

YO RYU

OCTOBER 2009

Being Dina

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secret to success is herself

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A grad's four decades at York. BY BERTON WOODWARD

Mud and Heart

Throughout this 50th anniversary year for York University, we have been receiving memories from alumni about times past. Among those getting in touch was Margaret McVey, whose degree list (BA '68, BAS Spec. Hons. '99) belies the fact that she was on campus in every decade from the 1960s to the end of the '90s. McVey, who now lives in Surrey, BC, first came to York to finish off her BA in the storied centennial (and Sgt. Pepper) year of 1967, just seven years after York began classes.

"I remember being concerned whether anyone would even have heard of York U if I graduated from there," she writes. "It was very small and remote, at the top of Toronto. There were no paved walks yet, only mud and boards around the few buildings (Stedman, Farquharson, Steacie Science Library), which were new solid brick." She also recalls "getting off the bus and walking all the way in from Keele Street, then back to wait in the cold bus shelter on Keele in winter 1967."

She graduated, then later returned to do an undergraduate qualifying year for a further degree, living in Vanier Residence as a don in 1972-1973. "That year included some students from the floors I was responsible for going out and chopping down one of the expensive donated trees on campus – for the floor Christmas tree. The security guards simply followed the student tracks from the tree stump through the snow to Vanier. They located the thieves and the students were fined. So they held a good



dance to raise enough to pay the fine!"

McVey came back to York again in 1984 to start an accounting degree as a part-time student at night. "It was a lot of work and hardship. Bless the professors and assistants who gave real help. Bless those who provided some fun here and there. For example, one accounting professor told us no assignments were to be handed in with hairpins holding them together, because they made the pile of paper uneven. Another told us that an accountant can find fly specks in pepper."

At last, 15 years later, she was finished. "When I graduated from Atkinson College, one of the officials who spoke announced we had permission to stamp our feet in the hall. And we did!" Many Yorkies will recognize the words of popular Chancellor Emeritus Avie Bennett, who served from 1998 to 2004 and always urged the convocation crowd to make noise. Then came McVey's big moment: "When I went on stage, a lovely tall man handing out diplomas looked down at me and said quietly, 'It took you long enough.' I had to laugh."

After all that time, it's not surprising that McVey says she has "a spot in my heart for York." ■

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

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YORK
UNIVERSITY
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redefine THE POSSIBLE.

Planning for the university of the future. BY MAMDOUH SHOUKRI

The New Realities

No matter how you look at it, this has been a difficult year for postsecondary institutions in Canada – declining endowments, deferred construction projects, hiring freezes and increased demand for spots in universities, particularly in graduate programs. More stakeholders are demanding that universities deliver more with fewer resources.

There is no question that universities in Canada are changing, that we are being forced to adapt to new economic and social realities. The good news is that this is nothing new. The university is one of our most enduring institutions, and one reason for this is our ability to change and adapt to serve society. Throughout history, great universities have helped society argue, articulate, define and achieve the next stage of progress.

The period of change we find ourselves in may be more dramatic, and the timeline shorter, but this is nevertheless an



fine arts; a York that trains the finest doctors, as it currently trains the finest business leaders and lawyers. We want to build a university whose aspirations closely align with the public we serve.

We want to build a York

opportunity for universities to plan for the future, to reposition themselves for where they want to be in five, 10, even 50 years.

What might the postsecondary landscape look like in

Ontario five or 10 years from now? It's a good bet we will face:

- continued financial challenges;
- a more technologically demanding student body, with a greater interest in non-degree programs;
- more international competition;
- increased pressure to “professionalize”, reflecting demands for greater accountability and productivity.

To build the university of the future, we need to think about the future of the university, and that's exactly what we're doing at York. Our goal is to make York a comprehensive university. That means making our science and applied science programs as strong as those where York already excels – arts and the humanities, business and law. We want to build a York that is in balance, that is as renowned in engineering as it is in

**that is in balance, that is
as renowned in engineering
as it is in fine arts.**

Now is the time for planning, for building our case to governments and stakeholders, for rethinking and reorganizing, so that we are best positioned to come through the current period ready for what comes next.

The one thing all universities must do is to make the “business case” for the university: to remind people – governments and the public – that money spent on postsecondary education increases the quality of life for all Canadians. There is simply no better return on investment. We also need to remind people that this business case is not only measured in dollars and cents. The return on investment in a university includes the development of a more enlightened, more engaged and more civil society.

The next few years at least will represent a period of significant change for our universities, and we must embrace that change. In fact, we must lead it if we are to respond to the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities before us. Our challenge is to work together to provide an environment in which such change is regarded not as threatening, but as an exhilarating opportunity to engage in learning, in its many forms, to better serve our world. ■

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

UNIVERSE

DESIGN

Bearing Fruit

A design prof documents BC's disappearing handmade signs

There's no doubt Jan Hadlaw's research will have a fruitful outcome. Hadlaw, a design professor in York's Faculty of Fine Arts, loves the graphic qualities of the homemade signs associated with British Columbia's roadside fruit stands. She has decided to document them for posterity because they are quickly disappearing as urban sprawl and the wine industry begin to transform BC's Okanagan and Similkameen valleys.

"Roadside fruit stands have been a part of the regional economy and cultural identity in this area since the early 1950s," says Hadlaw. "As the region's agricultural base changes from orchard fruit to wine grape growing, extraordinary examples of vernacular signs and fruit stands are disappearing."

Hadlaw did her PhD at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC, and she and a friend would go on drives for a break from academia, she says. "I became more and more fascinated by the signs. We'd stop at the fruit stands and talk to

the orchardists about the business of fruit standing. I began looking forward to seeing my favourite signs every time we went out."

Hadlaw says her objectives as a design scholar are twofold – to bring design scholarship to bear on phenomena generally considered outside the purview of design history (handmade signs, the vernacular architecture of the fruit stand itself), and to produce a scholarly work that locates design as an everyday practice. "Handmade roadside fruit stand signs also raise questions about what constitutes legitimate 'design' within the discipline," she says.

Hadlaw's photo-documentation and research on the history of BC's fruit stands and signs will be published as a book, and the photos exhibited in museums and archives across Canada. She also plans to make the research available to the region's historical associations, archives and museums. "It will be a resource for future scholars, students and the general public." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF JAN HADLAW

BOOKS

What They're Reading

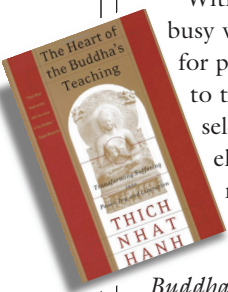
York people reveal what's on the bedside table

Myriam Mongrain
Psychology professor

With two young kids and a very busy work life, there is little room for pleasure reading. Perhaps due to this paucity of time, I tend to select works that inspire me, that elevate my spirit or help me make sense out of my existence. I have been dipping into *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy and Liberation* by Thich Nhat Hanh. It was ripe with meaning when I bought it a few years ago, and I love returning to it. I am concurrently reading *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*, by Eckhart Tolle. These types of works are best savoured in small bites when the right time has come.

Raymond Mar
Psychology professor

As a reading researcher, it is ironic that I rarely have time to read purely for pleasure. Right now I'm finishing a volume entitled *Neuroaesthetics*, forthcoming from Baywood and edited by Martin Skov and Oshin Vartanian. I'll be providing a laudatory quote for the back of the book, so I guess this qualifies as work although it's certainly been a pleasure. My other book of the moment is *A Pomegranate Seed*, the recently completed, but currently unpublished, novel by my friend and collaborator Maja Djikic of the University of Toronto. If any publishers happen to be reading this, I highly recommend this manuscript and will happily volunteer a quote for the jacket!



HEALTH

School of Hard Knocks

Researching the perils of playgrounds

It seems astounding, but approximately one-fifth of all childhood injuries occur at school, usually while kids are playing or taking part in informal sports. Those are among the surprising findings of Professor Alison Macpherson of York's School of Kinesiology & Health Science in the Faculty of Health.

In a joint York University-University of Ottawa study, Macpherson and colleagues including Jonathan Josse, a York graduate student and the first author on the study, analyzed childhood injury statistics over one year from the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and six other Ottawa-area emergency departments and clinics. They found 4,287 children were hurt at school in 2002, representing 18 per cent of all kids injured.

"We also assessed the school activities most associated with injury and the most frequent types of injuries," says Macpherson. She and her colleagues found that the most common cause of injuries were "playing" and "informal sports" and that children aged 5-9 and 10-14 were more likely to have school injuries than older kids aged 15-19.

"We found many kids get injured at school, especially during informal recreation activities," says Macpherson. "The impact isn't just on the children but also on their schoolwork." A study she quotes shows the average number of school days missed due to injury in Grades 6-10 was two to three days. That may not seem like much, but overall it adds up to almost 2.2 million lost school days per year across Canada, she says.

So what's the solution? Macpherson suggests closer playground supervision for one, coupled with injury preventative "safe play" programs aimed at teachers and elementary school students, as well as improvements in the design of playground equipment. ■



It all started quietly, decades ago, with the humble lottery ticket. Then, slowly, governments got into the casino business. It looks good on paper, of course: casinos raise government revenue, provide jobs and money for areas and people that otherwise might not have much opportunity, and have a huge impact on local tourism. But what are the downsides – especially in a recession? It’s one of many questions about legalized gambling’s role in Canada that Thomas Klassen hopes his new book, *Casino State: Legalized Gambling in Canada*, may answer.

The book is a collection of essays investigating the tensions arising from the relationships between gambling and morality, risk, social policy, crime, addiction and youth. Klassen, a York political science professor in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, co-edited the book of essays with James Cosgrave, a sociology professor at Trent University.

“The book seeks to explain how and why gambling and casinos went from being illegal and deviant to mainstream and encouraged – by the government – in just a few decades,” says Klassen. “In the end, it is better to regulate gambling than not, but once you do, the government then has to make difficult decisions, like how much gambling, what type and for whom. We’re hoping the book provides knowledge to have a more nuanced opinion on such matters.”

Has Klassen himself ever taken a turn at the tables? “I’ve never gambled at them, but I did visit casinos in Canada and the US while doing research for the book. I don’t even know how to buy a lottery ticket!” ■



POLICY

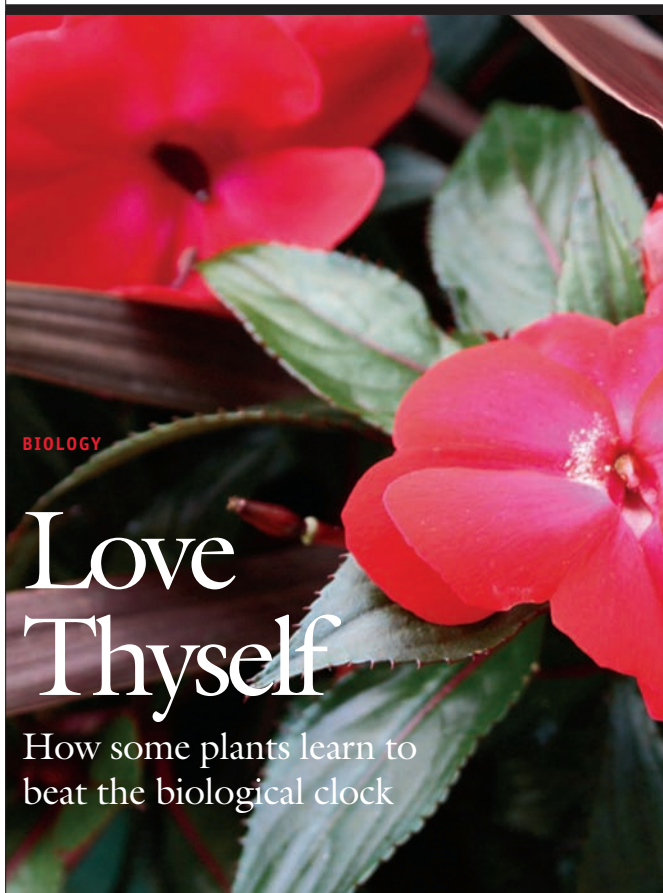
You Bet

In tough times,
governments gamble on casinos

When the clock of survival is ticking, some plants learn how to speed up their reproduction, York University and University of Toronto researchers have found. It doesn’t happen overnight, though.

John Paul Foxe, a biology PhD student in York’s Faculty of Science & Engineering, and Tanja Slotte, a former post-doc at York now at U of T, along with their co-author, U of T Professor Stephen Wright, sequenced 39 nuclear genes from specimens of *Capsella rubella*, a.k.a. pink shepherd’s purse, and its genetic predecessor, *Capsella grandiflora*. They found the species developed the ability to self-fertilize – thereby speeding up the reproductive clock – sometime within the last 20,000 years. Prior to Foxe and Slotte’s discovery, little had been known about the timing involved in the shift from “outcrossing” (where plants mate with unrelated individuals) to self-fertilization.

After the Last Glacial Maximum (the maximum extent of the ice sheets during the last glaciation which ended approximately 20,000 years ago), agriculture began spreading across Europe. This produced a situation more favourable for plants that could colonize more quickly – one of the advantages of self-fertilization, says Foxe. “Based on our findings, we speculate that natural selection for guaranteed reproduction can lead to major changes and speciation – the process by which new distinct species evolve – in relatively short periods of time.” ■



BIOLOGY

Love Thyself

How some plants learn to
beat the biological clock

PSYCHOLOGY

No 'Doubt' About It

Why religious brains experience less anxiety than non-believing ones



If you believe in God, are your chances of showing reduced stress and anxiety on cognitive tests better than for the non-religious? The answer is yes. A York researcher has found the brains of religious people are calmer in the face of error and uncertainty than those of doubters. Ian McGregor, a professor of personality and social psychology in York's Faculty of Health, along with graduate student Kyle Nash and colleagues at the University of Toronto, found that believing in God might help religious people block anxiety while under stress.

"Our research, based on two EEG studies, indicates people with greater religious zeal and stronger belief in God show less firing of the anterior cingulate cortex [ACC] – an area of the brain involved in self-regulation of the experience of anxiety in response to errors and uncertainty," says McGregor.

His past work has shown that stressing people causes them to increase their zeal, while his current study shows religious zeal is associated with reduced ACC activity. "Together these studies suggest people adhere to zealous faith because doing so relieves anxiety," says McGregor. His latest study was funded by the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada. ■

Mary Poppins knew a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, but did she also know that sugar could help manage infant pain? Joel Katz, Canada Research Chair in Health Psychology in York's Faculty of Health, and Professor Anna Taddio, the study's lead author from the University of Toronto's Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, have collaborated for more than a decade on research focused on understanding and alleviating pain in hospitalized infants. They recently published research results showing sucrose (sugar) can provide safe and effective pain management in infants.

"We know that if a baby's pain is not managed well it leads to pain sensitivity in the short term and possibly long term," says Katz. "We found sucrose appears to help diminish pain in procedures such as drawing blood with a needle from a vein, but it wasn't successful for procedures such as a heel lance or intramuscular injection. We are not the first to use sucrose to relieve pain in infants, but in the past it was only evaluated for one single painful procedure, whereas we evaluated it for several."

The study involved 240 infants no more than two days old. Babies were treated with either a placebo or sucrose solution before all painful procedures. (A drop is placed on the baby's tongue.)

"No one is quite sure how oral sucrose works," says Katz. "Our results demonstrated a modest decrease in the level of pain experienced by the newborns who received sucrose, but more work needs to be done to find ways to eliminate infant pain." ■

MEDICINE

Sweet Idea

Sucrose helps infants weather painful procedures



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RSQUARED

SCHOLARSHIP

Their Own Space

A digital library for York researchers' work

How's your "IRQ" (institutional repository quotient)? If it's not up to snuff, maybe you need to talk to York's digital initiatives librarian, Andrea Kosavic (pictured). She's the person in charge of YorkSpace. Known in the digital world as an "institutional repository", YorkSpace is designed to offer greater access to York research via the Internet.

Impetuses for platforms like YorkSpace (yorku.ca/yorkspace) include the rise of the open-access movement and an insistence by government funding agencies that the results of research be publicly accessible, says Kosavic. "YorkSpace enables York community members to post, organize and preserve their research online in an institutional context. It also makes it easier for people to discover your research online."

Why not just have your own Web page? You could, says Kosavic, but YorkSpace was specifically developed for the purpose of storing, organizing, preserving and disseminating data. "YorkSpace acts like a digital library, instead of a data dumping ground. It can also be searched and browsed, and items are 'catalogued' based on standards," she says. Also, research deposited into YorkSpace is harvested by many other search engines besides Google, which makes discovery of YorkSpace items more likely, she notes.

At present, YorkSpace features a small but eclectic mix of items ranging from York's *Toronto Telegram* Photograph Collection to a dissertation on the Don River, as well as Design Department chair Wendy Wong's essays on Hong Kong cartoons. Says Kosavic, "With YorkSpace, scholars and researchers are able to ensure their research is exposed to the largest possible readership." ■



Being Dina

“Breakfast Television” co-host Dina Pugliese once thought she might be too “spicy-Italian” for viewers. It turned out to be her secret to success.

BY DAVID FULLER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

THERE'S NEVER A SHORTAGE OF OPINION when it comes to celebrities. Once you enter the limelight, people feel justified in commenting on everything from your hairstyle to your character. Just ask Dina Pugliese (BA Hons. '97), co-host of Citytv's “Breakfast Television”. It's been three years since she agreed to trade witticisms and opinions with Kevin Frankish and the team on Toronto's top-rated morning television show and, not surprisingly, people stop her everywhere she goes. “This show's a beast,” says Pugliese when asked how quickly the Toronto edition of “BT” brought her notoriety that would make some Hollywood actors jealous. “Kevin told me, ‘Get ready, your life is going to change.’”

While the effervescent Pugliese enjoys the positive attention the show has brought her, it took some getting used to for an Italian-Canadian Catholic girl who was raised by “very strict but loving” parents and lived at home until she married at 31. From the day she first filled in for popular predecessor Liza Fromer, Pugliese was the subject of comments from both fans and detractors. “They got letters saying ‘Who is this chick?’ and ‘Keep her!’” And, in a business where you can be loved or despised in the space of a 10-second sound bite, Pugliese has won over even dedicated cynics who think trash-talking about celebs is as much a right as giving an umpire the raspberry.

Her Facebook fans call Pugliese “lovely & gracious”, “a breath of fresh air” and “simply stunning”. *Hello! Canada* magazine named her one of 2007's top-10 sexiest

women on television and most recently one of the 50 most beautiful Canadians. Even former high school acquaintances gush online about her energy and sense of humour, just as they remember from her days as valedictorian and inveterate volunteer at Father Bresnani Catholic High School in Woodbridge, Ont. She was always quick to sign on for fundraising and social events. "I was part of almost every single group in school," she says with characteristic hyperbole. Described in her official bio as "a force of nature" known for her "big smile" and "charismatic screen presence", it's hard to believe Pugliese turned down on-camera work several times before finally giving in to friends' urgings to make a demo tape and get out from behind the camera. "I didn't have the confidence back then," says the admitted late bloomer, who spent six years working in television production after finishing her studies. "I thought, what if I'm too spicy-Italian for them?"

Hardly. Pugliese earned a Gemini nomination for her job as host of the MuchMusic VJ Search in 2006 and has been selected as favourite TV personality in numerous polls. Like close friends picking up an ongoing conversation, fans regularly remind her of things said on air about her family or the crew. "People's memories of what happens and what was said on the show are amazing," she says.

Her journey into the world of what she unabashedly calls "infotainment" began at York, where she won a scholarship to study sociology and mass communications and added courses in film, women's studies and language & media. "It took a while to figure out what I wanted to do, but from the moment I took my first film course, I knew entertainment and pop culture was my comfort zone," she says. "I took one or two film courses every year." And from the moment she picked up a highlighter cum microphone to give a news presentation in a fourth-year tutorial, Pugliese knew she wanted to be in broadcasting. "I loved the immediacy," she says.

With advanced standing from her York degree (she made the dean's honour roll), Pugliese entered the broadcast journalism program at Humber College and finished in just two years, again with honours. She began her career as an associate producer of Global Television's "Bynon" show and then became an entertainment reporter, writer and producer for now-defunct Toronto 1 TV's "Toronto Today" morning program. Friends began coaxing her to audition for a regular on-air job. "I thought, 'You're turning 30, so you might as well give it a shot,'" she says. Her next move in front of the camera came as host of Toronto 1's "The A-List", followed by a stint as host of Star! TV's entertainment news program "Star! Daily", where she got a taste of interviewing Hollywood celebrities on the red carpet. Her

enthusiastic style made her stand out among her colleagues and induced hearty laughs from the usually reserved glitterati.

Her commitment to "being Dina" has served her well, and fans have responded to her warmth and sense of traditional values. Raised in Toronto, she moved to Woodbridge, just 12 minutes from York's Keele campus, in Grade 6 and went to a school that was "95 per cent Italian." With a schedule that has her in bed by 7 and up at 4, she has little time to make the celebrity scene; she spends off hours visiting and dining with family and entrepreneur husband Alek Mirkovich. "Family is what feeds my soul," she explains. When she does do public appearances, it's usually as MC at charity events that support children, abused women and the poor. At an event for the

homeless, she helped inspire a shoe design named "The Dina" that wound up in the collection of the Duchess of York. Throughout it all, her focus is to be comfortable and enjoy herself. "I live in the moment," she says.

Her traditional values also cause Pugliese to work at protecting her privacy – as much as anyone can in her business. "I was the last person on the team to get a blog," she admits, then adds in her shoot-from-the-lip style, "It's nice to be connected with the larger scene, but opening yourself to all things can be a bad thing." That kind of "organic spontaneity", as she calls it, keeps her audience tuning in and her colleagues chuckling through the daily three-hour ritual of making the news, weather and talk entertaining – not always easy when you start work at 6 in the morning. "I love the team aspect of broadcasting," she says. When she's having a bad day, usually due to a lack of sleep from appearing at an event the previous night, it's the team that gets her back on track. "When I come in, within five minutes someone will say something that takes you out of it." And it's loyalty to her broadcast family that she says will likely keep her in Canada despite offers to move to the US, as many of her peers have done. "I've been asked," she admits, "but I'm so close to my family – and going to the States doesn't mean you've made it."

In a show one morning shortly after being interviewed for *YorkU*, an obviously tired Pugliese managed to flummox everyone with a torrent of light-hearted, stream-of-consciousness commentary – including several trademark references to her days at York directed at one-time Yorkie, weatherman Frank Ferragine – that left Frankish smiling broadly to the point of speechlessness. "I can't do this next item," he told the crew in surrender. And in her earpiece, one can be sure Pugliese heard "wrap, wrap", the words she admits she hears often from producers when she's in full flight as Toronto's favourite infotainer. It's all part of what she does best: being Dina. ■

"From the moment I took my first film course, I knew entertainment and pop culture was my comfort zone."

TRANSFORM⁵⁰

You can transform students' lives. York's 50th Anniversary Bursaries and Awards program provides immediate assistance to students. Close to one-quarter of the \$185 million pledged to the \$200 million York to the Power of 50 fundraising campaign has been directed to students. Add your support today and help some of our country's brightest minds reach their academic and research goals.



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YORK TO THE POWER OF 50

Still Running

The Toronto school board's dynamic new director, Chris Spence, has long been a man on a mission.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK



IF CHRIS SPENCE HADN'T torn his Achilles tendon and cut short a pro-football career with the BC Lions, he wouldn't be director – the first black director – of the Toronto District School Board today. The injury sent the running back with a criminology degree tacking into a job at a detention centre for young offenders. “It changed my life.”

Spence grew up in Windsor, Ont., in the bosom of a nurturing family. His Jamaican-born parents cheered their athletic son but also insisted he earn a university degree. He won a sports scholarship to Simon Fraser University in suburban Vancouver and was drafted by the BC Lions as soon as he graduated. Two years later, he limped off the field forever.

His dreams dashed, the beefy powerhouse cast about for a new football. “I had a strong interest in helping kids who'd taken a wrong turn,” he says. But he wasn't prepared for what he saw at the detention centre – boys 12 to 16 years old locked up, boys whose dads were in jail, boys without hope, boys “society had written off”. To this day, Spence seethes at the memory of how routinely he was paged: “Got a hanger in Cell 4. Need help.” He can still feel the limp bodies he lifted in his arms so a colleague could cut a crudely crafted noose. It happened all the time. And it choked him up. “I decided I've got to get to these kids before they get here.”

Suddenly he was in a hurry. He registered for York's one-year consecutive education program and applied to teach where few others would – Oakdale Park Middle School in Toronto's rough immigrant neighbourhood near Jane and Finch. On his first day, two black boys spotted him looking at class lists in the cafeteria. “Who are you?” they asked. “I'm your teacher.” Minutes later Spence was swarmed. “I told you he's our teacher. I told you he's black.”

Over the next six years, Spence threw himself into making a difference. The failure rate among black children in Toronto schools was 40 per cent. “Obviously, the status quo wasn't working,” he says. For boys in particular, “school was temporary incarceration. I wanted to find a way to break down the door and make them see education as their future, as a way to realize and recognize their dreams.” Not pin all their hopes on sports, as he once had.

He tried everything he could think of to create a “culture of caring”, spurred by the deep-felt belief that children succeed when they have high expectations and a caring adult in their lives. Shaking hands with each member of his all-boys class and telling them what he expected each day made a big difference.

Watching them play basketball at the community centre, on their turf – “that was huge.” He wrote, directed and produced a documentary about the first black general manager/head coach duo in Canadian Football League history – Roy Shivers and Danny Barrett of the Saskatchewan Roughriders – and films like *No J*, about an uneducated basketball player who ends up washing dishes. Anything to motivate and inspire his flock.

Evenings, an unstoppable Spence completed master's and doctoral degrees at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. In 1998, he became vice-principal, then principal a year later, of nearby Lawrence Heights Middle School and made history turning a “bad” school into a model school.

With buy-in from parents and students, he introduced uniforms – and the motto Dress for Success – a reward system tied to extracurricular activities (If You Get a No, You Can't Go) and biweekly progress reports requiring a parent's signature. Weekly Name & Shame assemblies helped put an end to a culture of violence. Students adored the principal who believed in them, made their school safe – and ate lunch with them. Within three years, Lawrence Heights scored above average in provincial tests and teachers lined up to work there.

Spence wrote about this success story in *On Time! On Task! On a Mission!* (2002). So did *Reader's Digest*, *Maclean's* and *The Globe and Mail* in glowing features highlighting Boys 2 Men, his mentoring program for fatherless tweens. For this and his Read to Succeed and Project GO (Girls Only) programs, his films and his five books on teaching and learning, the 47-year-old man on a mission has won many community leadership and educational awards, and been the subject of a documentary. “For me, teaching is a calling,” says Spence.

In June, he left the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board after five years as director of education to lead Canada's biggest and most diverse school board. He'll analyze the data, then look for ways to improve student achievement. That could mean single-gender classes, a customized curriculum for Aboriginal students, black-focused schools. “I'm in favour of choice. One size doesn't fit all.”

Toronto is simply a bigger arena. “My philosophy of education hasn't changed from being a classroom teacher to being a director of education,” says Spence. “I now have an opportunity to influence the lives of 250,000 kids. I think that's what leadership is about – influence. The future of this city, the future of this province, the future of this country is sitting in our classrooms.” ■

THE BRAIN IS FASCINATING. It's amazing how much we can do," says Professor Denise Henriques as she warms to the task of explaining the puzzles she is trying to solve as a member of York's Centre for Vision Research. Reaching for her office door handle by way of demonstration, she describes the complex set of calculations our brain performs to tell us how to open a door. It's a task a small child learns quickly but which neuroscientists and engineers don't fully understand and can't duplicate. "They still don't have robots that can totally do this thing," says the York grad (BA Spec. Hons. '95, MA '97, LLB '01, PhD '02) whose work has already been cited in textbooks and journals and won several awards since she joined the Faculty of Health in 2004.

"This thing" is but one example of the many commonplace movements we perform every day that require the spatial data our brain uses to locate an object and guide our muscles so precisely. In addition to sight, the brain uses data from other senses, too, such as the body's own awareness of where it is in relation to the door handle. Determining which of the senses is at play at a given moment and how the senses interact is one of many questions Henriques and her team in York's School of Kinesiology & Health Science are working to understand.

This past summer, Henriques flew to Europe to give talks at four universities in Germany, the Netherlands and France, including a guest lecture at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive & Brain Sciences in Leipzig. Her work has helped overturn our understanding of how the brain controls movement and has won Henriques funding awards, most recently a prestigious \$50,000 Sloan Research Fellowship for early career researchers, that will allow her to press ahead with her work despite austere times.

Henriques says she likes a challenge, which explains why she decided to study law at York's Osgoode Hall Law School while doing her PhD in psychology. The law was her early career choice, but she also enjoyed her undergrad courses that introduced her to the challenge of understanding the brain. "I like solving problems," she says. "There's great fun to it when you have a puzzle and you say, OK, let's find the most optimal and efficient way of doing this."

In the lab, she designs simple hand-eye experiments that provide clues to how our senses work. What Henriques and others have found suggests that the visual data not only relocates a target's position every time the eyes move but also updates and corrects the body's sense (known as proprioception) of our hand's position as we reach out to grab a computer mouse or a cup of coffee. How, exactly, the visual information is interpreted and combined with data from our other senses is still a big question, but researchers are now convinced that, when it comes to grabbing that door handle, the eyes have it.

There are other questions, too, such as how the brain learns from what it sees and feels. When we pull on a door handle, our eyes reprogram our brain on the fly, helping our hand and arm stay with the task as the door swings towards us and then away to one side in what's called a compliant motion. That's the thing the robots don't get, says Henriques. "We'd have to hard-code a robot's computer to get it to do this just once." Results of another of Henriques' experiments, where subjects are asked to point to their hand beneath a table, suggest that we code the hand's location in eye coordinates, even though we can't actually see it, and this information is used to adjust our body's sense of where the hand is. "This is not very intuitive," she explains, "because you can't see your hands."

Although Henriques sees many mechanical and therapeutic applications for her work, her passion is for puzzles and fundamental research. Her findings have implications for treating neurological disorders, such as Parkinson's disease, and for robotics, physical education and teleoperations, such as remote surgery. But for now, Henriques just wants to get a handle on what our brain is doing and, so that others can gain that knowledge, open a few doors. ■

Denise Henriques is helping overturn our view of how things are overturned.

BY DAVID FULLER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE FORD

The Eyes Have It

Street Sister

How Angela Robertson helps homeless women live lives with dignity and security.

BY MICHAEL TODD ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK

ANGELA ROBERTSON'S STORY ECHOES that of many young, black women who came to Canada from the Caribbean in the 1980s. Robertson's begins with her mother, who arrived in Canada alone having left behind her two daughters. Because of her mother's economically enforced absence, Robertson and her sister grew up in the care of their Jamaican grandmother and great-grandmother. "My mother came to Canada and worked as a domestic," says Robertson. "Later, when she could afford to bring us, we joined her in Canada."

When she arrived, Robertson (BA Hons. '91, MA '93) found a tight-knit community of like-minded young Caribbean women at Central High School Of Commerce in downtown Toronto. That group helped ease the transition into Canadian society, she says. It also helped her find the activist voice that would serve her well in years to come.

Robertson was very conscious of the kinds of work her grandmothers did (non-unionized, hard domestic labour with little or no safety net if you got fired or sick). And that informed her activism early on and led her to champion the rights of racialized women, she says. "My story isn't unique. It's the story of many Caribbean immigrants – reunification, reattachment and reconnection to a new community in Canada."

Unique or not, Robertson's story recently gained her a 2009 YWCA Toronto Women of Distinction Award for Social Change for her groundbreaking work in the realm of women's homelessness. Being executive director of Sistering – A Woman's Place, says Robertson, is the kind of job that makes her want to get up in the morning. Why? "I can see that the kinds of skills I bring to the job and the things I can do here make a real impact on the lives of homeless and low-income women."

Sistering offers practical and emotional support to homeless, under-housed and low-income women in Toronto. In fact, more than 2,000 marginalized women use Sistering's services each year. The organization also offers the ability to drop in for meals, have a shower, get counselling, receive employment support and have a mailing address. Robertson joined Sistering just over 10 years ago and in that time has doubled the agency's

budget, facilitated the expansion of Sistering's space at its College Street location and spearheaded a new office on Bloor Street West. She also secured funding and community partnerships for two buildings designated as permanent and secure housing for women.

Homeless women's issues differ from men's in several ways. "Two significant differences are that women's homelessness is often hidden and therefore underestimated, and that women who are homeless experience higher rates of violence or trauma," says Robertson. The "usual" form the violence takes is sexual assault. She notes that women who have experienced sexual assault and are homeless are also more at risk for revictimization. The other link to women's homelessness is poverty. "Women still earn less than men, and have more precarious employment, so there's a shorter spiral into deep poverty and homelessness. This is even worse for Aboriginal and racialized women."

Aside from high school, Robertson's social activism was fuelled by her work on women's liberation issues as a member of the Toronto Black Women's Collective. This activism was also reinforced during her years of study at York (she received her master's degree in sociology and her BA in sociology and Latin American & Caribbean studies). Why choose York? "There was a group of about seven of us who were really tight in high school," says Robertson. "We were all like-minded about social justice issues and, interestingly, five of us ended coming to York."

She says that for her, York was the ideal combination of the academic and social justice. "Our perception at the time was that we likely were not going to have the same conversations around those issues, or even get those conversations, at other universities. York was also where my feminist academic activism began. What my friends and I had was the language of experience, but we didn't have the language of the academy."

What called her to the career she chose? "I realized that working at the policy level is important, but at Sistering I can make a difference in women's lives every day. I can see the results," says Robertson. "I needed to be in a place where I could do many things and have an immediate impact on improving women's material conditions – that's what feeds me." ■

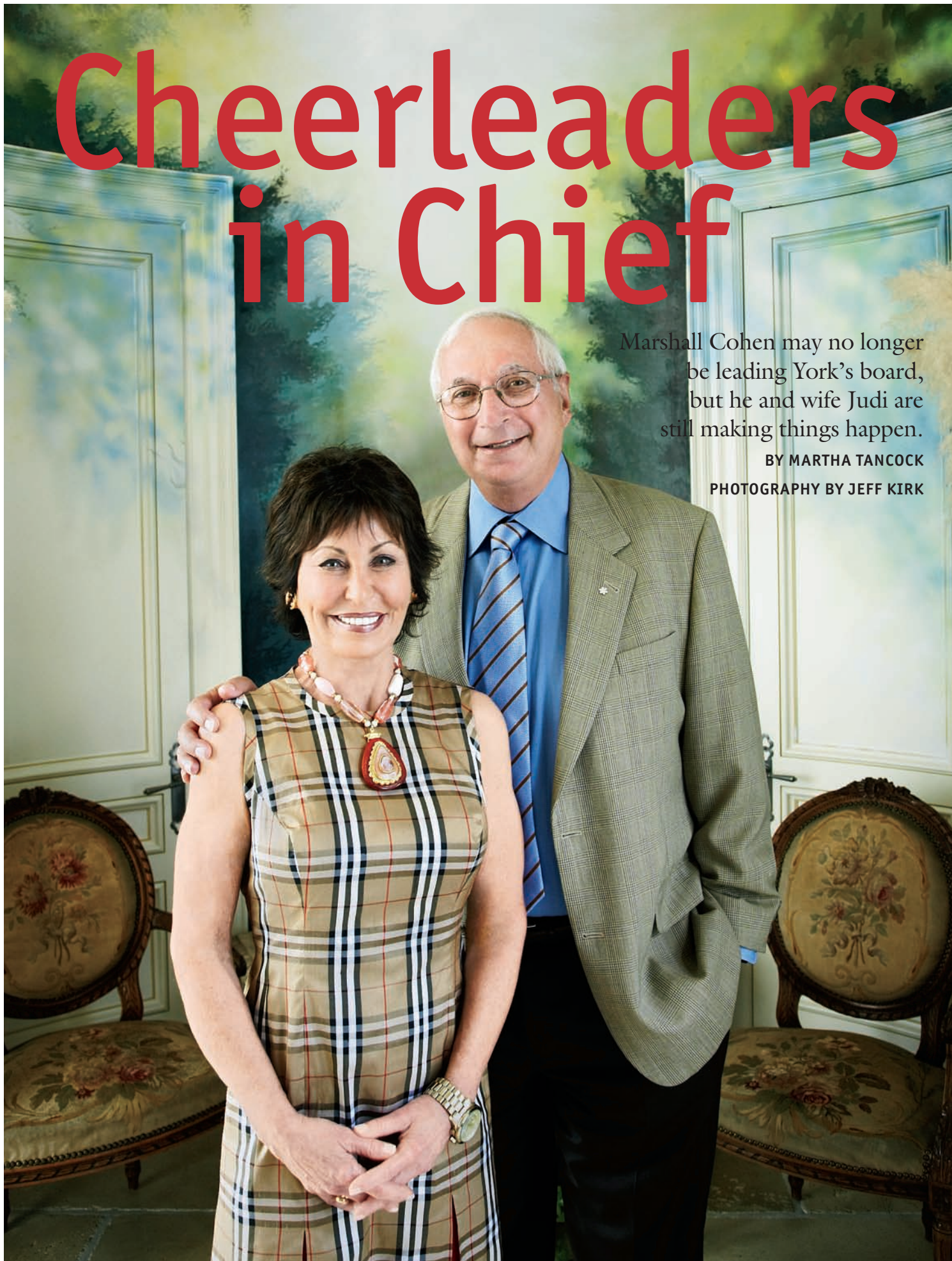


Cheerleaders in Chief

Marshall Cohen may no longer be leading York's board, but he and wife Judi are still making things happen.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK



MARSHALL COHEN STEPPED down this year after almost a decade as chair and more than two as a member of York's Board of Governors. He'll tell you himself he's no professional volunteer and he's a lousy fundraiser. So what exactly did he do all that time?

He mentored two presidents and a dean, for one thing. "It's what I do," he says. "People don't call me to talk about marketing." Behind the scenes, the retired president and CEO of The Molson Companies has had a big impact on the success of York's business school and the University's ability to raise money. With advice from his wife Judi, whose expertise in the non-profit sector complements his in the corporate sector, the man known for thinking at 50,000 feet dreamed up the plan to create a foundation exclusively focused on fundraising – and the branding necessary to make it work. And see that trendy housing development south of The Pond Road? He dusted off an old blueprint and launched the process that made Tribute Communities' Village at York University happen.

Though Cohen says he's retiring because "22 years is long enough", York isn't finished with him and he isn't finished with York. Like Judi, he continues to volunteer at the most senior levels. He is back where he started – at the Schulich School of Business, this time as executive in residence and chair of the new Hennick Centre for Business & Law. And he remains involved in the York University Development Corporation. At 74, this father of five and grandfather of 11 is only semi-retired. He still clocks in as counsel at Toronto law firm Cassels Brock & Blackwell and is a director on corporate and non-profit boards. "I'm a passionate golfer but you can't golf every day," says the founder of York's annual Chair's Cup tournament.

As 2009 draws to a close, Judi, too, steps back after steering York's 50th-anniversary committee, her biggest leadership role at York since co-chairing the twin-building Accolade Project. Enthusiastic, energetic and fiercely loyal, she has also made her mark, not least advocating for and championing an MBA program and undergraduate courses in non-profit management and leadership.

On March 28, the Cohens took a bow as York's "biggest cheerleaders" at the 50th birthday gala. Generous with their expertise and influence, they have also endowed scholarships, donated art and given \$400,000 to the York to the Power of 50 campaign. "We've watched with enormous pride as this institution has come of age," Mickey told the black-tie audience.

Cohen admits he would never have joined York's board in 1987 if then president Harry Arthurs – an old classmate – hadn't asked. The former federal deputy minister had received

an honorary doctorate the year before, but otherwise had no bond with York.

For the first 12 years on York's board, Cohen focused on the business school. He created and chaired an advisory group made up of movers and shakers in Canada's business community for Dean Dezsö Horváth, a newcomer to Canada who lacked connections.

Ready to exit after the usual three terms, Cohen accepted an invitation to become chair instead. In 2000, he was retired and had time to spare, while Lorna Marsden was in her third year as president & vice-chancellor. "I liked the notion of oversight, of being an adviser and mentor," he says. "I thought I could help Lorna figure out how Lorna could get what she wanted accomplished. I'm not of the school that says that chairs should have their own vision." But when pressed, he comes up with three: 1) the York University Foundation – because York "had a less than productive way of raising money"; 2) branding – because "if you don't brand you won't raise money"; and 3) selling and developing York's vacant land – because York would gain needed income and turn a barren landscape "into a friendlier place". Mission accomplished, Cohen announced his departure two years ago – then agreed to stay and ease Mamdouh Shoukri's transition to president.

York has figured large in the conversations around the Cohens' kitchen table. "We're a team," says Judi, who first got involved at York when Mickey tapped her for advice about creating the foundation and branding. "I knew something about it because I'd done it," says the founding chair of Invest in Kids, a non-profit organization devoted to improving parenting. As a team, the Cohens came to know and care about people at York. "York is such a treasure and it's gone unrecognized for far too long," she says. "It's a very, very exciting place full of talented people and I hope the exposure that came with the 50th celebrations will be a turning point."

It could be, now that Mickey has hatched another idea – The York Circle, dedicated to sharing York's intellectual riches with those who rarely set foot on a university campus. "I've always believed universities have a role to play in the community and don't really maximize it," he says. The York Circle launches Oct. 24 (see next page) with a day of irresistible lectures and a free lunch for alumni and students' parents, the first of many events that will build on the momentum of York's 50th celebrations and could do wonders for town-and-gown relations. "We do a lot of things that go totally unnoticed," Cohen says. "I want to corral and capture some of that stuff, get flyers out and show off York." Still cheerleading after all these years. ■

EVENTS

Welcome to The York Circle

Starting October 24, members will sample some heady intellectual fare. **BY MARTHA TANCOCK**

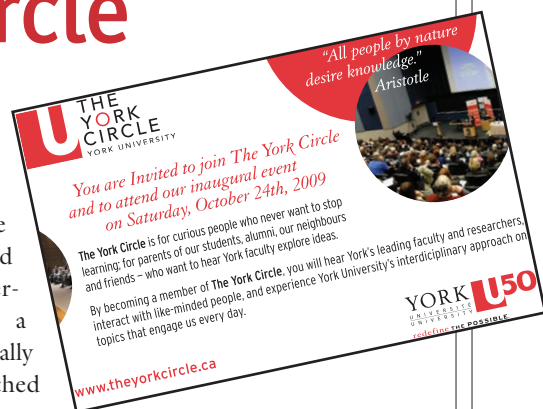
Ever wished you could go (back) to university but never had the time? On Saturday, Oct. 24, you can – for a day. Free lectures, free lunch – it’s the launch of The York Circle, a new and informal learning club designed for the busy but curious.

You may have heard of mini-universities, science cafés, “bacon and eggheads” breakfast talks – intellectual talent shows tailored for the non-student who still yearns to learn but is squeezed for time. They’re proliferating as researchers increasingly reach out to share their enthusiasms with audiences eager to partake.

As departing Board of Governors Chair Marshall Cohen imagines it and President Emerita Lorna R. Marsden plans it, The York Circle will offer members – alumni, students’ parents and community neighbours – a chance to sample intellectual hors d’oeuvres à la York at intervals through the year. “I think there is a lust for learning by people of all ages and at reasonably sophisticated levels,” says Cohen.

The Oct. 24 menu features one morning lecture and a choice of two afternoon talks, with a lunch made from locally grown food sandwiched in-between. To start, Faculty of Health Dean Harvey Skinner will talk about keeping people healthier longer. After lunch, award-winning stage designer and York theatre Professor Phillip Silver reveals a few tricks of the trade – like what goes into staging eating and drinking scenes – and popular astronomer Paul Delaney, director of the York Observatory, takes participants on a planetary adventure.

The York Circle will carry on where the 50th-anniversary celebrations leave off, a legacy of York’s landmark year. To find out more, visit www.theyorkcircle.ca and become a member. ■



WHY I GIVE TO YORK

Alumna and former president of the York University Alumni Association Joan Wood (BA '75) explains her reasons for leaving a legacy gift to York.

Why do I give to York? That’s easy – it was a life-changing experience. For me, York was more than just classrooms. I was involved in many college and intramural sport activities. I even managed the Orange Snail coffee shop in Stong College. And my fellow Yorkies continue to be some of my best friends today. Even though I now live in Bermuda, I’m still a Yorkie through and through.

I spent 25 years working in the insurance industry so I know that by naming York University Foundation as the beneficiary of my life insurance policy I will help the University and its students better than I could in any other way. When planning for your estate, you don’t have to be rich to make a big difference.

York University is in the midst of its 50th anniversary fundraising campaign, *York to the Power of 50*. There has never been a better time to redefine the possible through gift planning. Contact York University Foundation at 416-650-8210 or visit yorku.ca/foundation



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Carole Ann MacDonald

Teacher, advocate

Specially Needed

WHEN CAROLE ANN MACDONALD entered her Brampton classroom for the first time and saw rows of desks, she knew “this was not going to work.” She made space for a mini-trampoline, a beanbag chair, a sectional couch, stability balls, terrariums, and fish and lizard tanks – stress relievers to help her 12- to 14-year-old autistic pupils make it through daily lessons without a meltdown or eruption. Like some of them, MacDonald has Asperger syndrome, a high-functioning form of autism, so she is uniquely equipped to help them cope.

She’s had phenomenal success. Once bottom of the class, many of her students are excelling in regular classes despite their social gaucheness, just as she did. “Forget Walmart,” she tells them. “You’re going to university.” At their age, MacDonald’s hyper-articulateness became an advantage and she did so well in high school, she went on to earn a BA (’95), a BEd (’04) and an MEd (’08) at York, with stellar results. The 36-year-old mother was nominated for a provincial teaching award and, with a couple of law courses under her belt, has become a formidable advocate for children with special needs. She aims to get a PhD so “people will listen to what I have to say.” In truth, they already do. ■■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACHTCHOUK



A full-page photograph of Jerry Tonello, a man with curly brown hair, smiling and sitting on red bleachers. He is wearing a black polo shirt with a small logo on the chest and an Adidas logo on the sleeve, black shorts, white socks, and grey and white sneakers. His hands are clasped in his lap. A basketball is on the wooden floor next to him. The background shows rows of red bleachers in a gymnasium.

Jerry Tonello

Basketball coach

The Chair Man

THE OLD BASKETBALL TERM “PICK AND ROLL” took on a whole new meaning for Jerry Tonello when a high school buddy’s older brother became disabled in an accident. Still wanting to play sports together, Tonello (BA Spec. Hons. ’81) and friend joined the elder brother when he took up wheelchair basketball and together they formed the Spitfires Wheelchair Sports Association in 1976. A graduate of York’s School of Kinesiology & Health Science, Tonello continued playing as an able-bodied competitor (it became legal in 1992) “because they were my friends.” He turned to coaching as he got older but continued playing and, in 2005, he and his 40-something Spitfire teammates won the Canadian Wheelchair Basketball League national club title.

In January this year, Tonello, 52, was named head coach of Canada’s world-champion men’s national wheelchair basketball team and will lead it to the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation 2010 World Championships in Birmingham, England, as well as the 2012 London Paralympic Games. An early advocate of video analysis as a coaching tool, a skill he picked up while doing his fourth-year thesis, Tonello now travels the country scouting players and is never without his video camera, laptop and LCD projector. “It’s a very technical sport,” he explains. “Talking to players doesn’t always work. It’s better if they can see what they’re doing.” ■

GIVING

The Final Stretch

York to the Power of 50 nears its goal

IN THE FACE of a continuing economic slowdown, York's donors remain steadfast in their commitment to the University's academic and research priorities. Their generosity has now pushed the York to the Power of 50 campaign within sight of its \$200 million goal, with \$185 million pledged or donated to date. The 2008-2009 fiscal year continued the campaign's momentum, with more than \$26 million contributed, surpassing the University's fundraising goal for the year.

"This generosity in tough economic conditions is really inspiring," says President & Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri. "It's a testament to the depth of commitment to York University and widespread belief in the very bright future of this institution."

York to the Power of 50 was launched to support the University's academic and research priorities in four key areas: student awards, bursaries and scholarships; pioneering programs and research; Chairs and professorships; and infrastructure.

Paul Marcus, president & CEO of the York University Foundation, says York to the Power of 50 has a healthy profile, with gifts from a broad base of supporters as well as a significant number of larger gifts. "We saw 9,000 donors contributing in the past year. And we saw tremendous support in terms of very large donations,

with 42 pledges of \$1 million or more since the start of the campaign."

Important gifts celebrated over the course of the past year include \$2.5 million from a friend of the University to create 500 entrance awards for York students of \$5,000 each over the next two years and \$3 million from Jay and Barbara Hennick to create the Hennick Centre for Business & Law, a unique integration of business and legal education.

Other successes include the Family Campaign, catering to York's faculty, staff and retirees, which has gone well past its goal of 2,009 donors by 2009.

Many Family Campaign donors responded to a special appeal by York to raise \$5 million for the 50th Anniversary Bursaries & Awards program, aimed at providing immediate assistance to students struggling with the combination of an extended school year amid tough economic conditions.

Fundraising events have also played an important role in the success of York to



CAMPAIGN BENEFACTORS: Top, at the opening of the York University - TD Community Engagement Centre at Yorkgate Mall, made possible by a \$1-million gift from TD Bank Financial Group, York President & Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri (left) and centre executive director Sue Levesque stand with Bill Hatanaka (BA Spec. Hons. '77), TD group head wealth management. Bottom, Nona Macdonald Heaslip (left) meets Monika Mielczarek (centre) and Agyakar Singh, two of six annual winners of the \$15,000 William and Nona Heaslip Scholarships.

the Power of 50. Key events include the Fisher Fund Wine Tasting & Auction in support of activities at the Las Nubes Rainforest in Costa Rica, The St. George's Society of Toronto's Red Rose Ball and the Kenaidan-York University Chair's Cup Golf Tournament, which sold out well ahead of time and has raised more than \$3.75 million for graduate student scholarships since 2001. ■

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News:

A Tale of Two Mentors

You get back a lot if you volunteer for one of York's programs

WANT TO IMPROVE your job performance? Talk to a student.

That's what you'll hear from Chris Jamroz, who works at J.P. Morgan in Toronto, and Vanessa Lewin of TD Canada Trust. Despite their demanding jobs, they returned to York as mentors in two of the University's numerous mentoring programs. Lewin (BA '96) co-founded and volunteers with Glendon's program; Jamroz (MBA '00) volunteers with Schulich's. As mentors, they expected to help students, but they were surprised by what they learned themselves.

Lewin helped Lisa Chan (BA Spec. Hons. '08) with her grad school applications. "We worked on drawing out her skills and making her experiences relevant to the applications," says Lewin. She advises mentors to "invest time in learning about your mentee before making assumptions about what you're going to do for them." The one thing she never offers is to try to get the

student a job at TD. "Maybe I can, maybe I can't, but it's not about finding them a job at the place where you work," she explains.

Jamroz says he sees his task as "helping students become more acutely aware of the challenges and the characteristics of the specific field they're trying to get into." He also provides "a reality check" for some. "When you have a 35-year-old with three kids trying to get a junior position within investment banking, you have to be the bad news bearer," he says.

The mentoring experience may seem warm and fuzzy, but it's not always so. Jamroz recalls a "brutal" first encounter with one student. But he quickly adds, "It's very important that you persevere. Some of the toughest ones can be the most rewarding in time." Following his rocky start with this student, Jamroz recounts, "Over six months we met weekly for two-hour sessions. We completely restructured his resumé, did a ton of mock interviews and



THE RIGHT KIND OF QUESTIONS: Lewin (left) and Chan

focused on making sure he excelled in his studies." After the months of polishing, Jamroz got a call from his mentee: he was one of the first students in his class to be recruited. "When they tell you 'I got my dream job,' it's difficult to match in terms of satisfaction," says Jamroz.

But there's more in mentoring than the feel-good factor. "It really isn't just a one-way string of information," says Lewin. She likes to stress the value of networking, so "mentoring keeps me on my game because I have to practise what I preach." She's learned "the right kind of questions" to ask when interviewing, has been exposed to other industries and academic streams, and is intimately

familiar with the challenges grads currently face.

Jamroz, too, gets a lot back professionally from mentoring. "It helps you stay very current with the trends – what makes employers appealing to students," he explains. "Without that knowledge you could be mis-marketing the opportunities and missing out on top talent. It's a remarkable opportunity." ■

Let's Talk Mentorship basics

DURATION: Usually eight months (September to April)

COMMITMENT: Typically two to six hours per month

MORE INFO: Visit yorku.ca/alumni/getinvolved



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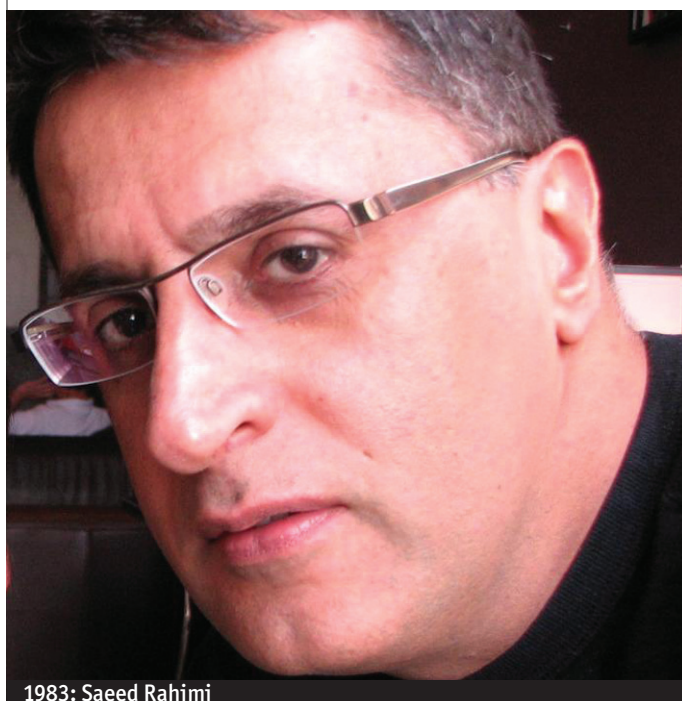


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Class Notes:



1983: Saeed Rahimi

1964

McIntyre, Robert (LLB) was recently recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Peel Law Association. He practises in Mississauga, Ont.

1967

Herman, Nina (BA Glendon) completed her master of social work after graduating from York and worked as a community organizer and administrator of several social agencies until she was 70 – all while raising three children. She would welcome hearing from her class of '67 peers.

1970

Silverberg, Christine (BA Glendon), whose career in policing and public safety has spanned nearly 30 years, retired in 2000 after a five-year term as chief of the Calgary Police Service and joined Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP. In addition to her York BA, she studied criminology at the University of Toronto and received her LLB from the University of Calgary.

1971

Watson, Jonathan (BA Atkinson) obtained his master of education after graduating from York and

worked as a counsellor and educator in Ontario and BC. Since retiring in 2004, he has served on the boards of Victoria's Harbourside Rotary Club and Oak Bay Volunteer Services. He and his wife, Penny Watson (BA '69 Founders), recently returned from Europe, where their son Ivan works for the European Union.

1973

Wilson, Monica (BA Glendon) retired last year after a 34-year career teaching with the Simcoe County District School Board. She now works part time for Theatre Collingwood and volunteers for Chow Rescue Ontario. Her husband, Doug, is also retired.

1977

Watt, Brian (BA Founders) lives in Barrie, Ont., with his two sons. He has worked in the paper industry since the late 1970s and at Domtar for the past 12 years.

Moir, Richard (BA Glendon) studied at the London School of Economics, *l'Institut d'études politiques de Paris* and the Sorbonne before beginning a career in international private banking in London. He specializes in political risk, market access and

international insurance, with a particular interest in China, thanks to Glendon Professor Boon Cham, who actively encouraged him during his undergrad.

1978

Barclay, Barry (BSc Spec. Hons. '75 Bethune, PhD) recently presented at the 11th International Primary Therapy of Early Breast Cancer Conference in St. Gallen, Switzerland, on a model that he and Dr. David Murray have developed for sporadic breast cancer. It is hoped that this model will lead to improved strategies for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

1979

Pokorchak, Patti (MBA) has just returned to the Toronto area after living in the Ottawa region for 20 years and in Europe for nine. She runs a small marketing company that specializes in low-cost technology tools and strategies.

1980

Proctor, Wayne (BA Atkinson) is having a blast playing the stock market from the shores of Georgian Bay and wintering in the Bahamas.

1981

Reuben, David (BA Founders) runs an online comedy resource guide and performs standup comedy. He has produced Toronto's HogTown Comedy Festival, written for Yuk Yuk's and guest lectured at Humber College. In 2008, David received the first ever Architect of Comedy Award at Bracebridge, Ont.'s Cottage Country Comedy Festival.

Hofmann, Dave (BA Hons. McLaughlin) married Jane Hofmann (Arcand) (BEd, BA Hons. '84 McLaughlin) in 1982. They have two daughters, Julie and Michelle. Dave says a special "hello" to the grads with whom he partied at Mac Pub.

1982

Kaufman, Todd (BFA Spec Hons. Winters) is completing a master of divinity at the Starr King School for the Ministry, a college of the Grad-

uate Theological Union, which is affiliated with the University of California, Berkeley.

Ludwig, Cindy (BA Founders) is an entrepreneur who has found success selling an Inukshuk toy. Inspired by the 2010 Olympics, the product is carried by the Royal Canadian Mint and Ontario Science Centre, among other outlets.

1983

Rahimi, Saeed (BSc Hons. Stong) served in the Iranian army for seven years during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. He moved to New Zealand in 1990, and 10 years later to Australia, where he now lives with his two children. Saeed is a software engineer specializing in payments and smart-card technology.

McGeean, Eileen (BA Glendon) is an active volunteer with the Meals on Wheels program in Toronto.

1986

Subramaniam, Sreedhar (MBA) saw a lack of an independent news voice in Malaysia and so founded an online newspaper, *The Malaysian Insider*, in 2008. It has become one of the top news sites in the country.

Nakagawa, James (BA Vanier) is married and lives in Tokyo, where he is CEO of Mobile Healthcare Inc. The company won a Technology Pioneer award from the World Economic Forum in 2009 and a Red Herring Top 100 Global Award in 2007.

Baharudin, Norlela (BAS Spec Hons. Atkinson) lives in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and is director of finance and accounting at BASF - The Chemical Company.

1987

Lee, Heather (BA Glendon) moved to Canada's west in 2006 and is team leader of classification and labour relations for the RCMP North West Region. She is happily married and has "three future alumni".

1988

Cassimatis, Jim (BA Hons. Bethune) is married to Nancy Cassimatis (Bonenfant) and has a 14-year-old daughter, Amelia. He



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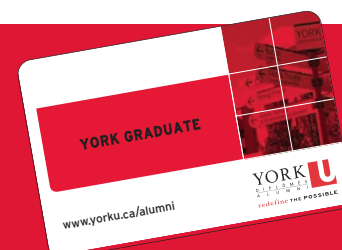


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Class Notes:

worked for the Ontario Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care for nearly a decade and became director of e-Health. He recently moved to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing as director of finance.

Genco, Tony (BA Vanier) is an External Fellow of McLaughlin College. He is president & CEO of Parc Downsview Park Inc. (YorkU, October 2006), where he has worked for nine years. He recently served on the Toronto 2015 World Expo Steering Committee and is currently working on the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension as a committee member.

Jacobs, Nellie (BA Glendon) is a business consultant helping companies use creative thinking. She hosts a weekly Internet talk radio show, "Igniting Imagination with Nellie Jacobs", and wrote *Grading the Teacher: A Canadian Parent's Guide*,

published by Penguin Group (Canada) in 1996.

DesOrmeaux, Denis (BA Hons. Atkinson) has just retired after nearly 30 years as an elementary school teacher. He nows works part time in a remedial reading group for kids. In summer, he relaxes at his trailer on Manitoulin Island.

1991

Brockman, Helen (BEd) is a principal at Anne Hathaway Public School in Stratford, Ont. In February, she was named one of Canada's Outstanding Principals by The Learning Partnership, a broad non-profit group supporting education.

1993

Cox, Jeremy (BEd) completed a master's degree at Mount Saint Vincent University after finishing his BEd, but returned to York again to

take more courses. He is now working for an organization that supports teachers.

1994

Salter, James (BA Hons. Stong) lives with his wife and three children in the Seattle area. He works as a

senior industry marketing manager for Microsoft Corp.

Nixon, Deborah (MES) received her PhD from the University of Toronto in 2007. Her business, Trust Learning Solutions, specializes in building trust among customers and within organizations. She has a 12-year-old son, a



1996: Andrew G. Munro

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Class Notes:

"goofy" Lab and two cats. Her husband Tim passed away at 37 in 1999.

1995

Samy, Teddy (BA Hons. Glendon) is an associate professor at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University and served as its acting associate director in 2008-2009.

1996

Munro, Andrew G. (MBA) specializes in video and Flash content for corporate video and the Web. He was recently appointed a board member and Policy and Governance Committee chair for the Redwood Women's Shelter in Toronto.

1998

Vandenbogaerde, Tammy (BA Hons. Glendon) works for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board ele-

mentary panel in London, Ont. She lives with her family in the Chatham-Kent area.

1999

Ruiz, Jorge (BA Atkinson) completed his degree in teaching adult education at Brock University in 2003. In his spare time, he enjoys painting landscapes and seascapes.

Tabet, Cyril (BAS) is head of marketing at Alpuri, a global provider of online foreign exchange trading services. He is responsible for driving global growth, promoting innovation and developing new services.

2000

Ahmed, Kabir. A. (LLB '94, MBA) received his master of laws degree in securities law from Osgoode in June. He lives in Toronto and works as an investment banker and mining entrepreneur.



2002: Eric Bednarski

Huang, Vivian Wei (BSc Bethune) works as a software developer at IBM Canada Software Lab in Markham. She recently received approval for two patents.

2001

Yohannes, Mahilet (BSc Bethune) is pursuing a master of science in

quantitative analysis at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio.

2002

De Sousa, Marushka (BDes Spec. Hons. Winters) graduated from Nice Sophia Antipolis University in France with a Master II – *Lettres, Langues,*

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Class Notes:



2003: Matthew Curran

Arts et Communication in December 2008.

Bednarski, Eric (MA) was nominated for a 2009 Writers Guild of Canada Best Documentary Screenwriting Award for his film *The Strangest Dream*, a portrait of Nobel Peace Prize-winning nuclear physicist Joseph Rotblat. The National Film Board of Canada organized a cross-Canada tour for the film and it was also screened at the European Parliament and at the United Nations in New York City.

2003

Curran, Matthew (BA Hons. '98 Founders, BEd) was recently elected vice-president for the Peel Elementary Teachers' Local of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. He lives in Toronto with his wife.

2004

Vander Stoep, Stephen (LLB) married Neda Karamouz in May 2009. He

is an associate in the mergers and acquisitions group of Shearman & Sterling LLP, a New York City law firm.

Garfinkle, Michael (BA Hons. Bethune) recently completed a PhD in clinical psychology from Adelphi University in Garden City, New York. He is beginning a private practice in New York City.

Palasandiran, Myuran (BAS Spec. Hons. Atkinson) proposed to his girlfriend in 2006 on the roof of Curtis Lecture Halls (the building where they met). They married in June 2008, after seven years of dating. He obtained his chartered accountant designation in December 2008.

Biback, Sammy (BA Calumet) recently moved into a new home in Maple with his wife Deena Cohen. He has worked for the Toronto Argonauts Football Club for five years and was recently promoted to manager of ticket operations.

Anmolsingh, Dinesh (BSc Hons. Vanier) lived in Vanier Residence in the same room his dad Krishna Anmolsingh (BSc '76) lived in. York will always have a special place in the family and hopefully in generations to come.

2005

Ibarra, Isabel (BA Hons. Winters) will return to York in September to pursue graduate studies in translation. She currently works as a Spanish teacher as well as an interpreter and translator.

Melnichuk, Svetlana (BSc Spec. Hons. Stong) is creative director and owner of Photon Art Lounge, a creative content management company based in Toronto.

2006

Rahman, Nusrat (MBA) married Tanzim Hassan on May 8, 2009.

Craig, Chad (BA Hons. Glendon) recently joined Navigator Ltd., a Toronto strategy and public affairs firm, as a consultant focusing on communications and Web 2.0 social media.

Hikel, Sabine (MA '01, PhD) recently launched a new blog, podcast and consulting project called Leaving Academia, for grad students and faculty who are considering transitioning into a non-academic career.

2007

McCullough, Kim (MSc) is founder and director of Total Female Hockey, which provides training resources



2005: Isabel Ibarra

and educational opportunities to the coaches and parents of young female hockey players.

2008

Gadsby, Andrew (BA Hons. Vanier) recently completed his BEd from the University of Western Ontario and will be teaching in England in September. He has also been to New Orleans to rebuild homes with Habitat for Humanity as part of his studies.

Rowley, Martina (BES Spec. Hons. McLaughlin) works as a community animator for Live Green Toronto. The program facilitates neighbourhood greening and energy-reduction initiatives.

Springstead, Melanie (BA Spec. Hons. Winters) married Cory Springstead on March 21, 2009.

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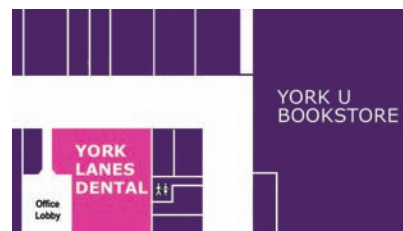
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How I got back into writing after 25 years. **BY JOHN BRITT**

Return of the Muse

WHEN I WAS THREE, my mother would plunk me on the floor in front of a portable Underwood typewriter, roll a sheet of paper into the carriage, and tell me to write a story. Ah! There was a machine! It had knobs to twist, a roller feeding the paper and a carriage that tracked to the left as I hacked. With the push of a lever it would tear home with a crash. Hit shift, the carriage would rise and fall, making the house quake.

Writing was seismic shock. All I needed was a place to sit, a keyboard large enough, and I would shake the world! Best yet,

In 1974, I began the book,

my mother could read my gibberish word for word, thought for thought, exactly as I'd intended. I was bitten. Writing was in my blood.

The first story I wrote was in Grade 4: a corruption of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, populated with personable mice and compressed into two-and-a-half pages. Yes, I stole from Dickens and Disney. Even now I worry about the copyright infringements, but copyright's not the issue. My story was evidently so inspirational, the teacher decided our class would write and perform an original Christmas play, "thanks," she gushed, "to John Britt's story!"

A Christmas play! Inspired by what I'd written! The dream formed years ago with a load in my pants was coming true! I was moving the earth! Except when the team of writers, actors and stagehands was selected, I was excluded. The usual politics. Ins versus outs. Artists are usually among the outs.

The play was an outrage, of course. Sheep, shepherds and angels. Wise men. Mary, Joseph and Jesus. Had nativity not been done to death? Where was the art? Surely Christmas was about injustice, poverty, awakening social consciousness, reclamation of the human spirit, redemption through generosity and personable mice! But they weren't prepared to see that and, as for me, I wasn't reading the omens right. This was what my writing life would be like.

I pounded that Underwood through elementary and high school and those disastrous early days of my postsecondary

education. I struggled for a voice to call my own; ached to write a novel, but couldn't get past page five. Ideas withered as they came; a plague of false starts and genuine stops. I yearned to scorch words onto a page, brand them into minds. Then, in 1974, in my parents' basement beneath the golem gaze of a Maharishi Mahesh Yogi poster, I began the book, hammering keys nightly from midnight till two as Ravi Shankar ripped the Raga



Rangeela Piloo. A satire that cut and scathed! Seventy-five single-spaced pages so hot they burnt my fingers.

Then – gone. The only copy.

Had she who'd plunked me in front of a typewriter at three

found it and, disapproving, burned it? Was it spontaneous combustion? Was that basement office a vortex between universes? Had some alternate John Britt in another dimension used it to win my Giller? An unresolved mystery.

Shortly after, I married and tried to continue writing. Show my wife what I'd written, though, and she'd invariably say: "Why can't you write something I'd like?"

"Why would I want to?" I'd counter. Wrong counter. The Muse fled for safer environs, leaving John behind, empty.

We separated 25 years later. Within three months I was writing again; two novels over six years. No awards. No short-listing. Some sales. Writing's benefits appeared largely intangible. I lived a year in a decaying trailer on the edge of a swamp at the end of a dirt road, waiting for interstellar cattle cars to cart me off to the abattoirs of Cygnus 5. Hardly productive.

Then it occurred to me. Writing was my life. It may have brought me to the swamp, but I'd been writing since I was three. The only option was to become the best writer I could be. And so I contacted York. No matter how undisciplined an undergrad I was, those were the years of my greatest creativity. I needed to tap that wellspring again.

Lord knows why they let me in, but if it means anything, I'm writing again, and a novel lost since '74 is undergoing another incarnation. And who knows? Perhaps I'll yet find that place to sit, a keyboard large enough, and shake the world. ■

John Britt (BA '83) studies English and creative writing at York and recently won the President's Creative Writing Award for Fiction.

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