

THURSDAY  
OCTOBER 21 2010  
VOL.4 N°162



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# 24H

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**CONTEST**  
We may put an iPad in your hot little hands P15

**HER EMBRYO'S  
A STAR ALREADY** P13

## GEEKY GIRLS PREPARE TO SAVE LIVES

**HACKATHON** • Girl Geeks worked for 24 hours to create an Edmonton emergency preparedness application P3

**ENTERTAINMENT**  
**Defending 'stupid' music** P14  
Critics describe 3OH!3's party pop as 'scummy'



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## Interactive table top therapy

**GRAD STUDENT SPEEDS  
UP REHABILITATION  
PROCESS** P4

CODIE MCLACHLAN, QMI AGENCY



### HEEL PAIN?

Common symptoms of Plantar Fasciitis are sharp pain directly under the heel – especially with the first few steps in the morning or after sitting. Pain usually eases with walking or activity and comes back worse after resting. Pain may also decrease during sleep but comes back severely when getting out of bed.

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# Tabletop therapy speeds up healing

PAMELA ROTH  
QMI Agency

Four months ago, Bill Presiznuik thought life as he knew it was over.

The 65-year-old was at the University Hospital in early July recovering from a quadruple bypass when he suffered a stroke a week later on the day he was to be released.

"I went to the bathroom and all of a sudden I started to trip. I was falling and I knew I couldn't stop myself," said Presiznuik, whose stroke left his left leg and arm paralyzed.

"I couldn't move a fraction. I figured my life was over with."

Shortly after his stroke, Presiznuik arrived at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital where his life began taking a turn for the better thanks to a local invention.

The invention, developed by PhD student Michelle Annett, is an interactive tabletop with a touch-sensitive screen like an iPad.

Using the screen, rehabilitation patients can enjoy therapeutic activities such as popping virtual balloons, finger-painting and arranging family pictures.

The technology gets patients using upper limb motor therapy to regain strength, co-ordination and reactive skills. Annett came up with the idea when she was approached by staff at Glenrose to come up with a low cost version of a Microsoft surface.

Now, she has the ability to develop an assortment of activities for all ages. An interactive floor version for leg therapy is also currently under development.



Michelle Annett, a PhD student in the department of computing science at the University of Alberta, demonstrates a touch screen that could lead to faster recoveries for rehabilitation patients. CODIE MCLACHLAN

"I can basically create whatever kind of activity they want," said Annett. "I think as more and more people at the hospital get to see it and try it out, it'll spread to a wider demographic."

Since its inception in July, nearly 40 patients have benefited from the interactive table top therapy.

The technology, which cost \$6,000, also allows health professionals to precisely measure a patient's progress because it can

track the slightest hand movement and reaction.

Angela Sekulic, supervisor of the occupational therapy department, said the device has potential for all types of patients.

"For brain injuries, stroke, older adults, children, it's fantastic," she said. "It can certainly help speed up the healing process."

Traditionally, rehabilitation patients perform tedious exercises such as stacking items, reaching for cones and wiping a table with a cloth.

## U of A students raising money to teach Stelmach a lesson

MICHELLE THOMPSON  
QMI Agency

Premier Ed Stelmach is about to be handed a free round-trip ticket to Fort Chipewyan.

Concerned about the toll oil-sands development is taking on the northern Alberta community, a group of U of A students nearly raised enough cash to send Stelmach there to investigate.

The students spent Tuesday and Wednesday selling T-shirts on campus to raise the necessary \$400. Liberal environment critic Laurie Blakeman joined the HUB mall fundraising efforts Wednesday.

"I think by the end of it they fig-

ured they would have the money they needed to buy a round-trip ticket," Blakeman said, adding with a laugh: "I suggested if it wasn't round trip, they could just buy a one-way."

Concerns over the damage being done to the Fort Chipewyan community by oil-sands development resurfaced last month, when a group of deformed fish were collected from Lake Athabasca.

In September, northern fishermen, aboriginal leaders, University of Alberta researchers and health professionals called on the federal government to launch its own program to monitor the

health of fish in northern Alberta, downstream of oil-sands development.

Several fish with deformities were put on ice and displayed at a news conference. One appeared to have a golf ball-sized tumour, another was discoloured.

Edmonton students are concerned, Blakeman said.

"Given what we know about the health of the people and the health of the ecology in that region, this group and I agree this is a place the premier needs to go," she said.

The plane ticket will likely be delivered to Stelmach at the legislature next week.

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