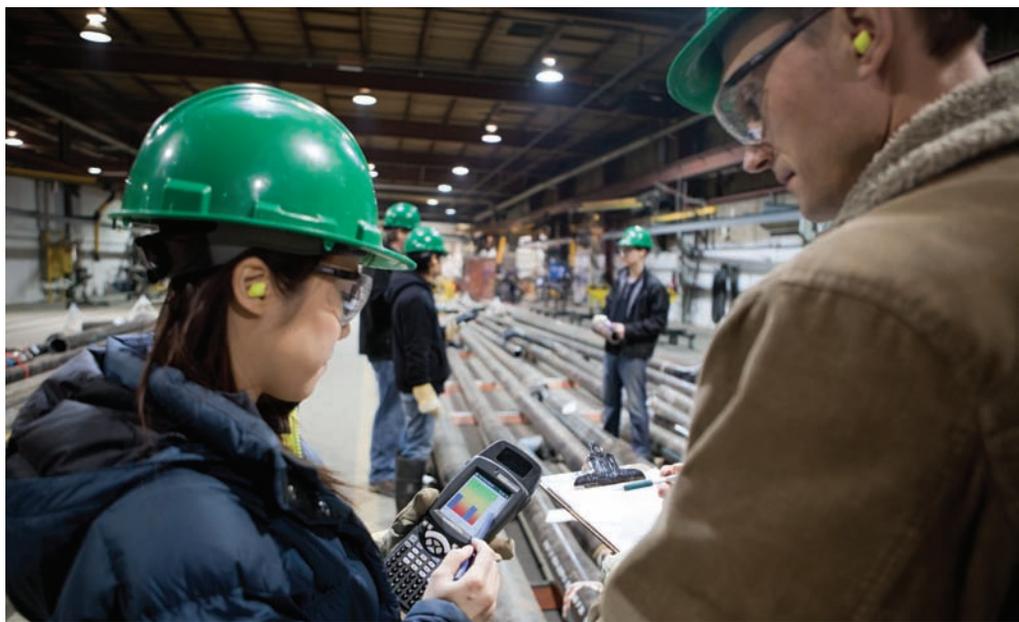
STORY BY
SUSAN RUTTAN

PHOTOS BY
AMY BIZOVIE

This spring, three students formed a company to bring new technology to inventory tracking. What they lack in experience and startup funding, they make up in ambition. Will it be enough for them to find success?



From left, partners in Triple-i Tracking Technologies: Katrina Lee, Igor Teterski and Dean Vitisin.



ON A RAINY SUMMER MORNING, Dean Vitisin and Katrina Lee are crowded into their office – one work station in a room they share with two other organizations. Vitisin is at the desktop computer while Lee has her laptop perched on an edge of the desk. The space around them gives a sense of practicality and efficiency – no piles of paper, no dirty coffee cups. A picture of the partners and an *Edmonton Journal* article on the launch of their company, posted on the bulletin board right after they moved in, are the only personal touches.

They work quietly, talking in low tones so as not to disturb the *novaNAIT* Boreal Research Institute staffer working on the other side of the room. They use email to keep in touch with their partner Igor Teterski, who is working from home, something they take turns doing because of the tight space.

Vitisin, Lee and Teterski have recently formed Triple-i Tracking Technologies Inc. The three 2010 Bachelor of Technology in Technology Management grads have been lucky enough to get inexpensive office space in the Duncan McNeill Centre for Innovation, *novaNAIT*'s incubator for startup companies, located on NAIT's Main Campus.

The venture they launched in April, to sell and implement customized electronic systems allowing companies to efficiently track inventory and assets, is hugely ambitious. A year ago they barely knew each other, and only Teterski, who has an electronics engineering degree, knew anything about tracking technologies. Today, they have no business experience and very little money.

"It's kind of ridiculous, but we seem to be doing it," says Lee, with a laugh, acknowledging that more experience would, of course, be an asset.

Despite their determination, training and low-cost workspace – all ingredients for success – at this point

they've yet to land a customer in what is a competitive field. There's hope: they are motivated by the possibility of landing a contract with Canada's biggest general contracting organization. But, as with any new business venture, nothing's guaranteed.

VITISIN, LEE AND TETERSKI came together last fall on a classroom project to investigate the use of radio-frequency identification, or RFID, for tracking the spools of pipe that PCL Industrial Constructors Inc. makes in Nisku, a few minutes south of Edmonton, at the largest plant of its kind in Canada. Right now the company's pipe spools are tracked using a barcode system the inspector must locate by sight. That's a challenge in winter, when spools stored outside are covered in snow.

The eight-month capstone project is part of the final year in NAIT's Bachelor of Technology program. Each capstone team must use applied research to address a real issue for a sponsoring company. Vitisin, Lee and Teterski estimate they spent 765 hours on their assignment. Besides producing the capstone program's first startup, the effort won top spot in NAIT's 2010 Applied Research Project Capstone Symposium. It also impressed PCL.

"They came with no idea what we were dealing with, and how fast they picked it up was very impressive," says Jamie Nelson, PCL material control supervisor.

PCL is interested in moving to RFID tracking, but at a future date, says Nelson. When PCL is ready, Triple-i hopes to win a contract to roll out the technology, train staff and provide ongoing service.

Although still very new, Triple-i already has its fans. "We are very proud of them," says Dr. Klay Dyer, the Bachelor of Technology associate chair who helped put the team together. "It's fun for us to watch."

Vitisin has emerged as a leader, but all three participate equally in decisions and most tasks – a result of the good chemistry that originally had instructors

Above from left, PCL's Jamie Nelson; Katrina Lee and Igor Teterski test RFID technology at the PCL Industrial Constructors shop in Nisku as research for the class project that led to the launch of their asset tracking systems company.

"THEY CAME WITH NO IDEA WHAT WE WERE DEALING WITH, AND HOW FAST THEY PICKED IT UP WAS VERY IMPRESSIVE."

- JAMIE NELSON, PCL MATERIAL CONTROL SUPERVISOR

encouraging the students to consider starting a business. But they have each gravitated toward certain tasks.

Vitisin, who has a Mechanical Engineering Technology diploma from NAIT, is both company president and salesman because of his strong communication skills. Now 23, he came to Edmonton at age five. He speaks Bosnian, a dialect of Serbo-Croatian, with his family but also flawless English, making him well suited to speaking with clients.

Teterski, who has been handling the legal requirements of the startup, and Lee are less confident in their English. Teterski, 41, came from Belarus four years ago with his wife, Ina, and teenage son, Nikolai. Ina, who works in a local accounting firm, has been supporting the family while he tries to get Triple-i going. "She told me, 'Go ahead, start your business,'" says Teterski.

Lee, 28, who has a NAIT diploma in Computer Systems Technology, does IT work and market research. While her parents remained in Hong Kong, she came to Canada at age 14, living with her sister while completing high school. She admits that going without a salary to start the company is a concern (her parents have offered a no-interest loan if she needs it). Yet, she's optimistic about the company's prospects.

"I see the potential," says Lee. "That's the biggest thing that convinced me to do it."

RANDY THOMPSON, *novaNAIT* entrepreneur in residence, also admires the Triple-i team. A regular advisor to the business rookies, he's told them that a big company like PCL will take time deciding on a tracking system. And when it comes to landing that deal, he says, they need the moxie to compete with other RFID providers who would love to win the PCL contract.

Even with his dream of running his own business at stake, Vitisin isn't worried. "The market for asset tracking is huge," he says, "especially in Alberta."

The trio's immigrant background is a possible asset. Between them, they speak five languages besides English: Teterski speaks Russian and Belorussian, Lee speaks Cantonese and Vitisin speaks Bosnian and Ukrainian. They hope to use that to market their expertise overseas - to the Russian oil and gas industry, perhaps, or in Hong Kong.

Thompson says being part of NAIT gives Triple-i a big advantage. Rent at the Duncan McNeill centre is

just \$250 a month. As well, says Vitisin, the location lets them chat with startup-savvy NAIT staff and other entrepreneurs.

Triple-i's other big advantage, says Thompson, is having PCL as a potential client - a "big gorilla" customer, he calls it. If Triple-i can land and keep PCL, it might never need another customer, he says.

While they wait for the big gorilla, the trio is hoping, learning and chasing potential clients. In regular brainstorming sessions, they talk about where their company might be in a year, or five years.

With hard work and some luck, Triple-i might soon land that first client and start building the strong reputation for customer satisfaction its founders desire. In the meantime, the hard realities of a startup are setting in, and all three are looking for other sources of income until the company gets a break. For Vitisin, currently living with mom and dad, occasionally moonlighting as a bartender and working on contract as a lab technician, that day can't come soon enough. "Hopefully I'll move out soon," he says. "I feel bad mooching off my parents." ■

RFID at work



Radio-frequency identification, or RFID, describes the use of radio waves to identify unique objects. This is done by placing a tag - a computer chip with a tiny antenna - on or in an item, and using an electronic reader to pick up the antenna's unique signal.

The technology in action:



A microchip implanted under a cat's or dog's skin can, when scanned, identify the owner of a lost pet in a central database, leading to a happy reunion.

A timing chip worn by a triathlete can clock the competitor's race time.



As part of a national cattle identification program, all Canadian cows now have RFID tags attached to their ears, providing an efficient way to identify cattle during an animal health or food safety crisis.

Transit fare payment information - whether a monthly pass or cash for pay-per-use - can be stored on a smart card's microchip, which is scanned (no swiping involved, the card can even stay in your wallet) as riders pass through a reader before boarding a bus or train.



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A FORCE TO BE RECKONED



I NDA HENDERSON HAS a saying she likes to recite to anyone skeptical of her abilities. And when you're an ambitious director of Athletics and Recreation, as well as a longstanding female coach of men's volleyball, you're bound to come across your fair share of naysayers.

Henderson, however, just smiles mischievously, bares her teeth a little, and says, "You do your thing. I'll do mine." The results, she believes, will speak for themselves.

It's getting harder and harder to disagree with her.

Henderson is the face of a major push by NAIT to revamp the athletics program from the ground up. It's a bold, aggressive initiative that began in 2008 with her hiring and the department's rebranding (until then it was known, somewhat less inspiringly, as Campus Sport and Wellness), and continues all the way up to the financial backing that allowed Henderson to hire six full-time coaches just months after her arrival on campus. No other college-level school in Canada can boast even one.

In person, that fiery spirit and competitiveness are unmistakable. Henderson dreams big, and she'll fight tooth and nail to get what she

wants. But she's also quick with a giggle. Charming, too, and heartily self-deprecating - a vegetarian and animal activist marooned in cattle country. Most importantly, she's confident: in her colleagues, in the 200 student-athletes she works for, and especially in her ability to make NAIT a force to be reckoned with in Canadian athletics. Anyone standing in the way of that goal is not going to last long, if she has anything to say about it.

Her first major decision on the job set the tone nicely. Henderson figured that if NAIT was serious about elevating the program, the teams needed full-time coaching. So she drafted a proposal that was intentionally over-ambitious and ran it up the flagpole, just to see how dedicated the administration really was.

"I proposed 12 full-time coaches," she says, grinning, "which was ridiculous, right? They say, 'Can you scale it back?' I went back to the (athletics) leadership group and said, 'They're serious! They're going to buy into this!' So we worked on it, and chose to elevate six. I said to them, 'This will be leadership. We will be splashed all over Canada as the first institution to ever offer full-time, 100 per cent coaching.'"

WITH

A FIERY COMPETITOR, LINDA HENDERSON HAS BIG DREAMS FOR NAIT ATHLETICS AND RECREATION. HER GAME PLAN IN PLACE, SHE BELIEVES THE RESULTS WILL SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

STORY BY
MICHAEL HINGSTON

PHOTO BY
JASON NESS



The search to find these coaches was rigorous and far-reaching. The individuals who held the existing part-time positions had to apply for the new full-time jobs; most of them did not make the cut (since then, none remain). Henderson took an active role in the process throughout, bypassing Human Resources to write the new job descriptions herself.

And when adjustments needed to be made to this vision, Henderson didn't hesitate. This was recently the case with two of those six coaches hired in 2008: men's hockey coach Terry Ballard (who had worked at NAIT for 14 years) and women's basketball coach Curtis Nelson. Both were let go earlier this year. Henderson says these decisions were extremely difficult and sensitive, but in the end necessary - for the teams, as well as the athletics department as a whole. This is a place where her own coaching instinct comes to the fore. For Henderson, the bottom line is performance. When certain players aren't doing their part, they get replaced.

This approach is nothing new. Henderson grew up studying sports from both ends, getting a master's degree in coaching from Ontario's

Lakehead University and playing volleyball, where she was instrumental in getting the women's team reinstated at the varsity level. Then she headed west, and for the next 15 years juggled the equivalent of two full-time jobs: working 9-5 as an athletics administrator at the University of Victoria, and spending weeknights and weekends coaching men's volleyball at nearby Camosun College.

In that time she led the Camosun men's team to numerous provincial and national medals, as well as 12 consecutive appearances at the British Columbia Colleges Athletics Association championships. The college now gives out the Linda Henderson Award for Excellence in her honour.

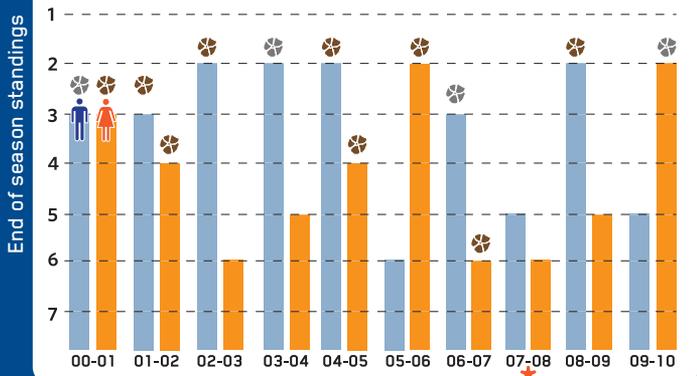
Josh Howatson played under Henderson in 2002-03, when the Camosun team won a bronze medal at nationals with only eight players on its roster (the average is 12 to 14). He now plays professionally in leagues around the world, including as a member of the Canadian national team, and credits Henderson as a major force in shaping his work ethic.

GAMEON

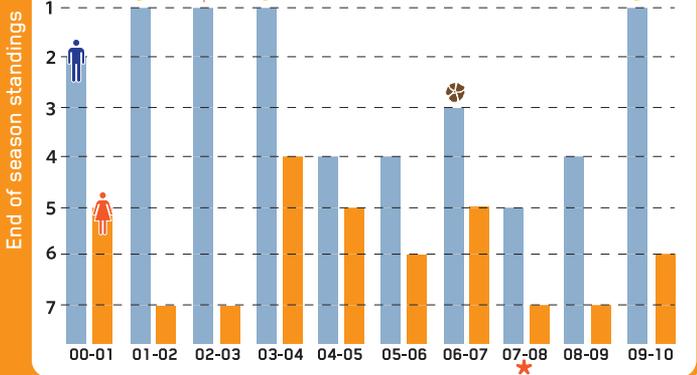


LINDA HENDERSON IS BETTING ON SIX FULL-TIME COACHES TO ELEVATE THE PROGRAM; HERE'S A LOOK AT THE RECORD OF THOSE TEAMS - AND THE CHALLENGE THAT LIES AHEAD.

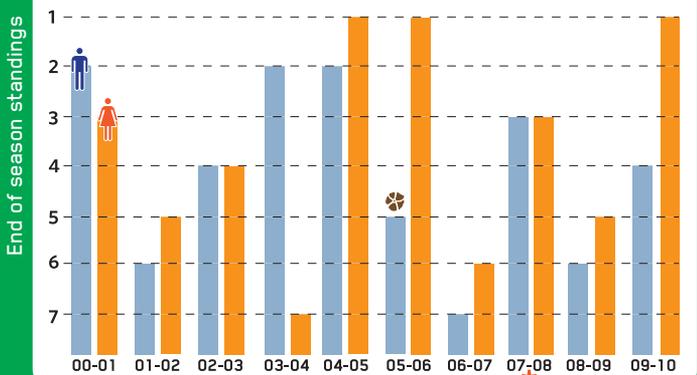
HOCKEY



BASKETBALL



VOLLEYBALL



Post-season results

- BRONZE AT PROVINCIALS
- SILVER AT PROVINCIALS
- GOLD AT PROVINCIALS
- PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL CHAMPS
- HENDERSON HIRED

"She was very demanding of her players. We were expected to behave appropriately," he says. "But she didn't rule with an iron fist - she ruled with the respect she had for her players."

In 2006, Henderson was hired as a recreation consultant for the British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts. She liked the job well enough, but felt stifled by the bureaucratic hoops one had to jump through to get anything done. Ambition was not rewarded.

So when the newly created position of athletics director came up at NAIT, Henderson saw the opportunity to fulfill her potential, and took it. "I kept reading the job description," she says, "over and over, going, 'I know how to do that, I know how to do that...'. I was really excited." Even more fortuitously, this is a job where ambition isn't just tolerated - it is written into the position's DNA.

With so much experience behind the bench, it's perhaps no surprise that Henderson runs her department with the finesse and poise that she first picked up as a coach. She's no micro-manager. Her strategy is to put the right people in the right positions, and then step back and let them work. If that involves big-picture changes, like re-organizing titles and responsibilities within the department, or overhauling areas where the results simply aren't happening, so be it.

Perhaps the best litmus test of Henderson's effectiveness, however, is counting the championship banners that line the rafters of the gymnasium. One of the expectations associated with her position is that she secures at least one new banner every year. So far she's more than succeeded: after nearly three years under Henderson's watch, NAIT teams have brought home no fewer than eight provincial and four national banners. They're also hosting national championships (including badminton and, this November, soccer), and numerous players and coaches have won awards for outstanding individual achievement.

One of those coaches is Deanna Iwanicka, who was hired by Henderson to lead the women's hockey team at the age of 23. She quickly brought the team from the bottom of the league in 2008 to a silver medal at last year's provincials, and in February was named women's hockey coach of the year by the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference. Iwanicka says Henderson gives her the freedom to do her job the best way she knows how.

"She keeps the right distance," Iwanicka says. "She wants to lead us in the right direction, she sets the expectations, then she lets us get at it."

Some may question the value of putting so much emphasis on (and money into) athletics. To Henderson, however, it couldn't be simpler. Sports are a way of bringing the student body together. They instill a sense of pride and camaraderie that simply cannot be replicated by anything else.

And the benefits continue long after individual players graduate and move on. "The student-athletes are ambassadors for the programs they're in," Henderson says. "When they leave NAIT with a gold medal around their neck, they're going to be out in the field, promoting what a great institution it was - athletically, academically. They're going to give back." ■



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STORY BY
SCOTT MESSENGER

PHOTOS BY
JASON NESS AND
SCOTT MESSENGER

DECLARATIO INDEPENDENDE

James Ahnassay's journey to becoming **chief** of the Dene Tha' First Nation required a **solid focus** on his own **education**. Now, he's certain his **community's** path to **self-reliance** depends on nothing less.

N OF NCE





AT A CLEARING just outside Hay-Zama Lakes Wildland Park, a marshy patch of remote, northwestern Alberta, Chief James Ahnassay parks his late-model SUV and says, "This is where I was born."

James Ahnassay
at Hay-Zama Lakes
Wildland Park.

Decommissioned power poles lean haphazardly in a line leading away from the vehicle. Along their path is a waist-high knoll roughly marking the location of the nursing station that in the fall of 1957 welcomed Ahnassay as the fourth of nine siblings. There's no trace of the building now, just as there's nothing left of the rest of Habay, the community that occupied this part of the Hay Lake Indian Reserve, one of seven in the area belonging to the Dene Tha' First Nation.

Ahnassay, a calm, soft-spoken man now serving his fourth term as the band's chief, remembers the place well. But he's not nostalgic about it. He describes the past with a bare-bones practicality that seems to govern his approach to life. Besides the nursing station, houses lined the banks of the Hay River, and there was a church, a Hudson's Bay Company trading post and a school. By the time he was school-aged, a residential school had opened in what was then known as Assumption, the new community a few kilometres south.

He remembers that school, too. When floods finally forced the majority of Habay's residents out of these lowlands, Ahnassay's father took a chance on a new life in Assumption, moving his family – just five children then – by canoe in 1962. Ahnassay attended classes at the Roman Catholic-run Our Lady of Assumption from 1964 to 1968. Other than to refer to himself as a "survivor of residential schools," he doesn't like to talk about that time with just anyone.

He starts the engine and heads back to what he and every other Dene Tha' now call Chateh – their name, taken from an early 20th century chief, for what's still on the maps as Assumption, a label charged with unsettling memories. Ahnassay has a schedule to keep, ending the tour of the park. A few hundred people, mostly aboriginal, have gathered in Chateh for the First Nation's annual cultural and educational assembly. Besides the workshops, sessions, drumming and dancing, teams' abilities to bluff and guess are being tested in a hand games tournament, a traditional contest. Ahnassay is expected as a participant.

More importantly, he's to preside over the annual graduation ceremony, honouring the educational achievements of any Dene Tha' with a new certificate to frame. This year the event celebrates a record 52 graduates. Congratulate him and his community for this and the broad-shouldered, compact man breaks momentarily with the decorum of political life and beams with pride and gratitude.

Faced with community issues like substance abuse, 80 per cent unemployment and slumping income from diminishing local oil and gas, Ahnassay is seeking to set the Dene Tha' on the path to prosperity. Regardless of any scars left by a bygone school system, he's convinced innovative education tailored to aboriginal needs is the key to young people's success, and therefore that of the community he leads. There are jobs here aboriginals could fill, in health care, law, the trades, even in a new venture he's promoting in that rugged parkland around Habay. "Two million dollars in salary," says Ahnassay with certainty, "up for grabs."

He alternates between seeing this prize as "a pot of gold" and as basic self-reliance. Either way, the 2009 NAIT Alumni Award of Distinction recipient believes there's only one way for youth to seize the opportunity – and, here in particular, it's not easy. "To be independent," says the chief, "they have to realize they must have an education."



Dene Tha'
Community School,
opened in 2001.

"TWO MILLION DOLLARS IN SALARY, UP FOR GRABS."

- JAMES AHNASSAY,
CHIEF OF THE DENE THA'

AHNASSAY LEARNED that early in his career. "While I was in high school," he says, "all we ever concentrated on was, What's the easiest way to get through this?"

As a result, when he started working as a fire prevention officer trainee in the engineering department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1979, he soon realized his math and science skills were lacking. "Everyone around me was a technician of some sort, so that inspired me to shoot for something that was going to promote me in the department."

No doubt, that attitude is one reason he was chosen as chief in 1993 in the first-ever Dene Tha' election by secret ballot (apart from losing the 2001 vote, he's held office ever since). But in those early days of his career it also pushed him, despite the demands of having a young family, to upgrade by correspondence, as well as in High Level and Grande Prairie. He completed high school physics, chemistry and even calculus, positioning himself to enter NAIT's Civil Engineering Technology program, which he finished in 1988.

It was tough, he recalls, but necessary to break from the local cycle of hardship and to access opportunities being enjoyed elsewhere in Alberta. The end of the fur trade significantly reduced a traditional source of income, explains Ahnassay, while at the same time the separation imposed by residential schools weakened families. Alcohol only complicated attempts at self-reliance. "With the lack of education, we were basically isolated even more."

Chateh opened a new community school in 2001 within sight of the spot of the residential school, long since torn down. It's as modern as any facility currently being built in Alberta, but nonetheless embodies tradition and history. Artifacts like the ancient canoes on display in the library serve as symbols of identity for approximately 160 kindergarten to Grade 10 students.

The decor suits the administration's approach to education. "It's up to us to fit with the kids," says principal Lori Aliche. "We see what they need and we make the programs fit the need."

With the proportion of aboriginals who don't complete high school roughly double that of non-aboriginals, Ahnassay's band council has allowed the school a generous measure of academic freedom to find ways to keep older students engaged. Ahnassay in particular, Aliche adds, "is supportive. He understands the need for education."

Over the past year, the school has experimented with work experience. Older students spend afternoons as either teacher assistants, serving as role models for youngsters, or working with other emerging Chateh role models: Dene Tha' contractors. Students shadow journeymen tradespeople and pick up real-world skills, modest pay and, maybe most importantly, self-esteem. But there's a catch: If they don't attend morning classes, they don't work. About one in three follows through – that's considered a success. In a school that not long ago was teaching Grade 5 students how to read, "We're producing real Grade 9 grads," says Aliche, proudly.



"HE'S NOT CAUGHT UP IN THE ROLE OF CHIEF IN TERMS OF TITLE, BUT IN THE ROLE IN TERMS OF HOW TO HELP PEOPLE."

- STRATER CROWFOOT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO, INDIAN OIL AND GAS CANADA

WEB EXTRA

Hear hand games drumming and singing in a narrated slideshow of writer Scott Messenger's visit to Chateh, Alta.

techlifemag.ca/a-day-in-Chateh.htm

Above, from left, Dene Tha' Community School; drummers prepare for the annual graduation ceremony; attendees offer prayers prior to the ceremony; a hand games team drums and sings during a tournament held the same day in Chateh; Hay-Zama Lakes Wildland Park (top) and a resident herd of wood bison.

AT CHATEH'S EVENT grounds, just down the gravel road from the school, past new multiplex homes and aging bungalows on acreage lots, the assembly resembles a summer festival. Men test their accuracy at a hatchet-throwing competition, kids buy candy and bannock burgers from concession tents, hand games drummers pound and sing, doing their best to distract opponents. At the centre of all the activity is a wide, corral-like arena, the site of the graduation ceremony. A fire gently smolders at its centre. Family and friends sit ready with cameras. Ahnassay, dressed in black despite the heat of the day, stands onstage with a microphone, acknowledging not just those Grade 9 students (most of them preparing to leave Chateh and their families for high school in Grande Prairie, High Level and Edmonton), but high school and post-secondary achievers with new degrees, certificates and diplomas. First, he addresses the crowd in Dene, a breathy language spiked with hard consonance. When he switches to English, the event assumes the spirit of a rally.

"The students who are finishing their education are role models," says Ahnassay, also acknowledged today for completing NAIT's Project Management program last year. "We as the Dene Tha' people are just as capable of going through these different levels of education."

For now though, reality speaks to little more than the community's potential. "Because we lack the capacity in good education," he says, frankly, "all the

jobs are being taken by those who are educated." In other words, more often than not, by those other than the Dene Tha'.

Existing jobs are an obvious and attainable starting point. Ahnassay is proof of that. Al MacBride, a long-retired Indian and Northern Affairs Canada senior regional fire and safety officer, recalls meeting the chief in Chateh in the late 1970s. After inspecting the community fire hall and truck, MacBride offered the fire prevention officer trainee job to the young Dene Tha'. "He was a good listener," he says. "He was very pleasant and you need a person like that to pull volunteers." As Ahnassay travelled to various First Nations to teach fire safety, it was clear MacBride had chosen well.

Whether he was addressing classrooms or communities, "They liked James," says MacBride. "He'd lecture and they'd listen. And he was well-respected around different reserves in Alberta, from the south right to the north."

Today, Ahnassay and 1,200 residents of Chateh (and 800 others spread between the nearby villages of Meander River and the chief's hometown of Bushe River) see Dene Tha' being their own firefighters, health-care professionals, teachers, lawyers, social workers and so on. And while the chief keeps an eye on jobs in nearby Rainbow Lake and Zama oil and gas fields, factors including economic and environmental sustainability have pushed him to explore other opportunities.



"Being a leader from here, part of my job is to promote access to different activities to derive income from," Ahnassay said early in the day. One of those brings him full-circle: Hay-Zama Lakes Wildland Park, the 486-square-kilometre network of lakes, ponds and rivers just northwest of Chateh. A herd of wood bison roams here, roughly 570-strong after being relocated from Elk Island National Park more than two decades ago, and which last year attracted around 100 big-game hunters in need of local guides and accommodations. Also, the area lies along bird migratory paths, suggesting a major ecotourism venture to replace existing oil and gas activity once a moratorium takes effect in the area in 2017. Out of a desire to protect the lakes and convinced of a future appetite for remote wilderness experiences, Ahnassay was instrumental in negotiating the end of extraction.

"We're hoping that nothing gets started ever again," he says. "It shouldn't have happened in the first place."

THAT SENTIMENT - vaguely resentful and entirely steadfast - might cause wonder regarding Ahnassay's future outlook. True, barring new discoveries or extraction methods, local oil and gas revenues are headed for exhaustion. But regarding the alternative of ecotourism, the remoteness of the area - more than 900 kilometres northwest of Edmonton - could prove as much obstacle as draw for the adventurous traveller, let alone the casual naturalist in need of infrastructure yet to be built. Furthermore, a \$25-million settlement won from the federal government in 2007 for failure to consult the Dene Tha' over the local impact of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline does nothing to guarantee the area will remain pristine enough to be marketed as such. Unless he's hedging a bet that the long-delayed natural gas project remains mired in bureaucracy, that particular success seems, on the surface, contradictory.

Whatever the future brings, supporters remain convinced Ahnassay will raise the fortunes of his community. Strater Crowfoot has worked alongside Ahnassay since the 1990s, when the former was chief of southern Alberta's Siksika Nation; today, that relationship continues with Ahnassay serving as a member of the co-management board of Indian Oil and Gas Canada, of which Crowfoot is executive director and CEO. In Ahnassay, he sees a pragmatism he associates with revered generations of the past.

"In the old way, the elders really understood life as a whole. They respected nature and they respected people. They had a good sense of where they fit into the overall scope of the world," says Crowfoot. "I see James as that kind of person. He's not caught up in the role of chief in terms of title, but in the role in terms of how to help people."

Crowfoot sees Ahnassay's focus on education in the same light. "Before contact, people prepared their communities, their families so they could live in the environment they were in. They had to attain certain skills: trapping, hunting, understanding the environment - understanding everything about their world so that they could survive and progress and benefit. James sees that today. The world today is knowledge, understanding, education; he's saying these are the new skills that his people need to be able to flourish in the environment they're in today."

By celebrating education and facilitating it inside and outside of the school (he put his band council and managers through the same project leadership training he took), Ahnassay insists, "We are doing something different." He's convinced he's providing the means for independence to his own generation and, maybe more importantly, to an upcoming one. The youth, after all, already have the advantage. The end of the residential school system offers the chance for stronger, united families. They have a better grasp of English than previous generations. And - if the growing popularity of hand games is any indication - a renaissance in aboriginal culture has emerged to help ground them.

After the graduation ceremony, the chief has little time to talk. The hand games have started again and he's being called to join his team for its turn in the tournament. The drumming and the singing start and, sitting with his legs folded beneath him, Ahnassay watches members of the opposing team as they sway to the rhythm of the music and shuffle coins between hands concealed beneath a tarp.

The most cursory explanation of the contest is to call it a guessing game. One team hides; the captain of other team tries to find. But it's not just a game of chance. A good guesser looks for signs, subtleties of expression or movement, and uses what information he can glean to predict a positive outcome.

So, like any good captain, Ahnassay will watch carefully, anticipate the future based on what's before him today, and choose as best he can. ■



Hay-Zama Lakes Wildland Park. Bottom, a resident herd of wood bison.



HAY-ZAMA LAKES WILDLAND PARK



WILDERNESS RETREAT

Hay-Zama Lakes Wildland Park, located in northwestern Alberta, roughly 110 kilometres west of High Level, is a birdwatcher's dream. These wetlands lie along three of North America's four major avian migratory paths; the list of visiting species reads like a field manual. It's also home to a variety of fish, fur-bearing water mammals like beavers, as well as black bear, deer and a herd of wood bison that enjoys the bounty of forage in winter months. Thanks in part to recognition in 1982 as a "Wetland of International Importance" according to the conservation-oriented Ramsar Convention, the area has maintained ecological integrity despite local oil and gas activity. Since then, the 486-square-kilometre network of lakes, creeks and rivers was twinned with China's Dalai Lake National Nature Reserve, another Ramsar site, allowing for an exchange of ideas and information about development and protection that should keep birds and watchers alike returning for years to come.



PLANNING AHEAD

Being goal-oriented suggests focus, determination, efficiency. At the level of the individual, it's how go-getters get ahead. At the level of the community, however, it can be the dividing line between success and failure. "We're trying very hard to live within our means," says James Ahnassay, chief of the Dene Tha' First Nation. Bringing in projects on time, on budget and in line with expected outcomes is critical to meeting that objective. To give his administration the tools for proper planning - and for achieving those goals that will serve the community - Ahnassay and Dene Tha' council members and managers completed NAIT Project Leadership and Project Management certificate programs.

Project Leadership certificate

To help avoid project overruns, this program highlights common project challenges, and gives managers the leadership and communication skills necessary to build effective teams that keep jobs running smoothly.

Project Management certificate

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FINNING 



A team from Habitat Studio & Workshop builds homes and friendships in the Central American country of Honduras. Clockwise from above, the Flores family's original sugarcane and scrap metal house; construction of the new home; from left, homeowner Juana Flores, grandsons Brayon and Allan (front) and friend Jayson; the lights go on; and Trevor Hoover with Flores's youngest granddaughter, Milagro.



hola from Honduras

For the past three years, I have travelled to Honduras with three others from Habitat Studio & Workshop Ltd. to build homes for families in need. This March, president Peter Amerongen, Rick Young (Carpenter '02), Paul Whincup (Architectural Technology '07) and I built a home in Tulian Rio for Juana Flores and her six grandchildren - Santos, 16, Brayon, 14, Yohan, 12, Allan, 10, seven-year-old Nayeli and five-year-old Milagro. Their mother died from cancer and their father abandoned them.

They lived in a shack Juana built out of scrap material she scrounged. Wind and rain would easily penetrate the sugarcane walls, while the roof of sheet metal scraps, held down with large stones, was at risk of flying off in the wind.

Now Juana has a concrete block home with a concrete floor, a solid roof, indoor bathroom, two bedrooms, a kitchen and sitting area. She has doors, windows and power to run the lights.

The morning after we finished construction, we returned to say goodbye. I've never seen such jubilation and tears of joy. For the first time in their lives, the family had slept without fear of someone coming into their house during the night.

We've met a number of amazing people and have not only constructed three homes, but friendships that will last a lifetime. We thought we would be going to Honduras to help change the lives of families in need. We didn't realize the impact it would have on ours.

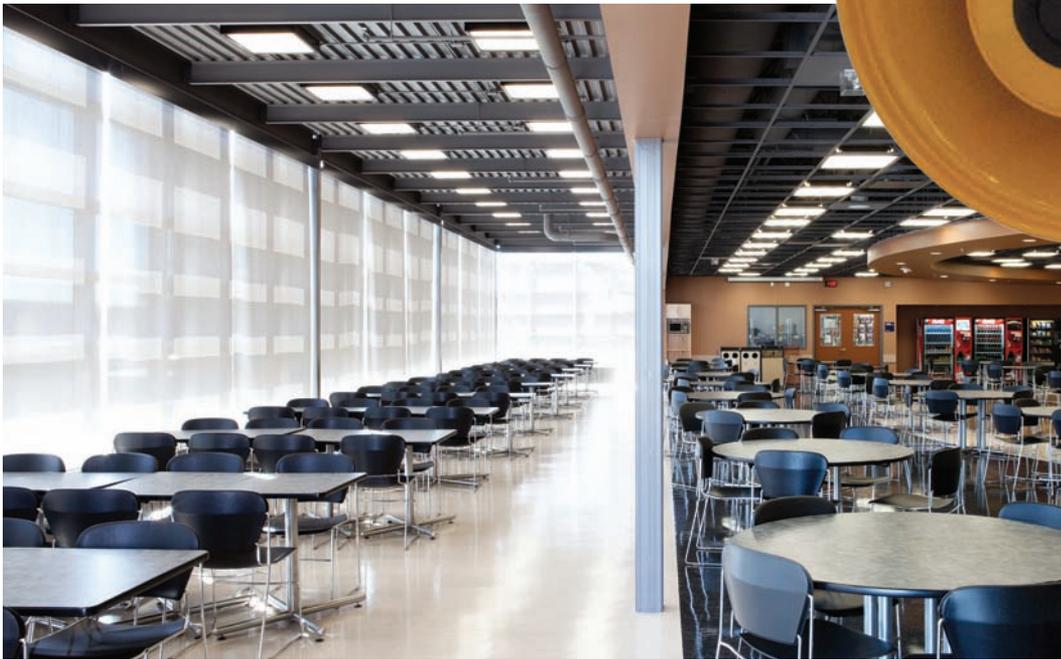
TREVOR HOOVER
ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGY '89
VICE-PRESIDENT, HABITAT STUDIO & WORKSHOP LTD.

SOUCH

AN IMPROVEMENT

In meeting the demand for skilled tradespersons, "Shop space is where the bottleneck is," says Steve Moores, associate dean of the School of Trades. "Apprentices need that hands-on training." To ensure they get it, a 2,718-square-metre expansion and renovation of Souch Campus - home to the NAIT Waiward Centre for Steel Technologies - now accommodates 900 new welder apprentices each year. Here, we make our own inspection of the world-class facility, which was completed this past August.

— Scott Messenger



Renovations at Souch, which also serves Boilermaker, Ironworker, Structural Steel and Platefitter students, produced more than new welding labs. Clockwise from above, the cafeteria now extends 126 square metres to the east; the new atrium admits plenty of morning sunlight; a state-of-the-art ventilation system - drawing air from multiple heights - ensures easy breathing.



Right, "There's been a lot of thought put into the design," says Moores of the welding instruction bays. Program staff, facilities management, contractors and architects all had a say. "By working collaboratively this is what you get." That includes, besides the latest welding equipment and safety features like the adjustable "snorkel" ventilation system, the custom-made tool racks and stands and, just out of sight, a small wall-mounted whiteboard for teaching. As an educational facility, "You wouldn't find a better set-up not only in North America but the world," says Moores.

"GOING FORWARD, WE'RE IN A TREMENDOUS POSITION TO ACCOMMODATE ANY FURTHER DEMAND FROM INDUSTRY."

- STEVE MOORES,
ASSOCIATE DEAN
OF THE SCHOOL
OF TRADES



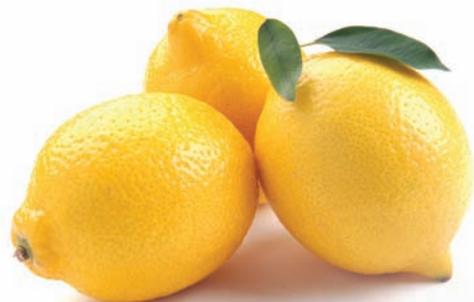
STORY BY
MIFI PURVIS
PHOTOS BY
LEIGH FREY



Best of Bridge author
Sally Vaughan-Johnston

THE RIGHT ingredients

Take one girlhood dream, combine it with a willingness to take risks, lots of hard work and a pinch of luck and you've got Sally Vaughan-Johnston's recipe for a mid-life career change that saw the former journalist inherit the Best of Bridge cookbook legacy. A new generation of Canadian cooks can thank her for it.





The ladies were won over by Vaughan-Johnston's humour – she made a remark about the early books' use of **the three Ms: mayo, mushroom soup and marshmallows.**

SALLY VAUGHAN-JOHNSTON stands in her kitchen holding a cookie sheet covered in burnt, shredded coconut. She is smug. She knew it wouldn't work. She always uses a skillet. But another cook said the only way to toast coconut is in the oven. Though she'd tried the oven before, with the same result, she thought she'd try again. That's Vaughan-Johnston all over: learning the rules and when to deviate. She scrawls some notes on a grease-spotted page. While you might see both coconut-toasting techniques in the next Best of Bridge cookbook, you'd also read that you'd probably be more successful with the skillet.

Vaughan-Johnston's test kitchen is in her Edmonton home. It's where the career journalist finessed 200 recipes in the fall of 2008 as the writer of *Bravo!*, the latest in the venerable Best of Bridge line of cookbooks. This she did while on a four-month leave of absence from her kitchen job and the Cook apprenticeship program (which involves three, eight-week technical training periods at NAIT and 1,560 hours each year of on-the-job experience).

Twenty per cent of the recipes in *Bravo!* were submitted by the original Best of Bridge ladies – the Calgary cards- and food-loving women who launched a self-publishing empire with their first cookbook in 1976. Vaughan-Johnston, who confesses she has never played bridge, developed the remaining 160 *Bravo!* recipes herself.

The one she's working on today is for muffins made with coconut, lime and dried pineapple. It's one of 200 new recipes for a 2011 volume in the Best of Bridge line – a legacy Vaughan-Johnston is just beginning to carry forward. It's also indicative of her willingness to experiment and take risks, grounded in skill and experience. Also in the mix, however, are loads of hard work, a pinch of luck and one girlhood dream to study cooking.



"Bravo!" author and chef Sally Vaughan-Johnston prepares Lemony Zucchini Flaxseed Muffins in her home test kitchen, where she creates and refines recipes for the Best of Bridge cookbook series.

VAUGHAN-JOHNSTON WAS working as an apprentice cook when she got the call. From her years writing about food for the *Edmonton Sun*, she had frequently spoken with Bob Dees, president and publisher of Robert Rose Inc., one of Canada's largest publishers of health books and cookbooks, including the Best of Bridge series. Impressed with Vaughan-Johnston's thoroughness and passion for food, Dees had filed away her information for the right cookbook project. That match came after Dees had negotiated continuing the Best of Bridge line.

Bridge's five remaining partners were hanging up their aprons. It had been several years since the ladies had put out a book, and several more since publishing an all-new collection. Dees thought it was an appropriate time for fresh recipes. The ladies wanted to maintain a little input and to approve Dees's proposed author.

They wanted someone who would stay true to the series' roots, says Bridge ladies' spokesperson Mary Halpen. "It was the 1970s," Halpen says of the genesis of Best of Bridge. "Today, it's book clubs. Back then, we'd play our obligatory three hands of bridge and then move on to the food. There was a keen competition to bring innovative snacks." Eventually, the group decided to publish their collected recipes.

In July 2008, Dees contacted Halpen to say he thought he'd found the right candidate to helm the series, and Vaughan-Johnston headed to Calgary to meet the group. "Sally was nervous," Dees says. "Imagine it as a blind date with somebody really important."

"I was terrified," Vaughan-Johnston recalls. "I remember standing outside Mary's door waiting for her to answer." The door swung open and Halpen greeted her with a hug. Though all of the ladies were there, it wasn't going to be a panel interview, but a meet and greet, and the start

of an ongoing process of transferring their considerable knowledge. With Bridge's history of 10 books, more than 30 years and 3.2 million copies sold, that knowledge was gold.

The ladies were won over by Vaughan-Johnston's humour – she made a remark about the early books' use of the three Ms: mayo, mushroom soup and marshmallows. And her plain-talking style fit right in. "We learned early that you can't get too uppity," Halpen says.

Uppity, Vaughan-Johnston is not. She views journalism, like culinary arts, as a trade, saying that scribes these days would do well not to get too "artsy-fartsy."

IN NORFOLK, ENGLAND in 1973, fresh from college entrance exams, Vaughan-Johnston found herself staring at two letters of acceptance: one from a culinary technical institute, the other from a journalism school. Her mother recommended journalism.

After years in newspapers, Vaughan-Johnston found herself in an enviable position: lifestyle/food editor and columnist at the *Edmonton Sun*. Her paycheques were good but she was increasingly dissatisfied, and the industry was in contraction.

Then came another conversation with her mother. In 2006, Vaughan-Johnston told her she was revisiting that old dream to attend culinary school, this time at NAIT. She had, after all, long been a passionate cook and had already taken several of NAIT's continuing education culinary courses.

"But you'll be 53 when you're done," her mother said.

"I'll be 53 anyway," she replied.

With her husband, Chris, and their two grown kids supporting her, the deciding point came when she was invited, as food editor for the *Sun*, to attend the week-long course at the Culinary Institute of America in New York. "I came away saying, 'I have to do this,'" she says. She began with research, sitting down for a chat with Joe Srahulek, then-executive chef at downtown Edmonton's Sutton Place Hotel. She wanted feedback on the employment opportunities for an apprentice over the age of 50 and took a job at the Sutton's banquet kitchen on Saturdays before quitting the *Sun* and becoming a full-time apprentice cook.

She knew the apprenticeship would ground her in culinary know-how, but she didn't expect it would lead her back to writing.

"Lots of people can come up with 15 good recipes," says Dees. But he and the Best of Bridge ladies knew Vaughan-Johnston had the stamina and training to develop 200 per book.

Vaughan-Johnston's background and NAIT training (she passed her interprovincial Red Seal certification in June) uniquely prepared her to write cookbooks. But she's a Bridge lady at heart, believing that time-pressed home cooks can make great food. "I'm not going to get all cheffy-weffy in the books," she says, now at work on her second instalment in the series. Vaughan-Johnston can size up a nascent recipe and look at where to take a chance, putting her own stamp on the Bridge legacy, keeping it simple but current.

"Mary is right there behind me," Vaughan-Johnston says of the Bridge ladies' spokesperson. "We can speak to each other without taking offense." It's the same plain-talking, warmly humorous tone that Best of Bridge has been using to communicate with cooks for more than 30 years. ■

When life gives you lemons



"Lemony Zucchini Flaxseed Muffins are a very typical Best of Bridge recipe. They're a good example of how recipes come about. While I was working on 'Bravo!', a friend of mine mentioned that she'd had delicious lemon zucchini muffins once. Of course, Murphy's Law, she didn't have the recipe so I developed one. It took quite a few tries... too dry, too moist, not enough lemon, and so on. But the final result is pretty damn tasty and good for you, too!"

- SALLY VAUGHAN-JOHNSTON

LEMONY ZUCCHINI FLAXSEED MUFFINS

INGREDIENTS

300 ml (1 ¼ cups) ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR	375 ml (1 ½ cups) GRATED ZUCCHINI
125 ml (½ cup) GROUND FLAXSEED	175 ml (¾ cup) DRIED CRANBERRIES
5 ml (1 tsp) BAKING POWDER	175 ml (¾ cup) GRANULATED SUGAR
2 ml (½ tsp) GROUND CINNAMON	75 ml (⅓ cup) VEGETABLE OIL
1 ml (¼ tsp) BAKING SODA	25 ml (2 tbsp) GRATED LEMON ZEST
1 ml (¼ tsp) GROUND NUTMEG	25 ml (2 tbsp) FRESHLY SQUEEZED LEMON JUICE
2 EGGS, LIGHTLY BEATEN	

METHOD

Preheat oven to 180 C (350 F). Grease a 12-cup muffin pan or line with paper liners. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, flaxseed, baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda and nutmeg. In another bowl, combine eggs, zucchini, cranberries, sugar, oil, lemon zest and lemon juice. Pour egg mixture over flour mixture and stir just until evenly combined. Spoon into muffin pan. Bake for about 20 minutes or until tester inserted in the centre of a muffin comes out clean. Makes 12 muffins.

From Bravo! Best of Bridge Cookbook by Sally Vaughan-Johnston and The Best of Bridge Publishing Ltd.

WIN A COPY OF BRAVO!, THE LATEST COOKBOOK IN THE BEST OF BRIDGE SERIES

Just answer this question (taken from the story): At what hotel did Sally Vaughan-Johnston work as part of her research into becoming a chef? Be one of the first three respondents to email the correct answer to contests@techlifemag.ca, and we'll send you a book. Please include your mailing address.

MAKING MARVELLOUS MUFFINS

TOUGH LOVE

Mix wet and dry ingredients in separate bowls. The last step is to combine until just moist, even still lumpy. Over-mixing makes tough muffins.

EMPTY NEST

If a recipe unexpectedly leaves you with an extra muffin cup, fill the remaining cup partway with water to stop the tin from scorching.

PONY UP

Spend a little more on a high-quality, nonstick muffin pan. With cheaper pans, you may end up leaving half a muffin behind.

PAPERWORK

A muffin made according to the recipe in a nonstick pan will be golden and slightly crunchy on the sides and bottom. Paper liners make for easy cleanup, but possibly at the expense of this golden perfection, which may peel away with the paper. Let muffins cool completely before removing the paper.

indulge

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HYATT REGENCY LEXINGTON, 401 WEST HIGH ST., LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, U.S.
859.253.1234

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(COOK '99)

About 80 per cent of the ingredients used at BlueFire come from within 100 miles of Lexington, making the farm-fresh, "upper southern" menu truly authentic. Enjoy rich stews, homemade pastas and organic, free-range chicken, for just a few examples.

CAFÉ DE VILLE

10137 - 124 ST., EDMONTON
780.488.9188
cafedeville.com

EXECUTIVE CHEF AND CO-OWNER
PAUL CAMPBELL
(COOK '97)

SOUS-CHEF AND CO-OWNER
TRACY ZIZEK
(CULINARY ARTS '02)

With nearly every item made from scratch, the menu at Café de Ville weaves together European, Asian and Indian influences for meals made all the more memorable by the charming, intimate dining room.

ITZA BAKESHOP

111, 908 - 17 AVE. S.W., CALGARY
403.228.0044

OWNER AND OPERATOR
ALEXANDRA CHAN
(CULINARY ARTS '98)

She'll never give in to the current cupcake fad, but Itza owner Alexandra Chan will happily make you a Whoopie Pie, a sort of cookie-and-marshmallow sandwich. She also does French-inspired pastries, fresh artisanal bread and even wedding cakes, all made with whole foods.

MADISON'S GRILL

UNION BANK INN, 10053 JASPER AVE., EDMONTON
780.401.2222
unionbankinn.com

EXECUTIVE CHEF BLAIR LEBSACK
(COOK '98)

SOUS-CHEF COREY MCGUIRE
(COOK '07)

SOUS-CHEF COLIN MCFALL
(CULINARY ARTS '05)

CHEF DE CUISINE ROBERT SIMPSON
(COOK '09)

Located in downtown Edmonton's Union Bank Inn, constructed in the early 1900s, Madison's Grill combines a "Canadian-cultivated" aesthetic derived from French and European cuisine with, as much as possible, locally sourced meats and vegetables.

MRKT (PICTURED HERE)

10542 JASPER AVE., EDMONTON
780.757.6758

CHEF AND CO-OWNER CARLA
ALEXANDER
(COMMERCIAL COOKING '91)

By day, MRKT is a stylish cafeteria, with a changing menu and trays to carry meals back to long, shared tables. By night, it's a classy place for wine and the sort of finger food - homemade crackers, cheese, charcuterie, fondue - to create an experience best described as an "indoor picnic."



PHOTO BY JASON NESS



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Todd Cherniawsky in his Los Angeles home studio.

M A K I N G A S C E N E

ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGY GRAD TODD CHERNIAWSKY'S WORK AS A MOTION PICTURE ART DIRECTOR

WITH BLOCKBUSTERS that include *Alice in Wonderland*, *Splice* and Academy Award-winner *Avatar* under his belt, art director Todd Cherniawsky has come a long way from his days working on short films as an Edmonton student.

After graduating from NAIT's Architectural Technology program in 1988 (which he credits with giving him a solid foundation in design principles), Cherniawsky completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Alberta ('93) and then headed south to the City of Angels to attend the American Film Institute (AFI).

Within 18 months of graduating from AFI, Cherniawsky was given his first Hollywood studio film opportunity as a set director for *Sphere*, which was released in 1998.

In a phone interview from his Los Angeles home, the Ardrossan native provides a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the role of an art director.

— Ruth Juliebo

Everyone practices the craft of art direction. Every time you read a book, you create a world in your mind's eye for the characters to live in. My job is to translate the ideas and the vision of the director into locations and sets that the actors can work in. For example, the design of the mining operations and vehicles in *Avatar* was inspired by the Alberta oil sands and open-pit mines in Ontario.

What art directors all have in common is curiosity, the ability to draw (for which I credit my NAIT education) and a love of working with large groups. On big productions, I will often have 20 or more people in the art department and construction crews of up to 300.

It's a constant hustle for work. If you sit back and relax between films, your career is over. There's always someone younger, smarter, cheaper and faster waiting in the wings.

THE SKINNY

- **Pay:**
Ranges from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per week (depending on experience, responsibility and production size)
- **Location:**
Anywhere. Hot spots right now are Michigan, Louisiana, Manitoba, Vancouver and Toronto
- **Work hours:**
Average 56 - 75 per week
- **Education requirements:**
Life experience

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5 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH NAIT

1 GET CONNECTED

NAIT has launched a brand new online community, Alumni Connection, exclusively for alumni, making it easier than ever to reconnect with former classmates.

Search for old friends in the alumni directory, post an alumnote (an update about yourself that can be viewed by other Alumni Connection users), participate in forum discussions or send an eCard.

Interested in giving back? Through Alumni Connection, you can sign up for volunteer opportunities, including mentoring a student, and make donations in support of your favourite scholarship, bursary or program.

Visit www.nait.ca/alumniconnection.

3 Do you know a NAIT grad who's done something great? Let us know, and that person could be featured in *techlife* magazine or on the NAIT website or be nominated for an alumni recognition award.

WHO DO YOU KNOW?

Email alumni@nait.ca with your suggestions.

4 Senior students in the Bachelor of Technology in Technology Management and Bachelor of Business Administration complete an applied, practical capstone project designed to provide real-world experiences that integrate their learning.

The Capstone Applied Research Project Office is now accepting proposals from companies and organizations for September 2011.

Learn more at www.nait.ca/capstone.

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2 HELP US SERVE YOU BETTER

Are there benefits or services you'd be interested in as an alum? The Alumni Council is interested in hearing from you. Send your ideas to alumni@nait.ca.

The Alumni Council elected a new executive at its annual general meeting on Oct. 16.

Visit www.nait.ca/alumnicouncil to meet your representatives.

5 REMEMBER NAIT IN YOUR WILL

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The AWARD goes to . . .

Grads, staff and students continue to amass awards and accolades in everything from industry to visual arts to athletics. Here are a few recent winners.

1



Edmonton-based photographer **Tracy Grabowski** (Photographic Technology '93) won first place in the fashion category for this image at the 2010 National Image Competition, held by the Professional Photographers of Canada.



2

Vital Engineering Corporation president **Dean Turgeon** (Engineering Design and Drafting Technology '90) was named 2010 Technologist of the Year by the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) for his work on alternative energy systems. ASET Technical Excellence awards went to **George Al Haddad**, Bachelor of Technology in Technology Management student, and **Pete Van't Hoff** (Engineering Design and Drafting Technology '97). As an automation technologist and electronics team leader with UT Technology, Al Haddad designed an improved scanning device for testing pipeline welds and an automated quality control system. Van't Hoff, founder of Keystone 3D Technical Services, was recognized for his 3-D design work.

3

Former Dental Technology instructor and NAIT men's soccer coach **Stuart Brown** was inducted into the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame for coaching the Edmonton Angels to nine national championships. Brown coached the Oaks for 17 years, taking the team to the top of the Canadian Colleges Athletic Association in 1987.

4

For its work on the institute's new Aboriginal Awareness course, NAIT's **Department of Teaching and Academic Development** (DTAD) won the post-secondary Award of Excellence and Innovation in Video from the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education. DTAD, including videographer Kim Brix (above), contributed videos for the online course developed in collaboration with NAIT aboriginal elders.

5

For demonstrating the spirit of innovation and experimentation, Chemical Technology instructor **Dr. Ron Currie (above)** and **his research team** received an Innovation of the Year Award from the League for Innovation in the Community College for advancements in gas chromatography – a technique used to vaporize and separate mixtures into component compounds for analysis.

WHAT'S NEW @ techlifemag.ca

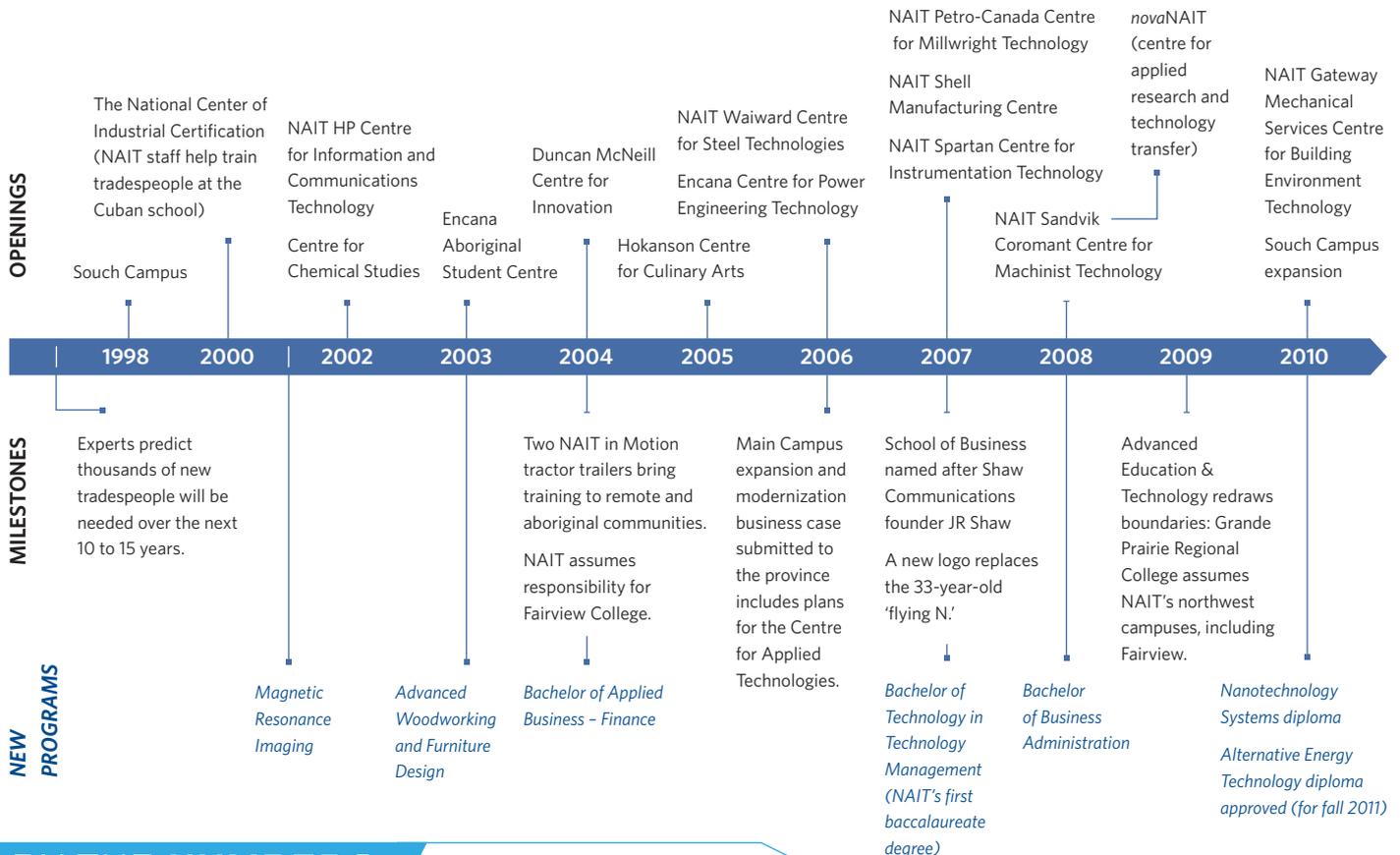
1. **DIY BIKE TUNE-UP** - Personal Fitness Trainer instructor Ken Riess guides you through a basic bicycle tune-up in this three-part video series. [→techlifemag.ca/bicycle-maintenance.htm](http://techlifemag.ca/bicycle-maintenance.htm)
2. **GET COOKING** - As part of an Alberta Milk marketing campaign, NAIT culinary students created a series of tasty new recipes for you to try at home. [→techlifemag.ca/milk-recipes.htm](http://techlifemag.ca/milk-recipes.htm)
3. **THE INTERN** - Delve into international affairs with BTech student Susan Hartwell, NAIT's most recent export to The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars in Washington, D.C. [→techlifemag.ca/susan-hartwell.htm](http://techlifemag.ca/susan-hartwell.htm)
4. **ART OF THE AUTOMOBILE** - Photographic Technology alum Darren Greenwood has an eye for the beauty of motorized transportation. See for yourself. [→techlifemag.ca/hotrod-photos.htm](http://techlifemag.ca/hotrod-photos.htm)
5. **FEEL THE BURN** - Personal Fitness Trainer instructor Dr. Randy Dreger and three students lead St. Albert firefighters through a rigorous training regimen in preparation for an annual competition based on tasks performed when responding to an emergency. [→techlifemag.ca/firefighter-fitness.htm](http://techlifemag.ca/firefighter-fitness.htm)

13

In July, Dr. Sam Shaw announced his retirement. "Techlife" takes a look at how the landscape has changed since Shaw became NAIT's fifth president on Oct. 1, 1997.

— Kristen Vernon

YEARS OF PROGRESS



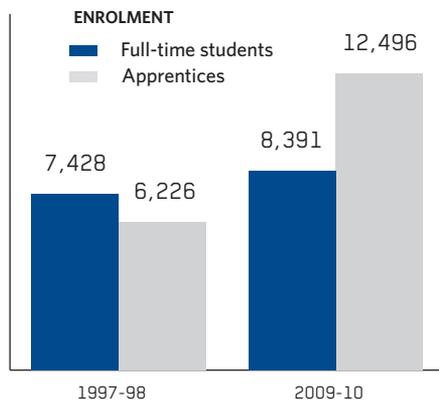
BY THE NUMBERS

\$110 MILLION

NAIT's 1996-97 revenue

\$309M

NAIT's 2009-10 revenue



\$80 MILLION

Total raised during the Building on Demand campaign 2005-08, in support of 10 training centres, student awards and equipment and technology. **The goal: \$50 million.**

\$24 MILLION

Total raised during the Opening Doors campaign, 2000-02, for three centres and student awards.

The goal: \$14 million.

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1997-98	Kathryn Dykstra, counsel at Parlee McLaws LLP
1998-2003	Brian Butlin, chairman and CEO of Flint Energy Services Ltd.
2003-07	Ian Reid, president of Finning (Canada)
2007-10	Douglas Goss, lawyer with Bryan & Company LLP
2010-present	James Cumming, CEO of Creative Door Services Ltd.

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