



CITIZEN PHOTO BY BRENT BRAATEN

Dr. Chow Lee, centre, and his research team have received an almost \$400,000 grant to study the potential of local mushrooms as possible cancer and diabetes treatments. High school students Delphine Ji, left, and Zeynab Asadi Lari were invited to be Gene Researchers for a Week, a program of the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation.

Federal grant for mushroom research at UNBC

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As UNBC's Chow Lee and his team of researchers got a federal grant of almost \$400,000 for equipment to further studies of local mushrooms as potential cancer and diabetes fighters, the professor welcomed two keen students into the lab.

The student program Gene Researcher for a Week is provided by the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation with financial support by CIHR-Institute of Genetics to encourage Grade 11 and 12 students who show interest in science, human genetics, and human genetics research. Students are then placed in labs of influential scientists for one week during spring break.

Lee is hosting two students, Delphine Ji from Victoria and Zeynab Asadi Lari from Vancouver, who are in the lab this week.

The researchers on the team beside project leader Lee are co-principal investigators chemistry professor Kerry Reimer, ecosystem science

and management professors Keith Egger and Hugues Massicotte and chemistry senior laboratory instructor Tina Bott.

The researchers are looking for mushroom compounds that either block cancer cell growth on their own or help stimulate the immune system and act as a catalyst to help the body fight the cancer.

"The CFI (Canadian Foundation for Innovation) infrastructure funding grants (equipment only) to be set up will significantly boost our quest to find new medicinal compounds that can be potentially used for the treatment or prevention of two chronic diseases – cancer and diabetes," said Lee, who is the principal investigator of the research. "The infrastructure includes equipment for chemical extraction of mushrooms, equipment for purifying and to help identify bio-active compounds, equipment for biological analysis (various types of microscopes and a cell sorter), and fridge/freezers for storing mushroom extracts and bio-active compounds."

The funding for the lab equipment is pro-

vided to UNBC as part of a federal government program to help Canadian universities attract and retain the best and brightest researchers from around the world.

The federal government is investing \$23 million for 95 projects in 26 universities in Canada.

As the students come into the lab they will explore certain components of the mushroom and then research cancer cells.

"They are bright kids," said Lee of Ji and Asadi Lari.

"So basically the students will attend class and then they will have a hands-on experience as they extract DNA from mushrooms and then amplify specific samples of DNA and then we are going to send it out for sequencing to verify the species of the mushroom and then the students will be extracting genome DNA from cancer cells from a Petri dish just to expose them to research and get them excited in science. It's great to have a program like this in British Columbia. We just want to pass on our knowledge and inspire them."

Arson charge laid following house fire

Citizen staff

Crown counsel has approved a charge against a woman known to police and the courts following a suspicious fire Monday morning at a downtown home.

Lisa Anne Whitford, 43, faces one count of arson in relation to inhabited property and remained in custody as of Tuesday morning.

Police arrested Whitford on Monday after firefighters were called to a 1600-block 11th Avenue home shortly before 8 a.m. on Monday.

They found smoke and flames in the rear of the home.

The fire was quickly extinguished, but not before the home suffered substantial damage.

The home's two occupants got out safely, with one leaving the scene prior to firefighters' arrival, Prince George Fire Rescue noted in a press release.

Whitford was last in the news in 2008 when she was sentenced to four years in prison after pleading guilty to manslaughter.

Whitford fired a fatal shotgun blast at her common-law husband, Anthony Ryan Cartledge, 49, at their East Perry Road home northeast of Prince George in 2006.

In issuing the term, now-retired B.C. Supreme Court Justice Glen Parrett allowed her to serve her jail term with her newborn.

She had given birth to the child during her time in custody.

Whitford remained in custody as of Tuesday.

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Anthropology in our backyards talk today

Citizen staff

To find out how ebola, the oil sands, and standards of environmental and human health can affect reaction in communities, Craig Candler, director of the Firelight Group in Victoria, offers a free lecture at the University of Northern BC today from noon to 1:30 p.m. in room 5-123.

This lecture called Powerful and Unruly: Ebola, Oil Sands and Community-Based

Standards in Environmental and Human Health, is part of the Anthropology in Our Backyards series.

Candler will be part of an anthropology career panel presented by the Northern Anthropology Student Society tonight at 6 p.m. at the Northern University Student Centre.

Students will get the chance to hear about career paths they can choose once they graduate with a degree in anthropology.

Montreal protest against police violence peaceful

The Canadian Press

Montreal's annual protest against perceived police brutality went off without a hitch Tuesday night after a few hundred demonstrators, including some wearing masks and singing anti-police chants, marched downtown for about 90 minutes.

The march ended across the street from the old Forum with those still left congratulating themselves for an incident-free evening.

One woman took a megaphone to say she was surprised they managed to get

that far because everyone believed the police were going to shut the event down right away.

At one point, protesters headed west, against the traffic, on busy Sainte-Catherine Street.

Some previous editions of the March 15 event have turned nasty, featuring massive arrests and vandalized police cruisers.

Before the protesters began Tuesday's stroll through city streets, they congregated in a park and took turns hitting a large effigy of a police officer bearing a pig's head as it was strung from a tree branch.

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