NAIT

PEOPLE TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

v8.2 2015

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HOW ANDREA PEYTON'S WEE NOT-FOR-PROFIT HAS A

BIG IMPACT

BAKE BY FIRE

WITH CLAYTON FOLKERS

CHOCOLATE CHAMP

REBECCA GRANT REINVENTS THE CHOCOLATE BAR

PRESIDENT GLENN FELTHAM

ON WHAT MAKES A **POLYTECHNIC**

P. 11

WHAT TO KNOW IF YOU GET LOST

IN THE WILD

SHANE TURGEON'S PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

VINTAGE TOY ENTREPRENEUR FINDS SOLACE AND SUCCESS

SHERRIL COSSEY,
(Business Administration, Management '99)
Current NAIT staff member

SOWING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

ST. JOSEPH ISLAND was a special place in Patrick Smith's early life.

Home to an abundance of maple trees, the Lake Huron island is one of Ontario's centres of maple syrup production. Every spring, farmers large and small tap the trees to produce maple syrup. Patrick owned 50 acres of sugar maple trees.

Shortly before he succumbed to cancer in 2011, Patrick, a former NAIT instructor agreed with his wife, Sherril Cossey, to sell the land and the maples. Sherril decided proceeds from the sale would be used to create the Patrick A.R. Smith Memorial Endowed Fund, benefiting Carpenter apprentices at NAIT.

Read more at nait.ca/giving

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By Blaise van Malsen

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THE **LATEST** FROM techlifemag.ca

Between print issues of *techlife*, we post new stories at **techlifemag.ca**. To stay in the know – and receive useful content including how-to stories and recipes – sign up for our e-newsletter at **techlifemag.ca/subscribe.htm**. Here's a sample.

ICE IN THE DEEP SOUTH

Andy Willigar (Personal Fitness Trainer '12) pursues a pro-hockey dream in the American Cotton Belt.
techlifemag.ca/andy-willigar-cottonmouths.htm

JUST LIKE DUCHESS DOES IT

Jacob Pelletier (Culinary Arts '07) and the team at Duchess Bake Shop reveal their secrets in a tell-all cookbook.
techlifemag.ca/duchess-cookbook.htm

TOUGH TALKS

It's not what you say, it's how.
techlifemag.ca/difficult-conversations.htm

ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

A NAIT expert lays out the ideal dining experience. How did your last experience measure up?
techlifemag.ca/restaurant-service.htm

DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY

A positive attitude takes practice. Learn to resist the natural – and biological – tendency toward negativity.
techlifemag.ca/positive-attitude.htm

GOLD-MEDAL ALBERTA CUISINE

Why Ryan O'Flynn's (Cook '01) big win at the Canadian Culinary Championship was flavoured with a hint of destiny.
techlifemag.ca/ryan-oflynn.htm

CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

Take a tour of the Centre for Applied Technologies, scheduled to open in fall 2016.
techlifemag.ca/construction-update-Feb-2015.htm

GET UP, GET MOVING

For its health risks, prolonged sitting is being called the new smoking. Here's how to kick the habit.
techlifemag.ca/sitting-risks.htm

BETTER WITH AGE

Watch a NAIT Professional Meat Cutting and Merchandising instructor prepare prime-rib steaks after a 40-day age.
techlifemag.ca/dry-aged-beef.htm

PHOTOS BY NAIT STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS, ISTOCKPHOTO.COM, ASPEN ZETTEL, SUPPLIED

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PEOPLE TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

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Caitlin Crawshaw is an award-winning Edmonton writer who loves meeting interesting people and sharing their stories. Her work has appeared in dozens of North American publications, including *Maclean's* and the *Globe and Mail*. Crawshaw is also the mama of a busy toddler and a part-time Master of Fine Arts (creative writing) student. She sat down with alumna Andrea Peyton to find out more about her Weehelp Foundation. Crawshaw hopes to check out the charity's next pop-up shop in the fall.

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Natalie Lang learned more about composting than she expected while interviewing a lab technician for her first contribution to *techlife*. "I'm so pleased that I live in a city that goes to such great lengths to protect the environment through the reduction and repurposing of waste," says Lang. This is just one of the many reasons she's proud to call Edmonton home, where she lives with her six-year-old son. A member of NAIT's Marketing and Communications team, Lang loves food, travel, singing in the car and her family (though not necessarily in that order).

As stewardship administrator for Advancement, **Lynn Ryan** supports NAIT donors with their advertising needs for *techlife* magazine and other institute publications. An employee of the polytechnic for seven years and a busy mom to two teenagers, Ryan enjoys volunteering with her daughter's soccer team and is committed to a positive lifestyle that includes yoga, training for distance runs and healthy eating.

Passionate about education, **Chantelle Svensen-Lewis** studied Business Administration – Marketing (class of '01) at NAIT before getting a degree and an MBA. She is currently manager of alumni relations, which gives her the opportunity to work with alums who share her enthusiasm for the polytechnic. "Everywhere you turn you find graduates of NAIT and they are making such significant contributions to industry and the community," she says. Svensen-Lewis shares these findings with the *techlife* team, which then transforms them into stories. She is also a sessional instructor in the JR Shaw School of Business and enjoys running and travelling.

"WE EXPLORE THE **KNACK SHOWN BY NAIT ALUMNI** FOR IDENTIFYING **UNEXPECTED OR UNUSUAL** BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES."

PHOTO BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN

BUILDING A BUSINESS ON A LOVE OF TOYS may sound like child's play, but for vintage toy collectibles entrepreneur **Shane Turgeon**, the experience hasn't been all fun and games. It took Canada's first toy collectibles appraiser 25 years of hard work and a re-examination of his priorities before Turgeon (Radio and Television '02, p. 42) was able to find his version of success and, with it, happiness (The Completist, p. 42).

Turgeon's story is one example of the knack shown by NAIT alumni for identifying unexpected or unusual business opportunities. In this issue we explore this entrepreneurial mindset and how it often results in interesting contributions to the economy in Alberta and beyond.

One of the country's most acclaimed chocolatiers, **Rebecca Grant** (Culinary Arts '08, Management '13, Marketing '14) started the Violet Chocolate Company while still in school. Her ability to combine savoury ingredients with chocolate has earned international awards for her one-woman, boutique chocolate-making business. When not experimenting with surprising ingredients like olives, salt and vinegar chips, caramelized onions or sweet potatoes, Grant considers how to balance growth with her desire to maintain her artisanal approach (Rebecca and her Chocolate Factory, p. 52).

Logan Jacobs' career as a bass player for a major-label rock band didn't produce the No. 1 hit he'd hoped but, in a roundabout way, it pointed him toward a potential hit in the tech industry. His idea for a simple home audio system caught the attention of a group of startup investors at a NAIT entrepreneurship bootcamp, resulting in a different kind of success, first as the founder of his own company, then as chief technology officer for a global technology company (Corporate Rock, p. 35).

If you plan to buy or sell a home, you may want to check out **Jesse Tutt**'s company, 3D Scan Experts. Tutt (Bachelor of Technology in Technology Management '15) uses cameras and infrared sensors to scan the interior of homes and other buildings and create a three-dimensional digital model. Besides providing an innovative way to look at houses, the scans offer sellers and agents an opportunity to differentiate their properties. He developed the business plan while still a student and now operates across the province.

Because life can't be all business, make sure you read **Clayton Folkers**' (Cooking '79) tips for campfire baking (More than S'Mores, p. 22) and Forest Technology instructor Chris Klitbo's advice on how to make it home if you ever get lost in the wilderness (Survive the Wilderness, p. 24). If golf is your game, don't miss **Bryan Mudryk** (Radio and Television '98), **Meg Storms** (Radio and Television '04) and Jules Owchar's thoughts on their favorite sport (Lure of the Links, p. 21).

Have a great summer, whatever you do!

Sherri Krastel
Editor
editor@techlifemag.ca

TECHLIFE AWARDED

Alberta Magazines Showcase – finalist

Photograph, Landscape, Still life, Architecture (Well-appointed Workspace, p. 60, V7.2)

YOUR THOUGHTS ON OUR STORIES

THIS EVENING I RELAXED WITH V8.1. It was with pleasure that I touched upon my life at NAIT via your communiqué. Wow, what a great read! Congratulations to your very creative, intelligent students, therefore also their mentors and teachers. In my humble opinion it is one of the best volumes.

Sincerely,

Kim Hammond
(Biological Sciences '73)

I READ THE LATEST ISSUE (8.1) of *techlife* from cover to cover. I was impressed: informative, interesting and balanced. Kudos to you and your staff at NAIT for putting together such a fine publication.

Jerry Weigl
Retiree, Court Reporting

HELLO, did the "lawn prep for winter" article on the web get missed in the [8.1 print edition] techlife issue?

Thanks,

Linda Tutt
(Microcomputer Application '91)

P.S. Great job on *techlife*. It is always interesting, well laid out and a good read. Congrats.

Thanks Linda. The content you find online at techlifemag.ca is original and not duplicated in the print issue, including the article you mention (techlifemag.ca/winter-lawn-prep.htm). If you haven't already, you can subscribe to the e-newsletter (techlifemag.ca/subscribe.htm) so you don't miss any of the stories, videos and how-to content posted there regularly.

– Editor

Would you like to share your thoughts about stories in *techlife* magazine or on techlifemag.ca?

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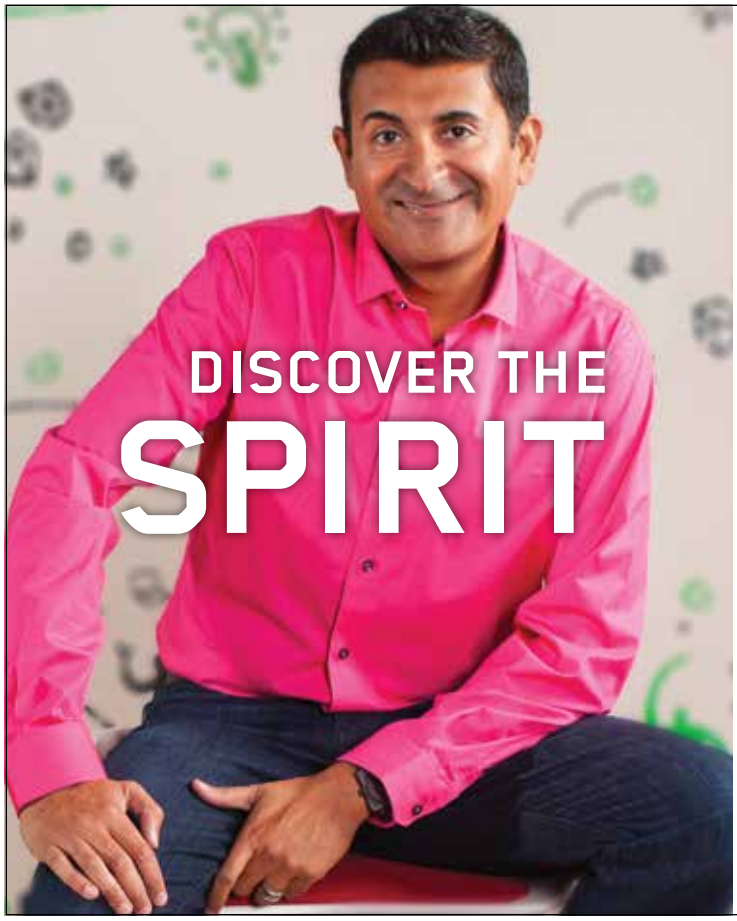
(Letters we print may be edited for length or clarity.)



LEARN. DO. SUCCEED.

When Ashif Mawji (Computer Systems Technology '92) thinks about Edmonton's technology industry, he doesn't hesitate to think big. "We can help launch the next Apple or Facebook. I have no doubt in that," he says.

Mawji would know. He's been an entrepreneur since his childhood in Kenya. He started his first Canadian company a month before he graduated from NAIT. Since then, he has sold two successful businesses and started two more.

Learn more about Edmonton's entrepreneur network.nait.ca/ashif

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WEB EXTRA
Visit **techlifemag.ca/polytechnic.htm** to watch NAIT president and CEO Glenn Feltham's video on what defines polytechnic education.

POL•Y•TECH•NIC DEFINED

PHOTO BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN

I GET ASKED a lot of questions from people in the community. For instance, how's construction coming on the Centre for Applied Technologies? (On schedule to open in fall 2016.) Or, what might the adjacent lands of the old municipal airport mean to NAIT? (Transformation. I'll leave it at that for now.) Or, when are you going to start tweeting about all the cool stuff happening on campus? (I am – follow me @GlennFeltham.)

But the number 1 question I'm asked points to the core of all that we are and do. Glenn, people say, NAIT calls itself a polytechnic – what exactly is that? I've put a lot of thought into my answer as this institute's president and CEO and also as a member of the board of Polytechnics Canada, a national advocacy group for providers of this kind of post-secondary education. I feel that there's never been a better time to share that answer and to illustrate what makes NAIT unique.

A polytechnic is different from a college or university in several fundamental ways. From the student perspective, learning happens through hands-on experience and involves the same technology they'll encounter in the workforce. Also, there's a direct industry connection. Industry is a partner in everything we do, advising us on how to best meet workforce demands. Finally, our research is driven by industry too, with companies coming to us for solutions that will not only make them more competitive but provide incredible learning opportunities for our students.

These defining features can be seen in the classrooms and labs of any of our four programmatic pillars: business; health; trades; and science, technology and the environment. These are the features that have made us distinct for more than half a century, as well as relevant and responsive throughout times of prosperity for this province, and times of challenge.

Being a polytechnic is how we meet current and emerging needs. It's the foundation from which we look to our 192,000 alumni with pride, to our current students with the confidence that we are training them for rewarding careers, and to upcoming generations with great excitement. Should they have questions about how to achieve their goals, we have pretty clear answers.

Glenn Feltham, PhD
President and CEO
glennf@nait.ca

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PHOTO BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN

TECHNOFILE

COOLEST LOGO EVER →

The logo before and after cooling.

JUSTIN EVERNDEN DEVOTED hundreds of hours of his spare time creating a refrigerated logo.

Containing about 50 per cent recycled components, the project is powered by the same parts found in a home refrigerator and uses a similar amount of electricity. It develops a frosty layer of ice within an hour of being plugged in, says Evernden, an instructor with the Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning Specialist certificate.

He built the 1.5-metre NAIT logo to demonstrate to "students what is possible with the skills they learn. It also serves as a training tool as all the standard components that make up a refrigeration system are there, just in a different package." It will be displayed at Skills Canada and various NAIT events.

— Shelly Decker

CENTRE FOR APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES TAKES SHAPE

CONSTRUCTION ON THE Centre for Applied Technologies, the largest capital project in NAIT's history, is past the halfway mark, with work beginning on interior finishes. Scheduled to open in the fall of 2016, it will accommodate 5,000 full-time students and 500 staff. "The progress of the construction has been amazing to witness," says **Lou Zoldan** (Construction Engineering Technology '82), project director. "Just 20 months ago we were digging a hole." Here's an update on construction, by the numbers.

— Frank Landry

CONCRETE FROM
2,000
TRUCKS

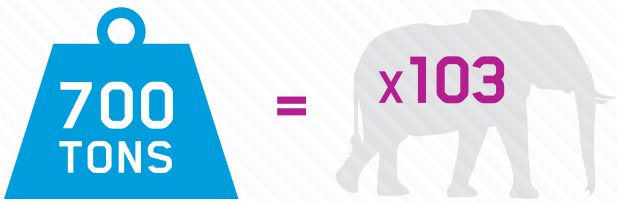
OVER
350
WORKERS
ON SITE DAILY

All the required concrete has been poured: 21,000 cubic metres, equal to the contents of more than 2,000 concrete trucks.

When complete, the building will include 3,325 square metres of glass panels. Placed end to end, they would equal the length of 16 Canadian football fields, or 2.2 kilometres.

= 100 square metres of glass panels

PHOTOS BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN, JEANETTE SESAY, SUPPLIED



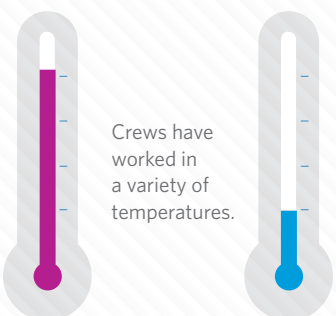
700 tons of structural steel have been installed, which is equal to the weight of about 103 male African elephants.

22,000

CUBIC METRES OF DIRT EXCAVATED

Enough to fill eight Olympic-sized swimming pools

To date, approximately 95 per cent of construction waste has been diverted from landfill sites to be recycled. The target is 75 per cent.



Crews have worked in a variety of temperatures.

+31.7 C
(July 30, 2014)

-30.6 C
(Dec. 6, 2013)

WEB EXTRA
Tour the building in progress at **techlifemag.ca/construction-update-Feb-2015.htm**.

ESSENTIAL CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

THE LARGEST FUNDRAISING initiative in NAIT's history is more than half the way to meeting its goal of raising $100 million by 2018. Essential: The NAIT Campaign will support student success, applied research and the construction of the Centre for Applied Technologies.

"We're pleased with our progress so far," says Mike Meldrum, associate vice-president, Advancement. "Even though we're seeing a tightening of the economy, we continue to raise significant funds from our supporters in the corporate sector and from individual donors who see the longer-term value of supporting NAIT's diverse educational programs."

Of the $100 million, $15 million will be earmarked for the Centre, currently under construction at Main Campus. The remaining $85 million will support student learning initiatives, improve program and equipment funding, and fund applied research.

Officially launched in November, the ambitious initiative is led by Board of Governors chair Brent Hesje and supports NAIT's vision to be the most relevant and responsive post-secondary institution in Canada and one of the world's leading polytechnics.

When complete in 2016, the 52,000-square-metre (560,000-square-foot) Centre will enable NAIT to increase enrolment in health, business, engineering technologies, and sustainable building and environmental management programs.

— *Michael Robb*

President and CEO Glenn Feltham and Board of Governors chair and campaign cabinet chair Brent Hesje help launch Essential: The NAIT Campaign at a November event.

SOARING ABOVE THE FORT

THIS SUMMER, TAKE a spin on Fort Edmonton Park's newest midway attraction, built with help from NAIT staff and students.

Emulating the experience of flying in an open cockpit, the Chair-O-Planes ride took three years and countless volunteer hours to complete before opening in August 2014. It's part of the city's efforts to increase visitors to the park.

"The work that was done would not have been possible without the help of volunteers, especially NAIT," says Suzzette Mellado, Fort Edmonton Park communications co-ordinator.

Six NAIT staff members, two students and one graduate were involved in the project, including instructors and students from Electrical Engineering Technology, the Learning and Teaching Commons, and Digital Media and Information Technology. Volunteers helped power the ride, size equipment, design controls and write and edit a Chair-O-Planes historical colouring book sold at the park's gift shop.

Electrician instructor **Tim Rosen** (Electrician '04) says part of the work involved running power to the ride. "It was close to 300 feet of pipe and it wasn't a straight line from the mechanical room to get the power out there," Rosen says.

Originally from the 1920s, the machine was not operational when it was donated four years ago. Volunteers had to rebuild the ride, putting in brand new parts and electrical work.

"The inside of the ride is very modern but the look of it is very 1920s, very post-war," Mellado says. "You'll feel like you're flying. It's a nostalgic ride and you also get a great view of the park."

— *Linda Hoang*

NAIT PRIDE

MORE THAN 200 staff, students and friends took part in the polytechnic's first Pride Week in March. Check out the footage at **techlifemag.ca/pride-week-2015.htm**.

PHOTOS BY NAIT STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS, SUPPLIED

A FIRST IN CANADA

NAIT HAS BECOME the first polytechnic in Canada to participate in the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute University Recognition Program, preparing grads to challenge for a CFA credential.

NAIT's Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) - Finance program incorporates at least 70 per cent of the CFA Program Candidate Body of Knowledge and adheres to the CFA Institute Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

Students who obtain a BBA - Finance must successfully complete three exams administered by the CFA Institute to receive the investment designation, which is recognized worldwide.

The opportunity to acquire the credential elevates the status of the program which "is massive in terms of recruiting students," says Anna Beukes, chair of Business Administration - Finance. It confirms the curriculum is closely tied to professional practice.

It also opens the door to new student scholarships. In February, the CFA Institute reduced exam registration fees for four NAIT students. That reduction was approximately $600 for each of the students.

— *Frank Landry*

A NEW FACE FOR NEW VENTURE

DR. GEOFF GREGSON joined NAIT in October as the JR Shaw Applied Research Chair in New Venture and Entrepreneurship, bringing a wealth of experience and an international perspective. Originally from Alberta, Gregson spent the last 17 years in the United Kingdom where, most recently, he was director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Research at the University of Edinburgh.

Tad Drinkwater, interim dean of the JR Shaw School of Business, is excited about the addition to his team. "His passion for applied research will accelerate our efforts to foster creativity, innovation and new ventures to address real-world challenges."

In addition to researching topics, including early-stage investment for new ventures, Gregson runs student seminars on new venture creation and is building new relationships with industry and local organizations such as the University of Alberta, MacEwan University and the City of Edmonton. He has also been exploring the development and commercialization of rehabilitation technologies that have emerged from the partnership between NAIT and the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital.

He's seeing early signs of success. "One thing I have noticed since arriving is the solid reputation that NAIT carries in conversations with others," says Gregson, who acts as the polytechnic's representative on the Colleges and Institutes Canada entrepreneurship committee. "NAIT's distinctiveness is a great strength."

— *Marta Gold*

CELEBRITY SWEETS

WHEN WORD GOT out that **Kathy Leskow** (Management '96) was taking her signature cookies to L.A. for the latest Oscars, people began lining up outside the door of her Sherwood Park store, Confetti Sweets.

A local TV station had reported that Leskow's gourmet cookies were going to be included in swag bags at an Academy Awards party for Hollywood insiders on Rodeo Drive, organized by Los Angeles-based Wow! Creations.

Leskow's journey to the Oscars began seven years ago when she launched a hobby business selling her home-baked cookies at the Sherwood Park farmers market. "If I made 50 bucks at the market, I'd be thrilled," she says.

As her business grew, doubling its sales every year, she installed a commercial oven in her home kitchen, followed by a commercial mixer. Next she built a bakery in her basement and, in May 2014, opened a stand-alone bakery and retail store. She now has 10 part-time staff.

Last fall, she supplied cookies for the Canadian Country Music Awards in Edmonton, also organized by Wow!, which then invited her to its Oscar party in February. Leskow made 125 dozen (1,500) of her two most popular flavours – chocolate chip and coconut – and flew at her own expense with two helpers to L.A.

While she didn't meet any A-list actors at the party, she did meet *American Sniper* screenplay writer Jason Hall and *Whiplash* producer David Lancaster. And they loved her cookies. "People kept saying, 'This is the best cookie we've ever had,' which is pretty impressive since the cookies were already four days old," Leskow says. (She baked them Wednesday before flying to L.A. Thursday for the Saturday party.)

Leskow believes the trip was well worth the cost. She gained market exposure few Canadian bakers can dream of, and the buzz continued at home. The day after returning from L.A, business was brisk, Leskow said. "They want the Oscar cookies."

— Marta Gold

SOLVING THE POWER PROBLEM

WHEN JARED ZAMZOW was asked to create a business plan, his instructor told him: "Think of problems that are important to you."

Zamzow (Finance '09) recalled volunteering for a local music festival, where he experienced firsthand the limited availability of power for charging festival-goers' phones. "I let everyone charge their phone off my truck," he says. "Then I came off my shift and had to get a boost on my truck so I could charge my own phone. Life shouldn't be like that."

The idea for Rhynopack – a portable power pack able to charge multiple devices – was born. It took Zamzow and three classmates two months in the fall of 2012 to complete the Rhynopack business plan. By summer 2013, he had found manufacturers for all three parts of his product: power bank, case and cords. With a loan from his dad, he was able to turn that plan into reality.

At the time, there were mobile chargers on the market but Zamzow says Rhynopack's rugged case and multi-purpose cords make it unique. The $55 power pack is fully powered after being plugged in for eight hours, and allows users to charge multiple smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices at the same time.

Rhynopack has sold nearly 2,000 units since summer 2013, primarily at festivals and other events – a targeted approach by the team, which includes Zamzow (who works full time with the company), and five others.

In November 2014, Rhynopack began testing the retail market in book stores at NAIT and MacEwan University. The chargers will soon be available online at rhynopack.com.

Zamzow recently returned from a trip to China, where he finalized designs for a second generation of Rhynopacks, which will be smaller and lighter. The company plans to release the updated Rhynopacks this summer.

— Linda Hoang

PHOTOS BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN, SUPPLIED

LOCAL OSCAR NOD

A DOCUMENTARY BY Digital Media and IT instructor Michael Jorgensen has been recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. *Unclaimed* made the Oscar long list last November as one of 134 films vying for best feature documentary.

"It solidifies your street cred as a professional storyteller," says Jorgensen, who's won more than 80 regional, national and international film awards over the past 30 years, including an Emmy award for *Battle of the X-Planes*, about the competition to build the F-35 fighter jet. "Quite honestly, I had no illusions of making the shortlist," he says. "There's a certain alignment of planets that needs to happen to get there."

The film tells the story of Tom Faunce, who after enduring a traumatic childhood and two tours of duty in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, makes an oath to spend the rest of his life helping others. While doing humanitarian work four decades later in Southeast Asia, he discovers a man who claims to be John Hartley Robertson, an American Special Forces soldier listed as killed in action. Throughout the film, Faunce struggles to find the man's family and reunite them. While the U.S. government has said the man in the film is an imposter, members of Robertson's family are convinced he is not.

While it wasn't shortlisted, Jorgensen says the Oscar nod will inevitably lead to more opportunities, such as securing funding for future projects.

— *Frank Landry*

MEET ME AT THE FLAGS

FOR NEARLY 50 YEARS, 12 flagpoles lined the parking lot on the west side of 106 Street, marking the entrance to NAIT's Main Campus and serving as a rendezvous point for students, staff and visitors. "Flagpoles have significant meaning. They define an important space," says Robin Ngo, senior project co-ordinator with NAIT Capital Projects.

Recently, however, the poles needed to be replaced due to rust. In the summer of 2014, three new, 12-metre poles featuring larger flags became the new meeting spot at Main Campus. The new flags have been placed closer to the school, near NAIT's 50th anniversary time capsule, which will be dug up and opened in 2063.

— *L.H.*

BERGER'S ON BOARD

IN A SENSE, Valerie Berger (Accounting '90) has come full circle. In December, she was appointed to the NAIT Board of Governors, nearly 25 years after she graduated from the polytechnic.

"It's incredible being back here. This is where I got my start. NAIT was the stepping stone to the career I have now."

Berger is ATCO Gas's vice-president regulatory and controller. She has more than two decades of financial experience, including eight years with ATCO.

With the Centre for Applied Technologies set to open in 2016, and plans for further campus expansion, Berger says it's an exciting time to be back at NAIT where, as a board member, she will help govern and guide the polytechnic.

"It's an opportunity to be part of that growth," she says.

— *F.L.*

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LURE OF THE LINKS

MAYBE ALL SPORTS feature elements of the absurd – fights in hockey, soccer's faked injuries, stats in baseball. But with golf, are its fundamentals the oddities? Consider: players spend several hours whacking a very small ball toward a very small hole over distances measured in hundreds of yards. Here, two alumni and a staffer share why, despite all of this – or because of it – golf is their game.

— Scott Messenger

MEG STORMS
(Radio and Television '04)
Owner, executive producer and host of *Pro-Am Golf Show*, featuring tips and celebrity athlete guests. Catch it Saturday mornings on CTV.

What brought you to golf?

There are three kids in my family and my parents had all of us golfing on Friday nights. We would play nine holes as a family outing. It was a huge part of our lives in the summer.

What is it about golf that makes for good television?

People are at their most relaxed on a golf course – they get fired up at times, of course, depending on what kind of shot they have. Probably the most fun for us [on the show] is that we get to learn more about the athletes. We get to relax with them and see their personality outside of a dressing room.

Anything you'd change about the game?

People think it's an old man's game. When I step up to do my first tee shot no one knows if I'm going to be able to hit it. Then you hit it well and everyone goes, "Oh, I guess she can play!" There aren't a lot of young girls involved. That's one thing I would change.

JULES OWCHAR
Coach of the NAIT golf team since the late 1970s. His teams have won eight provincial championships.

What are the challenges of coaching golf?

At NAIT, it's a short season. We have our playoffs at the end of September, so the students [start school] and that weekend we have tryouts. The next three weekends we play and it's over. You just take the best players and away we go.

What do you like about the game?

You go out and you're hitting the ball beautifully on the drive but you're having trouble chipping. Next day, you can't hit the fairway but you're chipping good. And every now and then everything comes together and you're having one of your best days ever and you hope you can keep it up but golf has a way of bringing you to your knees. No one can say that they can master it. That's the beauty of it.

Has golf taught you anything about life?

Sometimes things go bad and you just have to suck it up and forget about it, and the next day try harder. You learn to get tougher.

BRYAN MUDRYK
(Radio and Television '98)
TSN host and play-by-play announcer. A cancer survivor, Mudryk founded the Bryan Mudryk Golf Classic, an annual tournament that has raised more than $1.2 million for equipment for Edmonton's Cross Cancer Institute.

Why choose golf as a fundraiser?

I love the sport. I probably play about 100 rounds a year. It's kind of my passion. What better way to raise money for a cause I care about than have a golf tournament?

Do you ever find the game frustrating?

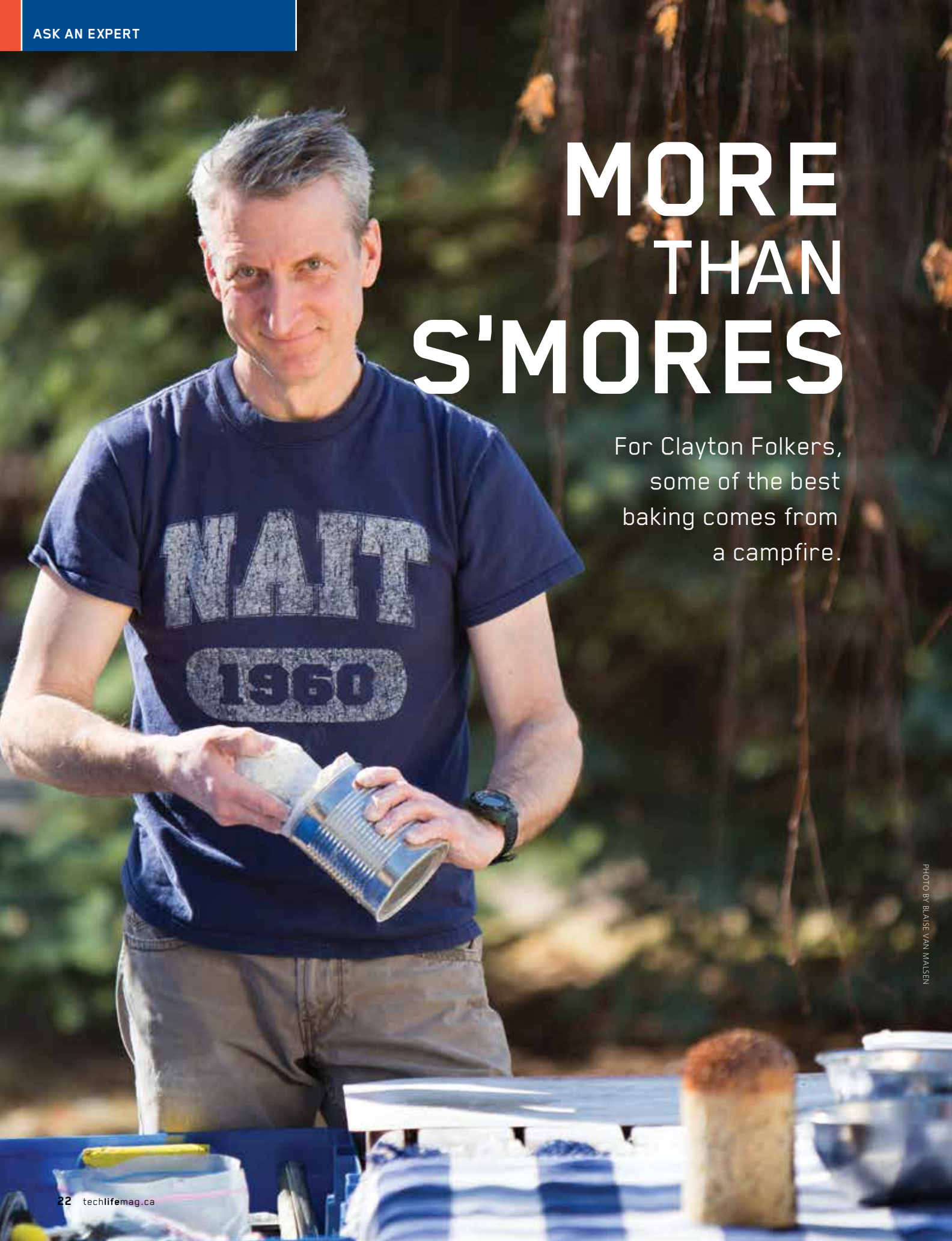
Every single day. There's the days that you've got it – they don't come along very often so I've learned that if I'm having one of those days when you're playing great, man, I make sure that I enjoy it. Because then there are those days that no matter how you try to turn it around, you just can't. I've toned down on my f-bombs and throwing of my clubs but there's no halo over this kid's head.

What's one of your best memories of the game?

My buddies and I did a golf trip to the Monterey Peninsula [in California] a couple of Aprils ago. We golfed Spyglass [Hill], Spanish Bay and Pebble Beach. Walking with some of my best friends on a picture perfect day on the West Coast, that was phenomenal. I'll never forget that.

Visit **techlifemag.ca/golf.htm** for more of our experts' thoughts on golf.

PHOTOS BY NAIT STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS, SUPPLIED, ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



MORE THAN S'MORES

For Clayton Folkers, some of the best baking comes from a campfire.

PHOTO BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN

HE HAS ACCESS TO HIGH TECH KITCHENS. He's spent hundreds of hours creating artistic masterpieces such as a feathered headdress sculpted from chocolate. And yet, Canada's only internationally certified pastry judge goes rustic whenever he can.

"I love cooking over the open fire," says Clayton Folkers (Cooking '79). "That's the original, authentic cooking."

It can be challenging but, with practice, the average camper can produce delicious baking, says the Baking instructor who earned his pastry judging accreditation from the World Association of Chefs Societies. "On a fire, the temperature goes up and down and you've got to watch it and move your food. But I guess that's what I like about it. It's a constant dance," says Folkers.

A camping and canoeing enthusiast since childhood, he also likes the social side of campfire baking. "It's the sense of community as the sun goes down and people come together," he says. "It's awesome."

Before setting out on your own adventures, Folkers recommends practicing outdoor cooking on a backyard barbecue. It offers better heat control than an open fire but still tests your skills in an unconventional environment.

— *Shelly Decker*

WEB EXTRA

Visit **techlifemag.ca/red-river-bread.htm** for one of Baking instructor Clayton Folkers' campfire recipes.

PACKING

Folkers' culinary creativity starts before he leaves home. Nothing gets packed for a paddling trip – be it a cooking tool or food – unless it "has at least two uses. If it doesn't, it doesn't get in the boat," he says.

The type of trip determines what tools he can bring, such as a collapsible oven or Dutch oven. If he's driving, he'll pull out his "portable kitchen" – a box packed with different cooking items. His basic must-have list is short: tongs, oven mitts and aluminum foil, which can be used for many things, including making domes to keep heat around the top of your baking.

INGREDIENTS

Before leaving home, Folkers separates measured ingredients into bags so that when he's ready to bake, he only has to mix them. On every trip he tries to make something different. Simple buns, breads and cobblers are feasible for novice campers. Pies, cookies and brownies are more complex but taste fantastic when cooked at a campsite. "How can it get any better?"

WOOD

When he arrives at his destination, Folkers inspects his cooking area and the type of wood available. He prefers hard woods because they burn longer, which allows for a steady heat.

He is always mindful of the powerful heat generated by burning wood, which he once tested, out of curiosity, with a dial thermometer. "This one went to 700 F. The thing broke! And that was just sitting up on the grill. It wasn't even right in the fire," says Folkers.

STONES

Depending on the firepit, Folkers may add stones to create more distance between the powerful heat of embers or flames and his treats to prevent burning. "You have to be somewhat creative about it."

ADVENTURE

There's nothing Folkers wouldn't try to bake on a camping trip regardless of complexity. Among his most challenging attempts was a soufflé – good enough, but it wasn't up to his usual standards. "It's something to be revisited," he says before laughing. Folkers feels that fear of failure shouldn't dissuade people from testing their baking abilities in the outdoors. "Stuff gets burnt once in a while," he says. "Big deal. This is not an international pastry competition."

SURVIVE THE WILDERNESS

A short guide to help get you back home.

NO ONE PLANS to get lost when they head into the great outdoors.

But if you've accidentally strayed from your hiking route or your boat tips over and you find yourself on an unfamiliar shore, preparation and the ability to stay calm are vital to surviving when you're lost in the wilderness, says Forest Technology instructor Chris Klitbo.

"Don't panic," he says. "It's about keeping your brain in the right spot to help think your way out of this problem."

In some cases, you could be on your own for a few days. Here, Klitbo shares his strategies to increase your chances of being found.

— Shelly Decker

BEFORE YOU GO

Let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back. If you deviate from your plan, make sure you contact someone before you proceed so rescuers will know where to look if you don't return.

PHOTOS FROM ISTOCKPHOTO.COM; ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDY OVIATT

S-T-O-P

Follow this acronym to help increase your chance of survival, advises Klitbo.

- **Stop moving:** Stay in a safe, visible position.
- **Think:** What are your next steps? Stay calm.
- **Orient yourself:** Look for landmarks. Make sure you're in a safe place, not near a ledge, for example.
- **Plan:** This may include making a shelter, building a fire, finding water and assessing your food supplies.

JACKET

"The first line of shelter is the jacket on your back or in your pack," says Klitbo. A lightweight waterproof jacket is an essential item on any outing. High-tech materials allow you to stay warm and dry with minimal weight or bulk.

SHELTER

Stay or get dry, and preserve heat. A survival blanket that fits into your pocket, heavy duty orange garbage bag or small tarp will work as a temporary shelter. If you're caught without, ward off the elements by covering yourself in dry boughs or leaves. Hypothermia, when you lose body heat faster than you can produce it, is an often overlooked threat that can lead to death. Cold ground, water or wind will conduct heat away from you.

Building a shelter can also help keep your mind busy. "A shelter gives you something to do and provides a place of comfort." And it's fine to stay on the ground as animals rarely attack people, says Klitbo.

FIRE

If you're wet or cold, this is a potential lifesaver. Always have a lighter. Fire starters, such as flint and steel are fine but make sure you're competent with these techniques before packing such items. "The first time you use it better not be the time you need it," says Klitbo.

WATER

A person can die within days from dehydration, says Klitbo. Water from creeks or other sources should be good to drink when it's come to a full boil for three minutes. Use a metal water bottle for a pot.

FOOD

Pack extra non-perishable snacks, such as granola bars. No food? Most people can go several days without it. Don't expend more calories searching for food than you might gain from it. You don't want to get hurt or more lost searching for food. Avoid berries and mushrooms unless you're positive they're safe. "Don't be afraid to eat bugs," says Klitbo. "That big ugly beetle or grub you'll find will taste awful but there's a reason grizzly bears do it."

WEB EXTRA

Visit **techlifemag.ca/flint-steel.htm** to watch Forest Technology instructor Chris Klitbo start a fire using flint and steel.

THE ESSENTIALS

NEVER BE WITHOUT survival gear when you head into the wilderness, says Forest Technology instructor Chris Klitbo. The following items are lightweight, affordable and compact.

- **A trail map**
- **Proper clothing, including a toque and coat. Plan for wet weather or an unexpected overnight stay.**
- **First aid kit**
- **A lighter. If you're in a boat, slip a lighter into a waterproof container that clips onto your life jacket. If you're on foot, put one in your pocket. Carry another in your pack.**
- **Fire starter such as fire paste, fire sticks, dryer lint or cotton balls**
- **Metal water bottle to boil water**
- **Non-perishable food, such as granola bars**
- **Compass**
- **Cellphone, if the area has coverage**
- **Knife**
- **Rope, 20-30 metres. Paracord is best. Stronger than nylon, it's extremely versatile and can be used in many different ways, such as securing items or when building a shelter. It can be found at most outdoors stores.**
- **A whistle. Three blasts is the universal call for help.**
- **Survival blanket**
- **Signaling mirror**
- **Bug spray**

AN AUTHOR IN ACTION

Gerard Mutabazi Amani writes to motivate our future leaders.

GERARD MUTABAZI AMANI felt joy and hope as he and other youth delegates from more than 50 countries waved flags at the closing ceremonies of the Tavrida International Youth Forum in Crimea.

Amani, 25, (Business Administration – Management '13) and other delegates spent 10 days last August discussing how young people can, and are, making a difference in their respective countries. The youth activist was so inspired by the delegates' stories that he chronicled what he heard in *Tavrida 2014: Young Leaders in Action*, a 100-page book he self-published in December (available on Amazon) to motivate youth to get involved in their community.

"My ultimate goal is building and encouraging community ambassadors. There are a lot of things that organizations need – find those and apply your skills," says Amani, who has attended seven different youth forums. "At the end of the day it could be raising awareness about issues that we face or encouraging others to take action by organizing a rally, writing a letter, or having a political meeting."

Over the years, Amani has met with politicians including former Edmonton mayor Stephen Mandel and Prime Minister Stephen Harper to share his personal journey and ask them to support programs that engage youth.

Amani and his family immigrated to Edmonton in 2008 following years spent in South African refugee camps after fleeing the First Congo War that broke out in their homeland, the Democratic Republic of Congo, in 1996.

"The experience I had has a lot to do with the person I have become," he says. "I want to be able to bring change into other people's lives."

Amani, who volunteers for the Red Cross, the Diaspora African Youth Association and Homeless Connect, is working towards a business degree. He doesn't expect to turn a profit from the book but hopes it – along with his story and continued actions in the community – inspires other youth.

— Linda Hoang

PHOTO BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN

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THE BUSINESS BUILDER

techlife's Scott Messenger imagines a pitch for the Hatch Startup Program and its potential to improve Alberta's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

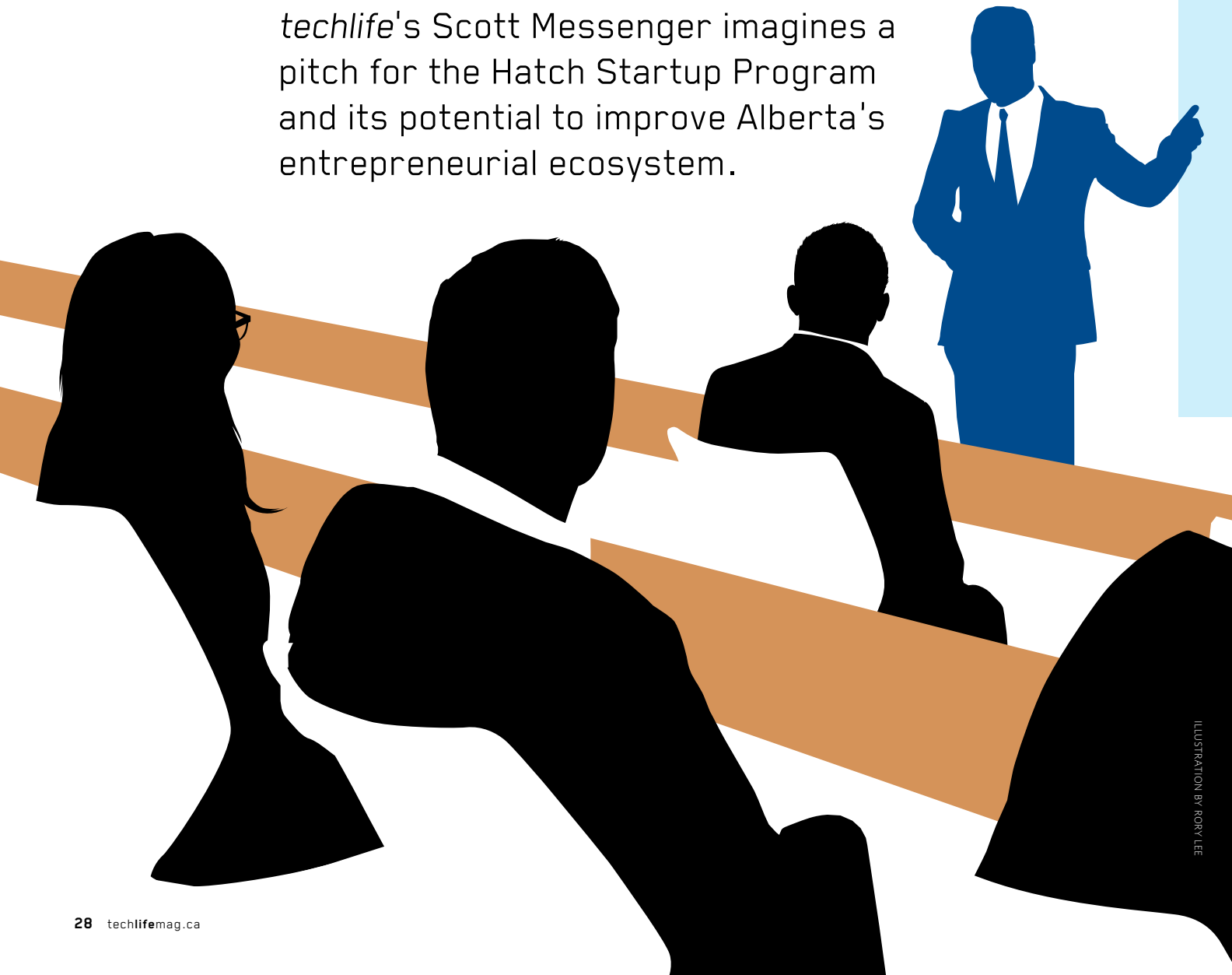


ILLUSTRATION BY RORY LEE

THANKS FOR JOINING US. I'm here to pitch a new way to transform aspiring Alberta entrepreneurs into owners of successful businesses. I hope to convince you to help us make it a reality.

We know what you're thinking: that transformation already happens. Sure. But not quite like this. The Hatch Startup program focuses on NAIT students and recent alumni. It harnesses the entrepreneurial output of the entire polytechnic. With that comes the potential to boost a provincial economy that affects everyone.

According to a 2014 Alberta government report, small businesses make up 95 per cent of all business in this province. In 2012, they accounted for 25 per cent of the GDP and 35 per cent of private sector jobs. "Small" hardly describes their impact on the province. Hatch starts those kinds of businesses.

Throughout the school year, this one-of-a-kind program nurtures business ideas from the point of inspiration, to incubation, to going concern. "We want to build an entrepreneurial community and culture on campus," says Sandra Spencer (Accounting '10, Bachelor of Business Administration '13), who created and manages Hatch in partnership with the JR Shaw School of Business and local startup organizations.

The most recent round of Hatch activities started in January with 3 Day Startup, a hands-on workshop administered by a group of Austin, Texas-based entrepreneurs that teach early stage business building. A series of other workshops are held throughout the year to help prepare participants for the Hatch Startup Challenge, where they pitch their ideas to a panel of judges – composed of high-profile entrepreneurs – for as much as $20,000 cash, incubation space, mentorships and services. In the lead-up, they're eligible for other development programs, workshops and bootcamps from Startup Edmonton, TEC Edmonton, Hong Kong Business Association, VA Angels and more. Some of these students and their business partners (who don't need to be NAIT students or alumni) may end up in the Hatchery, an on-campus incubator space.

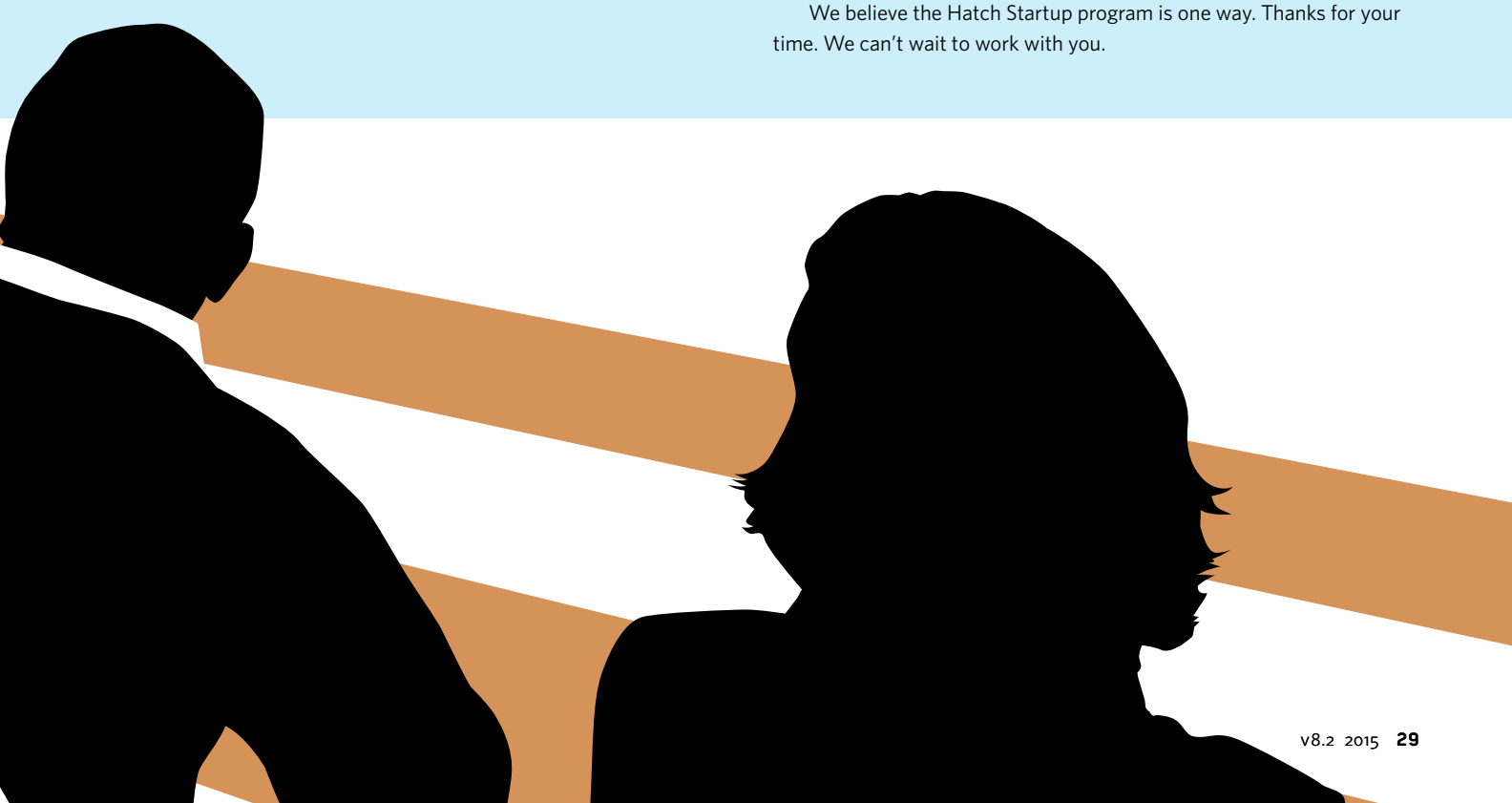
In short, the program is a connector, providing direct links to valuable business resources. As Sandra puts it: "We're not redeveloping the wheel. Why do things that are already available?"

And all of it is free, thanks to funding from Alberta Innovates Technology Futures, a major supporter of Alberta's startup community. Jennifer Hill, the head of their geekStarter program, says they know not every startup will make it but, "It's the experience that is worthwhile." Tech Futures wants to see students get to market fast and then tailor their ventures to serve customers – a method known as lean startup. That's what Hatch is all about: we want to get good businesses going.

To succeed, we need your help – your time, your expertise. Participate, be a mentor, join us. Between 2012 and '13, 10,000 small businesses launched in this province. Let's build on that and enjoy the benefits together.

"The objective is economic creation," Sandra will tell you. "How can we be part of creating that ecosystem here?"

We believe the Hatch Startup program is one way. Thanks for your time. We can't wait to work with you.



VIRTUAL REALTY

Jesse Tutt wants to change how Albertans see real estate.

JESSE TUTT OFFERS A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE on buying and selling real estate.

His company, 3D Scan Experts, creates three-dimensional digital models of the interiors of houses, condos and other buildings. "The tool allows you to remotely view any home, from any angle," says Tutt (Bachelor of Technology in Technology Management '15).

3D Scan Experts posts the digital images online, allowing potential buyers to "walk" through a property without actually stepping inside. Clients can also zoom out for an overhead "dollhouse" view.

The service saves time for buyers, who can preview a home in detail, and it's advantageous for sellers. "You're getting people who are interested in the home because they've seen the 3D model," says Tutt.

The renderings are created using cameras, infrared sensors and emitters that detect space and objects, and which were sourced from a U.S. company. Software transforms this data into 3D images. It takes two to two-and-a-half hours for a technician to scan a standard 2,400-square-foot (222-square-metre) home. The cost starts at $199 and increases depending on the size of the property.

This concept is not new to Canada – it's used in larger centres including Toronto and Vancouver. However, Tutt did the first scan in Alberta and says he remains the only provider of the service to sellers and agents in the province.

Kathy Schmidt (Accounting '80), broker/owner of Schmidt Realty Group, has more than 20 years of experience in real estate and says Tutt's service is an improvement over other virtual tours, offering a more interactive experience. While in its early stages, she says the technology appears promising. (Schmidt reviewed the technology for this article but is not a client.)

"Anything we can do to improve the consumer's experience prior to physically coming to see a property is going to be a benefit," says Schmidt.

Tutt developed his business plan as part of his BTech capstone project and launched the company in the fall of 2014 using personal savings. With the help of six contractors located throughout the province, 3D Scan Experts has done more than 40 scans, including residential, commercial and institutional properties.

Tutt believes the recent shift in Alberta's economy has created new opportunities. Sellers and real estate agents are looking for ways to differentiate their properties from others (and, for agents, to differentiate their services). One way to do this is with 3D models, he says.

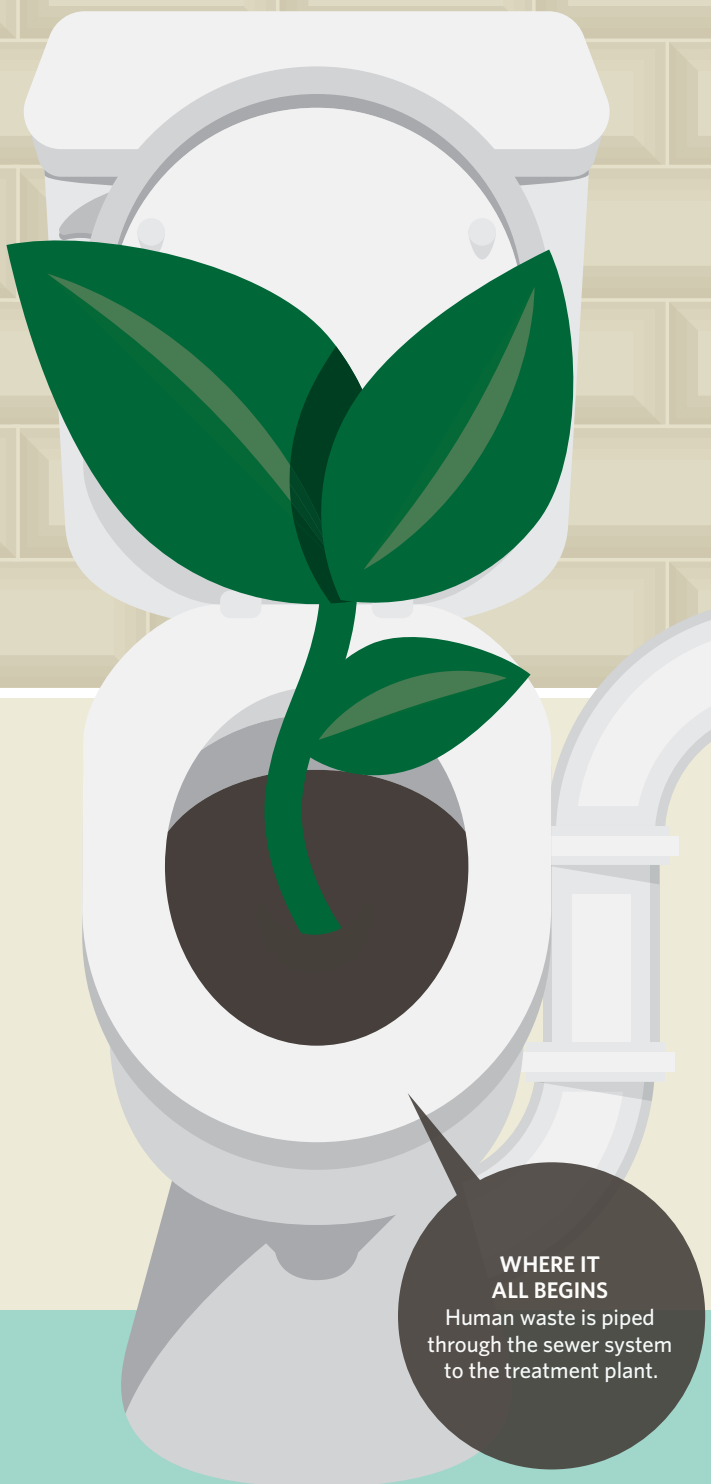
— Frank Landry

PHOTOS BY JOHN BOOK, SUPPLIED

STORY BY
MARTA GOLD
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
RORY LEE

FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS

How local alumni are helping Edmonton turn sewage into a valuable soil supplement.



WHERE IT ALL BEGINS
Human waste is piped through the sewer system to the treatment plant.

FEW COMPANIES would be willing to tackle a project that was so clearly in the toilet from the outset. But ONEC, a local engineering and construction firm, was happy to work with the City of Edmonton to help it produce a marketable soil supplement from sewage sludge.

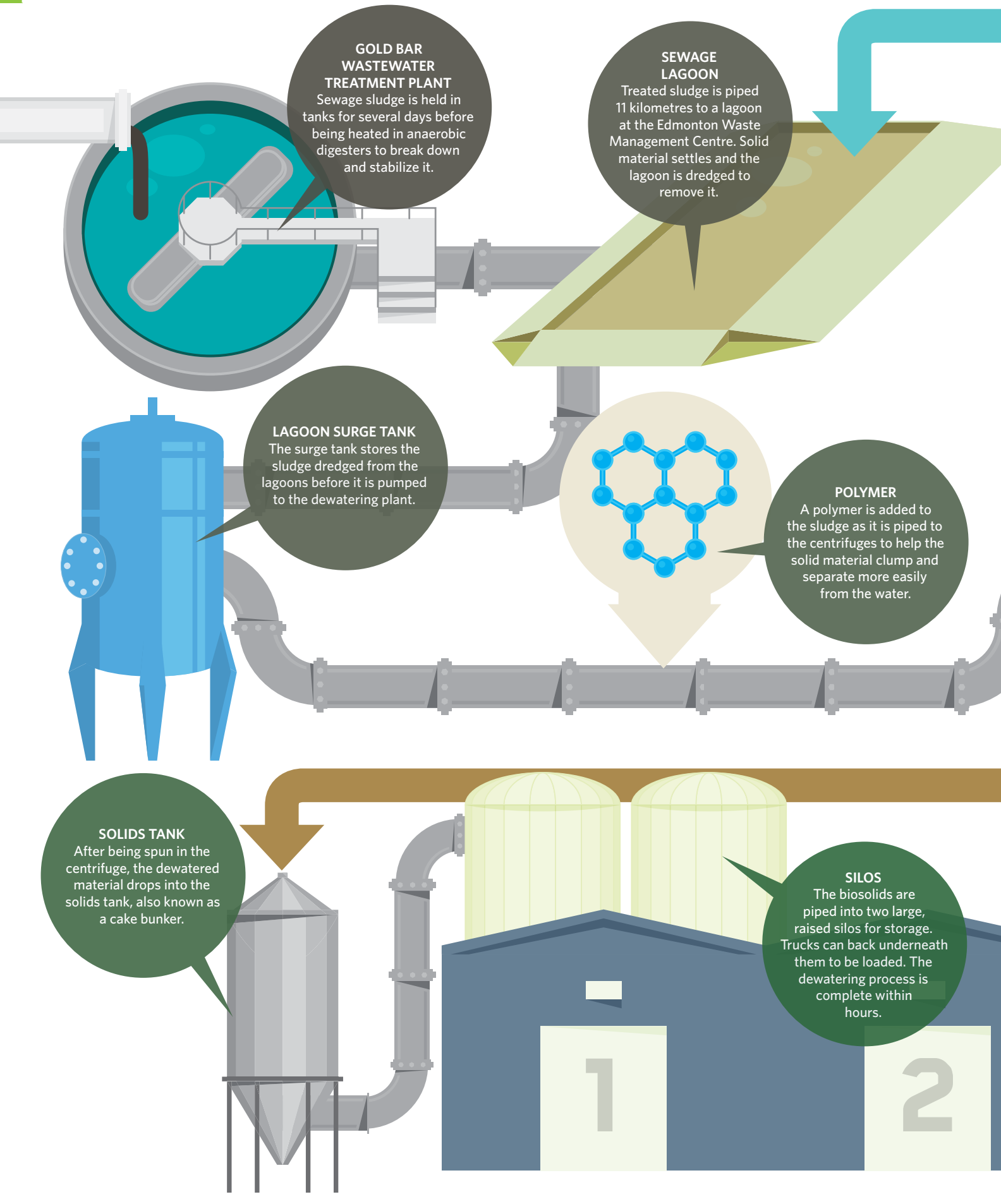
The $15-million project at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre makes the city a leader in processing this kind of waste, thanks in part to the expertise of NAIT grads at the company.

ONEC enhanced and expanded the system, making it more automated, faster and more efficient at removing much of the water from the massive amounts of sewage produced by close to a million people.

"It's a really good recycling story," says Denis Wiart, general manager of engineering and president of ONEC, which completed the work in December. "A lot of people think it just goes down the river and, in many cities, it does. But here, they're recycling; they're using it for other purposes."

The system processes sewage sludge that is treated at the Gold Bar Wastewater Treatment Plant and piped to a storage lagoon at the waste management centre. "I've been telling people, 'Everybody has input into this project in one way or another,'" Wiart adds with a laugh.

ONEC, recently named one of *Alberta Venture*'s 50 fast-growing companies for 2015, had a team of about two dozen mechanical,


GOLD BAR WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT
Sewage sludge is held in tanks for several days before being heated in anaerobic digesters to break down and stabilize it.
SEWAGE LAGOON
Treated sludge is piped 11 kilometres to a lagoon at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre. Solid material settles and the lagoon is dredged to remove it.
LAGOON SURGE TANK
The surge tank stores the sludge dredged from the lagoons before it is pumped to the dewatering plant.
POLYMER
A polymer is added to the sludge as it is piped to the centrifuges to help the solid material clump and separate more easily from the water.
SOLIDS TANK
After being spun in the centrifuge, the dewatered material drops into the solids tank, also known as a cake bunker.
SILOS
The biosolids are piped into two large, raised silos for storage. Trucks can back underneath them to be loaded. The dewatering process is complete within hours.
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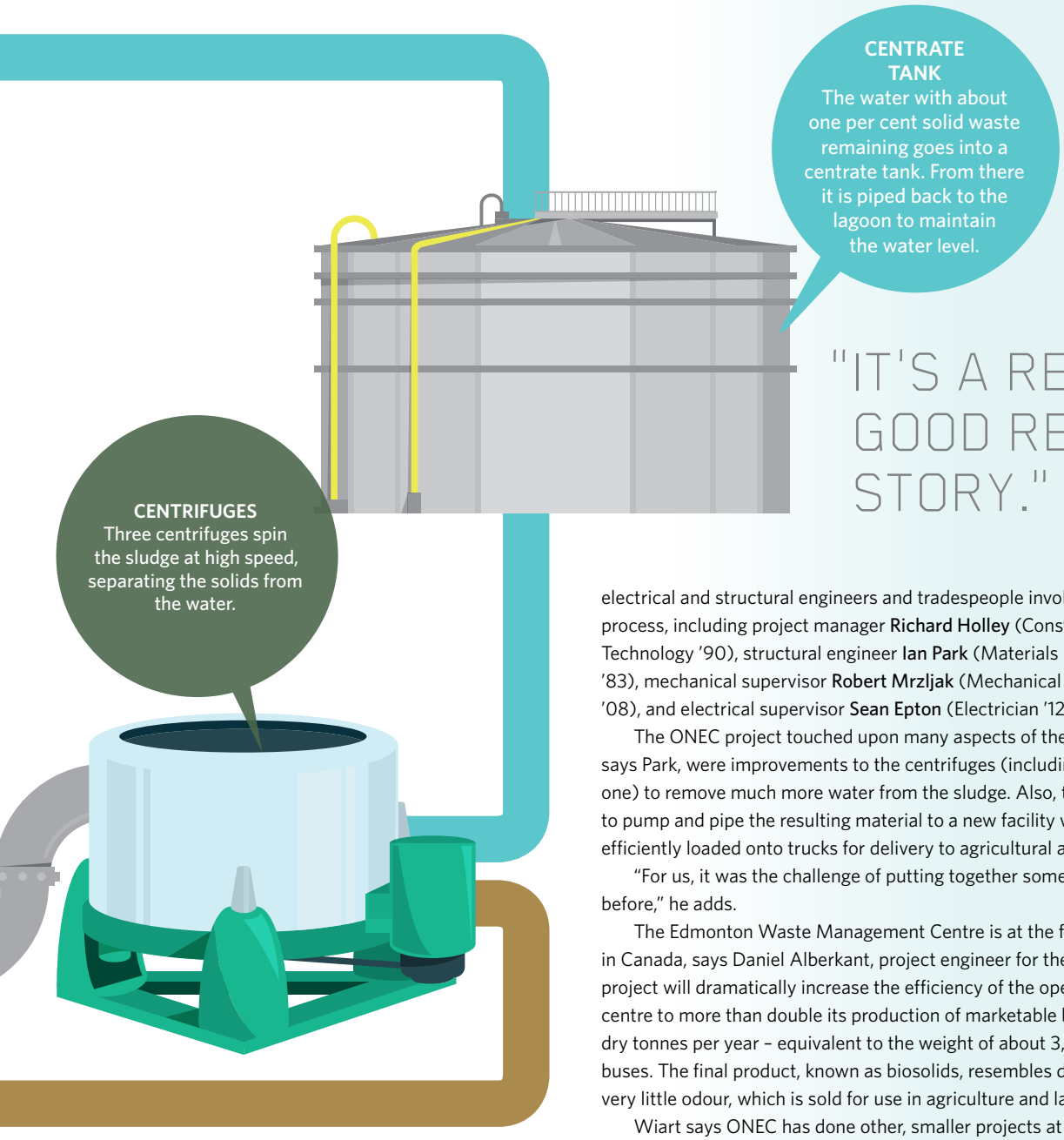

"IT'S A REALLY GOOD RECYCLING STORY."

- DENIS WIART, GENERAL MANAGER OF ENGINEERING AND PRESIDENT, ONEC

electrical and structural engineers and tradespeople involved in the year-long process, including project manager **Richard Holley** (Construction Engineering Technology '90), structural engineer **Ian Park** (Materials Engineering Technology '83), mechanical supervisor **Robert Mrzljak** (Mechanical Engineering Technology '08), and electrical supervisor **Sean Epton** (Electrician '12).

The ONEC project touched upon many aspects of the system. Among them, says Park, were improvements to the centrifuges (including the addition of a new one) to remove much more water from the sludge. Also, they built a better system to pump and pipe the resulting material to a new facility where it can be easily and efficiently loaded onto trucks for delivery to agricultural and industrial users.

"For us, it was the challenge of putting together something that we hadn't done before," he adds.

The Edmonton Waste Management Centre is at the forefront of this technology in Canada, says Daniel Alberkant, project engineer for the city. The dewatering project will dramatically increase the efficiency of the operation and allow the centre to more than double its production of marketable biosolids to about 40,000 dry tonnes per year – equivalent to the weight of about 3,290 articulated transit buses. The final product, known as biosolids, resembles dry horse manure, with very little odour, which is sold for use in agriculture and land reclamation.

Wiart says ONEC has done other, smaller projects at the waste management centre but this was by far the biggest. "Edmonton leads the world in recycling," he says. "That whole site is just a technical marvel."

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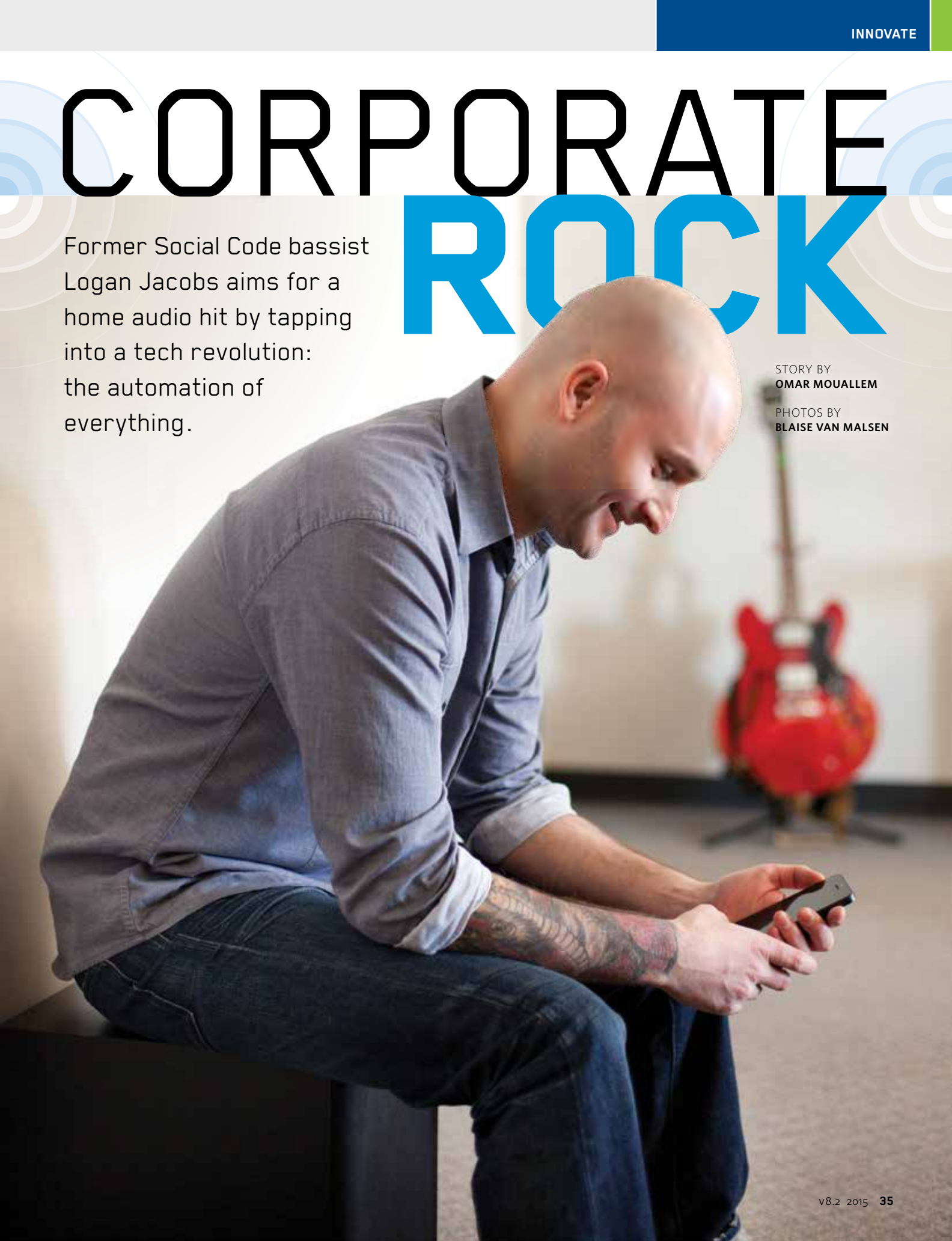
CORPORATE ROCK

Former Social Code bassist Logan Jacobs aims for a home audio hit by tapping into a tech revolution: the automation of everything.

STORY BY
OMAR MOUALLEM

PHOTOS BY
BLAISE VAN MALSEN



Airhome, a multi-room stereo controlled by smartphones, got its start at a NAIT entrepreneur bootcamp.

"I LOOKED AT THE OFFERINGS AND SAID WE COULD DO THIS A LOT BETTER."

– LOGAN JACOBS, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, ROSWELL GLOBAL

LOGAN JACOBS SNAPS A PIC of a teardrop-shaped trophy to send back to friends and family in Alberta, 4,600 kilometres away. He's 20 minutes from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, in the office of Roswell Global. The company's new chief technology officer is surprisingly upbeat for someone operating on just a few hours of sleep. The night before, in late January, Roswell was awarded "Innovation Company of the Year" by the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast, and the team celebrated with a somewhat modest consumption of sushi and spirits.

"That's not how I used to celebrate," jokes the tattooed 35-year-old. He used to crack open the whiskey and party until dawn, but that was long before founding Zenovia Electronics, now a subsidiary of the award-winning Roswell. Back then, he was one-fourth of Social Code, a defunct major-label rock band. "Things do change. And they change fast."

Just four years ago, Jacobs stood nervously before a panel of startup investors at an entrepreneur bootcamp organized by NAIT, pitching an idea for a multi-room stereo controlled by smartphones. Today, he walks a 72,000-square-foot (6,700-square-metre) facility that handles manufacturing, distribution, research and design. It will mass-produce the outcome of his pitch: Airhome, a slim white panel with the elegance and simplicity of the iPhone that controls it.

Now in dozens of residences, Airhome marks Jacobs' and Roswell CEO Robert Oswell's entry into the multibillion-dollar industry of home automation, or "smart homes." Oswell has invented and designed marine technology for the wakeboarding industry for 16 years. Soon after becoming a hardware-developer adviser to a burgeoning Zenovia in 2012, Oswell proposed a merger that would take Roswell Global to shore, where increasingly homeowners are interacting with their stereos, appliances, security systems, curtains, lights – you name it – through remote technology. Though home automation has been around for 20 years, the ready-made interfaces that are the world's nearly two billion smartphones have driven costs down and demand up.

But what makes Jacobs, a late entrant to the market with little business background and only a high-school diploma, think he can penetrate it?

"I looked at the offerings and said we could do this a lot better."

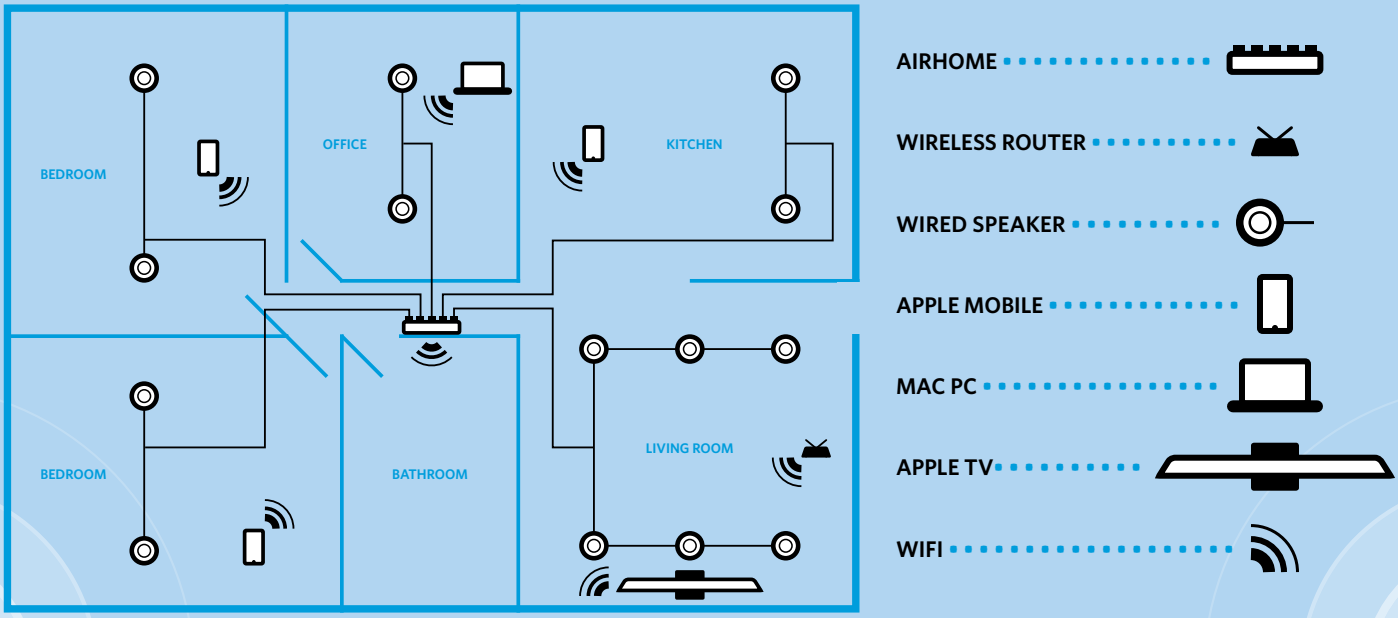
And simpler. Compared to competitors' systems, Airhome is much easier to install. All it takes is speakers and WiFi. It's also equipped with AirPlay, software that allows streaming from any Apple product – and that Jacobs expects will tap directly into the ever-growing Cult of Mac.

Is he overconfident? Perhaps. But with good reason. "Since I've begun my journey in entrepreneurship, I hear all these stories about how hard it is," says Jacobs. "I think, 'Wow, none of you guys have started a band.'"

PHOTO SUPPLIED

HOW IT WORKS

THE AIRHOME SYSTEM is a simple combination of wired speakers connected to a panel (up to five amps for five rooms), a wireless Internet router, and any number of Apple devices enabled with AirPlay technology and the Airhome app to control the system wirelessly in any room of your home.



"I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE USABILITY, AND I IMMEDIATELY REALIZED I WANTED ONE IN MY HOUSE."

– ROBERT OSWELL, CEO, ROSWELL GLOBAL

JACOBS' JOURNEY STARTED 12 YEARS AGO with a phone call from record industry executive, Jeff Blue. "Welcome to Interscope," he said, giving the band the backing of a major label.

Weeks later, Jacobs, then bassist for Social Code, and his bandmates flew to Los Angeles. The St. Albert high-school friends lived there for six months and recorded at Henson Recording Studios in a suite one door down from Jon Bon Jovi.

Within 12 months, life changed with another call. They were in an RV, leaving the Hamilton, Ont. club they'd just played for eight people when an Interscope rep phoned to say, "Sorry, you've been dropped."

"We fell to the bottom, we had a bunch of Jack Daniels, then we rebuilt," says Jacobs.

The band signed with Universal Canada to release their album *A Year at the Movies*, staying with the company until 2007. After that, they went independent and Jacobs started framing and wiring a basement studio where the band made their next record, *Rock 'n' Roll*.

They coded their own website, formed their own distribution deals, marketed the album and hired a music video director for *Satisfied*, which ranked higher on the Canadian Billboard charts than any Social Code song before it. But not high enough. "I will always be a top 11 artist," says Jacobs.

In 2009 he and his wife, Stephanie, had their first daughter, Zenovia – the name Jacobs would later borrow for his upstart technology. He soon realized that it was nearly impossible to be a good father in a post-Napster industry requiring constant touring to survive. While Social Code petered out, he took contractor jobs installing home audio systems. That's where he saw firsthand the future of home automation.

Because he worked directly with homebuilders on the forefront of this technology, he could see what the consumers walking Home Depot's aisles back then couldn't. He wondered, what if he could manufacture a consumer-ready product like – no, better than – the ones he was installing? No hassle. No expertise required. Just plug and play.

At the time, existing multi-room audio systems were operated from a wall pad, and dragged wires through the home to a mainframe. Scrolling through his iTunes playlist, he thought it peculiar that his smartphone couldn't make things simpler. Why couldn't he use Mac products to queue up and play different music in different rooms, even at the same time?

His wonder turned into obsession. He pored over articles and market research on smart homes and smartphones, evangelizing to friends and family about the linkages. Stephanie got the brunt of it. So perhaps out of love, or frustration, she cut out a newspaper ad for NAIT's first entrepreneur bootcamp, slapped it on his desk and said, "You're going."

RANDY THOMPSON, FOUNDER AND CEO of angel investor group VA Angels and NAIT's former entrepreneur-in-residence, led that bootcamp and remembers Jacobs trying to articulate his vision. "I had no clue what he was talking about," he says. "He came in green as grass with just an idea. It was really fascinating to watch how much he progressed in those three days."

After placing third in the bootcamp's *Dragons' Den*-style competition, Jacobs leased space at a tech incubator in St. Albert that NAIT has since relocated to its Edmonton campus and re-imagined as a service for alumni and students (see sidebar below).

It was a crash course in investment, product scaling, market research and salesmanship. Jacobs says the most valuable takeaway was, "They validated that it was OK to be trying what I'm trying." Most others told him that "hardware is hard" and "too risky," especially in Alberta. "Unless it's an oil and gas widget," he says.

After connecting with Jacobs through a high-school friend who was also in the bootcamp, Robert Oswell sympathized with the new entrepreneur. "I came on as a mentor/adviser," says the CEO. "I initially saw it as a way to give back to an entrepreneur who's excited and motivated." But soon he saw more. "I was impressed by the usability, and I immediately realized I wanted one in my house – that's a pretty good indicator. I was developing a marine wireless product myself. I thought we could learn something from him, and maybe he could learn something from us."

Last year, Zenovia Electronics' lean staff of less than 10 and Roswell's 250 joined forces. The resulting merger, in which Zenovia operates as an individual brand, is still headquartered in Acheson, Alta. but Jacobs has been catching more sunrays than snowflakes for the better part of the year. For Jacobs, being chief technology officer of a host of products, including underwater lights and wakeboard speakers, means he can focus on his strong suit – innovation and creativity – and relinquish sales and distribution to Roswell's expert team.

For Oswell, the merger means his global company can enter the most exciting technology revolution since the smartphone with a ready product. "It's almost like a re-founding of the company," he says.

THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS in the "Internet of Things" revolution, which goes beyond home furnishings to a near future when everything can communicate with our devices, or each other, from cars that schedule their own service, to public infrastructure that monitors potential safety issues, even to plants that alert your phone when soil moisture is low.

"It's going to happen relatively rapidly," says **Mark Archibald** (Electronics Engineering Technology '80), chair of applied research at the School of Information Communication and Engineering Technologies. He believes the technology has the potential to fundamentally transform the Canadian household – depending on consumer adoption.

In some cases, that's already happening. Homebuilder **Rick Young** (Carpentry '01) of Habitat Studio says three-quarters of his clients request smart-home technology. "You can link anything to a program in your phone," says Young. "Music is the most popular request."

According to a 2014 MarketsandMarkets report, the global home automation industry is expected to be worth $12.8 billion by 2020. Last year, in time for Black Friday, Best Buy revamped 400 stores with smart home sections, stocking thermostats, lightbulbs and more. Noticeably absent, however, was a multi-room stereo system.

Probably not for long, says Archibald. Incorporating wireless technology in products is becoming cheaper and easier, both to Jacobs' advantage and disadvantage. "There's somebody just lurking around the corner with a similar idea, a competitive idea, and it's not going to cost them very much to get into the market either," says Archibald.

Zenovia is currently shipping orders for online sales, continuing to infiltrate the homebuilding market, and hoping to find space for Airhome on the shelves of big-box stores like Best Buy. It's a race against time as the company works to claim its share of a tightening North American market and, as Jacobs puts it, get "more music in more houses – in every room."

Last November, he held one of the first Airhome units to ever come off the assembly line. "I had a lot of pride when I got it, carried it, unboxed the product," he recalls. "But the other side of it is, it's just a new beginning. You now need to move that product into millions of people's hands." ▮

HATCHING A PLAN

LOGAN JACOBS' COMPANY Zenovia Electronics (now a subsidiary of Roswell Global) was among the last clients of NAIT's previous approach to business incubation, in which qualified members of the local entrepreneur community could access business services, mentorship and office space. "NAIT supported Zenovia early on," says Jacobs.

Today, NAIT's focus has shifted to students and recent alumni of the polytechnic to support them with the Hatch Startup Challenge business development program (read more about it on p. 28). The new approach still involves office space and mentorship, but places greater emphasis on workshops and connecting clients with other local support organizations, such as VA Angels and Startup Edmonton, says Hatch manager **Sandra Spencer** (Accounting '10, Business Administration '13), who Jacobs calls one of his longtime supporters.

"We're not building new things; we're bringing things to campus," says Spencer. "It's organizing the opportunities and accessibility."

— Scott Messenger

PHOTO BY JOHN BOOK

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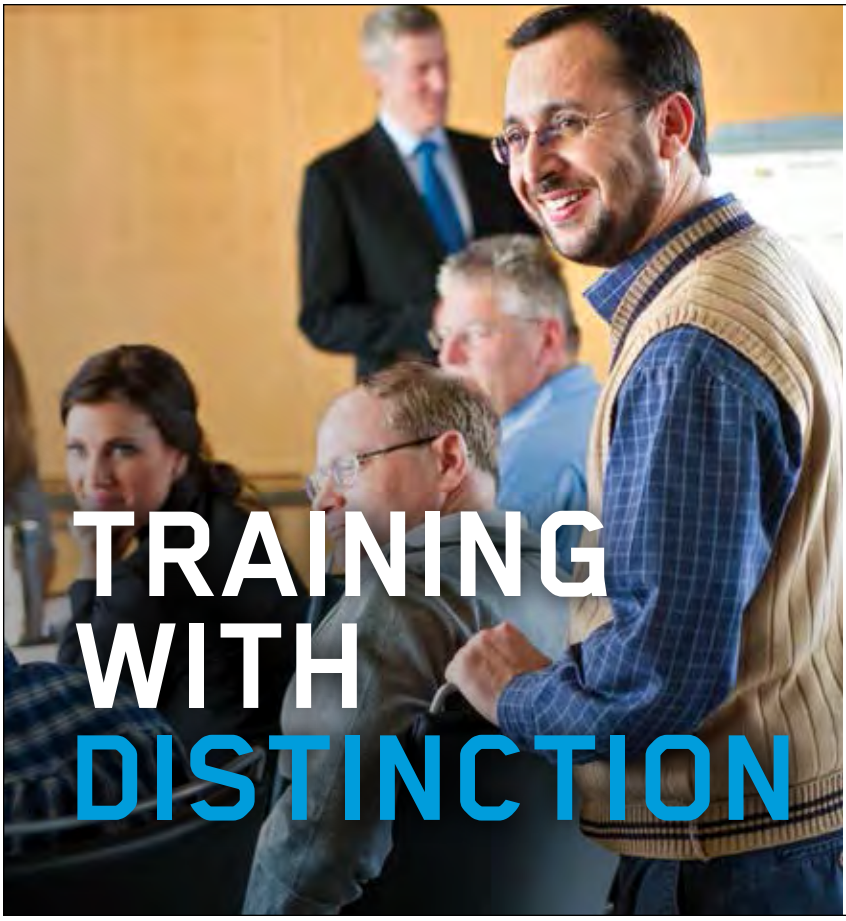

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ANDREA'S WORKSHOP

Weehelp Foundation founder and sole staffer Andrea Peyton renews secondhand kids' items in support of the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation.

PHOTO BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN

BEFORE SHE OPENS HER DOOR TO VISITORS, Andrea Peyton (Bachelor of Applied Business Administration – Accounting '03) warns them about what they'll see: bags upon bags of baby clothes, toys stacked up and high chairs tucked into the corners of nearly every room in her west-Edmonton home.

"I call it hoarding for a cause," she says with a laugh, describing how her home is filled with child-related goods a few months every year. Since 2013, Peyton has collected, refurbished and sold secondhand kids' items as the founder and CEO of Weehelp Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising funds for the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation. So far, Peyton has raised nearly $60,000 while keeping a full-time job as a senior financial officer at Calder Bateman Communications.

She came up with the idea of holding pop-up sales to support the Stollery after she noticed how rapidly kid stuff depleted her friends' savings and storage spaces. When their children outgrew the items, they would donate them. Buying new could get expensive – making the sales Peyton holds at an Edmonton church an attractive bargain. Now Weehelp is growing fast, yet continues to be a one-woman not-for-profit organization that takes up much of Peyton's free time.

— Caitlin Crawshaw

Why did you decide to fundraise for the Stollery Children's Hospital?

It started when family friends lost their son to leukemia. Although they weren't from Edmonton, and didn't use the Stollery, it really got me thinking about how I could give back to our local children's hospital.

With a full-time job, how did you get the foundation up and running?

I ran the idea by a bunch of people in late 2012. I got a few donations that way. In the spring of 2013, I responded to every garage sale ad on Kijiji, asking sellers to donate any children's items they had left. I spent the next week picking up donations, washing them, and getting ready for the first sale.

For about a year, in addition to working full time, I did accounting for clients out of my home and used all of the money to help the foundation so 100 per cent of the proceeds could go to the Stollery.

How has Weehelp changed?

It's the same basic idea, just a lot bigger. At the first sale we filled a 2,300-square-foot space and raised $5,000. At a sale in October, we filled 6,000 square feet and raised more than $15,000. My mom and dad help out and there are volunteers at the sales but most of the time it's just me. *[Ed. note: Prior to our press date, Peyton had her most successful sale yet, raising $18,000.]*

Tell me about a typical week for Weehelp

I work on it pretty much every night. I respond to emails daily. Thankfully, I no longer have to pick up many donations. Happy Nappy, a local diaper service, does most of the pick-ups. I go through the donations – sort things, clean them, test them, remove batteries and pack them.

I Google almost every toy we get to make sure I know what it is and what the price would be, both new and used. I post a lot of items on Facebook to give people teasers about what's going to be at the next sale.

For a couple months before a sale, I'll probably spend 40 hours a week.

You hold "pop-up shops" twice a year to sell the donations. What is it like at one of these sales?

It's a madhouse for a couple of hours. People run in and get their stuff – it's like they've already scoped the place out.

What's next for Weehelp?

I'd love to grow it but there comes a point where you can only grow it so much because you only have so much time. How do you get it to the next level?

What motivates you to keep going?

There's a satisfaction – a sense of ownership and pride – when I spend a day hauling trailer loads of stuff to set up for the sale. There's complete exhaustion, too, but there's this feeling of accomplishment.

I love the feedback from people about how happy they are to donate and help out, too. A lot of them wouldn't be able to help out the Stollery with a cash donation. I'm like a middleman.

THE COMPLETIST

Shane Turgeon's passion for collecting rare vintage toys gave him everything – before it nearly ruined him. Now, it may have pointed the way toward what has long eluded him: true happiness.

ON A RAINY, MID-WINTER AFTERNOON, Shane Turgeon (Radio and Television '02) and shop manager Cori Bagnall stay warm and dry inside, picking through a pile of tiny weapons. It's a typical day here at Shades of Grey, a tattoo/vintage toy and collectibles shop on Whyte Avenue, Edmonton's busy south-side shopping and entertainment district. A needle buzzes as it bites into a back, mid-'90s Alice in Chains plays on the sound system. In the middle of the room, on a spotless brown laminate floor, several glass tower cases stand full of toys: Transformers, Masters of the Universe, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, GI Joe, even a Smurf village and a small herd of My Little Ponies.

The weapons, little plastic blasters for little plastic fists, arrived with a collection of dozens of *Star Wars* figurines that Turgeon (pictured on left) bought to resell, some for a few bucks each, others for a few hundred, depending on condition and rarity. Some of the guns are reproductions, which Turgeon, who labels himself a toy – not to mention tattoo – snob, cannot abide. There's a clear cup of water on top of a glass counter and two napkins, one marked *sink*, the other *swim*. Real deals float; sinkers get chucked. Or you differentiate by the sound they make when dropped – a ting or a thud. "The thud is the real one," says the 37-year-old store owner. Then he taps a tattooed finger to his forehead.

"Twenty-five years of useless knowledge," he adds with a grin.

Turgeon seems to enjoy self-deprecation. The truth is, that knowledge is the bedrock of his professional life. Turgeon owns and operates three businesses; he's an internationally renowned vintage toy expert; he's a founder of two of the city's collectible and comic shows; and, most recently, he's the author of *The Force in the Flesh Vol. 2*, a book of *Star Wars*-inspired tattoos released this spring that points to a broadening of his business horizons.

All that knowledge, it might be said, is also responsible for his near ruin, followed by an unexpected awakening to the true value of old plastic stuff.

FOR A LONG TIME toys were a big part of Turgeon's life. At 13 years old – already a burgeoning action figure collector – he moved with his family to the Edmonton area from rural Saskatchewan. "It was kind of a culture shock," he says. "I grew up, literally, at the end of a dirt road." The city's comic book stores helped ease the transition and deepened his interest in collecting, particularly *Star Wars* and GI Joe figures, for display, not play (he was a teenager, he points out, and supposed to be interested in "basketball and girls").

"As I got older and more mature, my taste started refining and I realized I had expensive tastes." Turgeon's interests turned to prototypes. "Anybody can have the action figure. Anybody can have the action figure still in the package if you try hard enough. Only one person can have the sculpt to that action figure. Only one person can have the original painting for the package for that action figure."

During a trip with Turgeon to Indianapolis in 2005 for a *Star Wars* Celebration fan convention, long-time friend **Curtis Comeau** (Radio and Television '01) got a glimpse of Turgeon's cred among collectors. They managed an invite to a floor's worth of hotel rooms rented by a collector looking to sell rare items. "It was ultra-secretive," says Comeau, who uses the back room of Shades of Grey for his photography business. "We're talking $10,000, $20,000 pieces. They lay these toys out on beds. It's like an arms deal. This is the level this guy was at."

No longer was this the Turgeon with whom Comeau competed 20 years ago for the title of biggest and best *Star Wars* figure collection. While Comeau moved on, his friend had become a rarity in his own right as an international collectibles expert.

In 2002, Turgeon launched tattoosandtoys.com, a site devoted to the intersection of pop culture iconography and body modification (connecting him to the Celebration conventions, where he's now part of tattoo programming). He followed that the next year with the first Edmonton Collectible Toy and Comic Show. In 2005, he added authorship to his CV by co-writing *The Official Price Guide to Star*

STORY BY
SCOTT MESSENGER

PHOTOS BY
BLAISE VAN MALSEN

Left: Shane Turgeon checks for fake action-figure weapons (note the tattoo of the retractable, *Star Wars* figure lightsaber); above: Turgeon released *The Force in the Flesh Vol. 2* at a recent *Star Wars* convention in Anaheim, Calif.

"YOU CAN'T HELP PEOPLE WITH WHERE THEY'RE GOING UNLESS THEY KNOW WHERE YOU'VE BEEN."

- SHANE TURGEON, OWNER, SHADES OF GREY

Wars Memorabilia, then went solo in 2007 by self-publishing the first installment of *The Force in the Flesh*, which nearly sold out of a print run of 2,100 copies. He became Canada's first toy collectibles appraiser in 2010, the same year he opened his Whyte Ave. shop (and the same year he finished a decade-long career in the TV industry, which ended as assistant director of programming at Super Channel).

Comeau describes his friend as a "pioneer" in his field. In the true sense of the word, Turgeon kept a near-obsessive focus on making the life he wanted. As can happen for pioneers, that life got very hard.

WHILE 2012 MARKED THE LAUNCH of the Edmonton Expo, the result of a merger of the Edmonton Collectible Toy and Comic Show and the group behind the Calgary Expo (Turgeon's now general manager and co-founder of the local show), this high point came during a dark period of Turgeon's life. Business debts had mounted, forcing him to turn to his collection for financial salvation, liquidating valuable pieces to pay bills. At the same time, his marriage of 12 years ended in divorce. Depression, which Turgeon openly says he's struggled with in life, took hold.

"Life kind of kicked my ass for a while," he recalls. "But you don't learn to enjoy the simple things until you get your ass kicked."

During this time, Turgeon began to clarify his priorities, evaluating how he'd spent his time (and money) as a collector, thinking he'd spend more of it with family and friends if given a do-over.

"I realized there really doesn't come any true happiness in the acquisition of things."

Though he still takes pride in having one of Canada's most comprehensive collections of GI Joe stuff, and notes that his shop probably has the best selection of vintage toys in town, Turgeon doesn't actively collect anymore. Still, he chose to stay in the business of enabling other collectors. He makes no apology for that.

"You can't shy away from using your expertise," he says. As long as it doesn't become obsessive, he adds, "This can be an amazingly rewarding hobby."

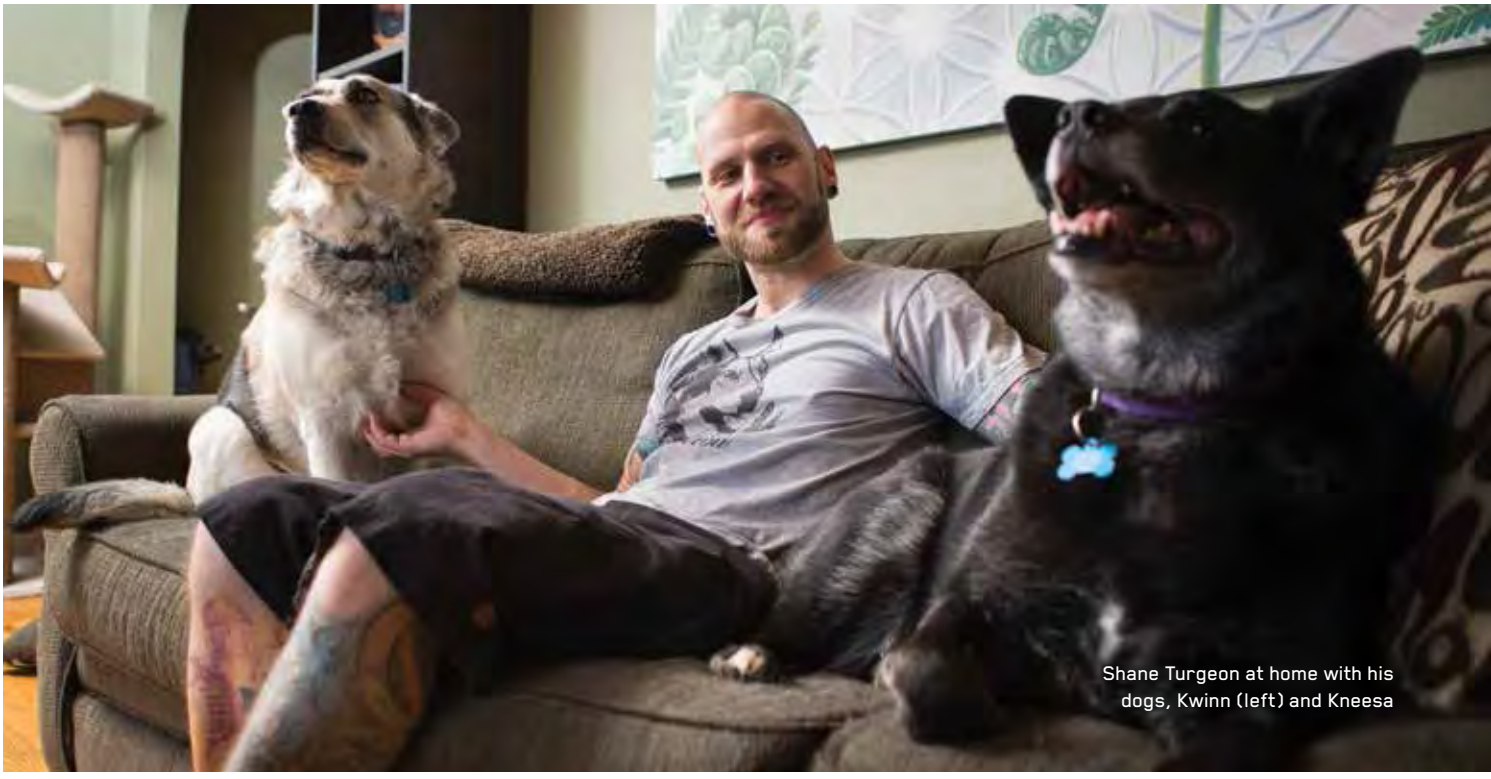
That reward might be most obvious at the conventions. In 2014, Turgeon filled a void in the local collectibles community by creating the Edmonton Collector Con, an event he hopes to hold three times a year, inviting people to buy, sell, and reminisce.

"For me, it's nostalgia," says Brandon Best, a vendor at last year's events. "It brings back memories of childhood," temporarily displacing the difficulties of adulthood. "We need a bit of an escape. It's nice sometimes to reflect on those easier times."

And the conventions build community, he adds. "It gives people a chance to meet like-minded people and make friends in an area where traditionally a lot of people are known as loners and not having a lot of friends."

Sometimes, such events strengthen existing bonds, as they do for **Andrew Reid** (Network Engineering Technology '04), a process analyst with NAIT's registrar's office. He brings his three children – ages three, six and 11 – to the Collector Cons. Each of them leaves with a toy or two, dad included. They'll play with them together, and Reid might display his finds alongside selections from his horde of more than 5,000 action figures. "I like to see a collection of things that I love – being able to just enjoy it, or rearrange it. It brings peace and calm to me."

Turgeon considers the Collector Con, "a good hang-out day" where everyone's welcome. He sees the Expo, despite being roughly 100-fold bigger in terms of attendance, much the same way. "One of my favourite moments was from the first Edmonton Expo." Turgeon noticed a disabled woman in a wheelchair. "She was incredibly tiny, all crunched up, wearing a superhero outfit and cape because she could come there like everybody else and be her own superhero for the day. Everyone was stoked to see her doing it. That just puts a smile on my face. That's what we do it for."



Shane Turgeon at home with his dogs, Kwinn (left) and Kneesa

SO FAR, THE EDMONTON COLLECTOR CON hasn't turned a significant profit. Turgeon's other businesses aren't making him rich, either, he notes. Still, he's sustaining all of it. He competes with about half a dozen nearby tattoo shops, and vintage toys is a niche market. "I would never open just a toy and comic book shop in a million years," says Turgeon.

"Shane's got a way of making difficult businesses succeed," says Florida-based tattoo artist and entrepreneur Marc Draven, who got to know Turgeon from tattoosandtoys.com. This April, at the *Star Wars* Celebration convention in Anaheim, Calif., he organized the tattoo pavilion where Turgeon launched *The Force in the Flesh Vol. 2*, featuring Draven and about 60 other artists. Draven likens its quality to a "hardbound museum."

"Shane's a motor," says the artist and entrepreneur. "Whatever his final destination is, he's going to reach it one way or another."

The new book represents one way he might do that. At 300-plus pages, it's roughly 30 per cent bigger than Vol. 1, and features artist bios he wrote himself. It's also the flagship publication of an imprint he created for it and future books he'd like to write, including one he's calling *77 Things*. He describes it as a "self-growth" book, and it lays out his lessons from 2012, when sinking or swimming would have had a different, more profound meaning than simply setting the value of a few bits of plastic. The project is also indicative of the person Comeau believes Turgeon has become: more outward looking, more interested in finding ways to create a sense of community.

"You can't help people with where they're going unless they know where you've been. Who's going to listen to you if you're just some [guy] who owns a toy and comic book shop and puts on comic book conventions?"

These days, figures come and go at Shades of Grey as part of its day-to-day business. Before he enters the collector's world, he spends time in the natural one, walking the two dogs he says helped him through his depression: a mixed breed called Kneesa (named after an Ewok princess) and Kwinn (an "Eskimo" mercenary of GI Joe comics), a husky-shepherd cross.

"I'm happier than I've ever been," says Turgeon. Part of this stems from a new, more complete understanding of what happiness means. Once, he found this in scoring the rarest bits of pop culture he could find; now he experiences it in the subtlety of bringing people together.

Just as he has maintained his businesses, he's found a way to preserve that perspective. At the end of each year, Turgeon reflects on the lessons that emerged from the positive and the negative. "My lesson for 2014 was that I already have all that I need." ▮

TURGEON TV

In 2012, Shane Turgeon's expertise as a vintage toy expert was the subject of a potential reality television series. A production company flew him and co-host Curtis Comeau to Peru to investigate the South American vintage market and shoot a short pilot. "It's one part *Lonely Planet*, one part *Antiques Roadshow*," says Turgeon of the show.

Though it wasn't picked up by a network at the time, another production company was trying to revive the idea at the time of writing, though it declined to comment on progress.

Chris Durham, one of Turgeon's former Radio and Television instructors, believes Turgeon would make a great show. "He had a real cerebral passion for fantasy and comics," recalls Durham (Radio and Television '85). "He really wanted to share that passion and enlighten people on that whole genre. It seems like a natural fit for the Shane I knew as a student."

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ABLE AND WILLING

Inclusion for Geoff Harris means more than fitting in. At NAIT, he and other students with developmental disabilities are preparing for meaningful, fulfilling careers – just like their classmates.

STORY BY
SCOTT MESSENGER
PHOTOS BY
BLAISE VAN MALSEN

LIKE MANY ALBERTANS who have attended a post-secondary institute, Geoff Harris would say the experience is almost nothing like high school. Expectations of students are different, the responsibility for success mostly their own. And the characteristics that made them unique in high school tend to be less special, even common, in an environment defined by the best and brightest. It becomes harder to stand out.

That's exactly what Harris, a 22-year-old student in NAIT's Personal Fitness Trainer program, is after. Because of a developmental disability, he spent high school in a segregated class where his differences were highlighted, sometimes inadvertently, sometimes not. A current instructor describes Harris as never having a bad word to say and he keeps to that when recalling how other students treated him, sticking only to the facts. Some were nice; some made a video poking fun at his slight drawl and boisterous laughter. "I felt like more of an outcast than an actual person," he says.

Even if that were still the case, Harris likely wouldn't have time to notice. As one of the institute's nine students enrolled in inclusive post-secondary education – a program led by the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) since 2003 – he keeps a hectic schedule. During the winter 2015 term, part of his second year at NAIT, Harris audits three classes. He has a part-time job in the institute gym and volunteers with the men's basketball team, helping set up and run practices. And he keeps a tight focus on a goal that's fundamentally the same as that of his classmates: "I want to help people and get them better and healthy – and have an active lifestyle and try to be a role model to people."

After his studies are complete, possibly in 2016, that goal may be within reach. As many as 80 per cent of students in the inclusion program find employment once school is over, most in their chosen field. That is, Harris stands a good chance of escaping the life of poverty of many people with developmental disabilities. As NAIT and AACL refresh their partnership this year with a refined approach to inclusive education, moving more students to post-secondary education and on to financial independence, Harris's story might become less special, and more the norm.

AS MANY AS

80%

OF STUDENTS IN INCLUSIVE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FIND EMPLOYMENT

APPROXIMATELY

70%

OF ALBERTANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ARE UNDEREMPLOYED OR UNEMPLOYED

IN SOME WAYS, the inclusion program challenges the thought that segregation might be beneficial. Mischa Taylor, Harris's on-campus education facilitator from AACL, sees the need for a "paradigm shift."

"AACL believes that a difference in ability does not mean that separation in society should occur. There are differences within all of us in the community but we should not be segregated based on age, race, sexual orientation, et cetera. Therefore it should be no different for ability or disability."

To try to achieve this shift, Taylor works with Harris (and two other inclusion students – each AACL facilitator at NAIT has three) and instructors, providing support as needed. He attends the same classes and labs as other Personal Fitness Trainer students. Though he earns no credit, Harris does assignments and group projects, takes exams and is evaluated by instructors based on attendance and participation. Often, his assignments and exams are modified by Taylor (in partnership with instructors) to suit his capabilities, but his post-secondary experience is meant to be as demanding for him as it is for his classmates.

"It's like books stacked [up] and I'm trying to reach the top," says Harris of his coursework, likely echoing the feelings of his peers in the two-year diploma program.

Sharing in that struggle, however, is important, says Wendy Marusin, manager of Services for Students with Disabilities at NAIT. "Why would we not do the same with a student with a developmental disability?"

Marusin believes that, too often, expectations are unnecessarily lowered for students like Harris. She's seen the result of asking more. "Guess what? They rise to the challenge. Sometimes [their] families didn't know there were those potentials in their own children. Everyone needs to be challenged. Just because you have a disability doesn't mean we should soften that."

A disability isn't ignored but it isn't dwelled upon either. It's often not even named. Harris's details are left in AACL case files, allowing Taylor and instructors to focus on his strengths while identifying areas in which he needs support.

"What's important is that we have an understanding of what barriers or inaccessibility this person is experiencing in the academic environment," says Marusin, "and then let's address those."

CURRENTLY, THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT, which funds AACL's work in 19 post-secondary institutes across the province, is trying to address those barriers in the workplace. The department of Human Services reports that Albertans with disabilities experienced 15 per cent lower employment than average in 2006 (the most recent stats). Of those with developmental disabilities, about 70 per cent are underemployed or unemployed. The Alberta Employment First Strategy was created to boost that number by bringing together organizations to help a minority the government sees as capable and "underutilized" in meeting labour demands.

Partnerships like those between AACL and NAIT play an essential role in that strategy. The department of Human Services hopes that inclusive education can accomplish two major goals. First, as teachers of professional skills and places where social skills are developed, schools offering inclusive programs are key entry points into the workforce. Second, inclusion affects workplace culture by familiarizing classmates (and future co-workers) with aspects of human diversity that often go overlooked.

To make that transition even smoother, Marusin's rewrite of the agreement between NAIT and AACL – a sort of renewing of vows – refocuses the document on the ideal student experience rather than just roles and responsibilities of those involved. It

Geoff Harris, a Personal Fitness Trainer student through inclusive post-secondary education at NAIT, is looking forward to a positive future.

AN INCLUSIVE LEADER

Last year, the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) gave NAIT its Community Inclusion Award, identifying the polytechnic (and co-recipient City of Edmonton) as a leader in "enabling the complete and meaningful inclusion" of persons with developmental disabilities into community life. It is the highest honour AACL grants.

Reasons for the win included employment rates of 70 to 80 per cent (well above the average for those with developmental disabilities), as well as a high level of collaboration between polytechnic and on-campus AACL staff. Less tangible but no less important is the impact a post-secondary experience has on the lives of not just students but their families.

"I think that's all that any parent wants, is your child to be included – to be happy," says Sandra Harris, mother of Geoff, who's currently enrolled in Personal Fitness Trainer courses. At NAIT, she adds, "he feels a part of something."

illustrates the "life cycle" of the student, says Marusin, including the possibility of participating in workplace learning opportunities.

Jacquie Kell was among the first inclusion students to be placed. When she saw her classmates heading out to local clinics for experience "she said she wanted to go on practicum," says Linda Glasier, Veterinary Medical Assistant associate chair. "She was quite adamant about it."

With the help of Services for Students with Disabilities, Glasier modified the practicum agreement she used for other students so that it would reflect Kell's skill set (as an audit student, she cannot perform tasks of registered technicians, such as injections) and helped place her at Delton Veterinary Hospital in north Edmonton. After her program in 2014, Kell's work experience and studies helped her get a part-time job at the clinic as an animal care attendant. (She spends much of the rest of her week volunteering at locations including the Edmonton Valley Zoo, where she helps look after Lucy the elephant.)

At Delton, Kell walks dogs, sanitizes kennels and restrains animals – a job that can have a profound impact on a pet's well-being. "An animal that's well restrained, you're going to get blood from," Glasier offers as example. "An animal that's poorly restrained, you're not." Handling even the biggest animals doesn't phase Kell. The trick, she says with a laugh, is "just don't let go."

Kell enjoys her job, in part because of the challenge that comes with it. Compared to labs at school or previous experience in pet stores, "it's a different work environment than I'm used to," she says. "It's more fast paced, kind of a stressful job. But it's good. I'm learning lots."

> "NAIT's prepared me enough to push me into the vet world."
>
> - JACQUIE KELL
> ANIMAL CARE
> ATTENDANT, DELTON
> VETERINARY HOSPITAL

One day, the 24-year-old would like a paid position at a zoo, and sees herself at the outset of a career that will allow her to continue to explore her passion for caring for animals.

"NAIT's prepared me enough to push me into the vet world," she says.

KELL'S PRACTICUM REPRESENTS a step forward for inclusive post-secondary for all students at NAIT. The work placement plan Glasier spearheaded with Kell will be applied to other students, says Marusin. Post-secondary inclusion will grow at NAIT in other ways as well and be guided almost entirely by onsite AACL staff, including Taylor. Currently, the School of Hospitality and Culinary Arts, JR Shaw School of Business, and the Personal Fitness Trainer, Animal Health Technology, Digital Media and IT, Millwork and Carpentry, Landscape Architectural Technology and Radio and Television programs accept inclusion students. This is a small fraction of the polytechnic's programs.

To inclusion candidates, though, this fraction often seems like the coolest stuff to study. AACL staff are encouraging potential students to consider other options. They are collaborating with Marusin to reach out to program chairs and address myths that include increased workloads associated with students with developmental disabilities, as well as safety issues.

"It's not any more work," says Lorraine Glass, a Personal Fitness Trainer instructor now in her second year of teaching Harris. As for safety issues, AACL inclusive post-secondary coordinator Jessica Brandsma points to Culinary Arts. The program regularly hosts students in an environment involving open flames and sharp knives. "There's still a chance they might cut themselves but that is the normative experience," she says. "Any student might cut themselves."

The more that the AACL team and Marusin can increase access for students, the better the chances for the cultural shift they believe would free more people with developmental disabilities from what Brandsma calls a "life of loneliness and segregation."

Left: Jacquie Kell's studies at NAIT helped her land a job at an Edmonton veterinary clinic.

"There are so many people doing nothing at home – and families struggling to understand how they can support their son or daughter."

"THIS IS THE VERY FIRST TIME that I feel that my child has been treated 'normal,'" says Harris's mother, Sandra. "They [instructors and students] treat him like he doesn't have a disability and I truly respect that. In order for my son to grow, that's what he needs.

"This is finally life for Geoff."

Harris's parents have spent most of his life trying to get education systems to acknowledge his capabilities. They don't need to with NAIT. Over the first two years of his program they've seen his confidence grow, as well as his comfort with social situations and fitting in. There's still room to grow with both, notes Sandra. Harris would like to be able to get to know his classmates better before he's done at NAIT. "He still doesn't get out as much as he'd like to. Don't get me wrong – things are still lonely for him."

Nevertheless, he's reached a point in life where he's less distracted by daily struggles and able to focus on goals. Harris sees his strength in leadership, a role he embraced during a job last summer leading City of Edmonton children's day camps (which he'll resume this year). One day, after he crosses the stage at convocation to collect his certificate of completion, he'd like to move to Vancouver and work with disadvantaged kids. "I'd try to help them out by giving them lots of encouragement," he says.

In the meantime, the skills Harris has learned at NAIT – and his work and social experiences – are likely already enough to help him land a job after completing his studies. Glass doesn't see him as a personal fitness trainer but "if he stays in the health fitness area I think he would probably fit really well into an organization – an accepting organization, maybe a YMCA or a private location – knowing the basics of where everything goes, cleaning equipment, talking with people."

Asked where Harris thinks he might be without NAIT and AACL, he answers immediately: "Lost and confused."

That he doesn't feel this now suggests that, in some ways, he's already succeeded as a student of inclusive post-secondary education. This isn't measured by marks alone, says Taylor. Meaningful gainful employment is a factor, so is being included. "Generally we would define success as achievement in all three areas," she says. "That would be the ideal."

But the clearest sign that Harris's time at NAIT has been worthwhile might be his attitude. Harris himself admits that he'll put on a brave face to try to please people but he seems genuinely optimistic. So far, the most important thing post-secondary education has taught him is "that I can do more things if I have a clear, open mind – and that if you're young you have a bright future ahead of you," he says.

"I'm so curious about what is going to come next." ▮

CHANGING THE SYSTEM

Experts say there's no such thing as an "average" student, notes Wendy Marusin. "Variability is the norm but we often are in systems built on the notion of an average student."

Much of her job as manager of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at NAIT involves trying to change aspects of those systems and learning environments that can create barriers for students. That means providing vital services including note-taking, sign language interpreting, special accommodations for exams, reduced course loads and more for the roughly 1,200 people who annually identify as students with disabilities.

Lana McLaughlin (Civil Engineering Technology '15, below) saw the benefit of services like these during her time as a student. Two decades after suffering a severe traumatic brain injury in her late teens, she decided to return to school. McLaughlin explained in a speech at a recent Disability Awareness Day at NAIT, she realized she needed help after failing a first-term exam. She wasn't after "an advantage," she said, "it was just levelling the playing field." SSD helped her get more time with exams and a thorough assessment that led to a learning strategy for the rest of her program.

"I relearned how to learn," McLaughlin said. "And the best part was going from failing a year ago to the honour roll [in] the second term."

Rebecca & her Chocolate Factory

International acclaim is just the latest sweet success for alumna Rebecca Grant's artisanal Violet Chocolate Company. Is it her golden ticket to expansion?

STORY BY
MARTA GOLD
PHOTOS BY
BLAISE VAN MALSEN

FOR REBECCA GRANT, the path to success has been as smooth as one of her award-winning chocolates. Fresh out of business school, the Culinary Arts grad has molded her passion for artisanal chocolate into a small but thriving operation, winning national and international recognition for her inventive approach to combining sweet and savoury ingredients.

Now the 28-year-old entrepreneur has some stickier decisions to make, including how to capitalize on her success so far and potentially expand her popular business while maintaining the creative, small-batch approach that has made her one of the country's most acclaimed chocolatiers.

The Violet Chocolate Company, a business Grant started while still in school, is just past its first full year of operation since she graduated – a year in which three of Grant's hand-made-in-Edmonton bars won awards (a gold and two bronzes) at the prestigious International Chocolate Awards in London.

Grant's company was one of only two Canadian businesses to win a gold medal at the awards, which attracted about 950 different products from around the world, all of which were already award winners in their own regional chocolate competitions.

"You look at the list of [winning] companies and they're well-established European chocolatiers who have been around for years and really know what they're doing – and you see your name in there and think, 'That can't be right,'" says Grant (Culinary Arts '08, Management '13, Marketing '14).

"It really validates that I'm doing the right thing and have what it takes to make it a success," she adds.

That Grant has the right stuff when it comes to chocolate was already evident from her showing at the Canadian chocolate awards last October, when 10 of the 12 chocolates she submitted won awards.

"It was unbelievable," she says. "That was the most awards anyone in the competition won."

GRANT'S CREATIVE FERVOUR IS tempered by her business education – hence her plan to first test the market for a future retail space by setting up temporary, pop-up shops as a next step. Currently, she sells at farmers markets, online and through other retailers such as gift, flower and specialty food shops. She also does custom orders for weddings and other occasions, makes diabetic chocolate and creates mint chocolate replicas of the Alberta Legislature building, sold in the legislature gift shop. She'll even sell by appointment from the southwest-Edmonton townhouse she uses as a commercial production facility.

"I do want to be realistic," she says of her business plans. "Is Edmonton ready for another boutique chocolatier, stand-alone shop? I do want to have a retail space but I don't want to push it if it doesn't feel like it's the right time."

"I think my culinary background gives me the palate to be able to pull off the weirder flavours."

– REBECCA GRANT, OWNER, VIOLET CHOCOLATE CO.

"Anyone can buy a tempering machine and have perfectly tempered chocolate, but then you're losing the art of what being a real chocolatier is."

– REBECCA GRANT

Jacek Chocolate Boutique and Sweet Lollapalooza, for example, are two popular local shops but each of those has found a slightly different niche, she says, with Jacek focusing more on elegant truffles and Sweet Lollapalooza offering chocolates and other confections.

For now, Grant continues to make small-batch specialty chocolate, tempering it by hand on a big marble slab after melting it first on a double boiler. A tempering machine would speed up the process and allow her to produce more chocolate, she acknowledges, but she wants to maintain her artisanal process.

"My philosophy is that anyone can buy a tempering machine, turn it on and pour chocolate into it and have perfectly tempered chocolate but then you're losing the art of what being a real chocolatier is," says Grant. "I want to provide the freshest product I can. I'm not about mass-producing extravagant amounts of chocolate."

Sure, it's messier, and sometimes by day's end she feels coated in a head-to-toe layer of greasy cocoa butter. But that, too, is part of the art, and the tactile pleasure. "I have fun making them and eating chocolate should make you happy, so I try to come up with stuff that's going to increase that experience."

GRANT'S OWN CHOCOLATE EXPERIENCE began after graduating from Culinary Arts. She trained with a friend who worked for local chocolatier Kerstin Roos, then returned to NAIT to study business with an eye to opening her own shop. But when Roos decided to sell the business and move to Germany, Grant knew the opportunity to buy her equipment and start her own chocolate company was too good to pass up, even though she was still in school.

The result was an on-the-job education like no other, mixing school assignments with real-life entrepreneurial lessons. "My instructors were great because they all knew I was starting a business, so any project that could relate in any manner to what I was doing, they let me use my company for," she says. "Each step I was in at school fit with where I was in the business so it really helped me create a stable foundation."

Standing out in the small but growing artisanal chocolate market in Edmonton wasn't difficult for Grant because of her unique – some might say weird – approach to flavours, she says. Habanero peppers and candied hibiscus flowers, raspberry-pepper-lime, and berries with Pop Rocks are among the many combinations she's used. Her Mediterranean chocolate bar includes candied Kalamata olives, sundried tomatoes and Italian seasoning; another dark chocolate bar is embedded with salt and vinegar chips. Stranger still was her caramelized onion truffle, among a line of savoury truffles she produced last summer that included sweet potato and Saskatoon berry-tarragon.

Her international-award-winning chocolates included a honey-rosemary milk chocolate bar, a pumpkin-chai caramelized white chocolate bar and a rose-mint dark chocolate bar.

"I think my culinary background gives me the palate to be able to pull off the weirder flavours," she says. "I like the challenge of finding a flavour that you don't think would ever go with

chocolate and making it work." Lemon and dill, for example, is a flavour combination that required a fair bit of experimentation but resulted in a bar that won a Canadian chocolate award.

CERTAINLY LOCAL CHOCOLATE LOVERS, whether at farmers markets or at high-end specialty shops, appreciate her attention to quality and flavour, she says. "People realize one of my $5 chocolate bars is not me selling you a Snickers and just upping the price ridiculously high," she says with a laugh. "Edmonton's come a long way in what people consider fine food and what they're willing to spend money on foodwise. When I first started culinary school, I don't know how receptive Edmonton would have been to specialty chocolate."

Clayton Folkers (Cook '79), an internationally acclaimed pastry chef and instructor in NAIT's Culinary Arts program, says the shift is part of a larger food trend, fuelled by people's exposure to more and better products through travel and the Internet.

"It's that whole rediscovery of good-quality product," he says. "We had this huge shift away to industrial plants in the '60s, '70s and '80s. Now we're seeing the resurgence of these smaller, niche-market items, whether it's chocolates or breads or specialty pastry shops."

Folkers says there's no reason why a talented, small producer like Grant can't compete with international heavyweights. "Creativity isn't based on location," he says.

Grant is also benefiting from a market interested in supporting local producers, and connecting with community, says JR Shaw School of Business marketing instructor **Teresa Sturgess** (Business Administration-Marketing '83), who taught Grant, and is one of her products' many fans. "She has the ability to provide a really fabulous customer experience."

But balancing an artisanal approach and small-batch production with the need to be profitable and potentially grow is not easy, she adds. "You have to reach some point of scale; you still need some kind of volume to cover your fixed costs or it becomes just a subsidized hobby."

In order to supply larger retailers, small producers like Grant need to increase capacity with controlled growth, says Sturgess, an approach Grant seems to have embraced.

She has already hired a part-time staffer to help with packaging and will likely bring in someone soon to help with production. Her chocolate offerings continue to expand, growing from her original line of 10 flavours to almost 20 now, plus a monthly special: a "Violet Edition" that is limited to 100 bars. A line of larger, 80-gram bars is in the works (her current bars are 36 grams) along with a new product, chocolate-covered nuts.

While she has no shortage of ideas for products, packaging and marketing, Grant is also realistic about how much she can take on, and how quickly. At her busiest, she can make 850 chocolate bars a day by herself but she knows that pace isn't sustainable without help.

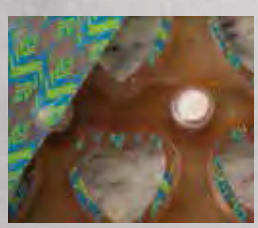
For now, she's content to experiment as an artist and grow cautiously as a business person. "I'm just getting into my rhythm out of school with how much I can produce," she says. "I think I'll just see where the flow goes." ▮

Truffles by Hand

1. *Coat the mold*

2. *Fill*

3. *Cover*



4. *Stencil*

5. *Share and enjoy!*

[RECIPE]

Cinnamon Meltaways

by Rebecca Grant

Makes approximately 20 pieces

INGREDIENTS

130 g	milk chocolate (plus an additional 20 g reserve)
40 g	coconut oil
0.5 ml (1/8 tsp)	or to taste, cinnamon
250 ml (1 cup)	icing sugar or cocoa powder

EQUIPMENT

- candy molds (size will vary)
- double boiler
- candy thermometer
- 2 bowls
- spatula
- sifter

METHOD

Combine the chocolate, coconut oil and cinnamon. Melt in a bowl over a double boiler. Allow the mixture to melt slowly. Use a candy thermometer to ensure the mixture does not exceed 32 C (90 F). If it does, remove from heat and slowly add in reserve chocolate.

Once the mixture is melted, pour into candy mold and let set in the fridge for approximately 30 minutes.

Remove from candy mold and toss lightly in a bowl of icing sugar or cocoa powder, depending on your preference. Shake off excess cocoa powder or icing sugar with a sifter.

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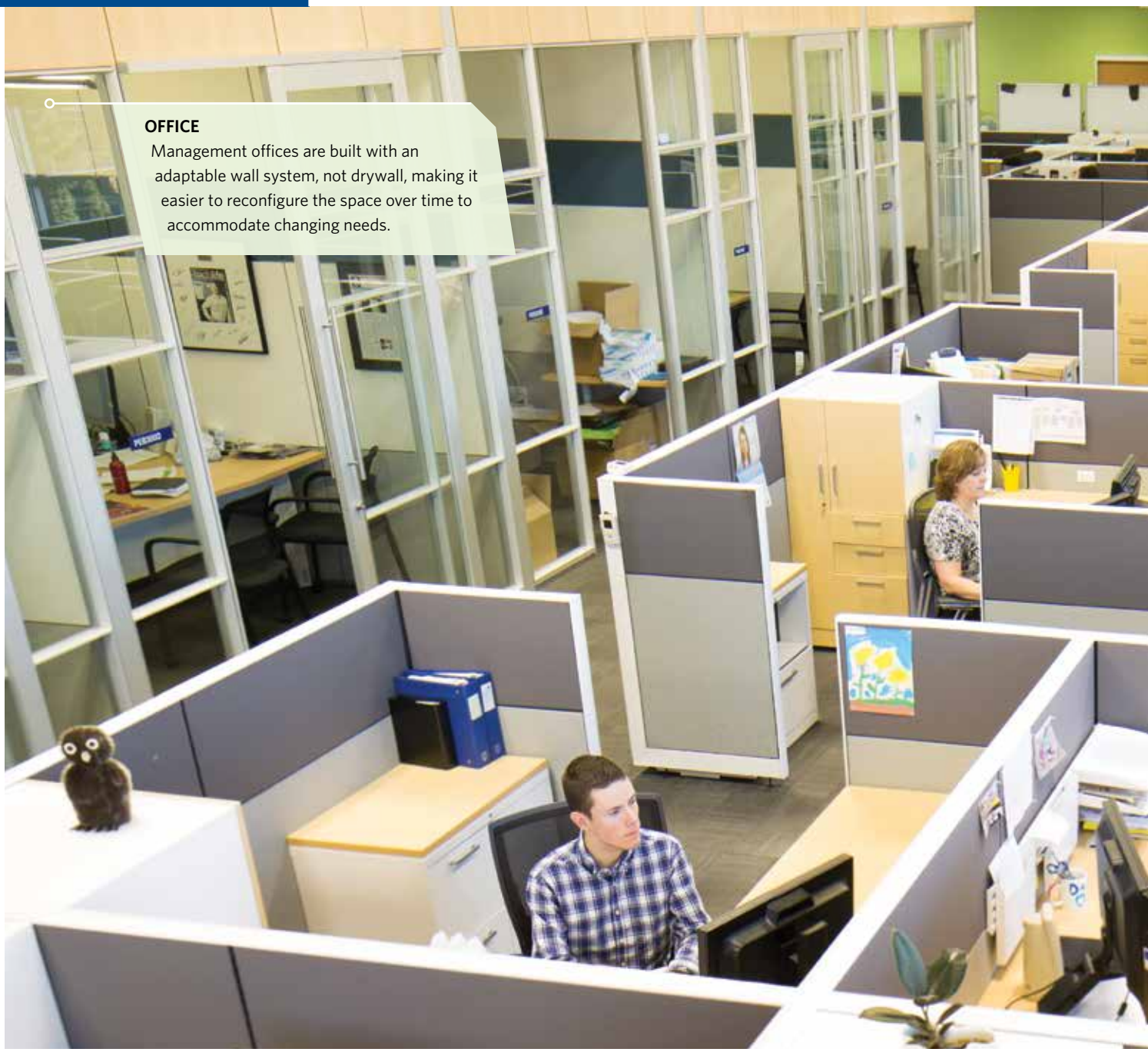
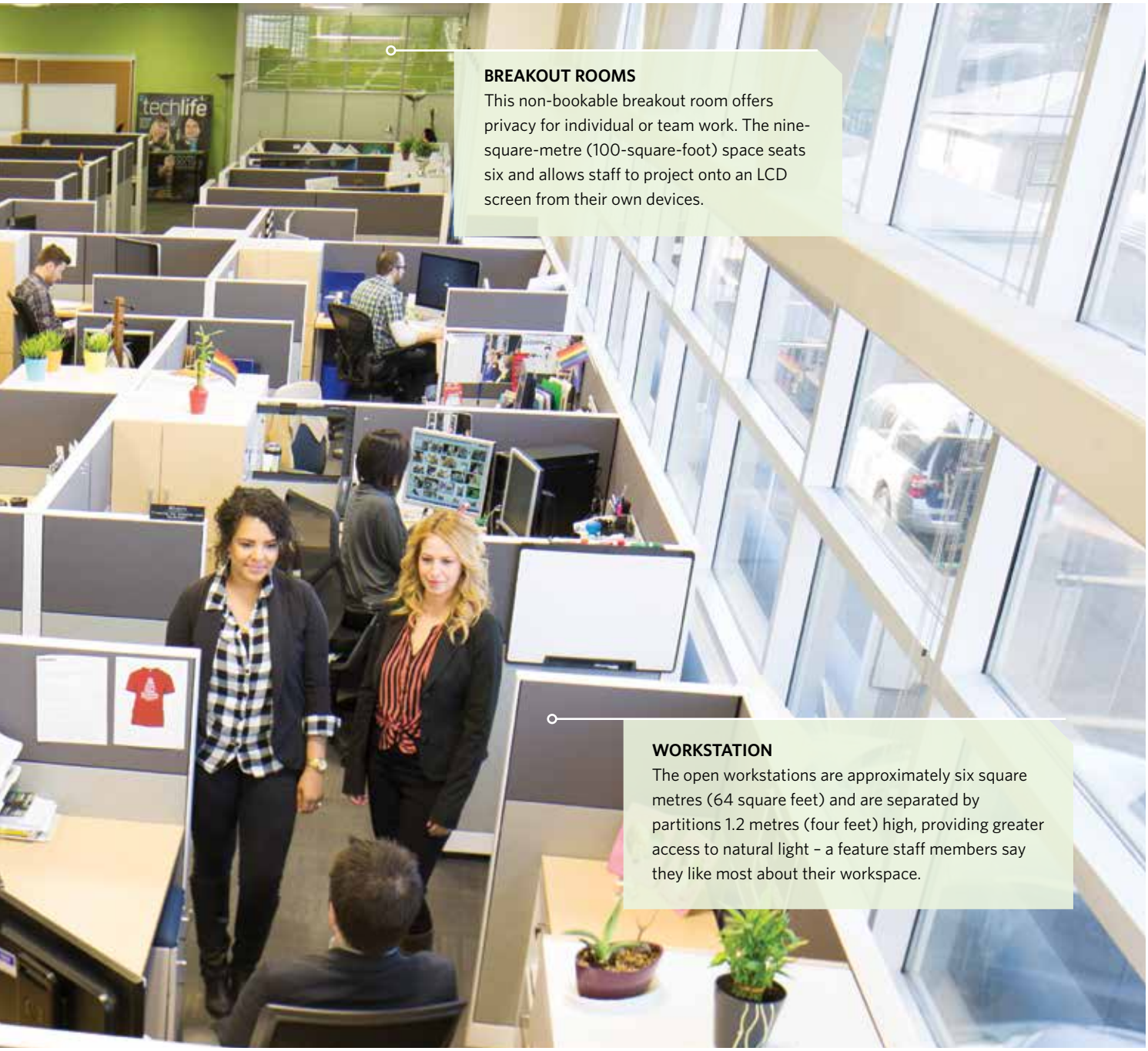


OFFICE
Management offices are built with an adaptable wall system, not drywall, making it easier to reconfigure the space over time to accommodate changing needs.

WORK, CREATE, COLLABORATE



BREAKOUT ROOMS
This non-bookable breakout room offers privacy for individual or team work. The nine-square-metre (100-square-foot) space seats six and allows staff to project onto an LCD screen from their own devices.

WORKSTATION
The open workstations are approximately six square metres (64 square feet) and are separated by partitions 1.2 metres (four feet) high, providing greater access to natural light – a feature staff members say they like most about their workspace.

PHOTO BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN

A RENOVATED BUILDING has become a test bed for the open-office design planned for NAIT's new Centre for Applied Technologies. The Centre will be one of Canada's largest simulation-based education facilities when it opens in fall 2016.

Approximately 50 administrative staff in Retail and Ancillary Services, Food Services, Marketing and Communications, and Health and Safety Services now work in open-office environments that promote collaboration and provide greater access to natural light.

"We tried to test out as many of the open-office design concepts as we could," says **Matthew Orlando** (Architectural Technology '07), who was the polytechnic's project lead on the renovation of the 1,375-square-metre (14,800-square-foot), four-level Princess Elizabeth Building, located at the south end of Main Campus.

Orlando's team trialed the size, furniture and partitions of the open workstations and closed offices intended for the Centre. His team also tried out the layout – the few closed offices are located toward the centre of the floor, with the open workstations around the perimeter. The departments of Facilities Management and Development and Information Technology Services also evaluated the furniture layout and technology in the non-bookable meeting rooms, which provide staff with options for where to work when they require privacy, for individual or team work, conversations and phone calls.

"We continue to look at ways to make adjustments on design as we go forward on other projects, including the Centre for Applied Technologies," Orlando says.

— Kristen Vernon

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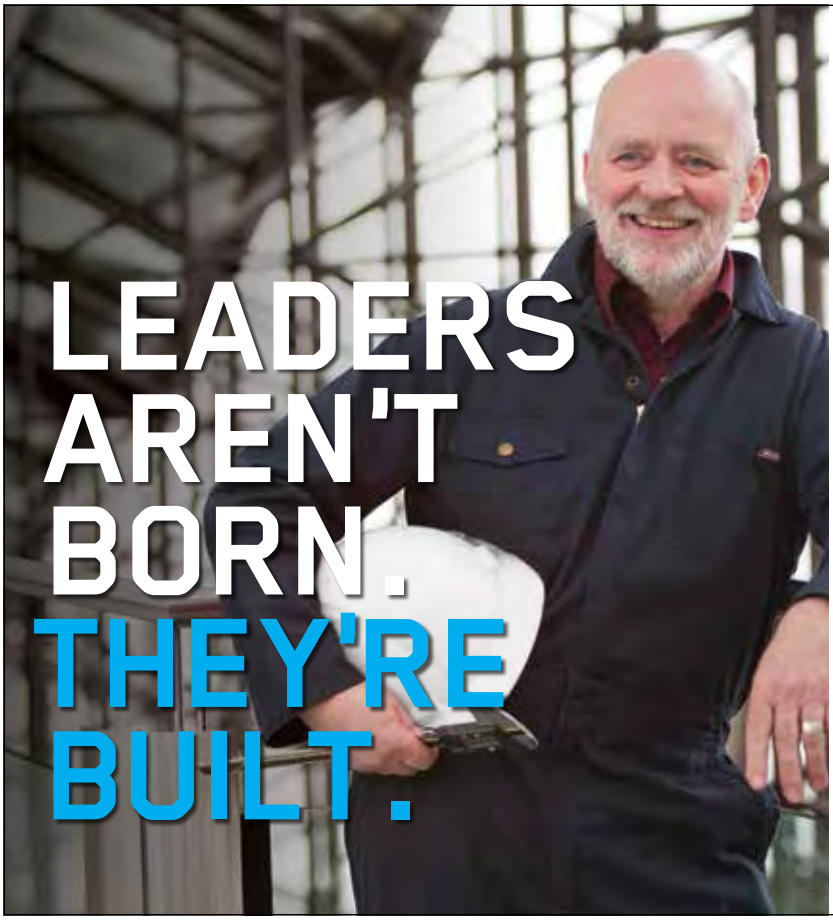
5 FIND A JOB

NAIT helps current students and graduates with job search information. Check out postings, industry websites and get tips on creating professional resumés and cover letters. There's also information about using social media in your job search and setting up your own business at **nait.ca/studentemployment**.



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Alberta's top companies understand that grooming the leaders of tomorrow requires building essential skills today.

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TECHNOLOGIES FOR SUCCESS

Stay current with the latest technologies through NAIT's Computer Training Centre.

NAIT offers a range of information technology learning opportunities – from industry training to advanced courses – all designed to help you stay on the cutting edge.

Whether you're looking to develop new skills or advance your profession, CTC delivers part-time certificates and courses that fit with your lifestyle, your pace and your personal goals.

For more information visit **nait.ca/ctc**

A LEADING POLYTECHNIC COMMITTED TO STUDENT SUCCESS

NAIT

SALARY:
$49,974 - $62,772

HOURS:
67.5 hours biweekly

LOCATION:
Municipal landfill sites

TRAINING:
Biological or environmental sciences diploma

DIVERSIONARY TACTICS

WHAT CRISTAN LOCKHART "NOSE" ABOUT COMPOST

A LAB TECHNICIAN at Edmonton Waste Management Centre, **Cristan Lockhart** is used to pungent aromas. The odours at the 233-hectare facility, located in east Edmonton, are best described as a mixture of rotting food and sewage. Nevertheless, Lockhart (Biological Sciences Technology '09) endures them in support of the city's waste reduction strategy.

North America's largest facility of its kind, the Edmonton operation converts solid waste and sewage into more than 50,000 tonnes of compost a year. It's sold to farmers, landscapers, oilfield companies and even local gardeners.

Here, Lockhart shares why large-scale recycling, for her, has the sweet smell of success.

WE TURN ALL OF THE CITY'S household organic waste into compost. It's screened then mixed with treated biosolids (organic matter recycled from sewage) which provide carbon and nitrogen to help start the composting process, before moving through the aeration bays for two to three weeks where the composting takes place. Then it goes to our cure site where the compost ages and we monitor temperature, moisture, maturity and pathogens like salmonella and E. coli. Once it's mature, usually after eight to 10 months, we do more testing to make sure it's OK to sell.

I MONITOR COMPOST and help with research projects. We monitor storm water, landfill gas and odours. A couple of hours each day are spent on composting: either probing or sampling piles outside, or in the lab testing samples and compiling data.

COMPOSTING IN CANADA IS CHALLENGING. It's different than in warmer climates. When you get to -20 C it's hard to keep the temperature of the materials around the 55 C that we're looking for to keep the composting process active. It slows down the operation.

I LIKE THAT I GET TO BE AT THE BEGINNING of a lot of different research projects. We've conducted waste audits for the new Waste-to-Biofuels and Chemicals facility, which involve picking through garbage, characterizing waste and seeing what's in it and what we're going to do with it. The new facility (which converts waste to biofuels like ethanol) is supposed to take us from 60 to 90 per cent waste diversion by 2017.

IT'S REWARDING that we're making a product that actually leaves the site and is being sold. We're helping to divert waste from landfill, turning it into a resource instead of something that just has to be buried.

As told to Natalie Lang

PHOTO BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN

Morning coffee

Oil keeps products on the move.

With 92% of our transportation needs fuelled by oil, it moves people, and the goods and services that drive our economy and improve quality of life. Find out more at **More2theStory.com**.

cenovus ENERGY

AND THE **WINNER** IS...

Recent awards and accolades for NAIT staff, students and alumni.

GOLD-MEDAL ALBERTA CUISINE

The career of chef **Ryan O'Flynn** (Cook '01) has circled back to Edmonton following stops in the world's best kitchens, where he has prepared meals for royalty. This February, he took top spot at the Canadian Culinary Championships. Watch for his pine-wood smoked sturgeon terrine on the menu at Share at Edmonton's Westin Hotel, where he's executive chef.

WEB EXTRA

Visit **techlifemag.ca/ryan-oflynn.htm** for a look at O'Flynn's amazing career.

SO SOCIABLE

In a recent survey of the social media environment for the Canadian post-secondary sector, **NAIT** ranked number 1 for total retweets among colleges and other polytechnics. MediaMiser ranked NAIT third overall for total mentions, following Mohawk and Algonquin Colleges. (Join the conversation at **social.nait.ca**.)

QUICK FINGERS

Captioning and Court Reporting instructors **Joanne McKenzie** (class of '94) and **Janice Plomp** ('82) proved they've still got the touch in speed competitions last fall. McKenzie finished first at an Alberta Shorthand Reporters Association competition while Plomp reached second place at a National Court Reporters Association event in San Francisco. "It gives us a little bit of street cred," Plomp says with a laugh.

ALL THE RANGE

Blair Lebsack (Cook '98) brings the farm to the city with RGE RD, the Edmonton restaurant he co-founded. His focus on seasonal ingredients and strong support of local producers earned the eatery the number 4 spot on *enRoute* magazine's list of best new Canadian restaurants.

WEB EXTRA

Visit **techlifemag.ca/lebsack-local-food.htm** to see how Lebsack incorporated local ingredients into his time as a NAIT instructor.

PHOTOS BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN, NAIT STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Alberta's TOP 70 EMPLOYERS 2015

For the fourth consecutive year, **NAIT** was recognized as a top Alberta employer. This February, the polytechnic was named among 70 progressive organizations judged according to criteria that include work and social atmosphere; health, financial and family benefits; vacation leave; and professional development.

YOUNG AND TALENTED

Avenue magazine's annual Top 40 Under 40 has become one of Edmonton's most prestigious who's-who lists. Like years previous, the 2014 roster included an impressive number of NAIT grads, including:

- **Curtis Comeau** (Radio and Television '01), photographer
- **Tiffany Linke-Boyko** (Management '07), Startup Edmonton COO
- **Julie Matthews** (Radio and Television '95), senior investigator, Consumer Investigations Unit at Service Alberta
- **Andrea Peyton** (Accounting '03), founder and CEO, Weehelp Foundation
- **Paul Shufelt** (Cook '01), executive chef, Century Hospitality Group
- **Shane Turgeon** (Radio and Television '01), owner, Shades of Grey Tattoos, Toys, Comics and Art; general manager Edmonton Comic and Entertainment Expo

AND THERE'S **MORE!**

NAIT's department of **Institutional Research** won the Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association's Best Practices Award for its use and sharing of Tableau, a data management software that helps drive key decision-making at the polytechnic.

It was another great year for the Ooks. Read about the results at **techlifemag.ca/ooks-2014-15.htm** – including double gold in provincial hockey playoffs.

For implementing programs that promote awareness and eliminate stigma about mental health, **NAIT** earned the 2014 Workplace Wellness Award presented by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division.

Before winning at the nationals, **Ryan O'Flynn** also took gold at Gold Medal Plates Edmonton. Flanking him on the podium were **Blair Lebsack** (silver) and **Lindsay Porter** (bronze, Culinary Arts '06).

Reynolds-Alberta Museum curator Laurel Neustaedter (top) is happy to receive NAIT's vintage vehicle manuals, a donation co-ordinated by Christine Loo (middle) and processed by Audra Chan, both staff members of the NAIT Library.

MANUAL TRANSMISSION

The NAIT Library makes a contribution to Alberta's car culture.

FOR MANY OF US, vehicles – however much we love them – play little more than supporting roles in the daily drama of getting from here to there. Schedules might slide without them, but the heroism of cars, trucks and minivans often goes unsung, with our most passionate feelings for them usually reserved for breakdowns.

Laurel Neustaedter, of the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin, sees the story of the vehicle differently. That's why she was pleased to add 161 vintage service manuals, donated from the NAIT Library, to the museum's collection of more than 60,000 documents.

Though the story of the automobile is shared by the world, it's particularly entwined with the lives of people in this province, says the agriculture, industry and document collections curator. "There's such a significant car culture in Alberta: lots of car clubs, lots of people interested in collecting and restoring."

The museum, focused on transportation and technology, provides vehicle enthusiasts from Alberta, Canada, even across the continent, with information to get their old motors running – information that due to age or rarity hasn't been digitized or exists only in pricey databases. Museum researchers use it as well to guide their restorations. But Neustaedter's collection has gaps, some of which were filled by the NAIT Library.

"What I really liked is they had some imports manuals – Volvo, Nissan, Volkswagen – which we don't have a lot of." What's more, it was in pristine condition, unlike the shop-worn materials Neustaedter is sometimes offered.

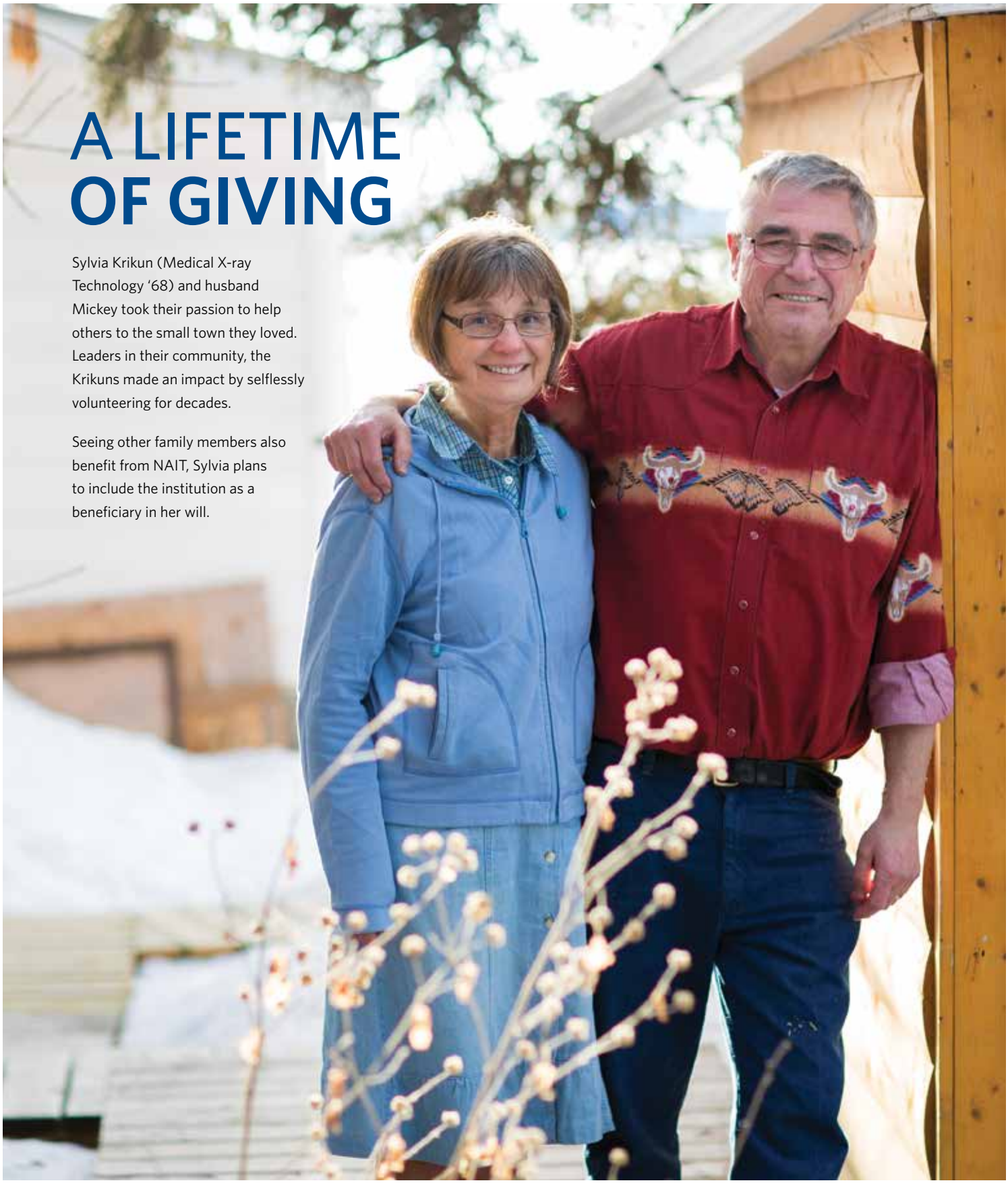
"We wanted to make sure that this information was still available even if there wasn't a home for it anymore at NAIT," says collections librarian Christine Loo, who coordinated the donation, valued at more than $1,000. The polytechnic's library, she points out, deals in current and in-demand materials rather than archives. Today, they provide digital resources commonly used in the Automotive Services Technician labs.

That change reflects common shop practices, says program chair Rob Dawson, who's happy the material will see new life in the community. The modern technician is as likely to reach for a tablet as a textbook. "The days of the guy in the dirty coveralls and the rag hanging out of his pocket are long gone," says Dawson.

Neustaedter, who's currently cataloging the manuals for the museum, sees that evolution in her collection too. She believes the material captures the story of technical as well as cultural development. The donation makes that story more complete – and more accessible to enthusiasts looking for help to shine a spotlight on their personal piece of automotive history.

— Scott Messenger

PHOTO BY BLAISE VAN MALSEN



A LIFETIME OF GIVING

Sylvia Krikun (Medical X-ray Technology '68) and husband Mickey took their passion to help others to the small town they loved. Leaders in their community, the Krikuns made an impact by selflessly volunteering for decades.

Seeing other family members also benefit from NAIT, Sylvia plans to include the institution as a beneficiary in her will.

Read more about the Krikuns' inspirational story and how you can leave a legacy of generosity at **nait.ca/giving**

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