

WINTER  
2003/2004



# Wisdom

Grande Prairie Regional College Magazine



## **THIS ISSUE**

An Interview with  
Senator Tommy Banks

Math Describes the World

White Spruce Survival  
and Growth

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*In communities like ours the College is far more than a means to deliver education – we are key contributors to the*

*social, cultural, recreational and economic well-being of the region.*

We have a robust economy in our region and a relatively young population that we need to retain if we are to prosper. With the aging baby boomers and low ebb of immigration into our region we know that we must educate and retain our own if we are to succeed. The “Alberta Advantage” truly exists but can only be achieved if we have a workforce with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to succeed. Futurist Dr. Roger Goodman recently stated that Kyoto will not curtail oil sands production, but the shortage of skilled labour could. The impact of education (or its lack) is real and measurable.

A recent study estimated that colleges and technical institutes generate over \$2 billion towards Alberta’s economic activity. For every dollar invested by the Province in grants for post-secondary education, \$1.55 in salaries and benefits are added to the provincial economy. Improved health, reduced welfare, unemployment and crime also provide significant savings. In addition, post-secondary graduates are healthier and more productive, confirming the value of investment in post-secondary education.

Alberta’s 18 public colleges and technical institutes operate 168 campuses or learning centers in 106 communities across the province. Over half (131,000) of Alberta students enrolled in credit programs attend colleges and technical institutes. Another 250,000 Albertans register annually for non-credit courses. In North-Western Alberta Grande Prairie Regional College facilitates an estimated 3,000 full time and part time credit students and 13,000 non-credit students.

In the past five years the enrolment in Alberta’s colleges and technical institutes has grown by

13% despite recent program eliminations, enrolment suspensions and cutbacks. Enrolment is projected to grow by another 17% in the coming five years provided that Albertans invest the necessary resources in post-secondary education. It is for that very reason that all 18 institutions have embarked on an “Influencing Strategy” to convince the Province of the need to provide for appropriate, predictable, sustainable funding commencing immediately. Increases in grants need to be “appropriate” at a level that allows for reasonable increases in expenses for salaries and benefits, supplies and services. Grants need to be “predictable” so that effective planning can occur over several years without having to engage in a guessing game annually. Finally it has to be “sustainable” so that grants are supported on an ongoing basis by the economy of the Alberta Advantage.

In 2002 two studies emphasized the challenge facing our region. “Reasons for Going South” prepared by the Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse and “Rural Youth Migration: Exploring the Reality Behind the Myths” prepared by the Government of Canada both point to the trend of youth moving to the larger urban centers immediately after high school. And once they move away from the region, they are less likely to return. The first two factors influencing the youth were the lack of, or perception of lack of desired educational options, and a perception of lack of quality. We can correct those perceptions and for the future of our communities we must succeed!

We should all be telling the youth of our region that a significant number of educational programs are available here at GPRC, and they are of outstanding quality! At GPRC students can complete certificates, diplomas, an applied degree, several degrees from Alberta universities, and in the near future we hope to add some of our own degrees! The value-for-money here is outstanding. The benefits to our region touch every aspect of our lives.

– Jim Henderson

## A Sense of Community

The 2003 President's Ball was an unequalled success, raising over \$40,000 for the GPRC Annual Appeal. This black-tie event brought out 450 friends, donors, volunteers, staff members and students.

After a champagne reception emcees Kathy Harper and Ken Campbell introduced GPRC President Jim Henderson who opened the festivities and welcomed attendees.

Alumni/Foundation Board Chair Lyle Carlstrom addressed the crowd and reminded everyone about the strength of our region and what it took to make Grande Prairie Regional College what it is

today. Returning co-chairs Rhonda Side and Linda Side thanked the volunteer committee for all their hard work in putting together an event of this size.

The spectacular meal was catered by four local restaurants: The Iron Lunch Box, Jeffrey's Café Company, Golden Touch Catering and GPRC's own Chartwell's. After the meal, Faith and Desire, Vancouver's premier dance band took the stage and played music that had the crowd dancing in the aisles until the wee hours. The evening was also enhanced by performances by GPRC Conservatory of Fine Arts Dancers and Dancer's Academy.



This year the GPRC Alumni/Foundation resumed a campaign that began in 1995 to restore our College Theatre. Termed the Theatre Heritage Project, the plan is to raise \$550,000 to return the theatre to its former glory. The earlier campaign, a "seat sale", allowed community members to purchase a theatre seat including a plaque on which the donors name would be inscribed. Through the generosity of those donors we raised over \$100,000; money that is still in the bank. Those funds, in addition to the proceeds from the current campaign will go to the purchase of new seats, carpeting and theatre audio/visual technology.

The GPRC theatre is a well known landmark designed by famous architect Douglas Cardinal. This campaign is near to the hearts of everyone who has ever watched a play, musical performance or dance recital there, and once again we look forward to working with our community on this

very important and worthwhile project.

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Rhonda and Linda Side

## Recent Gifts

The Beaverlodge Area Cultural Society has generously established a Bursary in honour of Peach Country Artist Eric Bask. This Bursary is to be designated to a peace region GPRC fine arts student. The group made the presentation to Executive Director Carmen Haakstad (at right).



An anonymous donor recently donated \$10,000 toward the completion of our Alumni Room. This generous donation will be added to the \$3,000 already given by the Lyle Carlstrom and Shannon Nelson family.



“When was the last time you had a 1-in-3000 chance to earn a hotel with annual sales of \$3,400,000 simply by writing an essay? In short, that’s what the Hotel Invitational is all about: Helping you realize The Dream of becoming a self-sufficient entrepreneur; minus the backbreaking debt often associated with being a business owner.”

In a clever move, the owners of Grande Prairie’s York Hotel have decided to sell their business with an essay contest. By choosing one of three preset questions and paying an entry fee of \$1000, subscribers have a 1-in-3000 chance of winning a business valued at \$3,000,000. The family has chosen GPRC as one of the recipients of part of the proceeds.

On February 12, 2004 GPRC president Jim Henderson will be addressing the Grande Prairie business community at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon. He will be presenting a Report to the Community and speaking about the future of GPRC.

Another important event in February will be our Donor Recognition event. For the first time the Board of Governors will be presenting the Award of Distinction, which recognizes individuals whose actions have made exceptional contributions to our community and to the advancement of higher education.



Thank you to all who continue to support our Adopt-A-Wolf program. Your support helps our athletes to regularly achieve provincial and national recognition for their excellence, and to add a wealth of athletic performance to our community.

GPRC was the proud recipient of a \$195,000 grant from Western Economic Diversification. The purpose of the grant was to equip a classroom with Smart Technology and to upgrade videoconferencing capabilities. As well, the grant will allow us to enhance our distance

learning initiative. Angela Lamoureux from WED was on hand for the ribbon cutting along with GPRC President Jim Henderson and Alumni/Foundation Board Chair Lyle Carlstrom.



GPRC Theatre

*Hermin*

In Conversation

# Senator Tommy Banks





# Stage project



One thing of which Tommy Banks is certain is that hard work is inescapable for people who are serious about what they want to do. He applies that ethic to both his career as a jazz musician, and as a Senator of the Government of Canada – even though he had made up his own mind to be a jazz musician, and being named to the Senate came as something of a surprise!

During his visit to Grande Prairie in October, Tommy Banks was asked to explain his remarkable success as a professional musician. “The same thing exactly applies to a person who wants to become an actor ... or a research scientist ... or a hockey player ... they all face the same kind of questions. People look at us and say ‘well that’s very nice, but when you grow up what

are you actually going to do?’ The idea of being a research scientist is only slightly closer to the ‘norm’ than the idea of being a jazz musician.

“The simple fact is that if you are determined, and if you work hard at it – which includes becoming very well prepared for it – then you will have good luck. I think it was Mark Twain who said ‘good luck is the coincidence of preparedness and opportunity.’ Everybody comes into those opportunities – if you’re prepared for them, then you will succeed.”

Tommy Banks knew at an early age that he was going to be a jazz musician. He did not meet opposition to that idea with his parents (well, maybe a heavy sigh) because his father was a musician and his mother was in show business. But

friends and other family members expressed their reservations strongly enough that Banks succumbed to the social pressure to get ‘a real job.’ “I realized very quickly that this was a terrible mistake. I decided then and there that I was really going to do it – and never looked back. Oh, yes, there were times when I did not know how I was going to survive financially, but never ever did I consider giving up music ... until the Senate.”

He quotes a speaker at a seminar, who was asked by a music student if it would be wise to have some career to fall back on. “No!” the speaker was emphatic. “If you don’t have anything to fall back on, you won’t fall back!”

“That’s exactly right,” says Banks. “The only advice I ever give



people in that situation is, if you have that fire in your belly, if you work as hard at your art, music, or writing as an engineer works at becoming an engineer, or as a doctor works at becoming a doctor – if you are prepared to work that hard, probably harder – then you can just tell anyone who is trying to dissuade you to mind their own business – and get on with it.”

Banks may have been surprised out of music when he was appointed to the Senate, but it was as a musician and spokesperson for the arts that he first came into real contact with the Senate in the mid 1980s. “I was a member of Canada Council for six years during that period, and served as a policy consultant. We were heavily involved in a lobby against legislation which would have been hard on not only the Canada Council but on all of the humanities in Canada. The Senate came to believe that our group was right, and they defeated that particular bill. I realized then that the Senate plays an important and effective role in governing Canada. I gained considerable appreciation for the Senate that I had not had before, and a direct understanding of what value the Senate serves.”

Politics was never officially in Tommy Banks’ periphery, but he had been taught from an early age to pay close attention to what politicians and governments were doing. “My parents taught me that you have to pay attention to these people – they are going to be making decision you are going to live by. Consequently I guess I have a long history of interacting with government. People really should do that more! Go to election meetings, ask questions, and most of all, tell your representatives what you think!”

It is a personal vexation to Senator Banks that the public often paints the senate as a sleepy purposeless group basking in their patronage appointments.

“Nothing could be further from the truth,” Banks asserts. “The Senate is the only legislative house in the country that daily takes attendance and publishes it – ironically that makes us the easiest target. But what Canadians should realize is that your Senate is filled with people who have the freedom to look at issues from the standpoint of values and long-term impact. The Senate is where representatives take the time to truly immerse themselves in a topic, and occasionally take up advocacies with a passion.”

Senator Banks has been wading into the work of the Senate, and currently is Chair of the Energy and Natural Resources committee. “I try to do what I can on behalf of

*“I have met performers all over the world who have shared that experience, and who still talk about the amazing Cardinal facility that is Grande Prairie Regional College. They remember this stage, this building.”*

*– Tommy Banks*



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specific projects," he says, "but I have not found my niche, my passionate advocacy, yet."

In Grande Prairie, people are hoping Senator Banks will become a strong advocate for their plans to refurbish the Grande Prairie Regional College Theatre – the landmark design by Douglas J. Cardinal which helped launch the architect's international career.

"The first person I ever met who had directly to do with GPRC was Douglas Cardinal," Banks explains. "Cardinal was living in Edmonton then, and I was running a nightclub where he used to spend time. We talked about the work he was doing on the new college for Grande Prairie."

Over the years, Tommy Banks has been a regular musical visitor to Grande Prairie – frequently as an adjudicator at music festivals, frequently performing on the College stage or providing big band music for a formal Ball. "As one who has performed on the GPRC Theatre stage, I am a member of a very special group," Banks says. "I have met performers all over the world who have shared that experience, and who still talk about the amazing Cardinal facility that is Grande Prairie Regional



Senator Tommy Banks, GPRC President Jim Henderson and GPRC Alumni/Foundation Chair Lyle Carlstrom

College. They remember this stage, this building."

As the careers of these two remarkable artists developed, they both became known as icons of Canadian culture and achievement – and Douglas J. Cardinal and Tommy Banks have both been named Officers of the Order of Canada.

Tommy Banks fulfilled an amazing career as a jazz musician – playing in clubs, symphonies, for

recordings, hosting a Gemini award-winning television show. He was founding Chariman of the Alberta Foundation for the Performing Arts, and the first Albertan to win a Juno award.

And in the midst of a musical career which showed no signs of faltering, Tommy Banks fell forward, into the opportunity to serve as a Senator of Canada. After all, falling back was never an option.

– Lynne Ness



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*Doug Morris grew up in Red Deer, but his mother was from Grande Prairie, and his grandparents were among the early citizens here in 1919. "My mother really encouraged me to come here in the first place; she had a real soft spot for the College. She always loved Douglas Cardinal's work."*

*The home of Morris' grandparents is now commemorated by a plaque in Muskoseepi Park across from the Museum.*

## Diamond Legacy Donors: Doug and Laurie Morris and family

"Post secondary education is very important locally," says Doug Morris. "Not everyone can go off to the city for university. Having education available in our community is a huge benefit. I hope my children, Douglas and Jaimee choose to attend GPRC in the future, so I do have a vested interest in its continued success. This College is a great alternative to studying in big cities – and the quality of education is excellent. I like to keep involved because I can have input into how things happen."

"Involved" seems like an inadequate word to describe Doug Morris' contributions to Grande

Prairie Regional College over the past three decades. He has been a GPRC student athlete, a coach, and a tireless Wolf Pac Booster Club activist. He has added many things to the athletic history of our college, including a precedent-setting ACAC Coach of the Year award four seasons running (1987 through 1990) as coach of Wolves Badminton. In 1992, Doug Morris was inducted to the GPRC Wolves Wall of Fame. He has served on the Advisory Committee for the phys ed and athletics department, was on the Alumni Association Board of Directors, and has twice served as Foundation Board member. He is now a Director on the recently amalgamated Alumni/Foundation Board, and chairs the Planned Giving Committee.

While this list barely hints at the



*Douglas G. Morris,  
Laurie Morris, Douglas Jr.  
and Jaimee*



*“If you are willing to be involved, there is no limit to what you can do.”*

dozens of ways Doug Morris has worked toward building athletic and educational opportunity in our community, it does underscore the enduring commitment he has demonstrated toward the College and the community.

“My first involvement with the college was not even on the campus,” Mr. Morris explains. When he first came here from Red Deer to explore some new options, he took the trucking course offered at the industrial campus. “I drove truck for about six months before enrolling as a full time student.”

During that first year (1976) as a GPRC student he played volleyball, basketball, badminton, and golf. In short order he was named Most Valuable Player Badminton, and by 1979 began coaching badminton. His teams achieved provincial and national recognition, and Coach Morris was named CCAA Badminton Coach of the Year in 1986.

“The sports teams were very appealing to me,” Mr. Morris explains. “It is nice to play with a group of people, making friends and contacts which have enriched my life ever since.” In fact, he met his future wife when attending the wedding of her brother – a former Wolves team mate – in Manning some six years later.

“The people skills, learning how to relate to people, are probably the biggest value I got out of college and university – the thing about my education that has had the most influence on my career.” Doug Morris is currently in his 24th year in the financial services industry in Grande Prairie. He is owner/manager of Morris Financial

Group which serves clients throughout Alberta and British Columbia. He began his financial services career as an agent and sales supervisor with Mutual Life.

His career keeps him busy, but even though he retired from athletic involvement several years ago, Doug has a continuing commitment to the College. “I enjoy people – working together to accomplish something. I believe in what the College does. Working on the boards and advisory groups is a good way to stay connected to what is going on - for the good of all of us! If in the process we can

raise funds and help, then I think that is what we should be doing.”

Doug Morris was the first person to make a planned gift to the benefit of Grande Prairie Regional College. “It is my personal belief that planned gifts are the next big thing for our institution. This is where we can really add something to the possibilities for the future of our College and community.”

“If you are willing to be involved, there is really no limit to what you can do for others, and what you will gain by doing so.”

– Lynne Ness



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# White Spruce Survival and Growth

*Dr. Weixing Tan has been actively engaging in applied forestry research while teaching Applied Forestry Degree Program at GPRC over last 8 years. He has successfully obtained funds ~ \$226,000 in industry funding for two on-going research collaborations with 5 forest companies in Alberta. He has published 14 papers in international scientific journals related to forest science. He is currently planning a province-wide project which covers the major operating areas for white spruce utilization in Alberta with collaboration of 6 forestry companies, Dr Roy Sutton, an internationally renowned scientist in seedling quality and reforestation from Canadian Forest Service, and Dr David Reid of Department of Biological Sciences at University of Calgary*

The proposed project is a province-wide study to investigate how to improve white spruce planting survival and growth through the selection of optimum pre-planting physiological conditions. This project is based on recent research findings by Dr. Weixing Tan in the Manning area (Tan 2003; Tan et al. 2003) that by simply manipulating the pre-planting physiological conditions of white spruce seedlings, their early survival and growth could vary by up to 25 – 50 % in the first two years. He also found that over-conditioning in nurseries shuts down white spruce physiological activities and in fact results in significantly reduced survival and growth in the field. This refutes the common belief that the ‘hardier’ the summer-planted seedling, the better its performance. Since manipulation of pre-planting physiological conditions requires very little additional investment, potential benefits from this project could far outweigh the costs.

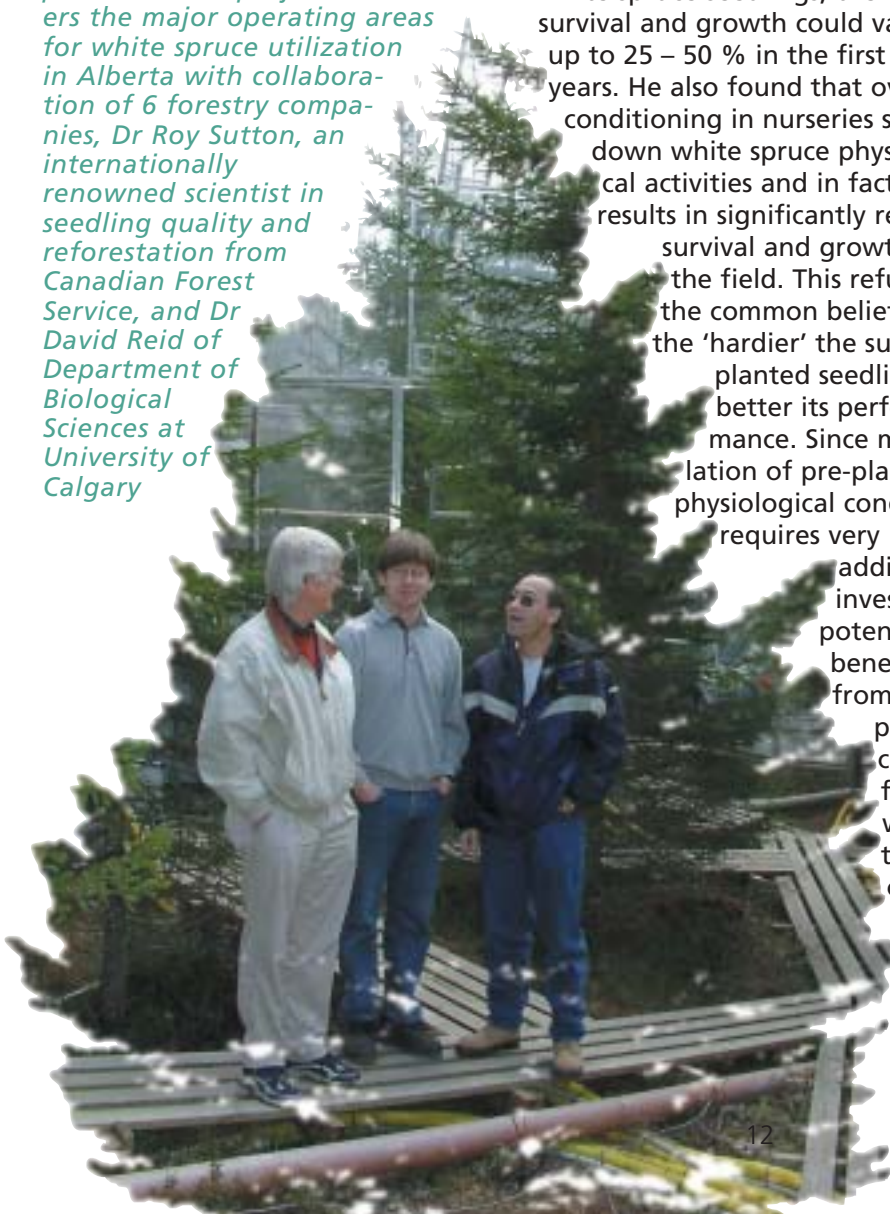
White spruce (*Picea glauca* [Moench] Voss) is one of the most important commercial tree species in Alberta. Sustainable management of this species not only provides direct economic benefits to Albertans but also plays an essential, dominant role in sustaining natural forest ecosystems in Alberta.

Over 35 million white spruce seedlings are planted each year in Alberta. Although severe mortality and growth retardation have not been observed across Alberta, a modest improvement in survival and early growth could provide significant savings for forest companies. For example, a 3% increase in survival alone could translate into approximately one million dollars savings annually.

The results from this proposed project will help decision makers to determine the optimal white spruce pre-planting physiological conditions for local site/climatic areas in future reforestation programs. This could improve survival and early growth of planted seedlings, thereby providing direct economic benefits to Alberta sustainable forest management. The project will employ unique and innovative approaches to further explore our new theory that stress tolerance prior to planting helps survival and early growth only when it also promotes new root growth.

Goals of this project include:

- Improve early survival and growth of planted white spruce seedlings across Alberta.
- Study how pre-planting physiological conditions of white spruce seedlings may





impact field performance under different site and climatic conditions across major forest management areas in Alberta.

- Study how pre-planting physiological conditions of white spruce may impact their physiological and biochemical responses and new root growth under stressful conditions that are considered to be the keys to successful field performance.

Planting performance could be effectively improved by modifying pre- and/or post-planting site and/or seedling conditions (Sutton 1980). Substantial investment and efforts

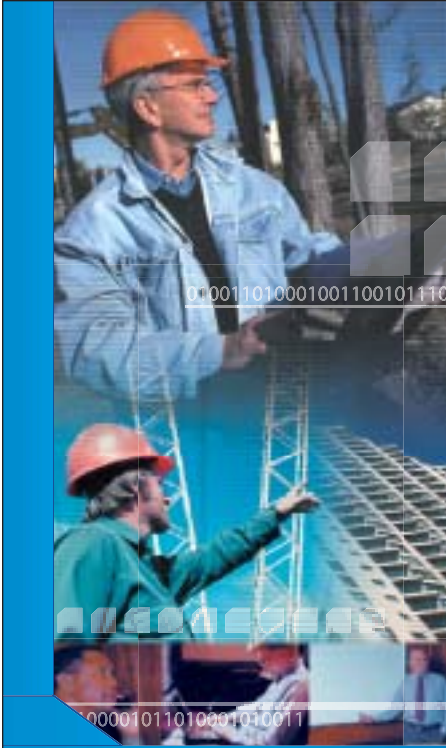


have been put into modifying pre and post-planting site conditions across Alberta including site preparations and vegetation control. However, in spite of its significant potential, little effort has been made to understand how pre-planting seedling conditions could impact white spruce field performance (Tan et al 2003).

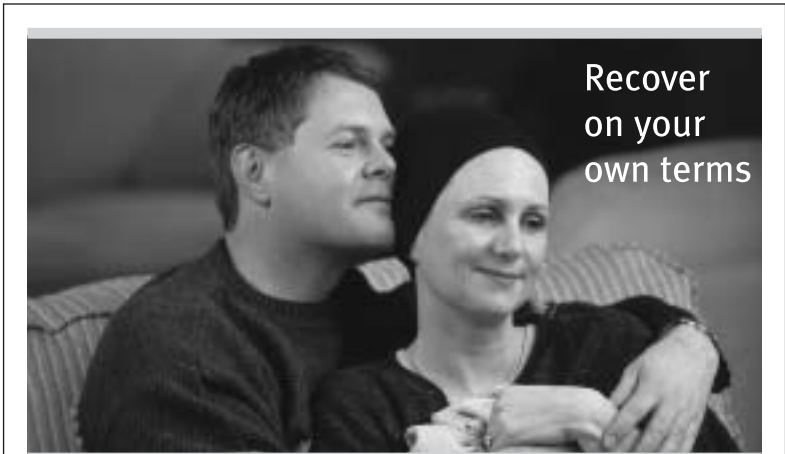
For planted seedlings to survive and grow well in the field, they must possess two basic attributes: 1) material attributes, e.g. morphology (height, diameter, root/shoot ratio), bud dormancy, nutrition; and 2) performance attributes, e.g. frost hardness, drought tolerance, root growth potential, general vigor (Ritchie 1984, Sutton 1994, Tan 1992, Tan and Hogan 1998). The morphological attributes have been more often and more widely tested in nurseries and by operational foresters (Colombo et al. 2001). However morphological attributes alone may not directly reflect

seedling quality as seedlings of the same size may be physiologically different even as extreme as dead versus living seedlings (Sutton 1980; Mexal and Landis 1990). Seedlings can not survive and/or grow well under the harsh environments in Northern Alberta (summer drought, cold soil temperature, high vapor pressure deficit) without an appropriate level of physiological quality (Tan et al. 2003).

The results of a 5-year study conducted by Tan near Manning further illustrate the importance of physiological quality for white spruce planting performance (Tan 2003; Tan et al. 2003). Seedlings with intermediate stress-tolerance performed best in the first year while the seedlings with the highest level of pre-planting stress tolerance had suffered 25% higher mortality and had greater than 50% reduction in height and diameter growth. Since the study was conducted in only one region,



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questions remain as to whether the results would be applicable under different site/climatic conditions in other parts of Alberta. The new project is designed to answer this question. Five coniferous companies covering major forest management areas throughout Alberta have agreed to participate in the project.

Results have also indicated that vigorous new root growth after planting may be the key mechanism that promotes seedling survival and growth (Tan et al. 2003). A detailed study to investigate physiological and biochemical controls of new root growth in the field and under controlled stressful conditions is therefore warranted to advance our understanding. Such a study could lead to new discovery and development of innovative approaches to further improve planting performance.

This part of the study will be conducted in collaboration with University of Calgary and a PhD candidate will be recruited. Such a



partnership would enhance Alberta's educational system, thereby providing direct benefits to the public of Alberta.

The project will be able to address the following issues critical to the reforestation success of white spruce in Alberta.

- How may pre-planting physiological conditions impact planting success across different regions in Alberta?
- What are the optimum pre-planting physiological

conditions for best planting performance in different regions of Alberta?

- How much improvement in planting performance could we make by optimizing pre-planting physiological conditions?
- What are the mechanisms to promote new root growth under stressful conditions and how could we potentially improve it?

—Weixing Tan

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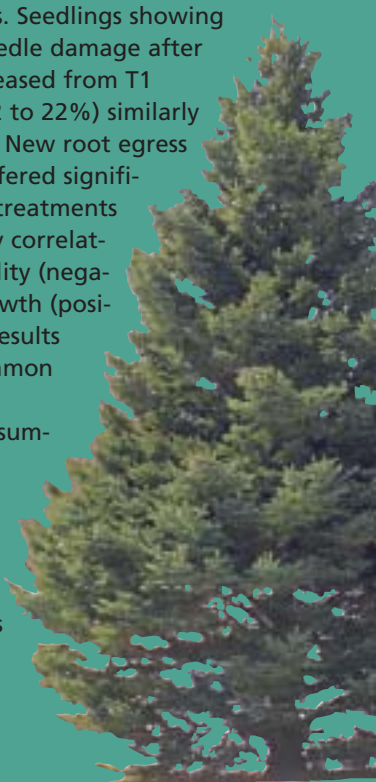
## Abstracts: Recently published papers by Dr. Weixing Tan

**Paper 1:** Tan, W. 200X. Physiological conditions prior to summer planting and field performance of white spruce (*Picea glauca* [Moench] Voss) seedlings: I. Physiological and morphological responses to different hardening treatments. *Can. J. For. Res.* Greenhouse-grown white spruce (*Picea glauca* [Moench] Voss) 1+0 seedlings for summer planting were subjected to short-day (12-h) hardening treatments (T) for 0 (T1), 3 (T2), 7 (T3), 10 (T4), or 15 (T5) days. Subsequent physiological and morphological responses were determined concurrently. In all treatments, mean seedling height (24 cm), dry weight (2.4 g), root collar diameter (3.1 mm), and foliar N (>2.44%), P (>0.38), and K (>0.98%) were within the operational guideline ranges. Seedlings in T2, T3, and T4 were morphologically indistinguishable; those in T1 were slightly smaller, in T5 slightly bigger. Terminal buds and needle primordia were well developed in all T3-T5 but none of T1 or T2 seedlings. Shoot dry weight fraction increased gradually but significantly from T1 through T5 and was linearly and highly correlated with needle specific weight and frost tolerance. Electrolyte leakage index decreased steadily from T1 (25% for roots, 17% for needles) to T5 (1% for roots, 2% for needles) after 2-h exposure of fine roots to -2EC and of needles to -8EC. Withholding soil watering for 19 days caused mortality of 80% of seedlings in T1, 50% in T2, and <10% in T3-T5. The transpiration decline curve suggested that enhanced drought tolerance after hardening was largely attributable to quicker stomatal closure during mild to moderate water stress and a lower cuticle transpiration rate. Root growth capacity differed little among Ts under both 20EC and 9EC root temperatures when root size was taken into account.

**Paper 2:** Tan, W., Blanton, S., and Bielech, J.P. 200X. Physiological conditions prior to summer planting and field performance of white spruce (*Picea glauca* [Moench] Voss) seedlings: II. Survival, growth, and needle damage two years after planting on four

reforestation sites. *Can. J. For. Res.* The relationship between physiological conditions of 1+0 white spruce (*Picea glauca* [Moench] Voss) seedlings prior to summer planting and field performance was studied at four boreal reforestation sites (Alberta, Canada). The seedlings were exposed to five hardening treatments (T) which, from T1 to T5, progressively increased their tolerance to drought and frost but did not affect root growth capacity. Field survival, growth (height, diameter and root), and needle damage were determined on c 5000 seedlings two years after planting in July 1999 on mounded and ripped sub-areas at each of the four sites varied in soil texture, drainage, aspect, slope, and slope position. Rainfall was meager and temperatures often >25°C before and after planting. Seedlings in T3 (intermediate stress-tolerance and ability to maintain stomatal opening) performed best in the first year but the T1 (no hardening) did best during the second year. After two years, no differences occurred among T1, T2 & T3 in mortality (18%) and total height growth (15

cm). T4 and T5, in spite of their higher levels of pre-planting stress tolerance, had higher mortality (24 and 43%), and lower height growth (12 and 10 cm, respectively). Results were similar among all sites. Seedlings showing very severe needle damage after two years increased from T1 through T5 (12 to 22%) similarly across all sites. New root egress in the field differed significantly among treatments and was highly correlated with mortality (negatively) and growth (positively). These results refute the common belief that the >hardier= the summer-planted seedling, the better its performance. Current hardening practices for summer planting stock might need reevaluation.



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# Dallas Sawtell

Instructor Computing, Mathematics  
and Statistical Science



*“Rise above oneself  
and grasp the world”*  
*“Transire suum pectus  
mundoque potiri”*

– Archimedes (287-212 BC)

“Math describes the world,” says GPRC instructor Dallas Sawtell who adds she has always been a math person. Math people are those individuals who have never experienced ‘fear of math,’ and who readily recognize the impact of math on our daily lives.

“Without calculus, we’d be a few hundred years behind in technology,” says Ms. Sawtell. “Calculus is the math of change.”

Engineering depends upon math. Engineering students and Bachelor of Science students are always among those taking the first year courses Ms. Sawtell has taught at GPRC for the past six years. “Without math you would not have any sciences,” she reminds us. And if we all paid attention to the mathematics of daily life, we would perform better at everything from basketball to origami.”

“I was always a science/math person – math was my easiest subject in school – so I always knew math was where I would end up, but I did not know I would be teaching.

Dallas Sawtell started university in Engineering, later switching to a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations. Several years later she returned to university to complete a BSc Math (Honours) and one

summer found herself teaching upgrading math at a college.

“I found I really enjoyed teaching, and decided to pursue it,” Ms. Sawtell explains. She earned her Bachelor of Education at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, then completed a Masters of Science in preparation for instructing university level students. “My Masters program was in applied math, using math to solve real-world problems.”

Ms. Sawtell began teaching high school in southern BC, and once she had started teaching was keeping an eye on potential for college jobs. “I enjoyed teaching high school, but I wanted to teach a higher level eventually.”

The desire to teach a higher level of math is satisfied in the summers, when Ms. Sawtell sometimes teaches a second year Calculus at Dalhousie University. “It is good to teach at a higher level occasionally, and keep my math skills up,” she explains. “Math is like language – if you don’t use it, you lose it.”

Maintaining her skills is both important and a challenge. “I do a lot of reading of “fun” math/physics books,” she says. “I like keeping up with current stuff – and I love periodicals such as

Discover magazine.”

In the classroom, she meets the challenge of students with a wide range of math aptitudes and interests. “Math is certainly more accessible to people direct from high school,” she says, and has found that mature students need time to regain confidence in their ability. “Some students, especially those in BEd programs, come into class scared, and leave having fun with math. That’s nice, because they then go into the education system able to share some of the fun of math with their students.”

“Math is so logical. The logic of math is essential to understanding – and thus the fun. Some teachers might miss showing students the logic behind the math concepts.”

“My favourite moments in teaching are when students come to me for help, the opportunities to help them one to one. It’s funny. Because students are hesitant to disturb instructors; they feel awkward about taking the instructor’s time for themselves. But that’s what I like best. It is always great when you are helping someone and suddenly they SEE it. It is rewarding to be able to help someone else understand something that you enjoy.”



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## Recent Faculty Achievements

### Graduate degree completion

**Elizabeth Hood**, Instructor in Nursing Education, completed her coursework toward her PhD from the University of Alberta.

**Rick Erlendson**, Instructor in Business Administration, completed his PhD in Education from the University of Alberta

**Trevor Thomas**, Instructor in Administrative Technologies, completed coursework toward his Masters Degree from the University of Southern Queensland.

**Margot Brunner-Campbell** has received her Masters in Adult Education.

### Awards and recognitions

**Rick Erlendson**, was named recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award presented by the GPRC Student's Association. This award is presented annually to an instructor nominated by students as a person who added greatly to the educational experience.

**Erin Vig** received the Employee of the Year Award awarded as part of Business Week celebrations of the GP Chamber of Commerce. Erin has left her work in the Physical Education, Athletics and Kinesiology department at the College to take on new challenges at the Crystal Centre.

### Great Contributions

**Bethe Goldie**, physical education instructor, is known throughout the College for her enthusiasm and her tireless organizational skills. Her reputation also helped Grande Prairie to become one of three pilot sites for a new Canada-wide training project.

The Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability organized three pilot workshops across Canada aimed at guiding communities in ways to include people with a disability in active living.

Alberta organizer Val Mayes proposed Grande Prairie as a suitable host location, and says she was confident that there were people here with a sufficient level of interest and commitment to make the event happen – especially GPRC Instructor Bethe Goldie.

Bethe Goldie has been sharing information, skills and enthusiasm about including people with disabilities in phys ed for a long time. Her course PE 2070 (Physical Education and Leisure for Special Populations) has been on the GPRC timetable for more than one decade, and each year students taking that course can be found throughout our community helping people of all ages and abilities to enjoy physical activity.



"I hope that this workshop will eventually be offered here each year," says Goldie. She has worked toward inclusion since she became a national facilitator of the "Moving to Inclusion" program in 1994 which was to help teachers include kids with disabilities in their phys ed classes. "Now we are reconnecting with those people – and I believe it is more likely to happen now that so many organizations are becoming actively involved."



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## GPRC alumni

### '85 Tom Smith

Tom Smith grew up in Fairview, and began his Bachelor of Arts at GPRC in 1984-85. Tom recently visited the College again, accompanying Senator Tommy Banks. These days, Tom Smith BAsc is the research assistant for Senator Banks in Ottawa.

### '90 Donna Bennett

Back when Donna was a student in Office Administration at GPRC (1989-90) she was Donna Horrigan (Tissington). She graduated with her Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of Alberta in 2003, and is living in Edmonton.

### '91 Louise Lindblom

Louise attended GPRC from 1988 to 1991 in the Business Administration program. She is currently a Service Manager at Staples in Grande Prairie.

### '91 Catherine Osted

Catherine was in the Education Transfer program and ECD from 1989 to 1991. She is a teacher at South Slave DEC in Hay River.

### '96 Patrick Nett

Patrick spent 1995 and 1996 in the Industrial Maintenance Technology program at GPRC. He is an operator at Aquatera.

### '98 Carla Dodd (Basarab)

Carla attended GPRC from 1997 to 1998. She obtained her Certificate in Office Administration and is currently an Office Assistant in the Student Services Department at GPRC.

### '99 Sarah Scott

Sarah was in the Science program from 1999 to 2001. She is living in Edmonton.

### '01 Kirk Scriba

Kirk was in the visual arts program from 1994-2001. He writes "I have many hats. Yep, hats. They hide bad hair days, and keep rain off your head. There isn't much to report since I was finally kicked out of GP. No wives or children. I am not the president of any countries, nor am I incarcerated in our MORE than ample penal system. I have a wonderful job in the industrial service sector. What does that have to do with Fine Arts? Nothing at all. It pays the bills." Kirk is living and working in Edmonton

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### Great Contributions

**Dr. Robert Hunt**, who established the Engineering program at GPRC in 1974, was the subject of a feature in the UofA Engineer Alumni magazine (Summer 2003). The article, *Waking the Giants*, tells the story of Bert Hunt's 20 years of evenings, weekends and summers, working tirelessly to extract a wealth of pre-history from the riverbeds of the Grande Prairie area. Recently, Hunt was working with the Royal Tyrrell Museum team which has extracted the skeleton of a new dinosaur species of pachyrhinosaurus.

Dr. Hunt's palaeontological adventures have also been featured in recent issues of the PEGG, a publication for professional engineers and geologists, and several Alberta newspapers. He says that GPRC colleague Dr. Desh Mittra (geology instructor) provided the first experience in rocks and fossils, and the two have both been closely involved with the excavation teams for the Royal Tyrrell in the past couple of decades. It was as an Engineer, though, that Dr. Hunt was involved in his first big

palaeontology find in 1984, according to the *Waking the Giants* article. Hunt had helped Dr. Mittra with an excavation of some sample bones, and when they turned out to be those of a 10,000 year old elk, the services of an Engineer were required to prepare the site, organize facilities and equipment, and oversee the removal of the overburden for the palaeontologists of the Provincial Museum. Since then, both Dr. Hunt and Dr. Mittra have been part of several significant discoveries.

Visitors to Grande Prairie Regional College can view the ancient wapiti skeleton, and also a replica of the Pachyrhinosaurus.



### Letter from a former student

**To Sharron Barr  
(Chair, Administrative Technology)**

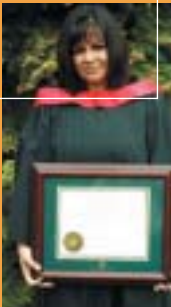
Sharron – you may not remember me, but I was a student in Office Administration at GPRC in 1989-90. I was Donna Horrigan (Tissington) back then. The reason for writing today is to say a belated thank you to the staff and department of what was then known as OA. I was a newly separated mother of two daughters when I became a student at GPRC. The quality of education I received back then was second to none. It was a demanding program that taught me to work hard and take pride in what I was doing. After one year, I obtained a 'summer' position that turned into a six-year career – a career that enabled me to advance and learn. The quality of my work was a direct result of the quality of education I received in OA at the college.

On June 10, 2003, I graduated

from the faculty of law at the University of Alberta. The professionalism required by the faculty of law was natural for me after the rigours of OA. I do not hesitate to give the credit for many of my writing abilities to the department of OA. Because of that education, law school was much easier than it would have been.

Thank you for the strong beginning of my educational pursuits. Thank you for the foundation that will continue to serve me in all of my professional endeavours. Thank you for the strong beginning of my educational pursuits.

– Donna Bennett, LLB





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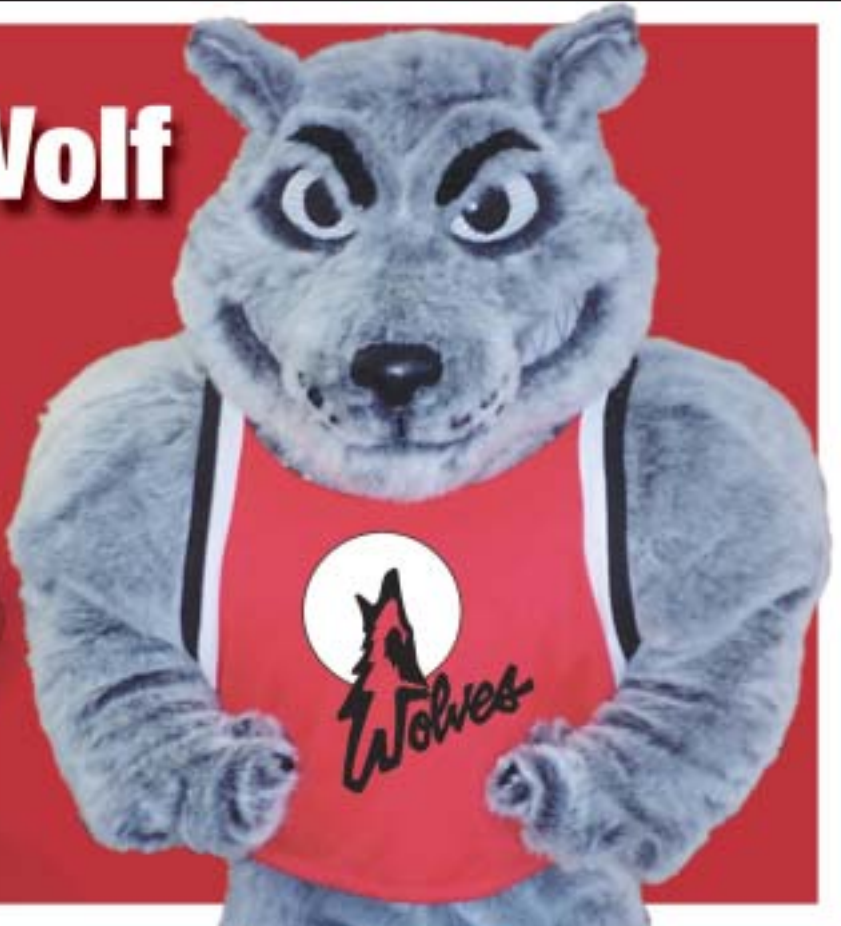
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