Northern Light

How writer Joseph Boyden found the path that led to the Giller Prize

PLUS

York’s elegant 50th birthday
Barry Callaghan on Atkinson’s early years
The art sharks
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THE MAGAZINE OF YORK UNIVERSITY

**SUMMER 2009**

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**Cover Photography: Jeff Kirk**
Visions of Atkinson. BY BERTON WOODWARD

Night and Day

In my observation, old English professors never fade away – they just keep writing. So it is with not-so-old Barry Callaghan, a magical Canadian writer who also bears a magical name (his father was Morley Callaghan, another of Canada’s greats). Barry Callaghan spent 37 years as an English professor at York, based in what began as Atkinson College, became the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies and, as of July 1, will join with the Faculty of Arts to create the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies. This transition coincides with York’s 50th anniversary, also covered in this issue, a time of looking back and looking ahead.

So it seemed natural to turn to Callaghan for a look at the early days of Atkinson, which was founded just three years after York itself began in 1959. You can read Callaghan’s vivid memoir on page 18.

But that is hardly all he’s writing these days. He has just launched his latest novel, Beside Still Waters (McArthur & Co., 2009), a well-reviewed love story that ranges around the globe. What seems to have tickled him most, however, is the fact that his nearly 600-page autobiographical opus, Barrelhouse Kings (1998) has now been translated into Italian. As we finalized the YorkU piece, he was preparing to go to Italy for that launch, somewhat to his amazement.

To illustrate Callaghan’s work, we have made use of two Atkinson posters from times past. One comes with a story attached. On page 19, you’ll find the striking, literally dark rendition of a guy in a car and a slightly mysterious young woman, under the headline “University at Night”. Those of us who have seen this poster, which has survived in framed versions in at least two offices on campus, have marvelled at how freewheeling York must have been in the 1970s to approve such a delightfully self-mocking, not to mention suggestive, piece of promotion. “It was the times,” we’d say to each other.

Er, not quite. It turns out that Robert Fothergill, then a colleague of Callaghan’s in the Atkinson English Department and later a York theatre professor, approached his friend Charles Pachter, the renowned Canadian artist, about doing a poster. Pachter had other commitments, so he recycled the nighttime image from his existing work. The poster was printed, but Barry Callaghan recalls in his memoir. Much of York's history and the development of the university is inseparable from the history of Atkinson College.

The American poet Oliver Wendell Holmes, as in what is one of the most famous quotes in the history of journalism, said, “In my opinion, the press is the very life of a free government.” And what is a university if not a free environment for ideas to flourish?

There are still challenges, notably the financial crisis, for instance, is showing no sign of abating in the near future. But that is not to say that York University is in crisis. In fact, it is at a moment of transition, as the new administration and the new president, Mamdouh Shoukri, work to redefine the university and its role in society.

Convocation, the moment when students are awarded their degrees, is a time to look back with pride and forward with hope. For York, there is no more gratifying sight.

Send letters, submissions, comments and ideas to editor@yorku.ca.
Despite a challenging year, we have much to be proud of. BY MAMDOUH SHOUKRI

Coming Together

It’s hard at this time of year not to be optimistic. The days are long and the air is sweet – the weather cannot help but make you feel truly alive. On a university campus in late spring, there is another, more obvious sign that all is right with the world: students robed for convocation. For the faculty and staff of a university, there is no more gratifying sight.

Convocation means that a university is sending its graduates out into the world to share what they have learned through years of study and research. For their families, it is a time to look back with pride and forward with hope.

Convocation is, by definition, a calling together. And at York, at this time, we must heed this call. We must come together as a community, as a family. Students, faculty and staff – we all have York University attached to our names and identities. It is part of who we are. So it only makes sense to build the kind of university we want, and to treat each other as we want to be treated.

This has been a challenging year, in more ways than one: a lengthy labour disruption, the difficult economic climate and student behaviour that has been, at times, less than collegial. Despite these challenges, however, we have much to be proud of at York.

One of my priorities is to help rebuild a sense of community, and I believe that dialogue is key. In addition, I have struck the Task Force on Student Life, Learning & Community to review concerns about the student environment on the York campuses. It will examine the broad spectrum of student life, the learning environment and student community at York University, with special attention to the relationships between and among students, as well as between students and other parts of the community.

There are still challenges, to be sure; the global financial crisis, for instance, is showing few signs of letting up. But the important thing is not so much where we stand, to paraphrase the American poet Oliver Wendell Holmes, as in what direction we are moving, and I believe that York is moving in the right direction.

Our goal at York is to educate citizens of the world who are able to participate in the life of their times. What gives me the most pleasure about participating in convocation ceremonies is knowing that our graduates take with them not only a body of knowledge and the ability to think critically, but the values and spirit of this place.

York is a dynamic University, still young and still evolving; we have great strengths and even greater potential. The only way to reach that potential is to bring together the entire York community – students, staff, faculty, alumni and their families. Together we can build on our 50 years of success, and look to the next 50 full of hope and confidence.

Mamdouh Shoukri is York’s president and vice-chancellor.
It’s been dubbed “aquatic osteoporosis.” Whatever you call it, loss of calcium in soft-water boreal lakes could spell trouble for already beleaguered freshwater resources. York biology Professor Norman Yan and grad Adam Jeziorski (MSc ’05), now a Queen’s University doctoral student, along with their York/Queen’s research team, have been studying 700 lakes in Ontario, northern New York state and Nova Scotia to find out how the changing chemistry is affecting lake ecosystems. The results of their study were recently published in the journal *Science*.

“Our study focused on a water flea known as daphnia. It’s a key link in the food chain in lakes,” says Yan. Calcium is an essential nutrient for all lake-dwelling organisms, he says. Daphnia eat tiny algae and other tiny organisms, keeping our lakes clean, but the fleas absorb their calcium from the lake water. The daphnia are, in turn, eaten by larger aquatic predators such as fish that also have high calcium demands.

“The problem is when calcium decline transforms the aquatic food web,” says Yan. “Daphnia are like canaries in the coal mine, and if they are in trouble, chances are other, larger calcium-rich animals like crayfish, fish and mollusks, not to mention animals such as loons that depend on them, are also in trouble. The problem will likely worsen if we don’t manage our forests sustainably.” Yan and colleagues link calcium decline to the long-term effect of acid rain on soils, which depletes calcium levels in runoff.

Yan says we can still slow or even reverse the situation. “The problem of calcium decline can be reversed with further reductions in sulphur dioxide emissions in North America and better logging practices. We have solved enormous environmental problems in the past, and we have the knowledge to solve this too. The question is, do we have the will?”

Photography by Lindsay Lozon
What They’re Reading

York people reveal what’s on the bedside table

William Denton
Web librarian, York Libraries

I reread a lot of fiction. It’s nice to visit old friends again. Recently I reread Anthony Powell’s 12-book sequence *A Dance to the Music of Time*, one of the best things ever written in English. To honour the late Donald Westlake I’m rereading what he wrote as Richard Stark about the remorseless professional thief Parker. Today I’m on *Slagyard*. For non-fiction, next up is Chris Turney’s *Ice, Mud and Blood: Lessons from Climates Past*, about paleoclimatology. Natural historic climate change has much to tell us about what humans are causing now.

Don Thompson
Marketing professor emeritus, Schulich School of Business

I am halfway through *The Brain that Changes Itself*, about the revolution occurring in the field of neurology – that the brain is not hardwired early in life, unable to adapt, but has lifelong “plasticity”, and that neurological disease and the aging process can be treated and reversed. Author Norman Doidge is a psychiatrist at Columbia University, and the book is full of rich case histories. I just finished *Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business* by Jeff Howe, as background to my own next book. It is a fascinating description of how communities of interest like Google and Wikipedia can innovate, write and run business initiatives more effectively than traditional organizations.

Eye on a Cure

Can Pac-Man fix a common vision problem?

It’s a novel idea – use a computer game to help cure what’s known as convergence insufficiency (CI), an inability to maintain effortless alignment of both eyes. Computer engineering Professor Robert Allison, a member of York’s Centre for Vision Research, along with colleagues at York and the University of Waterloo’s School of Optometry, have figured out a way to use a modified 3-D version of the popular arcade game Pac-Man as a way to treat CI at home.

In their study, Allison and colleagues had patients play the game for 20 minutes a day, five days a week, for two weeks. They found patients’ eye coordination improved as they advanced through the game.

Tristan Carvelho (BASc Spec. Hons. ’05, MSc ’08), who developed the game as a York computer science student, chose the maze genre because it appealed to both males and females across a wide variety of ages, says Allison. “This type of game has a lot of replay value since it doesn’t really have an ‘end’. That’s important because the therapy needs to continue over several weeks,” says Allison. “We chose an updated version of Pac-Man because the game has nostalgic appeal and a proven track record as one of the most successful games in the genre.”

Approximately five per cent of the population is affected by CI, a disorder that often causes blurred or double vision. “Studies have shown office-based vision therapies – or OBVT – are more effective than home-based ones, but OBVT is expensive and requires time away from work, school or other responsibilities,” says Allison. “The majority of eye exercises are tedious and patients often get discouraged and stop. Our goal is to motivate patients to comply with their treatment by incorporating home-based therapy through games.”
Looking for a visual image or painting? You can find almost anything you want regarding “visual culture” on the Internet these days, but you can only find The Canadian Art Database (CAD) – devoted solely to contemporary Canadian art production – at York University. And that’s where visual arts Visiting Professor Bill Kirby comes in.

Kirby, who created and has worked on the project for the past 10 years, brought the CAD with him when he was hired by York in 2008. Now CAD – www.ccca.ca – is housed within York’s Faculty of Fine Arts.

It’s a unique project, says Kirby, who began it as a collection of information on Canadian artists compiled when he was director of the Canada Council for the Arts’ Art Bank. “When I left that position in 1995 I decided to assemble information I had on artists into a database. It had modest beginnings – a Web site with 60 images by 60 artists – but it gradually grew, until 2000, when it took off.”

In 2000, Kirby received funding from the Canadian Culture Online Program of the federal Department of Canadian Heritage and from The Ontario Trillium Foundation. That was the financial impetus he needed to get the ball rolling. Kirby’s database now contains over 54,000 images, more than 600 media clips, and over 2,400 texts by 800 visual and media artists, graphic designers, writers and curators. And it is still expanding, he says. York students are helping.

Kirby is currently focused on developing a multimedia chronology of contemporary Canadian art by documenting a wide range of material from the archives of various Canadian art organizations. The chronology will set the context within which the artists, designers and writers created their work, effectively documenting the history of contemporary Canadian art.

It’s long been known that behind many successful women executives are supportive husbands. But little was known about what shape that support took – until now. Human resources management Professor Souha Ezzedeen of York’s School of Administrative Studies recently co-authored a qualitative study looking at the spousal support received and valued by executive women.

The study probed the attitudes of 20 married executive and senior-level women toward their spouse’s support. Female business leaders, it turned out, valued emotional support above all; that is, a partner who exhibits “empathic listening, especially during high-stress episodes”. Housework apparently was not high on the list of needs since household help could be hired but emotional support could not, notes Ezzedeen.

Husbands’ willingness to care for other family members was also highly valued by executive women, adds Ezzedeen, who says the study conveys an important message. “I think this study should help ambitious women feel more optimistic about their lives in the sense that they can pursue a high-achieving career without compromising their chances at marriage or an intimate partnership. The men in our study were spoken of in more or less glowing terms. They’re not perfect, but you can tell they are trying to be supportive of their ambitious wives.”

Ezzedeen, who co-authored the study with her former Penn State Harrisburg MBA student Kristen Grossnickle Ritchey, says there were a few personal surprises for her in the results. One was that some men were willing to put their careers on hold or relocate along with their partner. “I was also surprised to see men are capable of evolving around their wife’s growing career and will adjust their support as well as their values in response.”
Little Place

Why do so many elite athletes come from smaller centres?

SPORT

Heavens Above

The York Observatory goes online with live viewing and chat

Astronomy

W e’re all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars, said Oscar Wilde. Certainly Paul Delaney, director of the York Observatory and senior lecturer in the Department of Physics & Astronomy, Faculty of Science & Engineering, is looking at them and he’s setting up four telescopes with a real-time online feed so others can do so too.

Now astronomy buffs around the world can see what York’s telescopes are tracking and join an interactive online chat room with resident astronomy experts. The “online observatory” is part of York’s 50th-anniversary celebrations and marks the International Year of Astronomy. It’s also an example of Delaney’s own long-standing commitment to public education about astronomy.

“This is the first time York has shown images from multiple telescopes live,” says Delaney. “Online public viewing reaches a worldwide audience and it’s very interactive in the chat room.” Images will be broadcast from the observatory’s 40-centimetre Schmidt-Cassegrain and 60-centimetre classical Cassegrain reflecting telescopes, augmented by a wide-field, short-focal-length 90-millimetre-diameter refractor and an all-sky meteor camera.

Delaney says all the classic planets will be visible, as well as the moon. “They’re always the big favourites,” says Delaney, laughing.

For viewing, visit astronomy.blog.yorku.ca. Viewing times from May to August will be 9 to 11pm each Monday evening. “The site will be up all the time but new images and the chat room will only be active Monday nights,” says Delaney.

Sport

Big Stuff, Little Place

If you want to be big – a big athlete that is – you could do worse than grow up in a small city or town. In a recent study, Joe Baker, a professor in York’s School of Kinesiology & Health Science in the Faculty of Health, found smaller cities are more likely to produce elite athletes than larger ones.

That seems almost counterintuitive. After all, everyone thinks big cities would be the place to be for aspiring athletes – the best tracks, pools, arenas, coaches. But cities with populations over 500,000 pose lots of problems for a young athlete, says Baker.

“Ever try to organize a game of pickup hockey in Toronto?” he laughs. “It may be easier to develop sport-related creativity in smaller centres,” he says. “I don’t think it has anything to do with the distribution of innate talent. Our working hypothesis is that it’s more to do with differences in access to essential resources or involvement in less structured forms of sport. In larger centres athletes generally are involved in sport in a very structured way.”

Baker and colleagues, including Queen’s University sports psychologist Jean Côté, the study’s lead author, found the optimal community size for the development of a professional athlete is greater than 1,000 but less than 500,000. Baker says these are places where children enjoy more and safer space for unstructured play, which may promote higher levels of skill development.

Not much is known about the causes of this effect and Baker is somewhat concerned how the study results will be used. “This kind of study could have an important effect on the behaviour of elite sport scouts,” he says. “But if they’re limiting their searches to medium-sized areas they could be missing large pools of potential talent.”
BIOLOGY

Rapid Transit

York’s Bridget Stutchbury finds songbird speeds worth crowing about

Using high-tech miniaturized tracking devices attached to the backs of migrating songbirds, York biologist Bridget Stutchbury and her fellow researchers have astounded the world with the news of how much day-to-day distance our feathered friends cover while migrating. Songbirds also cover those distances in record time. In a study published in the journal Science, Stutchbury found they fly three times faster than previously thought.

The tracking devices, or geolocaters (pictured), weigh only 1.3 to 1.5 grams. “The geolocaters are like tiny backpacks – lighter than a dime – that rest on the base of the back,” says Stutchbury, who is based in York’s Faculty of Science & Engineering. “We were a little worried they would slow our study birds down, but that didn’t happen.” Stutchbury’s right about that. One purple martin they tracked took only 13 days during spring to return to its breeding colony in North America from Brazil. (Interestingly, the same bird’s fall migration to Brazilian wintering grounds took 43 days.)

Data from the geolocaters indicate that songbirds can fly more than 500 kilometres per day if they want to. This was surprising. Formerly most scientists guesstimated daily flight distance was closer to 150 kilometres per day.

The study, partly funded by the National Geographic Society and proceeds from Stutchbury’s book Silence of the Songbirds (excerpted in YorkU, October 2007), found songbirds’ overall migration rate was two to six times more rapid in spring than in fall. Geolocaters were attached to 14 wood thrushes and 20 purple martins breeding in Pennsylvania in 2007. Researchers then tracked their migration to South America and back to North America. In summer 2008, the team retrieved geolocaters from five wood thrushes and two purple martins and reconstructed their individual migration routes.

DOUBLE-CLICK ON PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT TO ENLARGE
Joseph Boyden is a tease. Before surrendering to the irresistible opening page in Through Black Spruce, his 2008 Scotiabank Giller Prize-winning novel about a Cree bush pilot, you might pause at the dedication. Beneath each of the four names listed are words of a strange tongue not translated anywhere in this suspenseful sequel to the York grad’s 2005 runaway bestseller, Three Day Road. The mystery words are Cree and the novel is peppered with them, though not these particular ones. If you can’t translate, you might never find out that Amanda Nisakihakan is “my wife, my love”; Jacob Nkosis is “my son”; and William and Pamela Kotakiyak Nicishanu are “my other family, too.”

But you will turn the page anticipating something exotic and original. You won’t be disappointed. In Through Black Spruce, Boyden delivers the story of Will Bird, fearless bush pilot and son of Xavier, First World War Cree sniper and the main character in Boyden’s first novel. As Will lies in a coma in a Moose Factory, Ont. hospital, he whispers to his family, trying to figure out how he ended up so broken, while his niece, visiting him daily, whispers in his ear the tale of her search for her missing supermodel sister.

“Joseph Boyden shows us unforgettable characters and a northern landscape in a way we have never seen them before,” stated the Giller judges, Bob Rae, Margaret Atwood and Irish author Colm Tóibín. For the 42 year-old novelist, “winning the Giller was like a stamp of approval, a nod that what I am pursuing is what people want to read and think is worthwhile reading.” That pursuit – telling stories of First Nations people – wasn’t something he planned when he fixated on a fiction-writing career.

But it is something that emerged from his childhood experience. Though his ancestry is primarily Irish Catholic and Scottish, Boyden also has strong Ojibwa and Métis bloodlines. Every summer, he and his sisters and brothers camped on Christian Island, home of Beausoleil First Nation, in Georgian Bay. That’s where he first heard stories of legendary First World War Ojibwa sniper Francis Pegahmagabow, the inspiration for Three Day Road.

Northern Light

Award-winning author Joseph Boyden may live in New Orleans but his heart is in the Ontario bush.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK
Boyden grew up in Toronto’s suburban Willowdale, the third-youngest of 11 children. Eight when his doctor father died, the boy who devoured Encyclopedia Britannica became a teenage rebel who wrote “angsty” poetry. “I was struggling with what I wanted to be and who I was.” At Jesuit-run Brebeuf College School, named after the French missionary Jean de Brébeuf who was killed by Iroquois in 1649, Boyden was football captain one day and politely asked to leave the next – for cutting his hair in a mohawk. He flourished at an alternative school and decided to go to university.

For five years at York, he soaked up the Western canon and honed his writing skills. “It was incredibly enriching and eye-opening. It really focused me.” When author and York English Professor Bruce Powe said “you could write for a living if you wanted to,” Boyden rushed to enrol in the Creative Writing Workshop at the University of New Orleans after gaining his York BA in 1991. “I was very hungry to learn to write.” And that storied Louisiana city, so steeped in history and music, called him like a siren. “It seemed dangerous and beautiful at the same time.”

His first year there he met Amanda, also an aspiring writer, chucked his Great Canadian Novel and turned his hand to short stories. The first time he wrote about the North, his spirit went into liftoff and his classmates oohed and aahed. “I was writing about a world no one down here knew about and I had lots of access to.” His path became clear.

In 1994, he and Amanda graduated, married, then pursued dreams that left them apart for months at a time. She toured Canada and the US as a professional trapeze artist and contortionist. He flew to Moosonee, Ont. and travelled up and down the James Bay coast teaching communications to Cree students enrolled at the Northern College of Applied Arts & Technology. “It changed my life.”

Back at the University of New Orleans in 1998 as writers-in-residence, the reunited Boydens sat down at the dining room table together and began writing. Three years later, out came Boyden’s first book of short stories, Born With a Tooth. Then in 2005 – the same year the pair had to flee the ravages of Hurricane Katrina for a few months – Penguin Group Canada offered Boyden a princely advance for his first novel, Three Day Road, and he shot into the literary stratosphere.

The book won a slew of national prizes – the Amazon.ca/Books in Canada First Novel Award, the Rogers Writers’ Trust Fiction Prize, the inaugural McNally Robinson Aboriginal Book of the Year Award and more. Translated into 15 languages and published in more than 50 countries, it flew off the shelves and had everyone talking – from author Isabel Allende on NBC’s “Today” show to sparring panellists on CBC Radio’s “Canada Reads”. It was nominated for a 2005 Governor General’s Literary Award, made the 2007 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award long list and won a 2008 Prix Littéraire in France.

“I was dumbfounded and happily amazed,” says Boyden, especially for the attention it brought to First Nations people. “What I write about is very, very important to me. That part of the country is so important yet so few people know anything about it, so the attention in Canada and abroad is a great bonus.”

Four or five times a year, Boyden travels north, like a migrating Canada goose. He picks up his teenage son Jacob, from a long-term relationship, in Toronto and the two drive to Georgian Bay to see Boyden’s mom or fly to Moosonee to fish, hunt or go snowmobiling, and catch up with Will Tozer, Boyden’s friend and the inspiration for Will Bird in Through Black Spruce. Boyden sheds the noise of modern urban life and grounds himself again in the still, remote and spectacular northern landscape. “It’s humbling.”

What do his Cree friends think of Boyden’s books? Are they leading literary tours yet? “They’re proud of me,” says Boyden. “But then again they’re very polite. They would never say they didn’t like them,” he laughs. “So I’m not sure.”

He’s devoted a portion of his $40,000 Giller windfall to creating an annual scholarship for a James Bay student heading for university. The first will be presented this autumn. “They give me so much. I want to give something back.”

Recently, he also established Moose River Waterkeeper, a local organization affiliated with Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s Waterkeeper Alliance to keep waterways clean. In March, he hosted an episode of CBC Radio’s “The Current” on water issues, and in June, his cover story on Kennedy appears in Zoomer magazine. “If I’ve got a voice in Canada, it would be silly and wrong of me not to speak out about things like the environment, which has always been important to me.”

By July, though, this part-time journalist and water activist will “shut down”, park himself at the dining room table across from Amanda (herself a successful author of two novels and his most enlightened critic) and start pecking on his laptop. He’s finished Louis Riel & Gabriel Dumont for Penguin’s Extraordinary Canadians series and published his interview with The Tragically Hip’s Gord Downie in Maclean’s. His plate is clear.

So what’s next? Boyden has been teasing interviewers with the answer. He plans to work on two novels at once – the third in the Bird family trilogy and a “big, juicy, historical epic” about which all he’ll reveal is “it’s very Canadian”. “I’m not trying to be coy here,” he says, “but I don’t know which one will win!”
You can transform students' lives. Give to York's 50th Anniversary Bursaries and Awards program to provide immediate assistance to students at York facing the economic challenges of 2009. Close to one-quarter of the $185 million of funds pledged to the York to the Power of 50 campaign have been directed to graduate and undergraduate awards, bursaries and scholarships. Add your support today and help some of our country's brightest minds reach their academic and research goals.

For more information, contact York University Foundation at 416-650-8210 or visit www.yorku.ca/foundation
Words and Music

York celebrates its 50th birthday with a high-powered symposium and a gala concert

The hallmark event in the celebration of York’s 50th anniversary, which continues all year (see yorku50.ca), was the 50+50 Symposium, subtitled “An Interdisciplinary Discussion of Pretty Much Everything”. Opening the day after York’s March 26 birthday, the two-day symposium featured lectures and discussions by eight leading thinkers. Some nuggets:

“The fundamental change in the last 50 years is we moved from a world of atoms to a world of bits. You can trace almost everything that’s happened, whether it’s changes in intellectual property, whether it’s changes in how you deal with people socially, whether it’s what the future of the book or the newspaper is – they all trace themselves back to that statement of fact.”
Nicholas Negroponte
MIT digital media expert, founder of One Laptop per Child

“[Globally] the production of cultural difference – whether it’s in matters of clothing or language, or in deep issues like the economy – will always outstrip the force of sameness, however much the forces of capital commoditization want to reduce a world of differences.”
Arjun Appadurai
New York University expert on global cultural flows

“Right now the front line is the Arctic. Global warming has opened up the Northwest Passage. Countries are eyeing the Arctic oil and resources, there are no rules and they can do what they want. We are back in a free-for-all Wild West of armament. The European Union, China, Russia and Japan all want to be players in the north. Who is taking the lead as mediator…? Should that not be us?”
Lloyd Axworthy
University of Winnipeg president, former foreign affairs minister

“How long will it take before people just get tired of being available at all times, in contact at all times, turned on or wired in at all times? The human being is not designed to have its ‘on’ button lit up 24-7. The new cool thing will probably be monasteries.”
Margaret Atwood
Author, cultural icon

“[Globally] the production of cultural difference – whether it’s in matters of clothing or language, or in deep issues like the economy – will always outstrip the force of sameness, however much the forces of capital commoditization want to reduce a world of differences.”
Arjun Appadurai
New York University expert on global cultural flows

“‘It is a human rights issue’, the inaction of the world to address this issue [of global warming] as urgently as it needs to be addressed… You may say, ‘which rights exactly?’ All the rights that are entrenched in the 1948 American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man – the right to health, the right to safety, the right to subsist, the right to culture.”
Sheila Watt-Cloutier
Canadian Inuit activist

We appear to be reluctant to call to account the intolerant countries who abuse their citizens, and instead hide behind silencing concepts like cultural relativism or domestic sovereignty or root causes. These are concepts that excuse intolerance. Silence in the face of intolerance means intolerance wins.”
Rosalie Sliberman Abella
Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada

“IT WAS A NIGHT OF BLACK TIES and ball gowns when more than 300 invited guests and ticket winners converged on the Tribute Communities Recital Hall to see top alumni talent perform at the York in Concert Black Tie Gala for York’s 50th. Hosted by Barbara Budd (BA ’74), co-host of CBC Radio’s “As It Happens”, the event included vocals by opera singer Vanja Chan (BFA Spec. Hons. ’08), crooner Matt Dusk (BFA Spec. Hons. ’02) and Latin singer Amanda Martinez (DMA ’09), among others. There were dancers choreographed by Debra Brown (BFA Spec. Hons. ’78), longtime choreographer for Cirque du Soleil, and York dance Professor Susan Cash (BFA Spec. Hons. ’78, MA ’07), and York dance Professor Susan Cash (BFA Spec. Hons. ’78, MA ’07) and even a whirling dervish, Sashar Zarif (MA ’07). Interspersed were memories delivered by prominent grads, such as writer Katherine Govier (MA ’72), and a reading by author Nino Ricci (BA Spec. Hons. ’81). The most unexpected performance may have come from lanky York English Professor John Lennox (BA ’67), who delivered a rousing rendition of York’s song: “Come along and join our throng as we sing our song. VICTOOORRRYYYY, VICTORY!” The applause was thunderous.

Words and Music

IT WAS A NIGHT OF BLACK TIES and ball gowns when more than 300 invited guests and ticket winners converged on the Tribute Communities Recital Hall to see top alumni talent perform at the York in Concert Black Tie Gala for York’s 50th. Hosted by Barbara Budd (BA ’74), co-host of CBC Radio’s “As It Happens”, the event included vocals by opera singer Vanja Chan (BFA Spec. Hons. ’08), crooner Matt Dusk (BFA Spec. Hons. ’02) and Latin singer Amanda Martinez (DMA ’09), among others. There were dancers choreographed by Debra Brown (BFA Spec. Hons. ’78), longtime choreographer for Cirque du Soleil, and York dance Professor Susan Cash (BFA Spec. Hons. ’78, MA ’07), and York dance Professor Susan Cash (BFA Spec. Hons. ’78, MA ’07) and even a whirling dervish, Sashar Zarif (MA ’07). Interspersed were memories delivered by prominent grads, such as writer Katherine Govier (MA ’72), and a reading by author Nino Ricci (BA Spec. Hons. ’81). The most unexpected performance may have come from lanky York English Professor John Lennox (BA ’67), who delivered a rousing rendition of York’s song: “Come along and join our throng as we sing our song. VICTOOORRRYYYY, VICTORY!” The applause was thunderous.
ONE OF CANADA’S LEADING WRITERS RECALLS THE COLLEGE’S FREEWHEELING EARLY DAYS – AND NIGHTS. BY BARRY CALLAGHAN

On July 1, the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies, formerly Atkinson College, and the Faculty of Arts will close and be succeeded by the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, combining the strengths of both in a new unit. The Atkinson legacy will be strong – the new Faculty is designed to cater to students of all ages, with courses available at a wide variety of times.

Author, poet and short-story writer Barry Callaghan, who has just published his latest novel Beside Still Waters (McArthur & Co., 2009), arrived at Atkinson in 1965, just three years after it opened as an evening college for adults, and was a professor there until 2002. He wrote this memoir for YorkU.

On a clear afternoon in May, I was walking along Queen’s Park Crescent with Marshall McLuhan. I had just completed, in a stuffy office, the oral defence of my doctorate. Marshall, all elbows and shoulder bones in a tweed suit, had been one of my examiners. I had done well. We had had a good time as we had befuddled his fellow examiners by talking about the clotted and often confusing poetry of Hart Crane. Then he startled me. He quoted Patrick Kavanagh, the Irish poet:

Sitting on a wooden gate,
Sitting on a wooden gate,
Sitting on a wooden gate,
He didn’t care a damn.

We walked on, pausing at the corner in front of his college and mine, where I had been a teaching fellow for three years – University of St. Michael’s College in the University of Toronto – and almost as an aside he said to me, “Of course, no matter how well you’ve done, they will not hire you here.” I was taken aback. I had taught well for them, I had gone through their rigorous PhD program with straight Firsts.

As it turned out, he was right.

The Reverend L.K. Shook, the president of the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, the man who had encouraged me to enter the graduate school, a man who knew I was now looking for a job, took me aside and said, “I believe it is a bad thing for a man to teach at the place where he has been taught.”

I thought, “That’s a strange thing to hear from an old priest teaching young priests how to become old priests.”

Then, Donald F. Theall, an extraordinary scholar who had guided me through the Toronto graduate school, told me I should come with him. “I’m going to a place called Atkinson College, a new college at the new university – York. I’m going to be chairman of the English Department and a new Communications Department, and I’ll hire you right away.” I said I’d go.

“By the way,” he said, “it’s a night college on the outskirts of town.”

“Great,” I said.

And it was great. Going to Atkinson College, and teaching there for the next 37 years, was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me, not just because I was forced to leave the dry but seductive urgings of celibate stone on the Toronto campus, but because at Atkinson, through those days, I was able to become who I was meant to be, and I was able to do this because I was part of a college that was, at the same time, becoming what it was meant to be. Hand in hand, in a kind of Aristotelian dance.

At Atkinson, we were night people. That is very important. We were not day scholars. We were not day scholars wearing our moonlighting in the evenings to make a little bonus money to pay down the mortgage. We were a new kind of college, our classrooms operating only at night, and only with adult students. When I came on campus to teach those students, I came on in the dark, in the dead of winter (the heart of our school year), and when I walked...
between office and classrooms, I walked like we all walked – head down into the numbing cold night wind that blew across open flatland spaces. Some students had to walk a half mile into that wind, their cars parked on unlit lots on the outskirts of nowhere.

They were special students. They were adults. As a teaching fellow at the University of Toronto, my students had been three or four years younger than I was (I started at Atkinson College when I was 28); and when they hadn’t read the text for the day, which was all too often, we would end up talking – between those unread stanzas, so to speak – about sex and God, whether Joe Brfsplk’s overhead cloud in Li’l Abner was an atomic cloud, and suicide as a logical option (Camus). All interesting, but highly speculative for those who were near youngsters.

At Atkinson, my first students were almost all older than I was – perhaps 10 years older on average – and several knew despondency, one or two had gone into the church, one had tried to commit suicide, nearly all had been married, all had suffered several broken hearts, all had often measured out their hours with coffee spoons, one had done time for manslaughter, and several had actually been to war.

They were not speculating about the moon in June and What If and Maybe; they were speculating about the harvest moon and What Is and What’s To Be Done!

Since they were coming back to school, and coming to school after work, and paying their own hard money, they came to class having read all the texts. No one had to explain that they owed that to themselves. They came loaded for bear, wearing their hunger for learning on their sleeves.

So, teaching was big at Atkinson. It was front and centre in our minds in our English Department. And I know the same was true for the other departments at Atkinson. By and large, we tended to take our obligations as scholars – as men and women who read and did research and then wrote – as a given.

To teach well, though, that was something else, because when I say teaching, I don’t mean a toe-dipping 50-minute session. I mean two to two-and-a-half hours, time to wrestle old ideas like old angels to the ground, in new courses, often using contemporary texts (at the University of Toronto, in 1963, a distinguished professor actually had told me with a straight face that he wasn’t sure whether T.S. Eliot should be taught since he hadn’t proven himself to be a poet of quality through the test of time). At Atkinson, one of my first lectures for a course designed by Stan Fefferman (designed is a good word; it captures exactly how we, as teachers, and our students were becoming what we believed was our potential as we went), was on Henry Miller, horny Henry Miller and his Tropic of Capricorn.

As I walked out on stage (miked for a class of hundreds), I could hear a rustle in the crowd – their course outline had billed the lecture, “The Tropic of Capricorn: The Metaphysics of Fuck” – but also a little flutter of concern, and I soon saw why. In the first row, there were three garbed-in-black nuns, notebooks at the ready.

I thought everyone was watching the nuns. I knew the nuns were watching me. So I took a deep breath and said, “Yes, well, we are going to be using the word fuck, a lot,” and set off – with an aside on how the Catholic theologian Jacques Maritain had said that all poetry approaches metaphysics – to describe and discuss the poetic pilgrimage made by Miller’s snub-nosed sperm into the upriver regions of orgasmic consciousness. Over an hour later, I concluded with a casual falling off, “And so there you have it, the metaphysics of...”, letting the unspoken word hang in the silence, and waited. The whole class waited. The three nuns, sensing all eyes upon them, rose and gave a firm round of applause.

I took it as a sign, as a particular Atkinson kind of moment – a moment that was not a scatological overcoming but rather an
opening of the heart in which I was home free as a teacher, free to feel at home among my students.

Though not entirely at home on the campus at large.

Principal Escott Reid of Glendon College had made it clear to Professor Theall that he thought the University could well do without the likes of a Callaghan or a Fefferman.

No matter. At Atkinson, we were in the process of getting serious things done in new and serious ways. Many of our professors, private in their classrooms, were engaged in a very public and often political discourse. Our dean, Harry Crowe, wrote a weekly political column for the Toronto Telegram; Robert Fothergill was making socially alert films; several men were intimately engaged in on-site research into the drug counterculture; Matthew Ahearn was not only directing plays by Arthur Miller, but had taken a year's leave of absence so that he could actually run in two presidential primaries against Richard Nixon; I was editing the book pages of a national newspaper, The Telegram, and reporting for the CBC from various parts of the world, especially Quebec and the Middle East.

All of this came to bear on our teaching, as we reached back – by intuition rather than design – to Ferdinand de Saussure's early-20th-century vision of "une semiologie generale", wherein he had hoped to apply the insights of structural linguistics across the whole breadth of human experience, hoping to pass through or over the traditional boundary lines between literary and non-literary texts, between the structures, forms and social practices of "high culture" – history, music, philosophy – and those that constitute culture in general – journalism, filmmaking, television itself, and even comic books.

A teaching assistant at Atkinson at the time, Michael Keefer, who is now a distinguished renaissance scholar and renowned authority on Doctor Faustus, writing about those days (1971), has said: "I would claim that, in his course, Callaghan (and others) were inventing, avant la lettre, a specifically Canadian form of what we can now appropriately call cultural studies... that was not merely or exclusively literary, but intimate (in its engagement with ideas) as well, because... Callaghan's journalistic work had taken him to the Middle East, several African countries, Central America."

This may be true, but then he had to add: "The year 1972 was a pivotal one... Callaghan, having been unceremoniously fired by the CBC for the 'lise-majesté' of daring to put forceful questions, about the ethics of conquest and occupation, to Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir... [turned to other matters and] launched the literary quarterly Exile."

It wasn't quite that neat.

I also had made a film about the Palestinians. It was the first such film of any length about the refugees in their camps in Jordan. Because it was only about the Palestinians, it was said that I must be pro-Palestinian, and if I was pro-Palestinian I must be anti-Israel.

That the revered philosopher Emile Fackenheim was vile enough to publicly call me an anti-Semite didn't help. What Margaret Atwood has called "the witch-word" had been laid on me.

At the CBC, I never again made a film for them and I never again appeared on television as a commentator on anything. After a period, I had no alternative but to resign from The Telegram. And it didn't help that some attempted to purge me from York by trying to deny me tenure.

But they are not now the point. They were and are only the context of that moment. The point is and always will be Harry Crowe, the dean of Atkinson College, who – though he was an ardent Zionist – was more importantly a man of integrity who would not stand for unfairness. The Senate, under advisement, voted to turn me down for tenure. But Harry so twisted the arm of the president that the president overrode the procedures of the Senate. I kept my job, I was given tenure. I would be able to go on teaching, not only home free but now safe.

Harry told me this over a glass of scotch and then astounded me. "Now that you have all this free time on your hands – no CBC, no newspapers to work for – what’re you going to do with your free time?" Without thinking I said, "How would you like to have one of the two best literary journals in the world?"
“How much would it cost?”

I plucked a big figure out of the air. He said, OK, he would fund it through his office for one year, to get it off the ground. I didn’t know anything about journals, but I said, “Great.”

Two young writers, soon to be known internationally as great poets, became our contributing editors – John Montague of Ireland and Yehuda Amichai of Israel. Montague is still with us, and Amichai stayed with us till he died.

Which brings me, of course, back to the beginning.

Only at Atkinson.

Never mind other universities; such a thing could not have happened at any other college within York itself. Exile had been given the freedom to become what it could be, and now, after 35 years, is – a journal that, having published some 1,000 writers and artists, is known and admired (its attachment to Atkinson and York acknowledged in every issue) in a dozen parts of the world.

I like to think that the nuns are standing somewhere, applauding, at another opening of the heart.

And so, at Atkinson, and in our department, we all went on doing what we did, becoming the teachers we were meant to be – John Unruh, a poet and world authority on Ruskin and St. Mark’s in Venice; Fran Beer, a first-class medievalist and authority on the Chanson de Roland; Ray Ellenwood, not just a singular authority on the literature of Quebec but a master translator.

Over the next two decades, there was political wrangling – to be expected – and some serious infighting (years earlier McLuhan had warned me that the political infighting in the universities made “Madison Avenue look like a piece of cake”). But that is a story of presidents and plenipotentiaries for others to write.

I went on teaching, in the dark, enjoying the night. Always teaching undergraduates – our undergraduate introductory course – because I never tired of taking pleasure at seeing the light of sudden understanding come into a young student’s eyes. And yes, they now were younger than I was, and though they were still adults who had jobs out in the world, year by year they were getting younger because I was growing older.

Over the last 15 or so years, I taught my favourite undergraduate course – a fourth-year study of post-concentration camp literature – stimulated, in the old spirit, by my travels in the Soviet Union and behind the Iron Curtain. Often, the first book we night riders read was – appropriately enough – Elie Wiesel’s searing little story, Night. By Christmas we had passed through This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen and were deep into Solzhenitsyn’s Gulag Archipelago. There were always about a dozen students in the class – fiercely interested – and soon, to step outside the cold concrete block walls of our classrooms, I took to meeting with them to discuss these grim matters in fashionable restaurants that favoured us with a silent corner, and for the final six years, we met once a week in my home. “I feed them wine,” I liked to say sardonically, “and a little pâté so we can talk more easily about such mutilation of the spirit and death.”

I realized that just as our little Atkinson English Department was being depleted by death itself, more of my courses were also being assigned to the summer daytime. My students were no longer night people. They were fresh-faced and young, speed-ball ing their course credits, full of What Is and Maybes and not What Is and What’s To Be Done?, eager to get out of school, not determined to get back into school. Finally, one morning, I found myself before class standing not in front of Atkinson College but between weeping willows on the Glendon campus, all in sunlight.

Sitting on a wooden gate,
Sitting on a wooden gate,
Sitting on a wooden gate,
He didn’t care a damn.
I retired.

I had donated a major outdoor sculpture by my friend, the Israeli artist Kosso Eloul (called “KoBar” – the name a sign of the bond between us) to the housing area on campus that bears Harry Crowe’s name, and I then donated all my working papers – two truckloads – to the University archives.

At a ceremony to honour this gift, the administration gave me a nice leather traveller’s tag, in York red, to attach to my luggage.

I took my leave, feeling no disappointment or even bitterness over anything. No, only thankfulness and a sense deep in my heart of having been very lucky – to have found myself among collegial men and women who (no matter what they thought of me personally) allowed me to become who I was meant to be, who I am today. I like to think – and it is one reason that I have written this little piece – that my story, in one way or another, is their story.

Only at Atkinson. ♠

My students were no longer night people.
They were fresh-faced and young, speed-ball ing their course credits.

For more Atkinson memories, visit www.atkinson.yorku.ca/heritage. The Heritage site also includes details of a new book to be published soon, Room to Grow: Celebrating Atkinson’s Living Legacy, supported by the Atkinson Dean’s Office and the U50 Campaign.
York's Faculty of Arts will join with the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies to form the new Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies. As at Atkinson, it has been a time of looking back for the people of Arts, York's largest Faculty. Recently, the Faculty mounted a display highlighting its diverse history since it was first constituted as the Faculty of Arts & Science in 1959. These images, including a wall of book covers by Arts authors, sample 50 Years in the Faculty of Arts: A Retrospective, curated by Briana Sim, Stephanie D'Amico and Annie Tung. You can see more at arts50.blog.yorku.ca.
AFT L V E R, if you bought a stuffed shark by contemporary British artist Damien Hirst as an investment ($12 million in 2003), you might want to take it back. Why? Well, according to marketing scholar Professor Don Thompson of York University’s Schulich School of Business, buying contemporary art as an investment is a mistake. Thompson himself collects because he genuinely loves art and art auctions, but he says he’s always been curious about how art is priced. He notes that when Hirst sold his first shark in 2003, it was the second-highest amount ever paid at that time for a work by a living artist (a work by Jasper Johns was tops). “When someone asks me, ‘Why is that work worth $10 million, and who determines which one thousandth of one percent of artists become stars?’ I realized I had no idea,” says Thompson. “Nor did any of the existing literature answer it. So I hope my book is the answer.”

That book is The $12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art (Doubleday Canada, 2008). To research it, Thompson spent a year at auction houses in New York City and London talking to dealers, artists and specialists at high-end auction houses such as Sotheby’s and Christie’s. His mission was to make sense (if it could be made) of why some contemporary art fetched stratospheric prices. “I think one thing that perplexes people – myself included – is, who are the gatekeepers who influence which artists will make it to the level of the Hirsts and Jackson Pollocks and Jeff Koons of the world, and which won’t? Secondly, why are pieces worth 10 or 100 times what I think they should be worth?”

One curious aspect of contemporary art pricing is that a piece’s price isn’t based on scarcity or the fact that the artist is no longer living. Hirst, for instance, is still very much alive and has produced (and sold!) nine of his shark pieces. They are all virtually identical. “These guys are still producing! So why does work sell for five or 10 million?” On the other hand, scarcity does play a role in the pricing of important historical, Impressionist and modern art, says Thompson – buyers fear that no other work like it will come up again during their lifetime. Thompson limited his study to contemporary works which, he says, “typically refers to art created after 1970.”

Thompson’s book is an in-depth, behind-the-scenes exploration of the way the contemporary art market functions – how auctions are organized by the name auction houses, how art is priced, and the role galleries and dealers play in the pricing and marketing of artists like Damien Hirst.

“Hirst is probably the richest and best-known contemporary artist in the world,” says Thompson. “In the 1990s he came up with the concept of the shark as a contemporary symbol for the times. He said the shark looks ‘dead when it’s alive and alive when it’s dead’. For him it represents that space between life and death.” Hirst had an Australian fisherman catch the shark, pack it in ice and ship it to the UK. On its arrival the artist had it taxidermied and mounted in a tank of formaldehyde. “Hirst didn’t catch it or mount it but he conceived it – therefore he is the artist, and that’s at the centre of conceptual art,” says Thompson. The embalmed shark – titled The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living – currently resides in New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art where it is the single most viewed object in the museum’s collection.

“Hirst went into shock/conceptual art more than most but he wasn’t alone – he’s just the best known,” says Thompson. The difference, he argues, between Hirst and his lesser-known contemporaries is that Hirst and his manager are the smartest art marketers in the world. But is Hirst the “best” artist? “I couldn’t say,” says Thompson. “I’m not an art critic. My conclusion is that marketing may be as important in contemporary art as artistic skill.”

Hirst is a top brand, which is why he can charge what he does. “Very often you are buying what an adviser, dealer or auction house specialist tells you will establish you as a cultured and cutting-edge collector,” says Thompson. “And the branding part – branded artist, branded dealer – protects you from your friends not having proper respect for what is now hanging on your wall. Branding offers risk avoidance and trust.”

One thing Thompson learned is just how rich really rich people are. “For the buyer of the stuffed shark, the $12 million purchase price represented four- and a-half days’ income,” he notes. “This is what characterizes the upper reaches of the contemporary art market – a lot of collectors who are really rich.” And if you aren’t among the super wealthy and still want to collect? Well, just don’t delude yourself that your latest purchase will fund your retirement. Says Thompson: “Buy it because you love it, or because it touches your soul, but don’t buy it as an investment.”
AST DECEMBER, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival appointed New York City-based Elizabeth Bradley senior artistic associate. That’s a fancy title for a global talent scout. There’s no money and only modest glory in it, but no matter, she felt utterly compelled to accept. “It helped to ease my defector guilt,” jokes the 1976 York theatre grad who has spent the past eight years revitalizing two of America’s leading university drama schools.

The truth is she vowed 25 years ago to help Des McAnuff if and when he took over the artistic helm at Stratford. The two crossed paths there in 1983. Legendary artistic director John Hirsch had recruited Bradley as communications and special projects director and lured hotshot McAnuff home from New York to direct Macbeth. “It was a hugely formative period in my career,” says Bradley. “Working for John was a wild and unforgettable ride. It was an ambitious time for the festival.”

In high school a decade before, Bradley had served as a casting intern on McAnuff’s musical Silent Edward at Toronto’s Young People’s Theatre. At Stratford they recon­nected. “We share a similar aesthetic. We admire bravery of aspiration, technical accomplishment and intellectual daring. We both want theatre to create heat and be compelling.” Now she’s trolling New York and the international theatre scene for directors, actors and companies fitting that esthetic to help McAnuff “take a revered and cherished Canadian institution to even greater heights.”

It’s all in a day’s work. Attending plays is part of the other job Bradley accepted last year – arts professor and chair of the drama department of New York University’s prestigious Tisch School of the Arts, situated right on Broadway. By March, she’d floated at least a dozen ideas across the festival transom, including notes on a stunning new production of Othello. Stratford audiences could see the fruits of her labour as early as next year. “But I’m trying to incubate relationships for 2011 and five years beyond that.”

Bradley has devoted her entire professional life – as producer, programmer and now educator – to fanning theatrical creativity, to making theatre happen. The daughter of a big­bow arabsque, and Bradley, by this time mother of a pre­schooler and an infant, soon settled for 10 less-peripatetic years of Tony Award­winning plays Broadway to apprentice with Doris Cole Abrahams, producer of Equus and Travesties. She wanted to be like those storied American producers who find and champion a play, then bring it to glorious life. “That was the impulse that led me to New York.”

Back in Toronto in 1981, she was managing famous Cana­dian actors like Roberta Maxwell and Nicholas Pennell when John Hirsch called “out of the blue”. He’d heard about the 26-year-old’s New York training and knack for managing theatres and promoting artists. Would she join his senior team? “John was a hard man to refuse and the allure of Stratford was irresistible.”

After Hirsch exited Stratford, so did she, to produce and tour independent commercial shows like The Mikado and HMS Pin­aforte and B-Movie, The Play. However, “it was always a case of thinking more or less as a lark.” Ten days later, they offered her the tenured position, unfazed by her lack of postgraduate degrees. “It was a very, very maverick hire,” she says. “I’m fond of saying I have taken an honours BFA from York a very long way.”

Five years later, more students than ever were clamouring to enroll in the drama school and Carnegie Mellon rushed to renew her appointment. Bradley had diversified a traditional program, brought in international artists and created a festival for student work. During this time, she also helped launch the Pittsburgh International Festival of Firsts as founding artistic director, chaired the International Society for the Performing Arts, provided programming advice to Ottawa’s National Arts Centre and won a Queen’s Jubilee Gold Medal for outstanding contribution to the arts in Canada. No wonder Tisch came knocking in 2008.

Bradley takes time to swim, enjoy her husband’s home cooking, and catch up with daughter Bronwen’s career as a publicist and son Ben’s music studies. But theatre compels her more than ever. “I have been privileged to witness indelible work,” says Bradley. “Every time I have one of those moments, I’m infatuated all over again.”

Elizabeth Bradley leads one of North America’s top theatre schools on the strength of a York BFA – and a lifetime of making theatre happen.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN WATTERS
Photography by Sophie Kinachtouk

by Michael Todd

says there’s a better, slower way.

Ecological economist Peter Victor

More growth? Get over it.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH? How do we know when to stop? What will happen if we don’t? And what, if any, are more sustainable alternatives to past economic growth policies? These are some of the questions around the “G-word” that economist and York environmental studies Professor Peter Victor contemplates daily (and did so long before the current economic crisis). Victor, an ecological economist, defines himself as “an economist who understands economies not as stand-alone systems, but as subsystems embedded in, and dependent upon, the biosphere.”

Victor lays out his take on growth in detail in his newest book, Managing Without Growth: Slower by Design, Not Disaster (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008). He conceived of “economies as subsystems of the biosphere” years ago. It all began when he was working on his PhD at the University of British Columbia in the late 1960s. His research from that time was later published as a book with the title Pollution: Economy and Environment (1972). “At UBC I got caught up in the environmental movement and my PhD research gave me the opportunity to break new ground. I remember the literature review in my thesis covered only three papers — there was so little written on this then.”

Victor’s work on slow/no growth dates back to 2001 when he got a call from his old thesis supervisor Gideon Rosenbluth (now in his 80s and still going strong) to collaborate on research about growth and the environment. “We settled on the question of whether it is possible to have full employment, eradicate poverty, maintain fiscal balance and protect the environment without economic growth,” says Victor. They published several papers and then Victor decided to embark on his book in 2006 with Rosenbluth’s encouragement.

In the book, Victor doesn’t advocate a knee-jerk reaction to economic crisis so much as a thoughtful approach which will carry us through decades to come. How? By choosing green over brown-based economies, he says. “The burden placed on the biosphere by global economic growth since the end of World War II is simply unsustainable,” says Victor. “A better approach would be to deliberately manage the economies of developed countries on the basis of little or no growth.”

It’s not a matter of quitting the production/consumption model cold turkey. Instead, he says, rich countries need to gradually reduce their dependence on growth in the long term. According to Victor’s research and systems modelling, an economic slowdown could be achieved without sacrificing prosperity. If the economic growth rate, as measured by increases in gross domestic product, was deliberately slowed, even to zero, between 2010 and 2035, Victor says, Canada could continue to provide enough jobs and revenue to fund government services and dramatically reduce poverty and greenhouse gas emissions.

“I’m not saying zero growth should become the overarching goal of economic policy,” says Victor. “But I don’t think we should bother with growth as a policy objective.” Economic growth in rich countries has been disappointing, he says, noting that growth in Canada hasn’t eliminated poverty and may, in fact, have increased it. He notes also that growth has not brought full employment, and has increased demands on the environment. “The burden placed on the environment by the economy for natural resources and waste disposal has risen. When economies were small in relation to the environment – in the sense that these material and energy flows were modest – maybe it was acceptable for economists to ignore them,” he says. “But now they are large – so large that some scientists refer to our current age as the ‘Anthropocene’ in recognition of the magnitude of human impacts on the planet.”

Victor argues there is the possibility that increases in GDP do not necessarily require an increase in material and energy inputs in the future. Over time, he says, we have reduced the material and energy requirements per dollar of economic output. “The material and energy intensities of economies have already declined,” he notes. “The trouble is these reductions in intensity have been too small to keep up with the increases in the scale of the economy, so the combined effect has been increases in the use of material and energy.”

Of course, in the end, we may learn nothing from past mistakes and could plunge once more into a same-old-same-old model of production, consumption and debt. Says Victor: “I’m worried we’ll rely on Band-Aid solutions to the recession. The short-term severity of the current crisis may distract government from the long-term dangers of relying on growth alone to keep economies afloat. Growth is not the answer.”

More growth? Get over it.

Ecological economist Peter Victor says there’s a better, slower way.

BY MICHAEL TODD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOPHIE KINACTCHOUK
SUCCEEDING IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS is hard enough without trying to make it as a jazz musician, especially one who likes performing Chinese folk music and plays “moon guitar”, but don’t tell that to Jarek Dabrowski. Not only have his parents already warned him – both are former musicians who left Poland for Canada when he was 15 – but he’s too busy working to listen. “My parents didn’t encourage me,” says the percussionist/guitarist. “You know the stereotype – always looking for work.” Since graduating from York’s Faculty of Fine Arts, Dabrowski (BFA Spec. Hons. ’03, MA ’06) has played traditional and world music with the Toronto Chinese Orchestra and the Yellow River Ensemble, and jazz/traditional fusion music with Klezfactor, all led by York instructors. He also made a CD with the York-based Chinese fusion group Ethnocity, and is now working on a pop/jazz recording project.

Dabrowski learned the power of networking – and curiosity – during his time at York. “I auditioned as a classical guitarist,” he says, “but because York is the way it is, I was exposed to several different genres.” Even while doing research for his ethnomusicology thesis on post-war jazz in Communist Poland, he was invited to tour with a group of local musicians, and he intends to go back. “I’ve been fortunate that I don’t have to get a real job,” says Dabrowski, who also plans on adding producing to his list of talents. “I enjoy projects.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

Jarek Dabrowski
Jazz musician
World Fusion
Diane Flacks
Comedian

Baby Stage

Until she gave birth to her first son six years ago, Diane Flacks never imagined life with children. Now motherhood has hijacked this 43-year-old Toronto actor. Pre-Eli and Jonathan, she’d scripted and appeared in TV comedy series (“Kids in the Hall”, “Royal Canadian Air Farce”, “The Broad Side”), won rave reviews and award nominations for her collaborative plays Sibs and Smudge, and toured three hit solo shows, including HBO-aired Myth Me, Dora Award-nominated By A Thread and Random Acts.

Born into a family that hooted together at Mel Brooks movies and Lily Tomlin records, this “least-likely-to” (her words) theatre grad quickly learned to harness a subversive sense of humour to create work for herself. Just how was revealed at York’s 50th-anniversary gala concert in March (page 16) when Flacks (BFA Spec. Hons. ’88) presented an excerpt from Bear With Me, a monologue based on her 2005 book about her first pregnancy. Performed with her trademark heart and shtick earlier this year at Toronto’s Nightwood Theatre and later at the CBC Winnipeg Comedy Festival, it marked Flacks’ return to the stage after two desperate years nursing sick second baby Jonathan to health – and writing about it in Toronto Star columns. Now she’s back doing guest turns in shows like CBC TV’s “Being Erica” but, no question, Flacks’ leading role these days is mom.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN HRYNIUK
Montreal native Damon Knights speaks English, French, Italian and Spanish, and is proud of his African-Canadian heritage. His mother is descended from the first settlers of Nova Scotia’s Africville community and he tries to coach other black business people about the benefits of investing in an MBA. “The return on investment is really, really high,” says Knights (IMBA ’06), who took part in last fall’s Connect 2008, the annual Schulich School of Business Alumni Forum. Because there were relatively few blacks in the MBA programs at Schulich when he was a student in 2005, Knights wanted to find a way to increase the school’s visibility in the community. He hit upon the idea of forming the first Canadian chapter of the Chicago-based National Black MBA Association and set about organizing it. In 2007 the association’s president came to Toronto to make it official and the chapter now has more than 100 members and blue-chip corporate sponsors.

During his two years of study at Schulich, Knights worked at HP Germany and took part in an academic exchange in Caracas, Venezuela. He has since become an executive at a major financial institution. His experiences have made him a big supporter of the school and the International MBA Program. “Schulich provided me with confidence, business knowledge and an ability to apply that knowledge in a way that’s specific to me,” he says. “Now I have found my own style.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN BEEBE
A Tough Time for Students
York seeks $5 million in donations to help

As if the global recession weren’t enough, for many York students there is the added impact of the extension of the academic year as a result of the three-month strike on campus. “Students are very concerned about their finances for next year,” says Angie Sawczko, associate director, scholarships & bursaries, for Student Financial Services.

Vice-President Students Rob Tiffin sums up the tough situation: “As the winter term will now end in early June, we anticipate that many students will face serious financial hardship in May and in the following academic year, as their summer employment time will be limited. Unfortunately, this challenge comes at a time when many are already feeling the harmful effects of an economic downturn.”

To help students through these difficult times, York University has launched the 50th Anniversary Bursaries and Awards Program. The University is raising $5 million in expendable gifts (versus endowed) to help returning students whose schooling is threatened by the challenges of 2009. The York community has been quick to respond, with more than 1,400 alumni, faculty, staff and retirees contributing to the program.

The economic climate is also having an impact on those students looking to begin their academic careers. With this in mind, an anonymous donor has stepped forward with a gift of $2.5 million to create 500 Entrance Awards of $5,000 each over the next two years.

Combined, the 50th Anniversary Bursaries and Awards Program and these new York University Entrance Awards will help ease immediate financial barriers for qualified students. Moreover, nearly one-quarter of the $185 million so far pledged to the York to the Power of 50 fundraising campaign has already been directed to students. These are mostly long-term endowments for scholarships, bursaries and awards, and many of these gifts have in turn triggered government matching funds, exponentially increasing the overall impact for students.

For more information or to give to the 50th Anniversary Bursaries and Awards Program, visit yorku.ca/foundation or call 416-650-8210.

Prominent York University supporters and community leaders Sandra Faire and Ivan Fecan (BA ’01) were the honourees at the 2009 Red Rose Ball organized by The St. George’s Society of Toronto.

Like York, The St. George’s Society is celebrating a major anniversary this year. Toronto’s oldest charity, now in its 175th year, was established in a coffee house in 1834 and brings together people of all cultures who have an interest in things British. Each year during the Red Rose Ball, the society bestows its Award of Merit on those who have made exceptional contributions to the community.

Typical of their thoughtfulness and dedication to York, Faire and Fecan asked that part of the funds raised from this year’s ball benefit York students in financial need – funds that will go even further during this difficult year thanks to Ontario government matching programs.
If you don’t have a profile on the social networking site LinkedIn yet, chances are your co-workers do. Today over 36 million people use the site – over one million in Canada – and with so many people nervously navigating the economic crisis, it is growing at a staggering one new user every second.

Like so many people these days, York grad Jason (surnames in this story have been withheld at the request of interviewees) was looking for work, cold-calling prospective employers. After many such calls, he got a break and landed an interview. But while he’d read all about the company on its Web site, Jason knew nothing about his interviewer. So he turned to LinkedIn.

One of the top social networking sites, LinkedIn.com is designed to help people like Jason build their professional networks and make important connections. “I threw my interviewer’s name into LinkedIn and it turned out I somebody I knew, knew somebody who knew him – a ‘third degree’ contact. And because of this connection his entire CV popped up in front of me,” recalls Jason, who graduated with a BA in international studies in 1998. What he uncovered next was like striking gold.

“My interviewer had posted one of the recent deals he had done with a particular company. This was perfect because I had just completed an internship at that same company,” says Jason. When he got to the interview, Jason could demonstrate his direct experience and establish a personal connection with his prospective employer by highlighting his internship. This won him a second interview and, eventually, the job.

While sites like Facebook and MySpace are great for staying in touch with friends old and new, LinkedIn is very much a professional tool – and it’s being used by York grads in a whole range of industries.

Christie (BA ’03) is the communications director at a fitness centre in Canada. “I use LinkedIn to blast out info about our newest corporate training programs to my connections and groups. This is a new endeavour for the studio, but we’re getting calls from people who we otherwise would not have reached,” she says.

Like Facebook, LinkedIn enables people with common interests to come together in professional forums called “groups” – there’s even a group for York grads. According to Christie, “The groups are the best part of LinkedIn. They allow you to connect with dozens of like-minded people at once.” She also makes good use of the blog application, which allows her to feed to her network her daily blog on getting fit.

YORK TO THE POWER OF 50. Fifty years ago a dream began. A vision of bringing together researchers, teachers, students and partners from different disciplines to tackle real-world issues. This is the essence of our interdisciplinary approach. For the last fifty years, York University has produced outstanding leaders in every field. We are proud of our 200,000 alumni and believe there is no limit to what the next 200,000 can accomplish. yorku50.ca
Linking Up on LinkedIn

York grads can get a lot of networking help

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LinkedIn’s groups are also home to private job and event postings, as well as polls and business-oriented discussions between members. “I’ve had great success using it to get answers to specific HR questions that I don’t have expertise in, especially if I’m looking for answers that are US or international specific,” says Corina (MBA ’98), a self-employed human resources consultant.

But groups can do more than just connect you to colleagues in your industry. “It’s important to ensure that you have some breadth in your network – because otherwise you can get tunnel vision,” says James Allan, York’s director, alumni. “It’s always good to join a couple of groups that connect you to a broad range of people across a variety of industries, and alumni groups are great for that. After all, sometimes it’s an outside perspective that can give you the greatest insight into a problem.”

One of the unique aspects of LinkedIn is the way in which your contacts can recommend your work. These references then become part of your profile. Corina says having recommendations “helps lend credibility to my work as a self-employed consultant. I’ve even utilized the recommendations as part of testimonial marketing literature.” Corina has also been approached by recruiters, in part, she believes, due to the recommendations she’s received. LinkedIn also has an “Answers” section where you can post questions for all users to respond to, or lend your expertise to others’ questions.

LinkedIn is fast becoming an essential tool for people looking to find new professional connections and to build on the ones they have. With thousands of York grads on LinkedIn already, alumni have a built-in community just waiting for them to join in and get down to business.
ALUMNI MATTERS, the alumni e-newsletter that delivers the latest news and special offers

PERKS that give you privileged access and great savings on products and services

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1969
Atkinson, Richard T. (MBA) recently published Don’t Just Retire: Live it, Love it!, a guide to help people ages 45 to 65 in building a retirement plan.

1971
Ledrew, Melvin (BA Winters) retired in May 2007 after 33 years at the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Sobel, Harold (BSc Founders) works as a computer support specialist for the medical simulation labs at Fanshawe College in London, Ont., where he’s also a member of the Board of Governors. In his spare time he restores antique cars and enjoys RVing with his wife.

1973
Pulver, Howard (MES) operates BikeOnTours.on.ca and is the author of the Ontario Bicycle Touring Atlas. He is married and has three children.

1974
Abrams, Bernard (BA Atkinson) has produced four Broadway shows, including Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, Chita Rivera: The Dancer’s Life and Dr. Seuss’ How the Grinch Stole Christmas, as well as the Seattle opening of Lone Star Love.

Doyle, Martin (BA Stong), a professional actor for 36 years, is the coordinator of Niagara College’s Acting for Film & Television Program. He and his wife Judi recently celebrated 37 years of marriage. They have two sons, Colin (BFA Spec. Hons. ’01) and Devin.

1975
Orchard, Ian (BA Hons. ’72 Winters, MES) retired from the Ontario Region Environmental Protection Operations Directorate, Environment Canada in March 2008 after 33 years.

Young, Terence (BA Bethune) was elected Conservative MP for Oakville in 2008 and recently published Death by Prescription: A Father Takes on his Daughter’s Killer – the Multi-Billion-Dollar Pharmaceutical Industry. His 15-year-old daughter Vanessa died tragically in 2000 after taking a prescription drug.

1976
Hamilton, Karl (BFA Stong) recently moved to the Thunder Bay area with his wife Luba, where he continues to produce nature sound recordings with his company NatureSounds.ca.

1977
Cervinka, Jana (BFA Bethune) enjoys a varied and rewarding career which includes acting and travel. She has been married 14 years and lives in Cobourg and Toronto.

1978
Coombs, David (BA Spec. Hons. ’72 McLaughlin, PhD) recently retired after 27 years as a stockbroker. He has just published Madcap Adventures in the Madawaska Valley, a collection of columns originally written for his local paper.

Michael, Patricia (BA Spec. Hons. Glendon) has written and produced for TVO, VisionTV, Citytv, CBC and for magazines, and is currently assisting people in writing their biographies and memoirs.

1979
Pitsuła, James (MA ’73, PhD) recently published For All We Have and Are: Regina and the Experience of the Great War, tracing social movements against the lives of Regina men who fought overseas in the First World War.

1980
Eaton, Catherine (BA Spec. Hons. Atkinson) is a teacher with the Toronto Catholic District School Board. After retirement, she hopes to volunteer with inner city teens. Her son is a student at York.

Kesteven, Pauline (BA Spec. Hons. ’79 Stong, MA) is a counsellor whose work with Aboriginal bands has introduced her to the Sto:lo culture and longhouse dance and ceremonies.

1981
Dagorne, Shelley (BSc Stong) works in finance for an agency of the Ontario health care system. She lives with her partner in Pickering where she volunteers on the board of a local charity that helps youth and families.

Schmidt, Rene (BA Hons. Calumet, BED), a teacher for almost 30 years, has written a student-friendly series on Canadian disasters for Scholastic Canada. His latest novel, Leaving Fletchville, was published by Orca Book Publishers in 2008. He has been married for 25 years and has two sons.

1982
Barizo, Ophelia (BSc Spec. Hons. Stong), a teacher and chair of the science department at Highland View Academy in Washington County, Maryland since 1996, was awarded the 2005 Private School Teacher of the Year Award.
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Class Notes:

Hardy, Lee (BA Founders, BEd) is in his 28th year of teaching. He is an avid reader of international news, follows the latest revisionist history theories and enjoys volunteering as an assistant basketball coach.

1983

Dyet, Michael (BA Hons. Bethune) works as a marketing specialist at JAPA, a non-profit health and safety association in Mississauga. He is an avid birdwatcher and is involved with the North Bramalea United Church in Brampton.

1984

Cooper, Marlene (BA Vanier, BEd) works as an occasional teacher for the York Region District School Board. Her daughter is a film student in York’s Faculty of Fine Arts.

Parada, Juan (BAS Atkinson) has worked with a number of banking institutions, including ING and Royal Bank. He and his family are currently located in Colombia where he works as country credit manager for Banco Popular.

Rowntree, Jessie-May (BA Hons. ‘81 Calumet, BA Atkinson), a former director in York’s Marketing & Communications Division, teaches in the postgraduate Corporate Communications & Public Relations Program at Centennial College and serves as director of marketing, communications & public relations at Pickering College, an independent day and boarding school in Newmarket.

1985

Arthur, Jack (BSc Founders) is the owner of Watershore Logistics & Trade Services Inc., a third-party logistics services provider offering international supply chain outsourcing solutions to Western Canadian resource sector companies. He lives in Vancouver with his wife and two children.

Hayward, Karen L. (MA) recently moved to Saskatoon to become director of professional development & community education for the Centre of Continuing & Distance Education at the University of Saskatchewan.

1986

Herscovitch, Aubie (LLB) is a partner at the law firm Phillips Friedman Kotler in Montreal, specializing in complex real estate transactions, bank financing, secured transactions and commercial corporate law.

1988

DeKeseredy, Walter (BA Hons. ’82, MA ’84, PhD) received the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society of Criminology’s Division on Critical Criminology. He is married and has a 16-year-old daughter.

Handson, Allyson (BA Hons. Glendon) has worked in theatre and with wildlife and domestic animals for nearly 20 years. She went back to college in 1993 and received two diplomas in Fish and Wildlife Management from Sir Sandford Fleming College. She is a very proud single mom of a four-year-old boy.

Tang, Robert (MBA) recently appeared on CBC TV’s “Fortune Hunters”, which featured his company, danceScape. Earlier this year, danceScape launched a teacher training program for those passionate about dance.

1989

Garrett, Leslie (BA Hons. Stong) has written more than a dozen books, including The Virtuous Consumer: Your Essential Shopping Guide for a Better, Kinder, Healthier World, and is the “green” correspondent for A Channel. She is a mother of three and lives in London, Ont.

Ramsay, Vassell O. (BA Winters) has worked as a probation and parole officer for the past 19 years. He has also published two novels, No Mercy and A Foot in the Hood - No Turning Back.

1990

Dharamsi, Shafik (BA Stong, BEd) is associate director of the University of British Columbia’s Centre for International Health. He travels everywhere from East Africa to Thailand for work and often brings his family along. He is married with two children, Shazia and Miraal.

Mylvaganam, Chandran (MBA) is chair of the Division of Management at Northwood University in Midland, Michigan. He is married to Agnes Khu (MBA ’90), and has two daughters. He coaches youth soccer teams and enjoys international travel with his family.

1991

Fishman, Jan (LLB) was elected to the BC Provincial Council of the Canadian Bar Association for a three-year term in 2006 and was recently appointed as its representative on the Board of the Law Courts Inn. He is married with two children.

Sung, Norman H. (BBA) moved to Richmond, BC with his wife in 2000. He currently works for CMC Markets Canada Inc. as vice-president of national Chinese markets and branch manager of the western region.

1992

Chu, Albert (LLB) has over 12 years of experience working as an international wealth planner for global institutions such as Schroders PLC, ING, Merrill Lynch and Fortis Group.

Traynor, John (MBA) recently accepted the position of vice-president of product marketing at Palm Inc. in Sunnyvale, California, after 16 years at Microsoft Corp. He will be responsible for the Treo family of products.
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YORK DAY at the Rogers Cup
Tuesday, Aug. 18

Section | Regular Price | Alumni Price (before June 30) | Alumni Price (after June 30)
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Class Notes:

1999

Graves, Rev. Daniel (BA ’94, BA Spec. Hons. Founders) is an Anglican priest in the Diocese of Toronto, currently serving as assistant curate at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Thornhill, Ont.

Matteson, Sara (BA Hons. Glendon) welcomed daughter Tessa Calais Matteson in July 2008, who joins her siblings Leila Amie and Xander Luc.

2000

Ciraco, Dan (BA Hons. ’96 MacLaughlin, MES) is former general counsel and corporate secretary of stock photo company Masterfile Corp. and recently joined the CBC in Toronto as legal counsel.

Khan, Muhammad (MES) recently moved from UNICEF to USAID in Pakistan, working as an education sector specialist. He is also trying to create awareness about Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s diseases after his father’s recent death from Parkinson’s.

Polanyi, Michael (PhD) works as a researcher with the caucus of the Ontario NDP and is responsible for research on poverty, environment and agriculture.

2001

Gordillo, Sandy (BA ’98, BSW Founders) married her boyfriend of five years on Thanksgiving weekend 2008.

Jubril, Tajudeen (BAS Atkinson) recently opened a takeout barbecue restaurant in Brampton with his wife.

2002

D’Souza, Selma (BA Founders) was on the 2008 Women’s Executive Network’s list of Canada’s Top 100 Most Powerful Women. She is a member of the York Regional Police Auxiliary, the Ontario Public Service Pride Network, and sits on the Board of Directors for Pride Toronto.

Song, Hyoung Suk (BA Hons. Calumet) recently moved to the product planning/strategic marketing team for Samsung Electronics Printing division. He was married in September 2007.

Wahbi, Michael (BA Hons. Stong) is a high school teacher at Bishop Allen Academy in Toronto. He married in May 2007 and volunteers as assistant coach for the York Lions men’s volleyball team.

2003

Montgomery-Hall, Louise (BA Glendon) has, along with her children, moved to a house in the middle of a conservation area and is discovering the beauty and quiet of the country and the fortitude and graciousness of people in rural Ontario.

Neal, David (BA Hons. McLaughlin) was to complete his MBA at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax in May 2009 and hopes to return to Toronto to seek employment upon graduation. He volunteers in community events with other members of the MBA Society in his spare time.

Pjescic, Minja (MBA) has been working at Fidelity Investments Canada in Toronto for 10 years, currently as manager in the Product Solutions Department. She married Tihomir Cvijic in May 2008.

Ruocco, Anthony (BSc Spec. Hons. Bethune) recently completed his pre-doctoral internship at the University of Chicago and is currently a post-doctoral research associate and neuropsychology fellow at the University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago.

Urso, Ramona (BSc Bethune) manages the commercial real estate transactions for Bell Canada in Ontario. She keeps herself informed on economics and the commercial market, travels for business and practices yoga twice a week.

Zepeda, Raquel (BA Spec. Hons. Vanier) lives in Barcelona and is working on a PhD on clinical developmental psychology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. She is studying parenting styles and disruptive behaviour disorders.

2004

Headrick, Paul (PhD) recently published his first novel, That Tune Clutches My Heart, with Gaspereau Press. He teaches English literature and creative writing at Langara College in Vancouver.

Johnston, Julie (BDes Spec. Hons. Calumet) co-founded Defence Intelligence, an Ottawa-based information security firm specializing in compromise detection and mitigation, incident response and emergency forensics.

Patch, April (BSc Bethune) gave birth to a 4-1/2 week premature baby boy, Cameron James, weighing 6 pounds, 13 ounces, on Jan. 16, 2008.

2005


Cole, Kenneth (BA Hons. Vanier) is an independent film director and recently concluded work on a short film. He looks forward to a master’s degree in either film production or screenwriting at York in the fall of 2009.

Mohi-ud-Din Qadri, Hussain (BA Atkinson) is CEO of Bala & Ladae Group, a manufacturer and supplier of spa equipment in Canada. He has authored five books including a book of Urdu poetry.

Russell, Marilyn (BA Bethune) was married in Port Sydney, Ont. in 2008. The couple has recently relocated to the Ottawa Valley.
2006: Suzana Stos

Silva, Steven (BA Hons. McLaughlin, BEd) was married on Aug. 2, 2008 to Josie (Giuseppa) Bagnato (BA Hons. ’07 McLaughlin, BEd ’08).

2006

Dubins, Matthew (BA Hons. Winters) married Rachel E. Lifshitz (BA, BEd ’07 Stong) in July 2008. Matthew is working toward his PhD in experimental psychology with a specialization in cognitive neuroscience at the University of Toronto.

Goodman, Adam (MBA) recently wrote and published his first book, Following The Goods: Financial Management for the Young and Ambitious, designed to help teenagers and young adults learn to manage their finances.

McQueen, Tammy (BA Hons. Winters) is the director of communications at the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, an organization working to improve the accessibility and quality of higher education in Ontario.

Nizam, Hudaser (BA Hons. Calumet, BEd) has for the past two years worked as a math teacher at Chinguacousy Secondary School in Brampton, where she’s just bought her first home with her husband. She plans to pursue a master of education on a part-time basis in 2009.

Stos, Suzana (BA Spec. Hons. Atkinson) recently completed an MA in English literature and film studies at Wilfrid Laurier University. She is currently completing a bachelor of education at York.

Smith, Westmore (BA ’06 Atkinson) is a French teacher at Shoreham Public School in Toronto. He also helps run a Boys to Men Program at the school for at-risk youth, and volunteers at the Jamaican Canadian Association.

2007

Stefanidis, Kyriake (BA Spec. Hons. Stong) teaches English and ESL at Dr. Norman Bethune Collegiate Institute in Toronto. She is also involved in an initiative that, in cooperation with schools, tries to close the gap between ESL and mainstream education.

Steinberg, Lindsay (BA Spec. Hons. Winters, BEd) has produced two off-Broadway plays, Jewtopia and Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead.

Wright, Nicole C. (BA ’88, BA Hons. ’05 Bethune, MA) is the owner/pro- prietor of Museum of Moments, a company that documents and preserves individual and corporate oral histories for clients. She lives in Mississauga with her three teenagers.

2008

Alexander, Sylvia (BA Atkinson) enjoys the freedom that graduating has given her by volunteering at the YMCA and a seniors’ centre. She feels fortunate to have had the opportunity of a university education in her later years as it has broadened her horizons and outlook.

Ghoari, Ridah (BA Hons. Calumet) is completing her MA in international & comparative legal studies, specializing in dispute & conflict resolution at the School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London, UK.

Gourley, Will (BA Founders) is completing his bachelor of education at York University College & Seminary in Toronto. He is the proud father of son Storm, 13, and lucky husband of Robyn (15 years). His undergrad took 24 years to complete because of a hiatus to found the clothing site CostaNada.com.

Haner, Dilsy (BA Spec. Hons. Vanier) has returned to York to pursue a graduate degree in clinical-developmental psychology. She is chair of the Board of Directors at Justice for Children and Youth.

Ijaz, Fatima (BA Atkinson) is pursuing a master in linguistics at Eastern Michigan University. She is also trying to develop a new approach towards language learning by incorporating poetry, philosophy and extracts of literature in the teaching of a language.

Kirkham, Amy (BA Spec. Hons. Bethune) moved to Vancouver with her boyfriend in August 2008. She plans to complete a master of science at the University of British Columbia.

Lachance, Heidi (BA Glendon, BEd) teaches French with the Toronto District School Board. She is confident that the learning experiences and mentorship she received at York are what helped her attain such a wonderful position.

Sharma, Kunal (MBA) works in the management training program at Manulife Financial. His wife had twin boys in July 2008 and he is enjoying life as a father.

Telner, Jason (PhD) works as a research scientist at Honeywell International Inc. in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

IN MEMORIAM

Bowsfield, Hartwell, who became York’s first archivist in 1970, died on Aug. 10, 2008. Also a history professor, he was inducted into York’s Founders Society in 1999.

Doege, George, founding chair of York’s Department of Economics and master of McLaughlin College from 1978 to 1988, died on June 5, 2008. His lectures, delivered in tandem with McLaughlin’s first master, George Tatham, have been described as legendary.

Escobar, José, professor emeritus of Hispanic studies, died Sept. 28, 2008. He had taught Spanish literature in Glendon’s Department of Hispanic Studies since it was founded in 1972.

Gibson, Barry (LLB ’74), well-known Vancouver libel lawyer, died of a heart attack on March 24 at 60.

Gibson, Dyanne (BA Spec. Hons. ’73, MA ’74), longtime York humanities professor, died on Oct. 19, 2008 at 75. She produced annually revised guides to Canadian universities, including Gibson’s Student Guide to Ontario Universities and Gibson’s Student Guide to Western Canadian Universities.

Jeffrey, Liss (MES ‘87), director of the McLuhan Global Research Network at the University of Toronto, died of cancer on Dec. 18, 2008 at 57.

Leswal, Thomas (BA Hons. ’74 Vanier) died in Calgary in November 2008, of complications from bladder cancer and kidney failure. The geography major had many friends in Ontario from his days at York.

Lucas, Robert, professor in York’s Schulich School of Business, died on Feb. 17 at 65. He taught organizational behaviour and industrial relations and had headed the Bachelor of Business Administration Program.

Minden, Harold (MA ’67, PhD ’69), York professor emeritus of psychology, died Feb. 18 at 85. At age 40, he sold his successful leather business, went back to school at York and then joined its Department of Psychology, where he founded the Learning Disability Program.

Nanj, Soraya (BAS Spec.Hons. ’07 Atkinson) was killed by a truck while walking in Toronto on March 25. Aged 28, she was an administrative assistant in sales and marketing at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Rezansoff, Jeff (MES ’05), died on Dec. 23, 2008 at 34 from complications stemming from an accident in Taiwan, where he was teaching English.

Solomon, Patrick, education professor, died of cancer on Oct. 4, 2008. Jamaican-born, he was one of the pioneers of the Urban Diversity Initiative in York’s Faculty of Education.


Youngman, Alison (LLB ’84, LLM ’89), a high-profile Toronto lawyer, died of lung cancer on March 8. She was named a YWCA Woman of Distinction in 2004 for breaking “new ground for women in the legal profession”.

YorkU Summer 2009 45
How a York dance instructor gave me my epiphany. BY SANDIE RINALDO

Dancing to the News

I realized I would never be a professional dancer. Until then, I had harboured dreams of Broadway musical stardom, a marriage perhaps to the much older choreographer Gower Champion or Alvin Ailey, a brownstone in Manhattan and dinners at the infamous Sardi’s on West 44th.

I had achieved some early success as a singer and dancer, as a regular on the CBC shows “The Good Company” and “Where It’s At”, and a TV pilot the CBC capriciously called “Ruby Begonia’s Electric Chowder Society”. But a seminal moment in my life, a man often cited in viewer opinion polls as the most trusted man in America. I was in an alternative fantasy relationship with Walter Leland Cronkite Jr., anchor of the CBS Evening News. Walter and I would get together five nights a week from 6:30 to 7. I had been involved with him since the 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy. He drew me into his television world of journalism and reporting.

With youthful exuberance I set my sights on an improbable goal. I did not want to be with Walter. I wanted Walter’s job. I became an information junkie, a walking encyclopedia Britannica of news. I read newspapers, magazines and books. I watched newsmagazine shows like “60 Minutes” and “W5”. The same week I graduated from York University I called the CBC looking for work as a news researcher. They politely declined to avail themselves of my services.

Not to be discouraged, I telephoned CTV and, remarkably, the head of personnel, Chuck Umland, took my call and took the time to talk to me. After 20 minutes he put me on hold. It was another seminal moment. When he returned he told me the director of news needed someone to answer the phones and asked whether I was interested in the job. A streetcar and subway ride later, I was interviewed by the late Don Cameron and hired.

Ahuva Anbary was a memorable teacher – whether you used her wisdom to build a career in dance or took her advice to try something else. I do not know where she is today, but I thank her for closing one door so I could open another.

By the way, I still dance every day in my living room, at parties with friends and family, and during intermission at tapings of CTV’s “So You Think You Can Dance Canada”, but only when the cameras are not rolling!
I would never be a dancer. She does not have the physical strength. But she has more musicality in her baby finger than all of you combined. Dance, Sandie. Dance.” I did not know whether to be thrilled or to throw up!

At each class she would single out someone for “special attention”. I generally tried to stay hidden behind some of the taller dancers, thinking that if I could not see Ahuva, she could not see me. I was wrong. One day she ordered the pianist to stop playing, glared around the studio and fixed her gaze on me. I realized I would never be a dancer. She did not want to throw me to the wolves. She did not want to see me. I was wrong. One day she ordered the pianist to stop playing, glared around the studio and fixed her gaze on me.

I had achieved some early success as a singer and dancer, as a regular on the CBC shows “The Good Company” and “Where the Heart Is”, and a TV pilot the CBC capriciously called “Ruby and the Dinosaurs” in my life, a man often cited in viewer opinion polls as the most trusted man in America. I was in the wilds of a new university, I pursued the finer arts in this intellectual and artistic refuge, a modern dance class at York University opened my eyes to another career path. Like others who sought an intellectual and artistic refuge, I became an information junkie, a walking encyclopedia.

It would be dishonest to say that Walter would not have been a big part of my life without the opportunity to work for him. It may have been disheartening to me that a man who knew me so well could not see the ambition that I put on the table. It may have been disheartening to me that a man who knew me so well could not see the ambition that I put on the table. It would be dishonest to say that Walter would not have been a big part of my life without the opportunity to work for him. It may have been disheartening to me that a man who knew me so well could not see the ambition that I put on the table. It would be dishonest to say that Walter would not have been a big part of my life without the opportunity to work for him. It may have been disheartening to me that a man who knew me so well could not see the ambition that I put on the table.

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As instructed, I danced for the class. But it was a sliding door moment for me, the moment when reality came face to face with ambition and reality. I may have been disheartened by the moment when reality came face to face with ambition. I may have been disheartened by the moment when reality came face to face with ambition. It’s At”, and a TV pilot the CBC capriciously called “Ruby and the Dinosaurs” in my life, a man often cited in viewer opinion polls as the most trusted man in America. I was in the wilds of a new university, I pursued the finer arts in this intellectual and artistic refuge, a modern dance class at York University opened my eyes to another career path. Like others who sought an intellectual and artistic refuge, I became an information junkie, a walking encyclopedia.

But it was Ahuva Anbary, my modern dance instructor, who provided me with my epiphany. She was an excellent instructor, but this tough former Israeli army drill sergeant, she declared: “This girl will never be a dancer. She does not have the body. She does not have the physical strength. But she has more musicality in her baby finger than all of you combined. Dance, Sandie. Dance.” I did not know whether to be thrilled or to throw up!

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