What’s up? What’s down? What’s real? You can’t be sure in York’s ‘immersive environments’

VISIONARIES

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SUMMER 2005
Looking East

This year marks an anniversary for me – 10 years since I left Hong Kong, where I worked as an editor on the regional newsmagazine Asiaweek. Though my time there was relatively brief, it was formative. Hong Kong has since become a bustling financial hub, but in 1997 it was “a non-event”, as best described by Christopher Wec, the newspaper’s editor. He describes the city at the time as “a place where the streets are not marked.” His words ring true now, as our graduates navigate the challenges of the 21st century.

While the political handover to Chinese control in 1997 was “a non-event”, Wec says. But his career trajectory gives a sense of the economic crises that later hit Hong Kong; he was laid off by two different banks before securing his current position as head of finance and administration for a Jewish private school. Still, the good salaries and low tax rate are a continuing attraction. “Overall, Hong Kong has been great,” he says. It’s just that starting a family, as he and his fiancée hope to do, is tough in the most densely populated place on earth. “You can’t raise a kid in 313 square feet, which is what I have here.” Canada beckons again, sooner or later.

Listed in this issue’s Class Notes is Alan Yim (BSW ’97), a Hong Kong native who came to Canada in 1990 in his 20s, and graduated in economics from the University of Western Ontario. Then he discovered how much he liked doing community work, and decided to get a social work degree through an accelerated program at York. “It was a unique program, very useful to me,” he says. It also set him up well for a job back home as placement manager at the elite University of Hong Kong, helping graduating students find jobs. But Yim now worries a little about the territory’s role as a foreign-friendly environment, due to changes in high school education policies since the handover. He has already seen a decline in students’ English fluency – “it will have a significant impact on the next generation.”

As for me, I was glad to see that Hong Kong is finally booming again, riding the powerful tiger of China’s growth. It is once more the gleaming city-state that it left, and it remains a key centre of finance and talent for the mainland and for the world. York’s over 1,500 active alumni living there have plenty to look forward to.

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

Our convocation honorees are very engaged in modern society. By Lorna R. Marsden

You have brains in your head
You have feet in your shoes
You can steer yourself Any direction you choose.

You probably know that it was Theodor Seuss, better known as Dr. Seuss, who set down those immortal words in 1990, not long before he died. The book that contains them, Oh, the Places You’ll Go!, is much quoted by convocation speakers and much beloved as a graduation gift. Addressing young people just setting out, Geisel distilled a lifetime of reflections into his deceptively simple verses. But amid his glowing optimism (“You’ll be on your way up! You’ll be seeing great sights!”), he was careful to warn that “life is a Great Balancing Act” and “you will come to a place where the streets are not marked.”

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hey never planned it this way, but a year from now, Bertie Friedlander, 76, his daughter Wendy Scolnik, 49, and his granddaughter Michal Scolnik, 21, might graduate together.

They didn’t enroll together, though. Wendy, mother of three, registered first, shortly after she became a Canadian citizen. “I couldn’t go to university before because ... to finish their master’s degrees. “He’s going to leave me behind,” predicts Wendy. “He’s much more determined than I am.”

So far, father and daughter are leaving Michal in the dust. When it comes to academics, “I’m the slacker in the family,” says the third-year kinesiology major. Yet, she admits, “I’d like to go to grad school and possibly be a professor. I’ve grown to love the atmosphere of a university.” Her mother Wendy may try for a teaching degree next.

As for academics, “It’s a wonderful way of life,” says Bertie, who hasn’t dismissed the idea of pursuing a PhD. “Learning keeps you young.”

STUDENTS

Triple Treat

Three generations embrace lifelong learning at York
York anthropologist Kathryn Denning isn’t sure whether we are alone in the universe but she is certain about one thing: we’ll have a tough time talking to alien “others” if we ever hear from them. Denning first became interested in the hypothetical challenge of communicating with extraterrestrials at a meeting of the World Archaeological Congress. Her interest was piqued when she heard researchers debating the merits of basic math or simple pictures to construct interstellar messages. She argues that we shouldn’t assume these methods could work when there are peoples here on our own planet who can’t count or understand two-dimensional representations such as maps. “Language is all cultural, all arbitrary,” Denning says. “With archaeological cases here on Earth, deciphering an unknown script usually requires a familiar language, proper names of historical figures and bilingual or multilingual inscriptions.” As well as being a member of the World Archaeological Congress’s Space Heritage Task Force, Denning has presented papers at meetings of the non-profit SETI Institute (search for extraterrestrial intelligence).

By Iris Murdoch

In truth, I tend to read a lot of magazines. I find The New Yorker to be good bedtime reading these days because the articles are short and I can drop off at almost any time. For lengthier bouts, I’ve been reading Stephen Jay Gould’s The Hedgehog, the Fox and the Magister’s Pox. Mending the Gap Between Science and the Humanities. A worthy enterprise and something lots of us should read.”

Jennifer Jensen, e-game creator, professor of pedagogy and technology:

An Accidental Man
By Leo Tolstoy

An Accidental Man, a painful, but comic, novel of middle-class betrayals. In my kitchen I’m drooling over the recipes and pictures in an Italian cookbook entitled Florence which I experience in the abstract – look, read, but don’t attempt to make!”

Before students and professors lived at York, the Keele campus was a popular spot with ancient Aboriginal Peoples – in fact, for thousands of years. “It’s one of the top 10 archaeological sites in Ontario which is saying something,” says Ron Williamson of Archegological Services Inc.

The partially excavated Parsons site (as the dig on York’s campus boundary is known) revealed a village that was inhabited year-round by up to 2,000 people over a 20-year period. More than 300,000 artifacts have been recovered. “And there’s a lot more to come,” says Williamson.

When glaciers receded 11,000 years ago, Paleo-Indian populations (10,000-7,000 BC) began to move into Ontario, including the York site. They, along with descendants and other cultural groups, left behind a clear record of their lives with artifacts such as spear and arrow heads, pottery vessel fragments, beads, and remnants of their homes. The Ontario Iroquoian village dates from about 1450-1550. Villages were usually occupied for five to 30 years and would contain (as the Parsons site does) several cigar-shaped longhouses which sheltered up to 50 people.

What would attract Aboriginal Peoples to the area? “Rivers and their tributaries were a natural migration path for people and also afforded a source of water,” says Cathy Crinnon, archaeologist with Toronto and Region Conservation. “Riverine environments also attracted wildlife.” Parsons is among 170 known archaeological sites in Toronto.
A York scientist advances techniques for remote sensing

Imagine you’re a farmer with hundreds of acres of crops. Now you can know exactly what parts of your field need more (or less) water or fertilizer – right down to a single acre. Sound impossible? Not with the new emerging field of “precision farming.”

Enter York physics Professor John Miller, who works in the area of geomatics. Not too long ago Miller was in Spain with York PhD grad Pablo Zarco-Tejada mapping Spanish vineyards and olive groves from an airplane using the technique of remote sensing.

Miller is perhaps better known for his work around remote sensing of chlorophyll pigments in deciduous forests (precise inference of colour from leaves can give an indication of tree vigour and detect problems, he says). But the same techniques used to sustainably manage woodlots are also valuable to farmers.

The Spanish project came up as an offshoot of Miller’s work to improve the technology involved in precision farming. Says Miller: “We collect the data as accurately as possible, but we ultimately leave it up to other experts like ecologists or plant scientists on how to use it.”

AWARDS

A Steacie for York

Scientist Doug Crawford wins the prestigious prize

York scientist Doug Crawford is this year’s winner of the prestigious Steacie Prize, awarded to a promising young Canadian scientist or engineer who is 40 or under. Although the award began in 1964, this is York’s first Steacie. Other illustrious recipients have included Nobel Prize winning chemist John Polanyi (1965). The award is named in memory of E.W.R. Steacie, a physical chemist and former president of the National Research Council of Canada, who was instrumental in the development of science in Canada (and for whom York’s Steacie Science Library is named). Crawford is Canada Research Chair in Visual-Motor Neuroscience, associate director of York’s Centre for Vision Research, and a professor in the departments of Psychology, Biology and Kinesiology & Health Science. His lab is engaged in three areas of vision research: eye-hand coordination, 3-D gaze control, and trans-saccadic integration (piecing together perceptions across different gaze fixations).

CULTURE

Down the Hatch

A stirring history of the cocktail

While Christine Sismondo likes her martinis dry, the same can’t be said for her academic research. Sismondo is now putting the finishing touches to a 12 chapter book on – gulp – the history of the cocktail. “This will definitely be a fun book to read and use,” says Sismondo, humanities course director and York grad. The book, *Mondo Cocktail: A Shaken and Stirred History*, contains 12 chapters each centred around a different drink, from the Martini to the Bloody Mary.

Sismondo calls *Mondo*, due in October, a crossover book. “It’s not strictly academic, but it’s not pop culture either.” To write it, she drew on her experience both as an academic and a real-life bartender of many years, and uses cocktails to explore what they say about us as a culture from gan and The Age of Reason, to rum running and the fortune made on Prohibition. “It’s interesting when you think how much cocktail language has influenced culture,” says Sismondo. “There’s the cocktail dress, the cocktail hour and cocktail parties where people don’t even serve cocktails.”

Along with stories about cocktail lore and culture, Sismondo also serves up some drink trivia. For instance, if you want to buy the world’s most expensive cocktail you’ll have to fly to Paris, deep into the Ritz and order a Sidecar (it’s made with a rare 19th-century cognac that survived the Nazi occupation). Cost? “400 Euros,” says Sismondo.
ver had a few drinks too many, staggered home, climbed into bed and awoke to find the room spinning? Then you’ve just experienced your own vestibular illusion (vestibular referring to the inner ear’s gravity-sensing mechanism). Your brain goes crazy trying to sort out whether it’s you who are spinning, or the room – or both.

A common reaction to that sensation is to feel nauseous. To avoid getting sick, most people sit up (gravity helps the inner ear feel reoriented in space). Turning on the light helps, as well as perhaps touching a wall. Any of these techniques – all gravity cues – gives us a sign that our world is how we think it should be (upright, not spinning). But sight is our primary tool, and our most highly evolved sense. “We tend to pay attention to the sensory system that screams the loudest – like kids seeking attention,” explains Jim Zacher, a research associate with York’s Centre for Vision Research (CVR). Zacher helped build several “immersive environments” at York.

Immersive environments, or IEs, are used for a variety of experiments in vision, motion perception, and the relationship between vision and the organs of balance (inner ear).
For instance, an ongoing puzzle is how humans determine what’s “up” or “down”. “Vision is our primary sense for telling us where we are,” says Zacher. “But when you have strongly competing sensory information which disagrees, there will be problems with orientation. For instance, your eyes might tell you you’re up, but your vestibular system will be saying your head’s pointing down. So which do you trust? When sensory systems are at war it causes humans to make mistakes.” For space shuttle astronauts the contradictions in up and down can lead to disorientation and space sickness. With fighter pilots it can lead to fatal crashes.

**A Vision for Vision**

The puzzle of how humans see is what led Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus Ian Howard to establish the “Vision Group” – now the Centre for Vision Research – at York in the mid-1980s. York’s lab was then one of 12 in the world. For Howard, a professor of psychology and biology, the question of “what’s up?” has meant years of research into vision and how the brain interprets data and converts it from a stereo image (our two eyes) into a coherent 3-D picture of the world. To investigate the puzzles of perception, Howard built the first of the IEs on campus – called the Sphere – in 1986, well before the days of virtual reality.

“IEs are a popular technology now for scientific visualization, psychological research and task training for pilots and astronauts,” says Michael Jenkin, York computer science & engineering professor and CVR member.

Howard’s Sphere is like a giant golf ball painted on the inside with black dots on a white background; subjects sit on a tilting chair inside the ball which then rotates around them. In 1996, the Tumbling Room was built for perceptual experiments. NASA astronauts used the room for training prior to the 1998 Neurolab shuttle mission to help combat space sickness. Howard’s down-to-earth suggestion to NASA designers for minimizing Visual Reorientation Illusions (causing space sickness) was to design the shuttle so there’s a clear sense of up and down, and avoid making every wall a work surface. In other words, make it look like a place you’d live in. While NASA has funded his research, it has yet to take his advice, he says.

The latest jewel in CVR’s crown is IVY, or “Immersive Visual environment at York”. It’s a cube with computer-generated visual displays on all sides. Jenkin and his team members built it in 2002 for a fraction of what companies that actually make such virtual “caves” charge. York now has a solid 20 plus years of research in visual perception. And with the continual evolution of IE technology, that reputation shows no sign of diminishing.

**In the Beginning Was the Sphere**

Ian Howard’s giant rotating Sphere was a York’s pioneering “immersive environment”, built nearly 20 years ago. The interior is entirely white except for large black dots randomly placed on the surface. Subjects sit in the middle, strapped into a seat. The Sphere, the seat or both can be rotated around either a horizontal or vertical axis.

Before the days of virtual displays, the Sphere was an early foray into determining how much our sense of spatial orientation – up or down – was due to visual cues and how much came from vestibular (inner ear) or proprioceptor cues (pressure on areas like the back, buttocks or feet).

Unlike the newer Tumbling Room, which has a rich visual environment to suggest up and down (a chair, table, curtains, cups and saucers, a window, etc.), the Sphere has only polka dots. “Turning the Sphere rarely makes people feel as if they’ve turned completely upside down, but turning the furnished room makes people feel they have turned head over heels,” notes Howard. In the Sphere, it’s more a sensation of tilting.

**What Goes Around...**

...comes around with...
After the Sphere came the Tumbling Room, another immersive environment designed by Ian Howard. It’s an actual hand-built furnished room – a kitchen – that’s still in use. It looks like the real thing except in this room up, down and sideways can be deceiving. Which isn’t a problem really, because that’s just the way Centre for Vision Research experts wanted it. The room is the perfect place for York scientists from diverse disciplines such as biology, computer science, psychology and kinesiology to investigate the mysteries of human perception.

In the Tumbling Room, pictures, a clock and a bookcase are fixed to the wall. A table, chairs and two lifelike mannequins are screwed to the floor. Cups, bowls and cutlery are glued to the table. You are strapped into a padded chair and the room is rotated completely around your line of sight. Instead of seeing the room rotating, you feel that you have turned head over heels and the room has remained stationary.

An even more amazing illusion occurs when you are turned upside down in this upside-down room. You feel upright in an upright room even though your gravity sense organs are telling you that you are upside down. For most people, what they see overrides the conflicting information from the gravity sense organs.

Astronauts in space have only what they see to give them a sense of what is up and what is down. But their visual environment does not contain many familiar objects, so they often become disoriented and experience sudden reversals of their sense of up and down. The work on the Tumbling Room suggests that astronauts would have a stable sense of orientation if the visual environment were enriched.

The Tumbling Room proved so valuable in investigating human spatial orientation that NASA used it to train space shuttle astronauts. The Canadian Space Agency and NASA also funded Howard to conduct experiments in which astronauts aboard the space shuttle used a virtual reality version of the Tumbling Room. It has attracted attention in Europe as well: the BBC featured the room last year in the science segment of its Radio 4 program, “Leading Edge.”

IVY’S LEAGUE

Michael Jenkin is a can-do kind of guy. When the computer science and engineering professor first investigated the price for a virtual-reality room made by firms like CAVE and Fakespace, the price tag was just too high. “It was around half a million bucks,” he says. Jenkin decided the Centre for Vision Research could build its own room. Final price tag for IVY, Jenkin’s acronym for “Immersive Visual environment at York,” was about $100,000. There are only five others like it in the world, and none in Canada.

The six-sided, 8-ft-by-8-ft room has a three-inch-thick glass floor – made of the same specialized glass used in the CN Tower’s observation deck – that supports your weight. The walls are special high-tech mylar screens onto which images are rear-projected. Imaging is controlled by computer. The room can be used for space simulations, robotics and vision research.

Stereoscopic virtual-reality images can be created on all six sides of the room, floor and ceiling included, so up can be down and vice versa. Wearing special stereoscopic glasses, a person inside the room can experience effects like watching solid-looking balls whirl by, moving through the walls, or spiralling down a tunnel. The room also has the ability to recreate virtual scenes and objects so accurately that participants experience them as physically real.

The ability to study human perception in virtual environments can help prepare astronauts for the disorientation associated with zero-gravity environments. But IVY also has applications for such things as tele-operation (remote operation of robots). Other spin-offs could include applications for interior design, architecture, urban planning and even recreating crime scenes, where investigators can walk through the actual scene months later looking for things they might have missed. Jenkin, Howard and other York scientists might not crack the code of how humans see tomorrow, but you can bet they’ll keep on looking.
TWO MORE DIFFERENT young women you couldn’t find: Hina Khan, a Muslim from a privileged Pakistani family, and Miriam Yosowich, a Jew whose grandparents were refuseniks from the former Soviet Union. And when they enrol in 2002 in a third-year course at York called War and Peace in the Middle East, their politics are as different as their family backgrounds: Khan is defiantly pro-Palestinian; Yosowich is adamantly pro-Israeli.

Fast forward to one year later: the two political science students are practically joined at the hip—for a cause that will change their lives. But the next batch of students arriving in the same War and Peace course don’t know that as Khan and Yosowich face off at the front of the classroom.

The students see Khan, wearing a Muslim Allah pendant, seated on the table at the front of the room. She’s scrawled the words “Israel Fest” on the blackboard behind her. Then they see Yosowich, wearing a Jewish Star of David, saunter past Khan and stop. “What’s this?” Yosowich asks. “It’s Israel Fest,” replies Khan. “Do you know how many Palestinians are suffering by the day?” demands Yosowich. Khan snaps back. “Do you know how many Israeli civilians are suffering by the day?” They start to argue and shoot until a third student, James Murayama, intervenes. “Stop, ladies!” he says. “What is this going to accomplish?” They stare at him as he launches into a pitch for something called Shalom Salam.

It’s a new club, he explains, named for the Hebrew and Arabic words for “peace” and designed to stimulate dialogue, quell tensions and promote peace on campus. When he finishes, the young women tell the students they were reverse role-playing. “We need to put ourselves in each other’s shoes,” says Khan. “We’re not going to solve anything by yelling at each other in hallways at York.” The class cheers and applauds.

“That was a defining moment,” says Khan now. Since that September day in 2003, Shalom Salam has recruited more than 200 members and made headlines on and off campus, due to York’s unique student peace group is a welcome force on the Canadian university scene and in the broader community.

“People are tired of the ongoing conflict,” says Yosowich. “We respect people’s right to be heard, but we want to make a difference in the student atmosphere. We want people to come together and heal from the difficult past. Our goal is to say, “Come, sit down, listen.” We would never ask people to change their opinion but just to listen to our views, to see how we’re for peace.”

So what happened to Yosowich and Khan in that intervening year? A lot of it had to do with Professor Saeed Rahnema, an Iranian exile who teaches the popular War and Peace in the Middle East course. “Prof. Rahnema opened my eyes to a wider view,” says Yosowich. Like most of their 110 classmates, Khan and Yosowich entered the class with biases and exited with an appreciation of the complexity of the conflict. The spectacular end-of-the-year, in-class debate revealed, however, that some students remained entrenched in opposing camps. Rahnema encouraged the class to continue the dialogue. In a flurry of summer e-mails, Khan and Yosowich emerged as the keystone to take up the challenge. Together with a few other enthusiasts, they formed Shalom Salam and began recruiting, in class and around the University. “We knew we had something that had the potential to be great,” says Yosowich. “We felt strongly that we could make peace on campus.”

As co-presidents, Khan and Yosowich head a nine-person executive consisting equally of pro-Israelis and pro-Palestinians. Vice-president Murayama is the tie breaker. The Japanese-Canadian they call The Swiss “makes us unique,” says Khan. “He’s the objective one, the balancer.” Ever the ambassador, he’s also tirelessly pitched Shalom Salam to one campus group after another, inviting their members to attend the peace club’s forums and socials.

It took the club a year of weekly meetings to hammer out a constitution and strict rules of conduct, but only three months to organize its first event, a forum called “Peace Is Possible.” More than 300 showed up to hear guest speaker Michael Bell, former Canadian ambassador to the Middle East. Promoting the event thrust Khan and Yosowich into the media limelight. They were interviewed by the student press, by CBC Radio’s “Metro Morning,” by the Toronto Star. Membership in Shalom Salam swelled and the co-presidents’ daytimers filled up with speaking engagements at schools and community centres around Metro Toronto.

Last December, the Star gave them a year-end laurel for promoting understanding between Jews and Muslims. And out of the blue, the Toronto Women’s Intercultural Network invited Mayor David Miller to present Khan and Yosowich with the 2004 International Women’s Day Award.
for their contributions to peace. So impressed were two of the key negotiators of the Geneva Accord (the possible template for peace in the Middle East) that Nazmi Al-Jubeh and Menachem Klein interrupted a speaking tour in the United States to speak at York in January this year. “You have our complete admiration for achieving what Palestinian and Israeli representatives have failed to achieve, and that is peace,” Al-Jubeh told the sold-out crowd, who’d braved a snowstorm to come out.

Peace sounds so reasonable. Yet members of Shalom Salam have met unexpected resistance from peers, faculty and even parents entrenched on one side or the other. “We try to remain as neutral as possible,” says Khan. “We’re not here to make people happy. We’re here to present an alternative. Sometimes people come up to me and say: ‘No justice, no peace.’ I say to them: ‘No peace, no justice.’” Murayama says: “The resistance only spurs us on to reach out more and do a better job.”

Racist experiences also fuel the two presidents’ crusade for peace. Post 9/11, Khan, who was born and raised in Toronto, discerned an Islamophobia she’d never noticed before: vandals desecrated mosques; a hijab-wearing Muslim woman was punched on a bus. When Yosowich was 11 and going to school in Germany, an anti-Semitic youth pushed her down the stairs. She was so badly injured she couldn’t return to school for six months. Her family left for a safer Canada.

Both Khan and Yosowich graduated this year. After two intense years promoting peace on campus – and beyond – they’ve become masters of diplomacy and the best of friends. Neither can imagine relinquishing Shalom Salam. “It’s changed my life,” says Khan, who sees a career in mediation ahead of her. “Making the connection between cultures and races has been more important than having a part-time job,” says Yosowich, who hopes for a future in international law. But first, she plans to go to graduate school and study peace theory, conflict resolution and women’s contribution to world peace. “That’s what Hina and I do. We are peacemakers.”

“Sometimes people come up to me and say: ‘No justice, no peace.’ I say to them: ‘No peace, no justice.’”
ork’s student radio station, CHRY 105.5 FM, used to broadcast from Room 258 in Vanier College. If it had been anywhere else, Matt Galloway might not be the current host of CBC Radio’s “Here and Now” and “In Performance – The World.” Galloway discovered CHRY shortly after he arrived at York in 1989. He and a friend were listening to the station’s fundraising efforts, called in to give a donation and ended up talking on air. “A week after I got to York,” says Galloway, “I started at the radio station.” It would become his favourite hangout and a fertile training ground for the future broadcaster and world music aficionado.

To an 18-year-old from rural Ontario who used to drive two hours just to shop at Toronto’s legendary Record Peddler, finding CHRY must have been like washing up on Treasure Island. Here was free access to 100,000 songs, a whole world of music at his fingertips. “I changed the way I listened to music and approached culture.”

Galloway grew up in Kimberley, an Ontario village south of Georgian Bay. With savings from waiting tables at a local ski resort, the son of an electrician and a teacher enrolled at York, keen to live in the big city. “What was appealing about York, even back then, was its diversity. I got to see different angles on things, I got to read different styles of literature.” Restless, intensely curious and easily bored, the English literature student veered from the traditional canon to study post-colonial literature, African-American and Korean culture, women’s fiction, war and peace in the nuclear age: “I had a great time. I learned loads of stuff I’d convinced I wouldn’t have learned elsewhere.” He stretched four into five years and graduated in 1994 on the dean’s honour roll. He thought he’d do an MA and PhD and become a prof.

But music proved a more powerful siren. After he graduated, Galloway remained as music director at CHRY for three years. At the same time, he landed a job writing for Toronto’s alternative weekly NOW. For the next eight years, he covered the city’s popular music scene, wrote about new technology and the Internet, and followed international soccer and cricket. “It was excellent. The way the paper works is you don’t have to be a specialist. If you have an interest in something, they encourage you to write about it.”

Avid CBC listeners may be aware that the chatty, quick and uniquely plugged-in Galloway didn’t just burst onto the airwaves as Avril Benoit’s replacement last year. While still writing for NOW, he tantalized audiences of “Brave New Waves”, “Global Village” and “Definitely Not The Opera” with tunes he’d discovered from Africa, Asia and Latin America. He guest hosted a variety of arts and entertainment shows and even covered cricket matches for “CBC National Sports”, demonstrating the kind of scope and on-air poise the national broadcaster looks for.

“Here and Now” takes Galloway off his usual musical track. He provides Toronto’s daily afternoon commuters with traffic and weather updates, and interviews local newsmakers. But Friday nights Galloway, now 34, settles back into a more familiar groove. As host of CBC Radio Two’s “In Performance – The World”, he airs concerts by international artists who perform on Canadian stages, from the Senegalese Orchestra Baobab to the Brazilian guitarist Celso Machado, from gospel singers to jazz virtuosos. For Galloway, thirsty for musical and cultural novelty, Toronto couldn’t be more intoxicating. “You’re a fool if you ignore the variety this city has to offer,” says the man who will cross the city to get some Ethiopian bread. And what better medium to share his global Toronto adventure than radio, one intriguing conversation, one musical discovery after another: “It’s a great opportunity to tell people about things I might have access to they don’t. It’s why I read newspapers, magazines, books. It’s why I talk to friends about theatre, about film, about music. Because I also want them to turn me on to something I’m not exposed to.”

Y
If there’s one thing there’s no shortage of in Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus Gordon G. Shepherd’s office, it’s paper. Paper in the form of textbooks both old and modern, essays, reports, scientific treatises, journals, certificates, awards, posters, photographs and pretty much anything else you could think of. Papers are piled on his desk, spill from boxes, or are lodged atop file cabinets. In short, it’s a classic prof’s office.

This isn’t to say that Shepherd, who’s now officially retired, hasn’t joined the computer age. He owns a very nice one. Asked about his paper overload, Shepherd says he’s seriously thinking of buying a document scanner. “I think it would really help, you know?”

An atmospheric physicist by trade, Shepherd specializes in the design and development of instruments carried into space. He has spent a large part of his career developing methods for remote space-based atmospheric observation, working on projects such as WINDII (Wind Imaging Interferometer). WINDII flew on NASA’s Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite. Shepherd has also worked on SWIFT, a stratospheric wind interferometer. It’s expected to fly on a future Canadian space satellite.

“I’ve had the same office for 35 years,” says Shepherd. That’s a lot of time and, as any office dweller knows, stay in one place long enough and chances are you collect memories and memorabilia. Shepherd is no exception and is quite proud of a gift from Chinese scientists of a scale model of China’s recent manned spacecraft. Then there’s the paper model of an early shuttle made by his son.

Along with a collection of coffee “space” mugs (featuring various logos from different scientific programs of the past), he has a collection of old engravings from Finland (early 1900s) of the Aurora Borealis – fitting for someone who discovered the Aurora was spectacularly red in colour on the dayside of Earth.

For now, Shepherd has no immediate plans to quit working on his scientific pursuits – or move out of his office. But he is looking into that scanner.
hen theatre director Jillian Keiley reads a script, she envisions the entire play in precise detail—
every actor’s move, every word of dialogue, each of the sets and costumes. All come together in a
kaleidoscope of influences in her mind. It’s a very special gift, one that she has turned into an
intriguing style of performance she calls “kaleidography” – a unique, mathematical and music-
based choreography and directing system. Now her gift has turned out to be lucrative as well. For
her work in Canadian theatre and her creation of kaleidography, Keiley received the Elsinoe and Lou Siminovitch Prize in Theatre for 2004. The $100,000 award is the most generous arts prize in the country.

The praise was generous, too. Her work with Artistic Fraud, the St. John’s, Nfld.-based theatre group she
founded, was described by the Siminovitch jury as “startlingly original and radically imaginative.” Keiley, who
graduated from York with a BFA in theatre in 1994, was selected from a shortlist of five candidates, chosen in turn
from 59 of the country’s top directors, the largest number of nominees ever to be considered for this award. The
five-member panel said she was a “visionary, innovative artist whose experiments with form and content have
cultural results for audiences and performers alike.”

Things weren’t always as focused for the 30-something director, who admits to failing her fair share of university
assignments because she wrote about every aspect of the plays she studied. “I wanted to include it all,” she chuckles.
She credits her education at York, and, in particular, the guidance she received from the late Professor Anatol Schlosser, for much of her development. There, and in an earlier stint at Memorial University in St. John’s, she
gained the foundation to create her unique brand of theatre and the courage to go with her all-encompassing vision
of how a play should be staged. With her professors’ support, she relentlessly pursued what made each script work.
She put in tremendous amounts of extra time, often working until the wee hours of the morning, to break the plays
down into units and then reconstruct them into cohesive works.

She landed her share of parts in plays—once she was cast in Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream “because
I was the tallest,” says Keiley, who tops six feet. But it was the mystery behind making a script come to life that
fascinated her, and she realized she preferred directing. She became enamoured of the dynamics of how a group of
unrelated actors band together to produce a cohesive, powerful representation of each script.

“I was fascinated by what I was learning,” she says. “I loved the precision and perfection of commedia dell’arte.
How do actors know when to catch another actor when that actor falls? While at York, I did a piece trying to
duplicate the technique and it was terrible. I went to Anatol and asked ‘Why can’t I get this right?’ and he told me
that it is because the actors are families and they have this connection. ‘You can’t impose that on actors,’ he said, and
I looked at him and said, ‘Oh yes I can!’”

Keiley pursued her understanding of ensemble theatre, working to develop that elusive sense of family in her own
theatre group. She returned to her roots in St. John’s, and it was there, in the city’s thriving theatre community, that
she created a company called Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland – originally a joke subsidiary of the Artistic Fraud
company she’d founded at York with fellow student and now guest professor Chris Tolley. Over the past decade, she
has successfully nurtured the company into the artistic family she so craved. With the support of that family, her
work in kaleidography has been the recipient of tremendous critical acclaim.

“It is really almost impossible to describe the effect,” she says of her unique form. “In the theatre, what you play
with is time. Our company builds the shows into units, and we have smaller units inside of them.” The
kaleidography technique, she says, creates a three-dimensional experience by infusing the units with acting, moving
and blocking techniques which are all based in a precisely-timed choreography. Combined with large casts and
music that is chorally driven, the resulting effect is a spectacular symphony of colour, movement and sound—
everything Keiley first envisioned a play should be.

Her company is called Artistic Fraud, but Jillian Keiley is the real deal.

BY JENNY PITT-CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL DALY
Don Drew
Innovative charity supporter

A Discount for Good

Life was good for the Drews five years ago. Don (BA ’79) was a government buyer. Diana (BFA ’87) taught voice and sang in her own jazz band. They had two little kids, a nice house, great friends. Then a shadow passed over their sunny world. Diana was diagnosed with thyroid and breast cancer. From Diana’s first day in hospital, volunteers swooped in to help the shaken couple. “They were keeping our lives together,” says Don. Grateful, he began asking retail, sports and entertainment businesses if they would give discounts to the volunteers and organizations that helped them.

The response was so enthusiastic that last June in Markham, Ont., Don launched Care Unlimited with great fanfare. Diane also relaunched her singing career. Don now lists over 170 suppliers in Ontario on the organization’s Web site (www.careunlimited.ca) and hopes to go national in three years. Charities are scooping up the $2.50 volunteer “advantage” cards. Like Don, they recognize that “selfless volunteers are the real heroes in society.”

Bryna Wasserman
Novelist

A Gothic Odyssey

Mix one part horror with equal parts of love,evil and the supernatural and the result is York alumna Bryna Wasserman’s new book The Naked Island. Set initially in a small Ontario community, the book takes the reader on a global odyssey to the Far East as it documents one young woman’s journey toward self-discovery.

Much of The Naked Island is a reflection of Wasserman’s own life experiences, including her travels to exotic locales and the ghostly presence she says inhabited her family home on the shores of Lake Erie.

Described by critics as a “delicious gothic travelogue”, the book took Wasserman 10 years to complete. Along the way, she enrolled in creative writing and English studies at York, earning a BA in 1995. “The professors and the program at York taught me to relax and go with the writing process – to let it happen,” says Wasserman. The results have been worth it. The Naked Island has received stellar reviews in the mainstream media and is in demand by Canadian booksellers, leaving Wasserman to embark on her next odyssey – her second novel. 

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACH TouHOUK
Dirk Bendiak
Brewmaster

In an industry where the currency is a single-celled organism, Dirk Bendiak could be called the head of bank security. Bendiak, who got his doctorate in biology from York in 1980, is a Molson brewmaster, responsible for ensuring that each bottle of Molson beer meets the brewery’s tough standards. Working with yeast and malt extract, he oversees a highly regimented and complex system to produce over 50 brands of beer. The company has five variations of yeast, including two Molson originals, kept under lock and key.

From the estery light ales to the heartier dark beers, Bendiak says he finds the entire process of brewing beer endlessly fascinating. “There’s the mystery of putting yeast into a big vessel and 20 out of 21 times the beer is perfect,” he laughs. “It’s what that little microbe can do in those big vessels; the challenge of working with raw materials which have natural variations; and what good old Mother Nature does with the whole process that I find intriguing.” He and his staff taste each batch, daily. “Yeast is like gold,” he says. “It is what makes beer what it is.”

Andrew Hall
Club owner

When Andrew Hall (BA ’85) suddenly lost his comfortable computer-purchasing job at 33, he spent a year ruminating on what he loved most. He recalled playing live music with his two older brothers in the wood-paneled basement of his central Toronto home. Sometimes his celebrity uncle, hockey Hall, then Host of TV’s “Let’s Make a Deal”, would stop in for a listen as the boys covered songs by the Stones, Bob Dylan and the Band.

Hall decided to make his passion for “jamming,” his livelihood. Knowing nothing about the club business, he opened Toronto’s Downtown Jam. Now, eight years in and just beginning to turn a profit, Downtown Jam provides, he says, a “mental health service” to dozens of weekly members who are also CEOs, cops, stockbrokers, lawyers, even stay-at-home moms. Key-boaesthetic and former Ontario premier Bob Rae is a member. Hall organizes evening jams based on members’ abilities and tastes — music of the ‘60s and ‘70s is big — and slots them into one of the club’s three soundproofed rooms.

“The club is not a means to an end — it’s an end in itself,” says Hall. “It’s about eating and having fun. When you put people together and watch them form relationships or see them play their first Beatles song — tell me how to make a better living than that.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RSQUARED
Remember your days at York. And enter to win!

York University’s 50th Anniversary is coming soon – in 2009! Think back on your time at York and send us your stories, memories or pictures that made it special.

You’ll be contributing to the history of York University – PLUS, you’ll be automatically entered into our Giving Back contest – and you could win a Platinum Seats at the Finals of the 2005 Rogers Cup international women’s tennis championships on Sunday, Aug. 21, 2005, at the Rexall Centre at York University.

Or

a Kodak EasyShare DX7630 digital camera

AANNDD  PPHHOOTTOOSS  TTOO::

You’ll be winning a York Alumni gift package worth $50, which includes a York University 50th Anniversary mug, a scarf and a YUAA bumper sticker

For details on the award categories, see the list below. For more information, visit www.yorku.ca/alumni or call 1-866-876-2228 for a nomination form.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION: Has shown dedication to the advancement of York through exceptional service, commitment and/or contributions.

LOCAL HERO: One who is also a current or former employee of York University and who has risen above the call of duty in his/her devotion to York. This award will recognize achievements, leadership, early accomplishments and/or contributions.

GREAT MEMORIES: An alumni story, memory or picture that makes York University special to you.

YPHOTO OF THE YEAR: An alumni story, memory or picture that captures the spirit of York University.

REDEFINING THE POSSIBLE: An alumni story, memory or picture that exemplifies York University’s tagline, “Redefine the Possible.”

The Awards

The revamped Bryden awards will be presented to a York alumni or alumna with these attributes:

Pinnacle Achievement: Has achieved true distinction in his/her professional life or in any field of endeavour and who, by his/her integrity and ability, inspires alumni, faculty, staff and students.

One-to-One Watch: Has made remarkable professional and/or community accomplishments early in his/her career (within 15 years of receiving a bachelor’s degree or 10 years of receiving a professional/graduate degree).

Redeﬁne the Possible: One whose leadership and successes – innovative, unconventional, during – embody York’s tagline “Redefine the Possible.”

The York University Alumni Association (YUAA) is currently seeking nominations for this year’s awards, which will be presented in November. “We want to hear about the whole range of York alumni – every Faculty, every discipline, whether they graduated in the 1960s or just last year,” says Nagaub Gouda, executive director, Alumni and Advancement Services.

“Nominations are open until Aug. 21, so we’re looking forward to reading about some of the truly extraordinary things that York alumni have been doing.”

The awards are named in honour of Bruce Bryden, a member of York’s first undergraduate class and founding president of the YUAA. Bryden also served for 20 years on York’s Board of Governors until his untimely death in 1992.

The YUAA held the first Bryden Alumni Awards in 2000. This year, the YUAA is introducing two new awards and revamping a few of its categories for the 2005 event. “We want the Brydens to capture the innovative spirit of York,” says Gary Burry, the recently elected Chair of the YUAA board. “Our alumni are remarkably diverse and they’ve achieved so many different kinds of success, we concluded it was time to update the awards to reflect that.”

For details on the award categories, see the list below. Here’s what nominators should submit: a detailed letter specifically addressing the criteria for the award, the candidate’s resumé or curriculum vitae (if possible), and three letters of support. All nominations are confidential.

Remember your days at York. And enter to win!

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YorkU
Glendon) is consul and senior trade commissioner at the Canadian Consulate in Munich, Germany. (BA Glen-
Charbonneau, Stephane 1986 (née Lalomia) (BA Cawker, Ruth 1997 in instructor at the British Columbia Institute of Technology's School of Business.
Edwards, Carol (BA Vanier) is working at IBM Canada in software sales, with a US-based clientele. She married her university sweetheart Tom in Oct. 2003, and they live in Toronto.
Perri-Tsingis, Giulia (BA Hons. Vanier) is married and has a 3-year-old son, Killian. Busy with family and working at home, she is almost finished her teaching & training adults certificate through Durham College.
Cacho, Nadean (BA Spec. Hons. Hons. Calumet) is a professor of English and women's studies at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif. Her research examines how public figures have been used as metaphors for the negotiation of cultural and racial differences in American culture since the 19th century.
Munroe Hotes, Catherine (BFA Calumet) is a pastor at the Grace Bible Church in Apsley, Ont. She was published in 2004. Valerie lives in the northeast of England with sons Dave and Dan.
Rowan, Stephen M. (BA Spec. Hons. Hons. Bethune) is owner of D.G. Cunningham & Assoc. in Lindsay, Ont., an environmental consulting firm specializing in natural resources issues related to land development. David is married with three children.
Kripalani, Anil N. (BA) is an attorney at law for Fitzgerald Abbott & Birdsong LLP in Oakland, Calif.
Bromer, Allen (BA Hons. Vanier) has recently been awarded his second Hon (degree) karate black belt. Owner-operator of an international crisis intervention and management consultancy, Allen lives in Toronto with his wife of 25 years, Lorna Jackson, who has two boys, Michael and Christian.
Glinister, Catherine (KA '76, PhD) is the author of the fiction novel Seduction (Knopf Canada, 2005) and Too Close to the Falls (ECW Press, 1995), a humorous memoir of her childhood. Too Close was a Trillium award nominee, won the Different Drummer award, and was on the Globe and Mail's best sellers list for 24 weeks.
Pery, Erz (BA Winter) is married with three boys and lives in Israel. She is the manager and owner of a small store that exports a fashion business that produces handmade-hand and hand-made printed fashion knits.
Bouchard, Johanne (BSc Bethune) is an executive director and advisor for marketing executives, international executives and entrepreneurs. She is president of BDS (Bouchard On Strategic Services), www.bds.ca.
Davies-Gillis, Elizabeth (BA Stong) has developed an innovative Yoga Teacher Training Program at Wajiru Laird University, Waterloo, Ont.
Murti, Michael (BA McLaughlin, MA) is an associate partner with a global financial services firm. He has held positions with three banks and is now the CEO of a private company.
Andrews, John (BA '89, BA Bethune) is a former Canadian diplomat and former Canadian ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran. He was appointed as the first Canadian ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2005. He is now the Canadian ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.
Redublo, Arthur (BA Hons. Stong) is a labor lawyer at the Tsawwassen Business & Technology Centre.
Munroe Hotes, Catherine (BFA Calumet) is a professor of political science at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ont. Her daughter, Sarah, is now a student at the University of Alberta.

works full-time (for the past 11 years) in the book industry.

St-Cyr, Olivier (BA Hons. Glendon) is engaged to Tu Lean Young (BA ’10 Calumet) and they plan to get married within the next year. They met at York while attending a third-year social science class. Olivier will be completing his PhD at the University of Toronto in April 2006.

2003

Castellano, Jennifer (BA Calumet) relocated to New York City in Aug. 2004 to complete a masters degree in occupational therapy at New York University.

Hare, Lindsay (BSc Spec. Hons. Atkinson) is a part-time clinical course director with York’s School of Nursing.

2002


2003

Allen, Venice (BA Atkinson) is doing a post-degree certificate in-additions counselling.

Baumgartner, Andrew (NBA ’95, LLB ’95, BEd) is marrying Lindsay Newman on July 30, 2005, in Fredericton, NB. Classmates can get in touch at andrew.n.baumgartner@sympatico.ca.

Curran, Matthew (BA Hons. ’98) is a nuclear operator for Ontario Power Generation. She recalls a York lecture in Physics 1410 that mentioned nuclear reactors (specifically CANDU) and how they work. She became fascinated with them, even though only 15 minutes of discussion was spent on them.

In Memoriam

Ross (Silverman), Gerald M., (BA ’72 Winters), better known as Jerry, lost his battle with bladder cancer at age 55, peacefully at home in Victoria, BC, on Feb. 15, 2005. He is survived by his best friend and wife of 12 years, Helene, who says Jerry’s legacy is: just by knowing him, your life was indescribably better.

2002

Cortes, Rafael (EMBA) is the trade commissioner of Mexico in Toronto. His mandate includes promoting business from Mexico to Canada and direct foreign investment in Mexico.

Storey, April Lynn (BSc, Bethune) is a nuclear operator for Ontario Power Generation. She recalls a York lecture on the “true extent of Stalin’s atrocities, which had resulted in the deaths of millions of people. But the revelations destroyed my parents’ faith in the party, and within a year they left the LPP along with about half the members of the party.”

...such was the passion for fanning the flames of anti-Communist hysteria. His famous speech in February 1950, talking about Communists in the State Department, struck a chord among Americans who were worried about internal subversion. He began receiving fresh material from J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI. For the next five years, McCarthy’s witch hunt gave rise to alarm and paranoia in the United States before elements of the political establishment finally decided that the demagogic had to be stopped.

In my family, it was another Joseph who had pride of place. Joseph Stalin, the first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, had been leader of the struggle to which my parents had devoted their lives for the previous two decades. My father, the son of an orthodox rabbi, had been won over to the Communist cause in the early 1930s, while a student at McGill University. For him the Communists alone appeared willing to stand up unflinchingly against the threat of the Nazis and fascists. And they symbolized the promise of a world without exploitation of workers by bosses in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. My mother, the daughter of a Protestant clergyman who had spent 35 years as a missionary in China, had found her own way to Communism.

When I was a kid, my father worked full-time for the Labour Progressive Party, the name the Communist Party took for itself during the 1950s. He was committed while Stalin was in power. In truth, the revelations barely touched on the true extent of Stalin’s atroci-ties, which had resulted in the deaths of millions of people. But the revelations destroyed my parents’ faith in the party, and within a year they left the LPP along with about half the members of the party.

In our era as in the 1950s, the world is torn by clashing belief systems. Especially in the United States, fear of Communism has been replaced by fear of terrorism. And just as the early 1950s was the climax of the Cold War, and in Canada, as south of the border, fear of the reds was at its height.

Tuesday, July 20

the Toronto I grew up in 50 years ago has changed beyond recognition from the cautious, colourless, Protestant city of my childhood. But the first decade of the 21st century does resemble those distant days in one alarming way. The 1950s was an age of clashing belief systems, and consequently of fear, as is the era in which we live. People get caught in the middle of these conflicts, as I did during my own childhood. The early 1950s was the climax of the Cold War, and in Canada, as south of the border, the fear of the reds was at its height.

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The New Age of Fear

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In our era as in the 1950s, the world is torn by clashing belief systems. Especially in the United States, fear of Communism has been replaced by fear of terrorism. And just as the red scare opened the way for assaults on civil liberties, fear of terror has fueled the incarceration of people who have been charged with no offence. Beyond the legitimate concern to prevent attacks like those of Sept. 11, 2001, a surveillance state takes shape, so that the communications, and even the reading habits, of large numbers of people are vetted.

Fifty years ago, it was people’s political associations that were marshalled to blackball them. Today, a person’s religion, ethnic origin and place of birth can be used, with the same devastating effect.