Choices abound for UTAS students

Future UTAS students are being offered a world of possibilities, with the introduction of several brand new undergraduate and postgraduate courses on offer from 2010. Already, applications for courses are up approximately seven per cent on last year, with more than 7,500 applications received. UTAS Executive Director of Planning and Development Paul Barnett said there was strong demand for all courses, but a continuing trend of increased interest in health and education.

“There also appears to be a resurgence of interest in science,” he said.

“Courses attracting significant increases include nursing, exercise science, paramedicine, health science, education, environmental design, science, engineering and naval architecture.”

Mr Barnett said the increase in applications is a reflection of UTAS’s long-term strategy of increasing opportunities for Tasmanians to undertake a university course.

“Over the past few years, we have been developing and promoting a number of pathways for both school leavers and mature-age students,” he said.

The pathways include students being able to access flexibly delivered courses, including some fast-track and online options. “These options help to broaden accessibility especially to mature-aged students who inevitably have other commitments and responsibilities such as work and family,” he said.

“The growth in demand is also a positive response to the attractiveness of UTAS programs and our commitment to teaching quality. This year UTAS received four star ratings for teaching quality and research in The Good Universities Guide for 2010, putting us ahead of many of the larger, metropolitan universities in other states.”

“UTAS has been pursuing a growth agenda, but not at the risk of quality.”

New courses for 2010 include a Diploma of Creative Media Technology, a Bachelor of Paramedic Practice, a Bachelor of Applied Science (Marine Engineering) and a Bachelor of Behavioural Science.

Also from next year, students enrolling in the Faculty of Education will be able to do pre-service education degrees fully online, making them more accessible to people who find it difficult to attend scheduled classes on campus. The online courses offered in 2010 are Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood), Bachelor of Education (Primary), Bachelor of Education – Secondary Options, a Bachelor of Physical Activity Studies and a Master of Teaching.

For 21-year-old Rubi Stockman, the journey to university has been full of a range of emotions from fear and uncertainty to incredible happiness and knowledge now that she has made the right choice.

And what Ms Stockman says she knows now that she didn’t when she left college is that she is certain she wants to do something in life that she is truly passionate about.

Ms Stockman has just finished her second year of a Contemporary Arts (Theatre) undergraduate degree. “The past two years studying performing arts have been the most challenging years of my life, but have also been the most rewarding,” she said this week.

“I have learnt so many skills over the past two years that I am going to treasure for the rest of my life – skills that are not only going to help me with my career in the future but also skills that I will use in everyday life.”

While Ms Stockman is aiming to have a career as an actor, she says her course is equipping her to have a range of options.

“My studies are not just about acting – we study other aspects of theatre from stage management to directing as well as theory. “Because of the theory component, I also have the option of undertaking a postgraduate degree to become a teacher.”

More information about courses is available at http://www.futurestudents.utas.edu.au/
We learnt about Professor David Bowman, an Australian engineer and scientist driving technological research recognized by ATSE as a leading medical researcher. The Graeme Caughley Fellowship, valued at up to $5000, is given to enable ecologists resident in Australia or New Zealand to enable ecologists resident in Australia or New Zealand to conduct research in South Africa on his work in Kakadu National Park.

Henry Reynolds, Professor Simon Foote, and Graeme Caughley Fellowship are discussed. Reynolds is the co-author of ‘Drawing the Global Colour Line’ and has been granted an ATSE fellowship. Foote is the director of the Menzies Research Institute and has been awarded the 2010 Graeme Caughley Fellowship.

The UTAS Transition Support Officer Carol Devereaux and the new UTAS student Shiji Xie, of China, share their world travels at the CFNP launch. The CFNP will help students to experience the real Tasmania during their stay or as they build a permanent new life in the state. The UTAS Community Friends and Networks Programme connects students who are new to town with Tasmanian people from all walks of life. It’s a way to get to know the locals,” Prof. O’Donovan said. The CFNP is for any new UTAS students from outside Tasmania’s major cities who feel that they would benefit from expanding their networks, including international students, students newly arrived on humanitarian visas, migrants, students from other Australian states and those from regional Tasmania.

CFNP volunteers will include local UTAS staff and students, and individuals and families from the wider Tasmanian community. The CFNP is statewide and will be run out of both Launceston and Hobart. Volunteers will offer friendship and local knowledge to participating students. This may involve meeting for coffee, sharing a home-cooked meal, having a BBQ, going on a bushwalk, or sharing other activities with the student out and about,” Prof. O’Donovan said.

For more details, email: source.wholefoods@gmail.com or see the website at: www.sourcewholefoods.org

The Source Community Wholefoods Cooperative volunteer Dan Zetah and co-founder Jenny Calder inspect the organic garden.

The Source Community Wholefoods Cooperative is to create a sustainable-living demonstration facility and community centre.

The tiered permaculture garden provides an example of urban organic gardening, greywater recycling and composting. The space will be used for people to meet, hold gardening workshops and socialise, as well as do food shopping. The space will be used for people to meet, hold gardening workshops and socialise, as well as do food shopping. Ms Calder said the aim of Source Community Wholefoods was to create a sustainable-living demonstration facility and community centre.

The Source Community Wholefoods Cooperative volunteer Dan Zetah and co-founder Jenny Calder inspect the organic garden.
Hobart Hospital Research Foundation's 2009 Christmas card collection.

Ms McAuliffe was among eight acclaimed Tasmanian artists to donate original art-works to the Art of Christmas card range. All proceeds from the sale of the cards will be used to support medical research in Tasmania.

Tree Wise Men features many of the simple objects that people associate with Christmas placed together in a mosaic to form the shape of a traditional Christmas space.

"Many people have a lot of memories from their own childhood Christmas, but these memories do not really match the traditional 'snow and sleigh' cards you see in shops," Ms McAuliffe said.

"I wanted to capture the essence of the fun of an Australian Christmas using some of the simple objects that have in a sense become symbols of an Australian summer Christmas."

Hidden in Ms McAuliffe’s design is an icy pole, thongs, a garden hose and even an image of a tired old Christmas tree that has lost its needles after being left up for too long.

A graphic designer, Ms McAuliffe last year ventured into creating a range of colourfull cards and wrapping paper as a new business, Phat Flats, which she runs from her family’s terrace house in North Hobart.

"This scheme was started by the stars taking a different twist at the start of the year when, in keeping with the theme of the Year of Astronomy, we announced the proposed $5.8 million optical astronomy observatory at Bidee Tier."

The observatory, complete with a $1.6 million optical telescope already donated by an anonymous astronomy enthusiast in the UK, is to be sited in the Tasmanian Midlands, well away from the light pollution of Hobart to allow for better viewing.

A major fundraising campaign has been launched to raise another $2 million to ensure the successful and timely completion of this world-class facility.

We celebrated when funding of $45 million allowed for better viewing. "The last UTAS graduates have graduated and the new students are starting. It is very useful to be able to take my new laptop out into the field to use it on-site."

– Elias Polyméropoulos, studying salmon health.

UTAS PhD candidates have been given free laptops and access to a central data storage system under the University’s Graduate Research Laptop Scheme.

The scheme has not only provided every student with access to the latest computer hardware and software but, by providing remote data storage, it also eliminates the risk of ground-breaking research being lost if the computer is stolen or breaks down.

Last month UTAS handed out 140 laptops to PhD students, who will use them to record and analyse data and write their theses during their three- to four-year research degree.

UTAS Dean of Graduate Research Professor Peter Frappell said that providing every research doctorate candidate with a new laptop ensured that students had a solid base from which to begin their research.

"Some students have in the past relied on their old home computer, which is not always reliable,” Prof. Frappell said.

"Or they have only been able to work using a desktop computer in the school where they are studying, which has prevented them from using the computer in the field or accessing their data remotely."

And the devastating news that years of research has been lost because of a stolen or broken-down computer should now be a thing of the past.

All student files can now be kept safe, with each student given access to five gigabytes of file storage in a data “cloud”, which acts like a remote server that can be accessed from anywhere in the world through an internet interface.

This storage provision is provided, managed and supported by UTAS Information Technology Resources and ensures that data is never lost as it is stored in a central place at the University.

"Students can save their thesis and data wherever they are in the world,” Prof. Frappell said.

Elias Polyméropoulos, who is studying how changes in temperature and oxygen levels affect salmon health (stress) at local fish farms, is looking forward to taking his new laptop with him out in the field.

"I spent some time at a salmon hatchery at Wya- tinah this year and will also be working on offshore farms in the coming year, so it is very useful to be able to take my new laptop out into the field to use it on-site,” he said.

"This is a wonderful scheme and will be an enormous support for students who do not have access to a computer and cannot afford to purchase the latest computer or software."

Prof. Frappell said the laptop became the student’s private property, meaning that it is theirs to use and keep as a private device.

The laptop includes applications and antivirus software, up to five gigabytes of cloud file storage, a warranty, phone support and a backpack.
UTAS farewells Monty the python

BY CHERIE COOPER

Monty the python, long-term and much loved resident of the UTAS School of Zoology, recently passed away.

Reptile expert and senior lecturer in the School of Zoology Dr Erik Wapstra said that Monty “didn’t come out of his usual hibernation very well” and just slipped away peacefully.

Monty, who was a Children’s python (the breed is named after naturalist John Children) was a resident of the zoology department since his arrival there in 1995.

Monty was no bigger than a pencil when he arrived but wasn’t shy about nippering people. As he grew older, he became more used to being handled by people and rarely gotHungry enough to bite.

Monty came to UTAS after Dr Randy Rose, an honorary research associate in the School of Zoology, acquired Monty in a snake swap, which was the result of a request from a mainland zoo for some Tasmanian tiger snakes. Dr Rose wanted a python because he wanted to show students how pythons digest their prey – by suffocating rather than poisoning. Pythons are not native to Tasmania.

Monty’s life was one of leisure and privilege. As a display item and teaching aid, he would be taken from his enclosure to greet visitors on UTAS open days. Monty was fed and “walked” by carers, who would take him outside in the sun for a slither in the bush.

He was also taken on field trips to local schools to teach children how to understand snakes and to react to them intelligently.

While he had a very comfortable life, Monty had his share of adventures, including taking himself on a vacation. Owen Daniel, who looked after Monty as a third-year zoology student, retells the story.

“He got lost upstairs when some people had him out and he got into the wall cavity and went missing,” Owen said.

“Skins would occasionally turn up mysteriously to indicate that Monty was still around and he was eventually found asleep in a rubbish bin a year later.”

Monty also survived a kidnapping episode. Luckily he was rescued – as he is not a native species it wasn’t hard to identify him.

Monty will be remembered as both a friend of the University and an invaluable teaching aid.

Handkerchiefs commemorate Northern Ireland’s troubled past

BY CHERIE COOPER

Almost 4000 names have been embroidered onto the handkerchiefs, as a purposely laborious funerary record, a toll of the human lives lost.

“Remembering, grieving and [oral history] storytelling is what visitors, on either side of the political divide, do with one another when they encounter this reconciliation commemorative installation,” Ms Trouton said.

“It can be understood as a non-hierarchical, chronological list of names of those killed.”

While the memorial was previously shown in North America and Australia, it was not unveiled in Northern Ireland until the Healing Through Remembering organisation launched the first annual Day of Private Reflection in 2007, where visitors attended the Peace and Reconciliation Centre, Carrickfergus, to see it.

Almost 4000 names have been embroidered onto the handkerchiefs, as a purposely laborious funerary record, a toll of the political unrest and violence in Northern Ireland that began in the late 1960s and has continued to the present day.

The artwork was conceived by Trouton as a way in which art might contribute to healing the wounds of The Troubles.

Trouton’s research concerns issues of monumentality and uses textiles as a metaphor for the body, trauma and migration.

Lincoln memorial: Gallery visitor Jo Ann O’Dell reads the names of the 4000 people who have died in the Northern Ireland political violence since the 1960s, as recorded in The (Irish) Linen Memorial by Lyicia Trouton.

The (Irish) Linen Memorial is an “alternative history” of The Troubles. “The Troubles” is the term for the political unrest and violence in Northern Ireland that began in the late 1960s and has continued to the present day.

The names listed are from both sides of the political divide; the work is therefore a commemoration without bias.

Ms Trouton said that because there was still no neutral site in Northern Ireland for shared public mourning, her untraditional monument has yet to be sited.

Lyicia Trouton arrived at the UTAS Academy of Visual and Performing Arts in Invercree in July of this year to begin work as a lecturer in Art and Design Theory. She also recently represented UTAS at the highly competitive and high profile International Symposium on Electronic Art (IEAS) conference held this year in Belfast.

She was born in Belfast and came to Australia to obtain a doctorate at the University of Wolongong. After completion, she lectured in Darwin, and then went back overseas to undertake postdoctoral, practice-led research. She became an Australian citizen as part of an award program that recognised specialist international talent.

Mark Potter
Director of Research Services

Life before UTAS
I am from Launceston; I was born in Queenstown. My family is from the West Coast. My dad worked for the HIC as a power-station operator. We moved around a fair bit but I spent most of my life in Launceston.

Education and work history
I did my undergraduate degree at UTAS in Launceston. Before that I worked in the Tasmanian Department of Agriculture in the sheep and cattle area. Then I was recruited to work in the Melbourne University Tasmanian Department of Agriculture in Launceston. Before that I worked in the Tasmanian militia organisations.

Looking forward to
I like to watch my big plasma TV. I’m a fan of the Adelaide Crows. I do a bit of doona embroidery and would love to try out my hand at quilting. I enjoy watching the birds that visit the bird table outside my bedroom window. My family is from the West Coast and I have many happy memories of life in Launceston.

Secret expertise
My PhD is in nineteenth-century American military history and I have recently had a book chapter published on this subject. I’d like to do some similar work on Tasmanian militia organisations.

Looking forward to
I am Director of Research Services with a portfolio covering competitive grants, contracts and consultancies, human and animal ethics, and data and publications.

Next EditioN: The submission deadline for the March issue of Unitas is 12 February
Canoe-building lessons cool in hot Kimberley

BY SHARON WEBB

K ids and canoes go together – especially when the temperature is hitting 46 degrees in Western Australia’s Kimberley region.

UTAS lecturer Ian Edmondson recently spent five days working with 20 Year Five / Six students and community members at the Kulkarriya Community School on Noonkanbah Station to make five plywood canoes.

A lecturer in the Education Faculty’s Indigenous Education and Teaching in Remote Locations unit, Ian met up with 2007 graduate Jotham Krom, who is in his second year teaching at the school and completed his internship there when he was studying at UTAS.

“Noonkanbah is a cattle station operated by Indigenous people; it’s one of the oldest and most significant Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley,” Ian said.

At the school on the banks of the Fitzroy River, Ian and Jotham worked on the canoe project, aimed at strengthening school–community links.

“The opportunity was too good to refuse, linking my teaching in design technology and Indigenous education,” Ian said.

“The people working on the project were learning about teamwork, building skills, construction materials and reading instructions in a way that suited the predominant learning approach of community Aboriginal children.”

The project to make the five-metre canoes was fully funded by Kulkarriya Community School.

Ian also gathered video and audio interviews to use in his teaching back at UTAS.

Currently two UTAS graduates teach at Kulkarriya Community School; another 13 work in schools across the Kimberley and four more will be employed in 2010.

Moss mania

BY KATHY GRUBE

M oss suffers from a bad reputation, commonly regarded by gardeners as the scourge of lawn and blight of paving.

Yet this ancient plant group has some very special adaptations that have helped it survive long after many other plant groups have become extinct.

The Moss Mania exhibition, at the Morris Miller Library at the Sandy Bay campus of UTAS, is proof that moss is not just a weed to be killed. Stunning botanical artwork by Lauren Black and Rod Seppelt illustrates the incredibly beautiful and detailed structure of the bryophyte group, which includes mosses and liverworts.

UTAS School of Plant Science lecturer and editor of the Australasian Bryological Newsletter Patrick (Paddy) Dalton has a passion for these fascinating plants and instigated the Moss Mania exhibition to showcase the forgotten flora.

“The bryophytes comprise the earliest lineages of land plants that evolved over 350 million years ago,” Mr Dalton said.

“While other groups of plants have come and gone, bryophytes have survived. They have some amazing adaptations that have helped them survive, including the ability to withstand long periods of desiccation.”

“The longest time a moss has been recorded as surviving without any water is 11 years. When the moss, which had been stored in a herbarium collection, was rehydrated with water it resumed normal metabolic processes within several hours.

“There are research teams in the USA who are searching for the genes responsible for this amazing desiccation tolerance.”

Possessing an ancient form of sexual reproduction, featuring motile sperm, bryophytes have been labelled the amphibians of the plant world.

But this is not the only way this amazing plant group can reproduce. New bryophytes can grow from just one small fragment of the original plant through asexual reproduction. Hundreds of tiny new bryophyte plants can be created by grinding up an original plant in a mortar and pestle and then sprinkling the grindings onto a suitable substrate.

Bryophytes are a diverse group of land plants, with about 13,000 species of moss, 6,000 species of liverworts and a couple of hundred species of hornworts around the world. There are more than 750 species of bryophytes just in Tasmania, including some as yet unclassified species.

One endemic Tasmanian sphagnum moss species is found growing in just three dispersed isolated quartzitic sandy pans in button grass sedgeland in Tasmania’s south west wilderness.

Tasmania is also home to some unusual species of dung moss, which grow on decaying organic matter. One famous example was the discovery in Tasmania of Tayloria octobrachium, which was first collected in 1845 from the decaying clothes and bones of a bushranger. The bushranger was identified as John Fisher and it was thought he had died of natural causes as he still had his two double-barrelled guns and pistols lying by his side.

In some habitats, like rainforests in Tasmania, bryophytes outnumber all the other plants species put together. For example, up to 60 different bryophyte species can be found growing on just one Nothofagus rainforest tree.

Mr Dalton said because bryophytes occur in a diverse range of habitats and in all types of vegetation, they are ideal for research.

Moss Mania, which is part of this year’s celebration of 100 years of biology at the University of Tasmania, will remain on display until the end of the year.
Native critter fascinates exchange student

A fun year spent as an exchange student in Tasmania lured Sweden’s Rachelle Olsson. Herrin back to the island state to study a special species that she had fallen in love with.

The animals of Tasmania stayed on her mind after she returned home and so, when she was deciding on a topic for her zoology master’s thesis, Rachelle decided to return to Tasmania to study at UTAS.

It was the “very special, very cool” platypus that captured her imagination during her first visit to Tasmania and which became the focus of her research. Rachelle’s research examined platypus population structure and the effects of forestry on the platypus population in the Plenty River in southeast Tasmania.

“There is very little known about how platypuses are distributed within river catchments and no-one has ever looked at the distribution of the platypuses within rivers,” she said.

“I compared occurrence, relative population sizes and condition of platypuses in the upper and lower river reaches, as well as in streams running through plantations and native forest.”

Rachelle rigged up nets in the river, one facing upstream, the other downstream. The platypuses would swim toward a net and wander inside. She would then measure and weigh them before releasing them.

“They all had very different personalities but were generally quite placid. The males have poisonous spurs so you have to be careful handling them,” she said.

Despite the nets being carefully placed, the “shy and hard to catch” platypuses proved elusive.

Rachelle’s research found that in the lower river catchments the platypuses were quite numerous, but there were fewer further up-river. Two hypotheses might explain this.

It could be that the platypuses move into the upper catchments only when there is a lot of food available, or they may just be harder to capture in these areas.

“They may live there; but it’s hard when you have such a low number of captures to be able to say for certain whether they are or are not present in higher numbers in certain areas,” she said.

Rachelle said there was scope for further research looking at platypus populations in forest areas as she was not able to capture enough individuals to draw any conclusions.

Rachelle has completed her master’s degree and returned to Sweden, but hopes to continue research into wildlife conservation.

(Above) Placid platypus: Rachelle Olsson Herrin, of Sweden, with one of the platypuses she caught along the Plenty River.

Rhodes to success

‘I would like to use what I have learned from my research, and utilise the research of others, to lead the planning and direction of programs in developing countries.’


The scholarship was presented by His Excellency the Hon. Peter Underwood AC, Governor of Tasmania, to UTAS graduate Rhea Longley, 22.

Miss Longley achieved consistently excellent results during her Bachelor of Medical Research and is now studying her Bachelor of Medical Research Honours.

The scholarship will help her to study at the famed Oxford University in the UK. During her degree, Miss Longley was placed on the Dean’s Roll of Excellence for the Faculty of Health Science twice.

She was also awarded the Australian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Prize for the highest achievement in third-year biochemistry in 2008.

But it’s not just academic achievements that win a Rhodes Scholarship. Back in 1902 the Rhodes Scholarships were created under the provisions of the will of Cecil John Rhodes. Rhodes stipulated that recipients of his scholarship must be selected not only for academic excellence, but also for sporting prowess, community involvement and strength of character.

Describing herself as “optimistic, driven and caring”, Miss Longley said she has always been interested in health, in particular diseases affecting developing countries.

Her honours project, conducted through the Menzies Research Institute, involves trying to identify a new gene involved in malaria resistance in mice.

When Miss Longley arrives at Oxford she plans to continue in this area of research and undertake a PhD in genetic research, focusing on host resistance to malaria in humans.

“I would like to use what I have learned from my research, and utilise the research of others, to lead the planning and direction of programs in developing countries,” she said.

“My goal is to achieve a high leadership role within a prominent non-government organisation or the World Health Organisation, to oversee the management and implementation of health programs to control and monitor infectious diseases and improve general health and wellbeing.”

Alternative options for animal control

Chemical-dipped carrots are on the way out as UTAS academic Dr Natasha Wiggins researches alternative methods to the poison 1080 for Tasmanian landowners with wallaby problems.

Working near Scottsdale in north-eastern Tasmania, Dr Wiggins, from the School of Plant Science, has run trials to compare the effectiveness of lethal control with non-lethal control – shooting the animals versus using fencing to keep them out.

Her analysis is in its early stages, but already she has evidence that farmers need to choose a suitable method depending on what they want to achieve.

“I’ve found that lethal methods mean the remaining animals increase their home range area and increase the proportion of time they spend feeding on agricultural land,” she said.

“As the remaining wallabies have less competition and they do well, as animals outside that population don’t appear to be moving in.”

“But when an area is fenced the animals move away to look for an alternative food source on a neighbour’s land, sometimes kilometres away in the case of Bennett’s wallabies.”

“Currently I’m looking at the sorts of situations in which landowners might use either technique.”

It may be that farmers need to work together to create different browsing areas or use a combination of techniques, such as initially reducing animal densities by putting up a fence.”

Dr Wiggins has been surveyed by Bennett’s wallaby and Tasmanian pademelon populations for a year, doing seat and spotlight surveys to gauge population densities and using GPS technology to gauge animal movement and range.

The project is funded by both the Tasmanian and Australian governments through the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement: Alternatives to 1080 Program.

The UTAS schools of Plant Science and Zoology have also contributed to the project.
Secret life of plants

BY CHERIE COOPER

Plants can seem more passive in their lives than living things—but did you know that they are just as complex and active in their lives as animals and humans? Dr Jim Weller, from the UTAS School of Plant Science, understands plants—and they actually sound a lot like us.

“Plants are sophisticated creatures that react to their environment and spend a lot of effort in resisting disease, competing with their neighbours and deciding how, when and with whom to reproduce,” he said.

Sound familiar? Dr Weller is using his extensive experience to study the genes that control when plants flower. He works mainly with legumes—a large family of plants that contains various important well-known crop species such as garden peas, chickpeas, lentils and soybeans.

“Our short-term goal is to identify the genes that control flowering.”

“That means tracking down the DNA sequences of those genes, which will show us what kinds of proteins they encode and help us understand the intricate molecular pathways by which environmental factors such as light and temperature stimulate a plant to flower,” he said.

Dr Weller said that his longer-term goal is to take that information from one species and see if it can be used to identify the genes that control flowering in other plant species.

“There’s a lot of interest in understanding how different groups of plants evolve this ability to control flowering,” he said.

“Our primary interest is in the basic biology, but the work has applications for plant breeders trying to develop new varieties that farmers are going to use.”

The identification of flowering-time genes will help plant breeders to develop new varieties that flower at a specific time by making it easier to monitor the genes in their breeding programs. It may also help identify environmentally specific genetic variations that can be used by breeders to develop a wide range of flowering responses within a crop.

“In drier places, farmers want crops to flower quicker so they mature before summer droughts. The use of earlier-flowering varieties could also extend the range of crop species and give more options to growers.

“If you’re a farmer trying to grow a crop, it’s about planting at the right time and knowing, the plant is going to yield, given the conditions that prevail at the time.”

“Ultimately, that’s going to depend on the combination of factors that the plant has,” Dr Weller said.

Controlling reproduction: Dr Jim Weller is investigating what genes are involved in controlling when plants flower.

UTAS books

Multiliteracies and Technology Enhanced Education: Social Practice and the Global Classroom

By Darren L. Pullen, UTAS Faculty of Education, and David R. Cole (Information Science Reference, 2009)

Recently, educators have begun to consider what is required in literacy curricula and best-teaching practices given the demands placed on the education sector and in literacy in general. Multiliteracies and Technology Enhanced Education: Social Practice and the Global Classroom features theoretical reflections on and approaches to the use of multiliteracies and technologies in the improvement of educational practices. Assisting educators at different teaching levels and fostering professional development and progress in this growing field, this innovative publication supports practitioners concerned with teaching at both a local and global level.

Concepts and Methods of Youth Work

Edited by Rob White, School of Sociology and Social Work (Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, 2009)

Concepts and Methods of Youth Work, which is the first of three volumes in the Living Youth Work in Australia series, contains a select range of contributions from the journal Youth Studies Australia, which is also published by the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies at the University of Tasmania. Concepts and methods of youth work looks at the key issues of youth work as a career and as a profession. It brings together the writings of many leading figures in the youth work field in a single volume.

Girl Reading Girl in Japan

By Tomoko Aoyama and Dr Barbara Hartley, UTAS School of Asian Languages and Studies (Routledge, 2009)

Girl Reading Girl in Japan looks at the reading practices of girls and young women from the early years of the twentieth century to the present day. The book features contributions from Australia, Japan and the United States and has created a strong network of scholars interested in Japanese cultural and literary studies. Editors Tomoko Aoyama (the book was an outcome of an ARC Discovery Grant awarded to Dr Aoyama) of University of Queensland and Barbara Hartley from UTAS will continue to work collaboratively.

My PhD

Lisa Cawthen

UTAS School of Zoology

Batty adventures

Most people look shocked when School of Zoology PhD candidate Lisa Cawthen tells them she is conducting research on Tasmanian bats.

“Many people don’t realise that there are bats in Tasmania,” Ms Cawthen said.

“But in fact, Tasmania has eight species of tiny little bats, but it is because they are so small that people do not recognise them.”

The eight Tasmanian species of bats are the Gould’s wattled bat (Chalinolobus gouldii), Chocolate wattled bat (Chalinolobus morio), Eastern forest bat (Vespadelus darlingtonii), Little forest bat (Vespadelus vulturnis), the Southern forest bat (Vespadelus regularis) and the endemic Tasmanian long-eared bat (Nyctophilus phyllostomus).

Ms Cawthen has spent the past three months wandering the foothills of Mount Wellington at midnight capturing and releasing bats for part of her project to develop a statewide Tasmanian bat call identification key.

“Infectious bats in Tasmania use echolocation (like sonar) to navigate and find prey. The echolocation calls are not within the range that humans can hear, but Ms Cawthen has a hand-held bat detector that records the calls and transforms them into sounds that humans can hear.

“Each bat species has a unique echolocation, and once Ms Cawthen has developed a call library for each Tasmanian bat species, she can go out into any forest in Tasmania and record what species or, at the very least, genus are present just by recording bat calls.

“My project is exploring how bats use forest remnants, and whether the availability of mature forest affects bat remnant use, species composition and demographics in the landscape,” she said.

“All of these bats are true forest-dwelling bats, which means they do not rely on caves to sleep in, but rather roost in tree cavities during the day and forage upon insects at night in the forest.”

“Despite their reliance on forest resources, there has been no detailed studies into how clearance or conversion of forest to plantation or regrowth affects bats in Tasmania.”

Ms Cawthen is keen to hear from people from around Tasmania interested in volunteering as field assistants. This is a fun opportunity to see some of Tasmania’s amazing little bats up close.

To find out more go to http://tasiebatsproject.jimdo.com

(Above) Batty boffin: PhD researcher Lisa Cawthen measuring the wingspan and size of a Lesser long-eared bat (Nyctophilus phyllostomus) captured in the foothills of Mount Wellington.
The work

The Christmas Garden

BY MICHAEL WEITNAUER

The Christmas Garden is a painting of my mother’s garden, which I had photographed and sketched in December 2008, six months after she passed away. I had always wanted to paint mum’s garden but never found the time.

Mum’s garden is very much a reflection of who she was and a place where she found great pleasure and occasional respite from bringing up a large family. In the eulogy at her funeral I said that ‘Mum’ mum’s garden but never found the time. It is a steep, large and rocky garden that over the years has come to reflect her personality to a tee – colourful, beautifully wild in places and sometimes thrown together, but it all worked and she was often successful in growing plants that others in our neighbourhood could.

Mum’s death was cause for me to pause and reflect on her life. It was as a consequence of this that I finally sprang into action. I created numerous small studies of the garden from which I then painted a large work entitled My Mother’s Garden, which was selected as a finalist for the 2009 Glover Art Prize.

When I was invited to submit a painting for the Menzies Research Institute Christmas card series this year, I immediately knew what I would paint. For over forty years my family has celebrated on Christmas Eve (the European Christmas time) at my parents’ home and it seemed appropriate that I create an image of the garden in full bloom at Christmas. I had my previous studies, photos and sketches to call on and felt a sense of delight in creating this painting on MDF wood that, while small and slightly understated, has for me great meaning and reflects the vibrancy of a wonderful garden which is an enduring living legacy of my dear mother.

Weitnauer donated The Christmas Garden to the Menzies Research Institute and the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation’s 2009 Christmas card collection.

Michael Weitnauer (1954–) was born in Germany and has lived much of his life in Australia since his parents emigrated in the 1950s. Weitnauer comes from a family with a strong art background. His grandfather, Arthur Fischer, was a renowned German landscape and portrait painter based in Berlin; and his mother, who studied at the Berlin School of Applied Art, ensured that drawing and painting were an important part of family life. At age eight Weitnauer had his first set of oil paints and was entering school art competitions. In 1986, after becoming particularly inspired by the work of Australian painter Fred Williams, Weitnauer began to develop a keen interest in landscape painting. In the last 18 years Weitnauer has held 32 solo exhibitions and participated in more than 20 group shows around Australia and overseas. His recent successes include winning the prestigious 2002 Wentworth Hotel Casino Art Award, the 2006 South Yarra Art House Inaugural Art Prize, and being selected as a finalist for the 2007 and 2009 Glover Art Prize and the 2007 Hutchins Art Prize. Weitnauer is senior executive officer in Development and Alumni at UTAS.