Mediation comes under the spotlight

BY KAY ANSELL

Family law can be a minefield for legal bills and broken dreams, so having a mediator to help both parties reach agreement outside court must be better, right? Not necessarily, says Monash researcher Ms Becky Batagol. There is an underlying assumption held by all key players in the family law arena that mediation is better than court processes because it is cheaper and quicker. But such assumptions are neither right nor wrong just untested. "What we're saying is let's look a bit closer," she says. "Looking closer" will involve a three-year research program as the basis of her doctorate, which has immediate relevance to the Federal Government's recent changes to the delivery of government-funded family mediation services.

The proposals have seen community-based organisations increasingly take over family and child mediation under the Family Law Act, a role previously shared with mediators within the Family Court.

Behind this move is another apparent assumption that the Family Court system does not have a role in encouraging couples to use mediation, she suggests. Her study, "Community-based mediation: bargaining in the shadow of the law", will investigate whether the law influences couples in seeking mediation, the mediation process itself, and the impact of mediation assessed three months later.

Given more time, she explains, she would have liked to have followed up again after five years, because over-seas research suggests that the greater the interval after the mediation, the more unhappy women feel about the result. Previous research has noted that mediation may reinforce the existing power imbalance in a relationship.

This may be due to the nature of the process, in which the couple bring their past relationship "with all its ups and downs" into the mediation room. The power imbalances inherent in any relationship tend to favour men in financial and property issues.

Lack of legal or financial advice in community-based mediation may exacerbate that. As well, despite screening procedures, mediators may not detect the subtle intimidation of one partner.

An objective assessment of community-based mediation on which to base law reform proposals could have widespread benefits for years to come.

$14 million boon for research

BY DAVID BRUCE

Monash University researchers in science, engineering, information technology and medicine have received $14 million in competitive research grants from the Victorian Government.

The Minister for State and Regional Development, Mr John Brumby, speaking at Monash, University's Clayton campus, recently announced the allocation of $54 million for 14 projects under the Science, Technology and Innovation Initiative Round One Infrastructure Grants.

Monash was the most successful Victorian research institution, attracting a share of the funding in five of the competitive groups, equal that of any part of a consortium. The focus for the Round One grants was on projects with the best prospect of making an enduring difference to Victoria's competitiveness as a world-class location for research and development, innovation and commercialisation.

Monash deputy vice-chancellor (Research and Development) Professor Peter Darvall welcomed the

Sights and sounds bring a culture alive

The amphitheatre at Monash's Clayton campus recently resounded with the bright colours and melodious sounds of traditional Torres Strait Island songs and dances, performed by the 2000 Thursday Island State School Dance Team. The team of 13 boys and nine girls aged between nine and 12 years performed using shakers, bows and arrows, bamboo clackers, paddles and drums. The troupe performed at Monash as part of their annual tour. Through their songs and dances, they hope to teach audiences about the lifestyle and culture of the Torres Strait Islanders.
First female deputy chancellor appointed

By JUNE YU

Long-standing Monash Council member Dr June Hearn has been appointed as the first female deputy chancellor of the university.

Dr Hearn, who replaces Dr Geoffrey Knights in the position, said she had been working as the first woman to have been appointed. "I'm looking forward to working closely with the chancellor, Jerry Ellis, and my co-deputy, Paul Ramler, in assisting the Council to act as a forum for robust debate and as a cohesive unit working for the future of Monash," she said.

Dr Hearn has carved out a long and distinguished career in higher education, and has been a pioneer for women in many areas previously dominated by men. She was the first female senior lecturer at the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Melbourne.

In 1982, Dr Hearn moved into academic management at the then Victoria's College (Deakin University), where she was head of the law campus, foundation dean of the Faculty of Arts and the college's only female dean.

She also became the first female chair in the law faculty of the university. Her appointment was an enormous boost to the Victorian legal workforce and has been widely acclaimed as a major landmark in higher education.

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Monash law professor retires

By FLEUR HABELFIELD AND FIONA PERRY

Law scholar and humanitarian Professor Louis Waller has retired from Monash University after 35 years of distinguished service.

From the first days of teaching fundamental law subjects at Monash, Professor Waller was instrumental in the development of the Law School as a leading academic in Australia. His interests in law and medicine resulted in the introduction of subjects such as 'Elements of forensic medicine', while 'Legal issues in medicine' was the first subject of its kind to be taught to both law and medicine students.

Professor Waller was also the driving force behind the establishment of the first Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Arts degree in Australia.

He has published several books and contributed more than 30 articles and chapters in his areas of expertise, which included criminal law, legal education and ethics, the interaction of criminal justice, forensic medicine and issues of medical and legal reform and law reform.

Professor Waller's contribution has ranged from institutional legal reform and Aboriginal rights to the Geneva Conventions, his work with the Red Cross and the Committee of the Geneva Conventions Dissemination Committee.

But it has been Professor Waller's service, the Monash Law School's current raising funds to establish the Louis Waller Chair in Law, the candidate will exemplify Professor Waller's commitment to social justice, legal and ethical issues, and for research services to the community.

More information, contact Ms Fleur Haberfield on (03) 9905 5224.

BRIEFS

South African judge presents keynote speech

South African High Court judge Justice Melvin Manlan presented the Monash Law Faculty Foundation Keynote speech at Master Ellison last month.

Justice Manlan's speech examined how banking and commercial transactions in South Africa are affected by English legal concepts and the provisions of the country's constitution and Bill of Rights.

Justice Manlan is a highly respected scholar and academic in banking and commercial law. Prior to his appointment, he was a dean of Law at Rand Afrikaans University in South Africa.

Boost to scholarships increases access

The doubling of Monash Merit and Equity Scholarships from 25 to 50 awards each year, starting from 2001, aims to make a university education a reality for more students.

The increase in scholarships means that the number of students being taken into the Monash-backed program now equals the number formally supported by the Federal Government before funding was withdrawn in 1999.

Chair of the Coursework Scholarship Committee Professor Merrenkruis said the increase in Australian universities offers to scholarship holders had received a significant boost in recognition of the students' social, financial and other circumstances.

"The increase in scholarships recognises Monash's commitment to achieving equitable access for students," she said.

Survey to support female rural doctors

The results of a state-wide survey by Monash's Centre for Rural Health will be used to develop programs in support of female doctors in rural areas.

The survey was completed by 140 of the state's female GPs and 18 women demonstrating Monash's commitment to help find solutions to some of society's most difficult and controversial issues.

A former Victorian Law Reform Commissioner Professor Waller was a member of the Law Reform Advisory Council and foundation chairman of the Victorian Law Reform Commission.

His work with the Red Cross included a role as foundation chair of the International Humanitarian Law Committee of the Geneva Conventions Dissemination Committee.

He has also been the foundation president of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and chairman of the Criminal Law Working Group.

A lifelong interest in the interaction between the law and medicine resulted in the establishment of Professor Waller's visiting professorship at the University of Melbourne in 1981.

His interests in law and medicine resulted in the introduction of subjects such as "Elements of forensic medicine", while "Legal issues in medicine" was the first subject of its kind to be taught to both law and medicine students.

His involvement in community issues has ranged from institutional legal reform and Aboriginal rights to the Geneva Conventions, his work with the Red Cross and the Committee of the Geneva Conventions Dissemination Committee.

The survey was completed by 140 of the state's female GPs and 18 women specialists working in country areas.

The Monash Centre for Rural Health will be used to develop programs to support female rural doctors in rural areas. The centre is looking for families or student willing to welcome a Japanese student into their homes, and to experience and share different cultures and lifestyles.

For more information, contact Ms Fleur Haberfield on (03) 9905 5224.
Researchers urge caution when buying children's Christmas gifts

Parents are being urged to consider safety this Christmas when buying children's gifts, especially those that involve the risk of falls.

A Monash University study has found that 41 per cent of children admitted to hospital with non-fatal injuries, and about the same number who presented for emergency treatment, were involved in falls.

Ms Karen Ashby and Ms Maria Corbo of the Monash University Accident Research Centre said the current craze for scooters has caused children's injuries to skyrocket. About 100 children were treated by public hospital emergency departments in Victoria during the first nine months of this year after falling from their scooters.

"Common scooter-related injuries are similar to those involving bicycles or skateboards, with fractures, sprains and open wounds to the head and face, wrist and hand," Ms Ashby said.

The researchers recommend that parents buying a child a scooter also buy an appropriate helmet and knee and elbow guards — although helmet use may not be optional for much longer. One state, South Australia, determined recently that under its road regulations, scooters are "wheeled recreational vehicles", therefore requiring helmets to be used.

Ms Corbo said children should wear closed shoes while on a scooter and that parents should supervise as children, especially younger ones, "learn the limitations of the scooter, and themselves".

While older male children (those aged between 10 and 14) traditionally make up the largest group reporting falls from bicycles, in-line skates and skateboards, scooters appeal to both boys and girls across a broad range of ages.

According to the researchers, there is a common misconception that these types of injuries are "accidental, random and unavoidable". But, they say, appropriate design, construction, supervision and where necessary, regulation and enforcement — will reduce both the incidence and severity of injuries.

Better safety measures will not only benefit the children and families affected, but also the broader community. Child falls accounted for 27,000 hospital admissions across Australia in 1996-97, while in the 1995-96 period the estimated "total lifetime cost" of these types of injuries was $458 million.

The continuing high incidence and severity of child fall injuries has led the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care to target this as a high priority requiring "immediate attention". It is an area in which research does make a real difference. As a result of research into unsafe children's cots, a new Australian Standard became mandatory from 1998. Playground and nursery equipment is also subject to ongoing research and improvement.

The Accident Research Centre's recent report on child fall injuries (published in Monash, No. 44) is funded by VicHealth.

Artworks from the political struggle return to the new South Africa

By David Bruce

Part of South Africa's rich cultural and political history safeguarded in Australia for almost 30 years has been returned for display on Monash's new campus in Johannesburg.

The gift of 27 pieces of artwork includes 15 pieces classified as 'township art' and two from the Rorke's Drift Art Commune. The works of the black South African artists were adopted by the black consciousness movement of the late 1970s as symbols of the political struggle.

The artists were boycotted and supported by Australian diplomat Ms JW Johnstone during her posting to South Africa between 1974 and 1976. For her efforts, Ms Johnstone was regularly subjected to harassment from the authorities, while the artists were regularly beaten and jailed.

Pro vice-chancellor of Monash South Africa Professor John Anderson unveiled the collection at the official campus launch last month. One of the pieces, a 1975 self-portrait by Mr Michael Maapola, was later presented to the artist.

"In spite of not having seen the portrait for 25 years, its return evoked strong memories of a past era. "Yes, I remember this work very well," he said. "It was an intense, very powerful painting." It is to be seen in the studio in South Africa again." Now a professional artist based in Pretoria, Mr Maapola recalled how the work was completed in a township under the strict rule of apartheid. "I was always involved in politics, and as an artist I was making statements through my art. I have lost count of how many times I was picked up and thrown into jail, which happened almost every time I did a painting. But as an artist I just couldn't stop, because I loved my work so much."

Some of the artworks were purchased by Ms Johnstone at covert exhibitions. Others, she said, were given to her by the artists.

"The Australian diplomatic mission, among others, sponsored art exhibitions at diplomatic premises, but the authorities at the time did not look kindly on such events and attempted to prevent them. At one stage, I was even evicted from my apartment after holding an exhibition of township art," Ms Johnstone said.

"I had always hoped to return the artwork to South Africa, and I feel the time is now right for these works to be displayed for everyone's general enjoyment, and importantly, to ensure that the artists also have access to them."

The collection will be on display at the Johannesburg campus next year.

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For further information regarding this course contact Ms Fran Spain, Telephone: (03) 9905 2719. e-mail: frances.spain@med.monash.edu.au

MONASH UNIVERSITY

Monash University South Africa has its first resident and mascot — 'Monash' the dog.

'The light brown puppy of uncertain lineage and excitable temperament has taken occupancy of the campus site, currently under construction in Roodepoort, Johannesburg, under the watchful eye of his owner, Lawrence, the building foreman. 'Monash' has taken on the role of greeting all new visitors to the site, but when his welcoming gestures prove overwhelming, he is secured in the vehicle holding yard until he calms down.
Distance studies not appropriate for everyone, a national study reveals

By David Bruce

Undergraduate students who study by distance education, one of the fastest growing areas in higher education, are far more likely to fail than their on-campus colleagues.

A national study by Monash researcher Mr Ian Dobson and Dr Raj Sharma from Swinburne University of Technology found that 18.7 per cent, or almost one in five students attempting by distance education undergraduate students, produced a fail grade. On-campus students had a subject failure rate of 11.6 per cent.

The study looked at performance data for all Australian undergraduate students from 1989 to 1999 across all fields of study. Over that period the numbers of distance education students enrolled in Australian universities almost doubled from 48,409 to 94,010. This compares with an overall university enrolment increase of 51 per cent.

Mr Dobson believes that universities and governments could consider more appropriate levels of support, both academic and financial, for distance education students to help reduce both the trauma and cost of such high levels of student failure.

"Some students are, in a sense, at risk if they pursue study by distance education," Mr Dobson said.

"But at the same time distance education provides some students with more appropriate levels of support, both academic and financial, for distance education students to help reduce such high levels of student failure."

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"But at the same time distance education provides some students with more appropriate levels of support, both academic and financial, for distance education students to help reduce such high levels of student failure.

The analysis found clear trends in the failure rates that related both to the type of student and the type of course being attempted. Those students most at risk were young, male, or attempting subjects such as maths and computing, business and economics, or engineering.

Age was an important determinant of distance education success, with one in four students failed by students aged under 24.

"Considering this age-linked factor, it would be preferable for younger undergraduates, and in particular school-leavers, to first have exposure to an on-campus learning environment, perhaps with an element of distance education later in their course," Mr Dobson said.

Results of the study were presented at the Innovations in Higher Education 2000 Conference, University of Helsinki, in September 2000.

Internship gives students a head start in politics

By Corey Nassau

Monash arts/law student Ms Melissa Gaddie was one of only two Victorians who attended the Millennium Youth Parliament in England last month, after being selected as a joint winner of the President's Prize for the most outstanding Victorian Parliamentary Internship.

Ms Gaddie, who has a long-standing passion for politics, undertook her internship with the Member for Frankston East, Mr Matt Viney.

During her internship, she produced a report tackling the drug problem, which mixes both on- and off-campus delivery, could be particularly important for these students," Mr Dobson said.

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Is democracy inevitable in the People's Republic of China?

Despite some limited signs of democracy at the national and local levels, democracy in China is still a long way off, predicts political scientist Dr Dennis Woodward.

Since the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the post-1978 reform era initiated by Deng Xiaoping, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has undergone dramatic changes.

China’s economy has largely made the transition from a centrally planned socialist economy to one in which market forces generally prevail—a socialist market economy.

Growth in economic liberalisation, first evident in the rural sector where a return to household farming replaced the collective farms, was subsequently extended to the urban sector with the advent of private enterprise and the opening of China to foreign trade, loans and investment under the open door policy.

These economic reforms necessitated a relaxation of controls by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-dominated state. This saw an upsurge in calls for greater political freedom in the form of a democracy movement.

Thus there was the democracy wall movement of 1979–89 before its suppression and a revival movement in late 1986 marked by student demonstrations. The massive demonstrations of 1989, centring on occupation of Tiananmen Square, were ultimately savagely suppressed by People’s Liberation Army (PLA) troops acting under martial law.

The determination of the CCP to resist any challenges to its monopoly of power has been reinforced by what it sees as the lesson of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

A beleaguered monopoly has been expressed in fears that the capitalist West is seeking China’s peaceful dismantling from socialism to capitalism and an assertion of nationalism.

Despite this, there are those who see China’s democratisation as inevitable. This view is based on a number of assumptions.

Firstly, the movement towards democracy is seen as part of a historical trend: the end of the Cold War has seen the demise of all but a few former totalitarian states (whose days are numbered) and the triumph of liberal democracy.

The Chinese leadership has maintained that as a sovereign state it will not accept any interference in its internal affairs.

Secondly, the growth of democracy is directly linked with economic development. Since China’s economy has been growing at spectacular rates since the reform period began, projects of continued economic growth are often accompanied by the assumption that once a given level of economic development has been attained, there will be pressure for democracy.

The rise of an affluent middle class is also seen by some as an agent for democratisation. Growing economic power is translated into political power in this view. The obvious rise of such a Chinese middle class is heralded as the guardian of democratisation.

There is a related view which sees the seeds of democracy in the emergence of civil society. This view draws heavily on both the historical emergence of a sphere outside state control in western Europe which was instrumental in the growth of democracy there and on the more recent conscious use of civil society in undermining communists and achieving democratisation in Eastern Europe.

The applicability of this model to China is debatable. It has been condemned by its Eurocentrism and there have been serious doubts raised with regard to the degree to which the various associations and groupings which have emerged in the reform period are independent of control by the party-state.

Hence, village elections have proved themselves to be an effective remedy to rural unrest which has weakened compliance with party policies.

Village elections have proved themselves to be an effective remedy to rural unrest which has weakened compliance with party policies.
Students from Beaconhills College on stage for the recent Monash Schools Drama Festival. Photo by Greg Ford.

Teenage hopes and fears revealed at Monash Schools Drama Festival

BY SUE McALISTER

The recent Monash Schools Drama Festival not only showcased the high standard of performing arts in our secondary schools, it also provided a window on the hopes and fears of young Australians from a range of backgrounds.

This year's festival — the fifth — was run by Monash's Performing Arts Precinct and featured short, original works by groups of students from 17 state and private schools in and around Melbourne.

Festival coordinator Mr Tim Clarke said the festival had three main aims: "It gave years 9 and 10 students a chance to perform their work in a professional setting; it gave their teachers a chance to support them in it; and it exposed students to what other schools were doing. At the same time, it promoted Monash as a centre for the performing arts — a number of participants go on to study drama here."

The festival also revealed a lot about high school students, Mr Clarke said. "In fact, boys' schools tended to lean towards themes of death and destruction, murder and restitution. One boys' school did a spooky piece about the Apocalypse."

"Two girls' schools did moving pieces on identity and non-conformity, and the repercussions of people going missing. Several works looked critically at the media; one was a thriller about cults. But we also had fun with satires on politicians."

The 12th Biennial Conference of the Australian Association of Glass Artists (Ausglass) will host two Ausglass workshops, which, says Ms Stadus, "will provide a challenging opportunity for participants to extend their skills and experience with this medium."

The Faculty of Art and Design Gallery will exhibit work by all Australian students and members, and also present the Ausglass display and exhibition, which artists can exchange ideas and technical information, and show the latest in equipment and sculpture.

Monash art enters uncharted waters in new millennium

By Sue McAlister

Things will become crystal clear at Monash in January, when the university's Caulfield campus will host the 12th Biennial Conference of the Australian Association of Glass Artists (Ausglass).

The event's title, Uncharted Waters, sums up its aim — to intrigue, excite and inform both artists and the public by focusing on the future of glass art. It will highlight new techniques and concepts and showcase the versatility and beauty of glass.

Featuring a distinguished list of international and Australian speakers, the four-day conference, at the Faculty of Art and Design building, will be accompanied by exhibitions, lectures, discussions, workshops and demonstrations, tours, talks, parties and fringe events.

Event director Ms Pamela Stadus said the conference would be a mecca for both international and Australian glass enthusiasts. "The entire venue will be flooded with the beauty and magic of glass — it's guaranteed to be an outstanding success," she said.

The conference celebrations will feature the opening of the Glass Studies in the Faculty of Art and Design building, art demonstrations by internationally renowned glass artists will take place daily.

Speakers will include Czech Professor Sybila Petra, currently working in Britain, who will discuss present and future directions of glass; Mr Brett Littman, from the US, who will provide a challenging programme, and also present a new exhibition in the Monash Glass Studios; and Dr Robert Bell, who will present Australian perspective, Mr Wilhelm Derix from Germany will focus on the possibilities of architects, designers and artists working together on architectural glass in Europe and the US, while Mr Gerry Cummins will focus on Australian heritage glass conservation.

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What: Uncharted Waters — The 12th Biennial Conference of the Australian Association of Glass Artists

Where: Art and Design building, Caulfield campus

When: Workshops: 13-21 January (other workshops will run concurrently at RMIT University and Holme's Glen Institute for Arts); Conference: 24-27 January; Fringe: 22-23 January; Trade Display and Exhibitions: 24-25 January; Auction: 27 January; Exhibitions throughout January.

Who: For more details contact conference director Ms Pamela Stadus on (03) 9528 2160 or pamela.d@link.com.au; Ausglass at ausglass-ofic-net.e.net or Monash Glass Studio Coordinator Mr Nick Wirdnam on (03) 9903 3719.

The Wall #3' by Ian Howry, an Adelaide-based artist who will present an Ausglass workshop.

Exhibition shows international outlook

Three artists from Australia, Japan and India have joined forces to create another landscape — History/Life/Language, an exhibition that aims to accurately reflect a diverse array of cultural outlooks.

Judith Wright (Australia), Kaoru Hirabayashi (Japan) and Nalini Malani (India) have contributed works that express each individual's interpretation of the idea of 'landscape'.

Judith Wright's work will include projections of body parts moving in murky liquids and dim light, Kaoru Hirabayashi explores language through intricate Japanese characters. Nalini Malani has contributed a video work that explores the landscape of a widow's memory as she struggles to take care of her family.

The exhibition began in Japan, went to Bombay, and concludes at the Monash University Gallery. It will run from 5 December to 16 December 2000 and from 16 January to 30 January 2001.

For more information, contact the Monash University Gallery on (03) 9903 4217.

Young artists enter the fast lane

An exhibition of work by fine arts graduate students at Monash's Caulfield campus reveals a love of freedom and a keen interest in creative expression.

Fast Lane Exit is an eclectic selection of painting, drawing, sculpture and printmaking exhibits that mix media, expressing the themes that run through the students' work without restrictions. The works also feature unusual substances such as plastics or recycled rubbish.

Event director Ms Jennifer Roberts.

The exhibition includes pieces by artist-in-residence and Golden Ceramic Award winner Ms Hui-Fen Deng, potter and mosaic tutor Ms Jennifer McWhob and sculptor tutor Ms Gaye Roberts.

Running until 9 December, the exhibition will take place at the Monash Short Courses Centre on the university's Clayton campus. Some items on show will be for sale. For more information, contact the centre on (03) 9903 3810.

Smashing Pancakes wins national award

A Monash staff member received a national award last month for a play that focuses on community violence.

Recently performed in Greece, Smashing Pancakes, by Ms Sarah Vincent from Monash's Development Unit, was announced as the Victorian winner of the Australian Violence Prevention Award 2000.

The award is a joint state and federal government scheme which recognises programs in each state to counter community violence.
Emotions in the workplace becomes today’s hot topic

BY SABINA BUCCOVA

The sometimes cold rationality of the corporate workplace may be in for a bit of a change if a predominantly Australi­an­led study of emotions in the workplace continues to gain momentum.

To date, the new wave of interest has been academic­based, but researchers are now looking for input from management across a cross section of industry in order to devise an emotions­based model appropriate for the workplace.

It is hoped that management styles in the new millennium will better acknowledge the impact of emotions in the workplace and the importance of being able to identify and be responsive to them.

Organisations need to create work environments that are more conducive to people’s emotional wellbeing, according to Associate Professor Charmine Hartel from Monash University’s Department of Management.

Dr Hartel, Professor Neal Ashkanasy from the University of Queensland’s School of Management and Associate Professor Wilfred Zerbe from the Faculty of Management at the University of Calgary, are part of an international research train leading the research on emotions in the workplace.

In 1998, they organised the first major international conference on emotions in organisational life. The biennial conference was held again this year.

“The team recently released a book, Emotions in the Workplace – Research, Theory, and Practice, which draws on some of the papers presented at the 1998 conference as well as contributions from other leading scholars in the field. A second book is under way with significant input from Australian academics,” Dr Hartel says.

In 2001, potential industry partners to participate in the project.

It would be fair to say that most of the groundbreaking research in this field is coming out of Australia,” she said. The struggle between emotions and rational behaviour is as old as humanity. The current focus on quality is likely to have contributed to a renewed interest in people’s emotional wellbeing in the workplace.

Key negative emotions that have been identified in the workplace include anger, envy, frustration, aggression, shame, fear and embarrass­ment, while grudge, job satisfaction, enthusiasm and joy are among the more positive ones.

2001 an art odyssey

BY SUE MCALISTER

Next year promises to be a great year for art enthusiasts at Monash’s Art and Design Faculty Gallery at the Caulfield campus, according to gallery manager Mr Bywaters.

“We’re hosting a diverse and stimulating series of exhibitions, featuring works in glass, multimedia art, photography, prints and drawings,” he said.

“Our exhibition programme will range from Monash students to established artists, including one of Australia’s greatest, Fred Williams,” Mr Bywaters said.

January

The Australian conference, Australia’s leading glass artists’ conference, will bring together glass practitioners from around the country and overseas. It will be accompanied by exhibitions and workshops (see story page 6).

February

Monash will host a selected survey of art and design by some 12 masters degree students. Survey curator Mr Ross Moore says the exhibition “will demonstrate the high quality of visual product achieved by our art and design masters and PhD candidates”.

March

Supported by the Japanese Council General, The Beauty of Japan Photographed will feature works by four of Japan’s leading ‘establishment’ photographers. It will coincide with a visit by two Japanese industrial designers from Chiba University in Tokyo.

April

The gallery will present an exhibition of sexual and gender­based imagery by established artist and staff member Mr Ross Moore.

June

A cutting­edge, contemporary exhibition, curated by Mr Samantha Comte, will reflect what is happening in Melbourne’s art scene as well as elsewhere in Australia. It will be filled with youthful vigour, and will have that “right here and right now” feel to it,” said Mr Bywaters.

July/August

A selected exhibition of drawing, curated by Monash staff members Mr Geoff Dupre and Mr Yan Smith, will be held along the lines of a festival of drawing, including seminars and practical workshops. The catalogue essay will be by staff member and Age art critic Dr Robert Nelson.

September

This month will feature an exhibition of the paintings, prints and drawings by important Australian artist Fred Williams. “This is the blockbuster exhibition for the year,” said Mr Bywaters.

October

The gallery will present a dynamic multimedia presentation by new technology visual artist and staff member Mr Troy Innocent, who was recently awarded a $35,000 state government grant.

November

A selected survey of the best art and design work being created by Monash’s third­year, honours, masters and PhD students will go on show. Further information about these events, contact Ms Bywaters on (03) 9903 2883, fax (03) 9903 1867, or email monashnews@adm.monash.edu.au.

*Australian Winter*, 1996, glass panel by Ursula Huth, a German artist presenting a workshop at Ausglass.

Book features in ‘Inprint’ are available or can be ordered at Monash’s four on­campus bookshops.

- **CTTS (Casefield)** (03) 9571 1277 .
- **Clayton** (03) 9905 3111
- **Gippsland** (03) 5122 1771 .
- **Peninsula** (03) 9831 6392

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Antidote to plagiarism in the electronic age

If research being conducted by PhD student Mr Krisztian Monostori comes up trumps, literary copycats will be forced to think twice next time they consider lifting text from another person's work to pass off as their own.

Mr Monostori, from the School of Computer Science and Software Engineering, is currently developing an advanced algorithm aimed at the detection of plagiarism.

"Because technology has made access to information so readily available, there is a growing need to have better methods of policing the way in which original texts are used," he said.

According to Mr Monostori, his algorithm is a breakthrough because it utilises what is known as a 'suffix tree' to search a repository of documents much faster and more accurately than other currently available methods.

"Suffix trees have been used in many other areas such as file-compression and DNA-matching in molecular biology. But algorithms so far haven't used suffix trees for plagiarism detection," he said.

"This method uses a two-stage approach, with suffix trees used in the second stage to find the exact positions and lengths of matching chunks of text." 

By using the algorithm to build a structure for a particular document, it can then be quickly compared to a repository of documents to test for overlapping content.

While the most obvious application of Mr Monostori's research will be to aid in the detection of plagiarism in student essays and research papers, it will also prove invaluable for identifying illegal documents on the internet.

"Unauthorized copies of documents often end up on the web. The package I am developing will help search and identify these cases of copyright infringement," he said.

Mr Monostori is currently focusing on applying his research to the detection of plagiarism; he believes the research may also have applications in designing new and more advanced internet search engines.

Students scoop the pool in national design competition

BY SUE MCALESSER

Being chained to a desk may soon become more of a pleasure than a pain, thanks to some award-winning designs from Monash University students.

The Monash industrial design students have scooped the pool in an Australia-wide competition to design an office for the future.

The students won the top three prizes with designs which took into account ergonomics, commercial viability, style and comfort. Twenty design schools were invited to compete in the competition, run by Danish company Linak.

First-place winner Mr Nicholas Tozer won $5000 (or the equivalent airfare and accommodation to visit the Interzum 2001 furniture exhibition in Germany next May) with his 'M-desk' design.

Consisting of two vertical, transparent acrylic legs and a number of variable aluminium flat surfaces, the desk has a split-level effect and can be adapted to a number of different configurations.

"I'm absolutely delighted – and it's great for Monash as well," Mr Tozer said. "I am grateful to Linak for giving me and the other students the opportunity of entering the competition. It was a good learning process as I got to work on the prototype of my design, which Linak produced." 

Mr Joseph Ganino won second place (and $1000), and Ms Joanne Fleming won third place in the contest. They incorporated a variety of materials into their designs, including stainless steel and glass, creating an interesting variation in textures and a high technology look.

According to industrial design lecturer Mr Selly Coxon, the three students were successful because they showed they were sensitive to product possibilities.

"They understood the potential of materials and structure in the development of new ideas that were creative and relevant and, importantly, commercially viable.

"We’re also actively working to encourage women to take up industrial design, and this recognition of Joanne’s talent shows what we’ve known all along – women make very good industrial designers!"

Danish-based company Linak has subsidiaries around the world, including Australia. The company designs and manufactures products which improve ergonomics by using memory computers to make height adjustments to surfaces to suit the users of hospital beds, patient lifts, chairs, tablets and even car seats.

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