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Find out more about York to the Power of 50 and how you can be part of the future as we countdown to York's 50th birthday in 2009.

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INSIDE

Simply the Best

Our annual look at York's undergrad achievers

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: LINDSAY LOZON

COVER

BOOKS

SPORT

PSYCHOLOGY

COMPETITION

PERFORMANCE

YORKU

THE MAGAZINE OF YORK UNIVERSITY

4 **Editor@YorkU**

How China's students fare. BY BERTON WOODWARD

5 **Leading Edge**

Exchanging ideas at Vari Hall. BY MAMDOUH SHOUKRI

6 **Universe**

Holy Stroller...What They're Reading...Bad Laws...Bee Worried...All Washed Up...Know Thyself...Hide and Seek...Gifted Patients

12 **Simply the Best**

Our annual survey of undergrad brilliance nets focused, passionate achievers – and a tie. BY MARTHA TANCOCK

18 **York's Storyteller**

Glendon historian Michiel Horn has brought the colourful saga of York's early years to life in *York University: The Way Must Be Tried*. BY DAVID FULLER

20 **Lion Tamer**

York's new football coach, Mike McLean, has a proven record in turnarounds. BY DAVID FULLER

22 **Babies: The Roots of Jealousy**

Maria Legerstee looks at how the green-eyed monster can affect infants. BY MICHAEL TODD

24 **Candy Man**

Joseph Moncada has a sweet thing going that's made him a champion student entrepreneur. BY MARTHA TANCOCK

26 **WWE and Me**

How I got a shot at world wrestling stardom – and why I'm glad to be back at York. BY SHANTELE MALAWSKI

30 **York People**

Community 'enabler' Laura Reinsborough...composer Daniel Schnee...horse wrangler Kimber Sider

33 **Giving**

The power of planned gifts.

34 **Back Talk**

Beijing spent seven years preparing for the Olympics, and so did I. BY SHAN QIAO

DECEMBER 2008

How China's students fare. BY BERTON WOODWARD

Bright Pearls

There's a quote in one of our profiles of this year's top students that jumped out at me, a former resident of the Chinese side of the Pacific. In staff writer Martha Tancock's story, China-born Jenny Xiao of the Schulich School of Business talks about visiting bustling Shanghai for the first time as an adult earlier this year and how "I didn't want to come back."

We often see students born in China figuring in our annual top-of-the-class feature. This is the sixth list we have produced, and three have included people originally, usually recently, from China. A fourth featured a student born in Hong Kong, where I used to live and which is now officially part of China. Even counting it at three, China is the leading source country for foreign-born top students (India follows, at two). Many of our high-achievers are children of immigrants, but fewer are immigrants themselves. This year's list reaches a high-water mark, with a record four out of nine born overseas.

China's prominence is hardly surprising, given the numbers of Chinese who have migrated to Canada and the legendary respect for education entrenched in their 3,000-year-old culture. But the transition to Canadian life can be tough for some. I don't mean for Jenny Xiao, who has been in Canada nine years and was in New Zealand before that. But others arrive at York pretty much straight off the plane, on student visas. For these people, there is not only a new culture and language to deal with. Given the fast pace of China's develop-



ment, coming to Canada can seem like a step back. Anyone who has ridden both the kludgy Toronto subway and any of the gleaming new systems in Shanghai, Hong Kong or other Chinese centres knows how much there is to envy. And among North American cities, only New York generates the kind of street-level buzz you feel today in Shanghai or Hong Kong.

Some of these elements are addressed in our Back Talk column by Toronto reporter Shan Qiao (BA '04). Having covered the Beijing Olympics, she notes the contrast on this side of the Pacific with the shiny newness of China. But she also alludes to the changes she has gone through since she first came to Canada from Shanghai on a student visa in 1999. Qiao told me that in her first two years at York, she felt "very disoriented". That began to change as she came to love her studies in English literature and decided she wanted to write for a living. She also appreciated the freewheeling nature of Canadian society. Qiao has seen many of her visa-student contemporaries return to booming China. Not her. In September, soon after she returned from the Olympics, Qiao became a Canadian citizen. **M**

Send letters, submissions, comments and ideas to editor@yorku.ca.

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YORK
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redefine THE POSSIBLE.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

Vari Hall is a natural place to exchange ideas. BY MAMDOUH SHOUKRI

York's Crossroads

Like many of York's students, staff and faculty, I pass through Vari Hall several times a day. Each time, I am reminded what a unique place it is. There is no other place like Vari Hall at any university I've ever been to. It is a crossroads, a natural meeting place, the front door of the University. It's also at the heart of a debate that has consumed the York community since before I became president – a debate about free speech and its limits, about the need to balance the right to free expression and the right to attend a class undisturbed.

York University is a community renowned for its commitment to free inquiry and expression. And that's as it should be: a university must be a place where we can lay aside fears and learn about other people, ideas and cultures in a spirit of free inquiry. The real business of any university is creating new knowledge and sharing that knowledge with the communities we serve. There is no better way to share ideas than through dialogue;



facilitate free expression, we must recognize that there are limits. In the case of free expression, the line is clear and immutable: when it descends to hate, when it invokes violence, when it violates the law of the land, we're no longer dealing with free speech.

To be clear, it isn't automatically "hate speech" if an idea offends us; an idea is not wrong simply because we disagree with it. And while Voltaire may not have actually written the line most often attributed to him – "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your

It is easy to be tolerant of those who agree with us; the trick is to be respectful of those who disagree.

some of my best ideas have come to me in the course of conversation with colleagues. In this sense, Vari Hall is an incomparable asset to York and to our wider community: it's the ideal place to discuss and debate, to exchange ideas and information.

I believe the exchange of ideas that happens in Vari Hall is as important as the exchange that happens in our lecture halls, labs and classrooms. That's why we've increased the number of tables available to groups and clubs, opened Vari to booking for events and streamlined the booking process. We're hoping these changes strike the right balance, that they increase dialogue and communication, and that they help promote civil discourse and mutual respect.

The Office of the Vice-President Students, Student Community & Leadership Development and the Centre for Human Rights are working with students to ensure that appropriate language is used at rallies and in printed material disseminated in Vari Hall. At the same time that we defend the right of free speech and

Mamdouh Shoukri is York's president and vice-chancellor.

right to say it" – it lends itself well to this argument. It is easy for us to be tolerant of those who agree with us; the trick is to be respectful of those with whom we disagree, or of whom we may be distrustful, suspicious or even afraid. We must not use our own opinions as a tool to oppress, alienate or silence others.

We communicate better through civil discourse than by shouting at each other. That said, there is a time and place for debates on controversial subjects. These ought to be conducted in a civil way, without invective or hostility; they ought to be won by force of reason, not by volume.

I believe we have an incredible asset in Vari Hall, and a terrific opportunity to talk – and listen – to each other. A good newspaper, to paraphrase the playwright Arthur Miller, is a nation talking to itself. Vari Hall is York University talking to itself – it's up to each of us to listen. **M**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY BEECHY

UNIVERSE

What can Toronto's oldest churches tell us about The Big Smoke? A great deal, it seems. Jon Caulfield, a York urban studies professor in the Faculty of Arts, has documented the evolution of 92 Christian churches built in inner-city Toronto up to 1893 (Toronto's centennial year) and found they have their own stories.

"The churches project arose from my interest in the adaptive reuse of old Toronto buildings," Caulfield says. "I found old Toronto churches adapted as a dance theatre, as academic offices, as a women's club, as an animation studio and for a lot of other uses. On looking into the histories of these buildings I found not much had been written on them."

Caulfield limited his project to pre-1893 buildings that were formerly Christian churches and were located in the area bounded by Palmerston Avenue, Davenport Road and the Don Valley. "The most interesting thing to me is the stories of the churches

themselves," he says. For example, he cites the history of the African Methodist Episcopal built in 1838 by black refugees from the US who came via the Underground Railroad. "By 1893 its congregation had dissolved and it had become a Christadelphian church, a Chinese church, a builder's warehouse and a synagogue before it was removed in the 1920s."

Another church, First Baptist, built in 1841 at Queen Street East and Victoria Street, housed Toronto's oldest Afro-Canadian congregation, founded in 1822. First Baptist relocated twice, finally settling at Huron and D'Arcy streets, where it remains today.

Caulfield says the loss of churches speaks to contemporary issues such as building conservation and urban planning conflicts, especially when congregations deal with condominium developers. "A study of church buildings is a way to explore Toronto history – its social history and built fabric," says Caulfield, who is writing a book based on his research. ■

Holy Stroller

Jon Caulfield tours Toronto's historic churches

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RSQUARED

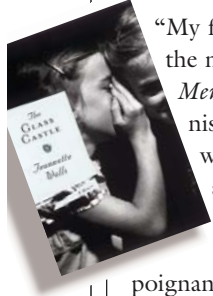
BOOKS

What They're Reading

York people reveal what's on the bedside table

Sarah Flicker

Environmental studies professor



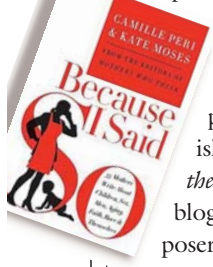
“My favourite book for pleasure at the moment is *The Glass Castle: A Memoir* – Jeannette Walls’ reminiscence of growing up with wacky parents and persevering against all odds. I also really enjoyed *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, Heather O’Neill’s

poignant narrative written from a child’s perspective about having a father with a heroin addiction. It is set in Montreal and deals with this tough subject with refreshing innocence. I am currently reading Stephanie Nolen’s book 28. It has 28 stories about HIV-positive people, one for each of the million Africans living with the virus. The book is both devastating and inspiring.”

May Friedman

Women’s studies doctoral candidate

“Sticking with my field of motherhood studies, I recently picked up *Because I Said So: 33 Mothers Write about Children, Sex, Men, Aging, Faith, Race and Themselves*. This is an excellent anthology that, while providing a provocative assessment of modern



motherhood, is still light enough to act as good bedtime reading. On a more personal level, I recently finished *Swish: My Quest to Become the Gayest Person Ever*, written by blogger and musical theatre composer Joel Derfner. This book lives up to the hilarious potential of its title but goes much further, providing a poignant and touching look at the life of one gay man in Manhattan. It is extremely thought-provoking, entertaining and astute.”



STUDIES

Bad Laws

There are myths out there about child porn

If her PhD thesis about online child pornography gets accepted for book publication, Sara Smyth hopes to put forth solutions to a problem she says has long been misunderstood – or ignored – in Canada. “Very little has been written on this topic in the past 10 years,” says Smyth, an Osgoode Hall Law School grad (LLD ’08). “And much of what has, especially in the media, focuses on sensational stories about child sexual predators.”

Laws designed to control child porn on the Internet pose several problems, Smyth says. “Privacy is a concern, so Parliament needs to be mindful of safeguarding existing privacy and freedom of expression guarantees. There is also the importance of preserving the essential nature of cyberspace. The key is to find a balance, promoting privacy and expression online while making it easier for law enforcement to target those who want to use this important space for their own illegal purposes. This balance hasn’t yet been achieved in Canada.”

One of the biggest myths, says Smyth, is that all child porn consumers are sexual predators. “This is not true. Not everyone who consumes child porn has an interest in children.” This has led to bad laws, she says, with policy-makers assuming that unless Parliament prohibits every conceivable form of child porn, all Canadian children will be at risk. That’s meant a prohibition on stories, drawings and other fictional works that have little or no connection to the commission of harmful acts against children.

Another difficulty is harmonizing laws that will police cyberspace. Countries often have very different legal definitions of who a child is or what constitutes child pornography.

Says Smyth, “Focusing limited prosecutorial resources on producers and consumers of stories and paintings makes little sense. The circulation of real child sex abuse images is global, not local. We should be focusing on how we can target the circulation of real child porn in cyberspace. That will take many countries cooperating worldwide.” ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY RSQUARED

Sheila Colla, a PhD candidate in York’s Department of Biology, has provided the first quantitative evidence of bumblebee decline in North America. Her recent article, outlining the plummeting populations of *Bombus affinis* Cresson in particular, appears in the online journal *Biodiversity and Conservation*. *Bombus affinis* is a species native to eastern Canada and many US states. Colla’s paper was the result of studying more than 9,000 bumblebees she collected.

Colla compared recent data from her summers surveying the insects in southern Ontario with data collected on bumblebees by an earlier Guelph researcher who charted their numbers in the mid-1970s. Colla found that half of the 14 species documented in the ’70s are now either missing or in decline.

Given the recent concern over declining bee populations, wouldn’t researchers be flocking to do such studies or unearth earlier ones? “There simply aren’t many people studying bumblebees in North America,” says Colla. “If someone had wanted to beat me to it they could easily have found the earlier study in the University of Guelph archives.”

Colla says she found both a decline in the number of species in southern Ontario and – for some species – a decline in their relative abundance. “*Bombus affinis*, *Bombus tericola* and *Bombus ashtoni* particularly show evidence of a drastic decline,” she says.

Researchers like Colla and her PhD supervisor, bee expert and York biology Professor Laurence Packer, say there is no one “smoking gun” that definitively explains why bees are disappearing. But good guesses, says Colla, include introduced diseases from commercial bees, habitat loss, pesticide use and climate change. ■



UNIVERSE

BIOLOGY

Bee Worried

A York researcher confirms a decline in bumblebees

What’s a visual designer doing in a hospital? Trying to see if good graphics about handwashing can help curb the spread of infectious diseases. Sandra Gabriele, a visual design professor in York’s Faculty of Fine Arts, teamed up with Mina Singh, a nursing professor in York’s Faculty of Health, and doctors and nurses in a hospital to test whether visual communication design can be used to address problems in health care.

Gabriele’s project – described in her 2008 paper “Using Visual Communication Design as Strategy in Patient Safety Practices: Behavioural Paradoxes” – examined how design can address problems such as disease transmission in health-care workplaces. “Currently, hospitals face the challenge of hospital-acquired infections,” notes Gabriele. It’s common knowledge now that the most effective defence against the spread of infection is handwashing, she says. “But health-care staff often fail to do so when entering or exiting hospitals and units.”

Several different sign combinations, all designed by Gabriele, a professional graphic designer before coming to York, were tested in the hospital. Ironically, and contrary to expectations, her study showed that handwashing prompts – signage placed next to disinfectant handwashing stations – had little or no effect. Gabriele says multiple, concurrent, site-specific strategies may be necessary to positively affect handwashing behaviour. The study also evaluated two access points: the hospital front door and the entrance to the cardiac care unit.

“Barriers to handwashing compliance could be a consequence of many things – both systemic and human factors,” says Gabriele. “Oddly, we found the public was more handwashing compliant than the health-care workers.” ■



COMMUNICATIONS

All Washed Up

Can good design help save lives?

PHOTOGRAPH BY RSQUARED

UNIVERSE



WORKSHOPS

Know Thyself

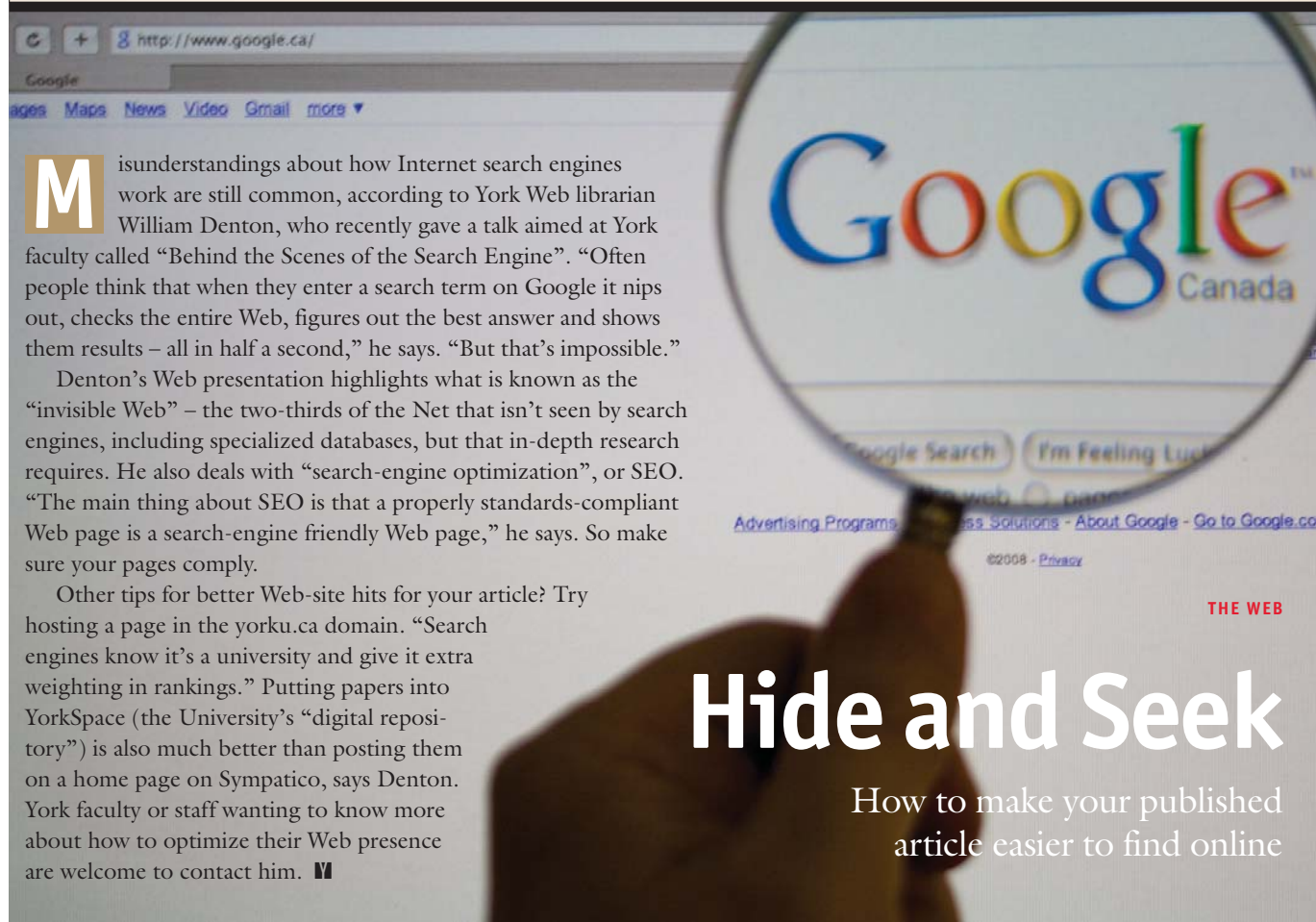
How York's Career Centre can help

What kind of person are you and what are you looking for in a career? It's a tough question for many students. Now York's Career Centre has made answering it a little easier with its "Who Am I?" workshop. It's a hands-on game designed to help students who are wondering what careers fit with their personalities and strengths.

"Students play an interactive self-discovery board game to explore who they are and what they want in their careers and their life. It lets them identify their unique skills, abilities, assets and desires," says Dianne Twombly, manager of programs and services for the Career Centre.

The game, which is facilitated by a career counsellor, also gives students a chance to interact with others in the same situation, notes Twombly. "We get students from all levels," she says. "Basically anyone who isn't sure of his or her direction. And we also serve recent York grads, up to two years after graduation."

The workshop, which has been offered for a year and a half, is held two to five times a month, depending on the time of year. "Often students learn how others may influence their career choices – like parents or peers. They gain self-awareness," Twombly says. "They come out of this clarifying who they are and what they want, not what others think they should become. They learn that understanding who they are is what matters when it comes to making good career decisions." ■



THE WEB

Hide and Seek

How to make your published article easier to find online

Misunderstandings about how Internet search engines work are still common, according to York Web librarian William Denton, who recently gave a talk aimed at York faculty called "Behind the Scenes of the Search Engine". "Often people think that when they enter a search term on Google it nips out, checks the entire Web, figures out the best answer and shows them results – all in half a second," he says. "But that's impossible."

Denton's Web presentation highlights what is known as the "invisible Web" – the two-thirds of the Net that isn't seen by search engines, including specialized databases, but that in-depth research requires. He also deals with "search-engine optimization", or SEO. "The main thing about SEO is that a properly standards-compliant Web page is a search-engine friendly Web page," he says. So make sure your pages comply.

Other tips for better Web-site hits for your article? Try hosting a page in the yorku.ca domain. "Search engines know it's a university and give it extra weighting in rankings." Putting papers into YorkSpace (the University's "digital repository") is also much better than posting them on a home page on Sympatico, says Denton. York faculty or staff wanting to know more about how to optimize their Web presence are welcome to contact him. ■



PSYCHOLOGY

Gifted Patients

York research offers new insights into schizophrenia

A York study is the first to confirm that a small number of schizophrenic patients have superior verbal abilities. In fact, they rank in the upper five to 10 per cent of the general population, right alongside similarly gifted healthy people. The study was conducted by York psychology Professors Walter Heinrichs and Joel Goldberg of the Faculty of Health and Hamilton neuropsychologist Stephanie McDermid Vaz (MA '01, PhD '05).

"There are no previous research reports of schizophrenia patients with superior ability in any aspect of standard cognitive performance," says Heinrichs, the lead author. "We were originally studying memory in the illness and as the database started to grow it became apparent that we had recruited a very high-functioning sample. So we decided to look for gifted patients and found them."

Verbally gifted schizophrenic patients, as defined by their vocabulary scores, were significantly more independent in community living than typical patients. However, both groups still

experienced equivalent levels of delusions, hallucinations, apathy and other common symptoms.

"There are two main reasons to study exceptional cognition in schizophrenia," says Heinrichs. "First, gifted patients help us understand to what degree better cognitive performance translates into better outcomes for mentally ill people, especially in terms of functioning on their own in the community. The future of treatment may lie in improving cognition in these people."

The second, says Heinrichs, has to do with a basic understanding of schizophrenia's disease process. How can gifted patients be just as "crazy" as their more cognitively typical peers? One possibility is that the brain mechanisms that cause psychotic illness are different from those that cause cognitive impairment, he says. "The challenge is to isolate what neural defects the gifted and more typical patients have in common as well as those that distinguish them. We may be able to make progress in specifying what goes wrong in the brain in schizophrenia by studying these exceptional patients." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RSQUARED

COVER

Our annual survey of undergrad brilliance nets focused, passionate achievers. **BY MARTHA TANCOCK**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDSAY LOZON

LIFE HAS A WAY OF LEADING US DOWN CERTAIN PATHS. For the sixth year, *YorkU* traces the paths of York's top academic achievers in each undergraduate Faculty as they enter third year. (There are nine this year because at the Schulich School of Business two were in an exact tie, showing the same cumulative grade point average with equal credits.) What's surprising is not the students' sparkling intelligence but the choices they have made. Two have returned to school after a hiatus in the real world, but most are only 20, still living at home, unseduced by romance and largely undistracted by popular entertainment. Competitive, focused and consumed with a passion for what they are studying, six of the nine are children of immigrants who moved to Canada to give them better opportunities. They are idealistic yet pragmatic, determined to improve their family's well-being but also to make this a fairer, more just and safer world.

SPARKLING: (clockwise from top left)
Brent Wirth, Jennifer Ly, Alice Melcov,
Andrew Bang, Sarah Shahmuradyan, Waqar
Zahid, Jenny Xiao, Michele Caranci

Repairing the World

NAOMI GREENWALD

Faculty of Health
GPA: 8.8

"I NEVER KNEW I WOULD GO TO UNIVERSITY," says Naomi Greenwald (who declined to be photographed). She couldn't have felt more fulfilled as a Grade 1 teacher at a North Toronto Hebrew girls school. Then she noticed that a few of her charges had problems and at age 23 she enrolled in psychology at York to learn how to help them. For four years, she's been juggling part-time studies with half-time teaching. It's an ideal mix of theory and practice for the 27-year-old who may end up counselling for a living, an activity she was born into. "My family loves analyzing people, not in a gossipy way. We like to talk about what makes people tick. People confide in us," says Greenwald, a middle child who says she won't leave home until she marries.

Intellectually drawn to mastering Torah logic and calculus, she is studying psychology because "I want to understand people." Her favourite escape in a life without TV, an iPod or the Internet comes from diving into characters' lives in classic novels like Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*. Sometimes, she paddles a canoe to see an Algonquin Park sunset. But compelling her most is what Orthodox Jews call *tikkun olam*, or "repairing the world". "Coming to university is taking that community service even deeper."





Looking East

JENNY XIAO

Schulich School of Business
GPA: 8.55

FOR SOMEONE WHO LIKES NOTHING BETTER than shopping for clothes with her girlfriends at Toronto Eaton Centre, visiting Shanghai last spring was heaven for Jenny Xiao. The daughter of Chinese immigrants who came to Canada nine years ago via New Zealand had signed up for intermediate Chinese expressly for a chance to see her country of birth. Compared to Shanghai's bustling streets, Canada looked boring. "I didn't want to come back." But she did, to a payroll job at a cosmetics factory, a comfortable home in Vaughan with her parents and younger brother, and more school.

Xiao wasn't such a high achiever until she found herself vying with smart fellow Asians in high school. The trained painter and pianist excelled at life sciences but in Grade 12 opted to study business at university. "Science seemed too hard and you can't make a lot of money." You can if you get your MBA and become a chartered accountant, however. The 20-year-old, who says she reads only textbooks (well, sometimes the *National Post*) and amuses herself by channel surfing and skimming *LouLou* magazine, hopes to launch her career at a major accounting firm. Her future remains a mystery, the way she likes it, except for this: "For sure, I want to work in China."

Why Not Do It Well?

WAQAR ZAHID

Schulich School of Business
GPA: 8.55

PROFESSIONAL, THAT'S WAQAR ZAHID. Always on time, congenial, accommodating. These qualities may come naturally to the sunny 20-year-old accounting major, but he's also deliberately buffing them, prepping for a career with one of the Big Four auditing firms. Last summer, he leapt at an internship with KPMG in Saudi Arabia, where his father works, so he could gain experience interacting with clients. During second year, the Mississauga resident worked part time at a drugstore; this year he's working at a bank, less for the paycheck than the discipline. "It forces you to better manage your time," says "The Office" fan whose social life consists of playing cricket and soccer and eating out with friends.

Zahid's Pakistani parents left Saudi Arabia for Canada so their three children could get a superior education. Schooled in both countries, Zahid finished Grade 12 here a valedictorian. "I'm not going to say I'm brilliant," says the number-crunching whiz. "My philosophy is: If you're going to do something, why not do it well?" He's followed his siblings into business at York, hooked on case-based analysis. and is girding for corporate success. "I can see the benefits not too far off now."

The Great Equalizer

SARAH SHAHMURADYAN

Glendon
GPA: 8.5

LIVING AS AN ARMENIAN REFUGEE in Germany instilled Sarah Shahmuradyan with a burning desire to make the world more just and fair. While her parents, both ethnographers whose jobs disappeared when the Soviet Union imploded, waited in vain for German citizenship, they encouraged their bright daughter to excel at school. "Education is one door you want to fling wide open," they told her. Shahmuradyan was 10 when Canada threw open its doors to her family. Fluent in Armenian, Russian and German, she felt at home in multicultural Scarborough and soon soared to the top of her class – in English.

Grade 11 law sparked her interest, but the teenager involved with the student council, school newspaper and Amnesty International aimed to pursue social work until she realized politics could correct injustice. Now the politics and sociology student, who has added French to her arsenal, plans to study law, then become an international legal policy analyst. Last summer, she worked with new-immigrant programs for Ontario's Ministry of Education and tasted her future. "Law, like education, is one of the great equalizers," says the 20-year-old "CSI" fan who likes to dance to CHUM-FM. "Regardless of your background, you should be treated the same. Rights are the same everywhere. Freedoms should be the same everywhere."

Challenge Yourself

MICHELE CARANCI

Faculty of Environmental Studies
GPA: 8.2

MICHELE CARANCI THRIVES in the sweet embrace of her large Italian family. She chose York partly because she could scurry home on weekends "to get my Mom fix". At 20, the youngest of four from rural Schomberg doesn't drive because she can depend on relatives and friends for lifts to work at Swiss Chalet or to the salsa dance club on girls' night out. Yet the daughter of a municipal worker and a real estate agent displays a fierce independence when it comes to academics. Not for her, memorizing historical dates or spouting Marx's theories. "I like giving my own opinion." She'll spend three months chomping on essay questions like "What is nature?", then write her answer in a day. "I love open-ended questions," she says. "You can go as deep as you want – challenging yourself and the way you think."

Once an avid gamer, this incurable romantic rereads *Gone With the Wind* and Harry Potter adventures, watches "Grey's Anatomy", concocts pasta dishes and redecorates with her mother. She's also a math tutor who aims to practise law and one day teach, and a doting aunty who hopes for her own big family. "My goal is to transform the world into a place my children can be proud to live in."



Back on Track

JENNIFER LY

Faculty of Arts
GPA: 8.53

ALMOST 25, JENNIFER LY is “making up for lost time.” The Grade 10 dropout who hated high school finally earned her diploma after years in dead-end jobs. She doesn’t regret her rebellious phase, but now the daughter of Vietnamese boat people, raised in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood, sees education as her way to move on and up. Inspired by her father who earned a Canadian engineering degree and her high-achieving sister, Ly has ventured deep into sociology and philosophy. “Five years ago, I didn’t think I’d be in university,” she says.

Impatient to learn, Ly remains plagued by fears of mediocrity and surprised by her high marks. The big-scholarship winner works weekends at a karaoke bar and tutors in an adult literacy program and as a York peer adviser. She rarely sees old pals and never watches TV (“It’s so mindless now”) but reads widely – and dotes on her pug Phoebe. Ly is fast-tracking, taking summer courses and preparing for law, MBA and medical program entrance exams, keeping her options open. She wants to earn enough to support her parents and find her niche in policy-making, health or education. “I hope one day to make a change to something that I feel is important.”

Music to the Max

BRENT WIRTH

Faculty of Fine Arts
GPA: 8.43

BRENT WIRTH DOESN’T DRINK or smoke or carouse, yet he’s been hanging out at the Corktown Tavern in Hamilton since he was 12 – singing and playing bass in Kosmonaut, an indie band he and his brother plan to take on the road after he graduates. He was only four when his guitar-picking dad started him on an electric keyboard, then bought him a drum set, eager to perform Smashing Pumpkins hits with his sons in the basement of their rural Stoney Creek home. That basement is now a recording studio where the Wirth boys produce band demos for a fee and Brent drives his older sibling crazy making tracks just so.

In high school, he consistently earned 100 per cent in music, hungry to understand theory and the science of sound, and master French horn, classical guitar, bass guitar and drums. “Music became the centre of my life,” he says. It still is. Thriving on a mere three hours sleep – without benefit of caffeine – the 20-year-old tutors at the local conservatory, rehearses with the band and devotes late nights to learning non-Western music styles at York. “I’m always looking for new things,” says Kosmonaut’s resident songwriter who dreams of a future composing film scores. Watch for his name as the credits roll.

A Big Heart

ALICE MELCOV

Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies
GPA: 8.55

WHEN THE SOVIET UNION COLLAPSED in 1990, Alice Melcov’s engineer parents fled politically unstable Azerbaijan for South Africa, hoping for a better future for their two children. Six years after they settled in Johannesburg, Melcov’s father died, sending his nine-year-old daughter into a soul-searching tailspin. By 12, the child born in a churchless Soviet republic was a prayerful Christian, raising funds to help children with AIDS in Johannesburg. When the family relocated to suburban Thornhill, Ont., Melcov carried on her good work. In high school, she set up a chapter of the Stephen Lewis Foundation and mentored immigrants struggling with English. At York, she has tutored at the Student Peer Support Centre and a Jane-Finch community after-school program.

Actively involved with Campus for Christ, the multilingual 20-year-old joined an evangelical mission last summer to Montreal and Paris universities. “I have a big heart for volunteer work,” says the Nelson Mandela fan. An introvert who can lose herself in a practical ethics text as much as a Tolstoy epic, she imagined a life in medicine until she sensed the heady power of public policy. “It can make a big impact on the day-to-day life” of citizens, she says, and she may now pursue public-interest law. “If you are privileged, you should help others.”

Fencing Against Cancer

ANDREW BANG

Faculty of Science & Engineering
GPA: 9.0

FOR A GUY WHOSE LIFE seems so compartmentalized and prescribed, Andrew Bang has come to appreciate risk. After his frosh year, the biology major took his first journey alone to volunteer at a medical clinic in Costa Rica and ended up performing instructive skits in Spanish and zip-lining through jungle trees like Tarzan. The son of South Korean immigrants came home confident he could make a difference in the world. He ditched business studies for dreams of medicine and oncological research. “I want to find the cure for cancer,” says the 20-year-old, inspired by survivors dear to him.

Bang is moving in that direction. He worked in a York lab researching heart-tissue proteins last summer. The former lacrosse athlete has taken up fencing to strengthen his wrists, steady hands being a prerequisite for surgeons. And as founder of the campus Marrow Initiative, he campaigns for student donations. The Richmond Hill commuter does all his school work on campus because at home he can’t resist basketball video games. Cautious by nature, he is proud he has veered into biology and an unknown future. He has taken his father’s advice to heart: It is more important to try and fail than not to try at all. ■

Once historian Michiel Horn signed on, he was determined to bring the colourful saga of York's early years to life. **BY DAVID FULLER**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK

York's Storyteller

MICHEL HORN HAD SEVERAL REASONS for not wanting to write *York University: The Way Must Be Tried*, the authorized history being published in January to kick off York's 50th birthday celebration. Although eminently qualified – he is one of York's most respected historians, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and a faculty member since 1968 at the Glendon campus, where York spent four of its first five years – Horn was reluctant to take on the project so soon after completing his latest book on academic freedom in Canada. “The last thing I wanted was to write a university history because I had just read every university history available. Well, I tell you, that's a sure cure for insomnia,” he says, relaxing in his backyard 10 years after he was first approached by the committee overseeing York's 40th anniversary.

Horn was also concerned about his objectivity, an indispensable quality for any historian, not to mention one writing about his employer. “I said I was too much a part of the furniture to criticize the layout of the room,” he explains. Then too, with York being relatively young, “a lot of the people who were active in the early years are still around and it's very difficult to write dispassionately about things that other people feel passionate about.” But in 1999, at the urging of the late Kent Haworth, York's archivist, Horn agreed to hear a pitch from a former fellow undergrad at BC's Victoria College (now UVic) – York president & vice-chancellor Lorna R. Marsden. She offered him research assistance and an appointment as University Historian with unfettered access to all records. “I decided that the offer was too good to refuse,” he says.

Once Horn set his mind to the undertaking, he was determined that *The Way Must Be Tried* not be another “doorstop”. To get at the colourful story of Canada's third-largest university, he conducted some 250 personal interviews with people such as James Keachie, a member of the original “summer bachelors group” that first mooted the new adult education facility in 1955, and many of the first students, who wanted to be part of “creating something new”. In the hands of an accomplished historian, their words bring York's story to life. The resulting 320 pages, which include hundreds of new colour photographs and archival images, detail York's history up to the appointment in 1985 of Harry Arthurs, York's fourth president – or seventh, counting three acting presidents. The final chapter – a wide-ranging essay on York's past and present – brings the story up to date and deals with important changes

that are still taking place, such as the building boom that has made the Keele campus “rather like a sizable town”, and the achievements of York's researchers.

While Horn admits he felt obligated to tell a story that would appeal primarily to people who love York, he provides ample context for the general reader to understand the decisions and motivations of the actors. From the first inklings of the baby boom to wrangling over land for a new, much larger campus, Horn tells a story of dedication and commitment to ideas about education that set York apart from Canada's other postsecondary institutions. From the beginning, he notes, York was intended to be the interdisciplinary university. Although the development of curriculum might not seem like a barnburner, Horn decided the story of how York got its general education courses had to be told. Similarly, he knew it wouldn't do to gloss over controversy. Readers will certainly find the names, faces and signal events they would expect in a piece of celebratory memorabilia, but they will also find fascinating treatments of the more delicate moments in York's history, such as the frustrating search for a new campus and opposition to the project by some in business and government.

One major controversy that he says “cast a long shadow” over York's growth in the 1970s was the leadership crisis that followed the retirement of founding president Murray Ross and the era of financial retrenchment in which it was played out. Two of those acting presidents appear in this period. Horn also writes about the formation of York's faculty and staff unions (he is a former chair of the York University Faculty Association) and the strikes of the 1980s. The decision in the early '70s to suspend classes on some Jewish high holidays is described along with the many debates over how the University would develop as it responded to the ebb and flow of enrolment, the economy and political winds.

“I had a lot of fun doing it,” Horn admits now that the book is completed. “I'm conscious of the fact that a lot of people are going to criticize me for one thing or another,” he says with a grin. “One thing that they'll probably be thinking is, ‘Why didn't he come and talk to me? I could have told him a thing or two’.” ■

York University: The Way Must Be Tried will be published by McGill-Queen's University Press in January 2009 and can be pre-ordered through the York University Bookstore.

L I O N T A M E R

York's new football coach, Mike McLean, has a proven track record in team turnarounds.

BY DAVID FULLER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG



LOVE AND TRUST. Those are the first two words you hear as Mike McLean, York's new head football coach, talks about his guiding philosophy in turning around a team that saw some of the worst days in its history over the previous two years. They're simple words, but they reveal a lot about where the team has been and where it's going. Although he is loath to discuss the past, McLean admits he knew he was taking on a tough job when he agreed to coach the Lions, who had won only two games since 2006. "The ghost and the black cloud that we're trying to erase are pretty significant," McLean said in his office as training camp was about to open. After Labour Day, when the season began with some heavy but not unexpected defeats, McLean could already talk about the team's improved morale – a change reflected in glowing comments to the media by players who had lived through the chaos of the past. "Our first objective was to heal the locker-room and we've done that in spades," said McLean. "We're not going to get caught up in the wins and losses. We're building the foundation of the future and those building blocks are immovable."

As McLean calmly elaborates on the team's priorities – a commitment to hard work, practice and cohesive team energy – he is deliberate and convincing. His is no rote speech for public consumption. He means what he says and has the resumé to prove it: All-Canadian with the University of Alberta in 1985 and a seven-year professional career with the Edmonton Eskimos, including their 1987 Grey Cup championship. After

his playing days ended in 1992, McLean became a religion teacher and coach at a Catholic high school in Edmonton and then, in 1999, joined the winless Edmonton Huskies junior team, which he guided to immediate respectability and national titles in 2004 and 2005, earning him a coach of the year award. In 2006, he moved to St. Mary's University in Halifax as defensive coordinator and moulded his players into the country's top-rated defensive unit. But his desire for a head-coaching position soon led him to York.

When he took up residence in his Stong College office last February, McLean immediately began "bailing water" to try to keep the Lions' ship afloat. With the all-important recruiting season already underway, he had to go on what he calls an "internal and external" talent drive. It's the most critical factor in the success of any sports program, one that's made more difficult by teams with bigger budgets who can attract the best players with scholarships. A few players left but more stayed. Still, fully half of this year's team are first-year players; only four are seniors – "the guys you win with," as McLean calls them. One of those five-year men, quarterback Bart Zemanek, who left the Lions after the 2006 season for a stint with a semi-pro team in Finland, returned to complete his master's degree in kinesiology and quickly became a McLean booster. "He's a guy you want to follow," Zemanek told a downtown reporter. "Five days into camp and all the vets were hugging each other."

McLean expects a lot from the team and makes his point in direct terms. "You play like you practise," he says, reciting a

coach's maxim that takes on ominous significance from a man who once wore army fatigues on the sidelines, has a buddy in the US Marines and rides a Harley-Davidson. Oh, and did we mention the tattoos? Since his playing days, McLean – a self-described "emotional guy" – has added some impressive skin art to complement his equally impressive biceps. It's all in keeping with his nature, says former teammate and fellow BONEhead (Brotherhood of Nasty Eskimos alumnus) Larry Wruck. "He wears his heart on his sleeve, that's for sure. You never have to guess how he's feeling," McLean's fans among the pigskin blogging set call him a "motivator and an excellent recruiter" who "surrounds himself with highly skilled and capable assistant coaches." For his first university head-coaching challenge, McLean picked former Edmonton Huskies colleague Beau Mirau, whom McLean describes as knowledgeable, enthusiastic and – there's that word again – trusted. Assistants Trevor Prichard and Michael Wozimirski also transferred from Alberta. "They're teachers," McLean says. "In football, you're supposed to be a teacher, not a coach."

McLean – who friend Wruck says "hates to lose" – knew he was in for a rough ride this season but says York has everything it needs to be successful. "The big thing is expecting excellence," he says. "The results will take care of themselves. If you worry about the end result you're going to miss the process of getting there – and the process is what will have enduring results. That's the foundation. I call it love and trust." ■

ACCORDING TO an old Russian proverb, “jealousy and love are sisters.” So perhaps it’s reasonable to infer that this powerful feeling might arise in infancy, or at least have roots in childhood and family settings. A pioneering new handbook co-edited by York psychology Professor Maria Legerstee is devoted to unlocking the processes of jealousy’s development. Interestingly, the book was sparked not by work with adults, but by Legerstee’s own research with infants.

The Handbook of Jealousy: Theories, Principles and Multidisciplinary Approaches will present a complete picture of jealousy, dealing with its functions, origins and differentiation during infancy and childhood, says Legerstee. “It’s a unique book, the first of its kind.” Due in 2009, its 20 papers and three commentaries will chart how jealousy unfolds while also looking at the familial, cultural, cognitive and biological factors that drive its development.

Legerstee herself had never done any work in the area of jealousy before. So where did the idea come from? “It developed from the babies’ responses in an experiment I had put them in,” she says. “My research focuses on infant socio-cognitive development. That refers to the ability to understand other people. I use the infants’ ability to communicate to infer what they know about people.”

It’s a topic the Faculty of Health professor, who has taught at York since she established the Centre for Infancy Studies in 1991, knows well. She is the author of *Infants’ Sense of People: Precursors to a Theory of Mind* (2005), and co-editor of a special section of the journal *Infant Behavior and Development*, titled “What Does It Mean to Communicate for Infants?”. She is also preparing to edit a new book on early socio-cognitive development.

Legerstee conducted her study on jealousy with 3-, 6- and 9-month-old infants. Each communicated with a female experimenter in three situations while the mother sat at their side in a triangle. In one situation, the experimenter communicated face-to-face with the infant in a normal, baby-friendly fashion. In another, the experimenter looked at the infant but was unwilling to communicate with it. Then, in two “unable” conditions, the experimenter first drank water from a bottle while looking at the infant and later was interrupted by the baby’s mother, who began

to talk with her to the exclusion of the infant. In all cases the experimenter was looking at the infant.

“What I wanted to know was whether infants would discriminate between the unable and unwilling experimenter. That is, does the infant differentiate between the different communicative motives of the woman?” explains Legerstee. “The infants reacted with more sadness and gaze aversions and less smiling when I was unwilling to communicate with them than when I was willing. However, the infants did not get upset when I was unable to talk because I was drinking. But when I was unable to talk to the infants because I was interrupted by their mother, and we began to engage in an energetic and vivid dialogue together to the exclusion of the baby, the babies got very upset.”

Could this be jealousy?

Legerstee also discovered another curious phenomenon. While absent at a conference, she had student researchers try to replicate her findings with the infants and mothers. Reviewing the videotapes of the interactions later, she found her students had merely kept up a monologue with the mother (the student talked, the mother listened). Intriguingly, the babies were not upset. They merely watched the spectacle of the student talking to/at mom.

“I realized that here I had my experimental control,” says Legerstee. “Infants reacted negatively to being excluded by their mother, but not when being excluded by a stranger. I had shown what the distinguished neuroscientist and psychobiologist Jaak Panksepp calls ‘the affective precondition for the emergence of human jealousy, namely, the existence of a social bond that is threatened by the perceived intervention of a third party’.”

Legerstee says some people might be cautious about calling the infants’ response “jealousy” and feel that what she discovered could be more akin to “separation distress”, a basic human social emotion and one of the foundational processes for human sadness. However, says Legerstee, “while separation distress is elicited in a dyadic situation, that is, a fear of being separated from mother, and jealousy involves a triadic one – a fear of losing mother to someone else – both may have the same root.”

“But this is only a theoretical position,” stresses Legerstee. “No one really knows for sure what’s going on in the mind of a baby.” ■

The Roots of Jealousy

Infant behaviour expert Maria Legerstee looks at how the green-eyed monster affects babies. **BY MICHAEL TODD**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD



Joseph Moncada has a sweet thing going that's made him a champion student entrepreneur.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDSAY LOZON



C A N D Y M A N

TWO YEARS AGO, when Joseph Moncada failed to get a summer internship with a big corporation after second year, he decided to open a candy shop at Wasaga Beach on Georgian Bay. Who wanted to spend their holidays making photocopies and running for coffee anyway? Some people scoffed – but not for long. Within two years, the York business student's beachfront Sweet Tooth Candy Emporium has penetrated the Toronto market, and its 22-year-old owner is this year's national champion student entrepreneur.

Moncada never planned to operate his specialty candy shop beyond Thanksgiving weekend that first year. He just wanted to have fun, live cheaply at his parents' cottage and make enough money to pay for his winter exchange term in Milan, Italy – one reason he had enrolled in York's International Bachelor of Business Administration program in the Schulich School of Business. With a \$3,000 start-up grant from Ontario's Summer Company program and about \$8,000 in savings, he rented a 1,000-square-foot former T-shirt shop and fed his friends pizza and beer to help him prepare for the Mother's Day opening.

Sweet Tooth would not be another Belgian chocolate shop, decided this young risk-taker. It would not sell Gatorade or jujubes in bulk, or the usual corner-store fare. Moncada carved out a niche market in retro candy – wax lips, hot toothpicks, pink popcorn, bottle caps, blackballs and sponge toffee, Malted Milk and Sweet Marie chocolate bars, Pop Shoppe pop – to appeal to baby boomers and gen-Xers. His shelves are stocked with Cadbury Flake bars made in the United States, cappuccino Kit Kats from Japan, nougat from Europe and dark chocolate from Italy. And even unappetizing confections, like tequila-worm lollipops and Canadian chocolate-covered insects. To wash it down, there's pomegranate lemonade and hot chocolate spiced with hot pepper.

"Kids love our products, but we target adults," says Moncada, who obviously aced his marketing courses. "It's a walk down memory lane whether you grew up in Canada or the States or Europe. When customers come into the store, they all say, 'I haven't seen this in 20 or 30 years.' It's a nostalgia trip."

That first season in Wasaga Beach, Moncada worked 60-

and 70-hour weeks and made almost \$20,000. He sold off the remaining stock and gave back the key. "I thought I was done." Then his sister persuaded him to start a year-round shop in a corner of the Scarborough Town Centre. "All the money I made for my exchange, I invested in a new store." (He still managed to go to Milan, though.) Since then, the "mom and pop operation" has spawned a third store in another Toronto mall, branched into Christmas kiosks and may become a franchise operation one day.

The guy whose e-mail moniker is "superman" never doubted he could succeed. From childhood, this only son of Italian professionals has loved to work and has never shied from a challenge. "I continually seek to overcome my flaws and grow as a person. I want to be well rounded," says the math and science talent who has struggled to master Italian and Spanish. "I just keep going, I never give up. I always attack things head on."

In high school, Moncada won student achievement awards and problem-solving competitions. At five-foot-eight, he was a point guard in provincial-level basketball and played competitive soccer. With energy to burn, he runs every morning and still kicks around a soccer ball.

Though he owns and oversees Sweet Tooth, Moncada focuses on diversifying the product line and building the enterprise. "I've taken myself out of the equation." And he's moved on. In June, he and two friends went to Japan in search of new candy products and to climb Mount Fuji – a post-convocation celebration before he started as a management trainee for InBev, the world's largest brewer. "I'm going from one dream job to another," says the 2008 IBBA grad, who beat out thousands of MBAs for one of the handful of trainee positions at the Belgium-based company.

This fall, from somewhere in North America, the national champion of the 2008 Advancing Canadian Entrepreneurship (ACE) Student Entrepreneur Competition was due to fly to Chicago. There he would switch to his Sweet Tooth cap once again and represent Canada at the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards final. Watch for him soon making a business pitch on CBC's "Dragons' Den". Life is indeed sweet: "I'm having fun and I'm loving it." ■

How I got a shot at stardom with WWE – and why I’m glad to be back at York.

BY SHANTELE MALAWSKI

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

IT’S NOT EVERY MOTHER’S DREAM to have a daughter who wants to become a professional wrestler. But things change when World Wrestling Entertainment Inc. offers you a contract! It certainly became my dream, and for a while I lived it – the wild world of caped characters, boastful promos, scripted battles and a lot of talented athleticism in the ring. I was 20 at the time, and in my second year of a BA in psychology at York. How did it go? Well, be careful what you wish for....

I have always been an overactive person, both mentally and physically. My parents signed me up for every sport or athletic activity in attempt to curb my hyperactive disposition. As soon as I could walk and talk I was in swimming, dance, gymnastics, skating, softball and ringette. I was also an infamous sleep-walker. In a zombie-like trance, I was able to have conversations, walk out to my backyard swing set and run around the living room screaming at the top of my lungs while in a deep sleep.

Being overactive is not all bad though. It enabled me to try many different athletic and creative outlets at which I excelled. I especially loved ringette; I owe so much of who I am to it. It taught me balance, time management, independence, leadership, teamwork, respect – and that life is not fair. It also gave me the chance to represent the southern region of Ontario in the Canadian Winter Games. I was one of the two youngest members of the team.

In high school in Etobicoke, I did manage to squeeze some diversity into my growing athletic resumé. I played cello in the orchestra for six years, served as student council vice-president in Grade 12 and was a counsellor at leadership camps. I also worked hard on my academics and remained an honour student throughout high school.

In Grade 11, I participated in a cooperative education program and landed a part-time job as a fitness instructor at the Etobicoke Olympium. That’s what opened the door to my

career as a professional wrestler. One of the former trainers, who visited the gym frequently, was a pro on the independent circuit. I had always been a wrestling fan, and admired the glitz and glam and athletic integrity of the wrestlers. But I had no idea there was a place in Toronto that could prepare me for such a career.

I started my professional wrestling preparation when I was 17, at Squared Circle Training in Toronto. Wrestling was, and still is, the most passionate love-hate relationship I have ever endured. Training is tough, and becoming a professional is even tougher. Being a natural athlete is a foot in the door, but you must still learn all the required technique. Few people realize that professional wrestling is based on respect. Not only are you a performer and an athlete, but you are also one of two people who go into the ring to fight. Goofy tights or not, you put each other’s lives at stake match after match. Without respect, there would be no sport – just a lot of fatalities. Throughout my training and career, I have broken numerous fingers and toes, sustained several concussions, and twisted, strained, sprained, stretched and jammed almost all of my joints. Still, the only long-term damage I have sustained is a 30-per-cent loss of sensation in my left hand due to nerve damage from repeated elbow and wrist injuries.

In fact, professional wrestling is one of the most empowering professions. You develop a new respect for your body because it takes you to an entirely different level of performance. And wrestling enabled me to travel the world and meet people of all different lifestyles. I soon had matches all over North America as well as in Mexico and South Africa. After two years of gaining a vast array of experience and credibility, I earned two try-outs with World Wrestling Entertainment Inc., the world’s top wrestling company, and was offered a contract.

I never intended to leave Toronto. My entire family is here, all my friends, school and work. Even though I had been travel-



PERFORMANCE

ling solo for the past year for weeks at a time, I was extremely distressed. My dream job required me to stop attending York and move to Atlanta, Georgia, to what is called a developmental territory. It's like a finishing school for independent wrestlers. It prepares you for the opportunity to perform on one of the WWE TV shows, "Raw", "SmackDown" or "ECW". Being hired by WWE does not guarantee you a position on any of the three shows. Like many things in life, these chances often spring from good timing and being at the right place at the right time.

Based in the US South, I was fortunate enough to appear in a few live events for both "Raw" and "SmackDown". I performed on house shows (which happen on the weekends and are not filmed for television) and for dark matches, which occur before the live

events are filmed. I wrestled as many different characters in a short amount of time. I fought as a Japanese male named Sendai, a masked female wrestler named Katana, and then a darker version of a Catwoman-like superhero. I had so much fun doing these live events, it made all the pain worthwhile. I got to perform in front of thousands while some of the biggest icons in wrestling watched and patted me on the back after matches. My greatest memories come from meeting my childhood heroes, including Dean Malenko, Rey

Mysterio, Ric Flair, Bill DeMott and the late Fabulous Moolah. It's one thing to meet them, but it is quite a surreal experience to be a part of the same company and form a relationship with them.

I fought as a Japanese male named Sendai, a masked female wrestler named Katana, and then a darker version of a Catwoman-like superhero.

The women in wrestling all share the same quality: we are very aware that we are a rare breed. But what separates us is

that we come in two species. The first is the girls who realize how few of us there are and that we should all be fighting together to prove ourselves. And then there are the others. These girls would rather stab their friends in the back to get to the top, no matter whom they hurt. It's worth it to get their time in the spotlight.

Despite my talents and all the hard work, after one year and one month the WWE creative team gave me the infamous line: they "had nothing for me". I have no hard feelings towards World Wrestling Entertainment; it gave me the opportunity of a lifetime. Its leader, Vince McMahon, is a brilliant individual who put professional wrestling on the map and turned it into the pop culture phenomenon it is today. But the company had been through a big transition. It was not the same company that hired

me and definitely not the same one I watched as a kid.

There was also a darker side to the lifestyle. Not only is substance abuse overlooked in this industry, it is readily accepted. The poison of choice for most is alcohol. DUIs and prescription-strength cocktails were all too common. In my 13 months at WWE, I witnessed the loss of three amazing wrestlers. It bothers me tremendously. There seems to be something there that causes a toxic reaction within people.

Even though at one time it was my dream to become a WWE superstar, I feel blessed I was released. In the end, it became just a job. I am very excited to be back at York, taking my psych courses again. But I still love professional wrestling, and I am back in the ring as part of Total Nonstop Action, which shows on Spike TV. They offered me a

job in April, and in July, under the name Taylor Wilde, I won the TNA Women's Knockout Championship, giving me the moniker "Upset Queen". Every other week, I fly to Orlando, Florida, to wrestle and then come home and attend regular classes at York.

In retrospect, WWE may not have been the place I had glamorized in my mind, but it made me a great judge of character, even stronger and more self-sufficient than I ever knew I could be. Having been in such a cut-throat industry I've been humbled, and it really taught me that I only have myself to rely on and to blame. The bottom line is, shoot for the stars and follow your dreams. But don't ever think that talent alone will be your ticket, because no matter how talented and driven you are, without an education you are just a lost soul looking for your 15 minutes. ■

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YORK TO THE POWER OF 50



WHY I GIVE TO YORK

Retired University Treasurer Bruce Dugelby explains his reasons for leaving a bequest to York.

Both my parents were disabled in later life. They always admired people who didn't let their disabilities stop them.

When I told my mother that I wanted to endow a bursary for York students living with disabilities and in financial need, she thought that was a wonderful idea. Now the bursary is in both our names. Sometimes, students who received funding would send letters and we really enjoyed those - it felt great to make a difference.

I will add to the bursary through a bequest in my will. After nearly 40 years with York's Finance Department, I know this endowment will continue to benefit those most in need - and I have seen the wonderful effects myself.

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YORK PEOPLE

Laura Reinsborough Fruitful Labour Community 'enabler'

LIKE ANY GOOD ENVIRONMENTALIST, Laura Reinsborough (BES Spec. Hons. '05, MES '08) wanted to help last year when she learned about a new farmers' market in her west Toronto neighbourhood. When the organizer suggested she pick fruit for the market from the heritage orchard at historic Spadina House, it set the Sackville, NB, native on the path to a juicy idea. Noticing all the fruit trees in her area, Reinsborough decided to organize "not far from the tree", a collective that harvests unwanted fruit and distributes it among community organizations, tree owners and the volunteer pickers.

Pulling people together for the project followed naturally from Reinsborough's work as a student in York's Faculty of Environmental Studies and her current role as community art facilitator with the Art Gallery of York University. The idea also gave her a chance to demonstrate how, with a bit of creativity, people can grow food locally, instead of buying it shipped from halfway around the world. This season, volunteers collected over 3,000 pounds of fruit from homes in Toronto's Ward 21, including sweet cherries from trees in FES Dean Barbara Rahder's backyard. "I was amazed at the quality of the backyard fruit," Reinsborough says. Now she is working with community groups to set up harvests in other parts of the city. "I really thrive on community organizing," she says, "but I think I'm more of an enabler than an organizer." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG



IT'S A LONG WAY from North Battleford, Sask. – polka country – to Japan and the Middle East, but it's a musical journey York PhD student and saxophonist Daniel Schnee was willing to make after connecting with jazz iconoclast Ornette Coleman. "I met him at a party in New York and he agreed to give me a couple of lessons. When I told him I was interested in Japan, he said I should go there," explains Schnee, who is in his third year of the Graduate Program in Ethnomusicology in York's Faculty of Fine Arts.

Schnee went. While there he studied formal Japanese court music, composed for television and the theatre, performed, and learned about the interdisciplinary nature of Japanese art. "They have dozens of ways of saying 'beautiful' that apply to all the arts," he says. On his return to Canada and graduate studies at the University of Alberta, he was introduced to Arab music, which the saxophone was not designed to play, and set about learning the techniques required to achieve the unique sounds, known as quarter-tones. Schnee is one of only five saxophone players worldwide who studies and regularly performs classical Arab and Persian music on the saxophone. He plans to write a book about his technique based on his PhD research, and this year he was included in a prestigious listing of innovative music scorers, *Notations21*, updating a work originated by the legendary John Cage. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG

Daniel Schnee
Composer, musician

Classical Sax

Kimber Sider

Horse wrangler, distance rider

Heart Land

PLODDING FIVE KILOMETRES AN HOUR on horseback from Nova Scotia to Vancouver in 38-degree heat, slashing rain, high winds and near-zero temperatures, just to prove a point, is not everyone's idea of fun. "I've known all along it's a completely absurd idea. I thought, who does that, rides a horse across Canada?" says Kimber Sider (BA '06, BFA Spec. Hons. '08), a longtime horse wrangler and show jumper.

Sider plucked the idea and inspiration from a recent book by veterinarian and researcher Barbara Kingscote about her 1949 journey by horse from Quebec to BC – *Ride the Rising Wind: One Woman's Journey Across Canada* (2006). In April, straight out of York, Sider set off with her horse Kat, a tent and plans to make a film of her adventure. This fall the pair were due to reach their destination, dipping toes and hooves into the Pacific Ocean. "We've enjoyed it, but we're ready to go home."

Did she prove her point that what Kingscote called "the generous heart of Canada" still exists? Absolutely. The tent was unpacked once. Canadians opened their stables, their homes and their hearts. It was a journey that was emotionally and physically trying, but also wonderful. "I've never been much for taking the easy route. I always want to take the interesting route," says Sider.

That's for sure. Sider plans to hitch trailer rides with her horse back to Ontario, testing Canada's generous spirit once again. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRASON FERNANDES

GIVING

A Lasting Legacy

York donors discover the power of planned giving



SUPPORTER: Mary Lyons

Many of York's greatest supporters are faculty members, staff and retirees who choose to continue their outstanding contributions to the University – often through the power of planned giving.

"Our students are wonderful young people," says retiree Mary Lyons. As former coordinator for both the women's interuniversity sports program at York and the physical education program within the Faculty of Education, Lyons devoted more than 25 years to working as an academic adviser, coach and confidante for countless students. After retiring she wanted to continue making a difference in students' lives. She decided to purchase a life insurance policy and made York University the owner. When realized, the policy will create the Mary Lyons Award for students in York's School of Kinesiology & Health Science in the Faculty of Health.

Lyons is one of York's many planned giving donors. This option allows individuals to make a significant contribution to the University through legacy gifts such as bequests, life insurance policies, stocks and bonds, retirement funds and gifts in kind. These gifts are arranged during the donor's lifetime and, in most

cases, realized after death. It is an increasingly popular way of supporting York and transforming the lives of students. Planned giving is also one of the most powerful philanthropic tools available to individuals today.

"It may allow our supporters to give a larger gift than they ever imagined possible," says Jacqueline Cooper, associate director of gift planning for the York University Foundation. "By planning today for a future gift, even those with limited means at the present time can have a significant impact."

Bruce Dugelby spent close to 40 years working in York's finance department, retiring as University treasurer in 2005. He established the Edith A. Horsley & J. Bruce Dugelby Bursary for students with physical disabilities. Along with him, the award is named after his late mother, Edith, who was disabled. "Sometimes, students who received the bursary would send letters, and my mother really enjoyed reading those," he says.

Already aware of the wonderful impact his bursary fund is having, Dugelby has arranged for a bequest in his will to further support the fund after his death. "It feels tremendous to make such a difference," he says. "You are helping

students, who already face challenges the majority do not face, to succeed in life and to in turn help others."

Sharing your planned giving intentions with the York University Foundation is important in ensuring your gift has the impact you want. Legacy gifts can be directed to support a particular Faculty, Library or University priority area such as student scholarships and awards, Chairs and professorships, infrastructure, or research. Legacy gifts can also be designated as "unrestricted", allowing York to use your donation where it is needed most.

For more information, contact Jacqueline Cooper at 416-650-8210 or cooperja@yorkfoundation.yorku.ca. ■

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Latest data on York to the Power of 50, York University's 50th anniversary fundraising campaign:

TARGET: \$200 million

CURRENT LEVEL: Over \$167 million

TIME SINCE LAUNCH: 25 months

PRIORITIES FOR SUPPORT: Pioneering research and programs; student awards and scholarships; Chairs and professorships; infrastructure.

Beijing spent seven years preparing, and so did I. BY SHAN QIAO

The Games Afterglow

ON MY WAY BACK TO TORONTO after covering the Beijing Olympic Games, I needed to pick up a connecting flight in Los Angeles. In the line before me, an Asian senior spent a lot of time getting through US Customs. When the customs officer finally checked my passport, he said to me, his nose in the air, “Oh, so you live in Canada. You do speak some English.”

I answered fluently, then pointed to the ceiling where naked wires and pipes were hanging in the air. “Do you know how long the renovation will go on for?” I asked. He was a bit embarrassed, saying he had no idea. “I just came back from Beijing,”

The new generation in China

I told him. “They don’t have naked wires hanging in the air anywhere, especially not on top of customs officers.”

That’s what the Beijing Games gave me. Enough pride to push back when I need to.

Back in 2001, when Beijing defeated Toronto in the bidding for the 2008 Olympics, I dreamed of being a spectator at the Games. At the time, I was studying at York, an ESL student from China who felt totally out of place, didn’t talk in class, had to rewrite returned essays, and would sweat and stutter when people spoke to me in English.

Somehow, I ended up as a daily newspaper reporter in Toronto and, last summer, got the chance to cover the Olympics. Beijing spent seven years getting ready. So did I.

The city was extraordinary. Every pedestrian overpass was festooned with the Olympic slogan “One World, One Dream”. Smiling Olympic volunteers worked tirelessly to show the world one thing: our country is stronger than ever.

That is not exactly what Phoenix was in it for, though.

Phoenix was one of the 30,000 Olympic volunteers, working on a media shuttle bus. The first time I saw her, she was very nervous, trying to understand what two foreign journalists wanted. I translated for Phoenix and then started chatting with the pair, not realizing she was eyeing me the same way I had eyed my Canadian classmates years ago at York.

Shanghai-born Shan Qiao (BA ’04) is a reporter for the Chinese-language *Today Daily News* in Toronto.

Only after the journalists left did this shy girl start talking with me. A 21-year-old student at a local university, she came from the countryside of neighbouring Hebei province. She was very curious about my life in Canada, especially the English I spoke. “I can understand most of the English from a tape. But I don’t know why I get so nervous when real people are talking to me in real English,” she said softly in Chinese.

I didn’t know how to answer her, telling her I sometimes still mix up “erotic” and “exotic”. She giggled after I translated the two words, and the typical Chinese wariness of strangers dissolved. “Being an Olympic volunteer is one of four tools in the job-hunting survival kit,” she explained. The other options are speaking fluent English, having powerful parents and, not least, becoming a member of the Communist Party.

Phoenix told me her parents were farmers. Farmers may have ties in their village, but definitely not in the Olympic Village. Join the Communist Party? She had no interest.

Phoenix is proud of the Games and proud of China, but she shows no sign of the aggrieved, defensive nationalism from the days of Chairman Mao. Her generation is more cosmopolitan than xenophobic – a practical group whose emotions will not easily be manipulated by the ruling party.

She had chosen to be an Olympic volunteer rather than a party member. The celebratory crowds who flocked to the Bird’s Nest stadium and the Water Cube seemed to be saying: Sorry, we are showing our support for the athletes, the Olympics, a green Beijing, the no-spitting campaign. Chairman Mao? You can go to the Dirt Market and get yourself a cheap souvenir.

I bought some Mao pins to invest in my little trading business, trying to exchange them for more Olympic pins. I got nowhere. One media guy refused to trade his NBC pin. Others didn’t even want to bargain.

So now I’m back home with my leftover Mao pins, a reborn pride in the country I left nine years ago, and an e-mail from Phoenix, in English: “I tell myself to be confident just like you.” ■



YORK⁵⁰

YORK TO THE POWER OF 50. Fifty years ago a dream began. A vision of bringing together researchers, teachers, students and partners from different disciplines to tackle real-world issues. This is the essence of our interdisciplinary approach. For fifty years now, York University has looked to the future and discovered answers along unconventional paths. As we look back on our last fifty years, we believe there is no limit to what can be accomplished in our next fifty. yorku50.ca

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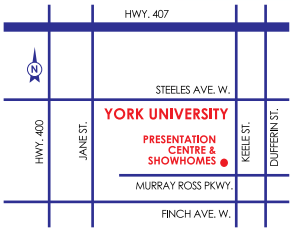
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