



YORK

DECEMBER  
2003

Sing to win \$1000  
Avie Bennett looks back  
Tracking SARS

# Top of the Class

York's Undergrad Achievers



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- THE -  
**POSSIBILITIES**  
*are limitless*  
**CHOOSE YOUR  
OWN DIRECTION**



# INSIDE YORKU

THE MAGAZINE OF YORK UNIVERSITY



SOME OF YORK'S BEST  
COVER PHOTOGRAPHY:  
EDWARD GAJDEL  
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LIZ YANKOLOVICH



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# DECEMBER 2003

A chancellor's legacy. BY BERTON WOODWARD

# The Avie Way

**I**F YOU'RE A STUDENT, you may not be thinking much about Convocation, unless you're a November grad. But when you get there, I hope your family is able to cheer your graduation as lustily as families have over the last six years. One of the many delightful touches Avie Bennett has brought to the University in his two terms as chancellor is his encouragement to relatives to shout out when their loved one gets the long-coveted degree. Avie's term is winding down now, with November his last Convocation, and a new chancellor will preside over next June's ceremonies. But I suspect the Bennett tradition of joyful noise will endure.

Avie seemed a natural choice when he accepted the York position in 1998. Talk about Redefine the Possible. This is a man who started off as a shopping centre developer and became one of the leading lights in Canada's cultural scene. In early 1986, as he notes in our interview on page 18, he bought McClelland & Stewart, the leading Canadian publishing house, as it teetered on the brink of financial ruin. He built it back up, making it a treasured home for such authors as Margaret Atwood, Rohinton Mistry and Michael Ondaatje, and then ensured its long-term survival in a move that astonished the literary world. In 2000, he turned over the controlling equity to the University of Toronto. At the time, some onlookers at York suggested he should have dealt with the University he represented, but he points out that this complex deal had been in the works with U of T well before he was approached by York.

I first met Avie when I was an editor



at *Maclean's*, where he and Ed Broadbent, the former NDP leader, came to give a briefing on their new commission on corporate social responsibility. So I was intrigued when their report later recommended that the government ban donations to political parties by corporations and labour unions. Yeah, right, said I, along with most political observers. Then comes the long Chrétien goodbye, with its array of legacy legislation, and lo – the government sets out to ban political donations by corporations and labour unions. I asked Avie if anyone from Ottawa directly consulted him on the measure. No one did, but he shows clear pride in the result. Next, he urges, the government should bring in proportional representation. "Our present system isn't right," he says, "where we can have a majority government with a minority vote."

That viewpoint places Avie Bennett, at 75, on the leading edge of current opinion, where he typically is. The combination – a successful businessman with a progressive outlook, a cultural leader with a practical bent, a soft-spoken heavyweight in Canadian society – is a perfect match for York. We've been lucky to have him. ■

Send letters, submissions and ideas to [editor@yorku.ca](mailto:editor@yorku.ca).

# YORKU

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY HORST HERGET

How York stays vibrant. BY LORNA R. MARSDEN

# A Fine Balance

**I**T HAS BEEN SEVEN YEARS NOW since I joined the York community. I am immensely proud of the way York community members have conducted ourselves as we cope with the challenges of a complex world. York is a microcosm of Canadian society – indeed, of the world at large – and we are often affected by issues of local, national and global significance.

In many ways, York has embraced the challenge inherent in Pierre Trudeau's Charter of Rights and Freedoms and made it our own. Those of you who were involved in the complex debates of the 1980s will recall the tension between individual and collective rights. So many of us worked to ensure that the rights and freedoms we cared deeply about were compatible with those with whom we often disagreed. It was a fascinating period of Canadian history and it is now part of our lives and our culture.

It is part of York's culture, too. The primary mission of York University is "the pursuit, preservation and dissemination of knowledge". As a community of nearly 55,000 people, York operates on basic principles to ensure a productive, safe and peaceful learning environment. These principles form the basis of University policies and regulations and have been condensed into a "Guide to Community Membership at York University", the full text of which appears on my Web site at [www.yorku.ca/president](http://www.yorku.ca/president). This guide outlines the rights and responsibilities of community membership and the accepted standards of conduct within Canadian society. The guiding principles for community membership are these:

**FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.** York University is committed to free speech as a fundamental democratic right. Members have the right to express their views and to test and challenge ideas within the law and in a peaceful and non-threatening way. One person's strongly held view does not take precedence over another's right to hold and express the opposite opinion.

**MUTUAL RESPECT AND DIVERSITY.** York will uphold the rights and freedoms of all members of the University to work and study free from discrimination and harassment. Inherent in this is a rejection of hatred and intolerance of the identities, beliefs and politics of others.

**A COMMITMENT TO NON-VIOLENCE.** Members of the York community adhere to the principles of peace and non-violence.

Lorna R. Marsden is York's president and vice-chancellor.



Physical assault of any kind or threat of violence or harm is not tolerated.

**A COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS.** All rules and regulations regarding conduct for all parties embody the principles of procedural fairness. Processes will be pursued fairly and responsibly and require the fullest cooperation from members so they may be completed in a timely manner.

**SECURITY AND SAFETY.** When situations arise on campus in which disagreements or conflict become a security concern, the University will invoke appropriate processes to ensure the safety of community members.

**NON-INTERFERENCE WITH THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF THE UNIVERSITY.** York has a mandate to deliver its educational program to its 47,000 students. Fulfilling this mandate requires that the University, its programs and facilities function effectively. One member's strongly held view does not take precedence over another's right to pursue her/his educational or community activities at York.

**RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.** York University is committed to creating a sustainable environment on campus, where community members feel a sense of ownership and pride. In the broadest sense, members are expected to respect University grounds, property and facilities and to support such practices as recycling, waste reduction and energy conservation.

As members of the York community we have lived these principles for over 40 years, which is why York has remained, like Canada, such a vibrant and free society. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY COREY MIHALIUK

# UNIVERSE

CONTEST

## Lion's Roar

Pen a York fight song – win \$1,000

**D**o you have a York fight song in your heart? You could win \$1,000. At the moment, there's a great York University Cheer, which lots of students chant at Lions games: "Deep in the heart of the York U jungle, You can hear the Lions rumble, Oo, Oo, YU YU, Oo, Oo, YU, YU." There's also a York University Song ("March, march, march down the road with me, Shout-ing out York's vic-to-ries..."), but it's rarely heard.

Seymour Schulich has long thought York needs a full-fledged fight song. So the University's prime benefactor, after whom the Schulich School of Business is named, has put up \$1,000 for the person who creates the best one.

Pat Murray, York's director of sport & recreation, thinks it's a great idea to add a song to go with the cheer. York is U, the student pride organization, also backs the idea.

So YorkU has invited a panel of judges representing students, Sport York and York is U to choose the song that deserves the \$1,000 prize. To enter, simply call this voicemail: 416-736-2100, ext. 34448 (FIGHT). Give your name, address and phone number, and sing the lyrics into the phone. Then e-mail the lyrics, with the same name, address and phone number, to [fightsong@yorku.ca](mailto:fightsong@yorku.ca). All songs must be original; additional rules apply. The contest closes Dec. 31, 2003. ■

**SING OUT LOUD, SING OUT PROUD:** York Lion track team member Shane Korman shows his team spirit

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDSAY LOZON

RESEARCH

## Skull-Testing Questions

Mystery migraine triggers could prove a headache

### DEPARTMENT York Rules!

YORK IN THE MID-60S SEEMED TO HAVE A RULE FOR EVERYTHING. SO NO MATTER WHAT YOU FEEL YOU PUT UP WITH TODAY, BE GLAD PUBS ARE NOW PERMITTED ON CAMPUS. HEREWITH A SELECTION OF DRACONIAN DOS AND DON'TS FROM "REGULATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN YORK UNIVERSITY 1963-64".

**CONDUCT AND DRESS** MEMBERS OF THE STUDENT BODY ARE EXPECTED TO COMPLY WITH STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND DRESS

BECOMING TO LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.



#### LIQUOR

UNDERGRADUATES ARE FORBIDDEN TO HAVE OR TO DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ON UNIVERSITY PROPERTY. ANYONE FOUND BREAKING THIS LAW WILL BE SEVERELY DISCIPLINED AND MAY BE EXPELLED.



**HOURS** DANCES, ENTERTAINMENT, ETC. MUST END AT OR BEFORE

MIDNIGHT UNLESS WRITTEN PERMISSION IS OBTAINED IN ADVANCE FROM THE DEAN OF STUDENTS.



**ARCHERY** ARROWS MUST BE SHOT ONLY AT REGULATION TARGETS, NOT

INTO THE AIR OR FOR DISTANCE SHOOTING ON CAMPUS. CRACKED ARROWS MUST NOT BE USED.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NANCY MERCADO

**O**n Fran Wilkinson's office wall is an eye-catching drawing of two heads. Each is filled with tiny squiggles and patterns. They're an artist's approximation of what you might see if you were having a migraine attack. "People do see things like that," says Wilkinson, a York psychology professor and visual neuroscientist affiliated with the Centre for Vision Research. "It's called the migraine aura."

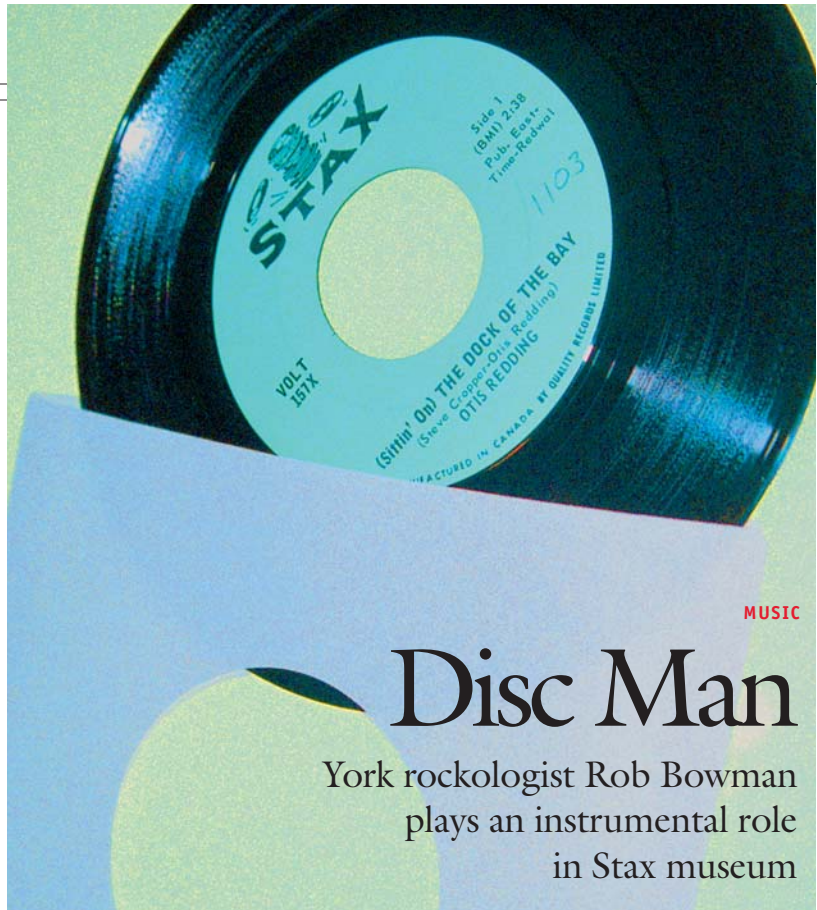
Wilkinson hopes that if she and her research partners can find the link between migraines and suspected visual triggers – flickering lights from computers, for instance, or maybe overhead fluorescent tubes or light patterns from Venetian blinds – they might be able to suggest non-drug therapies or develop diagnostic protocols.

"Visual sensitivity is a very prominent aspect of migraines," she says. "But we don't know why some people are more sensitive to light than others. Maybe light hypersensitivity makes you prone to migraines, or perhaps migraines make you hypersensitive to light. Health psychology research in this area has a lot to offer science and human well-being." ■

**R**ock music historian, fine arts professor and biographer of Stax Records, Rob Bowman was one of three top decision makers who helped establish the Stax Museum of American Soul Music. It opened its doors this spring in Memphis, Tennessee.

The museum is on the same street corner as the original Stax studio and chronicles the phenomenal success in the 1960s and '70s of the record company with musicians such as Booker T. and the MGs, Otis Redding, and Sam and Dave. The Stax signature sound came from a mix of black and white musicians, at a time when integrated bands were still unusual.

Bowman says that during interviews for his book, *Soulsville, USA - The Story of Stax Records* (1997), Stax people often mentioned the race factor, but in a positive way. "A lot of people I talked to called it an oasis of racial sanity," Bowman says. "Stax itself was a manifestation of Dr. Martin Luther King's dream, not because they [blacks and whites] were forced to work together, but because they had a common purpose: to make music." ■



MUSIC

## Disc Man

York rockologist Rob Bowman plays an instrumental role in Stax museum

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### Around the World York's student recruiters go the distance



Estimated number of kilometres travelled by York's recruitment staff during 2002-2003: **132,000**

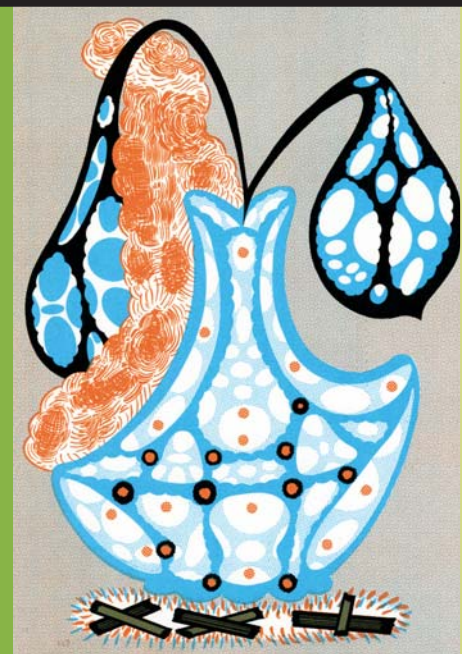
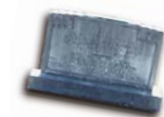
Number of trips around the earth's circumference represented by that number: **3.3**



Number of flat tires in that time: **1**



Instances a York recruitment officer was asked about reincarnation during a recruitment presentation: **1**



### ART What It Feels Like For a Girl

**T**he first exhibition curated by the new director of the Art Gallery of York University, Philip Monk, opens Dec. 3 with the intriguing title "What It Feels Like For a Girl." The phrase refers to the music video by Madonna banned from television a couple of years ago for its so-called violence against men. "I used this title for the show because I wanted to draw on some of the controversy around Madonna's music video but at the same time I didn't want to restrict the expression of the artists," says Monk.

The exhibition, featuring painting, performance, printmaking and video by Toronto artists Karma Clarke-Davis, Louise Liliefeldt, Peaches, Fiona Smyth and Julie Joyce, will run both at York's AGYU and in downtown Toronto at Zsa Zsa. "I wanted this first exhibition to be a nod to the downtown art community and relevant to students at York," Monk says. While he was curator at Toronto's Power Plant, Monk was known for his unconventional examinations of contemporary Toronto art. ■

LEFT: Julie Joyce, *Striking Oil*, 2001 (silkscreen 36.8 x 26.7 cm)

IDEAS

## Group Effort P3M pushes media in new directions

**T**he Gladstone Hotel on Toronto's Queen Street West strip likely wouldn't be most artists' first thought for a show location, but then Project3Media isn't your typical group of artists or designers. Founded two years ago by York/Sheridan design program students and like-minded peers from the outside art community, P3M is a collective. "P3M isn't about individual ego," says York grad Kevin Muise (BDes '03), who was in on P3M's beginnings and is now a design consultant in York's Communication Studies Program. "It's about the work itself."

The group's contributors can post work at any time to [www.project3media.com](http://www.project3media.com). "Then someone else will come along and

add to that work, but the idea is that part of the original piece is still recognizable. In that sense it's always evolving."

P3M isn't totally virtual. Shows in the outside community feature painting, illustration, photography, design and multi-media. They've done live video projections for various DJs and musicians, and their work frequently inhabits spaces not normally thought of as gallery material - like *NOW* magazine's office lounge or the Gladstone's beer parlour. Says Muise, "We wanted to take art to spaces and places where there are people who might not know much about art or be exposed to it." ■



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACQUE BRUNO

COLLECTIVE WISDOM: Clockwise from left: Adam Hilborn, Alain Parizeau, Ryan Cherewaty, Carlos Weisz, Kevin Muise, Cameron Browning



BOOKS

## A New Script

A York prof deconstructs gender in athletics

**F**rom his upbringing, Greg Malszecki seems an unlikely feminist. The sports historian went to an all-boys Catholic school, learned to box and competed in track. He learned that sissies cry, real men take control. Then he ran into the women's movement in California in the late 1960s and began questioning the script.

That questioning has infused his teaching and research ever since. In 1991, he introduced a course at York on women and sport. It challenged the notions that women are weaker athletes and sport is an expression of male virility. It was a first at York, one of only three in Canada and the first ever taught by a man.

In Malszecki's view, organized sport is based on a false under-

standing of physiology. "There is no physical difference between boys and girls before the age of 14. They can compete equally in the same sports." Yet, from the day they are born, boys and girls hear different scripts. "The language of sport is infused with male values, male virtues and virility, and connections with the world of war," he says. He explores those connections in his forthcoming book, *Homo Furens: Violence and Virility in Sport and War*.

Will sport ever be gender equal? Maybe, if we change the language, says Malszecki. "We have to quit heroizing boys and stop inferiorizing girls who do sport. We must look on sport as a human activity, not a male activity." ■

RESEARCH

## Nice Guys Finish Last

For a hot date, women choose bad boys over boy scouts

**W**hen it comes to casual sex, good guys finish last. At least, that's the finding of Maryanne Fisher, a York PhD candidate in psychology, and her fellow researchers. "The shorter the relationship, like a one-night stand, the greater the tendency was to select a cad," says Fisher.

Her research indicated that young women, forced to choose between fictional cads and kindly would-be dads, picked the dads for formal dates, for marriage, for road trips to California and even as the best prospective sons-in-law. But asked who they'd prefer to "hook up sexually with," the women spurned the dads for the cads.

One-off partners are those, in Fisher's words, "whose features indicate high genetic quality." On the other hand, for the long-haul, women sought partners with "the willingness and ability to sustain paternal investment." Maybe good guys really win out in the end. ■



PUBLIC SPEAKING

"These roads are absolutely gridlocked. There's no doubt the real solution here is a subway extension from Downsview. We'd relieve a lot of this traffic and we'd open the roads."

—TED SPENCE,  
York senior policy adviser,  
*Toronto Star*

ILLUSTRATION BY RYAN PRICE; PHOTOGRAPHY BY NANCY MERCADO

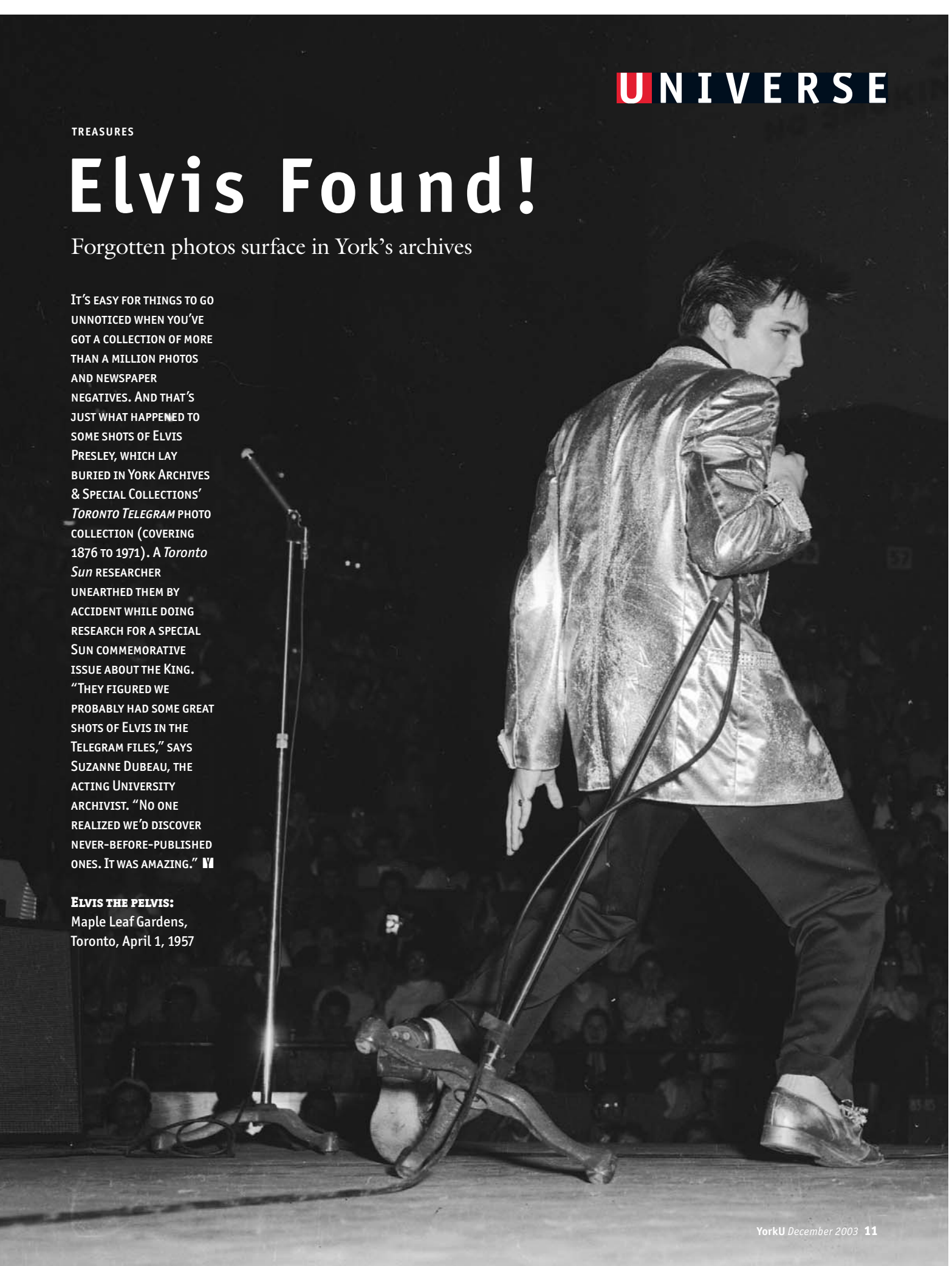
TREASURES

## Elvis Found!

Forgotten photos surface in York's archives

IT'S EASY FOR THINGS TO GO UNNOTICED WHEN YOU'VE GOT A COLLECTION OF MORE THAN A MILLION PHOTOS AND NEWSPAPER NEGATIVES. AND THAT'S JUST WHAT HAPPENED TO SOME SHOTS OF ELVIS PRESLEY, WHICH LAY BURIED IN YORK ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS' TORONTO TELEGRAM PHOTO COLLECTION (COVERING 1876 TO 1971). A *Toronto Sun* RESEARCHER UNEARTHED THEM BY ACCIDENT WHILE DOING RESEARCH FOR A SPECIAL SUN COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE ABOUT THE KING. "THEY FIGURED WE PROBABLY HAD SOME GREAT SHOTS OF ELVIS IN THE TELEGRAM FILES," SAYS SUZANNE DUBEAU, THE ACTING UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST. "NO ONE REALIZED WE'D DISCOVER NEVER-BEFORE-PUBLISHED ONES. IT WAS AMAZING." ■

**ELVIS THE PELVIS:**  
Maple Leaf Gardens,  
Toronto, April 1, 1957



## COVER

**WHO'S THE BRAINIEST STUDENT** in your class? The mouse in the corner scribbling notes? The keener in the front row monopolizing the prof's attention? Read on and explode those stereotypes. The seven students profiled here are among the top undergraduates at York, chosen for having the highest accumulated grade point average in their respective faculties going into third year. Midway through their bachelor's degree, they were top of the class.

As different as fingerprints, the seven nonetheless share certain qualities and approaches. Not all arrived at York by the conventional route, straight out of high school; some worked or travelled or started families first. For several, English is not their first language, which makes their achievement even more remarkable. Most have won major scholarships. And all share a passion for their subject, an eagerness to learn. They are disciplined, determined and self-confident. Some have a motivating vision of their future. Others are exploring possibilities, seizing this unique chance in their lives to explore new ideas, new people and whole new worlds.

## STRIVING FOR PERFECTION

**Sarah Lochhead** Faculty of Fine Arts **GPA: 8.44**

**WHEN SARAH LOCHHEAD WAS THREE**, her mother spied her imitating dancers performing *The Nutcracker* on TV and enrolled her in ballet classes. At 10, she started jazz dancing to overcome the disappointment of failing to get into the National Ballet School. When she graduated from high school, Lochhead had offers from four dance programs, including New York's distinguished Juilliard School. She chose York. She liked its broader scope. Now, the girl who idolized ballerinas Karen Kain and Margot Fonteyn finds inspiration in the fiercely individualistic Margie Gillis. "With each passing week at school, I'm learning so much about myself. It's opened my eyes to what dance can be."

Up to now, "all I ever wanted to be was perfect." She still strives for perfection by taking three ballet lessons a week, doing four hours of warmups and practice, cardio and weight training every day, and eating tofu. And her scholastic record is an unbroken strand of As. But now she's aware of career options – dance writing, teaching, choreography. This year she is giving up a part-time job at Second Cup to co-chair the Dance Students Association, which involves fundraising and organizing four shows a year. Pursuing dancing has meant small sacrifices, like giving up the French horn and suffering knee injuries, but at 21 Lochhead is as passionately propelled to twirl and leap as she was at three. One day she'll have her own company, she expects, thanks to her "artsy" parents who encouraged her to strive for the best, explore and take risks.

## SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES

**Yaakov Roth** Faculty of Pure & Applied Science **GPA: 9.0**

**YAAKOV ROTH SQUEEZES THREE TIMES** as much into a single day as the average mortal. School has always been a breeze and he likes to keep busy. Impatient to finish high school, he took Grades 11 and 12 in one year in an already foreshortened OAC program at Hebrew school and graduated with 98 per cent. He was only 16. "I didn't see any reason prolonging it." Last year, the chemistry major added a sixth course to the standard five, then dove into campus politics. He wrote for *Counterpoint*, a newsletter about the Middle East he had launched in his frosh year. He and friends founded a Canadian Alliance chapter at York and the Young Zionist Partnership. In fact, Roth became so busy with politics that for a while he didn't go to class or the library.

So how did he score a perfect 9.0 grade point average at the end of second year? "I pick up things quickly and retain them," says Roth, 19. "And I know how to manage my time. If I know something, I know it. I don't study for the sake of studying." Such self-assurance doesn't preclude doubts. When he arrived at York, he says, "I didn't have a good idea of my direction and I still don't." Torn between chemistry and economics, he has veered from both. This summer, he was special assistant to Calgary Alliance MP Jason Kenney in Ottawa. York has been the catalyst on a path where "I feel I make a difference."

**AIMING HIGH:**  
Yaakov Roth, left,  
and Sarah Lochhead

# Top of the Class

**Meet seven of the smartest students at York.**

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDWARD GAJDEL

TRAVELLING FAR: Left to right, Paul Marmer, Daraius Bharucha, Marc Morgenthau



## SEEKING TO GROW AS A PERSON

**Paul Marmer** Faculty of Environmental Studies **GPA: 8.38**

**AFTER A FOUR-YEAR JOURNEY** of self-discovery abroad – working on a kibbutz, meditating at Zen Buddhist centres in India and teaching English in South Korea – Paul Marmer applied to York’s environmental studies program. He was 27 and wanted to improve the health of the planet “especially after visiting India and seeing a degraded environment and people in need.” Following high school in Thornhill, Ont., where he’d grown up exploring pre-development woodlots, he had lasted a year in computer engineering at college and rejected a future as a commercial pilot after another intensive, expensive year training to fly a Cessna 150. Marmer, grandson of Russian Jewish immigrants and the first generation to go to college, took time out to travel, with a collection of Buddhist texts in his backpack. He was determined, he says, to find “something deeper that would help me grow as a person.”

When he returned to Canada, he enrolled at York, sure of his direction this time and drawn by the University’s interdisciplinary approach. Now 29, he is a zealous student who raids the library to research each new assignment. “I tend to do more work than expected. I don’t do it to satisfy the person marking, I do it for myself.” The future landscape ecologist leads a simple life of study and part-time work to support himself, with time out for picnics and camping trips. At York, he has found a course of study that balances a Buddhist’s spirituality, deep respect for nature and desire to do good.

## LIKE WINNING THE LOTTERY

**Daraius Bharucha** Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies **GPA: 8.7**

**EVERY TIME SOMEBODY ASKED HIM** what he’d do if he won the lottery, Daraius Bharucha said he’d go back to school. One day, it occurred to him he didn’t have to win the lottery to go back to school. The father of two and district sales manager for an industrial supplies corporation consulted his wife, switched back into sales and signed up for evening courses in religious studies at York. He devoured reading lists in social science, humanities, cultural geography and religion courses after work and ended up top among second-year part-time students with an 8.7 grade point average. School’s “like winning the lottery,” he says. “It’s just brilliant.”

It wasn’t the first time Bharucha had radically changed direction in his adult life. Born in Bombay, he’d spent 12 years in the merchant navy and visited “every place that has a coast line on this planet” with international shipping companies. At 30 and newly wed, he immigrated to Canada and within three days of arriving in Toronto had found a job telemarketing for *The Globe and Mail*. That led to selling windows, then office equipment and finally industrial supplies. Now 41, a skilled seaman, a talented salesman and a keen student, Bharucha is about to veer in yet another direction. For 15 years, he has taught Parsi children – first in Bombay, then in Toronto – the tenets of their faith, Zoroastrianism. “I think being a teacher is hugely fulfilling,” he says. With his wife’s blessing and a few lifestyle adjustments, he is fast tracking into education, turning his hobby into his profession.

## SNOWBOARDING TO NETWORKING

**Marc Morgenthau** Schulich School of Business **GPA: 8.6**

**MARC MORGENTHAU WAS NOT** an A student when he started high school, but by the time he graduated from a fast-tracking Toronto Hebrew school, his average mark was 89 per cent. Not satisfied, he enrolled at a public school and boosted his OAC average to above 90 per cent before heading to Whistler, BC, to teach snowboarding. He wanted to make sure he was one of the



## COVER

250 out of 3,000 applicants Schulich accepted. Now he is best of his class with an 8.6 grade point average, confident of his ability to squeeze the most out of York inside and outside the classroom. Taking lecture notes, synthesizing them with his own notes on the text, asking questions and reviewing lessons with classmates are key to his academic success, he feels. But “I don’t really have a strict routine of studying.”

That’s because the 20-year-old has been busy organizing charity fundraisers for his fraternity, lining up speakers for a school conference and diving into politics. Except for the odd basketball game, he doesn’t get sidetracked by television but religiously reads the *National Post* and *The Economist*. For this future investment banker or corporate lawyer, university is a golden opportunity to expand his network, hone his leadership skills and groom himself for the real world. He’s now in Copenhagen, Denmark, for a study-year abroad, getting an international perspective – “one of the reasons Schulich attracted me.” Like the business world he dreams of joining, school offers “a world of opportunity to excel personally and make a difference.”

## ACHIEVING IN TWO LANGUAGES

**Nicolas-Guillaume Martineau** Glendon GPA: 8.95

**NICOLAS-GUILLAUME MARTINEAU SPEAKS** softly but animatedly with the hint of a French accent. Though the 21-year-old economics student has grown up largely in English-speaking Brampton, Ont., he speaks French at home, has attended French schools and turns to French novels, cartoons and music to “decompress, de-stress.” Always a good student, he buckled down in Grade 11 to complete the demanding International Baccalaureate. His parents had enrolled him in the program at Le Collège Français in Toronto after he’d complained of being bored with regular high school. He ended up graduating with 94 per cent and double the usual OAC credits despite an arduous daily commute by GO bus and subway. He still commutes to Glendon.

Unsure exactly where his studies will lead, Martineau loves the neat logic and rigorous mathematics of economics. He may be headed for an academic career, but his left-leaning politics predispose him to applied economics – health or environmental – more than the theoretical side. “I can see applications in everyday life. The practical side of the discipline is very compelling,” says the son of teachers. In high school, Martineau tutored students in French and math and volunteered at Toronto’s Daily Bread Food Bank. Last year at Glendon, he worked as a research assistant and belonged to the economics club. He sometimes kicks around a soccer ball with friends. “I’m not always holed up in my room studying.” He took courses in both languages to become “more at ease” in English, not something he needs today in Brussels, Belgium, where he’s doing his third year.

## A SENSE OF URGENCY

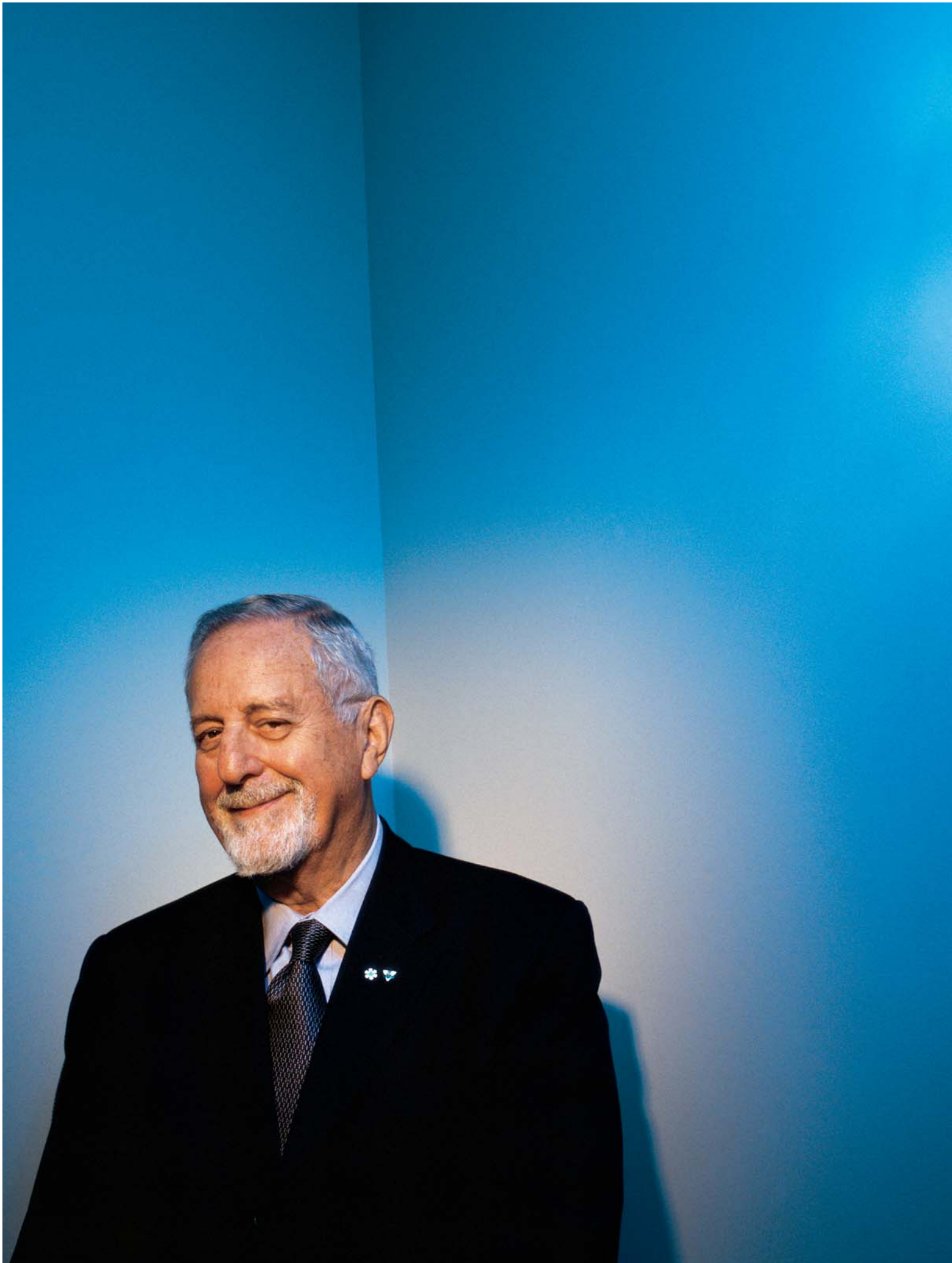
**Cecily Sheng Ying** (not pictured) Faculty of Arts GPA: 8.67

**CECILY SHENG YING COULDN’T** be farther from her roots. Daughter of a Chinese folk musician and traditional dancer, sister of a Beijing opera singer, the economics major has music in her toes. But her mother steered her away from the arts towards a more lucrative, secure profession. She majored in international trade at Shenyang University in her northern China hometown (where she was visiting during our photo shoot), then worked for four years for Michelin Shenyang Tire Company Ltd., practising English, studying French – and saving to study abroad. “That was my dream.”

Following her sister to Canada, she enrolled in economics at York, determined to acquire accounting and other “skills”. For one who learned economics according to Karl Marx, it didn’t interest her at first. She had toyed with a double major in economics and dance and would love to study early childhood education. But for now, “I can’t learn for fun, I have to learn for my future.” Sheng relaxes best by playing with her baby nephew but spends most of her time in the library. At 29, she feels a sense of urgency. “I have to study hard to get a good job that pays well, to make my dreams come true.” Like travelling around the world – or back to China – as an investment banker or financial analyst for a multinational corporation. Like learning to play the piano. “I believe if you want to do something, you can do it,” she says. “Nothing is too difficult.” ■

**TAKING WING:** Nicolas-Guillaume Martineau with Lochhead





# Making Noise

Outgoing York Chancellor Avie Bennett talks about students, the importance of liberal arts – and his own big career change.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF GEORGE

**A**VIE BENNETT, CHANCELLOR OF YORK University since 1998, was set to preside over his last Convocation in early November, and will soon step down after two three-year terms. The avuncular chairman of publishing house McClelland & Stewart Ltd. will have no shortage of things to do: he'll also be Chair of the Historica Foundation of Canada and president of Toronto's Harbourfront Reading Series, which includes the annual International Festival of Authors. Recently he talked with *YorkU* editor Berton Woodward.

**What stands out for you in your York experience?**

I think I've been most impressed by the dedication of the faculty and staff, and the energy and enthusiasm of the student body. Seeing Toronto's cosmopolitan mix reflected on the York campus is very satisfying and rewarding. I've also been impressed and quite moved, really, by the fact that so many of the students are the first in their families to go to university.

**One of the things you're known for at Convocation is encouraging parents and relatives to cheer and make noise. How did that come about?**

That was a spontaneous idea I had, and I think it's worked. Look, graduating from university is a great accomplishment, one that calls for celebration. Besides, it lightens the atmosphere of Convocation a little bit, which I think is good. And it also helps keep me awake!

**Any unusual incidents happen to you in your time at York?**

Well, I can tell you how important it is to be chancellor. I checked into the Air Canada lounge on a trip to Winnipeg, and the woman at the desk said, "Oh, Mr. Bennett, you graduated me at York, at Convocation. I'm so glad to see you." And I said, "Oh, that's great. Do you think you can bump me up to first class?" She said, "Oh, no, I couldn't do that!" So that taught me two things: first, I'd better not take myself too seriously as chancellor, and second, that York graduates are highly ethical and moral people.

**You've stressed your belief in the liberal arts as a very important element of education. Do you feel the liberal arts are under siege?**

I think there's no question they were under duress during the Harris regime. You certainly see the change at the pre-

university level, starting in the public schools. You don't have art and music and literature, and the libraries are decimated. That's going to reflect itself on student bodies as they get older. One of the things I felt pleased with in my term at York was when we convened a meeting of Ontario chancellors at Glendon, which resulted in a very strong statement in favour of liberal arts. The university must do more than turn out the cogs that are going to make the corporate world go round; it must produce well-rounded citizens who will participate in all aspects of society.

**You are well-known as the man who rescued McClelland & Stewart in the 1980s. Can you describe your earlier life as a developer?**

I went into a family business directly out of school, and we were the pioneer shopping centre developers in Canada. We built Sunnybrook Plaza, which was the first in Ontario and maybe the second in the country. That's at the corner of Bayview and Eglinton. It had a 117-car parking lot; we thought it was tremendous. We developed shopping centres right across the country. And we went into receivership in 1963, so at that point I was broke and had to start over again. It took about 10 years to get back on my feet.

And perhaps because of the difficulties I had, being in a family business that had problems, I didn't encourage my own children to come into business with me, even when I was getting re-established. So when the opportunity came along to acquire McClelland & Stewart, I was ready for a change in my activities. That was 1986, and that's when I got involved in publishing and lost interest in the real estate development business. I feel proud that at McClelland & Stewart we were able to publish many new Canadian writers and help them reach a global audience.

**You're 75 now and very active. What are your views about age and work?**

I've always been self-employed so it's easy to set my own parameters. I want to keep working. I don't want to retire in Florida and I don't play golf. I'm meeting interesting people and having interesting challenges, and I believe I have something to contribute, so why not just keep at it? ■



# Critical Math

Jianhong Wu and his team are uncovering the secrets of how SARS spreads. BY DAVID FULLER

## RESEARCH

**GETTING RESULTS:** Jianhong Wu (foreground, opposite) with his math department colleagues, (first row, left to right) Prof. Huaiping Zhu; Prof. Huaxiong Huang; PhD students Qingling Zeng and Rongsong Liu; (back row, l to r) Alexander Rezounenko, visiting scientist from Kharkov University, Ukraine; research associate Anatoliy Swishchuk; PhD students Asrat Gashaw and Yuriy Kazmerchuk; postdoctoral fellow Chun-Hua Ou; and Markus Riedle, visiting scientist from Humboldt University, Berlin

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HORST HERGET

**Y**

ou won't find him wearing a white coat or a facemask, nor will you spot him in a laboratory flanked by microscopes and Petrie dishes. You'd also be forgiven for picturing York Professor Jianhong Wu poring over patients' charts in a hospital. After all, where would you expect to find one of the world's leading SARS experts as he works at uncovering secrets of a disease that infected thousands across the globe over the past year?

Try looking in a Tim Hortons somewhere between his home and office. There, seated quietly with only pencil, paper and a medium coffee – cream, no sugar – you'll see this award-winning mathematician lost in thoughts that will help researchers gain new insights into the SARS virus and how it spreads. "I make it my rule not to do math at home," says Wu, who holds a Canada Research Chair in Applied Mathematics. "I get too lost in my work," he says, in deference to his wife Ming and their one-year-old daughter.

It's little wonder Wu finds caffeine a boon to his labours. He travels widely, and in early September flew to Banff, Alta., where he and his team of 12 researchers, five from York, attended a conference of SARS experts which he helped organize. The weekend session allowed researchers from Canada, the US, Britain, Taiwan and Australia to compare notes on methodology aimed at tracking the disease and predicting what results interventions, such as a quarantine, might produce. "The optimal design of the quarantine period is one of the major issues," Wu said in Banff. "If it's too long, the possibility that some people will not obey the order is high. If it's too short, the potential is that some symptomatic person might come back into the community and spread the disease."

Immediately after that conference, Wu travelled to China to deliver a series of lectures. The trip represented more than an opportunity for scholarly exchange; it was also a return to his native country where, in 1987 at age 23, he received the first doctorate in mathematics granted in the 1,000-year history of Hunan University. Wu began his university career at age 15, having already devoured his older sisters' collection of text books. Wu is proud of his achievement but gives credit to his middle sister, who gave up her chance for a costly university education so that he and his youngest sister could attend. "She made a sacrifice for me," he says in typically gracious style,

adding, "and she's the smartest one of us."

Born in Changsha, Hunan, in 1964, Wu was raised by his grandmother during the Cultural Revolution while his parents worked in the city. The family had little money for education, but those difficulties helped him appreciate school all the more. "I was a successful student not because I worked hard, which I did, but because I enjoyed it," he says. It's a message Wu brings to his math students at York, where he concentrates on building confidence and encouraging them to ask questions. "There are no formulas," he says. "If you understand it, you remember it. Then you can reproduce the results."

Wu knows about results. He has written five books, one of which is a standard reference in his field, and more than 170 scholarly papers, and has a long list of fellowships and research grants. The SARS team, which also includes York Professors

**"There are no formulas. If you understand it, you remember it."**

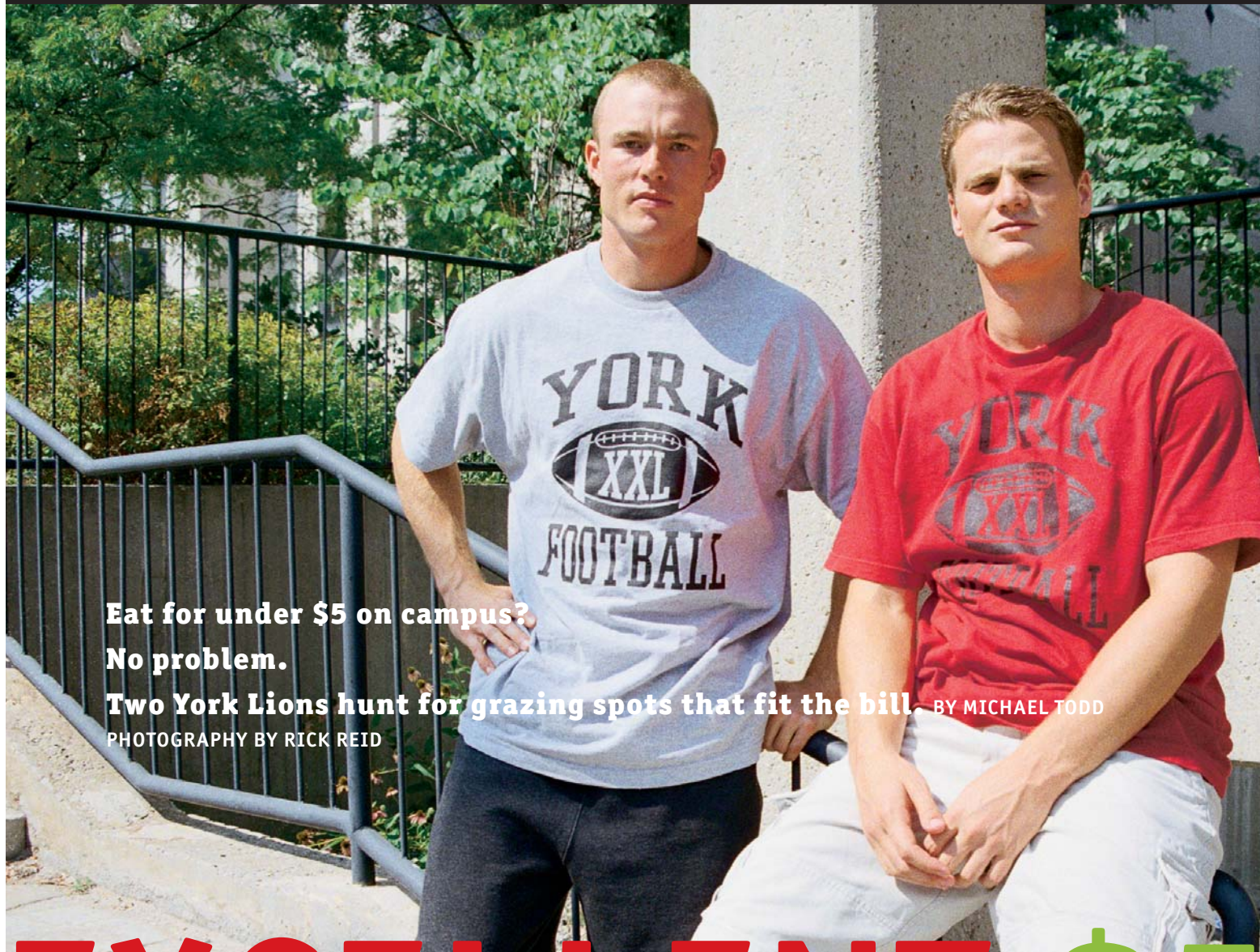
Neal Madras, Marcia Rioux, Vincent Tao and Huaiping Zhu, receives funding from MITACS (Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems), a federally funded National Centre of Excellence. Wu's colleagues in York's Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Zhu, Steven Wang and Ziji Yang, received a grant from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation that will help build a parallel computing laboratory needed to run the complex mathematical modelling used in the studies of the SARS and West Nile viruses.

These exciting developments are based on Wu's research into the architecture of the human central nervous system and its ability to recognize patterns in large amounts of information by "parallel processing." "The brain's individual neural pathways are very simple but they are connected in a very complicated way," Wu explains. Mathematics can mimic that process, and powerful computer technology has made it possible to collect and analyze the vast amount of information required to study patterns in global phenomena like SARS. But it's all driven by Wu's work at the theoretical level, much of it puzzled out in the quiet surroundings of a coffee shop. ■

# STEVE & ED'S

**L**iving well is the best revenge but what about eating well? Or, at least, eating for less than a downpayment on a Lexus. For students, especially, that means meals on a budget – in this case under five bucks.

We sent two hungry York Lions – Steve Carter and Ed Welch – to chow down at seven campus food outlets. The rules were pretty simple: use this five-dollar bill to get as satisfying a meal as you can, tax included, with drink if possible. There's grease, carbs and greens in their findings. So what are you waiting for? Eat. ■



**Eat for under \$5 on campus?  
No problem.  
Two York Lions hunt for grazing spots that fit the bill.** BY MICHAEL TODD  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK REID



**DOG DAZE**  
Ed and Steve visit the Absinthe Pub and Coffee Shop in Winters College where Ed chows down on a tasty chili cheese dog with Pepsi for \$4.93. Steve noshes on chicken nuggets washed down with a Pepsi for – oops – \$5.46.

# EXCELLENT \$5 ADVENTURE



**POP CULTURE**  
Steve enjoys etouf from Popeyes in York Lanes as Ed bites the biscuit. Total: \$4.27.





**BERRY NICE**  
Steve refuses to share his fresh fruit selection from Berries & Blooms in York Lanes. Total: \$4.11.



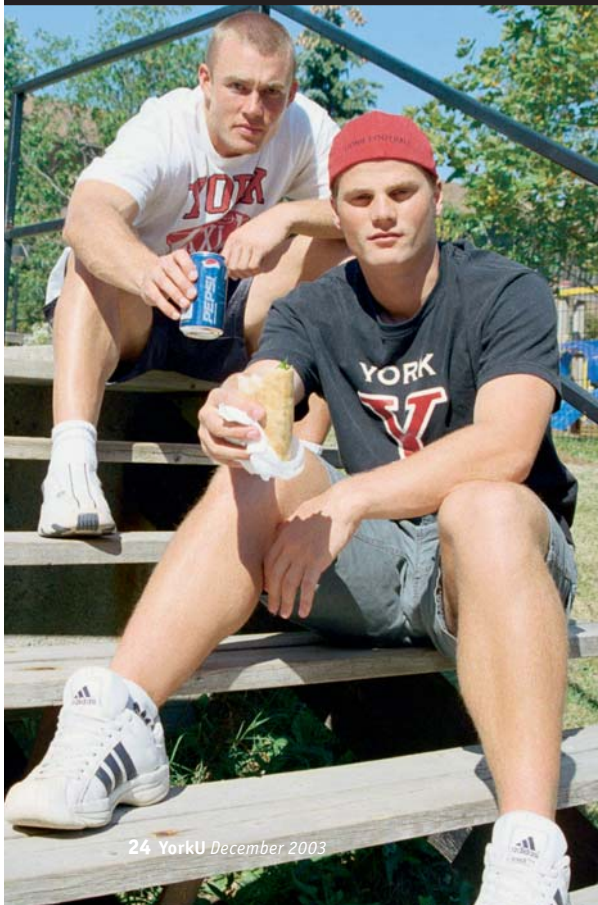
**THAT'S A WRAP**  
Ed lets Steve sniff but not bite his tangy chicken Tandoori wrap from Indian Flavour in York Lanes. No drinks were involved. Total: \$4.57.



**GET CRACKIN'** Both Lions make egg-cellent choices at Atkinson's Michelangelo's but bust the \$5 barrier. Steve devours the western sandwich with sausage, home fries and coffee. Total: \$5.25. Ed tackles his over-easy plus toast, home fries, sausage and coffee for \$5.07.



**BEEFEATERS** Steve inhales two Wendy's junior bacon cheeseburgers and a Coke (total \$4.25) while Ed scarfs down Combo #1 – cheeseburger, fries and Coke (total \$5).



**MOUTH TO MOUTH**  
Steve guards his falafel sandwich from Falafel Hut Village in York Lanes. Ed nabs the Pepsi. Total: \$5.



**RING A DING DING**  
The guys tuck into grilled ham and cheese sandwiches from Selona Grill in Central Square. Steve's got milk. Total: \$4.03. Ed skips the moo but blows his budget by splurging on onion rings. Total: \$5.30.



# HIGH FLYER

How a small-town girl from Brantford became principal choreographer in the surreal (and sometimes R-rated) world of Cirque du Soleil.

BY MICHAEL TODD

**S**HE'S THE HIGH PRIESTESS of avant-garde choreography. And while you might not know her by name, you've probably been wowed by the beauty of her work. Meet Debra Brown, principal choreographer for Cirque du Soleil, the Montreal-based company whose gymnastic dance spectacles have gained global renown.

Maybe it's apropos that Brown (BFA '78) works for the "circus". "I'm a gypsy by nature," says Brown from her country home north of Montreal. "I've been all over the world but, you know, I still love where I grew up – Brantford. I've got lots of friends I keep in touch with." Brantford, Ont., is certainly proud of its native daughter. So much so that the town put up a mould of Brown's face on the local wall of fame last year, she says.

That fame has arisen from a series of Cirque extravaganzas in which flying and gravity-defying aerial moves are a signature mark of her creations. She has also done work for Madonna, Celine Dion, Aerosmith and the Chicago Lyric Opera, which featured a 23-minute "bungee ballet" by Rhine maidens in a production of *Das Rheingold*. Last year Brown won an Emmy, presented by singer Paula Abdul, for her electrifying dance routines performed by Cirque at the 2001 Academy Awards.

The flair she has for combining the physical and the creative has always been there. "I was the artistic one in the family," she says. She was also crazy about gymnastics, and competed well enough to become Ontario senior champ while still in high school. "I was entirely self-taught," says Brown. "There weren't any professional teachers around." After high school Brown headed off to the University of Western Ontario for its gymnastics program. But something was still missing from her life. It was then, after graduating from UWO, that she decided her real passion was for dance and she came to York.

"York was so good to me. I can't say enough about it! The professors I had would take time out after class to teach me all the classic ballet basics. I didn't even know what a plié was! My teachers were wonderfully patient."

After graduating from York, Brown headed for Vancouver where she worked for eight years with the Flicka Gymnastics Club, developing an unusual blend of dance and gymnastics routines for 8-10 year-old girls, while also choreographing for an experimental dance troupe and continuing her ballet training. That wealth of experience made her ripe for a job when Cirque rolled into town.

According to Cirque lore, Brown got her first glimpse of the troupe's iconoclastic approach to spectacle by literally sneaking under the tent flap. Cirque was in Vancouver in 1986 giving a performance as part of Expo '86 and the Children's Festival. The



VEGAS HEAT: Scene from *Zumanity*, costumes by Thierry Mugler

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERRY METTELLUS



“The great thing about Cirque was they were very conceptual.”



**EMMY WINNER:** Debra Brown; inset, with presenter Paula Abdul; opposite, scene from *Zumanity*, costumes by Thierry Mugler

troupe itself was practically brand new – a ragtag collection of street performers and stilt walkers that had come together in 1985.

“It’s true. I really did sneak in under the flap,” says Brown. “It was time. I was ready to do something other than gymnastics. The great thing about Cirque was they were very conceptual. Trying to make art out of circus.”

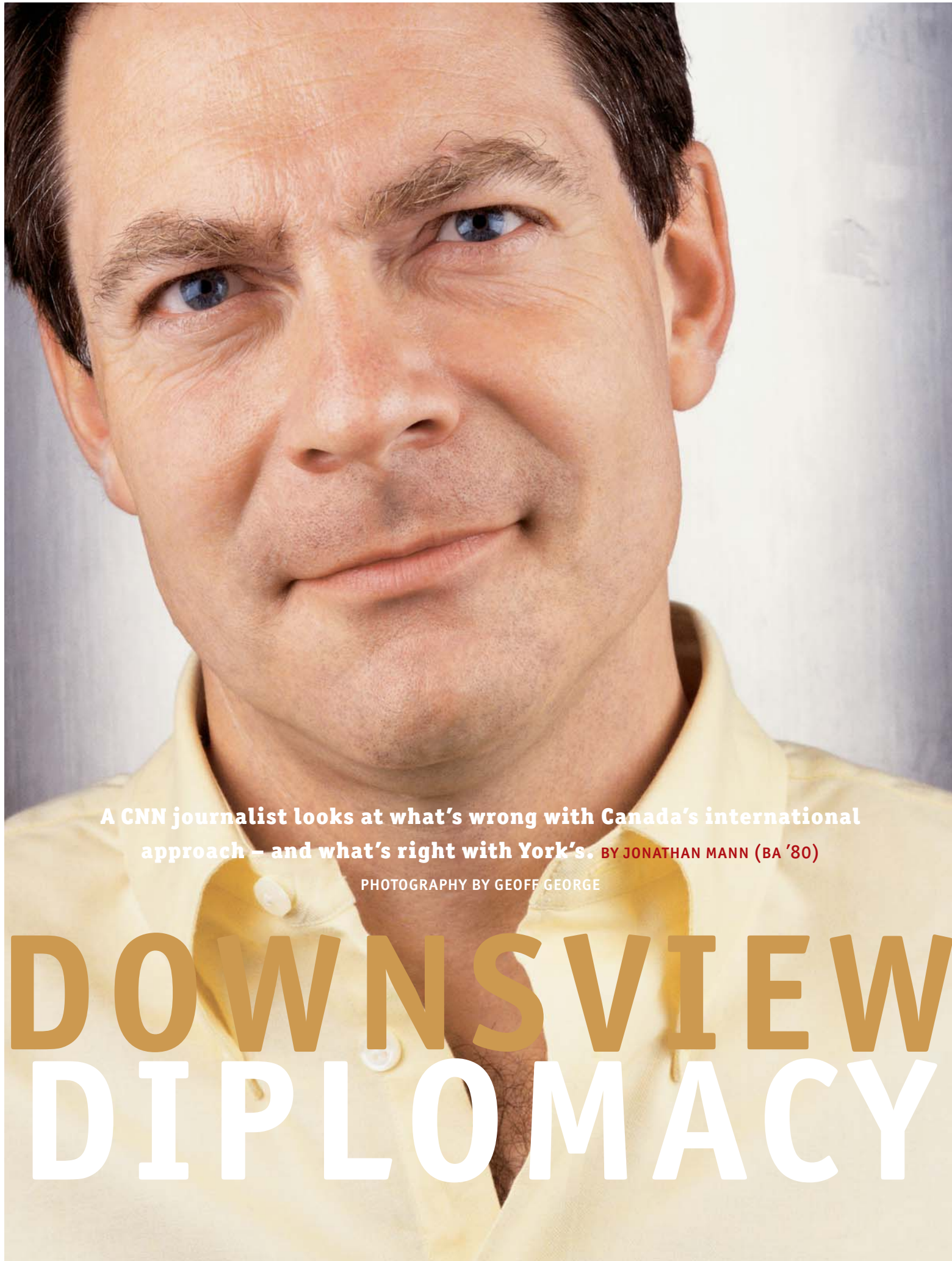
By accident Brown had run into veteran clown Michel Dallaire (then, and still, a member of Cirque) and had learned that the troupe was planning to add a choreographer the next year. Dallaire had also mentioned Brown’s skills to Guy Caron, Cirque’s artistic director. Brown went back to the tent the next day and said she could do the job if they wanted her.

They did, and shortly after Brown joined Cirque’s ranks in 1987, her genius for presenting the human body in space became apparent. *New York Times* theatre critic Bruce Weber praised her choreography in *O* – an early and ongoing Cirque production – as “semisurreal and visually arresting – in other words, very Cirque.”

While Brown has choreographed for all but two of Cirque’s shows, her recent work has been branching out from the circus. These days she seems bent on reinventing art forms, and has done gigs for Aerosmith (on their video “Jaded”) as well as Madonna’s flying feats in her Drowned World Tour. Now she’s started her own troupe, Apogee. “It’s smaller. More intimate. Not circus, not dance. More like acrobatic dance in the theatrical sense,” says Brown. Oddly, she’s been turned down by Canadian granting agencies (who said her work wasn’t “strictly dance”).

Most recently, Brown was hard at work choreographing Cirque’s first-ever R-rated show, *Zumanity*, which had its gala opening in late September in Las Vegas. Before its debut, the creators remained remarkably coy about its content. Brown told reporters cryptically: “You cannot reach the highest degree of spirituality until you have reached the highest degree of sexuality.” When it opened, the show featured flashes of nudity, a whip-cracking drag queen and an intense eroticism.

Nudity, whips and a highly creative girl from Brantford. How *surreal*. How very Cirque. ■



A CNN journalist looks at what's wrong with Canada's international approach – and what's right with York's. BY JONATHAN MANN (BA '80)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF GEORGE

# DOWNSVIEW DIPLOMACY

## OPINION

*After graduating from York with a BA in philosophy in 1980, former Excalibur editor Jonathan Mann went on to work as a journalist for the Montreal Gazette, United Press International and ultimately CNN. He now hosts the signature current affairs program "Insight" for CNN International, seen around the world but not in North America. In late September, Mann was keynote speaker at the first annual Celebration Dinner in recognition of York donors and friends organized by the York University Foundation. This article was adapted from his speech.*

**I**N THE 15 YEARS I have worked for CNN, I've travelled widely. We're a famously American news organization, but it tends eventually to slip out that I'm Canadian. People often smile, grateful because they can say nastier things about the US than they would otherwise. Clearly, there is more to being Canadian than that. But what is it?

We all know, at least vaguely, that Canada has a great record when it comes to diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping. But much of it is in the past. Our international profile, it seems to me, has been in decline for a long time. Let me give you an example close to my heart. Almost 20 years ago, just a few years after I graduated from York, I went to work as a freelance journalist in India. In the course of my work, I entered the state of Punjab, which was then off-limits to foreigners. I was arrested and spent a week in police custody in the city of Amritsar.

The Canadian government did a very good job of looking after my interests. But some Canadian MPs were impatient for signs that Ottawa was doing enough. One was the Liberal external affairs critic at the time: Jean Chrétien, who spoke out, and I was grateful. Fast forward to this year. Mr. Chrétien is prime minister and another freelance journalist from Montreal is arrested in the developing world, Zahra Kazemi. Only this time, it's Iran and even the Iranian government publicly concedes that someone in the Iranian government beat her to death. What could Canada do? The range of

possible measures runs from trade to diplomacy. What has Canada done? As this moment, it doesn't look like a lot.

What about another Canadian, Will Sampson? He was imprisoned for 31 months in Saudi Arabia, after a confes-

reduce tensions in a scary part of the world. And they had to figure out what to do about North Korea, which had a nuclear program and a population on the brink of starvation.

With support from the Canadian

**It tends to slip out that I'm Canadian. People often smile, grateful because they can say nastier things about the US.**

sion he said was obtained under torture. During his imprisonment, he communicated to Canadian officials that he was still being tortured. Today there are only questions about what Canada knew and didn't say. Is one measure of our international profile that our citizens can be treated that way?

Even in peacekeeping, the UN's figures for August showed we had exactly the same number of UN blue helmets in the field as Fiji: 237. If you include our contingent in Afghanistan, officially a NATO force, it rounds us up to 2,000. We'd still be behind Bangladesh.

To put it crudely, Canada is no longer a champion, in the largest sense of the word. If anything, we seem to be more of a volunteer umpire. But sometimes, an umpire is a welcome figure on the field. And one of Canada's most intriguing and least-known contributions began at York.

In the fall of 1990, as the world was beginning to measure the impact of the Cold War's end, two York professors – David Dewitt and Paul Evans – began something unprecedented: a pioneering effort to engage the countries of the North Pacific and in particular North Korea. They did it informally, as scholars, without the pressure of official diplomacy.

There were a lot of old tensions, between China and Russia, Japan and South Korea, not to mention between the two Koreas themselves. Those governments had never done this kind of thing and did not take part directly when it was launched. But all of them had an interest in somehow figuring out how to

government, scholars from each country would come together to meet in Canada, China, Japan or Hawaii. These sessions gradually evolved, from very predictable tirades against the West to more useful opportunities to talk and exchange ideas. Over conference tables at first, and then occasionally over cocktails, it was a way to take the pulse of a rogue state. And from time to time, home governments would send representatives to act as observers.

In 1993, Canada withdrew its support for the process and it passed into other hands. Dewitt, director of the York Centre for International & Security Studies, Evans, who is now at the University of British Columbia, and others continued their work on North Korea in other ways. The apparent progress continued. North Korea drew several nations into a 1994 agreement to steer clear of any nuclear weapons program and enjoyed a new period of better relations with Washington and Seoul.

There have been doubts, and problems, and one year ago, a setback: the revelation that North Korea is violating the 1994 agreement and is in fact pursuing a weapons program. But now, more than a decade after that first seven-nation approach Canada set in motion, North Korea has agreed to multilateral talks with Russia, Japan, China, the United States and South Korea. In part because of what York University people pioneered in the early '90s, the precedent has been set. From North York to the North Pacific, it was a nice bit of Downsvie diplomacy that may yet bear fruit. ■



## Stefany Singh

Poli-sci student, beauty queen

This beauty queen has brains. Crowned Ms Latina Canada a year ago and now Miss Richmond Hill, Stefany Singh is studying political science at York and plans to go into law. The petite 22-year-old who was voted Miss Congeniality at the Ms Latina World Pageant last fall in Miami (she has Caribbean heritage) can talk circles around debating opponents. When a modelling scout suggested she enter pageants, she hesitated. "I knew I would not be taken seriously." But the scholarship winner who was reading *War and Peace* in Grade 6 decided to challenge the pretty-but-dumb stereotype. With the same poise she exhibited at a recent Miss Canada pageant, she plays community ambassador and promotes her favourite charities. "I love it," she says. But for this hard-working woman, "school is my priority – you're only pretty for so long." ■

## Smart Choice

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF GEORGE



## Jordan Hellyer

English major, mockumentarist

## Cheap Flick

English major Jordan Hellyer was as surprised as anyone that his 20-minute, homemade spoof, *Jesus™*, won best "foreign film" at a recent US film festival. It wasn't big budget. In fact, the whole thing was produced for around "40 to 50 bucks," says the Founders College student.

The lead character "Jordan Hellyer" (played by himself) is chosen to document the much-publicized return of Jesus Christ. *Jesus™* becomes a collection of the best sound bites Hellyer garners during a three-month stint following the son of God and the earthly PR machine that builds around him. "A lot of what happens comes out of my being raised in a fundamentalist area," says the native of Simcoe, Ont.

This isn't the first time Hellyer has sent a flick to a festival – in this case, the Back East Picture Show based in Hoboken, NJ – but it is the first where he's had his work professionally recognized. Not bad for a third-year York student who isn't even in the film program. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF GEORGE

OK, I admit it: I like the United States. **BY MARK BRESLIN**

# My Dirty Secret

**W**HAT A SEASON! SARS, West Nile, the Big Blackout, my girlfriend bugging me to get married – the apocalypse was everywhere this summer and fall. Of course, a good sequel was needed to follow spring’s major release, America In Iraq. Now Yankee troops are stuck in Baghdad, fighting for their inalienable right to put a Starbucks next to every mosque in the Arab world.

The images are omnipresent. I’m at the gym on my favourite machine, the elliptical crosstrainer. In front of me are two TV sets, one playing repetitions of Iraqi carnage, one

**It’s too bad their foreign policy couldn’t be more like their treasured national sport.**

replaying last night’s Leafs game. Am I crazy, or are the images somehow connected?

Ever since I was a kid, I was turned off most sports because they seemed to me to be little wars of a different name. Hockey was the worst. Goons with sticks raised high, bashing each other over the possession of a worthless puck. Sorry, but to me the only reason to chase around a piece of rubber is if it slips off. It’s a weird paradox: the national pastime of Canada’s peaceable kingdom is a violent, testosterone-drenched game of inches while warlike America embraces baseball, a game so slow and gentle it seems almost fey.

It’s too bad Americans’ foreign policy couldn’t be more like their treasured national sport. A bunch of pinstriped swells marching into town with only symbolic weaponry – one bat. They wait forever until launching into battle. Then, they give the enemy at least three tries to attack until, frustrated, they surrender from sheer boredom. This is done nine times while the hungry citizens are fed by the invaders – hot dogs and warm beer – and peace becomes a deliverance. The war is over.

As a child, I noticed that even “innocent” organizations like Scouting reeked of the military. I hated it: my troop organized like an army unit, complete with uniforms, badges and a sergeant barking orders. Of course, I belonged to a Jewish scout troop, so we won our badges for singing show tunes. But even this was too much for me. I tried to turn my troop into a Marxist cell and got thrown out. Sports, scouts, summer camp – I refused to “soldier on.”

Mark Breslin (BA '73) owns the Yuk Yuk’s comedy club chain.

Many years passed, and this past spring I found myself at an outdoor table in Vancouver, nursing an \$8 tea and watching a demonstration against the war on Iraq. The anti-Americanism left me queasy: if you substituted any other group (Jews, blacks, women) in the chants, you could lock everyone up for hate crime.



I can’t join in this symphony of disgust towards our neighbour to the south: I like their product too much. Recently I appeared on a TV panel discussing the relationship of artists to recent world events. The other panelists all solemnly agreed that American hegemony was evil, and that they would use their work to illuminate this fact. Meanwhile, I pointed out that in my world, every comedian can’t wait to emigrate to Los Angeles and get a sitcom, a Beverly Hills mansion and an OxyContin problem, not necessarily in that order. This illegal and immoral war won’t stop the flow. In fact, lately I’ve been investigating eventual retirement to a gated community in Arizona, where, as a Canadian, I’ll be the nicest guy in the compound, inviting the gardener into my house for some lemonade and a quick tumble with my spouse.

Liking the United States has always been my dirty little secret. When I went to Glendon College in the 70s, it prided itself on its classy diplomatic Canadianism. Always a contrarian, I used to change my allowance into American dollars which I would ostentatiously throw around the bookstore and campus pubs. Of course, the dollar then was virtually at par, so my gesture involved little sacrifice. But I remember vividly the horror and disgust it provoked.

However, I won’t go to one of those hideous “Rally for America” gatherings. Sorry, but the only place for an American flag in Canada is at the US consulate, behind concrete barriers. Nor will I support those who boo The Star Spangled Banner at hockey games – there are probably more Russians than Americans on the ice anyway. No, these are the true, everyday casualties of war: intelligence, taste, irony, doubt – some things really worth fighting for. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HORST HERGET