

The U of M in the News

TECH STRUT: CAN TECHNOLOGY SAVE US FROM OURSELVES?

May 24

BBC, Forbes

Media recently reported on a new app invented by Juan David Hincapié-Ramos in the department of computer science. His app, CrashAlert, aims to help save people from themselves. It involves using a distance-sensing camera to scan the path ahead and alert users to approaching obstacles. The camera acts like a second pair of eyes — looking forward while the user is looking down. When it senses something approaching, it flashes up a red square in a bar on top of the phone or tablet. The position of the square shows the direction of the obstacle — giving the user a chance to dodge out of the way. “What we observed in our experiments is that in 60 per cent of cases, people avoided obstacles in a safer way. That’s up from 20 per cent [without CrashAlert],” says Hincapié-Ramos. What’s more, the device doesn’t distract the user from what they’re doing. Hincapié-Ramos’s tests showed it can be used alongside gaming or texting without any cost to performance. Although CrashAlert is currently a bulky prototype, collision statistics suggest a final version could prevent a lot of accidents.

RACIST, OR JUST RACE-RELATED?

May 25

Toronto Star

Sociologist Jason Edgerton helped the *Toronto Star* report on the changing demographics of Brampton, Ont. Brampton faces a complex situation: Massive suburban-style growth coupled with a huge influx of new Canadians, mostly South Asian, settling in a community that for decades was mostly white. Brampton has boomed over the past two decades, more than doubling from 234,445 residents in 1991 to 521,315 in 2011. But delving into the just-released National Household Survey reveals a paradox. While the visible-minority segment has exploded to represent two-thirds of Brampton’s population, white residents are dwindling. Their numbers went from 192,400 in 2001 to 169,230 in 2011. That’s a loss of more than 23,000 people, or 12 per cent, in a decade when the city’s population rose by 60 per cent. That’s hardly a picture of the multicultural ideal so celebrated in this country. Edgerton sees complexity in those numbers. “After you control for retirement, low birth rate, etc. some of the other (shrinkage) could be white flight — former mainstream communities not comfortable being the minority. Let’s say, for example, 2 per cent is (due to) higher retirement migration, 2 per cent is lower birth rate, 2 per cent is job change; they might only account for one half of the overall decrease, and the other half is unexplained,” says Edgerton. He says more study would be needed to say for sure why people are leaving Brampton.

LAGGING JUSTICE

May 25

Winnipeg Free Press

In 1999 the Supreme Court mandated that judges take an Aboriginal offender’s personal and cultural history of dislocation, poverty, addiction and abuse into account in sentencing. These Gladue courts, as they are now known as, are named after Rupert Gladue, and Manitoba still lacks an Aboriginal court, one dedicated to the spirit of the Gladue ruling, with well-trained court officers, expert report-writers and links to all the culturally appropriate rehabilitation services that could halt an offender’s cycle of crime. U of M law professors Debra Parkes and David Milward, who have studied Gladue in Manitoba, say the Supreme Court’s rules are followed only in a spotty, ad hoc way here. “Gladue is not being implemented in any sort of systemic way,” said Parkes. “There just doesn’t seem to be a culture of it being implemented and there hasn’t been any real push to do it.”

HEADLINES

“Helping bolster human rights,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 27, story about Gertrude Hambira who had to flee Harare, Zimbabwe, and ended up in Winnipeg where her daughter was doing a master’s in food science at the U of M.

“U of M grads unafraid to dream big,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 29, story about three U of M grads: Megan Jack, the Faculty of Medicine’s first deaf graduate; Matt Lowry, the Neepawa agriculture grad who splits his time between farming and professional hockey; and fine arts graduate from Red Lake, Allan Gould, whose passion for animation led him to pursue art.

—compiled by Sean Moore



PRESIDENT'S BOOKSHELF

RECENT BOOKS

These occasional notes about my reading are evidence, as I look back on them, of the eclectic nature of my interests — I read books on a wide range of topics that are written by authors I’ve come to enjoy in the past, that are given to me as gifts by members of my family or close friends, that are recommended by others I know to have interesting tastes, that appear in reviews I stumble upon and occasionally (though less frequently than in the past) that I find while browsing in bookshops. Here are some things I’ve read in the past few months.

The music and poetry of Leonard Cohen have been increasingly appealing to me in recent years. So when I saw a review of Alan Light’s *The Holy or the Broken* that focusses on Cohen’s song “Hallelujah,” I was intrigued by the idea of it and then pleased to receive it as a gift at Christmas. Light pays attention to the lyrics and what they suggest to him about Cohen’s thinking, but also to the several iconic recordings of the song and their impact. After reading the book it was a particular pleasure to hear Cohen sing it at his Winnipeg concert on April 26.

About 15 years ago I stumbled on *The Best American Poetry*, a series of annual selections guided by David Lehman, with a different editor each year. I began to watch for the new volumes as they appeared. Being somewhat compulsive, I wanted to complete my collection so after a few years looked for copies of the earlier volumes from sources advertising online, and managed to get a complete series in near mint condition. *The Best American Poetry 2012* was edited by Mark Doty. More recently, Molly Peacock became the series editor for a Canadian counterpart, and *The Best Canadian Poetry in English 2012* was edited by Carmine Starnino. These annuals always contain some poems not to my personal taste but also some that are worth continuing the collecting.

I began reading the work of the American writer Donald Hall decades ago, beginning with his poetry. I learned about his marriage to the poet Jane Kenyon and came to deeply appreciate her work. Recently I read Hall’s memoir of their life together, structured around the progress of the leukemia that eventually took her. *The Best Day the Worst Day: Life With Jane Kenyon* is a very open and moving account of their relationship and Kenyon’s death.

Edmund Morris has written three volumes about Theodore Roosevelt, dealing with the period prior to, during and after his presidency of the United States, respectively. The second of these, *Theodore Rex*, chronicles Roosevelt’s work as President, but also shows his energy and erudition. He loved the outdoors — traveling, hunting, hiking, boating, etc. — and wanted to preserve the natural heritage of the country. He also read an amazing amount on many topics and in several languages. That he could do so while carrying such heavy responsibilities can be an encouragement to all of us.

Lululemon’s Chip Wilson receives IDEA award

SEAN MOORE

The Bulletin

Lululemon’s Chip Wilson, founder and chairman of Lululemon Athletica Inc., has received the 2013 International Distinguished Entrepreneur Award (IDEA), an annual award presented by the U of M and the Associates, a group of more than 260 prominent business leaders who support the Asper School of Business. Wilson spoke to Asper School of Business students on Tuesday, June 4.

He joins past IDEA recipients including, Albert D. Cohen, O.C., Israel H. Asper, O.C., Q.C., Richard Branson, Heather Reisman, Gerald Schwartz, Jim Balsillie, Jim Singal and last year’s recipient, Stu Clark.

Forbes has ranked Wilson as Canada’s ninth wealthiest person, with a net worth of 2.9-billion. Lululemon boasts a cult



IDEA winner Chip Wilson.

following and revenue of \$700 million from 137 stores. The majority of the stores are in North America, but Lululemon has store presence in Australia and New Zealand. There are also showrooms in Hong Kong and Great Britain.

Wilson received the IDEA award at a formal dinner at the Winnipeg Convention Centre on June 4, 2013.

The Bulletin

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SUBMISSIONS

The Bulletin welcomes submissions from members of the university community letters to the editor, columns, news briefs and story and photo suggestions.

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Send events notices to bulletin@umanitoba.ca

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