



## OHC HAS NEW ERGONOMIST

**W**hile he was going to university Eero Laansoo, the new ergonomist at the MFL OHC worked in a number of blue collar jobs. "I worked in printing, in small factories, and at Nissan. In those jobs I had plenty of experience with jobs where the equipment and the bodies of the workers were not working well together."

These experiences, plus an interest in the relatively new field of ergonomics, led the Toronto native to study kinesiology (the study of movement) at the University of Waterloo. He graduated this May with an option in ergonomics.

### MAKING WORK SAFER

As a part of his training he spent two years working as an ergonomist in a variety of settings throughout Southern Ontario. His studies led to placements at General Motors, Honda, Molson Breweries and Women's College Hospital.

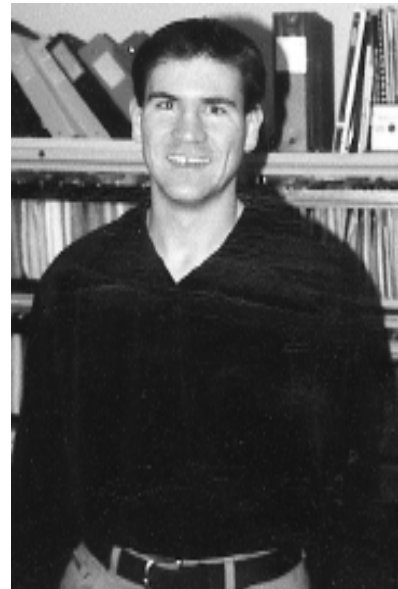
Laansoo says that for him ergonomics is the application of knowledge of the

capabilities and limitations of the human body in the context of the job the person is performing. "If you understand those, you can start working towards eliminating injuries and making that job safer for that worker."

Laansoo is currently overseeing the development of ergonomic training material and is working with the OHC team to provide ergonomic consulting services. "Previously, the MFLOHC has been only able to provide basic ergonomic training and awareness. With an ergonomist on staff, we are able to improve the technical content of our material, and we are now able to work with joint health and safety committees, workers and employers, providing in-depth ergonomic assessments, knowledge and skill."

### ERGONOMISTS IN DEMAND

There is a great demand for publicly available ergonomics expertise in Manitoba. Until now, one of the few sources was the Manitoba government's Workplace



MFL OHC ergonomist Eero Laansoo

Safety and Health Division. The demand for ergonomists easily outstripped the supply. With addition of Laansoo to the MFLOHC staff, access to ergonomic advice will be available to many more people.

### HEALTH FOR HEALTH'S SAKE

Laansoo believes the MFLOHC's approach is excellent for reaching the public, workers and employers. "We don't just promote health and safety as a cost-saving measure, we promote it because it is basic right for every individual."

## NATIONAL MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS HELD AT OHC

**T**his past June the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada held its national examination in Occupational Medicine at the MFL Occupational Health Centre.

One of the Centre's physicians, Allen Kraut, coordinated the examination and was one of the examiners. He was joined by four other occupational medicine experts from across the country.

Over a three-day period written and oral examinations are given in occupa-

tional medicine. As a part of the examination, students must examine a patient and present their findings and evaluation.

The College has only rarely held these examinations outside of Montreal or Toronto. Kraut said that the decision to hold them in Winnipeg is a sign of the OHC's acceptance by the medical community. "It shows that we are recognized nationally as a facility that can host this sort of examination."

## Ergonomics Workshop

April 23-24.

Presented by PAR Health Services, Health Sciences Centre

For more details call (204) 787-1048.

## Winners

The Winners of the MFL OHC Grey Cup pool are:

Craig Doerkson	\$50
Len Bueckert	\$100
Paul Thorvaldson	\$100

## Work in a cold climate

**Q** How should I dress when working in the cold?

**A** Cold weather is a fact of life in Manitoba. To carry on with our usual activities without risk of frostbite or hypothermia, it is very important to wear clothing that is appropriate for the work you do, and the weather you are working in. Too much clothing can lead to sweating, and wet clothing causes greater heat loss and the chance of hypothermia.

The best way to dress for cold weather is in layers, including the wicking (long underwear), insulating (sweaters/wool pants) and environmental layers (shell).

The wicking layer is the most critical layer to consider in the cold weather. Its purpose is to keep the body warm and dry. This layer will draw sweat and moisture away from the skin surface, allowing your skin to 'breathe' and stay dry, keeping you warm. Cotton clothing should be avoided because it readily absorbs moisture and quickly drains heat away from the body when wet. Polypropylene or wool are much better choices because they maintain most

of their insulation value when wet and dry quicker than cotton.

The insulation layer should also be made of fast-drying material such as wool that will keep the body warm when wet. This layer should be loose enough to allow air pockets for form, which provide additional insulation. If the insulation layer is too tight it can restrict circulation and contribute to cold injury.

Where the first two layers provided insulation and warmth for the body, the environmental layer prevents cold weather from affecting the body in the first place. It is important that this layer be windproof and waterproof, and fit well, allowing an unrestricted range of motion.

And don't forget, more than 90 percent of your body heat escapes from your head, so be sure to wear a warm hat when working outdoors. If you wear a hard hat, wear a hat liner that either covers your forehead and ears, or covers your face, chin, and neck. Manitoba winters may be long and cold, but by dressing appropriately, we can work comfortably and safely, and avoid injuries like frostbite and hypothermia.

## New Books at the Centre

*Assessment of health effects from exposure to power-line frequency electric and magnetic fields*, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, 1998.

Dentistry in Sweden, *Arbete Och Halsa*, 1998, no. 14.

Purification, characterization and immunological studies of rat urinary proteins causing allergy in humans, *Arbete Och Halsa*, 1998, no. 15.

Managed care, Jeffrey S. Harris, guest editor. *Occupational Medicine State of the Art Reviews*, volume 11 number 4, Oct-Dec 1998.

*Groundskeepers safety guide*, Third edition, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, P97-3E.

## COUNT ME IN!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I will assist the Occupational Health Centre to continue to publish the Focus newsletter and purchase up-to-date information for the library in the following manner:

a direct donation today of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

a payroll deduction sent directly to the MFL Occupational Health Centre

I authorize the MFL Occupational Health Centre to withdraw \$ \_\_\_\_\_ from my account on a monthly basis. I am enclosing a sample cheque with the word void written across it, indicating my account number and branch address.

a contribution through the United Way specifically designating the MFL Occupational Health Centre

Please return this form (Don't forget your voided cheque) to:  
MFL Occupational Health Centre  
102-275 Broadway  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 4M6

# WINTER SESSIONS

You are invited to the MFL Occupational Health Centre Winter 1998 weekly sessions at 275 Broadway. Topics relating to occupational and environmental health will be presented by invited guests and staff of the Centre. The one hour sessions are held on Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Phone: 949-0811 • Fax 956-0848 • email [mflohc@mflohc.mb.ca](mailto:mflohc@mflohc.mb.ca)

February 2	Mould Symptoms & Remediation	Dr. Jim Poplow, Medical Officer of Health - Environment Public Health Branch
February 9	How a Registered Safety Program Works in the Construction Industry. Safety is Everyone's Business!	Tara Zukewich, Program Development Coordinator Bob Kirkhope, Safety Advisor Manitoba Building Contractors Safety Program
February 16	NO SESSION	
February 23	Elements of a Successful Ergonomics Program	David Brodie, Ergonomist Workplace Safety & Health Branch, Manitoba Labour
March 2	Buyer Beware: What Credentials Should You be Looking for When Hiring an Ergonomist?	Susan Wands, Ergonomist Workplace Safety & Health Branch, Manitoba Labour HFAC Regional Director MB/SK
March 9	Return-to-Work Program & Policy	Vincent Boyce Ignace Paczkoski Injured Workers Association of Manitoba
March 16	Children & Youth Labour Survey Project	Nancy Anderson, Manager Client Services Employment Standards Branch, Manitoba Labour
March 23	Principles of Chemical Storage & Spill Response	Kit Galvin, Occupational Hygienist MFLOHC Staff
March 30	Diabetes & Work	Dr. Allen Kraut MFLOHC Staff

*The MFL Occupational Health Centre was established in 1982 by the Manitoba Federation of Labour to help Manitoba workers deal with job-related health issues and to assist those in many sectors of our society who strive for safer work environments. The Centre is funded by Manitoba Health and is a member of the Manitoba Association of Community Health and the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics.*

*The Centre's Medical Diagnostic Services attempt to ascertain whether a specific health problem is work-related and does not take the place of a family doctor. A multidisciplinary team assists workplace health and safety committees with workplace hazard evaluations and hazard control measures.*

*Our Resource Centre provides the public with a wide range of health and safety information, and we conduct education programs upon request. The Centre is open weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays.*