Dan Kanter is Justin Bieber’s musical director. So who’s the boss?

He’s a Belieber

PLUS
York’s student stars Battling concussion
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We made a list.

If you're paying for any of these medical bills out of your own pocket, you need to take a look at the Manulife Health & Dental Plan for Alumni.

The plan can help you save on both routine and unexpected health care expenses. Best of all, if you apply before March 31st, you'll pay 2011 rates for an entire year.

Call 1-866-842-5757 or visit our new website at healthplans101.ca/yorku where you can compare the available plans, determine which one best fits your needs, get quotes and apply online.
Bright Lights

Profiling York’s undergrad stars. by Berton Woodward

On the opposite page, you’ll see we’re asking for a moment of your time to take our readership survey. I hope you’ll do so. Your participation will be extremely helpful to us as we continue to make YorkU the best it can be for you.

The survey also incorporates questions created especially for university magazines by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, so the results will be directly comparable with other institutions across North America.

Further on, you’ll see that this issue includes a list of students whose achievements are being celebrated this month. We profiled each of these students and asked them about their current studies and their future plans. They told us about some of the smartest people you’re likely to meet at York University. These students are some of the brightest students at York who are doing very accomplished things, often the very things they told us they planned to do.

From time to time, I have been back in touch with past achievers. Inevitably, they are doing very accomplished things, often the very things they told us they planned to do. But others are in completely different realms – or wish they were. I was touched by the yearning of 2004’s Xin Wang (BSc Spec. Hons. ’06), who is continuing his high-flying path to a PhD in biology – but admitted to me he still dreams of opening a Chinese restaurant, and may yet do so.

For “redefine the possible”, though, you have to give the prize to Yaakov Roth (BA ‘04) from our first crop, when he insisted that’s not in his sights.

The students, whose profiles begin on page 24 (where you’ll also see a link to our readership survey. I hope you’ll do so. Your participation will be extremely helpful to us as we continue to make YorkU the best it can be for you.

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Further on, you’ll see that this issue includes a look at what some of today’s brightest students are thinking and doing. Soon after this magazine’s debut in 2003, we initiated an annual feature profiling top undergraduate students at York. It ran each year in our December issue, which circulated only on campus with a captive student audience. Now that we have consolidated our magazine schedule so that everyone gets the same issues, we’re delighted to bring the annual top-student feature to our full audience of alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends.

These students are some of the smartest people you’re likely to meet, and it’s fascinating – and inspiring – to get to know them.

The students, whose profiles begin on page 24 (where you’ll also see a link to view videos of them), boast the highest cumulative grade point averages in their Faculty and among the smartest people you’re likely to meet. They’re doing very accomplished things, often the very things they told us they planned to do. But others are in completely different realms – or wish they were. I was touched by the yearning of 2004’s Xin Wang (BSc Spec. Hons. ’06), who is continuing his high-flying path to a PhD in biology – but admitted to me he still dreams of opening a Chinese restaurant, and may yet do so.

For “redefine the possible”, though, you have to give the prize to Yaakov Roth (BA Spec. Hons. ’04) from our first crop, when he went on to finish first-in-class at Harvard Law School, clerked for US Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, and now works at a top Washington law firm. Recently he co-led a challenge to the US law against political contributions by residents of foreign countries to influence US elections, a move that would be upending the prohibition on a run for the presidency by the foreign-born, such as very bright Canadians. He insists that’s not in his sights.

Send letters, submissions, comments and ideas to editor@yorku.ca.
The University is very near to achieving long-cherished goals. By Mamdouh Shoukri

The Future of York

As we begin 2012 at York University, I thought it timely to communicate with you about my plans and prospects for the future. York is on the rise, and on the doorstep of becoming one of Canada’s most comprehensive universities. As many of you know from your time as students, York is not like traditional universities. We haven’t had centuries in which to grow, develop and determine what works and doesn’t work. Compared to other universities, we are, at 52, relatively young. But our youth is one of our biggest advantages.

The Birth of a University

York was incorporated in 1959, and made its first permanent home at Glendon. The Klee site was then selected, as it was believed that the movement of population in Toronto would be towards the northwest, making the Klee campus accessible to future main traffic arteries. The curriculum focused on arts and science, but by the late 1960s there was already talk of adding three additional Faculties: education, engineering and medicine. While education ended up being the focus, the aspiration three additional Faculties: education, engineering and medicine, but by the late 1960s there was already talk of adding three additional Faculties: education, engineering and medicine, but by the late 1960s there was already talk of adding.

York on the Rise

Over the years, we have transformed into a leading interdisciplinary and teaching university in Canada, all while continuing to hold dear York’s original values of commitment, accessibility, social responsibility and excellence. We have a student population of 55,000, almost $25,000 alumni worldwide, and a budget of nearly $900 million – making us the second-largest university in Ontario, and the third-largest in Canada.

York shares its role with the leading departments in humanities and social sciences, prestigious business and law schools, and a fine arts institution. While education ended up being the focus, the aspiration to expand in professions such as engineering and medicine was reflected in all of our strategic plans.

York has academic strength, people who are willing to work hard, a large population base, and land. This is the time for York to rise.

The York Advantage

Unlike many universities, we are in a really great position. We are better off than most because of our heritage. York has academic strength, people who are willing to work hard, a large population base, and land. This is the time for York to rise. But for us to continue to succeed, there are things that we can do better.

Operational efficiency is one of my priorities. That’s why we introduced PRASE – the Process Re-engineering and Service Enhancement project led by Vice-President Academic & Provost Patrick Monahan and VP Finance & Administration Gary Brewer. The goal is to develop more effective services and use of resources in support of teaching, learning, research and public service.

Moving Forward

We are on track – we have all the pieces to move forward. But what we need to do is put all the pieces together, and continue to work together. Let me give you just one example of how we are doing that: our expansion in engineering, for which we recently received $50 million from the government of Ontario for a new building, and $25 million from Pierre Lassonde, a private donor, for the new Lassonde School of Engineering.

Our Faculty of Science & Engineering is too small for a university of this size. There’s no university in North America with 55,000 students that does not have an engineering school and does not have a larger science school. This is why we wish to become more comprehensive, as our founders had envisioned. Building an engineering school will be a catalyst for enhancing York’s academic quality and for economic growth in the region.

In the last five years, demand for engineering in Ontario has risen 30 per cent, the highest increase for a particular discipline. Population growth is also a factor – according to Census Canada, York Region is one of the fastest growing areas in Canada. A majority of that population growth is made up of immigrants and children of immigrants, many of whom have a tendency to send their children to professional schools. Such immigrant-energized areas also tend to experience faster growth in small- and medium-sized high-tech enterprises, ideal for our knowledge economy. Our University has an opportunity to capitalize on this.

Expanding science, engineering and health should not distract us from the commitment to our traditional areas of strength. In fact, we need to create resources to maintain our strength in humanities, social sciences and business. Moreover, we should build on this strength by training future scientists, engineers and health-care practitioners who are socially responsible and committed to sustainability.

Investing in the Future

This brings me back to students, our number one priority and the reason our University exists. When I talk about academic and research excellence, student success and community engagement, for me, it’s about creating a better learning environment for students – with new programs and new opportunities that are relevant to their future careers. We want our students to be able to think broadly, to imagine new things and to build networks, much like our York alumni.

How can you help our students become citizens of the world and continue the legacy and history of our success? There is no doubt that York would not be what it is today without the support of its talented and diverse alumni population. Our graduates are the greatest ambassadors of our institution. They have inspired our students and helped build a legacy of excellence. If you are among them, we are thankful for your generosity.

After 52 short years, we are very near to achieving our long-cherished goals. I believe that with your continued support, we can carry on the tradition of being a place of access and opportunity where people from all backgrounds can hone their talents and make a difference in the world.
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The third challenge is the threat to institutional autonomy. As you know, I am very supportive of planning, but the government is looking for more alignment between itself and universities. In this respect, I am pleased that we are aligned with the government, but there are limits.

The York Advantage

Unlike many universities, we are in a really great position. We are better off than most because of our heritage. York has academic strength, people who are willing to work hard, a large population base, and land. This is the time for York to rise. But for us to continue to succeed, there are things that we can do better.

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The University is very near to achieving long-cherished goals. By Mandhoud Shoukri

Mamdouh Shoukri is York’s president and vice-chancellor.
A new sculpture adorns the Keele campus or the mystic, what is how. For the craftsman, how is what. For the artist, what and how are one,” said William McElcheran (1927-1999), the artist behind York’s newest sculpture acquisition. The McElcheran work, Encounter, is located in the cobbled square at the northwest corner of the Student Centre. York acquired the sculpture in 2011 through an anonymous donor.

The sculpture depicts two businessmen – a favourite motif of McElcheran’s – with briefcases in hand, dressed in overcoats and sporting fedoras, apparently greeting one another, or possibly bumping into one another. The figures, although opposite each other, are almost identical. (McElcheran had apparently keenly observed what he called “fat cats wheel and deal on the corners of Bay Street.”)

If the work looks eerily familiar, it’s because McElcheran’s sculptures dot a lot of Toronto’s public spaces as well as the civic spaces of several Ontario small towns and cities such as Guelph.

McElcheran was born in Hamilton, Ont. and began studying at the Ontario College of Art when he was 16. He graduated at the top of his class. He started his career as a woodworker and focused on liturgical art as he began carving church furniture and pews. In 1973, he established his own design firm which specialized in integrating sculptures into the design of buildings. He moved to Italy in 1975 in order to spend more time near a foundry and the artisans skilled in bronze casting. Encounter, like many of his works, is cast in bronze.

Legend has it that McElcheran slept very little, wanting to devote as much time as possible to his art. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Academy and his works are included in many provincial, municipal and corporate art collections in Canada, the US, Germany, Italy and Japan.
A new sculpture adorns the Keele campus.

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What They’re Reading
York people reveal what’s on the bedside table
James A. Walker  Linguistics professor
“My linguistics reading has to do with the articles I’m working on, one comparing ethno-linguistic diversity in Canada and Sweden, the other on word frequency and sound systems. My personal reading began this summer by revisiting Frederik Pohl’s Gateway sci-fi novel about human exploration of abandoned alien technology. I also reconnected with Swedish crime fiction: Leif ‘GW’ Person’s Mellan sommarens långt och vinterns kid (‘Between Summer’s Longing and Winter’s Cold’), an alternative view of Olof Palme’s assassination; and Håkan Nesser’s Kross Nobi bufora aldeiga i Genesuoti spi (‘Kross Nobi Never Swam in Genesaret’s Lake’), about an unresolved murder in the early 1960s.”
Christine Jonas-Simpson  Nursing professor
“I love to read, as it inspires my writing and gives me pause to reflect or become absorbed in another world. After designing the set for The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo trilogy, I looked for other Swedish thrillers and turned to Henrik Mankell’s The Pyramid. I read Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows for a fifth time this summer and just finished Sara Paretsky’s Water for Elephants and Ape House. At the close of Ape House I was thrilled to see Glendon Hall in 1983 she felt, while retrieving some documents from the attic, that she was “not alone” and a cold chill ran down her spine. She knew a ghost was near.
Another contributor claims a ghost is alive and well in one particular room in Hilliard Residence (she doesn’t say which one) and that nothing good has ever come the way of anyone who stayed there. As if that weren’t enough, there are also ill spirits reported in Wood D house and C house basements, and apparent sightings of the “Lady in the Library” – a ghost who gazes out the windows on winter nights. There is even a report of a ghost dog.”

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows
James A. Walker

Sage of Aquarius
Marshall McLuhan, protester, lights up York’s archives

What did Marshall McLuhan and urban expert Jane Jacobs have in common? A jointly made film for one. It was designed to raise public ire over the construction of the proposed Spadina Expressway in Toronto. Last year marked the centenary of McLuhan’s birth. The University of Toronto professor, a visionary educator about mass media and famous for such insights as “The medium is the message”, was reportedly inflamed by environmental and urban affairs issues and became a member of the Stop Spadina, Save Our City Coordinating Committee. McLuhan, who died in 1980, and Jacobs collaborated to make the little-known short film (12 minutes) called The Burning World in 1970. A rare copy of it resides in York’s Clara Thomas Archives & Special Collections. The enigmatic title is derived from James Joyce’s Finnegans Wake (a “burning would come to dance upon”).
York English Professor B. W. Powe, who knew McLuhan and has written and lectured extensively about him, also met Jane Jacobs in the early 1980s. He says Jacobs described McLuhan as living in a “whirlwind of ideas and perceptions.” “She told me he never stopped being McLuhan – that is, there was no chit-chat or small talk. He was finding visionary seeds in the moment,” says Powe. “MM was also not afraid of change and he was deeply sensitive to noise. Hence his opposition to the Spadina extension.”

Steve Henderson, postdoctoral Fellow with York’s Department of History, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, was too young by decades to have experienced Yorkville in its hippie heyday. But the cultural historian has nevertheless managed to plumb the soul of Yorkville in all its flower-power glory with his new book, Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s. Henderson says his book attempts to answer core cultural questions such as how is “hip” constructed, and, can counter-cultural events really influence mainstream society? Based on his reworked Queen’s University PhD thesis, the book covers Yorkville from 1960 to 1970. Interestingly, Henderson, who was born in 1977, says he got into counterculture in a way “not dissimilar from the avenues people who were concerned that I, as someone who didn’t live it, could never write about.”

Feelin’ Groovy
How Yorkville defined Canadian hipness
Stuart Henderson

Every university deserves a resident ghost. The University of Toronto has one or two well-known hauntings, so why not Glendon College? Luckily, the spirit world is cooperating, if you believe recent sighting testimonials on torontoghosts.org, which bills itself as Canada’s “oldest website devoted to ghosts & hauntings.”
In one case, a student said she saw a “lady” dressed in white walking in the Rose Garden and that it looked as if her feet floated a “few inches above the ground” (she is often reported to appear during wedding photos). Another eyewitness claims that when she worked at Glendon Hall in 1983 she felt, while retrieving some documents from the attic, that she was “not alone” and a cold chill came over her that made the hair on her arms stand up. She knew a ghost was near.
Another contributor claims a ghost is alive and well in one particular room in Hilliard Residence (she doesn’t say which one) and that nothing good has ever come the way of anyone who stayed there. As if that weren’t
**What They're Reading**

*York people reveal what's on the bedside table*

**James A. Walker**

Linguistics professor

“My linguistics reading has to do with the articles I’m working on, one comparing ethno-linguistic diversity in Canada and Sweden, the other on word frequency and sound systems. My personal reading began this summer by re-reading and reviewing each day’s column in the New York Times. Frederick Pohl’s Gateway sci-fi novels are also on my list.”

**Christine Jonas-Simpson**

Nursing professor

“I love to read, as it inspires my writing and gives me pause to reflect or become absorbed in another world. After devoring Stieg Larsson’s Millennium Trilogy, I looked for other Swedish thrillers and turned to Henning Mankell’s Wallander series. The burning question: ‘Between Summer’s Longing and Winter’s Cold’, about an aldrig i Genesarets sjö and Håkan Nesser’s Sommaren’s längtan och vinterns köld.”

**What did Marshall McLuhan and urban expert Jane Jacobs have in common?**

Marshall McLuhan, protester, lights up York’s archives

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**How Yorkville defined Canadian hipness**

Exploring Yorkville was a kind of proving ground for his theories about the idea of hip communities, and the politics that drive popular manifestations of countercultural identity, he says. Ironically, Henderson says the toughest part of doing the book involved the people he was writing about. “I met a great deal of resistance from people who were concerned that I, as someone who didn’t live it, could never write about it.”

**Making the Scene**

Offers new ways to think about counter-culture, dissent and the construction and performance of hip identities. Henderson’s next book will be about that former Toronto bastion of sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll, Rockdale College – “now a tidy seniors’ residence.”

**Motivating the Manor**

**Making the Scene** offers new ways to think about counter-culture, dissent and the construction and performance of hip identities. Henderson’s next book will be about that former Toronto bastion of sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll, Rockdale College – “now a tidy seniors’ residence.”

**Universe**

**Far Out**

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purple martins are beautiful, sleek birds that eat only flying insects —
they’re famous for their ability to dive while on the wing — and like
to live in colonies. They’re also known for their incredible feats of flight.
Twice a year, they make a 7,000-kilometre migration from wintering grounds in the
Amazon River basin to various points in Canada and the northern US. In
some cases, the journey takes them only three weeks.

“That’s a stunning feat, especially considering how small martins are,” says
Bridget Stutchbury, York’s Canada Research Chair in Ecology and Conser-
vation Biology. In order to track the birds’ movements, tiny geolocators
the size of a dime are attached to the birds’ backs, rather like a miniature
backpacks. They don’t interfere with bird behaviour or flight. Stutch-
bury was the first researcher to use this technology on songbirds.

“Scientifically, purple martins are particularly interesting because
they are highly social. During migration, nighttime roosts can
number more than 100,000 birds,” she says. “And they are in a
group of birds — aerial insectivores — that are experiencing a
decline in many species. So that’s a conservation concern.”

Stutchbury’s geolocator study of martins’ migratory pat-
terns began in 2007 and has recently expanded to Minnesota,
South Dakota and New Jersey. Her new postdoctoral fellow Kevin Fraser is now sifting through geolocator data
recovered from martins returning to colonies in Texas
and Virginia. “We’re looking at how crossing dangerous
dangerous barriers — for example, the Gulf of Mexico — affects
migration speed, routes and strategies. The results so far
are exciting but can’t be released just yet. I can tell
you we deployed more than 200 geolocators in 2011
— our biggest year to date.”

Stutchbury, based in the Faculty of Science &
Engineering, has spent her career studying martins and
other North American migratory songbirds
and is the author of the popular books
Silence of the Songbirds and The Bird Detective.
Hatha Care Benefits
How yoga helps fibromyalgia sufferers

Significant reductions in pain and associated psychological symptoms, such as pain catastrophizing (excessive focus on its negative aspects), and an increase in acceptance along with improvements in mindfulness after completing the study. End result: “Our study indicates Hatha yoga may be a helpful tool for individuals with fibromyalgia to work with and alter the way they experience thoughts about their pain.”

Psychology
High Anxiety
Why adults are experts at self-delusion

ODDLERS THROW TANTRUMS when they don’t get what they want (i.e., frustrated goals). But what do adults do, since tantrums aren’t acceptable behaviour? Well, according to recent studies by graduate psychology students Kyle Nash, Mike Prentice and Chelsea Ferriday, and York psychology Professor Ian McGregor, people practise something called “reactive approach motivation”, or RAM.

“Our research looks at, essentially, how people escape anxiety,” says Nash. Approach motivation is an energized and focused state that moves people toward a goal by shielding them from anything unrelated or uncertain, according to Nash. In one study, subjects were pre-primed and made anxious through the use of certain activities and questions. They were then asked to rate the level of confidence their “soul mate” or person they felt they were meant to be with. Subjects who were made anxious rated the relationship with their significant other higher on the “magic scale” – that is, they used belief in the “magic” of the relationship as a balm to ease their anxiety.

According to Nash, adults who are uncertain or anxious about one or more areas of their life will often find another domain that acts as a certainty, and will exhibit “irrational conviction” about that area. Relationships are a popular outlet for such irrational convictions, as are religious beliefs.

Nash says their recent studies suggest the tantalizing possibility that goals might be managed so people could be “shieldsed” from anxiety, even in uncertain or frustrating situations, thereby removing the need for extreme beliefs. “It might be possible to temporarily inoculate a person from anxiety.”

Stress
Purple martins are beautiful, sleek birds that eat only flying insects – they’re famous for their ability to dine while on the wing – and like to live in colonies. They’re also known for their incredible feats of flight. Twice a year, they make a 7,000-kilometre migration from wintering grounds in the Amazon River basin to various points in Canada and the northern US. In some cases, the journey takes them only three weeks.

“That’s a stunning feat, especially considering how small martins are,” says Bridger Strutchbury, York’s Canada Research Chair in Ecology and Conservation Biology. In order to track the birds’ movements, tiny geolocators the size of a dime are attached to the birds’ backs, rather like miniature backpacks. They don’t interfere with bird behaviour or flight. Strutchbury was the first researcher to use this technology on songbirds. “Scientifically, purple martins are particularly interesting because they are highly social. During migration, nighttime roosts can number more than 100,000 birds,” she says. “And they are in a group of birds – aerial insectivores – that are experiencing a decline in many species. So that’s a conservation concern.”

Strutchbury’s geolocator study of martins’ migratory patterns began in 2007 and has recently expanded to Minnesota, South Dakota and New Jersey. Her new postdoctoral fellow Kevin Fraser is now sifting through geolocator data recovered from martins returning to colonies in Texas and Virginia. “We’re looking at how crossing dangerous barriers – for example, the Gulf of Mexico – affects migration speed, route and strategy. The results so far are exciting but can’t be released just yet. I can tell you we deployed more than 200 geolocators in 2011 – our biggest year to date!”

Strutchbury, based in the Faculty of Science & Engineering, has spent her career studying martins and other North American migratory songbirds and is the author of the popular books Silence of the Songbirds and The Bird Detective.
He’s a Belieber

Musical director Dan Kanter loves his life recording, touring and chilling with Canada’s most famous teen idol. But he’s still working on his master’s.

BY MICHAEL TODD ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK

“Believer: A person who loves Justin Bieber and ‘believes’ in everything that he can do.” — Urban Dictionary

AYOU’RE 30, AND THE GUY WHO SIGNS YOUR PAYCHEQUE HAPPENS TO BE 17. Disjunct? Not really. Not if your boss is music phenomenon Justin Bieber. For Ottawa born and bred guitarist, musical director and York fine arts grad Daniel Kanter, that’s exactly the case. “Let me say, sometimes I’m his boss!” says Kanter. “But, yes, he’s my boss. Well, it goes back and forth. During sound checks and rehearsals, I’m his boss. The rest of the time he’s my boss.”

He wouldn’t have it any other way – the two are the best of friends and he is, by his own admission, a “bieberhead”. Kanter (BFA ’07) has been working for several years now with Bieber and directs his stage show productions. “My job is to basically take the songs that are on Justin’s albums and turn them into live productions,” says Kanter. It’s an arrangement that’s worked out so well that at times Kanter seems less like an employee on Bieber’s payroll and more like a big brother. Bieber even came to Kanter’s 2010 wedding at the Four Seasons in Toronto as a guest, along with his mom as his date, and sang a number of songs, as well as danced. (Search “Dan Kanter’s Wedding” on YouTube.)

Kanter’s lucky break came when he was working as a freelance producer and musician and working on his master’s in musicology at York. “Even as early as my second year at York, when I was doing my BA, I’d auditioned for a singer and left for a few years to tour with her and do session work. So, although I was ‘in school’, I’d sort of embarked on my professional career at the same time,” he says. Kanter’s work with other teen singers during the mid-2000s paid off when he came to the attention of a rep from Universal who was looking for someone to lead Bieber’s band. “Justin just coming to Canada on a promotional tour. He was going to play an acoustic set on Much-Music and management was looking for a second guitarist to thicken up the sound, and also someone who could act as his musical mentor,” says Kanter. They hit it off immediately. Bieber’s people kept...
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Kanter has also shared the stage with acts like Usher, Miley Cyrus, Drake, Ludacris, Boyz II Men and Selena Gomez, and has performed on “Saturday Night Live”, “The Oprah Winfrey Show”, “American Idol” and at London’s Wembley Stadium.

So what’s the best part of working with the Bieber? Kanter says he loves exploring new cities when they’re travelling – especially the food. “I’m a real foodie.” He prefers travelling by bus over plane. The other great thing is, of course, playing live in front of Bieber’s very appreciative fans. “Justin has the best fans in the world. There’s no doubt about it,” says Kanter.

“The excitement and the energy in the room is unbelievable. It’s never boring – even though we usually play the same songs – because of the energy and because Justin’s always challenging us and keeping us on our toes.”

Kanter’s musical roots began with his family. Both his mother and father were musical, he says, and into the usual pop artists of the time such as Bob Dylan, The Beatles and Elton John. In fact, they are artists he still listens to regularly. He was planning on doing his master’s thesis on Dylan – he’s completed his coursework – but has since changed his mind and plans to embark on something related to developing a pop show from a musical director’s perspective. One day he hopes to complete his doctorate and teach in York’s music department.

He started piano at a young age and says drums and guitar came relatively easy after that. His father, a teacher, directed musical productions and Kanter says by the age of four he could sing Tinny front to back. Both his parents, Jeff Kanter (BA ’72) and Julie Eisenberg Kanter (BA ’73), are York grads and lived in residence in Founders College in the early 1970s.

Kanter had applied to prestigious music schools such as Berklee, but says the fact his parents had attended York put it top of mind. “I looked into other schools, but York’s flexibility appealed to me – I didn’t have to commit to either classical or jazz or performance or composition. And I liked that. I could get my hand in everything, which is what I wanted to do.” While at York, Kanter relished his chance go in interdisciplinary directions and studied history along with entertainment law and an entertainment business course, and particularly relished studying with the likes of guitarist and Professor Matt Vander Veer.

“Justin was great. His manager said ‘Everyone, we’re taking two weeks off’, so I could have some time with my wife. I mean, I can’t think of another artist who would do that! My point is, for Justin, the band and the crew, we’re all a family and we’re all a very tight-knit, small family. Everyone thinks his productions are huge, but you’d be surprised at just how small an operation it is. It’s very family focused.”

Perhaps the most important thing for young musicians starting out, he says, is to really follow their heart if they truly want to go for it. Kanter says in many cases it’s a rude awakening. “Not in a bad sense. It is just a tough road and there are so many ups and downs. That forces any artist to assess how much they love it and how much they want it. You know, a lot of my friends say to me, ‘Oh, now you’ve made it’, but there’s so much more I want to learn, explore and do. Have I made it? To my mind, I’m not even close.”

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**COVER**

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calling him. “While the record label recommended to him, I also think I was the first person in a long time he could chat with casually about Tim Hortons’s coffee, the Tragically Hip and how he’s a Leafs fan and Tim’s a Senators fan.”

The upbeat of all was Kanter joined Bieber’s band in the summer of 2009, worked as producer on Bieber’s acoustic album, My World: Acoustic, appeared in Never Say Never, Bieber’s 3D documentary movie, and toured the world with him. In fact, since Kanter joined the band he’s spent about 80 per cent of the last two years on tour, even though he got married in the middle of it all.

“Justin was great. His manager said ‘Everyone, we’re taking two weeks off,’ so I could have some time with my wife. I mean, I can’t think of another artist who would do that! My point is, for Justin, the band and the crew, we’re all a very tight-knit, small family. Everyone thinks his productions are huge, but you’d be surprised at just how small an operation it is. It’s very family focused.”

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So what’s the best part of working with the Bieber? Kanter says he loves exploring new cities when they’re travelling – especially the food. “I’m a real foodie.” He prefers travelling by bus over plane. The other great thing is, of course, playing live on the ground where he’d done in terms of his musical background and real-world experience! “Well, I’d done my homework, and I was already working with other teen singers and was in the industry. I also had the work and academic experience to back me up when opportunity came calling. Sure I was lucky, but I was also prepared.”

Perhaps the most important thing for young musicians starting out, he says, is to really follow their heart if they truly want to go for it. Kanter says in many cases it’s a rude awakening. “Not in a bad sense. It is just a tough road and there are so many ups and downs. That forces any artist to assess how much they love it and how much they want it. You know, a lot of my friends say to me, ‘Oh, now you’ve made it,’ but there’s so much more I want to learn, explore and do. Have I made it?

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METEOROLOGY

It's covered Katrina, braved Ike and chased Gustav, Earl, Igor and Noel. His car can be fitted with Plexiglas hail guards, his $10,000 video camera is waterproof and he wears wetsuits to do his job. Meet Mark Robinson, storm chaser.

Over the past 15 years, he’s ranged from Ontario to Texas pursuing tornadoes, and from Florida to Newfoundland stalking hurricanes. If he couldn’t sell his footage to TV networks, the self-taught photographer posted it on his website, stormhunter.ca. Last spring, he earned a certificate in meteorology from York. (“To get to the storms, you have to know how to forecast them.”) Now he’s on call for The Weather Network and hosts his own TWN show, “Storm Hunters”, taking viewers to the heart of the most powerful winds on Earth.

“I’ve covered 11 hurricanes and 30 tornadoes,” says the 38-year-old severe weather expert and educator, pointing to hurricane decals on the driver’s door of his rusty 1996 diesel-powered Jetta. Spiked with antennas and crowned with tubular sensors, the car doubles as a mobile workstation. Laptop computers provide up-to-the-minute radar and satellite reports, and also read the local wind, rain and air pressure conditions. His video and still cameras are handy in the back seat. This trusty charger has clocked 450,000 kilometres and carried him into the wheel of deadly tempests.

One of the deadliest was Katrina. “It was the most intense experience of my life,” says Robinson of the Category 3 hurricane that smashed New Orleans in August 2005. He and his hurricane-chasing partner, George Kourounis, host of TWN’s “Angry Planet”, drove for two days to get to the gulf in time to catch Katrina making second landfall. Sleep deprived and running on adrenaline, they knew exactly where to go for the best and safest view – a parking garage in Gulfport, Mississippi. Built for strength, such open structures can withstand raging storms and offer a roof overhead. Pressed against concrete pillars, Robinson filmed guardrails, sheet-metal roofing and other “decapitator” debris flying past on 200-kilometre-per-hour winds. As the hurricane subsided, he waded up to his ribs in filthy floodwaters to shoot a sea surge so powerful it tossed ship like a deadly tornado. Residents asked why he loves something that kills and destroys. He answered: “The better I can understand these storms, the better my forecasting.” It’s critical for early warning systems.

Becoming certified as a meteorologist “was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done,” says Robinson. The family man took four years to complete the York program part time and still works for his father doing mould remediation when not on assignment for TWN. Nor has he given up his gig scuba diving into a local Mandarin restaurant’s giant fish tank to feed the sharks.

Fifteen years ago, Robinson started venturing into storms as a university student and soon became hooked on the danger and the godly spectacle. It also seemed to alleviate his chronic depression and definitely diverted him from a career as a wildlife biologist. Now he counts himself one of a few hard-core enthusiasts among 100 storm chasers in Canada, and one of 30 or so among 2,000 in the US.

Nothing takes a man’s breath away like standing underneath a dark swirling sculpture of wind and water miles wide and twice as tall as Mount Everest. The air is charged, the colours brilliant, the light intense, and Robinson will endure days of driving and hours of work to drink in that terrible beauty. “The blues are so blue. It’s the most gorgeous light in the world.”

And nothing beats the adrenaline rush. From May to October, Robinson spends weeks at a time chasing twisters in southern Ontario and mid-continent Tornado Alley, where cold north winds clash with warm, moist south winds to spawn as many as 1,000 violent storms a year, more than anywhere else in the world. He’s been chased down the highway by a black funnel, seen a twister lift the roof off a house, just missed being hit by lightning. So far, though, “nobody has ever been killed chasing storms,” he says. “You have to be extremely aware of your surroundings,” says the father of two little girls. “We treat our surroundings, the weather, as a live and active force.”

He’ll do whatever it takes for a chance to experience nature’s fury. If not storm chasing, he’s taping episodes of “Angry Planet” with Kourounis in exotic corners of the globe. The two have strung ropes across – and cooked eggs in – the boiling waters of a lake in Dominica, climbed Alaska’s Mount Washington through snow and against minus-30 degree gusting winds. In fact, winter storm footage is so popular, Robinson keeps busy between tornado seasons filming blizzards, snow squalls, ice storms and giant snow falls mainly in Ontario. It’s tougher, he says. You’re in and out of the car, bitterly cold one minute, melting the next and always worried about your equipment.

But he can’t imagine doing anything else. Some day, he says, referring to the US Weather Channel’s popular roving meteorologist, “I would like to be the Jim Cantore of Canada.”
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Last spring, Robinson visited Joplin, Missouri, flattened by a deadly tornado. Residents asked why he loves something that kills and destroys. He answered: “The better I can understand these storms, the better my forecasting.” It’s critical for early warning systems.

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Becoming certified as a meteorologist “was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done,” says Robinson. The family man took four years to complete the York program part time and still works for his father doing mould remediation when not on assignment for TWN. Nor has he given up his gig scuba diving into a local Mandarin restaurant’s giant fish tank to feed the sharks and clean the tank.

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**Not Just a Headache**

A team of experts at York is focusing on how to improve treatment of concussion and understand its mysteries.

**BY DAVID FULLER**

**SOPHIE KINACHTOUK**

EW PEOPLE CAN SAY they’ve never heard about concussions in sport after National Hockey League star Sidney Crosby was sidelined by two hits to the head a year ago. The injury to “Sid the Kid”, and the intense media coverage that followed, raised awareness and challenged myths about the condition like nothing before. At York, researchers are taking a leading role in studying the intricacies of concussion, while therapists prepare for an increase in the number of athletes willing to report their symptoms and get expert treatment.

The gravity of brain injuries was underlined tragically for the York community two years ago when student Donald Sanderson hit his head in a senior hockey league fight in Brantford, Ont. and died two weeks later without regaining consciousness. Since then, his mother Dahnah has dedicated herself to educating the public about brain trauma and raising funds for the Donald Sanderson Memorial Trust Fund in support of organizations that do the same. With the fund’s backing, the School of Kinesiology & Health Science in York’s Faculty of Health hosted the first Donald Sanderson Concussion Symposium in 2010 and a second one this past September.

School Professors Lauren Sergio, Alison Macpherson and Frances Flint have long-standing interests in the effects and treatment of brain injury, as does Cindy Hughes, head athletic therapist and manager at the school’s Gorman/Shore Sport Injury Clinic. When Dahnah Sanderson spoke at the 2010 event, it had a galvanizing effect, highlighting the growing need for better care. “We were starting to see more and more concussions and ones that were taking a long time to recover from – more than 10 days, a couple of months,” says Hughes. “We realized we could offer state-of-the-art, gold standard concussion care and management with some of the best medical practitioners in the city.” The list of experts York can call on includes researchers, athletic therapists, chaplains, physicians, neurosurgeons and psychologists who currently treat York Lions athletes. The goal eventually is to offer treatment to the community at a concussion care centre based at the Keele campus.

Treatment is but one of three aspects to York’s take on concussions, says Sergio. The others are education about taking the injury seriously, and research into exactly how it affects an athlete’s movements and senses. In her work on the effects of Alzheimer’s disease on motor function, Sergio has noticed similarities between the two conditions. Clinical diagnostic techniques are still in their infancy, so developing better testing is one goal of the research. The functional magnetic resonance imaging machine in York’s Sherman Health Science Research Centre will provide data to support emerging theories about exactly what happens when an athlete’s brain collides with the inner skull, producing such a wide variation in symptoms and in the all-important recovery time. “The thing about concussion is that it’s individual; you have to compare it to yourself,” says Sergio. She is currently testing members of York’s varsity sport teams, both before and after they experience concussions, and plans to widen her research to include a select number of athletes from the community.

Another study by Macpherson, an epidemiologist, started this fall with ongoing testing of 1,000 pee wee players in the Greater Toronto Hockey League. Macpherson knows first-hand about the impact of the concussion debate. As one of the people whose research influenced the recent ban on bodychecking for Ontario’s house league and select hockey teams, she has been at the centre of the safety controversy – both in the media and at home. Her son, who had just reached the age where bodychecking was allowed, is among her critics. “He had tears in his eyes when we found out [about the ban]. He said he wasn’t going to talk to me for a day,” she says. “But realistically, we need to do what works to help keep kids from getting concussions, especially as we learn more and more about the long-term consequences.”

Macpherson’s study should reveal whether the ban on bodychecking is reducing the number of concussions as intended, and what other preventative measures might be needed.

The key to treating concussions and promoting a safe return to play is to remove athletes from the rink or field as soon as they start showing symptoms. This means that volunteer team trainers, most of whom get only online training, must learn what to look for and how to administer the latest tests. “The athletic therapist isn’t there watching the game, they are watching the athletes,” says Flint, coordinator of the Athletic Therapy stream in the School of Kinesiology & Health Science. “We are the front-line people who put the athletes into the medical system. It’s critical that student therapists learn this.”

Another important aspect of concussion injuries is the psychological effect they have on both the athletes, who can experience depression when they can’t play, and parents, who are worried about their children’s health and safety. “There’s a lot of anxiety,” says Flint. In a keynote speech at the 2011 symposium, Canadian Football League Hall of Fame quarterback Matt Dunigan told a crowd of York athletes about the symptoms he still suffers 15 years after retiring, and how this led him to convince his son to quit football after he was concussed three times.

“It’s difficult for athletes to get proper treatment for their injury,” says Sergio. “If you’re a 14-year-old having these problems, there’s nothing out there. Nothing. You go to your doctor and they say, ‘yeah, well if it hurts, stop doing it.’”

York’s concussion experts know that kind of response won’t cut it now that Crosby’s experience has shown that there’s a better standard of care out there – and they are looking forward to the day when being able to find top-quality treatment for concussion is as routine as strapping on a helmet.
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY

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GOLD STANDARD: Cindy Hughes

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Cultures love their myths, but often these myths are more glamorous than the reality. The stereotype of francophone Canada’s beloved filles du roi is no different, as author Suzanne Desrochers (BA ’00, MA ’07) discovered in working on her best-selling historical novel, Bride of New France (2011). She was already well steeped in the culture. Her childhood unfolded in the small Ontario village of Lafontaine, a francophone community northwest of Barrie where the local Catholic Church and the public school sit side by side. Pea soup and “sugaring off” are yearly rituals. “My mom was anglophone, my dad francophone, so I grew up in a bilingual environment, but we really only spoke English at home,” says Desrochers. When she started school, though, it was strictly French only. “Most of my schoolmates came from homes where both parents spoke French.”

It was in public school history lessons that Desrochers first heard about the famed filles—a group of women who were brought over from France in the 17th century as wives for the men of the time in an effort to populate the New World. Their DNA, according to various genealogists, is now shared by virtually everyone of French extraction living in Canada. Between 1663 and 1673, 768 filles du roi or “King’s Daughters” emigrated to New France.

Desrochers began her novel while in a two-year interdisciplinary MA (studying French history and creative writing) at York, where she was lucky enough to hook up with creative writing professor and novelist Susan Swan. “I got two great supervisors at Glendon who were familiar with French and French-Canadian history, Jane Couchman and Roberto Perin, and, of course, Susan,” says Desrochers, who had little in the way of writing credentials up until that point. “I think Susan took me on since she too had written a historical novel [What Casanova Told Me, 2004] and we were both from the same area geographically.” (Swan hails from Midland, near the village where Desrochers grew up.)

Bride of New France explores whether the filles embraced the opportunity to escape the poornesses, or whether they were essentially forced into lives of servitude and childbearing in a rough, hard land. It focuses on the story of Laure Beaupré, who has grown up in a dormitory surrounded by prostitutes, the insane and other forgotten women. She dreams of using her needlework skills to become a seamstress and one day marry a nobleman, but in 1669, along with some slaves bound for the French colonial islands, she is shipped to the New World.

“My novel is really about how Laure faces the challenges of coming into womanhood in a brutal time and place,” says Desrochers. Laure arrives in Ville-Marie (Montreal) and is expected to marry and produce children with a brutish woodsman. Eventually she has a secret relationship with Deskaheh, an Iroquois man, and begins to sense the possibilities of a new life in the New World. “The novel really centres on the question of what happens to a woman who attempts to make her own life choices in such authoritative times,” notes Desrochers. She says she felt the story was important for a number of reasons, one being that it wasn’t well known outside French Canada, and a second that what little had been written on the filles’ experience failed to explore the individual experience of that time.

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Was tackling a full-fledged historical novel daunting for a creative writing student? “I think the toughest part is trying to develop characters and not make them cardboard,” says Desrochers. “You know, one of the myths is that we think these people were so much more conservative than us just because it was several hundred years ago and maybe because religion was so omnipresent. But nothing could be further from the truth.”

B O O K S

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BOOKS

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“Of course, in school history books, the filles were shown stepping off the boat in Quebec City dressed in gowns,” says Desrochers. “It was a glamorous tale, but nothing could have been further from the truth, as I found out later. While taking Desrochers. “You know, one of the myths is that we think these people were so much more conservative than us just because they were a hundred years ago and maybe because religion was so omnipresent. But nothing could be further from the truth.”

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Novelist Suzanne Desrochers found that the real history of the fabled filles du roi who populated New France wasn’t quite what she learned in school.

BY MICHAEL TODD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK

Brides Revisited
What does it take to be top of the class today? These undergrads can tell you.

By Martha Tancock
Photography by Mike Ford

YorkU February 2012

ACHIEVERS

When you were 20, did you know what you wanted to do with your life? Of the eight students profiled here – each of whom had the highest accumulated grade point average in his or her Faculty after second year – only one, maybe two, aren’t sure where they’re headed, and may even like it that way. These are York’s top undergrads at the midpoint of the bachelor journey, and they have much in common despite their widely varying intellectual pursuits. They’re all children and grandchildren of immigrants, they demonstrated their signature diligence and drive long before university, and they are blessed with unstinting parental support.

Those who have mapped their futures expect to pursue mostly professional and academic careers. Although two business students, tied for first place, want to jump directly into the working world after graduation, most foresee many more years in school. Whatever motivates them – goals, values, the ecstasy of intellectual discovery – these scholarship winners work hard for life’s rewards.

Into the Mind

Jacob Harris
Glendon GPA: 8.65

Last summer, Jacob Harris left home in north Toronto to move downtown, holidayed in Seattle with his boyfriend and read eight books – including three ancient Greek tragedies, Hesiod’s Works and Days and Aristotle’s Poetics, arguably the first work of literary theory. Not your usual light summer fare, but pure pleasure for the English lit major who developed an appetite for critical analysis during a course on gay and lesbian studies at his alternative high school. By Grade 12, the Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings fan was devouring Michel Foucault’s The History of Sexuality and other works by 20th-century philosophers.

This year, the French-speaking, Hebrew-reading 20-year-old travels to the Keele campus for most courses, though he prefers the intimacy of Glendon, where he’s taking one class on the literary uses of history. “Literature can shape how you think about yourself. It’s not just a diversion,” he says. The Shakespeare enthusiast roams around modern literature, too – novels by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, poetry by T.S. Eliot – exploring references, classical and otherwise, in search of deeper meaning. Now into queer theory, this future academic who loves a late-night restaurant is already pursuing the “life of the mind”. “I can’t think of anything I’d rather do.”

Vision Quest

Jakub Schnitzler
Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies GPA: 8.64

Jakub Schnitzler is looking for a sign. “I’m kind of lacking direction and just trying to figure things out.” He envies friends who know precisely what they want to do. The 20-year-old from north of Newmarket expected to become an English prof until he realized passion was a prerequisite. For now, he concentrates on getting As and curing himself of bad study habits, such as pulling all-nighters. He’s squeezed this year’s English and history classes into three days to reduce his commute and do shifts at a grocery store. That might explain why he’s added Healing Fiction and modern Ukrainian history to an eclectic transcript featuring literary theory, Islamic civilization, and film and society.

Last summer, the high school valedictorian and President’s Scholarship winner worked as a garbage collector, otherwise played guitar and keyboard, biked, kayaked, practised karate, watched “Breaking Bad”, and researched music and other subjects on the Internet. “I like knowing the background of things. Some days I feel I could win on ‘Jeopardy!’” Next year, he’ll take Professor Bruce Powe’s visionary literature course, for its promise of philosophical nuance. Then, should he go into law? His Polish grandfather and great-aunt were judges. Schnitzler’s leaving his options open, waiting for that special something to grab him.

See videos of these students at youtube.com/yorkuniversity.

Left: Harris
Above: Schnitzler
Student Stars

What does it take to be top of the class today? These undergrads can tell you.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD

ACHIEVERS

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Vision Quest
Jakub Schnitzler
Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies GPA: 8.64

Jakub Schnitzler is looking for a sign. “I’m kind of lacking direction and just trying to figure things out.” He envies friends who know precisely what they want to do. The 20-year-old from north of Newmarket expected to become an English prof until he realized passion was a prerequisite. For now, he concentrates on getting As and curing himself of bad study habits, such as pulling all-nighters. He’s squeezed this year’s English and history classes into three days to reduce his commute and do shifts at a grocery store. That might explain why he’s added Healing Fiction and modern Ukrainian history to an eclectic transcript featuring literary theory, Islamic civilization, and film and society.

Last summer, the high school valedictorian and President’s Scholarship winner worked as a garbage collector, otherwise played guitar and keyboard, biked, kayaked, practised karate, watched “Breaking Bad”, and researched music and other subjects on the Internet. “I like knowing the background of things. Some days I feel I could win on ‘Jeopardy’.” Next year, he’ll take Professor Bruce Powe’s visionary literature course, for its promise of philosophical nuance. Then, should he go into law? His Polish grandfather and great-aunt were judges. Schnitzler’s leaving his options open, waiting for that special something to grab him.
**Piano Rhapsody**

**Peter Widz**  
Faculty of Fine Arts  GPA: 8.65

For his audition at York, Peter Widz performed 19th-century hits – Chopin’s Ballade No. 1 and Debussy’s Clair de Lune. Then he prattled on about Schumann – and won a scholarship into York’s music program. The fall before, he’d abandoned international relations studies at the University of Toronto and his parents’ dream of a lawyer son. “What do I do with my life?” wondered the only child of hardworking Polish immigrants. He sat down at his Yamaha upright and played and played. “Music kicked in for me,” says the 21-year-old, who often volunteers to perform at the Brampton hospital and during intermissions at the Rose Theatre.

He fell for the “king of instruments” at 10 when his piano teacher started improvising jazz after a lesson. “I saw his hands gliding over the keys and thought, oh, wow, there are so many things you can do with piano.” Once easily distracted by tennis, golf and basketball, Widz spent hours mastering classical repertoire, aced Grade 12 and won a Governor General’s Award for music. After U of T, he rediscovered his musical bliss. Now motivated like never before, he rhapsodizes about grad school and how he copes with the stress. “I’m much more wellrounded now,” he says. He’s working on Schumann – and won a scholarship at Bocconi University. It’s why he enrolled in York’s international business program. The grandson of Italian immigrants never spoke Italian at home and visited Italy for the first time in Grade 12. Now he’s mastering Italian and adding Spanish to his repertoire of English and French so he can work in Europe some day. Not in finance, his original career choice, but in marketing. “Mortgage lending rates just don’t speak to me. Marketing suits my personality better,” says the chatty, pop-cultured people person who interned last summer at MacLaren McCann advertising agency. "I really like never before, he rhymes about good studies in performance, conducting, maybe even composing, at a top American school. “You never know what’s going to happen.”

**Vegan Crusader**

**Natalie Peragine**  
Faculty of Environmental Studies  GPA: 8.75

From birth, Natalie Peragine bonded closely with animals. Her first word was “meow”. She used to take horse-riding lessons and now also shares an Oakville home with her dog, two free-ranging rabbits and four uncaged budgies. When this evangelical vegan could no longer stomach feeding meat to cats at the local humane society, she vowed only to take care of herbivores and now volunteers at a Kitlenh donkey sanctuary. She and her boyfriend founded York’s first Vegan Environmentalist Group, dedicated to educating others about animal rights and veganism.

Once an aspiring animal-rights lawyer, this future professor advocates on behalf of defended animals and other marginalized living beings. She takes courses on environmental and social justice, human and non-human relations, and women’s studies. If she’s not reading course material, walking the dog, doing yoga’s downward dog or helping fellow students, she is crusading against everything carnivorous – in her short stories, cartoons (see “ferbivorous” on deviantart.com) and “postveganism” blog. “I really like to make people think,” says “The Big Bang Theory” fan. Some day, Peragine hopes to run a sanctuary for rescued farm animals. “I don’t want kids,” says the 20-year-old with purple hair today, but not by sacrificing green hair tomorrow. “I’ll be a parent to non-human animals.”

**Market Force**

**Deven Dionisi**  
Schulich School of Business  GPA: 8.65 (tie)

In February, Deven Dionisi flies to Milan for a six-month exchange at Bocconi University. It’s why he enrolled in York’s international business program. The grandson of Italian immigrants never spoke Italian at home and visited Italy for the first time in Grade 12. Now he’s mastering Italian and adding Spanish to his repertoire of English and French so he can work in Europe some day. Not in finance, his original career choice, but in marketing. “Mortgage lending rates just don’t speak to me. Marketing suits my personality better,” says the chatty, pop-cultured people person who interned last summer at MacLaren McCann advertising agency. "I really like never before, he rhymes about good studies in performance, conducting, maybe even composing, at a top American school. “You never know what’s going to happen.”

Growing up in Stoney Creek, Ont., Dionisi took the Kemen math enrichment program and martial arts. By high school he was teaching both. Known for speaking his mind, he says training for his black belt taught him self-discipline. But talk in class and he’ll tell you to be quiet. Yet he does homework with the TV on and puts himself to sleep listening to hip hop. When he reads, it’s for career inspiration. “I want to make lots of money,” admits the 21-year-old, but not by sacrificing his personal life. Soon, he’ll be immersed in European culture, savouring a taste of the future and plotting his return to Canada. But not before he’s왔다. Don’t let this singular ambition fool you. Already schooled in English when she emigrated from Shanghai and started Grade 2 in Don Mills, Sun is fluent in Chinese and learning French. She has travelled all over the world with her parents and thrives in Toronto’s – and York’s – multicultural mix. In her ethnically diverse high school, she played competitive badminton, led the flute choir and concert band, and was senior equity representative on the student council.

Last summer, she interned for two months at Sulzer Chemtech in noisy, bustling, crowded Shanghai, where she boarded with her grandmother. When she came home, Canada seemed so boring. But not for long. Soon Sun was teaching English to immigrant children in South Riverdale and volunteering at Harbourfront’s weekend ethnic festivals. During the fall term, this multiple-scholarship winner’s dream came true. A Big Four recruiter has promised her a job the moment she graduates from York. Who knows where in the world this might lead?

See videos of these students at youtube.com/yorkuniversity.
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A CHIEVERS

Anna Cvetkovic wasn’t always singularly focused on the healing arts. In high school, the towering teenager was a star athlete, played flute, edited her school newspaper and wrote poetry. Science, however, won over writing as a career choice because this daughter of Serbian immigrants had chosen to be a doctor. “I wanted to do something to honour my mom.” As a child, Cvetkovic had witnessed her mother lose a battle with cancer. “If I can make anyone not go through what I did, my life goal will be complete.” She volunteered in North York General Hospital’s day surgery and emergency departments for four summers before deciding that medicine was for her. Last August, she wrote the medical entrance exams and soon begins applying to med schools.

Meanwhile, the kinesiology student helps in Prof. David Hood’s muscle physiology research lab, is a peer tutor, plays centre on Bethune College’s basketball team and works part-time. Encouraged to do her best by sister Natasa (BBA ‘06), the “Bones” fan also escapes into music, attending concerts and playing guitar with her jazz trombonist boyfriend. A trip to Mexico last summer stoked this traveller’s wanderlust. One day she’ll settle into family practice in Toronto, but not before she explores other worlds – geographic and scientific.

Getting Somewhere

Jack Xu
Faculty of Science & Engineering GPA: 8.93

In Grade 7, Jack Xu got 63.8 per cent. The 21-year-old remembers his average so precisely because “that’s when I decided I can do better.” He was 12 and had arrived in Canada two years earlier knowing no English except the alphabet song. By high school, the only child of Chinese-educated professionals had beefed up his marks to the mid-80s – and his skinny physique by 45 pounds, intent on an athletic career. But a rotator cuff injury crushed that dream. Maybe he could be a doctor?

Outside school, Xu spent summers leading youth camps in his Jane-Finch neighbourhood and still teaches kids chess Saturdays at Oakdale Community Centre. Last summer, he did bee research at York instead and volunteered to work with seniors at Baycrest. Sure now he will pursue medicine, Xu studies immunology and macromolecules but also has electives on comics, Canada’s social policy and grammar. “I don’t just take courses I can nail. I pick courses I think I can get a lot out of.” If medicine doesn’t pan out, he’d love to teach. Or do an MBA. Or sell Bugattis. (This “petrolhead” is nuts about supercars.) Whatever he does, Xu will work with people. “I feel like I’ve got somewhere when I succeed in helping others to get somewhere.”

Fatouma Ahmed
Fundraiser Somali Angel

Fatouma Ahmed’s consciousness-raising about her country of birth didn’t hit home at home but, curiously, when she was travelling in Europe with her mother the summer after graduation. “I hadn’t travelled abroad since my family moved here when I was about seven. I was always working, but I saved up enough extra money to take a trip so I decided to take my mom to Europe.” While travelling there, Ahmed (BA ‘09) was shocked to see the state of homeless Somali youth in the streets of Italy’s cities. “As bad as they had it on the street, I knew it was still better than the conditions they faced in my homeland,” she says.

While others might have passed these people by, Ahmed was galvanized, and became determined to help Somalis in their homeland as soon as she got back to Canada. Fluent in French and Somali, she enlisted several friends and raised more than $60,000 that will be matched by a federal government East African relief fund. “It was a lot of hard work over several months, but it’s paid off,” she says. All of the money, given through Human Concern International, will be used to support families on the ground, says Ahmed. “The famine has been a terrible thing, but it’s also brought some good,” she says. “It has drawn the Somali community together and created a sense of solidarity among us – and that’s a wonderful thing.”
Pain Killer
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Faculty of Health GPA: 8.86

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**Vivian Del Valle**

**Social worker**

**Fighting Abuse**

Vivian Del Valle’s path to recognition and a graduate degree at York was not an easy one. As a child in Mexico, she grew up in a patriarchal family and watched as her mother was demeaned and abused by her male relatives. When she married, the pattern continued. Then, one day, her eight-year-old daughter made a comment about the way her mother was being treated that convinced her to change her life. It was the first of many decisions that led her to York and being named one of the YWCA’s Women of Distinction for 2011.

Del Valle (MSW ’08) immigrated to Canada with her husband in 1993, and the marriage ended soon after. As a social worker with no Canadian qualifications, “I had to start all over again – and learn English,” Del Valle said. In 1999, she took undergraduate courses at Ryerson University and, when it came time for graduate studies, she chose York. “I heard it was a progressive university and knew it was the best option for me.” Working at Toronto’s COSTI Immigrant Services, she made a successful proposal for a program to help Spanish-speaking women and children who are suffering abuse and discrimination. “Clients and colleagues consider her a catalyst for change,” said the citation for her 2011 YWCA Woman of Distinction Award for Community Support. Del Valle’s work not only to interpret and advocate, “it said, “but to build women’s confidence and sense of empowerment” – just as her studies did for her. “York had a big impact on my life,” she says. “I love my job.”

“Pierre’s gift and vision will support a whole new way of thinking about engineering education. His transformational donation will lead to a new generation of entrepreneurial engineers with a social conscience,” said Janusz Kozinski, dean of the Faculty of Science & Engineering (FSE).

Lassonde, chairman of Franco-Nevada Corporation, is an engineer himself. His connection to York came by way of his longtime business partner, Seymour Schulich, whose generous gifts to York have supported the Schulich School of Business and construction of the Seymour Schulich Building. “We made our money together, and here we’re going to do something even bigger,” said Lassonde.

York will be drawing upon its strengths in humanities, social sciences, and business and law to build its engineering program. “York has a rich history of educational innovation, and the broadening of the focus of the engineering school to include business and public policy is a welcome step forward,” said Glen Murray, Ontario’s minister of training, colleges and universities, who attended the announcement event. “Mr. Lassonde’s generous gift will accelerate the program and help transform it into a model for next-generation education in engineering.”

In his honour, the Computer Science & Engineering Building, where the announcement was made, was renamed the Lassonde Building. In an unveiling ceremony carried out by the remote-controlled, student-built Mars Rover, which has won top prizes in several international competitions, Lassonde was also given a leather bomber jacket emblazoned with “York Engineering.”

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**GIVING**

**Renaissance School**

A $25-million gift from Pierre Lassonde will vastly expand York’s engineering programs
Fighting Abuse

Vivian Del Valle
Social worker

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Renaissance School

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Six exceptional grads are honoured at this year’s Bryden Alumni Awards Gala

The sense of community and York pride was palpable as 200 guests gathered at the historic Design Exchange in downtown Toronto in November to honour six exceptional grads with this year’s Bryden Alumni Awards. “When I look at these recipients,” said the evening’s emcee, Barbara Budd (BA ’74), “I have to say it makes me proud to say I went to York too.”

Winner of the Local Hero Award, Sheila Forshaw (BSc ’83) was one of York’s most decorated student athletes, twice named female athlete of the year and a three-time Canadian Olympian. Graduating high school, Forshaw brought her talent to York’s fledgling field hockey team, despite offers from more well-established programs, because she believed in York. She led the Yeowomen to two Ontario golds and two national silvers. “My time [at York] didn’t just shape who I am, it shapes who I will always be,” Walters said. “York is a part of my soul.”

Joint award winners of The One(s) to Watch Award, playwrights Irene Sankoff (BA ’99) and David Hein (BFA ’97) are the creators of the hit musical My Mother’s Lesbian Jewish Wiccan Wedding. Since meeting on their very first day at York, the now-married couple have debated whether theatre can change the world. After their experience with Wiccan Wedding, Sankoff said she believes it can. She and Hein get approached all the time by people with stories about how the show opened their minds: “That’s why we keep writing and keep performing,” Sankoff said. Hein added, “York made us think about the people we wanted to be.”

Eric Walters (BA ’79, BSW ’82, MSW ’86), the recipient of the Redefine the Possible Award, said he “came from a part of Toronto that produced more people that were federally incarcerated than went to university.” He credited his teachers for changing his life, and turned his degrees in education and social work into a remarkable career writing, teaching and advocating for social justice through education. He has written nearly 70 young adult novels and founded his own charitable project, The Creation of Hope, to aid impoverished children living in the mountains near Nairobi, Kenya. “My time [at York] didn’t just shape who I am, it shapes who I will always be,” Walters said. “York is a part of my soul.”

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• Why is coffee great for men but not for women?
• What does red hair symbolize in impressionist art?
• What are the three musts for networking success?

yorku.ca/alumni
Pride and Community

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“Tork is like no other institution,” said Forshaw. “It was the best choice I ever made.”
member of York’s first graduating class, embodies the exceptional service, commitment and dedication to the University that the Outstanding Contribution Award recognizes. During his 17 years on York’s Board of Governors, he was a major force in the Keele campus redesign. He was instrumental in the construction of over $200-million worth of new buildings, including the Fine Arts Building, Vari Hall and the Student Centre. “Everybody needs to give something back,” said Cooper. “Because of the experience of being there from the beginning, I gravitated towards York.” Honoured with the Pinnacle Achievement Award, renowned human rights lawyer Clayton Ruby (BA ’63) echoed Cooper’s sentiments: “Everybody has a special spot in their heart for their own university; it becomes a haven.” Over the course of his remarkable career, Ruby has fought for the rights of gays and lesbians in the Canadian Armed Forces, represented both Donald Marshall Jr. and Guy Paul Morin, two of this country’s best-known victims of wrongful conviction, and negotiated a settlement for the surviving Dionne quintuplets.

“Universities create critical thought,” said Ruby in his acceptance speech. “The best universities commit to making the world a better place.” Speaking to all the winners, President & Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri said, “Our students look to you to see how to make a difference in this world so that they in turn can become global citizens. I continue to look at all of you to share your story, and what a story there is to tell.”

The event was generously supported by Manulife Financial and MBNA. To nominate a grad to receive an award in 2012, visit yorku.ca/alumni.

godowns

Here’s to the 1000s who use their perks!

We have one of Canada’s largest alumni communities, and that gives us a strong perks program. In fact, last year York alumni took advantage of the program over 65,000 times. From financial services to sports, entertainment & more, you have great connections. Why not use them?

yorku.ca/alumniperks

podium people: Clockwise from top left, Clayton Ruby, David Hein and Irene Sankoff, Eric Walters, Greg Cooper, President & Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri, Sheila Forshaw. OPENING PAGE: Professor Ron Westray and vocalist Kristina Victoria (BFA ’11) entertained the guests.

YORK ALUMNI

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member of York’s first graduating class, embodies the exceptional service, commitment and dedication to the University that the Outstanding Contribution Award recognizes. During his 17 years on York’s Board of Governors, he was a major force in the Keele campus redesign. He was instrumental in the construction of over $200-million worth of new buildings, including the Fine Arts Building, Vari Hall and the Student Centre. “Everybody needs to give something back,” said Cooper. “Because of the experience of being there from the beginning, I gravitated towards York.”

Honoured with the Pinnacle Achievement Award, renowned human rights lawyer Clayton Ruby (BA ’63) echoed Cooper’s sentiments: “Everybody has a special spot in their heart for their own university; it becomes a haven.” Over the course of his remarkable career, Ruby has fought for the rights of gays and lesbians in the Canadian Armed Forces, represented both Donald Marshall Jr. and Guy Paul Morin, two of this country’s best-known victims of wrongful conviction, and negotiated a settlement for the surviving Dionne quintuplets. “Universities create critical thought,” said Ruby in his acceptance speech. “The best universities commit to making the world a better place.”

Speaking to all the winners, President & Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri said, “Our students look to you to see how to make a difference in this world so that they in turn can become global citizens. I continue to look at all of you to share your story, and what a story there is to tell.”

The event was generously supported by Manulife Financial and MBNA. To nominate a grad to receive an award in 2012, visit yorku.ca/alumni.
Class Notes:

1977
Kit, Lish-Taw (BA) retired last summer from Chinese Culture University after 32 years as a professor. He is president of the Vocational Technology Development Association of Taiwan and a board director of the City University of Science and Technology of Taiwan.

1999
Gee, Ronda (LLB Osgoode) finished a tenure as an investment banker with Cormark Securities and six years as a partner with the Toronto law firm of Aird & Berlis.

1999
Fernandes, Lydia (BA Dentistry) received her second International Alliance of Women’s World of Difference 200 Award for furthering the economic empowerment of women. She also received the Women Helping Women Award from The George Washington University Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence for her work with the Hot Mamma Project, the world’s largest library of digital role models for women and girls.

1995
Chachan, Norie (BA Hons. Stong) went on to complete a master’s degree in psychology. He is now a psychometrist/consultant in the GTA.

1996
Lydia Fernandes

1996
McCluskey, Michael (LLB/ MBA Osgoode) launched his new firm, Greenkeeper Asset Management, a value-oriented equity manager. Before founding Greenkeeper, he spent nine years as an investment banker with Cormark Securities and six years as a partner with the Toronto law firm of Aird & Berlis.

2001
Arquelles, Mikhail (BA Calumet) received an LLB from the University of Buckingham in England in 2007 and a postgraduate diploma in law from the University of West of England in Bristol in 2008, and was called to the bar of Saskatchewan in 2009. He is a financial adviser, having started his practice in 2010.

2001
Boljkovac, Nadine (BA Hons. Vanier) received her PhD in film philosophy from the University of Kent, England & Wales by the Middle Temple in 2008, and was called to the bar of the University of West of England in Bristol in 2009. She is a financial adviser, having started his practice in 2010.

2002
Kadir, Bibi (BA Hons. Stong) recently published a second book, Daughter of Pharaoh. While at York, she renewed her passion for teaching and writing.

2003
Arguelles, Mikhail (BA Calumet) received his PhD in film philosophy and theory courses as a teaching fellow at the University of Aberdeen, and is currently affiliated with the Visible City Project + Archive under the direction of Professor Janine Marshak at York.

2005
Anthony, Martine (BA Spec. Hons. Atkins) recently obtained her Chartered Accountant designation and thanks York for all the guidance and training it provided him.

2007
Ellick, Troy (BA Spec. Hons. McLaughlin) recently completed a postgraduate certificate in financial planning from Humber College. He is now a financial adviser, having started his practice at Sun Life Financial. He and his partner, Emily, live in Toronto’s west end.

2011
Kupresak, Renata (BA Spec. Hons. Vanier) recently retired from the Meteorological Service of Canada after 34 years. He is married to Teresa and has two children.

Why I Give to York

Both my parents were disabled in later life. When I told my mother I wanted to create a bursary for York students with disabilities who are in financial need, she thought it was a wonderful idea. The bursary is in both our names. And sometimes we get letters from students who received funding. The bursary has made such an impact that I’ve decided to contribute more to it through a planned gift in my will. It feels great to make a difference.

Bruce Dupeeby, retired from York University as Treasurer in 2005 after nearly 40 years of service.
Why my thoughts are already fixed on the next trout season. BY MICHAEL TODD

Casting Call

his is a fishing column for the depths of winter. A time, you might assume, when thoughts of fishing – fly fishing, that is – would have given way to musings on back country skiing, snowshoeing or whatever winter sport turns your crank. But nothing, for the staid or fly fisher, could be further from the truth.

Fishermen, like fish, never sleep. They are the speakable in pursuit of the edible. While they may be slightly dormant during the months of winter, rest assured that fishermen’s and fisherwomen’s thoughts are deep currents wherein play imagi-

Fly fishing attracts those who are equally keen about catching fish and thinking about why they like to catch fish.

In other words, fly fishing, as a sport – I like to call it a pastime – attracts those who are equally keen about catching fish and thinking about why they like to catch fish. That is the appeal of fly fishing – it’s about both fishing and thinking, to steal a phrase from the eponymously titled book by philosopher and writer A.A. Luce. (Oh, by the way, let’s not forget the beautifully crafted writings on fishing by B.C.’s Roderick Haig-Brown, whose daughter – I found a few years back – is a professor in York’s Faculty of Education.)

All these books – and the personalities behind them – have, I think, done their part to spark a renewed interest in a sport that I see as a haven from, as Wordsworth put it, the quotidian grind of “getting and spending.”

My own fly fishing journey owes its own meagre success to a strong York connection and a professor who is a specialist in medieval environments and resource use, and who turned out to be a fly fisher in his own right. Years ago, when I was first getting into the sport, I had written a story about Richard Adams, or others like him, who are equally keen about medieval environments and resource use, and who turned out to be a fly fisher in his own right. Years ago, when I was first getting into the sport, I had written a story about Richard Adams, or others like him, who are equally keen about medieval environments and resource use, and who turned out to be a fly fisher in his own right.

Now a professor emeritus and senior scholar, he was a great mentor and gave me lots of advice on places to fish and fishing methods.

My father, from whom I inherited the fishing bug, by this time could no longer cast a line because of Parkinson’s disease. Rivers were off limits. Fishing gave us a place to talk that was neutral, and perhaps it eased the oftentimes rocky relationship that can develop between fathers and sons. I was fishing places he no longer could. For him, hearing the stories was enough.

So why has fly fishing experienced a renaissance in the last 10 to 15 years? I think it’s partly because of books such as the charming A River Runs Through It (which spawned the movie of the same name, although not nearly as good as the book), or others like Lones on the Water by Canadian novelist David Richard Adams, or Catch and Release by Toronto philosopphy professor and cultural critic Mark Kingwell, in which he mixes musings on fly fishing, philosophy, a mid-life divorce and the virtues of male bonding with brothers and father on a yearly fishing trip.

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My father, from whom I inherited the fishing bug, by this time could no longer cast a line because of Parkinson’s disease. However, he no longer could. For him, hearing the stories was enough.

And, not long before he died, you knew he was out there fishing and thinking about why they like to catch fish. That is the appeal of fly fishing — it’s about both fishing and thinking, to steal a phrase from the eponymously titled book by philosopher and writer A.A. Tace. Oh, by the way, let’s not forget the beautifully crafted writings on fishing by B.C.’s Roderick Haig-Brown, whose daughter — I found a few years back — is a professor in York’s Faculty of Education.

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And, not long before he died, you knew he was out there casting a line on some mountain brook, fishing in his mind. Michael Todd (BA Spec. Hons. ’78) is managing editor of YorkU.
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