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FEBRUARY 2006

PLUS:
The Guru of Marketing
Connecting with Kids
York's Tropical Treasure

York's **Rachel McAdams**
takes Hollywood
by storm – on her own terms

Rachel Rising





QUESTION EVERY ANGLE. STUDY EVERY ANGLE. RESEARCH EVERY ANGLE. WELCOME TO THE INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY. AT YORK, WE BREAK DOWN TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES AND BRING TOGETHER THINKERS FROM EVERY DISCIPLINE TO TACKLE REAL-WORLD ISSUES. PSYCHOLOGISTS, EDUCATORS AND KINESIOLOGISTS AT YORK ARE WORKING TO CONFRONT SCHOOLYARD BULLYING HEAD-ON. THE RESULTS SHOULD HELP EXPOSE THE SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF BULLYING AND EXPLAIN HOW PEER PRESSURE CAN BE SO INFLUENTIAL ON A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY, [VISIT YORKU.CA](http://VISIT.YORKU.CA).



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Rachel's Story

We're delighted to have Rachel McAdams on the cover just as her old friends in York's Theatre Department, along with the rest of the Faculty of Fine Arts, gear up for a great leap forward. This spring, York will celebrate the official opening of the two-building Accolade Project on the south side of the Common, and Accolade East will house superb new fine arts facilities, including a new proscenium theatre to augment the boards that McAdams once trod. We have long thought of McAdams as a fitting symbol of the achievements of the Faculty, Canada's leading training ground for fine arts talent. Long enough, in fact, to get a close-up view of the rise of Rachel.



schedule got ever more crowded. But although we were competing for her time with the likes of David Letterman and *Vanity Fair*, she made space for her alma mater. On page 14, managing editor Michael Todd offers a finely crafted story that I think captures her engaging nature and her strong professionalism in equal measure.

I'll never forget my first talk with her LA-based manager, Shelley Browning. It was soon after *Mean Girls* and *The Notebook* had become hits in rapid succession. According to Browning, things were wild at the office – people from Robert De Niro to Leonardo DiCaprio were calling, trying to set up projects with McAdams. It was too crazy a time to pin her down for a substantive interview, but we agreed to stay in touch. McAdams headed out to film Wes Craven's *Red Eye* ("it's not horror, it's a thriller," Browning stressed), and began to win awards like the ShoWest industry convention's supporting actress of the year and the MTV Movie Awards' Breakthrough Female, for *Mean Girls* (and Best Kiss for *The Notebook*). Then came the success of *Wedding Crashers* last summer. As a story, McAdams just got better and better – even as her

This issue, we also present a special look at York's Las Nubes Rainforest in Costa Rica, seen through the eyes of photographer Brett Cole, who visited the region on behalf of York and the Tropical Science Center from December 2004 to March 2005. "I made more than 20 trips into the trailless wilderness of Las Nubes," says Cole. "The reserve presents a dramatic scene at the end of the road – several steep, tall mountains covered in unbroken rainforest." On one trek, he slept out under a giant boulder with a group of local teenagers. "After a night of warding off giant spiders," he says, "we awoke to a resplendent quetzal flying through the forest five metres from our camp." It was a moment that summed up the value of Las Nubes – the quetzal, considered by some the most beautiful bird in the Americas, is endangered and cannot survive in captivity. ■

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

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YORK UNIVERSITY
redefine THE POSSIBLE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HORST HERGET

It's a great time for grads to get in touch. BY LORNA R. MARSDEN

Building York Pride

The Bruce Bryden Alumni Awards dinner was winding down after a spellbinding evening of awards. Marshall Cohen, Chair of the York University Board of Governors, got up to give the final words. "I spend a lot of time in the USA," he said, "and in conversation with Americans it is inevitable that within five minutes they've mentioned which university they attended. Well, it's time Canadians began to show that spirit and pride. York alumni – who are an amazing group of people – as well as alumni of all Canadian universities, should talk about their universities, show pride and engagement."

I agree. All of you who studied at York are truly amazing people and the more of you I meet, the more impressed I am. In every walk of life I meet Yorkies who "redefine the possible" as we say. It is important for today's students to read about you,



Have you visited York

meet you and in many cases be mentored by you. Naguib Gouda (MBA '84), executive director, Alumni & Advancement Services at York, is trying to find you all and get in touch to see if you'll help with students and alumni events. Our deans are asking you to advise them on plans and projects. I hope that you will respond.

We know that almost 85 per cent of you live in the Greater Toronto Area but we don't hear a lot from you. Have you visited the campuses in the past year or so and seen the changes? Would you like to attend alumni events here on campus? Will you come back to celebrate York's 50th anniversary in 2009? Professor Michiel Horn is writing a history of York for that celebration and we appreciate all of you who have been in touch, or sent anecdotes or photographs.

In the Jan. 23 federal election, several of our alumni have been contesting seats, and we have contacted them to talk about the importance of support for students, for researchers and for the granting councils. We know that our alumni who are working in universities will do the same,

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

especially as the new government takes shape.

Many of you will remember Professor John Yolton, who taught philosophy at York for 15 years and served as acting president of the University in 1973-1974. We are sorry to report that he died in November but his many contributions to the growth

of York University will live on.

And for all you marvellous alumni who are elsewhere in Canada and around the world, we want to hear from you just as much. Your stories are fascinating and many of our students are now in the award-winning international internships that Vice-President Academic Sheila Embleton, along with Associate Vice-President International Adrian Shubert, have set up. Increasingly, our students want an international experience and we'd be so grateful for your advice and assistance.

As York's history develops, it is important to let us know about your time at York, as the Bryden Award winners (see page 41) did at the dinner, and as Barbara Budd (BA '74), who hosted the evening (taking time off from her usual co-hosting of CBC Radio's "As It Happens"), did about her time in the Faculty of Fine Arts.

So, York alumni, what about it? We're very proud of you and we need your help to really put York on the map. Please help – talk about York! ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY COREY MIHALIUK

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UNIVERSE



When student Jamie Kwan first floated the idea of a dragon boat club at York, she had no idea if it would hold water. Not only did it not sink, but the Seawolves, as the club is now known, have gained in student popularity since they launched a mere year ago. Kwan had 50 people turn up for a fall membership meeting – double last season’s number. In fact there are now two streams in the club – competition and recreation – to accommodate everyone’s interests.

Dragon boat racing is an important Chinese tradition, second in some eyes only to Chinese New Year. According to legend, 4th century BC Chinese philosopher and poet Qu Yuan protested against the political regime of the time by jumping into the Mei Lo River. Local fishermen raced in boats to save him, but in vain. To prevent his body from being eaten by the fish, they beat the waters furiously with their paddles. The re-enactment of their efforts has become today’s dragon boat race festival.

York’s dragon boaters ply the waters once a week (at Toronto’s Sunnyside slip), spring to fall. Winter months are spent in the gym pumping iron or practising poolside. “We all line up along the edge of Tait pool and practise paddle technique and timing,” says Kwan.

So far the Seawolves have done well in their 500-metre races. A time of 2:27 is the team’s best, and the Wolves have moved up from the lowest divisions to mid-range in just a year. The team will be training hard for the biggest event of the coming season: the Great White North race at Ontario Place this summer where they’ll compete against 250 other dragon boat teams. ■

Enter the Dragons

The Seawolves have brought an ancient Chinese tradition to York

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF GEORGE

What They're Reading

A former York president reveals what's on the bedside table

Harry Arthurs, president emeritus, York University, and University Professor emeritus, Osgoode Hall Law School

Will in the World: How Shakespeare became Shakespeare

By Stephen Greenblatt

The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana

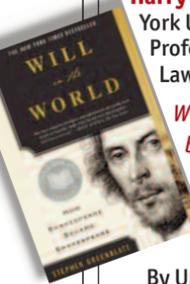
By Umberto Eco

"I'm in the grip of Stephen Greenblatt's *Will in the World* – a truly wonderful combination of biography, literary analysis and social history. Oddly, I also happen to be reading Umberto Eco's *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* which deals with similar themes but in a fictional recounting of what might or might not explain how Eco became Eco.

"I read haphazardly – because someone gives me a book, because I see something in an airport bookstore that was in the *New York Review of Books*, because someone leaves it at the cottage.

"My spare time reading has little or nothing to do with my professional interests. No: that's not quite right. My professional interests are often serendipitously enriched by my spare time reading, which provides me not only with ideas but also with allusions, metaphors, arcane information, odd titles and literary inspiration.

"Maybe when I retire, I'll have more spare time to read; maybe I'll write a novel. No: that's not quite right either. I am retired, still don't have enough spare time to read and am as likely to write a novel as I am to...come back in another life as a university president."



VAMPIROLOGY

Reality Bites

What 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' says about the soul

Scott McLaren swears he's no TV addict, but he's nevertheless been smitten with a serious liking for "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and its spin-off, "Angel". Why? According to McLaren, who is York's humanities and religious studies librarian, it's the complexity of the plotline's "ontological and existentialist elements" that interests him. In fact, he's just published an academic paper on Buffy and its creator entitled, "The Evolution of Joss Whedon's Vampire Mythology and the Ontology of the Soul" that appears in the latest issue of the online, refereed journal *Slayage*.

Buffy is a lot more complicated than most viewers might think, if a rundown of *Slayage's* past papers is any indication. Buffy studies by discipline include areas such as: legal studies, Slavic studies, library science, body studies, vampirology, folklore, feminist, sex/sexuality, humour and computer science.

McLaren never actually saw the show when it was on the tube. He discovered it when he picked up a Buffy videotape from a vendor in the York Student Centre. "I got hooked and then I bought all the episodes on DVD," says McLaren. "It was fascinating for me how Whedon played with ideas about the soul. I argue in my paper that he's advancing an understanding of the soul as a metaphor for individual moral agency. On the other hand, he also fosters a more traditional concept of the soul as the seat of one's individual identity and conscience.

"In 'Angel' you have both good and bad vampires which is interesting, because technically vampires aren't supposed to have souls. I think the show's complexity comes from the way Whedon explores what it means to be human (or almost human) and having to make moral choices." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RSQUARED

There's a curious thing that happens each year around tax time. Prominent people suddenly take an interest in Michael Moir, who just happens to be head of York's Archives & Special Collections. "Yes, we get really busy. People want to know if those personal papers they've had in their drawers all these years are worth anything. They're looking for a tax write-off."

Specifically, Moir is talking about gifts-in-kind. Donors don't actually get real money for their papers, but they do receive a healthy tax write-off if a professional appraiser deems a donation a valuable cultural asset. All donations are assessed at current market values. "But like the Antiques Road Show, nothing is truly valuable unless you have a seller and someone willing to buy it," says Moir.

Do donors usually expect their material to be worth big bucks? "I find you run the gamut," says Moir. "Some people are sure their documents are worth money, others have no expectations whatsoever but sometimes are pleasantly surprised."

Moir is careful not to offer an opinion on monetary value to any prospective donor – be they well-known public figures or otherwise. He leaves that to the appraisers. "For me it's not so much the dollar value of a gift that's important, it's the question of 'How will this be of possible use to researchers in the future?' or, 'How does it fit into our collection's existing strengths?'" Archivists are curious by nature, he notes, "but we're also crystal-ball gazers. It's our job to take a gamble on what might be valuable in the future no matter how insignificant or obscure it seems today." ■



Archives Road Show

Those personal papers can produce a tax bonus

EXPERTS

Is that York or Yolk?

Eric Armstrong teaches theatre students all about accents

Anyone who thinks there's only one Canadian accent, or that Canadians don't really have an accent, is in for a shock. Just ask York's self-identified "speech guy", Eric Armstrong. If anyone should know about accents, how to master them, change them and make them your own, it's Armstrong. In fact he's got about 15-20 different accents – from English, Australian and regional Irish variants to Brooklyn and back – at the tip of his own tongue.

Armstrong, a voice and speech trainer for York's Theatre Department, is a specialist in voice care, voice anatomy and physiology. "Accents surround us every day," he says. "It's just that most people aren't sensitive to them. There's even a recognizable accent close to York – in Woodbridge." Armstrong says Canada has dozens of accents ranging from rural East Coast (Nova Scotian, Cape Breton, PEI and Newfoundland) to mid-West variants, which often sound "American" to Ontario ears.

For theatre students, the ability to understand how to "adopt" an accent and stay in character is important. And Armstrong is the person who can help. Want "standard received British" (great for those TV upper-crust parlour dramas)? No problem. Other common accents he covers in his York courses include Chicago, New York dialect, "stage standard" and general American. A York theatre grad (MFA '94), Armstrong credits his love of music for his sensitivity to the nuances of speech. "I actually was never that great an actor," he admits ruefully. "But I always had this facility for doing accents."

Anyone interested in just how complicated (but fun) analyzing speech can get should visit Armstrong's "voice and speech source" Web site at www.yorku.ca/earmstro/index.html. There he offers sound samples, answers questions and provides links to the worlds of speech. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RSQUARED

Know When to Hold'em

Prof. Forbes Cavanagh has developed a poker 'win curve'



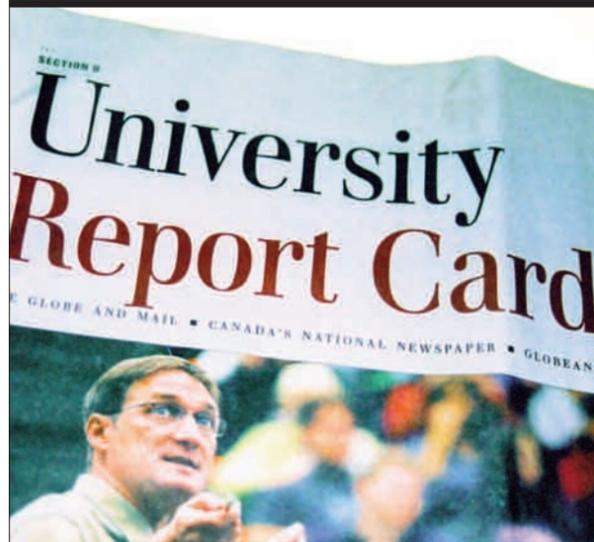
Odds are that once the Texas hold'em poker-playing public latches onto Forbes Cavanagh's new book, they'll never be able to put it down – unless it's to deal a new hand. Cavanagh, who's a professor of management science and quantitative methods in the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies, has laid out the secrets to beating the odds in *10 Steps to Winning Texas Hold'em*.

"I began playing hold'em about four years ago," says Cavanagh. "I soon realized that even the most regular players didn't have much of a grasp of the simplest odds so useful in the game." As a result, Cavanagh spent several years analyzing stats for limit Texas hold'em cash games, then calculated the winning percentages down to fractions of one per cent and

developed what he calls a theoretical "win curve".

He modified that win curve over the 169 possible starting hands and charted the results. (Percentage charts are included in the book, along with an introduction to the game, which can get you playing hold'em competently within an hour, he says.)

So far Cavanagh's strategy seems to have worked for beginning and more experienced players alike, although it likely won't turn neophytes into instant game winners. He's also put his strategy onto a wallet-sized card that comes with the book. It isn't available through the large chain bookstores as yet, but it's for sale in hard cover and download form at www.holdem-strategycharts.com. While no how-to book is a sure bet, Cavanagh's academic approach is the real deal. ■



Good Grades

York students have lots to feel pleased about

It's been a banner fall for York student satisfaction – and satisfaction about York students. Turns out they're quite pleased with the University, according to *The Globe and Mail's* annual University Report Card, and York is quite pleased about them – especially their entering grades.

In the Globe survey of more than 26,000 students across Canada, Yorkies gave their University an overall-satisfaction rating of B+, outranking other Canadian institutions with enrolment over 25,000, including the University of Toronto. York placed either first or second in a host of areas among the 10 universities in that category, including ratings of B+ in overall educational experience; A- for library facilities, quality of technology, and faculty's knowledge of subjects; and B+ for campus buildings and facilities, and labs and research equipment.

These grades are especially encouraging since it's also clear that more high-school students – with higher marks – are picking York as their first-choice university. Enrolment data for 2005 show that the proportion of York students with averages above 75 per cent rose significantly over the previous year, as did the number of those with 80 per cent averages. In fact, more than half of these incoming students – 54 per cent – were on their high-school honour roll. And since 1999, York has moved from fourth place to second (behind only U of T) in the number of first-choice applications from Ontario secondary-school students.

Total enrolment is also up over the previous year, by about 1,000 – and has officially cracked 50K. In December York had 50,634 students. ■

Meteorologic Rise

How the Victorians began predicting weather



For some people, the weather is a daily source of speculation. But for Katharine Anderson, it's not our current forecast that concerns her so much as how the Victorian mind grappled with the then-emerging science of meteorology. At that time, the new networks of scientific observers and government offices to study the weather competed with traditional knowledge – based on intimate local experience, animal behaviour or, most notoriously, astrology.

"In the enterprise of weather prediction the scientists had only mixed success," says Anderson, a professor in York's interdisciplinary Science and Society Program in the Faculty of Arts. "However, the Victorians were convinced that meteorology could become a highly measurable science. They saw no reason why weather couldn't be gauged as accurately as astronomy."

Unfortunately, quantifying the weather proved much more problematic than the scientists hoped. Anderson has charted Victorian meteorology's bid for scientific legitimacy in her latest book, *Predicting the Weather: Victorians and the Science of Meteorology*. "The invention of the telegraph, which could collect information and distribute forecasts quickly throughout the country, was one important impetus for believing accurate weather forecasts were a possibility," says Anderson. "Another reason was Britain's economic stake in shipping."

Daily weather bulletins were carried for the first time in Victorian papers, but proved so inaccurate that the dailies eventually dropped them. "In my book I explore how the Victorian notion of science evolved, and how science became professionalized as new instruments to measure the world were invented, and the technology to disseminate those results was developed." ■

Rachel McAdams, star of *Mean Girls*, *Wedding Crashers* and *The Family Stone*, is taking Hollywood by storm.

Still, she's not interested in celebrity
– at least not on Tinseltown's terms.

BY MICHAEL TODD

AROUND SOUTHWEST ONTARIO, St. Thomas is well known for two things: as the place where Jumbo the elephant (who lent his name posthumously to the jumbo jet) was killed accidentally by a train, and for its psychiatric hospital. But now this small town can stake a cheerier claim to fame – as the childhood home of York theatre grad Rachel McAdams, Hollywood's new A-list star of *Mean Girls*, *The Notebook*, *Wedding Crashers* and, most recently, *The Family Stone*. McAdams (BFA '01) now divides her time between film sets stateside and a house in Toronto. In fact, the 27-year-old McAdams is on record as stating she cherishes her St. Thomas roots, but likes hanging out in T.O. when not filming because she can ride her bike, shop for vintage clothes, and generally not be hassled.

But already her acting rep is firmly established among a whole sub-group of adolescent females who grew up with *Mean Girls* and *The Hot Chick*, her first Hollywood film (done a year after she graduated). On the night I attended a screening of her late summer thriller *Red Eye*, the McAdams' mystique was instantly recognizable to the three teenage girls giggling and whispering behind me. As the opening credits rolled and McAdams' name flashed on-screen, one girl said to her friend, "You know who that is, don't you? That's Rachel McAdams. She's Canadian, you know!"

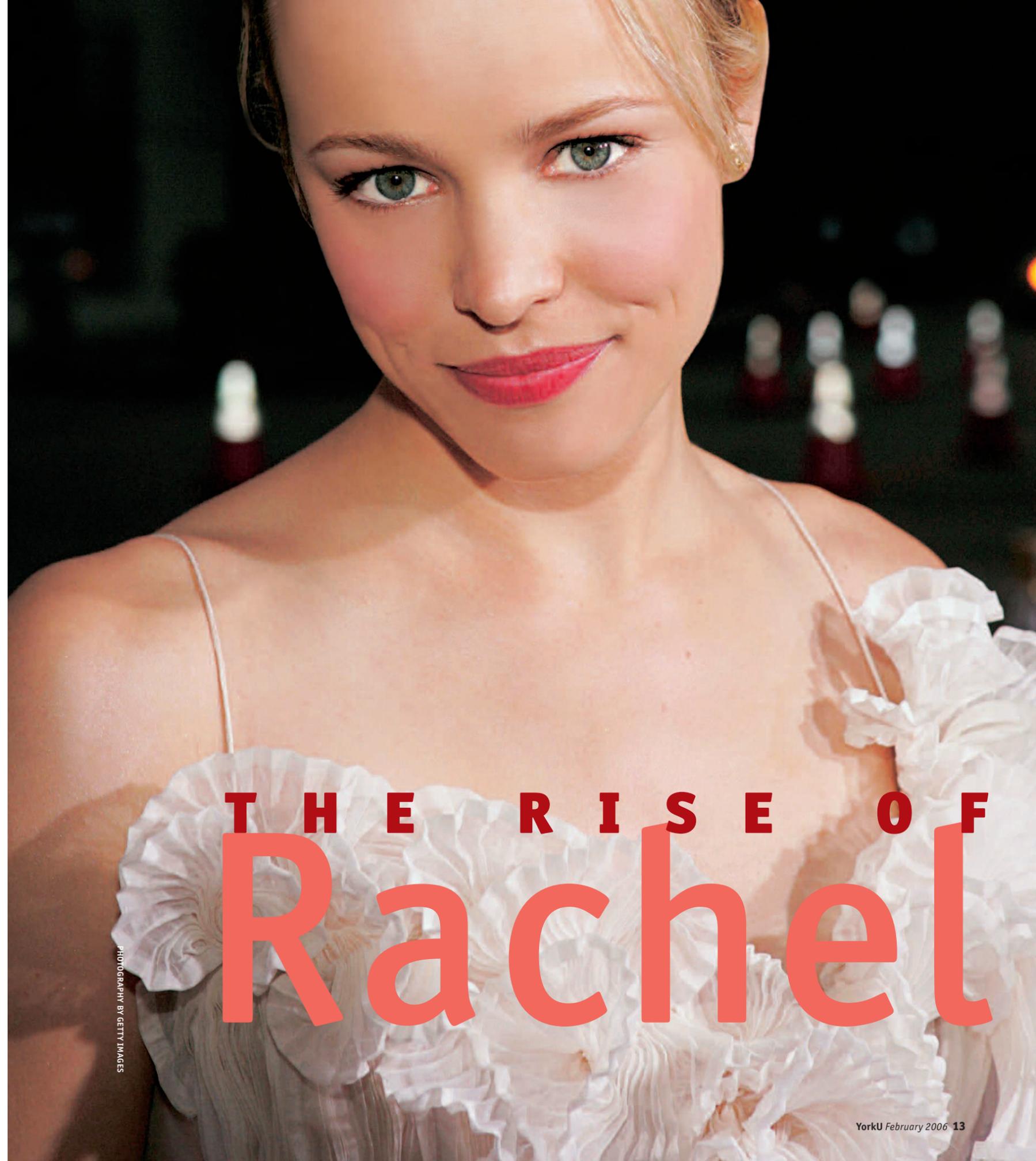
In fact, due to Hollywood's global reach, she is now easily York's most famous graduate. So how does McAdams feel about all this new-found celebrity? "Ohhhh," she says with a deep sigh, "celebrity is such a bizarre concept for me. This obsession with a person's life based on what they project in their art. I really don't understand that leap. In the old days you fell in love with a character like Clark Gable and you didn't know anything about his life. It didn't matter. Honestly? I hate the thought of losing my privacy. Celebrity isn't an exciting idea for me."

McAdams admits, though, she does think about her image as a role model. "It's nice to come to Canada and hear that you've inspired young girls to want to do something. That they admire you. I'm conscious of that."

THE ELDEST OF THREE CHILDREN, life for McAdams, up until a few years before her York graduation, was a classic story of small town existence. Her dad, Lance, drives a truck ("I used to love being picked up by him from my grandma's, going into fast food places in my pajamas. I would snuggle up in the back part of the cab – the sleeper"), and her mother, Sandra, is a nurse.

She got her start in St. Thomas's little theatre and remembers being in love with Stratford. "We went there on school trips. I was really, really a theatre snob, I think. I liked movies too, but I thought only plays were serious acting. Our family would get together every Saturday night and we'd rent a film. We started out with those big 12-inch movie reels and then got Beta. Our first family VHS machine was a big event! And I remember my parents bought a tape of *ET* to celebrate. I was so scared by it! I was only four." (Laughter.)

McAdams began acting Shakespeare at age 12 in an outdoor replica of a Greek amphitheatre in her



THE RISE OF Rachel

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GETTY IMAGES

COVER

hometown. "It's probably decrepit now. But it was an amazing experience, a wonderful time and place to act in. It really shaped me and gave me my start and I'm eternally grateful." In 1995, she received an acting award for her role in the one-act high-school play *I Live in a Little Town* when it was presented in the prestigious Ontario Showcase at the Sears Drama Festival. And while studying theatre at York she appeared in numerous stage and student film productions as well as playing a child character in *The Piper* (Necessary Angel Theatre Company).

Ironically, McAdams now says she's "terrified" of theatre. "I kind of feel like I've fallen off the horse and don't know how to get back on," she says, laughing. But if Stratford called her? "Oh god, of course I'd come in a minute! I'd be so honoured."

AT YORK, McAdams proved to be a quality student and actress, and quickly garnered the attention both of York faculty and people in the industry. Theatre Professor Peter McKinnon remembers her as immensely talented, but also grounded (she worked three summers at McDonald's), conscientious and – nice. "She came in one day to talk to me about her assignments. She was worried that she wouldn't be able to get everything done by the deadline because of work she was already doing in film and TV [she had begun her professional on-screen career with an appearance in Disney's *The Famous Jett Jackson* that aired in early 2001]. But she came through. I remember her project on Sam Shepard's play *Buried Child* was one of the best I've ever received in my teaching career. She got an A in the course."

Was there anything that set her apart? "I think that the hallmark of our most successful students has always been that they have a genuinely broad interest in all things to do with the theatre," says McKinnon. "And Rachel is typical of that – every area of the department wanted her to be in their area, because she was an excellent student of all aspects of theatre."

York theatre Professor David Rotenberg (now McAdams' personal acting coach) says he remembers her as a stand-out. "I decided to showcase her with a lead in Frank Wedekind's

Lulu for our fourth-year production. I saw something extra special there. I called a few agents beforehand and suggested they come out to the performance. They all rushed up to talk to me after seeing her. She's done amazingly well. And, you know, the Hollywood term 'A-list' means people will now pay to see movies because Rachel's in it. That's big."

NOW THAT McADAMS has an impressive list of Hollywood hits, she can be choosier about future roles and scripts she accepts. "So many scripts I read now are about rich people and their problems," she says. "I can't really relate because that's not the way I grew up. And if they're not about that, it's a role where they want me to play the ingenue."

What McAdams is really searching for in a script is a good story and a character she can sink her teeth into. "If you can connect to a character, chances are you can touch people. Your job as an actor is to be vulnerable and accessible, and it's hard to do that because then your heart is kind of on a plate. But if you can get there the audience will feel it. For me, that's always been what's exciting about making films. My goal in life these days is to tell new stories with really great directors."

Good scripts aren't the only thing McAdams is pursuing, though. Intensely interested in how new technologies are changing film, she says she'd love to do something more experimental.

"For instance, I love what Pixar is doing. *Toy Story*...wow...really moving. It'd be great to do a fantasy film, something magical." How about a character's voice for an animated film? "Absolutely."

When not thinking about her next big thing, McAdams seems to have found time to ponder life's larger questions, and what shape her own career might take 10 years down the road. Where does she see herself in a decade? "I'd like to have kids, maybe open a restaurant, do one movie a year, or every two years. One of the big things I've been thinking about is a way to give back. Ideally I'd like to facilitate some kind of kids' art program, or get involved in children's theatre – after all, it got me where I am." ■



A Rachel Filmography

SINCE GRADUATING NEARLY FIVE years ago with a BFA in theatre from York, Rachel McAdams has landed leading roles in six major US films and two independents:



***My Name is Tanino* (Canada/Italy, 2002)**
***Perfect Pie* (Canada, 2002)**
***The Hot Chick*, with Rob Schneider (2002)**
***Mean Girls*, with Lindsay Lohan (2004)**
***The Notebook*, with Ryan Gosling (2004)**
***Wedding Crashers*, with Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn (2005)**
***Red Eye*, directed by Wes Craven (2005)**
***The Family Stone*, with Clare Danes and Diane Keaton (2005)**

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MENTORS

If you need to know why consumers do what they do, just call Alan Middleton. BY MICHAEL TODD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF GEORGE

The Guru of Marketing

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; late and soon, / Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers," wrote William Wordsworth more than 200 years ago. Well, he got the spending part right. The post-war middle class has been consuming like there's no tomorrow. But, of course, the aspect no one thought much about is the longer hours spent working (with concomitant big salaries) to pay for it all. "There is no doubt that boomers are working harder and longer than their parents did," says Alan Middleton, marketing professor in York's Schulich School of Business. The million-dollar question is: for what? Already, he notes, there are distinct rumblings that boomers are thinking about impending retirement and what they might – or might not – do. Boomers want their leisure to be meaningful, he says. And relaxing, but not mindless. "One of the biggest sectors in the vacation industry right now are holidays where you get to relax but you're doing something that engages your mind," he says.

Middleton is surely Canada's – and York's – Marshall McLuhan of marketing and consumer behaviour. I suggest the word "guru". Middleton shrugs. "I'm not so sure," he says. "It's certainly never been a role I've actively pursued. It just seemed to happen." What happened is this. Hardly a week goes by that Middleton doesn't get quoted in the newspapers at least once (often, it's more like four or five times) by reporters looking for pithy insights into how our buying behaviours reflect our values.

"It seems the less I do about this the more often I get called," says Middleton, who has an MBA and a PhD from York. "You know what it is? Even though I'm an academic and teach here at the Schulich School of Business, I've always been much more of a good talker than a writer. I think the media like me because, one, I've got something to say and I know what I'm talking about, but I also think in sound bites." Such is his influence that when the Toronto industry established the Canadian Marketing Hall of Legends in 2004, Middleton was their first honoree in the "mentor" category.

A self-described Englishman from "the wrong side of the tracks" who came to Toronto in 1975, Middleton has paid his dues in the world of high-end ad agencies. He worked for many years at J. Walter Thompson in London and Toronto, and did a stint for JWT Japan, where he was president & CEO and served as a director of the worldwide company. Under Middleton's seven-year leadership of Toronto's Enterprise Advertising Associates (a JWT subsidiary) in the 1980s, revenues and profits more than doubled, as did the number of big-name clients, such as Guinness Distillers, Melitta and Pitney Bowes.

Asked why he decided eventually to pursue an academic career, he says there were several reasons but the main one was: "I got fired." It was his departure from JWT that got him thinking of an academic career as a "second life-stage", as he likes to put it.

Interestingly, Middleton himself is an example of York's own brand – a multidisciplinary approach to thinking, teaching and scholarship. Although now a business prof, he didn't start out that way.



GOOD TALKER: Middleton

MENTORS

Middleton embarked on a BSc (Honours) in sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Sociology is a discipline that's still core to his teaching on marketing and branding. "I was always curious about people and why we behave the way we do," he says.

After he left JWT, he spent time consulting in China and Canada before starting his PhD at York, where he did his dissertation on brands and private-label packaged goods, defending it successfully in 1996. It's a research stream he continues today. Since 1992 he has taught courses on consumer and organizational buying behaviour and on various elements of domestic and international marketing in Schulich's BBA and MBA programs, along with working for the Schulich Executive Education Centre, of which he became executive director in 2001.

His role and responsibilities for SEEC have grown steadily with the global demand for executive learning in the last decade. The centre is now one of Canada's largest management

education organizations. Why has it taken off? The guru has a ready answer. "Companies are beginning to finally realize that the technology you can get anywhere, but it's the people who drive your organization," says Middleton. "So they're finally investing in that talent. There's a global increase in demand for management training. The other thing is, those who've been through a business education, or any other degree for that matter, realize that after four or five years it's all out of date and so they better keep up."

When Middleton isn't overseeing the SEEC empire, he likes to take the kind of vacations he predicts will soon become ever more popular with boomers. As an amateur archaeologist, he likes nothing better than paying to work on a professional dig, getting dirty and crawling around on his hands and knees in the hot sun looking for shards of Mayan pottery. "That's what I'd really like to do once I retire – call it my third life-stage plan." ■

Middleton Bites

ALAN MIDDLETON WAS QUOTED IN THE CANADIAN MEDIA MORE THAN 50 TIMES IN THE PAST YEAR. SAMPLES OF HIS PUBLIC WISDOM:

ON PREMIUM BEER: "You've got a market that increasingly doesn't want to wear a badge that says 'mass'. When you order a beer you wear a badge. You want to wear a badge that says 'special, different'."

ON APPLE'S STEVE JOBS: "Jobs really understands his marketplaces. iPod is a perfect example. The design, the look and iconic value of it is just fabulous. He recognizes the role of technology as an enabler, not an end point."

ON ADVERTISING SHOCK TACTICS: "Shock alone is a vastly overrated strategy and it only works if the shock is directly related to the product."

ON TV: "Cheap superficial programming, sold to smaller audiences at ever-increasing rates, is not a sustainable formula. It may be attractive in the short term, but it may be the very formula that accelerates the medium-term decline of TV. Icarus still has much to teach us."

ON CELEBRATING TALENT: "Canadians haven't been good at promoting ourselves. We've worked very hard on building the better mousetrap, but not telling people how we did it."

ON VALENTINE'S DAY: "Men are, in general, more difficult to buy for. Men are stereotyped less in terms of gift-giving. Other than the beer-drinking jock."

ON LOYALTY CARDS: "Do they really need to know lots about you to sell you Tide or a cup of coffee? It's about getting you to shop regularly, but it's also about getting you to give them information about yourself for their database so they can get to know you better as a customer."

ON FAD DIETS: "We know it's unlikely to work, we know it's likely a con, but we always think, 'there may be a faint chance it works for me.'"

ON THE POST-9/11 ERA: "People are feeling unsafe, they feel overwhelmed, they feel a lack of control. All that translates into a willingness to splurge, a drive to find something that makes them feel special."

ON NICOLE KIDMAN: "She's continually changing her image and mixing edgy roles with more mainstream ones. It's all about keeping the brand fresh."

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Emotional Connections

York's Stuart Shanker is helping to pioneer a groundbreaking method of treating children with developmental disorders. BY DAVID FULLER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK



STUART SHANKER IS FUN to talk with. He's engaged, enthusiastic, encouraging and he listens well. So it's little wonder he was such a big hit with the kids at a Toronto daycare last summer when he dropped by to talk about his work. Being preschoolers, they had no idea he was the director of an early childhood development research facility receiving \$5 million that day – York's largest-ever private research donation. They also didn't care that he is an Oxford graduate with five degrees and a distinguished research professor of philosophy and psychology at York's Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies. All they knew was that their friend Stuart was sitting on the ground with them, eye-to-eye, including them in all the excitement.

The ground-level meeting with children was more than a photo opportunity for the assembled media who had come to hear about the launch of the Milton and Ethel Harris Research Initiative (MEHRI) that Shanker heads. He was demonstrating a fundamentally important interaction between children and caregivers and an intervention technique for helping children learn, especially kids with disabilities such as autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It's a direct response to what he calls the "old genetic determinist idea" that some children are born with a mental health disorder and there's not a lot you can do about it. "In fact it's not like that," he says. "The child may be born with significant biological challenges which, in a certain environment, will lead to these disorders, but that doesn't mean we can't figure out ways of intervening to try to prevent this from happening." By interacting emotionally with the children at the daycare, Shanker was demonstrating the pioneering clinical technique that promises to make York a world-leading centre in evidence-based research on the early identification and treatment of children with developmental and other sorts of disorders.

Developed by his colleague, Stanley Greenspan, clinical professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at George Washington University Medical School, the technique is known as DIR, short for Developmental, Individual-Difference, Relationship-Based model. It is based on the idea that emotions conveyed by parents or caregivers when they interact with a child spark the development of complex connections in the brain without which the child cannot develop language and other skills. Using this technique, Shanker says parents and therapists can re-establish a child on his or her trajectory of emotional development, even in severe cases where traditional therapies have failed. The groundbreaking theory about human evolution, intelligence and thinking that lies behind this technique was the subject of *The First Idea* (Da Capo Press, 2004), the book by

Greenspan and Shanker that won an award as psychology book of the year and first attracted the attention of Toronto-based philanthropist Milton Harris. As an entrepreneur with an interest in human brain development, Harris, who died last March, was already supporting anthropologist Jane Goodall's work with primates when he read the book.

In the early '90s, Shanker studied primates with Sue Savage-Rumbaugh of the University of Georgia. When they received a research grant for their work on bonobo apes and language acquisition, it included a facility for treating autistic children and a condition that the study would include child research. That became Shanker's brief. A specialist on the writings of 20th-century Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, he found himself working with autistic children, trying to teach them how to communicate. Shanker the philosopher had become a psychologist. The transition was a natural one for him: at Oxford he studied Wittgenstein's language theories while he delved into the latest thinking on knowledge development in infants with leading experimental psychologist Jerome Bruner. His background prepared him for the day, in 2004, when Harris introduced him to Goodall. "Anyone familiar with Jane's work will immediately realize that the developmental hypothesis Stanley and I present in *The First Idea* was one of Jane's most important arguments," Shanker says. "She saw the importance of caregiving and she saw that these caregiving styles get passed down socially from one generation to another, not genetically."

The interdisciplinary research, which Shanker says York is "unbelievably, uniquely positioned for", has its inspiration in dynamic systems theory, which is transforming many fields of scientific research, including anthropology, biology and primatology. It also informs the thinking of the scientist members of the Council of Human Development, an international interdisciplinary body co-directed by Shanker and Greenspan. Their guiding principle is that early childhood – as early as 4 to 6 months – is the most important time in a human being's development. "We're bottom-up scientists," Shanker says. "If we save the life of one kid, that's enough for a lifetime's work. So we are very focused on how we can get to the individual family and provide them with the tools that will help them maximize their child's development."

It is this prime directive that motivates Shanker to happily throw himself down in the sand to talk with three-year-olds. He looks forward to the day when he and MEHRI's team, led by researchers Devin Casenhiser and Jim Stieben, can develop a protocol tailored to individual learning styles that will help identify a child at risk and devise a program to maximize that child's developmental potential. That's when he'll know for sure, the first idea truly was a good one. ■

EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO he was Mr. Invisible. Then three things happened to vault a 1992 York economics grad into the media spotlight. He bankrolled Toronto's Trump Tower. He bought the losing Jordan Formula 1 racing team. And he made No. 488 on the *Forbes* billionaires list.

Who was this guy, anyway?

Out came the files. Alexander Shnaider. Age 37. Chairman and co-founder of Midland Group, an international trading and investment holding company. Worth a cool US\$1.4 billion. When not flying in his private Bombardier jet taking care of business – Ukrainian steel mills, a shipping line, a railcar foundry, Moscow commercial real estate, the Armenian power grid, a Serbian meat-packing plant and Belgrade hotels and restaurants – he resides with his wife and three daughters in an 11-bathroom mansion in North York. Canada's youngest billionaire might have expensive tastes – notice the bespoke Italian suits and Audemars Piguet watch. He might have luxury cars – depending on the season, he might drive a Mercedes, Bentley or Ferrari to his office at Dufferin and Finch, just west of the Russian-immigrant neighbourhood where he grew up. Time off might mean a gourmet dinner with family and friends on his Miami-moored, 170-foot yacht. But until last year, few, even in the chattering classes, knew much about this immigrant entrepreneur who used to deliver the *Toronto Star* and shave salami in his parents' delicatessen – and who got so rich so fast.

Born in 1968 in St. Petersburg, Russia, Shnaider emigrated to Canada via Israel when he was 13. It wasn't easy. "I had to overcome a language barrier and make new friends," he says. "Adolescence is hard enough but more so for immigrants. They have to do more to fit in." His engineer father and dentist mother opened a deli. "I grew accustomed to facing challenges and began looking for large ones to take on." He enrolled in economics at York but quit after two years to sell cars. "Frankly, I quickly became bored with academia and just wanted to begin working." Eventually, his parents persuaded him to finish his degree – and get good marks. This time at York, he really applied himself. "It taught me that if you work hard, you can achieve everything you set your mind to."

In 1989, the USSR collapsed. In 1990, Shnaider, still a York student, worked for a trading company doing business in the Ukraine – and glimpsed his future. In 1992, he graduated with a BA and began selling steel for Ukrainian mills desperate to stay afloat. By 1994, he'd

found an ideal partner in Russian-speaking Briton Eduard Shifrin (worth US \$1.3 billion himself, and No. 507 on *Forbes*' 2005 list) and founded Midland Resources Holding Limited. They've made a fortune trading steel and now own majority shares in two privatized steel mills, foundries, a shipping fleet, and manufacturing, agriculture and real estate investments in Russia and eastern Europe. By 2005, Midland had revenues of US\$2 billion, 34 offices around the world and 50,000 employees.

They're just getting warmed up. "We are a relatively young company that has only begun to grow," Shnaider says. He and Shifrin strike fast. Shnaider relies on gut feelings more than research when he's negotiating a purchase. Once they've bought, Shnaider charts the recovery, then Shifrin steers it. The partners want to turn their latest acquisition, the failing Formula 1 team, into a circuit winner – and an international platform for the Midland brand. They're ready for publicity.

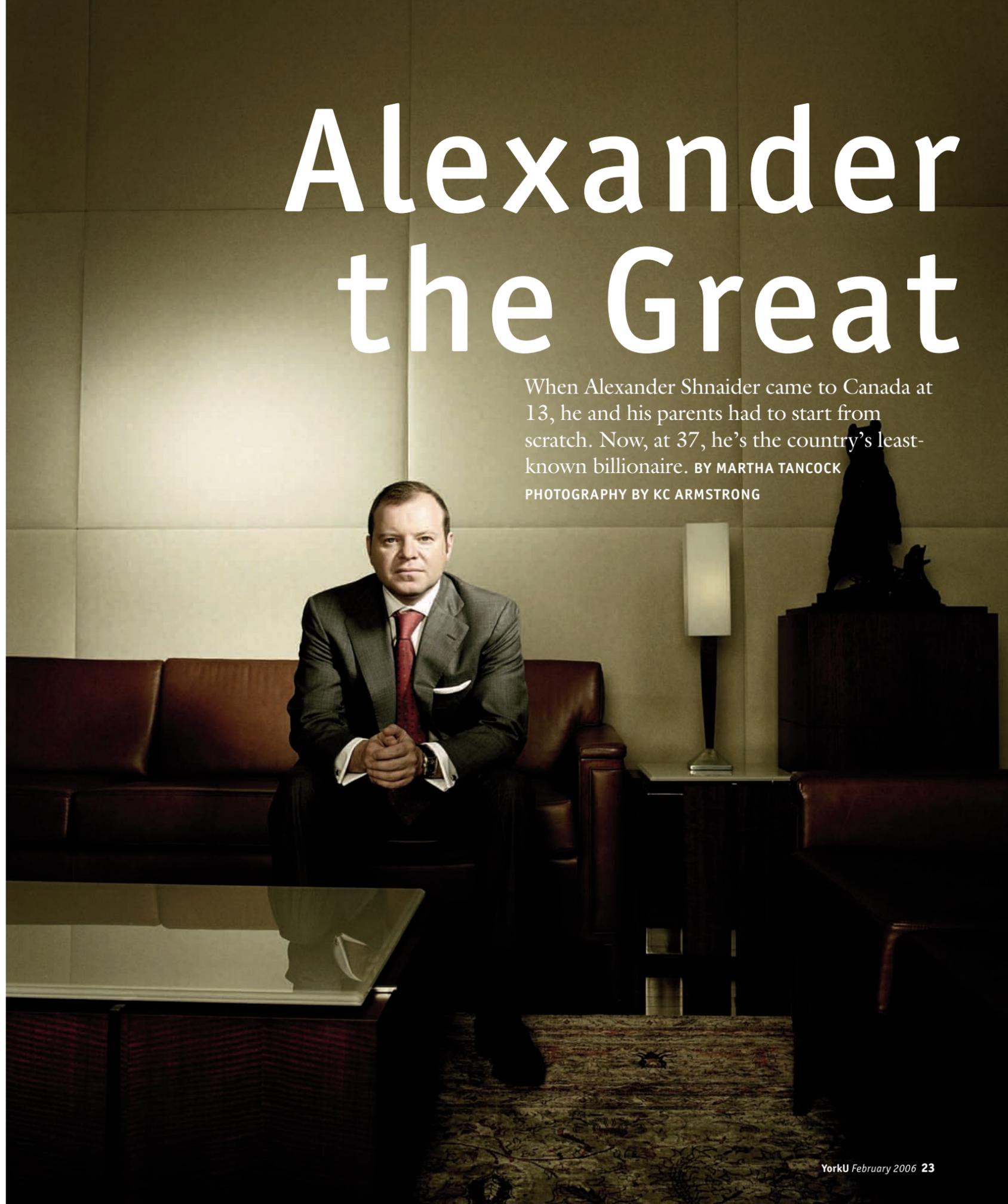
Funny, mused the *Toronto Star*, that Shnaider has "somehow slipped under the radar when some reputable Canadian business publications listed their 100 wealthiest Canadians." After *Forbes* pronounced him "Man of Steel" in March, Canadian reporters made up for lost time. Peter C. Newman was smitten. The venerable journalist launched his New Canadian Establishment series in *Macleans* in May with a profile of this "peregrine-eyed" Russian Warrior with whom he could relate as an immigrant Jew from eastern Europe. *The Globe and Mail* placed Shnaider's side-lit, gazing-into-the-distance face on the cover of *Report on Business* magazine and acknowledged its oversight by dubbing him "The Invisible Man". But sports writers all over the world paid the most attention, snapping photos of Shnaider posing with glamorous race-car drivers, hanging on his promises to make Midland F-1 a world contender and give Russia its first F-1 team.

Russia? "I like Russia – its people and its culture. I am proud of my roots," says the jet-setting Shnaider. "I also love Canada," he adds, though, business-wise, there is little keeping him here. The Toronto Trump Tower is his only Canadian investment. Where does he feel he belongs? "I feel I belong exactly where I am – both in Canada and in transit, with one foot in North America and the other in Europe." He does rue the six months a year he is away from home. "I wish I could spend more time with my family and watch my three daughters grow up, but with my busy lifestyle it is very hard to find the time to do so." Even harder now that he is no longer Mr. Invisible. ■

Alexander the Great

When Alexander Shnaider came to Canada at 13, he and his parents had to start from scratch. Now, at 37, he's the country's least-known billionaire. BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG





Sarah Varghese has an award-winning bag of teaching tricks. BY CHERYL MAHAFFY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROTH AND RAMBURG

Magic in the Classroom

FLASHING A DIMPLED SMILE, Greg beams expectantly as his Grade 1 classmates gather around the child-sized plastic chair that serves as his throne. Greg is the lucky one whose name was pulled out of Mrs. V's magic bag today, and he knows what's in store: a parade of "nice things about Greg" written by each of his classmates and read aloud by their teacher, York education grad Sarah Varghese. This esteem-boosting magic bag is but one of many teaching strategies that took Varghese to Ottawa last March to accept a Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence from Paul Martin. Among 236 teachers nominated, she was one of just 15 in the nation chosen for the honour.

Watching Varghese's class in purposeful action at Keenooshayo Elementary School in St. Albert, a suburban community just west of Edmonton, I soon see the magic bag as a metaphor for this teacher's gift of turning even the briefest interaction into an affirming moment. "Are you helping out? Good for you!" she tells a student who's leaning over to help a seatmate. "You sounded it out and I can read what you wrote – that's magic," she observes when handed a phonetically spelled phrase about Greg.

Varghese is a master at nurturing all students, says vice-principal Marlene Keanie. "She's very passionate about issues of diversity, about reaching and including each child." For Varghese, it's a passion fuelled by memories of life as a visible minority student in Ontario who parked her South Indian heritage at the door to fit in. Having watched Ontario become more adept at inclusion as its population grew increasingly diverse, Varghese hopes to offer insight as Alberta goes through a similar evolution. "Growing up in the public school system and now being a visible minority teacher, I can share my experiences because I understand."

Even in a seemingly homogeneous population, Varghese adds, children enter the classroom with diverse learning needs, physical abilities and backgrounds. "People are different, and we need to accept them for their differences. If you model it, students will respond." Varghese's own career choice reflects the importance of modelling. Her grandfather and her father both chose teaching as a profession, she notes. "I was born and brought up a teacher and never contemplated anything else. I really think it's in my blood."

York's Bachelor of Education Concurrent Program, allowing her to complete a BSc in psychology as well, provided the perfect stepping stone to the classroom, she adds. "I was able to work in three different schools in three years – that practical experience was amazing." Graduating from York in 1998 as Sarah Alexander, she taught in Scarborough and soon began working toward a master's in special education from the University of Toronto. Marrying an Edmontonian, she moved west and taught in Edmonton before taking her post in St. Albert. When news of her award arrived, she was on maternity leave with her first-born. "Having a child now, I realize what a gift it is for parents to give you their children," she says.

Parents who accept Varghese's open invitation to visit her class return home impressed. "I've never seen such energy, commitment, enthusiasm and dedication," says Brenda Kuchynka. "Every child is treated equally, with kindness and respect." Varghese's democratic approach extends to rule-making. Each year, her students create and sign a "class code of behaviour", complete with consequences for breaking the code. "They all strive to 'make her proud'," says Kuchynka. "I can't think of a better environment to learn."

Those words come alive as I watch Varghese in her element. Moving quietly from desk to desk, she intersperses praise ("Nice neat printing! That's awesome.") with comments that reflect understanding of each family ("Did Dad make pancakes today – the runny kind?"). Listening in, I recall what Varghese told fellow award recipients when they gathered to share best practices: "I often wonder, will the children remember me as a teacher who taught them to add and subtract or the teacher who took a personal interest in their lives?"

Now we're all listening as Mrs. V reads what everyone has written about Greg, the magic person of the day: "Greg is nice because he is kind." "Greg sharpens my pencils." "Greg is my friend and he rocks." Varghese asks him: "Do you feel the magic of the magic bag?" Greg nods, still beaming. Somehow, as the day continues, I'm not at all surprised when Greg does better than ever at everything he tries. ■

HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR A USED, metallic-blue Volkswagen Beetle, Jim McCarter's three-decade-long relationship with York University might never have got off the ground. "I had been accepted at Western and U of T as well," says McCarter. "But my parents promised to buy me a used car if I went to York. That sealed it." This kind of practicality has remained a constant in the life of the man who serves as Ontario's auditor general, the financial watchdog for the province. The Beetle led on to undergrad studies in administration (BA '74), an MBA ('79), part-time teaching at York, and perhaps, one day, the prospect of auditing his alma mater.

McCarter's job is not unlike that of federal auditor general Sheila Fraser, though he has yet to uncover a scandal of sponsorship proportions. But as acting auditor in 2003, he raised some headlines when the office found that while the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services received more than 4,000 complaints about debt collectors and only eight about video stores, it focused 95 per cent of its efforts – 1,600 inspections – on the video stores, especially adult video stores. More grandly, his 519-page 2004 report took aim at such big-ticket items as hazy records for \$1 billion in land transfer tax collections, and 2005 weighed in on false driver's licences.

McCarter's chief weapon for improving government practices is his bark – exposing waste and mismanagement. The bite comes from the legislature's Public Accounts Committee, chaired by a member of the opposition. It puts senior bureaucrats on the hot seat and grills them over their department's shortcomings, as cited in his report. And if things don't improve, McCarter can cite them again.

McCarter hadn't always planned to be a watcher – more likely, one of the watched. "My original goal was to work for a securities firm," he says. But fate – and a bit of practicality – intervened. One night, as a member of the Founders College student council, McCarter was going over the council's financial statements with a manager from the public accounting firm Arthur Andersen, the council's auditor. The manager suggested McCarter would make a lot more money if he became a chartered accountant before joining the investment world. Working out the numbers over a beer in the Founders pub quickly convinced McCarter. "I decided to get my CA designation first before heading off to Bay Street."

He ended up joining Andersen after graduation and realized that, unlike most other accounting students, he truly enjoyed auditing. "I liked the different challenges that each engagement brought," he says. "I especially enjoyed going into a different business every two weeks and learning enough about

a company to audit its financial statements." While at the firm, he began his part-time MBA studies at York. There he remembers learning much about the real world of business from other part-timers like himself. "Many of my classmates came straight from their offices bringing their first-hand knowledge of human resources, engineering, marketing etc.," he says. "As we went around the classroom discussing cases studies, I would absorb all these different perspectives."

And his priorities changed. After getting his second degree in 1979, he joined the Office of the Provincial Auditor as a director, attracted by the responsibility – and a better work-life balance than Bay Street's. Ever since, McCarter has remained an Ontario public servant, save for an 18-month stint as auditor general of St. Kitts and Nevis, a Caribbean island nation. There, too, his quietly practical approach had a lot to do with getting the job, and his success in it. "I told the CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] interviewers that outsiders could not simply walk in and take a high falutin' view of accounting," he recalls. "It was much more important to get the people you would be working with on your side by learning more about their lives, the local culture and business practices." A year after he left, the prime minister asked him to return, but McCarter's skills were needed at home.

While moving up the ladder at Queen's Park, McCarter still found time to teach information technology and auditing for several years at York's Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies. "My advice to anyone planning to be a sessional lecturer is the need to convey to students the impression that there is no other place in the world you would rather be," he says. Reluctantly, McCarter gave up lecturing, partly due to time pressures but also to eliminate a potential conflict of interest.

Amendments to the Auditor's Act in late 2004 now allow his office to conduct so-called value-for-money (VFM) audits on Ontario universities, including York, as well as hospitals, school boards and other institutions. "Under financial accounting principles," explains McCarter, "if an institution spends \$10,000 on a chair and records it in its financial statements under furniture & fixtures, then the auditor would conclude it is fairly presented. However, in a VFM audit we would ask, 'why did you need a new chair when the old chair was only two years old – and why did you need to spend \$10,000 on it?'"

There's no telling when a given institution's number will come up for such an audit – they'll be done over the course of years. But if York emerges on McCarter's watch, he can smile and remember that old blue Beetle as he pulls on the green eyeshade. ■



The Watchdog

As Ontario's auditor general,
Jim McCarter keeps a close eye on taxpayers' money. BY KEN MARK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

Letters from the Grave

How York's Varpu Lindström uncovered the little-known story of Canadians who died in Stalin's purges. BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG

AS VARPU LINDSTRÖM strolled down Park Avenue last fall, her heart skipped a beat. There in the heart of bustling Manhattan was a big poster advertising *Letters from Karelia*, a documentary she had just spent five years researching.

Until the 75-minute film was released last year, few knew about 2,800 young Finnish-Canadians who heeded the siren call of socialist Russia in the 1930s and ended up victims of Stalinist purges. "It was not even a footnote in Canadian history books," says the York historian. Now, thanks to filmmaker Kelly Saxberg and the National Film Board, hundreds of thousands know about the dream turned nightmare that still haunts the Finnish-Canadian community – and fuels Lindström's current quest to discover what happened to the families of those caught in the Karelia "fever".

For 30 years, Lindström has been rummaging in the dusty closets of Canadian history for buried tales of immigrant Finns who settled in Ontario's northern mining towns and logging camps. Her mission began one summer while she worked as a Finnair public relations officer and heard old immigrants talk about how hard it was to carve out a new life in Ontario's backwoods in the 1920s. Lindström, whose father had dragged her "kicking and screaming" at 14 from Helsinki to Oshawa, could relate. "I thought, my goodness, somebody should record this." So she did. The tapes inspired her BA, MA and PhD theses and launched her academic career at York in an emerging new field – Canadian immigration history.

In 1988, Lindström travelled to Russia for the first time. During *perestroika*, she gained access to government archives and confirmed rumours that many Canadians had been killed as part of Stalin's purges. Twelve years later, she would get an unexpected opportunity to return – and dig deeper.

It came after Saxberg, hunting for story ideas in the trunk of her own Finnish heritage, happened upon Lindström's PhD thesis, *Defiant Sisters: Social History of Immigrant Women*. Who, she asked Lindström, would make a good interview? Lindström recommended Taimi Davis, a feisty 93-year-old communist activist living in Thunder Bay, Ont. Just as shooting began, two yellowed letters arrived for Davis from Finland.

The letters were written on June 10, 1942, by Aate Pitkänen, Davis's brother, mere hours before the Finns shot him for being a Russian spy. Though a sympathetic warden couldn't mail the letters during the war, he never threw them out. Fifty-eight years later, his journalist son found and read them on Finnish national radio. Listeners were moved and

wanted to know what had happened to Aate's Russian wife and baby son Alfred. So did a stunned Davis. Saxberg's lens suddenly shifted to a dramatic new storyline.

Letters from Karelia traces Aate's journey from Depression-era Canada to resource-rich Karelia, a Russian province near the Finnish border, to build a hoped-for better society. At the film's heart is his son Alfred's journey to discover the father he never knew. To help make the documentary, Lindström came aboard as historical consultant and threw herself back into the research she had started 12 years before. A Russian reality-TV show found 60-year-old Alfred, a doctor-researcher in Moscow, and introduced him on air to two Canadian cousins. With help from the warden's son, Lindström combed Russian and Finnish newspapers, war archives and the warden's diaries to establish how Aate – multilingual, a passport-carrying Russian citizen and national ski champion – escaped Stalin's purges and was recruited to spy on enemy Finns. Villagers also led her to a gruesome and, until recently, unknown site – one of many mass graves in Karelia containing Canadian migrants.

Letters has been a sensation and has spurred Lindström to go further. More than 420,000 watched it on Finnish national television after its release in September. Thousands more have viewed it at screenings across Canada – including the Toronto premiere at York – and film festivals in Europe and North America. After almost every screening, someone has come forward to tell Lindström of relatives who disappeared in Karelia. She and a team of Russian scholars – supported by the Missing In Karelia Fund established by the York University Foundation – will start searching execution records and other archives to find out where these "disappeared" Canadians are buried and what happened to their orphaned children and spouses. That information will be posted on a Web site. After Letters, "I realized how important family reunification is," says Lindström, who is based in York's Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies. The work also offers a chance to study how state terrorism worked at a local level.

The story of Aate resurrects the memory of "hundreds of ordinary men, women and children who had the best intentions to build a new socialist society and became innocent victims of the purges," says Lindström. "Letters shows the human side and complexity of history," she says of an episode that still arouses left-versus-right antagonism among Canadian Finns. "The main reason for me doing this film is I firmly believe that every human being deserves dignity in death. It doesn't matter whether they are your enemies. They are human beings." ■

York's Las Nubes Rainforest in Costa Rica helps maintain biodiversity.

BY MICHAEL TODD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRETT COLE

Tropical Treasure Trove

THANKS TO A GIFT from Dr. Woody Fisher – prominent Toronto physician, medical researcher and co-founder of the Canadian Liver Foundation – York scientists and students interested in the well-being of the world's rainforests now have their heads in the clouds, literally. In 1998, Fisher donated the 124-hectare Las Nubes Rainforest (the name means “the clouds” in Spanish), located in Costa Rica, to York University.

Las Nubes now forms part of one of the largest rainforest ecosystems in Central America. It is located on the Pacific slope of the Talamanca range in southern Costa Rica, an hour outside the city of San Isidro de El General. To the northeast of the property is Chirripó National Park, which continues into La Amistad, an international biosphere reserve which Costa Rica shares with Panama. Further south is Los Cusingos Bird Sanctuary, the 78-hectare former holding of legendary American ornithologist Alexander Skutch, now owned by Costa Rica's Tropical Science Center, based in San Jose. ➤

COLOUR COATED: Rainbow over the Alexander Skutch Biological Corridor, which runs between Las Nubes and Los Cusingos (opposite); a fiery-billed aracari (top right); a coffee farmer and his son take a cable car over Rio Peñas Blancas, at the edge of Las Nubes (middle); a juvenile white-throated capuchin monkey



IMAGES



Tropical Treasure Trove



GROWTH OPS: (Clockwise from top right, this page) green honeycreeper, some of which show blue; reflective creek near Los Cusingos; signpost near San Isidro; section of Rio Peñas Blancas in the Skutch corridor; unidentified flower in Las Nubes; rainforest reaches to the clouds. (Opposite) cow pastures in a Las Nubes valley; shade-grown coffee maturing in Quizarra, near Las Nubes (top left), being picked (centre) and being readied for processing (right).



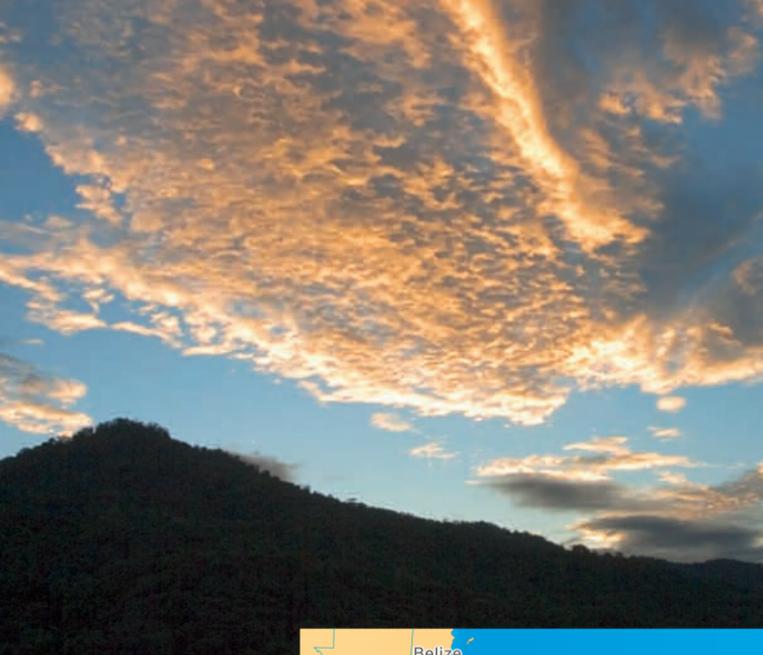
THE CONSERVATION OF SUCH SPECIAL AREAS as Las Nubes provides an opportunity for Canadians to share in the global responsibility to protect the world's biodiversity and will help reduce global warming. And Las Nubes, administered by the Faculty of Environmental Studies, is also an important training ground for York graduate and undergraduate students who will eventually become part of the new generation of Canadian ecologists, conservationists and international development specialists.

Already, York experts have helped neighbouring coffee growers produce the Las Nubes bean, marketed in Canada by Timothy's and certified as sustainable, fair-trade coffee. A portion of the proceeds goes to support Las Nubes via the York University Foundation.

There are also hopes that the nature reserve could play an important role in Canadian medical research. As yet undiscovered chemical compounds in the tropical biota of Las Nubes may one day be used in treating disease. ▶



Tropical Treasure Trove

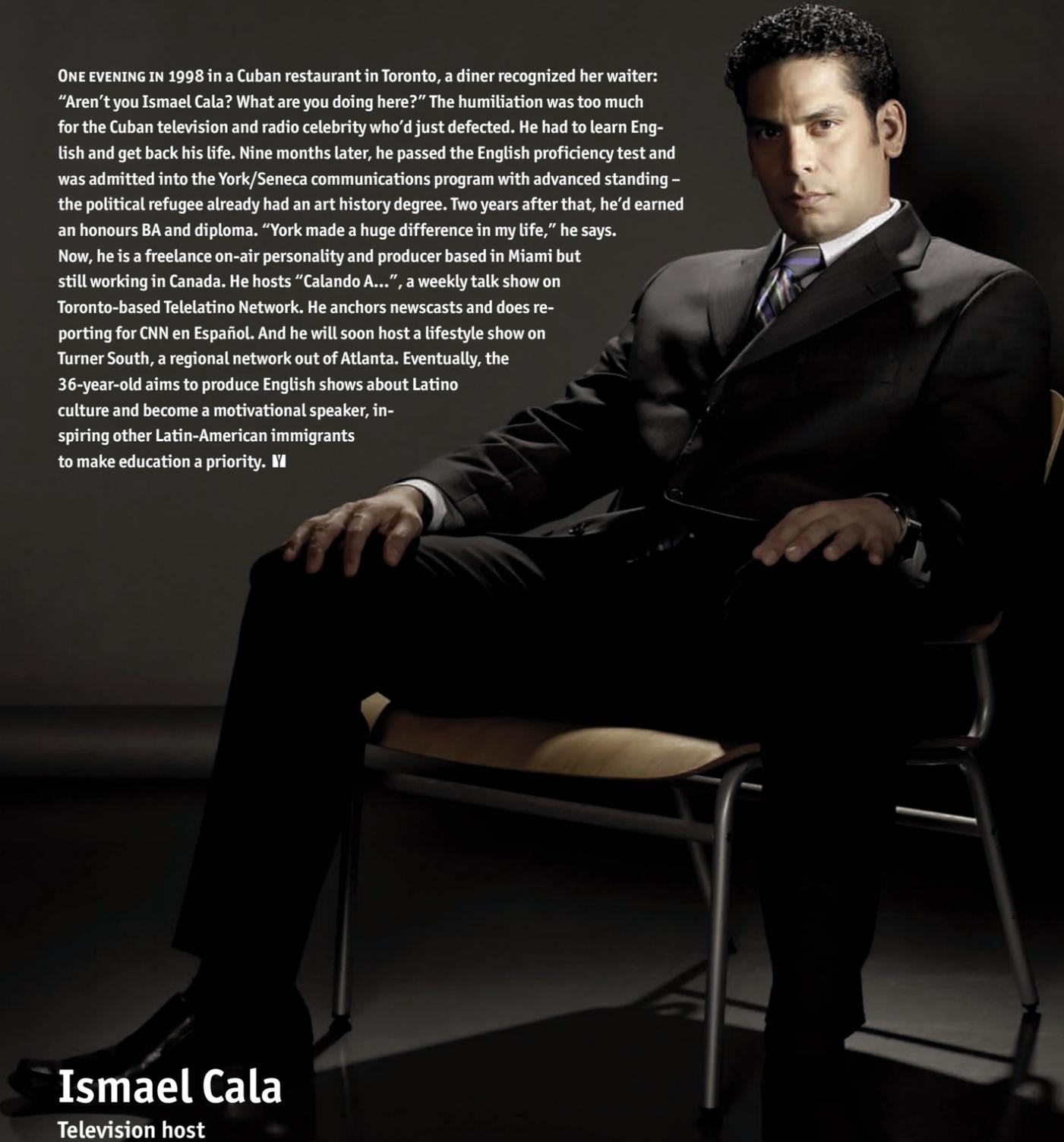


OF COURSE, RAINFORESTS are famous for their diversity of flora and fauna. Migratory birds that breed in North America winter in tropical areas such as Las Nubes. Many of those species' populations are declining, and once biodiversity is lost, it's permanent – another good reason to ensure the health and longevity of tropical treasure troves such as Las Nubes. ■

OPEN SKIES: Sunset (this page) over a valley near Los Cusingos. (Opposite, clockwise from top right) large iguana – nearly six feet long with tail – suns itself; strawberry poison dart frog; pair of scarlet macaws; palm trees in the Skutch corridor; sunrise at Las Nubes.

YORK PEOPLE

ONE EVENING IN 1998 in a Cuban restaurant in Toronto, a diner recognized her waiter: "Aren't you Ismael Cala? What are you doing here?" The humiliation was too much for the Cuban television and radio celebrity who'd just defected. He had to learn English and get back his life. Nine months later, he passed the English proficiency test and was admitted into the York/Seneca communications program with advanced standing – the political refugee already had an art history degree. Two years after that, he'd earned an honours BA and diploma. "York made a huge difference in my life," he says. Now, he is a freelance on-air personality and producer based in Miami but still working in Canada. He hosts "Calando A...", a weekly talk show on Toronto-based Telemundo Network. He anchors newscasts and does reporting for CNN en Español. And he will soon host a lifestyle show on Turner South, a regional network out of Atlanta. Eventually, the 36-year-old aims to produce English shows about Latino culture and become a motivational speaker, inspiring other Latin-American immigrants to make education a priority. ■



Ismael Cala
Television host

Celebrity Regained

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG

YORK PEOPLE

Heidi Kikoler
Shirt-maker

Little Fish, Big Dreams

TWO THINGS INSPIRED Heidi Kikoler to start a clothing line for "girls with curves" within months of earning a business degree in 2004. First, she remembered some graffiti – "Don't let your fears stand in the way of your dreams" – that had given her the courage to try surfing. Second, she was struck by a homely little amphibian called a mudskipper she'd seen in an Australian aquarium. "This fish made me truly realize that anything in life is possible if you really want it." The creative 24-year-old really wanted to design T-shirts for the neglected plus-size women's market. She consulted a pattern maker, found a fabric supplier and T-shirt maker, and created a retail Web site. Then she launched her label Mudskipper Girl. Orders have been steady for the pastel pink and turquoise tops with unusual necklines and embellished with hearts and stars and sayings. And the surfing-loving junior advertising account executive plans to ride even bigger waves as she expands her unique clothing line. ■



PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK

Christina Petrowska Quilico

Concert pianist, music professor

Piano Forte



DON'T BE FOOLED by tiny Christina Petrowska Quilico. The Juilliard-trained York music professor still has the physical stamina and "monster technique" – as one *Globe and Mail* reviewer noted – to play Canadian composer Ann Southam's impressionistic "Rivers" for two solid hours. The Ottawa-born child prodigy, who debuted with full orchestra at 10 and was hailed a "promethean talent" at 14 by the *New York Times*, studied in Paris and Berlin, and has performed on the world's great stages – including New York's Carnegie Hall. In 1992, her recording of Alexina Louie's "Star-Filled Night" lulled astronaut Steve MacLean to sleep as he circled the Earth. She is renowned for interpreting new Canadian pieces, many – like one by colleague David Mott she will perform at the opening of York's Accolade complex in the spring – composed especially for her.

She has also recorded compositions by her first husband, the late Michel-Georges Brégent, father of her two daughters, and accompanied the second, celebrated Metropolitan Opera House baritone Louis Quilico, on stage and in the studio. In 2000, devastated by Louis's death, she stopped playing piano for a while. "I got my joy back" by learning to tango and playing ancient drums, says the woman who loves to learn. "Passions keep your brain alive." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID STREET

Five Very Special People

This year's revamped Bryden Alumni Awards were handed out at a glittering event at the Design Exchange



DISTINGUISHED HONOUREES: Brown (left), Dranitsaris, Rinaldo, Sinclair and Jiwa

What could a broadcast journalist, a banker, an international development executive, a university administrator and a choreographer possibly have in common? To begin with, the five who came together at a glittering event this fall all shared one life-shaping experience: their years as students at York University. Now they also share a distinguished honour: the Bryden Alumni Award.

In November, the University hosted the annual Bryden Alumni Awards dinner at the Design Exchange in downtown Toronto and presented a revamped set of awards to Sandie Rinaldo (BA Hons. '73), Helen Sinclair (BA '73),

Farouk Jiwa (MES '03), Steve Dranitsaris (BA '73) and Debra Brown (BFA Spec. Hons. '78).

The Pinnacle Achievement award, which recognizes true distinction in professional life or in any field of endeavour, was given to Rinaldo, week-end anchor at "CTV National News" and one of Canada's most respected broadcast journalists.

Rinaldo responded with a moving speech that described her early years as a dancer and as a student. Using the analogy from the film *Sliding Doors*, in which a woman's destiny depends on whether or not she catches a subway train,

she said: "Like those sliding doors, the decision to attend York University was a life-changing event."

The Outstanding Contribution award, which honours dedication to the advancement of the University through exceptional service, commitment and contributions, was given to Sinclair, former president of the Canadian Bankers Association, a member of the York University Board of Governors and currently chief executive officer of BankWorks and BCN.tv.

Sinclair said she came to York's Glendon College "on the basis of a vision expressed by [then Glendon principal]

Escott Reid in a grade 13 assembly: bilingual, international, public policy and faculty engagement." She went on to praise the vibrant atmosphere of political debate at York, especially during the October Crisis of 1970.

The University presented the One-to-Watch award, which recognizes remarkable professional and community accomplishments early in the honouree's career, to Jiwa. Co-founder and director of Honey Care Africa, and senior manager at Care Enterprise Partners, Jiwa is the recipient of several prestigious international awards for his groundbreaking work in sustainable

business practices in Africa.

He praised the University's flexibility and support of his project with Honey Care Africa. "It shows one of the key strengths that York University has. Where else in the world could you find a liberal Faculty of Environmental Studies working at the same table with a far more conservative Schulich School of Business?"

The Local Hero award, which pays tribute to a York employee who is an alumnus or alumna and has gone

beyond the call of duty, was presented to Dranitsaris, now in his 33rd year as a York employee and the recipient of several University staff awards.

He reminisced about his life over four decades at York, and praised the University's achievements. "To become one of Canada's great universities, York has had to rely on strong, committed and visionary leadership; loyal and hard working staff; faculty committed to students, to their field,

their teaching, their scholarship, and their service; and most of all to their creative and innovative approaches."

Brown, principal choreographer for Cirque du Soleil received the Redefine the Possible award, which recognizes leadership and successes which are innovative, unconventional and daring.

Brown, who brought along two former Cirque performers to dramatically open the event, recalled her decision to attend York. "Before choosing

York, I said, 'where will I dance the most? York University; I am going there.' And I am so happy that I did. It was not just the classes I attended, it was a life experience. York University felt like it was a happening – everything was vital. And I honestly believe we were making history." ■

If you know a York alum who you would like to nominate for the 2006 Bryden Awards, look for the nomination forms at www.yorku.ca/alumni or in the Summer issue of YorkU.

LIFE-SHAPING EXPERIENCES: At the Bryden Awards podium (clockwise from left), York President & Vice-Chancellor Lorna R. Marsden; Naguib Gouda, executive director, Alumni & Advancement Services; Sinclair; Jiwa; Rinaldo; Brown; Dranitsaris



Class Notes:

1965

Wood, Sharilyn (née Mulligan) (BA Glendon) teaches ESL and Asian literature at North Harris College, Texas.

1970

Coombs, Maurice (LLB '66, LLM) was with the Ontario Law Reform Commission until he joined Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP in 1972. He retired in 2004.

1971

Robertson, Peter (BA Glendon) practises law in Ontario and Prince Edward Island and is celebrating his 35th wedding anniversary with wife Araxie.

1972

Profit, Gordon (BA Stong) taught for the Peel, Simcoe and York Region Separate school boards before retiring in 2001. He now lives in Midhurst where he enjoys spending time with his seven grandchildren.

Roberts, Bianca (BA Glendon) moved to California in 2002 where she works for RAND Corp. In building recognition for its PhD program in policy analysis, she was able to bring a Canada-US Fulbright Visiting Research Chair to RAND.

1974

Bates, William (BSc Stong) recently changed jobs to join Precision Label in sales. Actively involved in the community with wife Andrea, he is a Fellow of Stong College.

1975

Sulston, William (BA '72 Atkinson, BA), retired as a superintendent with the Ontario Provincial Police in 1996. He later served as president of the Ontario Assoc. of Crime Stoppers (2000-2003) and was president of the Canadian Crime Stoppers Assoc.

1976

James, Dorsey (BEd, BFA Bethune), a local high-school teacher, carves images from world mythology using discarded hydro poles and installs them in parks along the waterfront

trail in Pickering, Ont. See www.homeplace.ca.

Newman, Kenneth (BA Winters) is general manager for APY Land Council, a landholding body that consults with traditional owners on matters affecting the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands – an area of 105,000 sq. km in the far northwest of South Australia.

1978

Everingham, John (BA Hons. Glendon) has lived in the Netherlands since 2004, with wife Susanna and two daughters. On a loan of service to the Department of National Defence, John teaches at Afnorth International School in Brunssum, near Maastricht.

Greenberg, Lawrence (BSc Bethune) is manager of the North York branch of Desjardins Securities and has over 20 years of experience in the investment industry.

1979

Barclay, Janet (née Powell) (BA Spec. Hons. Glendon) is owner of Organized Assistant in Hamilton, Ont., and serves on the national board of directors for Professional Organizers in Canada.

Scheidt, Janet (née House) (BA Hons., BEd Glendon) teaches an inner-city kindergarten class in Kingston, Ont., where she lives with her husband Stephen, a Lutheran pastor, and three teenage sons.

1980

Hosowich, Stephanie (BFA Spec. Hons. Vanier) taught dance for several years, before getting a BScN at the University of Windsor. A nurse for the past 15 years, she works at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

Karam, Deborah (née Kissoon) (BA Vanier) obtained a BEd from the University of Ottawa and has been teaching for 24 years. She lives in Markham, Ont., with her husband of 23 years and has two daughters.

1981

Ramdeholl, Linden (BA McLaughlin) received the 2005 Governor General's Award for EMS Exemplary

Service. Having served 25 years as a paramedic with York EMS, he has trained and mentored paramedics in India and Ontario. He is now completing psychotherapy training and a master's degree in counselling psychology.

1984

Branigan, Erin (BA Spec. Hons. Founders) works for the University of Washington in Seattle, managing an HIV training program for clinicians in Namibia.

Starkman, Alvin (BA '74, MA '78 McLaughlin, LLB) was a litigation partner at Banks & Starkman. He and his wife retired early and moved to Oaxaca, in the mountains of south central Mexico, where they rent out part of their house as a B&B. Their daughter studies at Glendon.

1985

Lessard-Clouston, Michael (BA Hons. Glendon) completed his PhD at OISE, University of Toronto, and taught for more than 10 years at Kwansai Gakuin University in Japan. In 2005 he began teaching TESOL and applied linguistics at the School of Intercultural Studies, Biola University, in La Mirada, Calif.

Nicholson, Peter (BA Bethune) completed a master's degree in curriculum & instruction at Clark Atlanta University in Georgia and an education specialist degree at Florida Atlantic University. He is now a high school assistant principal in Fort Myers, Fla.

1986

Buckworth, Kathleen (BA Atkinson) worked in corporate marketing for 20 years and had her first book published in 2005, *The Secret Life of SuperMom*, by Sourcebooks. The sequel, "Supermom Every Day" is due out in 2006. She lives in Mississauga, Ont., with her husband and four children.

Lamba, Inder (MA) completed a PhD in statistics and served the Government of India for over 30 years. Married with two daughters, he is a professor and head of the IT depart-

ment at an engineering institute near Delhi.

1987

Jenkinson, Joan (BA Hons. Calumet) is director of programming at Vision TV, where she is overseeing production of several original series.

Kooiman, Michael (BA Founders) is the new minister of Birchcliff Bluffs United Church in Scarborough. In 2004-2005, he served as president of Toronto Conference of the United Church of Canada.

Penney, Theresa (née Geoffrey) (BA McLaughlin) retired in 2002 after more than 20 years of corporate work. After volunteering and supply teaching, she is now a full-time elementary core French teacher and is applying to York's Faculty of Education to certify as a junior high-school teacher.

1988

Angus, Elisabeth (née Von Tettenborn) (MA '78, MBA) and husband Ian were inducted into Canada's new Telecommunications Hall of Fame along with seven other inaugural inductees (including Alexander Graham Bell). In 1980, Elisabeth and Ian founded the consulting firm Angus TeleManagement Group in Kemptville, Ont., which provides advice to clients in business and government.

Corb, Abbee (BA McLaughlin) works with 10 law enforcement agencies across Ontario, and is the open source intelligence operations specialist for the Hate Crime Extremism Investigative Team. She obtained her master's degree in intelligence studies from American Military University.

DeKeseredy, Walter (BA Hons. '82, MA '84, PhD Founders), a professor of criminology and justice studies at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, has taught at St. Francis Xavier, Carleton and Ohio universities. He received Carleton's Research Achievement Award 1993 and the Critical Criminologist of the Year Award 1995 and is the author of 11 books.

Class Notes:

1990

Honke, Janis (née Christian) (BA McLaughlin) graduated from Humber College's Ambulance & Emergency Care Program and worked as an emergency medical dispatcher and paramedic. She joined York Regional Police in 1999 as a police communicator/911 operator, and is married with two children.

Stasyna, Bruce (BFA Spec. Hons. McLaughlin) returns to the Minnesota Opera for a seventh season as head of music, where he has worked on more than 30 productions. He is also music director of its acclaimed Resident Artist Program.

Steele, Stephen (LLB) worked for eight years as a flight instructor based in Hong Kong with Cathay Pacific Airways. He has returned to Air Canada as an A320 captain and a training captain.

1992

Goodman-Cuttler, Anne (BA Spec. Hons. '90, MBA Winters) is married with two sons aged 4 and 2. After working for several years in finance and marketing, she started an on-line baby store, a kiosk at Vaughan Mills Shopping Centre called Trendy Tomato, and the Trendy Group, which distributes high-end beaded jewelry.

1993

Bridgman, Debra (BA Hons. '91, MES Stong) pursued a career as a facilitator and project coordinator of environmental and community projects. The non-profit charitable organization she co-founded while at York, FutureWatch, is still going strong. But Debra has moved on, to St. Thomas, Ont. She obtained her education degree, got re-married and is now a full-time grade 4 teacher.

Moon, Lynn (BA '76, BEd Atkinson), retired in 1999 after teaching in Peel District and North York and lives with her husband in Penetanguishene, Ont.

1994

Martelock, Anne Marie (BEd '87, BA '87, BA Spec. Hons. Founders) is a principal with the Toronto District

School Board and lives in Caledon, Ont., with her husband Kenny and a daughter.

Sproviero, Robert (BEd, BA Spec. Hons. Winters) is a high-school teacher in Richmond, BC, married with two children, and contemplating a return to Toronto.

1995

Chauhan, Navin (BA '93, BA Hons. Stong) completed his master of science degree in psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK. His dissertation focused on stress management.

Gouvis, Jenifer (née Logan) (BA Hons. Calumet) worked in marketing for 10 years and is now a stay-at-home mom with daughters aged 4 and 2. She married Aris, a partner in a direct marketing firm in Markham, Ont., in 1997.

Van Egmond, Cecilia (BA Hons. Founders) has been appointed manager of the Family Violence Prevention Unit at the new Public Health Agency of Canada. She is married to Mark Irving.

Yong, Garvin (BA Atkinson) is a district sales manager for Greenpoint Laser Products Inc. in Toronto.

1996

Erb, Rhonda (née Wagler) (BEd) was an elementary teacher before deciding to stay home with her three daughters. She has started her own business in professional organizing, Heart of the Matter.

Ostrovsky, Lilya (BA '93, MBA Bethune) lives in Thornhill, Ont., with husband **Alp Hug** (BA '95 Calumet) and their three children.

Saleh, Safia (BA Hons. '94, BEd Calumet) completed an MA in leadership & training at Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC. She is married and working in Peel Region.

1997

Kelso, Sarah (BA Hons. Glendon) taught in the Toronto District School Board for six years before moving to London, England. She now works in the Evaluation Department at the headquarters of the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development.

Luna, Josie (née De Blasis) (BA Calumet) is married with a young son, and is a family transitional worker with the Outreach Team working with homeless and at-risk families in Peel Region.

Obriain, Janice (MBA) is general manager of Kaleidoscope Theater in Victoria, BC. Next spring, she and husband Jamie Woods will move to Calgary where Jamie starts his acting and Janice contemplates her next career move.

1998

Grafe, Heather (née Wilton) (BFA Spec. Hons. '97, BEd Winters) taught French and music in Peel Region for three years. In 2001, she married Peter and moved to Calgary to teach at Calgary Christian School.

Holmes, Nadene (BA Calumet) has been living in Nicaragua since May 2002 with her three children. She owns and operates a café/book store in Granada, the oldest colonial city in Central America.

Prutschi, Edward (BA '95 Vanier, LLB) is a partner in the Toronto law firm of Adler Bytensky Prutschi, primarily a criminal litigation practice. He lives in Thornhill with his wife and two daughters.

Romao-Vandepol, Lucia (BA Spec. Hons. Founders) is an employment specialist with the YMCA of Greater Toronto and has been enjoying maternity leave with her new daughter.

1999

Bains, Navdeep Singh (BAS Atkinson) was elected MP for Mississauga-Brampton South in June 2004 and served as Chair of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Human Rights & International Development. He is a Liberal candidate in the Jan. 23, 2006 election.

Doucet Campbell, Gillian (née Doucet) (BA Vanier) lives in Winnipeg with husband Stephen. While working in admissions at the Providence Theological Seminary, she is finishing her MA in counselling psychology.

Mullin, Arthur (BFA Spec. Hons. Winters) married Amy Sexton in 2004. He is working at Rosnick

MacKinnon Webster, a Toronto company that produces music and sound design for advertising, and is the owner of Riverwalk Audio.

Tsatsos, Jennifer (née Reid) (BA '98, BEd Glendon) has been teaching elementary school since 1999. She married John in 2002 and they had their first child, a girl, in Sept. 2005.

2000

Janopaul, Petra (MFA) is an associate producer working in film & video in San Francisco. She has worked on small art films and documentaries, as well as commercials, industrials and Hollywood movies including Wes Anderson's *The Life Aquatic* (2004), starring Bill Murray.

Lem, Peter (BA '99, BA Hons. Founders) completed his MEd at Memorial University and is a program manager at the Queen's University School of Business. He married **Sonya Bowles** (BEd '00, BSc '00 Founders) in 2001 and they live in Amherstview, Ont.

Rose-Jackson, Margaret (BA '92 Founders, BSW Hons. '93 Atkinson, MSW) is executive director of two agencies and founder of the treatment and foster care agency, Kids First Inc., in Lindsay, Ont.

2001

Brandt, Michael (BSc Spec. Hons. Bethune) obtained an MD from the University of Western Ontario and started residency in otolaryngology-head & neck surgery. Michael married **Naomi Peleg** (BA Hons. '05 Stong) on June 19, 2005. Naomi has started a master of clinical sciences in speech & language pathology at Western.

Garfat, Susan (née Rabjohn) (BSc Spec. Hons. Bethune) lives in her hometown of Peterborough and married Aaron on June 25, 2005. She works as a certified athletic therapist.

Melanson, Robert (BA Atkinson) spent three years as a child protection social worker at the Toronto Children's Aid Society, then became a mental health counsellor at the Canadian Mental Health Assoc. He was married in 2001 and plans to return to York for graduate studies.

Class Notes:

2002

Henderson, Julia (née Jackson) (MSW) and James were married on Aug. 6, 2005, at an outdoor ceremony & reception in Aylmer, Ont.

MacDonell, John (MBA) worked as engineering manager on a gold mining project in Argentina, where he lived for more than two years. He is now project manager on a tungsten, bismuth and fluorspar mine in Vietnam.

Mehta, Shaun (IMBA) is the author of *Divya's Dharma* (2004), a novel, and *A Slice of Life* (2005), a collection of short stories, one of which, "Amal", was adapted into a short film that won several awards. He is completing his third novel, "Deceptive Shadows".

Prentice, Christine (née Anstey) (BA Spec. Hons. Founders) is working as catastrophic claims adjudica-

tor for a leading insurance company and has her own landscape design business. She is married to Jason Prentice and has one child.

Siddiqui, Ahmed (BA Bethune) completed a business administration degree in 2005 at the University of Toronto, and established an international import/export business, Siddiqui Global Enterprise Inc.

Veenstra, Timothy (BA Atkinson) earned an MFA in theatre & acting from Florida Atlantic University and worked with the Orlando Shakespeare Festival. In the summer of 2005, he married Jolene and moved back to Ontario, where he now teaches theatre at King's Christian Collegiate in Oakville.

2003

Holder, Cary (BA Stong) gained the CSCS credential (the highest certifi-

cation in the US sports and conditioning field) and became program director of the premier fitness facility in Barbados, Surfside Wellness Centre. He is also studying towards his diploma in advanced nutrition.

Read, Jamie (BA Hons. Stong) made a six-month tour of Asia and returned to work at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute in Conference Services, in charge of event marketing and sponsorship.

Santos, Christine (BA Atkinson) worked for BIT Canada for five years as a travel counsellor and in various administrative roles. She is part owner and operations manager for Door to Door Services, a family business.

2004

Gibbons, Michelle (BA Hons. Calumet) returned home to Muskoka

after graduation and is the director of advancement at an independent day and boarding school. She is enrolled in the National Fundraising Executive Program through distance education at Ryerson University.

Toth, Kathy (BA Spec. Hons. '03, BA Vanier) established Forward Minds, a youth mental illness and health awareness organization, at York and has been converting its activities to an online community.

2005

Gale, Sean (BA '04, BEd McLaughlin) married Jennifer Hoover on July 23, 2005, and began his first teaching position with the Toronto District School Board in September.

Karayyim, Kamilia (BAS Spec. Hons. Atkinson) moved to Dubai, UAE, and is doing an online MBA at Capella University, USA.

Update Your Alumni Record

YORK

alumni

Personal Information

Name _____

Previous surname _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Degree(s) _____

Faculty _____

Year of graduation _____

College _____

Major(s) _____

Student no. _____

Signature _____

- York may announce in its publications where I am living and working.
- I would like to add more about my current activities. I am enclosing a letter or sending an e-mail. If I can, I'll try to include a photograph for possible publication.
- Please send me a new Alumni Card.
- I am interested in information about Alumni Services.

The Alumni Office may from time to time send you information about Alumni programs, services and fund development activities and include your personal information in contact lists prepared to enable benefits providers to let you know about their products and services.

Opting Out: If alumni so choose, they can opt out of any collection, use or disclosure of personal information for the Alumni Office's purposes including communications about programs and services and the preparation of mailing and contact lists, by calling 1-866-876-2228 or e-mailing alumni@yorku.ca

Occupational Information

Company _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Position title _____

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www.yorku.ca/alumni

The pull of The City That Care Forgot. BY JOSEPH BOYDEN

New Orleans Blues

MY FIRST VISIT TO NEW ORLEANS came late in my teens as a roadie for a punk rock band. I arrived in the desperate funk and heat of high summer. Air as thick as the breath of an overheated dog. Locals plodding the streets in search of bars and restaurants offering cold a/c. It was the architecture that caught me first. Ancient houses made of cypress and oak, ceilings tall enough to walk around inside with your best friend on your shoulders.

Music. The other drug of this place. It oozed from the architecture. My friend, Jay, introduced me to his local night

We briefly returned after

haunts on that first visit. Benny's quickly became my favourite, a tiny place with some of the best bluesmen I've ever heard, even to this day. Jay and I went to Benny's

every night I was in town, forging a friendship that's still un-sinkable. Part of my love of New Orleans is still tied into my nights at Benny's, even though the place closed years ago when the owner was caught one too many times dealing drugs over the bar. Something about the idea of sweating and drinking cold beer and dancing till dawn, walking out into the melancholy light of sunrise with two dollars of your original 10 still left in your pocket, stumbling home as the heat already begins its assault, falling asleep against cool sheets to the clang of the St. Charles streetcar and noise of kids on their way to school chattering louder than the morning birds. New Orleans, back then, was a young man's city.

But time goes on. When I decided to move there for good, I packed what I owned on my motorcycle after graduating from York. I'd decided to become a writer, and learned my work ethic over a four-year stretch at the University of New Orleans. I honed my voice. I met my wife Amanda, as well as a whole group of other hungry graduate students, all of us dreaming of the day we became the next F. Scott or Margaret or Ernest or Emily. Late nights at Benny's turned into late, manic nights writing, first in notebooks, then on a cheap and unreliable pre-

computer word processor. One too many times losing whole stories or chapters of my Great Canadian Novel sent me back to scribbling in notebooks again, something I practise to this day.

My school friends and I, most all of us graduated. Many went on to completely different careers than writing fiction, but some of us were mad enough to gamble it all and win a little back. Amanda and I moved to my home, to Canada, where I took a teaching position at a college on James Bay, and Amanda became a world-class trapeze artist under the tutelage of a Toronto circus school. We both continued to write. We were desperate to keep creating new worlds.

Two years later, we realized that we missed New Orleans, the live oaks, the music, the Mississippi River snaking its way through the city, the way we always seemed to live there so close to the bone. Like that, we agreed to move back.

Now, seven years later, Amanda and I are just two of the faceless masses who lost a city, lost friends, lost our place. We briefly returned to New Orleans and to our home two weeks after Katrina struck, and realized that the hurricane changed the face of this city forever. With press passes, we explored the city, and we saw the devastation and stink that was left behind. As of late 2005, only 20 per cent of New Orleans' population had returned, and our friends are keeping us informed through e-mail of the grim reality of it all.

We've been in Canada for the last months, and life is good here. But we live out of suitcases and sleep in the beds of kind friends and family. Word has come, though, that the people I'm closest to in New Orleans are all going back or are back already, figuring out how to rebuild the place. And so Amanda and I are heading back too, to see how we can help as well. I've suggested to her that we just jump on my motorcycle and enter the city the old school way. But the cold weather has come, and despite my belief that virtually nothing is impossible, I've learned by living in The City That Care Forgot some lessons about reality, and about approaching obstacles wisely. ■



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