Audio-visual collection offers new directions for teaching, research

Prof. Peter Oberlander, the pro tem director of UBC's new Centre for Human Settlements, believes the University committed a considerable act of faith in agreeing to serve as custodian for the hundreds of audio-visual presentations shown at last summer's Habitat conference.

He also believes that the material now in the hands of the University offers an extraordinary opportunity for exploring new directions in the use of audio-visual materials for teaching, research and public education.

Late in May UBC announced the creation of a Centre for Human Settlements to act as the custodian for the 10,840 audio-visual items. They make up the 240 presentations that were made by the 140 countries that participated in the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements — commonly referred to as Habitat — in Vancouver in May and June.

"The Habitat conference," Dr. Oberlander says, "has to be seen as one of a series of UN-sponsored events on specific issues rather than discussions of abstract issues on a grand scale.

"In the late 1960s it became obvious that the UN, as an action-oriented organization, had to cut across the specialized interests of its offshoot organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labor Organization, and set in motion a series of theme-specific meetings.

"The result was conferences on the natural environment in Stockholm, food in Rome, population in Bucharest, women in Mexico City, human settlements in Vancouver and, next year, water in Buenos Aires.

"At Stockholm, we argued that the Habitat conference and also the UN conference ought to concern itself with the way in which the countries of the world are attempting to solve problems of human settlement, such as housing, urban blight, sewage disposal, energy - the whole range of problems that man encounters as he uses the environment more densely and intensively.

"Canada also proposed that the UN should use such a conference as a means of breaking away from the print medium and employ audio-visual presentations," Dr. Oberlander says.

"At most international meetings, delegates are drowned in paper. Much of it simply doesn't get read and most of it gets shipped back to its point of origin after the conference and is destroyed.

"An audio-visual presentation has some obvious advantages — it breaks the language barrier to some extent and when each of the presentations is transferred to a videotape cassette it can be carried around in your back pocket or easily shipped to any part of the world, where it can be shown on closed-circuit TV to a select audience or on a local or national television network."

"The UN accepted this approach for the Habitat conference and also endorsed the concept that the audio-visual presentations should emphasize solutions to problems involving human settlements rather than dwelling on the ills of the world.

"It wasn't until a couple of months before the conference opened," says Prof. Oberlander, "that the Canadian Habitat secretariat realized that it would have a unique collection on its hands and that at the very least it ought to be kept together after the meeting so that it would be a continuing asset.

"There were suddenly a whole host of problems to consider — what machinery should be set up to deal with the presentations and what form should they be in to allow for global access by those countries who contributed to the collection."

There were other complications. "No one knew what the collection would be like in terms of method of presentation, whether each item would be in the form of slides, film or videotape cassettes. There is also very little expertise available for cataloguing and maintaining a purely audio-visual library and, finally, no one at that point was prepared to give any guarantees about space needs and financing," says Prof. Oberlander.

"So the University, as an act of faith, offered to act as custodian for the collection, provided the UN was prepared to leave it here and vest the international copyright of the material in UBC, and provided the federal and provincial governments were prepared to give assurances of financial support."

UBC set up its Centre for Human Settlements and on June 12 representatives of the UN, UBC and the federal and provincial governments signed an interim agreement vesting the audio-visual materials in UBC until the end of this year and assuring the University of substantial funding.

Prof. Oberlander said he expects that the UN General Assembly will shortly approve an agreement naming UBC as custodian of the material for five years.

Since acquiring the material, UBC has begun the long and difficult process of assessing all presentations — films, slides and videotapes — and preparing an inventory of the presentations as a first step in the production of an annotated catalogue that will include an evaluation of each presentation.

"We've also put a lot of effort into coming to grips with distribution of the material and who is to pay for that."

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Reunion of women veterans benefits UBC groups

Mrs. Helen Dunbar is a different type of veteran. First of all, her grandson received an "honorary degree" from UBC before he was born. And although she served in the Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force during the London blitz in the Second World War, she rejects the natural reaction many of us have toward veterans—they somehow experience the bad times we went through ourselves.

"The war was awful. Since the young people today never have to go through something like that themselves," Mrs. Dunbar says, "I hope they never know what it was like."

Mrs. Dunbar, of UBC's Copy and Duplicating Centre, was chairman of an organizing committee for a reunion at UBC this summer of women who served during the Second World War in the RCAF and Royal Air Force. She and other women veterans spent three years organizing the event.

The organization was such a success that the group is donating its surplus of $16,000 to local causes—$8,000 to the Centennial Women's Committee, $5,000 to the Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society, $4,000 towards UBC's central heating, and $2,000 to UBC's Crane Library for the blind.

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The centre is governed by a board of management chaired by Dean Peter Larkin, of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The emphasis on the presence of the collection at UBC will not mean any new degree or training programs.

"This centre is an organization that will provide a service to existing disciplines at UBC," says Dean Larkin. "It will provide a way to draw upon materials and students and scholars from all over the world who will use it."

Dean Larkin said one of the main concerns of the board of management has been to bring specialists to the campus for a period of time.

The first scholar-in-residence will be sponsored jointly by the centre and the Department of History and Social Science. The next intruder in the building was the Department of Computer Science, which was organized in 1968.

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FINE ARTS GALLERY. Exhibit of works by British sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi. Continues until Dec. 11. Tuesday through Saturday - 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Basement, Main Library.

LOST AND FOUND. The campus Lost and Found is located in Room 208, Student Union Building. Hours are 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

SUNDAY, NOV. 21
3:00 p.m. MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY. Dr. Alan Sawyer, Fine Arts, UBC, on Pre-Hispanic Andean Musical Instruments. Rotunda Lounge, Museum of Anthropology.

MONDAY, NOV. 22
12:30 p.m. CANCER RESEARCH SEMINAR. Dr. Jim Hudson, Medical Microbiology, UBC, on In Vitro Models for Latent Herpes Virus Infections. Library, Cancer Research Centre, Block B, Medical Sciences Building.
3:45 p.m. MECHANICAL ENGINEERING SEMINAR. W. E. Edwards, graduate student, Mechanical Engineering, UBC, on Simultaneous Heat and Mass Transfer in Wet Wood Particles. Room 1215, Civil and Mechanical Engineering Building.

THURSDAY, NOV. 25
12:30 p.m. CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. Habitat film preview. Three films from Latin America. Discussion led by Prof. Peter Oberlander, Room B79, Woodward Instructional Resources Centre.

Notice must reach Information Services, Main Mall North Admin. Bldg., by mail, by 5 p.m. Thursday of week preceding publication of notice.

TUESDAY, NOV. 23
4:30 p.m. CHEMISTRY SEMINAR. Dr. D. G. Clark, Chemistry, UBC, on Triosiphosphate Isomerases: Isolation of isozymes and Chemical Modification as a Structural Probe. Room 250, Chemistry Building.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 24
12:00 noon DENTISTRY SEMINAR. Dr. Ravindra M. Shah, Oral Biology, UBC, on Teratological Safety Evaluation of Drugs. Room 388, Macdonald Building.
12:30 p.m. HISPANIC AND ITALIAN STUDIES LECTURE. Prof. Olga Ragusa, Department of Italian, Columbia University, on Pirendello's 'Six Characters in Search of an Author.' Room 202, Buchanan Building.

FRIDAY, NOV. 26
9:00 a.m. PEDIATRICS GRAND ROUNDS. Prof. Sydney Segal, head, Division of Maternal, Fetal and Neonatal Medicine, UBC, on Pediatrics in China. Lecture Room B, Heather Pavilion, Vancouver General Hospital.
10:00 a.m. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES COMMITTEE LECTURE. Prof. Joseph Meeker, Athabasca University, Edmonton, on The Planning and Implementation of Science and Technology Studies Programs. Penthouse, Buchanan Building.
3:30 p.m. COMPUTER SCIENCE COLLOQUIUM. David Kirkpatrick, Computing Science, Simon Fraser University, on Recognizing Graph Properties from Adjacency Matrices; A Survey of Recent Developments. Room 326, Angus Building.

SATURDAY, NOV. 27
8:15 p.m. VANCOUVER INSTITUTE LECTURE. Prof. H. W. Janson, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, on The Role of Chance in Artistic Creation. Lecture Hall 2, Woodward Instructional Resources Centre.