



Bus Project

You don't expect, when climbing aboard an inter-city bus, to be confronted by two brightly-coloured seat covers. It's a startling departure from the coverings on the other seats in the bus, which emphasize durability over artistry. But the exceptional seat covers are only one element in a much richer story.

The story involves the creation of The Bus Project, which brought together a group of people with a wide range of talents. It also reflects a significant aspect of Saskatchewan's history as a destination for immigrants from all corners of the world.

The project originated from discussions between two teachers at the University of Regina, professor of theatre Kathleen Irwin, and visual arts instructor Rachelle Viader Knowles.

"Rachelle and I were working on the notion of low-tech bus travel and global migration," Irwin explains. About six months ago, the opportunity arose to explore these ideas further, through contacts with a public art festival in Saskatoon, called SPASM II. Gradually, the concept of The Bus Project evolved into those eye-catching seat covers on an STC bus linking Regina and Saskatoon.

But that's only part of the story. In addition to displaying the seat covers in a public space, Irwin and Viader Knowles also wanted to present fragments of travel diaries of people who came to Saskatchewan from other parts of the world. Viader Knowles and some of her visual arts

students produced the videos from interviews with members of the Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan organization.

Continuing the idea of presenting art in public spaces, sculptor John Reichert designed and built two computer kiosks, which were located in the Regina and Saskatoon bus terminals. Using a touch screen displaying a map of STC routes, people could access video clips of women talking about arrivals and departures as part of their life stories. For example, pointing to Swift Current on the on-screen map produces an image of the familiar white and green highway sign saying "Welcome to Swift Current", except the destination dissolves into "South Korea", followed by a video. Touch other destinations, and other videos appear.

Sharing their stories are Teressa Olinick, Palwasha Humayun, Slava Gottselg and Neelu Sachdev.

For Gottselg, it was a good opportunity to tell Canadians about the challenges that newcomers face. She arrived in Saskatchewan at the end of a 48-hour bus ride from Toronto to Regina. What she saw was unlike her native Ukraine.

"I had a chance to see the different landscapes, and I was really impressed," says Gottselg. "And the people were patient, welcoming and encouraging."

Humayun, who left Afghanistan by way of New Delhi, wanted to tell what it's like when you have no choice but



Fabric artist Wendy Allard, seated on one of her creations. "Talking with people at any gathering in Saskatchewan, I'm always struck by how many people have come here from other places."

Photo by Bill Armstrong

to leave your homeland. Her first impression of Regina when she arrived six years ago? "It was so quiet after New Delhi."

The technology inside the kiosks and the ideas behind it came from professor of computer science Daryl Hepting and one of his students, Melissa Buhler.

"I was attracted to the project by the potential for an interactive component," says Hepting. "We went through a number of different technical ideas before settling on the interface, the style of interaction and the presentation of the content in its present form."

Fabric artist Wendy Allard used

the stories as inspiration for the seat covers she created.

"I listened to the words they used - calm and quiet - in talking about Saskatchewan as their home," Allard says. "They noticed how the sun and moon stand out here, so I put images of the sun and moon on the covers, along with words in their native languages," Allard adds.

The Bus Project ran from May 27 to June 4 as a public art event of SPASM II. The project was a co-production of SPASM II, Knowhere Productions and the University of Regina, and was funded by the U of R's transdisciplinary fund and the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

A sampling of what some faculty will do for the summer

Modeling and retrieving computer music; exploring how educators can use wikis, blogs and other technologies; conserving and managing grasslands. These are a few of the topics University of Regina faculty members are discussing with colleagues around the University, and around the globe.

Traditionally, faculty members take a summer break from their routine. Giving lectures and marking student assignments gives way to delving deeper into research projects, developing new courses, and attending meetings and conferences where research findings are shared with fellow

scholars from other parts of the world. Here's a sampling of work being done by some teachers and researchers at the University of Regina.

Professors Daryl Hepting and David Gerhard have teamed up to explore ways in which music and technology can work together.

Hepting recently delivered a paper on music and animation at an international conference in Denmark. "I've long had an idea about creating an animation of the fractals (curves or geometrical figures) that I did for my Master's degree," says Hepting. "A student, Matthew McKague, did some preliminary work toward it last

summer, and the project has grown larger and more interesting since David and I began our collaboration."

Gerhard and Hepting are examining how they might construct and work with a system that allows music and animation to be developed from the same source, instead of one being based on another. As an example, with McKague's help they produced a video, "Triangularhythmic", which was shown at the conference. (If you have QuickTime on your computer, you can view the video at <http://www2.cs.uregina.ca/~hepting/CCAMC/>).

Hepting says he received a lot of positive feedback from attendees, who were mostly musicians with an interest in technology and its offshoots, such as electroacoustic music.

Meanwhile, Gerhard recently presented a paper at NIME, a conference on new interfaces for musical expression. Many new musical instruments exist, and more are being developed, Gerhard explains, but few musicians actually play them.

"Artists don't know what to do with the instruments' parameters because they are specified in very technical terms. Our work will allow musicians to explore these parameters without needing the technical language," says Gerhard.

If you've never heard of a wiki or a blog, you're not alone. You are likely to hear more about them in the future, however.

Professor of education Alec Couros is developing a web resource this summer - educationaltechnology.ca - that features examples of wikis and blogs. During the fall and winter semesters Couros maintains a busy schedule giving presentations to educators, parents and school groups on topics such as digital plagiarism and keeping children safe on the Internet. He's also developed a course about using technology in the classroom, which is delivered on-line.

"The work this summer will focus on awareness and practical uses of open source software in the classroom," Couros says. "When I taught the online course we supplied students with a range of open source software packages, such as Open Office. Wikis, which are available as open source software, allow people to collaborate on the creation of a web page, without any special tools or knowledge. The main theme of the open source movement is that people can do excellent work in collaboration, and open source tools can help

make that happen."

A blog (from web LOG) is a journal, usually updated daily, that is available on the Web. They give people who have little technical expertise the ability to express themselves on the Web.

Professor of geography David Gauthier recently gave the keynote talk at an invitation-only international wildlife conference in Calgary. The audience included representatives of wildlife and/or environment ministries from the North American free trade countries - Canada, the United States and Mexico - along with other representatives from business, state or provincial governments and the academic world. Gauthier's paper, "Towards a North American Grassland Conservation Strategy", describes issues that the three countries need to address to develop a combined strategy for grassland conservation.

"The paper also outlines a process by which that strategy can be developed," says Gauthier, who is also executive director of the Canadian Plains Research Centre at the U of R.

More information: * Second International Symposium on Computer Music Modeling and Retrieval: <http://www.cs.aue.auc.dk/cmnr2004/>

* NIME conference: <http://www.nime.org> * Alec Couros's presentations on Safety on the Internet and other topics: <http://www.educationaltechnology.ca/couros/presentations/archived.html>

* The online course on the use of technology in education: * ECMP 355 course: <http://education.uregina.ca/tech/nology/ecmp355>

* Alec's Blog: <http://www.educationaltechnology.ca/couros>

* Canadian Plains Research Centre: <http://www.cprc.ca/>

CAMPUS LIFE CALENDAR

June 10-12
Conference
"Making It Like A Man! Masculinities in Canadian Arts and Cultures"
An international conference/exhibition investigating masculinities in Canadian arts and cultures.
Various locations
Info: 585-4210
<http://v4.livegate.net/mltm/>

Mon., June 21 - 1 p.m.
Cougar Men's Basketball Golf Classic
Entry fee \$140 per person
Royal Regina Golf Club
Info: 585-4018

Tues., June 22 - 1 p.m.
First Nations University of Canada 2nd Annual President's Cup Golf Challenge
Entry Fee is \$150 per person or \$600 per team
Deer Valley Golf Course
Info: 790-5950 ext. 2200

Tues., June 22 - 7 p.m.
Alumni Association Annual General Meeting
Meet alumni, give input to future plans and find out how you can become involved.
Language Institute Theatre
Info: 585-5158

Thurs., June 24 - 12:30 p.m.
15th Annual U of R Alumni Golf Classic
Entry fee \$125 per person
Tor Hill
Info: 585-4503

For a complete calendar of events at the University of Regina visit our Web site at www.uregina.c



The green of the president's robes was appropriate to the occasion on June 6 when the U of R's Academic Green (the grassed oval at the centre of the campus) was named after President Emeritus Lloyd Barber (left), pictured here with current president David Barnard. The dedication ceremony took place during a special convocation held to confer an honorary degree on Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, who unveiled a plaque dedicating the space as The Dr. Lloyd Barber Green - or, as University Chancellor Art Wakabayashi quipped, "Lloyd's Lawn."

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