

U of A writer-in-residence settles in for the academic year

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

Rob McLennan regards his newly acquired copy of Homer's *the Odyssey* as a fitting going-away present for someone who has temporarily relocated to Edmonton.

"It's about going away and coming back," the University of Alberta's 32nd writer-in-residence points out. "That's my whole year, completely."

Leaving his home base of Ottawa for nine months, McLennan has made himself a member of the U of A community, and will be splitting his time between writing, doing readings, and working with students. The author of numerous poetry and non-fiction works, McLennan says that he has a plethora of ventures currently on the go that he hopes to pursue this year.

"I'm doing so many projects that, usually, if one thing stalls I jump to another one, and then let the first one kind of bang around my head for a while until something clicks," he

explains, crediting his ongoing to-do list with saving him from being slowed down by writer's block.

"The first thing I learned with all these things is that some things take their own time, no matter how much you want to push it through or rush it. If it's going to take the time it's going to take, there's really nothing you can do about it," he says.

McLennan has also recently launched a career as a publisher, and although his literary resumé primarily contains works of poetry, he says he has never refined himself to the genre.

"I've never called myself a poet," McLennan clarifies. "I think the term is very reductive—it presupposes that poetry is all I do, and if I am to call myself something based on what I do most of all, I'd be a sleeper or a television watcher."

And while McLennan has always lived in eastern Ontario, he's no stranger out west, having done twelve cross-Canada book tours since 1997.

"I've done more stuff here than I've

done at any university across the country, which is pretty cool," he notes, adding that he's been impressed by the amount of attention the arts seem to receive in Edmonton.

"Ottawa has the worst per capita arts funding in the entire country."

Tom Wharton, current WRITE program director and former chair of the Writer-in-Residence committee responsible for appointing McLennan, credits the program, which is the longest-running of its kind in Canada, with providing authors the opportunity to engage in their writing for a year without having to worry about their financial situation.

"A lot of writers, they live pretty close to the bone, right? And so it's an opportunity, and it's a help to them for a year," Wharton says, adding that students shouldn't feel intimidated to knock on McLennan's door for feedback on their own writing projects.

"He's very friendly, and I'm sure it would be really beneficial to people."



MIKE OTTO

A SLEEPER HIT McLennan brings his poetry—among other things—to the U.

**Win a date
with an
SU Executive
member!**



Michael "Head Cheese" Janz

Steven
"Lap Dog"
Dollansky



Eamonn
"Money-maker"
Gamble



Chris
"Springrolls"
Le



Bobby
"Bad Boy"
Samuel



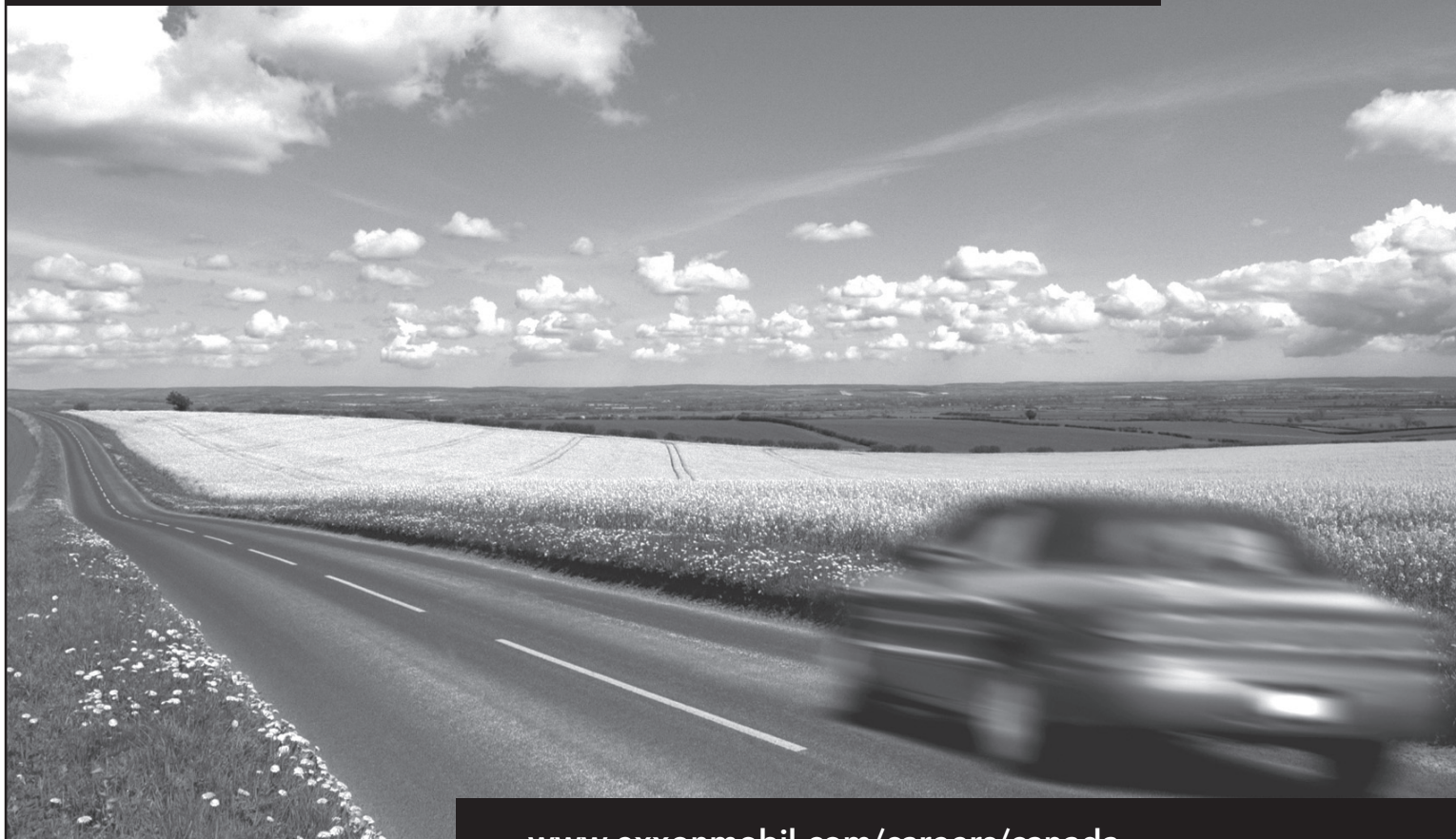
FEELING LUCKY?

Come to Gateway news meetings, Fridays at 3pm in SUB 3-04.

**GATEWAY
NEWS**

Playing matchmaker since 1910

More global energy. Less global impact.



www.exxonmobil.com/careers/canada

We're counting on people like you.
Are you ready for the challenges on the road ahead?

The need for energy is a very real environmental and economic issue. It affects literally everyone – everywhere in the world. At ExxonMobil Canada and at our affiliate, ExxonMobil Business Support Centre Canada, we're uniquely positioned to help find the answers to the world's toughest energy challenges. We have the resources, the technology, and the commitment of people just like you.

When you build your career here, you have the opportunity to make profound changes in the way energy impacts the world. From inventing new technologies, to unlocking new sources of petroleum, to developing more efficient fuel and engine systems, you can help make the breakthroughs happen.

The biggest challenges attract the best. Whether your background is in business, engineering, or science, an ExxonMobil company in Canada has a challenging career waiting for you.

ExxonMobil

Taking on the world's toughest energy challenges.™