

# THE GATEWAY

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ALEENA REITSMA

**WELCOME TO THE PARLOUR** A selection of some of the wall-crawlers that have become an obsession for Craig Scott.

## Web home to spider snapshot contest

OLESIA PLOKHII  
News Writer

As Halloween night approaches, people are anticipating trick-or-treaters at their doorsteps, ghouls and goblins in their worst nightmares, and creepy visions of spiders spinning webs of havoc in all corners of the house. But for University of Alberta PhD candidate David Shorthouse, spiders are part of his everyday life.

The long-legged arachnids have become an passion of Shorthouse's, who developed an interest in spiders only after taking a course on entomology, the study of insects, at Carlton University in his third year of studies. His passion turned into obsession as he studied all sorts of arachnids, 600 species of which live in Alberta alone.

"Part of the problem with spiders is that they are so poorly known," he said.

Shorthouse estimated that there are more than three times the 36 000 distinct spider species currently known and catalogued by science.

Today, he's the proud founder of a unique annual newsletter called *The Canadian Arachnologist*, and owner of a popular website of the same name that recently wrapped up its second-annual spider photo contest.

"[The website's] something that I started out-of-pocket on the weekends

from grocery money," he said.

That small investment has now grown to be known worldwide, which Shorthouse says has offered him the chance to work on protecting spider habitats, some of which are threatened by forestry and mining operations. He's also involved in the design of biodiversity websites all over the world that keep track of the spider community to assess the health of their environment.

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**DAVID SHORTHOUSE,  
PHD CANDIDATE**

"Spiders are predators, so they fit very strongly atop their food chains, and so whatever they eat is a good indication of the health of the ecosystem," Shorthouse said.

Via the website, Shorthouse has organized an arachnid competition that has generated a grand response. People all over the world sent in images of arachnids that were open to a public vote, with only one creepy-crawly weaving

its web of victory to the top. This year, Shorthouse registered an estimated 4500 votes that ranked submissions from South and North America, as well as India and Australia, but it was Edmontonian Joanne Bovee's photo of a crab spider underneath a pink flower petal that took the cake.

Shorthouse explained that he plans to produce a calendar and donate the bulk of the proceeds to the E H Strickland Entomological Museum, here at the U of A, or to the Royal Alberta Museum. This year's winning image, of a yellow crab spider that changes colour to adapt and evolve, will be featured on the cover of the 2006 calendar. Shorthouse explained that they're used for empirical study and are the subjects of continuous scientific research.

"Spider silk is one of the most tensile and strongest known substances, being 10-20 times stronger than steel at that equivalent diameter," Shorthouse explained, adding that the silk is being tested in its effectiveness in bullet-proof vests. Spider venom is also being experimented with in human cancer research, yet the minimal production of venom available hinders this scientific goal.

"Hopefully [the calendar] gets people thinking about [spiders] in a friendly manner, rather than rushing to squish it and flush it down the toilet," Shorthouse said.

## Calgary calls for greater funding

Schools in Calgary cite runaway enrolment and lack of finances from province as serious problems

SCOTT LILWALL  
Deputy News Editor

As enrolment rates rise and students are being turned away from postsecondary institutions in Alberta, some Calgary institutions are raising concerns that they're not getting a fair slice of provincial funding.

Julie Labonte, Vice-President (External) for the University of Calgary's Students' Union, said that the funding deficit is forcing the institution to turn away prospective students for lack of room.

"I think it was 6000 students that we had to turn away this year. We have the want and the demand to take on more [people], but we don't have the funding," Labonte said.

In a news release sent out in August, U of C announced that nearly 14 000 people applied for admission to the school. Most of the applicants were looking for spots in the school's

business and engineering programs. Labonte explained that this was one of the largest surges in enrolment that the U of C has seen in its 40-year history.

"We could have the ability, but we do need the additional funding to expand these classrooms. We do have a lot of space that could be utilized, but it needs to be modified, which of course costs money," she said.

While the school has plans to expand its current facilities and to create additional space for 7000 over the next four years, Labonte was concerned about those students currently turned down for admission.

"Basically, turning these people away is, in our eyes, a failure. We are failing these individuals, these people who want to better their life and want to obtain some sort of higher education and are being ... forced away," Labonte said.

PLEASE SEE **CALGARY** ♦ PAGE 2

## CAUS criticizes Klein education comments

BILL LUTHI  
News Writer

Comments made by Alberta's Premier on postsecondary affordability have sparked criticism from an organization representing university students in Alberta.

Premier Ralph Klein's comments were recorded by the *Calgary Herald's* Kelly Cryderman in a 13 October article.

"All I know is that we are funding postsecondary education at all levels adequately. Probably more per capita than any other jurisdiction in the world," Klein was quoted as saying in the article.

David Cournoyer, Students' Union Vice-President (External) and chair of the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), recently criticized Klein's comments.

Cournoyer said that CAUS doesn't believe the comments made by Klein are accurate.

"It really is funny to see the provincial government, the Premier, talking about how good the system is when really, in reality, students are facing high debt loads, high tuition and large classrooms," Cournoyer said.

Cryderman also stated in the article

also stated the Ministry of Advanced Education was not able to provide figures that supported the Premier's assertion by the time that the article went to press.

Using statistics from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), CAUS stated Alberta ranks third in 2004/05 funding nationally, behind British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

The *CAUT Almanac of Post Secondary Education 2006* is used to measure the levels of provincial funding given to colleges and universities per full-time equivalent student enrolments.

"Last year the Premier promised that Alberta would have the most affordable tuition in Canada," Cournoyer said.

Cournoyer added that Alberta's students have been waiting for a new tuition policy for 630 days, ever since the government announced a full review into Alberta's postsecondary system.

Cameron Traynor, spokesperson for Advanced Education, defended Klein's comments and disagreed with Alberta's third place ranking in funding.

PLEASE SEE **FUNDING** ♦ PAGE 4

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### Six degrees of scary

Your mortal souls will be chilled to the bone in our spooktacular 6-page Halloween Bloodfeststravaganza!

FEATURE, PAGES 9-14



### Out in the cold

Andrew Renfree braved a blizzard to report on the Bears last chance at making the playoffs against Regina.

SPORTS, PAGE 19