

YORKU

SUMMER 2008



SWEET DEAL

Farouk Jiwa turns rural Africans into honey-making entrepreneurs

PLUS

New Chancellor Roy McMurtry
Bilingualism and the Brain
The Oscars, John Lennon and 'Sir Jerry'

INSIDE



YORKU

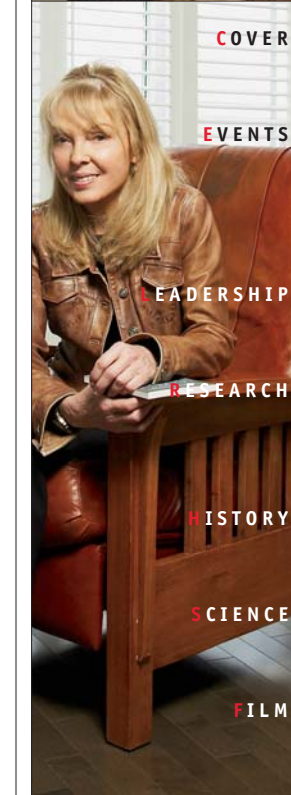
THE MAGAZINE OF YORK UNIVERSITY



4 Editor@YorkU A valuable kiss. BY BERTON WOODWARD

7 Leading Edge It has been a rewarding first year. BY MAMDOUH SHOUKRI

8 Universe Baroque is Back...What They're Reading...The Limits of Charisma...Let's Talk About Sex...The New Literacy...Bloggin' Mamas...Do No Evil



14 Sweet Deal
How Farouk Jiwa helps African subsistence farmers improve their lives. BY MICHAEL TODD

17 Speed Mentoring
Members of York's new "50 to the Power of 50" group of prominent alumni offer quick – very quick – life lessons to students. BY DAVID FULLER
Guiding Lights: Remembering those who made a difference. BY MICHAEL TODD

24 Roy McMurtry: A Life of Justice
York's distinguished new chancellor is keen to help students. BY MARTHA TANCOCK

26 Nimble Minds
Psychologist Ellen Bialystok finds bilingualism can put off Alzheimer's. BY MARTHA TANCOCK
Drive Talkin': Are bilinguals better at using cell phones while driving? BY MICHAEL TODD

30 The Darkest Time
York and the Azrieli Foundation team up to publish Holocaust memoirs. BY MARTHA TANCOCK

32 Nano Mechanic
Biochemist Gerald Audette is at the cutting edge of work with cellular proteins. BY DAVID FULLER

34 The Oscars, John Lennon – and 'Sir Jerry'
How lawyer Jerry Levitan turned his Beatle experience at 14 into an Oscar-nominated short – and heady times in Hollywood. BY DAVID FULLER



37 York People
Teacher and author Shernett Martin...art appraiser Charlotte McGhee

39 Giving
The library space race.

40 Alumni
Shared passions...Class Notes

50 Back Talk
How I track the decline of the songbirds. BY BRIDGET STUTCHBURY

SUMMER 2008

It was one for the books. BY BERTON WOODWARD

Lost Kiss

IN 1965, a York University official gave my aunt a kiss – and thereby hangs a great tale. It highlights how important the work of many unsung – or not loudly sung – groups can be in supporting a university.

Anyone remember the '60s? It was a time of dramatic social change with a great soundtrack – and in Canada, of countless Centennial projects. In the suburbs of Toronto, the University Women's Club of North York was casting about for what to do for their project in the run-up to Canada's 100th anniversary in 1967. My aunt, Janet Berton, was the president in 1964-1965, and she and her committee decided to raise money for books at York University, which was just then preparing to move to its new Keele campus in North York. Their target was \$5,000.

On Jan. 27, 1965, Wilfred Sanders, York's director of information & development, met with Janet and the committee to receive a ceremonial first cheque of \$137.50. A *Toronto Star* photographer was on hand, possibly spurred by the fact that Janet's husband was Pierre Berton, author, TV personality and former *Star* columnist. Sanders gave Janet a peck on the cheek, the camera flashed, and the club went on to raise the full \$5,000, which it presented to the University on May 31, 1967.

Strangely, the original \$5,000 cheque went astray at York, and the club replaced it that October. Perhaps that's a clue to what happened next.

Absolutely nothing happened – until the early 21st century, when a York



librarian got wind that there might have been a major gift to the library that officials were unaware of. The librarian began an archival search, and eventually found the *Star's* picture of Sanders bussing my aunt, along with a newspaper account of the gift. But no one at York was able to place it – until finance officials confirmed that, indeed, a trust fund had been established at the time but details were lacking. The newspaper clippings, not least the kiss, sealed the deal.

And what a deal. University Librarian Cynthia Archer announced in 2003 that the club's newly rediscovered Centenary Book Endowment of \$5,000 was now worth \$70,000, thanks to the wonders of compound interest. This amounted to nearly 10 per cent of the York University Libraries' total endowment.

In fact, this is just a portion of the support the club has been providing to York over the years, without great fanfare. According to club archivist Barbara McNutt, its scholarships and bursaries for York students have amounted to \$53,700 since 1963. The club's focus has long been female students, and it was a big supporter of the Women's Studies program when it was launched at York. All of that seems worthy of a kiss to me. ■

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

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

It's good advice for a president – and a university. BY MAMDOUH SHOUKRI

Being Yourself

LATE SPRING IS A GLORIOUS TIME of year at York – the days are long and not yet too hot, the trees are green and flowers are in bloom, and thousands of students and their families converge on campus for convocation. It's hard to believe nearly a year has passed since I began my term, a journey from being "York's new president" to simply "York's president". Along the way, I have been guided by two simple words of advice I received from a friend and top executive early in my tenure, words that were echoed on the other side of the world when I visited India on York's behalf last January.

While there, I met with executives of the Tata Group – Indian's largest private company – the day after the Nano was unveiled. The Nano, in case you missed it, is the world's cheapest car – no airbags, no air conditioning, not even a radio – and its launch was something of a revolution. It is the vision of the company's head, Ratan Tata, who conceived



It's been a rewarding year:

the idea and saw it through to production, against the advice of friends and critics alike. When asked about his leadership philosophy, Tata, like my friend, said: "Be yourself."

I haven't met Tata, but those two words have served me well in an eventful year that, while challenging, has also been very rewarding: the momentum for a medical school at York is building; the Government of Ontario is funding the expansion of Glendon into a Centre of Excellence for French-Language and Bilingual Postsecondary Education; and York has Roy McMurtry as its new chancellor.

These are all significant milestones, to be sure, but to my mind, there is an event even more important than these. If the mission of a university is to create and share new knowledge to better society, then convocation is the highlight of the academic year.

For the faculty and staff of a university, there is nothing more gratifying than seeing graduating students in their

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

robes. It is a moment of hope for the graduates and their families, and for York – hope that they remember, as they make their way in the world, what they have learned here, and what York stands for: excellence, diversity, accessibility, social justice, fairness. Hope that they remember to be themselves, no matter where in the world they end up.

At York, we educate students to be citizens of the world, so it's not surprising that our alumni live and work in nearly every country; we are also connected to the world because we come from every part of it. There are some 9,600 foreign-born students at York from 173 countries – nearly 20 per cent of our total student population. It is inevitable, with this incredible mix of languages and cultures and ideas, that there will be divergent opinions, differing ideologies and plenty of campus debate. Critical thinking and the push and pull of ideas are the lifeblood of any university.

As we move towards celebrating York's 50th anniversary in 2009, we do so knowing that our best years are ahead of us. York at 50 is a young and vibrant university, imbued with a can-do spirit and committed to playing a critical part in the cultural, social and economic development of our world. We are a university being itself. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

UNIVERSE



MUSIC

Baroque is Back

An elegant harpsichord comes to York

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

York's new harpsichord looks as good as it sounds. Hand-made by Montreal craftsman Yves Beaupré, it had its debut onstage in the depths of

winter but likely warmed the hearts of those hearing it for the first time. It was played in a concert of Baroque works by York Music Professor Stephanie Martin, a specialist in the period. "Interest in Baroque music has experienced a resurgence in the last 25 years," she says. "I think we rediscover periodically how wonderful this music is, and we want to recreate it the way it would have sounded."

The instrument doesn't have a huge dynamic range, unlike a piano. Partly that's because it's much smaller than a concert grand. Pianos were developed to fill big halls with sound, says Martin. "The harpsichord is really made for small, intimate spaces. In the 17th century people made music at home."

The strings of a harpsichord are plucked (in the early days using a bird quill, but now using plastic), not struck with felt hammers as in a piano. York's "Flemish Style" harpsichord, which cost in the range of \$17,000-\$20,000, was commissioned by the Music Department in the Faculty of Fine Arts to support a burgeoning interest in Baroque performance. It's based on a (still playable!) original made in 1624 and now housed in a museum in Colmar, France. Many different woods go into its making, says Beaupré. "We use pear, ebony, holly, spruce, oak, poplar and basswood." Beaupré's wife, Daniele Forget, did the ornate hand-painted decoration on the soundboard.

Though an old instrument, modern musicians like The Rolling Stones have used the harpsichord in their music, and modern and avant-garde composers such as Francis Poulenc and Philip Glass have written concertos for it. "It's an instrument with a warm, delicate sound and it's portable, which is probably why it was popular among musicians and audiences more than three centuries ago," says Martin. ■

MUSIC MAKERS: Martin and student Ian Uhlir

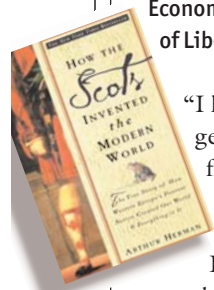
BOOKS

What They're Reading

York people reveal what's on the bedside table

Sam Lanfranco

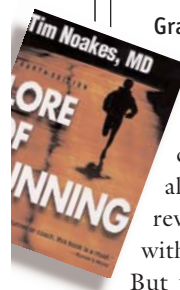
Economics professor, Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies



"I love books for their patience. I get to them when I can. I just finished Arthur Herman's *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*. The Scottish Enlightenment remains central to modern society and to my field, economics. I am reading Ursula K. LeGuin's novel *Seafood*. She is a great writer and I worked with her mother, Theodora Krober. Lastly, I am reading *Pride of Place*, Brenda M. Hudson's history of the settlement of Prince Edward County, where I live."

Jamie Burr

Grad student and triathlete, School of Kinesiology & Health Science



"I'm preparing papers for my comprehensive examination along with some systematic reviews, so most of my reading is with my nose in a scientific journal. But when not hunting out exercise physiology articles, I enjoy non-fiction science books. Currently, I'm reading *The Lore of Running* by Timothy Noakes and have just recently finished *The Velocity of Honey* by Jay Ingram, the person who hosts "Daily Planet". I enjoy the training books as a supplement to my triathlon-racing hobby, and I suppose my affinity for books on random science facts just highlights my inner geek. In fact, a look at my reading list might just supply the evidence needed to prove that the terms 'jock' and 'geek' need not be mutually exclusive."

STUDIES

The Limits of Charisma

Sometimes too much of it can be a leadership problem



It may seem paradoxical in today's personality-driven world, but two York researchers have found that having too much "charisma" can sometimes hinder a team leader's performance and even have a destructive effect on the team itself. Business literature has commonly characterized "charismatic" or "transformational" leadership as a superior style of leadership, says Len Karakowsky, a professor of human resources management, but too much may be a liability, he's found.

He and colleague Igor Kotlyar examined leadership styles to learn which are the most effective in generating "productive conflict" among team members while minimizing negative interpersonal conflict. "Although there's a lot known and written about the positive impact of transformational leadership on follower performance, much less is understood about the impact of transformational leadership on performance in a work team context," says Karakowsky.

Often charismatic leaders' great strength is that they are good at promoting constructive debate leading to strong management decisions by the team. Karakowsky says they do this by appealing to individual team members' self-concept, but this can be a double-edged sword.

The passionate style of charismatic leaders can often inspire group members to become more emotionally involved in the group's interactions, he says. Involving the self-concept means that group members want to prove to their leader – and themselves – that they are indeed "worthy". On the one hand, this can lead to productive and lively debates of ideas and contribute to high-quality decision making. On the other hand, bringing the self-concept to the table can also lead members to become hyper-defensive of their own ideas and vicious critics of those of others. Personal battles can come to overshadow constructive, task-oriented debates and so the decision process ultimately deteriorates.

Karakowsky and Kotlyar's study found that a less flamboyant, no-frills leader can often be more successful at engaging executive teams in brainstorming while keeping emotions and egos in check. ■

More young female teens are vulnerable to HIV than ever before, according to Sarah Flicker, professor in York's Faculty of Environmental Studies. Flicker recently completed the Toronto Teen Survey, involving a diverse range of 1,200 young people aged 13-18 drawn from 100 different Toronto communities. The survey's aim was to gather information from youth on assets, gaps and barriers that currently exist in sex education and public services and use that information to develop a city-wide strategy to increase positive sexual health outcomes for diverse Toronto youth, says Flicker.

A key element in the data gathering was to get teens talking to teens. Initially 12 young people aged 13-17 were recruited to form an advisory committee to assist in the survey design. Later, 20 similarly aged teens were given 10 weeks of training in how to facilitate survey workshop sessions with their peers and provide peer education on prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections. The 1,200 teens surveyed participated in 90 workshops. They submitted anonymous written questions to be answered by the workshop facilitators. Questions were coded based on topic and analyzed to identify common themes and areas for exploration. Researchers found a high proportion related to sex acts and behaviours, sexual readiness and pregnancy.

Doing research on adolescent sexual health isn't easy. "There are all kinds of barriers to working with youth," says Flicker. "Many people don't want to admit that their teens are sexually active. So the first hurdle is just getting over the fact that teens are sexual beings and we need to figure out ways to support them. I think one of the reasons our survey was so successful is that it involved teens as real partners at every step." ■

HEALTH

Let's Talk About Sex

A broad youth survey involves teens themselves

RESOURCES

The New Literacy

Reading and writing are not enough – you need to be 'information literate'

PHOTOGRAPH BY RSQUARED

When we talk about literacy, most of us think of reading and writing. But there's a new kind of literacy – the information kind. Luckily for students, York University Libraries (YUL) is on top of the trend.

To get the most out of their university experience, students need to be "information literate", says Sophie Bury, acting chair, YUL Information Literacy Committee. "Students researching a paper need to find ways to navigate a vast and daunting array of information resources," she says. Those resources include scholarly books, journal articles and credible Web sites, among others.

"Information literacy builds on traditional literacy," says Bury. "We're awash now in information every day in every context and in an information economy, information literacy is one of those indispensable 'soft skills' that add to your value in the marketplace. What were once just library skills have taken on a broader significance as information competencies."

Bury notes that YUL often gets requests for library instruction sessions from frustrated faculty who complain students don't move much beyond the free Web when doing term paper research. "We now play a role in teaching students when and how to use Internet resources like Wikipedia effectively, while also guiding them through the process of research using virtual and print collections and scholarly sources available through York," Bury says. ■

UNIVERSE



Bloggin' Mamas

May Friedman investigates mothers online

Two of the Web's major attributes – confession and anonymity – fit perfectly into the venue of what has become known as “mommy blogs”. May Friedman, a doctoral student in women's studies at York, is researching mothering and infertility blogs to see what she can learn about what's on mothers' and would-be mothers' minds. “In 1976, Adrienne Rich wrote, ‘We know more about the air we breathe, the seas we travel, than about the nature and meaning of motherhood’,” notes Friedman, who says blogs are the perfect way for women to overcome shame and isolation – especially infertile women. The “mamasphere” has become a good place to take the pulse of what Rich was talking about, Friedman says.

“Mommy blogs are simultaneously celebrated and reviled. But they've become a critical component of cyberspace. It's a cultural phenomenon. Yet, so far, there's been little consensus on their purpose or possible implications. Are they just mothering narratives or are they ‘transgressive’? Are they redefining motherhood and mothering as a contested, messy and variegated enterprise? No one yet knows.”

Friedman plans to use postmodern feminism, mothering theory and life writing theory to do a critical discourse analysis of mothering weblogs as a way to explore and consider the implications of motherhood in the Internet era. ■

Business and ethics has, at times, seemed a contradiction in terms (witness Conrad Black's recent travails). But there is a new breed of business leader on the rise, especially at York's Schulich School of Business if students such as Ian Howard are any indication. Howard and a team of fellow b-students recently took top prize (US\$10,000) in the North American Project Pyramid Case Competition designed to find practical business solutions to alleviating poverty in Ghana and other places in the world.

The competition was organized by Net Impact, an international non-profit organization dedicated to developing a new generation of leaders who use business solutions to bring about social and economic improvements. “There's a rise of counter-cultural evolution in b-school now with people working for non-profits like the World Wildlife Fund,” says Howard. “And the fact that Net Impact is one of the more popular clubs at Schulich is telling. I see many graduates now walk past Bay Street and look for sustainability jobs and alternative pursuits.”

Howard and team competed against 35 business schools from across North America. The Schulich team, consisting of Howard, Matthew Cohen, Simon MacMahon, Bob Mann and Alexis Morgan, beat teams from such high-profile b-schools as Wharton, Duke, Michigan and Chicago. Each had to develop a business solution to a real-life poverty-related problem and present their solutions to a judging panel of corporate executives. The Schulich team's focus was to build on the entrepreneurial strengths of local people, eschewing an aid-based approach.

So what's Howard doing with his share of the Pyramid pot? “I'm using mine to help support a friend in Mali – Amagono



Do No Evil

A Schulich team wins big in a competition to fight poverty

Saye – finish his radio journalism degree. That costs about \$1,500 a year. And I donated \$400 to the One Laptop per Child Project (laptop.org). That leaves about \$100 for me and Revenue Canada.” ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RSQUARED



... AN ECONOMIST SEES PROPERTY TAXES
... AN URBAN PLANNER SEES DENSITY
... A GEOGRAPHER SEES A VERTICAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

QUESTION EVERY ANGLE.
STUDY EVERY ANGLE.
RESEARCH EVERY ANGLE.

WELCOME TO THE INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY. At York, we tackle real-world issues by bringing together researchers, graduate students and partners from different disciplines. Right now, geographers, urban planners and policy experts at CITY, The City Institute at York University, are examining the problems facing large cities in Canada and the world. They are investigating whether creative practices can be used to educate and transform the experience of urban development in light of the changing technological, economic and cultural experiences of globalization. It is this collaborative approach to creating new knowledge that makes York a leading research innovator. To learn more about the interdisciplinary university, visit YORKU.CA



Farouk Jiwa helps African subsistence farmers improve their lives through small, eco-friendly businesses like beekeeping. **BY MICHAEL TODD**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGINA GOODWIN

SWEET SUCCESS

I MAGINE A HONEY OF AN IDEA as rewarding monetarily as it is socially. Farouk Jiwa did. The York grad (MES '03), who is a native Kenyan, has spent the years since his York graduation making a remarkable contribution to his former country through Honey Care Africa. HCA helps subsistence farmers improve their livelihoods by introducing them to sustainable beekeeping. The company ensures that the rural farmers – half of whom are women – access the capital they need for start-ups as well as training and a guaranteed market for the honey at Fair Trade prices.

Although Jiwa now calls Canada home, he travels frequently to Kenya and other parts of the world, setting up and attending to the honey and other sustainable, micro-financed businesses he's helped establish. His work involves principles that relate directly to his time at York, which included gaining a graduate diploma in business & the environment offered jointly by the Faculty of Environmental Studies and the Schulich School of Business. As early as 2005, Jiwa was recognized as One to Watch by York's annual Bryden Alumni Awards. Now he is one of 50 prominent alumni who are part of the new "50 to the Power of 50" group supporting York's \$200-million fundraising campaign (see following story). The bees have generated a lot of buzz.

"The decision to promote honey production as a micro-enterprise at the local community level was driven by a number of factors," says Jiwa. "From the market perspective, there was clearly a demand for honey both locally and within the wider region. At the time, my partners and I couldn't understand why a tropical country like Kenya was importing honey all the way from Australia and the US and yet we had a much more lush and vibrant flora. I was particularly keen on finding an income-generating activity that could be undertaken by



STEPPING UP: Jiwa in Nairobi

small-holder subsistence farmers, who represent a majority of the population, and didn't require heavy inputs or buying more land."

The decision to pursue honey production was also strongly influenced by the positive environmental impact that bees create, Jiwa adds. They pollinate native vegetation and food crops, and beekeeping could be done on the periphery of forests and national parks as an alternative to charcoal production. "Finally, we were looking for a commodity that was non-perishable because of the problems with road transportation in rural areas, so we needed a product that would keep well. Honey seemed to be the natural answer."

JIWA COMES BY HIS ENTREPRENEURSHIP skills naturally, it seems. "My father was a serial entrepreneur and my mother a school teacher. Between them, they ensured that my brother and I not only got a sound education but that we were well-grounded and had a clear sense of the important values in life." As a fourth-generation Asian-Kenyan and part of the first post-independence generation, he says, "I was fortunate to grow up in a strong, stable and cohesive community environment. From a very early age, this gave me a very good understanding of the power of communities and a sense of just what can be achieved when people come together and work towards a common goal."

HCA was launched in 2000 and, as part of his master's degree at York, Jiwa continued to work on elaborating his innovative business model. The initiative got a tremendous boost from its first significant project, worth \$50,000, with the Danish government's international development agency, Danida. HCA manufactured the widely used Langstroth hives and distributed them to small farmers who typically worked less than 0.8 of a hectare. In the early days Jiwa distributed 100 of the hives he'd made to 25 families in eastern Kenya. The result was highly successful. "Our first harvest was a mere 300 kgs of honey and collectively made only \$500," he notes. "However, that proved our model worked and gave us, the farmers and other partners the confidence to continue. We haven't looked back since." According to HCA, the company captured 27 per cent of the domestic honey market in Kenya within its first four years of business and established a network of 2,500 beekeepers who earned between US\$200 and \$250 a year, often double their previous earnings. That market share is now close to 40 per cent and there are nearly 9,000 households across East Africa involved in beekeeping with HCA.

Honey Care's business strategy has been to put the small-holder farmers at the centre of the business and to build a "Kenya first" marketing approach, says Jiwa. This involves focusing on the needs of the rural farmers to encourage them to start honey production, and to first serve the considerable

demand for honey in major Kenya hotels, retail outlets and local industries before pursuing the export market. Now, with a strong foothold in Kenya's domestic market, Honey Care has expanded honey sales to neighbouring Tanzania, the US and Europe. Although the recent political turbulence in Kenya caused some temporary problems for HCA, says Jiwa, the decline of honey bees noted in some parts of the world has not affected East Africa.

HCA's success has received international recognition. In 2003 it won the prestigious Equator Prize from the United Nations Development Program along with several other awards for social entrepreneurship. The Equator Prize recognizes innovative community partnerships that reduce poverty through conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Jiwa was also recognized as one of the "Most Outstanding Social Entrepreneurs" by the Schwab Foundation at the World Economic Forum in 2005 and received a World Business Award from the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum.

IN 2006, JIWA JOINED CARE Canada as director of CARE Enterprise Partners, a social venture capital unit that seeks lasting solutions to poverty through market-based approaches designed to unleash entrepreneurship in emerging economies. His most recent initiative with CARE Canada was a partnership with Trade Facilitation Office Canada to support Gone Rural, an innovative social venture based in Swaziland, to successfully find a market for its products in Canada. Gone Rural seeks to improve the lives of rural women who use traditional skills to create attractive bowls, placemats and other highly marketable household items in home-based businesses. This joint initiative won the 2007 Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters International Cooperation Award for Excellence.

"Growing up in a country where more than half the population lives in abject poverty earning less than \$1 a day, where so much human potential goes unrealized because people are struggling to meet basic needs, and a country where getting an education is a privilege rather than a right, I was determined to use the opportunity I had been given to get a university education to try and make some contribution towards addressing these enormous challenges," says Jiwa.

"A sense of empathy is a very strong driver for what I do. I always try to remember that had circumstances been a little different, I could very well be one of the millions of people living below the poverty line. I therefore try my level best to provide the encouragement, advice and support to others that I would have wanted them to provide to me if I was in their shoes, and in a way that doesn't take away their pride." ■

With a strong foothold in Kenya's market, Honey Care has expanded sales to Tanzania, the US and Europe.

Speed Mentoring

Members of York's new '50 to the Power of 50' alumni group offer quick life lessons to students.

BY DAVID FULLER ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY BEECHEY

GETTING CAREER ADVICE from mentors like former lieutenant-governor Lincoln Alexander or top banker Bill Hatanaka was already a rare opportunity for a lucky group of students at the launch of York's "50 to the Power of 50" group of prominent alumni. But these were life lessons on steroids, delivered at a set of tables in the elegant CIBC Lobby of York's Accolade East Building on March 26, one year before York's 50th birthday. You've heard of speed dating? This was speed mentoring.

As emcee Barbara Budd (BA '74) of CBC Radio's "As It Happens" kept time with a bell, students moved from table to table every five minutes to soak up wisdom from luminaries as varied as former TVO chief Isabel Bassett (MA '73), Ontario Science Centre CEO Lesley Lewis (BA '71) and lawyer Dale Lastman (LLB '82). They are among the 50 grads who will act as ambassadors for the \$200-million York to the Power of 50 fundraising campaign as it gears up for York's anniversary year.

Sunita Moharaj, an accounting student, did one of her five-minute interviews with Hatanaka (BA '77), chairman and CEO of TD Waterhouse Canada and co-chair of the York to the Power of 50 campaign. For Moharaj, it wasn't as much what was said, as who was saying it. "I'd heard some of the career advice about being well-rounded before," she said, "but to hear it from someone like William was definitely an eye-opener."

Hatanaka told her of challenges he faced in a career transition from professional football player to financier and advised her to take everything she could from her university experience.

Alexander (LLB '53) and administrative studies student Tamara Gordon – both black and seated in wheelchairs – talked about the dual challenge of coping with disability and racism. "I want you to let people know, that when you look at me, don't look at my handicap, look at what I can give to the world," said Alexander, who added words of advice on what not to do from his days in the '50s as an Osgoode law student facing racism. "Stand up against wrong," he said. "When anyone demeans you, check them – but do it quietly. I did it in front of 250 students. Don't do it the way I did."

Irina Millo, a fourth-year accounting student, so impressed her mentor, CBC Radio host Jian Ghomeshi (BA '95), with her involvement in campus life that he said, "It doesn't sound like you need any mentoring, you're doing fine." But Millo welcomed Ghomeshi's assessment that participating in campus life would help set her apart from other applicants in her field.

Ivan Fecan (BA '01), chair of the "50 to the Power of 50" group and head of CTVglobemedia and CTV Inc., was impressed with the way the students he met went straight for "big-picture questions". "They were all remarkably smart and self-aware," he said. And after seven rounds of speed-mentoring, maybe a little more so. ■

RARE OPPORTUNITY: (From top) student Maria Christoforou gets advice; student Ujjwal Ramdas with Debra Brown (BFA Spec. Hons. '78); Fecan with student Ivan Katsevman; student Billy Lee with Ghomeshi; Sandie Rinaldo (BA Spec. Hons. '73) offers her thoughts; Gordon with Alexander



Guiding Lights

Three members of York's '50 to the Power of 50' alumni group remember those who made a difference.

BY MICHAEL TODD ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK

MENTORS. Who hasn't had one (or needed one) at some point in their life? Certainly, these three highly successful York grads all agreed that finding the right person at the right time to guide the way made all the difference. As members of York's new "50 to the Power of 50" alumni group, they in turn recently came to campus to offer their words of wisdom and experience to current York students (previous story). Here's who they remember in their own lives.

Isabel Bassett (MA '73)

A longtime broadcaster and a former politician, Bassett was chair and CEO of TVOntario/TFO from 1999 until 2005. Previously she served as minister of citizenship, culture and recreation in Ontario's Conservative government. She received an honorary doctorate from York in 2001.

"Little did I realize back in the '70s, as a young mother of three taking an MA at York in Canadian studies, that my professor in Canadian lit, Clara Thomas, would have a significant influence on my future. She encouraged me to turn my research on 19th-century Canadian women into a book. I would never have done this without her support. I wouldn't even have thought I could write a book back then, surrounded as I was with small kids.

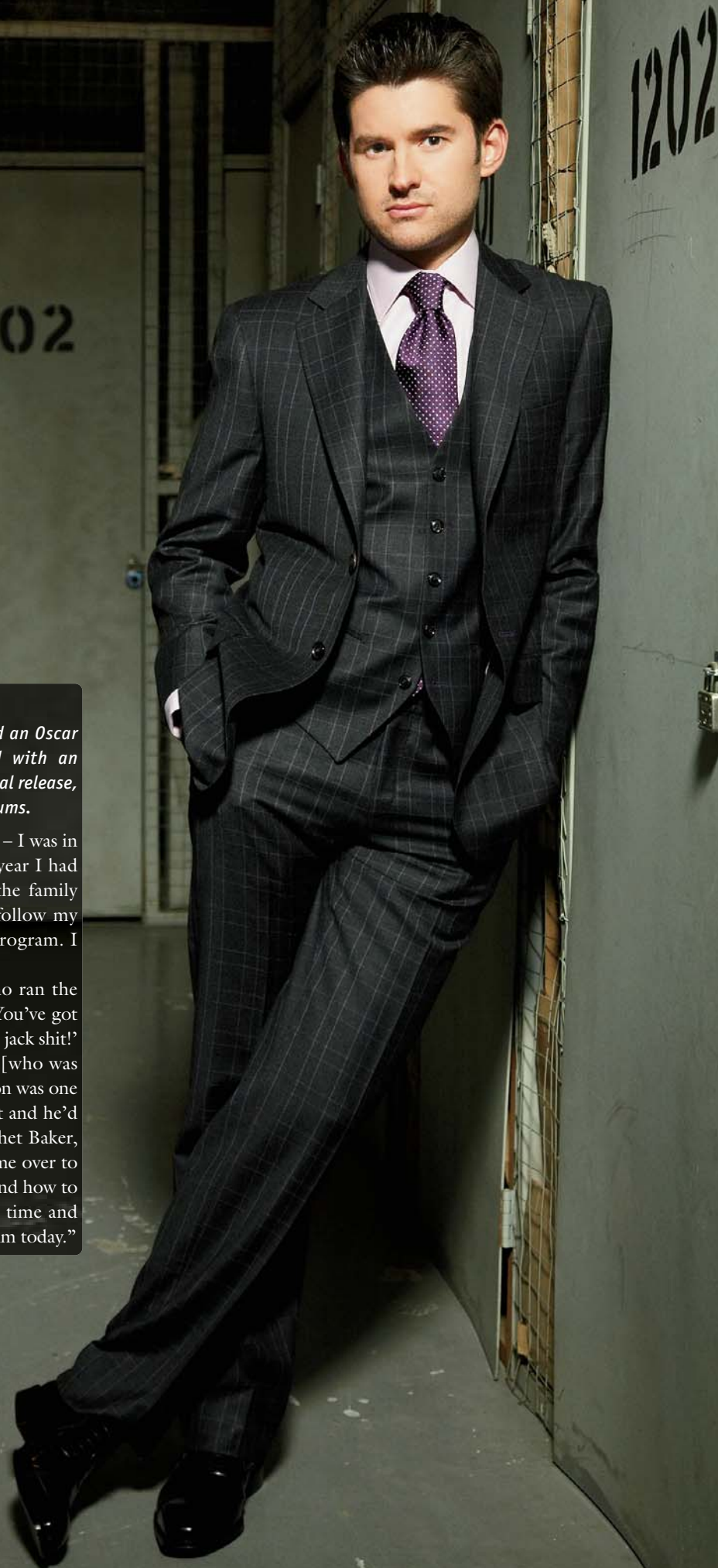
"But I only had to look at Clara to see it could be done, as she was not only committed to her career but had a busy family life with her husband and two sons. Writing that first book opened up my world – for which I am forever grateful. It also encouraged me to take those first steps toward a broader intellectual life."

Matt Dusk (BFA Spec. Hons. '02)

*Jazz vocalist and songwriter Dusk was awarded an Oscar Peterson Scholarship at York and graduated with an honours degree in music. Since his first commercial release, *Two Shots*, in 2004, he has released two more albums.*

"I wasn't originally enrolled in music at York – I was in economics and had a terrible time. After that year I had decided I was going to follow my dad into the family business. But my mother encouraged me to follow my love of singing and apply to the jazz studies program. I got accepted – to my amazement.

"One of my mentors was John Gittins, who ran the program. When he heard my audition he said, 'You've got a great voice, Matt, but you can't sing jazz worth jack shit!' He introduced me to jazz pianist Bob Fenton [who was adjunct faculty and has since passed away]. Fenton was one of York's best kept secrets. He was from Detroit and he'd played with all the jazz legends – Zoot Sims, Chet Baker, Nina Simone. He lent me recordings, brought me over to his house to jam for hours, taught me phrasing and how to sing jazz. He was absolutely unselfish with his time and experience. If not for him, I'd never be where I am today."

**Katherine Govier (MA '72)**

Govier is author of eight novels and three short story collections, and editor of two collections of travel essays. She won the Toronto Book Award in 1992 and has been a visiting lecturer in creative writing at York.

"Margaret Atwood gave a reading at the University of Alberta when I was a student. It was 1970. She worked full-time as a writer in Canada: she proved you could do it. I moved east, and after graduate school, started to publish. I was at a party when Writers' Union Director Alma Lee said, 'Someone would like to meet you.' It was Margaret Atwood.

"She said she was a fan of my column in *Toronto Life*. (That particular one was about trying to get men to do the housework. Or was it about buying men's underwear?) When she heard I was writing fiction, she offered to read it. We met at her farm, and sat together in a barn while she made comments. Later she asked me to be on a committee of the Writers' Trust. It is important to contribute. She has continued to be there, in our community of writers, for all of our benefit." ■



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Former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
Photo by Al Gilbert, CM

Gordon I. Ash
BA '74
Assistant General Manager, Milwaukee Brewers Baseball Club

Bradley J. Badeau, CA
MBA '82
Senior Vice-President and CFO, Burgundy Asset Management Ltd.

Isabel G. Bassett
MA '73, LLD '01
Broadcast executive, journalist and former Chair & CEO, TVOntario

William J. S. Boyle, C.M.
BA '69, MA '71
Chief Executive Officer, Harbourfront Centre

Rudolph P. Bratty, Q.C.
LLB '57
Senior Partner, Bratty & Partners

Mark Breslin
BA '73
CEO and Founder, Yuk Yuk's International

Debra L. Brown
BFA Hons. '78
Emmy award winning Choreographer, Cirque du Soleil and more

Barbara L. Budd
BA '74
Radio Co-Host, 'As It Happens' CBC

Rita M. Burak
BA '77
Former Chair, Hydro One Inc. and former Secretary of the Cabinet, Government of Ontario

Joel S. Cohen
MBA '92
Writer and Producer, 'The Simpsons'

William A. Dimma, C.M.
MBA '69, LLD '98
Chairman, Home Capital Group

Matt Dusk
BFA Hons. '02
Juno nominated singer and actor

William R. Fatt
BA '74
CEO, Fairmont Raffles Hotels International Inc.

Ivan Fecan
BA '01
President and CEO, CTVglobemedia and CEO, CTV Inc.
50⁵⁰ Group Chair

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BA '79
Founder, The Body Shop Canada

Jian Ghomeshi
BA '95
Broadcaster, CBC Radio and TV

Mitchell S. Goldhar
BA '85
President & CEO, SmartCentres

Katherine M. Govier
MA '72
Author and Past President, PEN Canada and Past Chair, Writers' Trust

Edward L. Greenspan, Q.C.
LLB '68
Senior Partner, Greenspan, White LLP
Photo by Al Gilbert, CM

Ethel Harris
MA '73
The Milton and Ethel Harris Research Initiative

Chantal Hébert
BA '76 Glendon
Journalist and Political Commentator

Jay Hennick
BA '78
Founder & CEO, FirstService Corporation

Jennifer Ivey Bannock
BFA '76
Director, Ivey Foundation

Ellis Jacob
MBA '76
President and CEO, Cineplex Entertainment

Farouk Jiwa
MES '03
Director, Private Sector & Development, CARE Canada

Colleen Johnston
BBA Hons. '82
Group Head Finance and CFO, TD Bank Financial Group

Robert C. Krembil, C.M.
MBA '71, LLD '00
Chief Executive Officer, Chiefswood Investors Ltd.

Armand P. La Barge
BA Hons. '95
Chief of Police, York Regional Police Force

William A. Lambert
MBA '87
Special Partner, Birch Hill Equity Partners

Dale H. Lastman
LLB '82
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Sandra E. Levy
BA Hons. '90, LLB '95
Director, Human Resources, Decoma International Inc. and two-time Canadian Olympic team member

Lesley V. Lewis
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CEO, Ontario Science Centre

Stephanie J. Ling
BA '85, BA Hons. '87, MEd '02
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Nigel Lockyer
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James B. Love, Q.C.
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Gordon A. Lownds
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Steven G. MacLean
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Astronaut, Canadian Space Agency

Douglas W. Mahaffy
BA '66, MBA '71
Chairman, McLean Budden Limited

Jonathan C. Mann
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Anchor and Host, 'Insight', CNN International

Rachel A. McAdams
BFA Hons. '01
Actor

Robert R. McEwen, C.M.
MBA '78, LLD '05
Chairman, President and CEO, US Gold

Sandie Rinaldo
BA Hons. '73
Weekend Anchor, CTV News

Edward S. Rogers, O.C.
LLB '60, LLD '94
President and CEO, Rogers Communications Inc.

Clayton C. Ruby, C.M., Q.C.
BA '63
Senior Lawyer/Partner, Ruby & Edwardh

Chandra Siddan
BEd '03
Founder, Regent Park Film Festival

Ken Singh
BA '79, BA '81
President, Atlas International Freight Forwarding Inc.

Irvin Studin
BBA Hons. '99
Rhodes Scholar and Author

Paul W. Tsaparis
MBA '84
President and CEO, Hewlett-Packard (Canada) Co.

Rick Waugh
MBA '74, LLD '07
President and CEO, Scotiabank

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MOST MORTALS retire at 65, if not earlier. Not Roland Roy McMurtry. At 64, the former Ontario attorney general and Canadian high commissioner to Britain became chief justice of Ontario. “I just felt there was an opportunity to do more,” he says. He wouldn’t hang up his robes for another 11 years. Even then, after fetes galore to honour a lifetime of distinguished achievement, he wasn’t about to sink into a Muskoka chair. In no time flat, he joined Gowlings law firm and moved into a corner office in First Canadian Place in the heart of Toronto’s financial district. When he isn’t giving legal opinions, he’s writing reports for Ontario’s premier on the roots of youth violence and victim compensation or chairing an advisory panel for Toronto’s mayor on community safety. And this spring, he added chancellor of York University to his repertoire. “What else am I going to do?” asks McMurtry, now 76. “My wife always says our wedding vows didn’t include lunch.”

The truth is McMurtry values York’s commitment to social justice and community outreach and sees a chance to engage students. “Young people have been a major part of my life,” says the father of six and grandfather of 12. “I’m hoping to impart some of my enthusiasm for politics. I think there is a strong element of altruism amongst students. They want to do something significant.”

For the first 17 years after he graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School in 1958, McMurtry was a trial lawyer, like his prominent father Roy Sr., and busy raising six children. “Politics was only a hobby.” But as legal counsel for the Progressive Conservatives, he “realized the enormous potential for politicians to make a contribution.” In 1972 he launched an unsuccessful bid for a federal seat and might never have run again had his former football teammate, Ontario

premier Bill Davis, not come courting. Two years later McMurtry won Toronto’s Eglinton riding and catapulted directly into Davis’s cabinet as attorney general.

“Probably the most important decision I ever made was to agree to enter the political world,” says McMurtry. Over the next 10 years, he presided over a particularly rigorous period of law reform, introduced a bilingual justice system and launched community legal clinics. As a red Tory, his concern for the less advantaged was homegrown. His father often defended underdogs and bristled at the racism and anti-Semitism that pervaded Toronto society in the 1930s and 1940s. Both parents drummed into their three sons the old-fashioned concept of “noblesse oblige” – with privilege comes responsibility.

The young McMurtry took it to heart. A lifetime of community service began when the University of Toronto history major volunteered with Frontier College, a national literacy organization. For two summers, he toiled in the Rockies alongside immigrant railway workers by day and taught them English by night. He is still involved with agencies that help released prisoners, fatherless children, seniors without housing, and people who can’t afford lawyers.

While in the west with Frontier College, McMurtry fell under the spell of majestic Mount Robson and began to paint. His office walls are now filled with “happy memories” on canvas of world travels with wife Ria, and he often donates paintings to charity auctions. “One of the best decisions I ever made was not to take up golf,” he says.

His windowsills are also crowded with photos, mementoes of a “very interesting and very working life.” There’s one of McMurtry, Roy Romanow and Jean Chrétien taken in 2007 at a special conference arranged in McMurtry’s honour, where lawyers packed the room to hear

the three reminisce about brokering the 1981 “Kitchen Accord”, the deal to patriate the Canadian Constitution and create the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

There’s one of Oscar Peterson (once a York chancellor, too). In the 1970s, “Oscar and I developed a dog and pony show.” McMurtry would use Peterson as bait to lure ad executives to lunch, then Peterson would buttonhole them about featuring more black people in ads. The two became fast friends and just before he died last year, Peterson gave McMurtry an inscribed gold Rolex. “I wear this with pride.”

There’s McMurtry with Nelson Mandela. As high commissioner to Britain in the late 1980s, McMurtry chaired the Commonwealth Heads of Government Committee on South Africa, which played a role in ending apartheid. And there’s his mother, Elizabeth, the day she graduated in 1980 from York with a BA in history. She was 67 and had taken one course a year for 15 years, not for the degree but “for the pure joy of it”.

Not all the peaks in McMurtry’s career were captured on film. But the world took notice when the chief justice ruled that Ontario was required to issue marriage licences for same-sex couples. For that *The Globe and Mail* dubbed him a Nation Builder in 2003, one of countless honours – including an honorary degree from York in 1991 and the Order of Ontario this year – that he has received over his lifetime.

Soon McMurtry will deliver his reports to the premier and wrap up his work for the mayor. After his May installation at York – succeeding the equally distinguished Peter deCarteret Cory, former federal Supreme Court justice – McMurtry will don cap and gown in June as the University’s 12th chancellor, dispatching graduating students into the world he occupies, full of opportunities to do good – and to do more. ■

A LIFE OF JUSTICE

York’s distinguished new chancellor, Roy McMurtry, is keen to help students ‘do something significant’.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK



Nimble Minds

Psychologist Ellen Bialystok finds bilingualism can put off Alzheimer's.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF KIRK



IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE NOW, but up to the 1960s research suggested that bilingualism made you stupid. Now we know the opposite is true – thanks in no small part to psychologist Ellen Bialystok. The distinguished research professor in York's Faculty of Health has made a career of proving that bilingualism makes you sharper. Speaking two languages is like going to “brain gym”. It forces the brain to choose between one language and another and, in so doing, stays limber. From cradle to grave, it turns out.

Bialystok's pioneering work has made her a world authority on the subject. Every time she publishes a new study, she's tied up for days talking to reporters around the world. Especially in the last few years.

Early on, much of Bialystok's research focused on children. Under some conditions, she found, bilingual children learn to read faster and score higher in some kinds of cognitive tests than their monolingual peers. Now, as she examines how bilingualism affects cognitive aging, baby boomers entering their sunset years are taking note. Last year, Bialystok published a high-profile study that found lifelong bilingualism can delay symptoms of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, by four years.

More than one person has commented on how the real focus of her research is aging, laughs Bialystok. “What I'm really interested in is the continuity of mental life. We're not like snakes. We don't shed our brains and grow a new one as we age. We have to understand how the cognitive mind of a two-year-old becomes an adult mind and how it changes across the life span.”

Bialystok never planned to be a leading researcher and respected authority on bilingualism. But, she says, “One thing led to another.” Good at math and physics in high school, she “did what smart girls in Toronto did” in the 1960s. At the University of Toronto, she took sociology and philosophy because, she says, sciences were not really acceptable for girls. “I never bothered to think what my options were.” In second year, she majored in psychology because she hated sociology. The Hall-Dennis Report of 1968 was about to radically change Ontario's educational system and Bialystok decided to join the revolution in public education. In 1976, she earned a PhD in language and cognitive development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. But there were no jobs at universities, so she settled for being a research assistant in OISE's Modern Language Centre. She took charge of a project on second-language learning and six years later had a budding reputation in the fledgling field. In 1982, she landed a job in York's Psychology Department.

At first, Bialystok returned to her doctoral enthusiasms. How, she wondered, did children acquire literacy skills? Did they learn spatial relationships through words or objects? If

they were learning two languages, were they aware of multilingualistic structures? She devised a grammatical test to find out whether children could recognize language structure – and got such surprising results, she couldn't resist exploring a new direction in her research.

Children were trained to recognize correct sentence structure, then asked to decide if simple sentences had the correct structure or not. Some sentences were correct but were nonsensical, like “apples grow on noses.” Bilingual children had no trouble recognizing the sentence as having the correct grammatical structure. But monolingual children couldn't get past the nonsensical meaning. Bialystok realized bilingual children could filter and ignore competing and irregular verbal information better than monolingual children. It was a light-bulb moment.

She remembered a 1962 landmark study at McGill University that showed bilingual children have better “cognitive flexibility” and spent the next few years proving it. Every time she gave a talk, though, people asked her if there were long-term benefits to bilingualism. By 2004, she had an answer. Middle-aged and elderly bilingual adults performed faster than their monolingual peers when given the Simon Test – an on-screen test that measures how fast they choose the correct answer among competing stimuli. Clearly, speaking two languages enhances mental performance – at all ages.

“To a person, journalists wanted to know if there were implications for dementia,” remembers Bialystok. Last year, she came up with that answer. Lifelong use of two languages can delay the onset of symptoms of dementia by four years. She and her research team at the Baycrest Centre's Rotman Research Institute in Toronto examined the diagnostic records of 184 patients with cognitive complaints and determined that 71 was the average age that dementia set in for one-language speakers and 75 for two-language speakers.

Next question: Can bilingualism prevent dementia and Alzheimer's? No, says Bialystok, but it can reduce the rate of the natural decline of a person's executive processes – a set of cognitive abilities responsible for things like prioritizing tasks and focusing attention – after age 60. “A bilingual person with dementia or Alzheimer's can maintain better cognitive performance longer because bilingualism gives you a cognitive reserve, like a reserve fuel tank,” she says. Bialystok is 59, when mild cognitive impairment – forgetting things – typically sets in for everybody. She's not bilingual either. However, she's quick to point out other ways to build your cognitive reserve – learning, reading, exercising (very important), socializing, solving cryptic crosswords. She does them all. She expects to keep digging into that cognitive reserve. “It's a very exciting field.” ■

TRAFFIC

Drive Talkin'

Are bilingual people better at using cell phones while driving? BY MICHAEL TODD

IN 2005, A STUDY FOR CANADA'S Traffic Injury Research Foundation estimated the number of driver-placed cell phone calls at 4.3 million, raising concern over the increased risk for collisions due to driver distraction. Indeed, who hasn't cursed a driver gabbing away on a cell phone while seemingly paying no attention to the road? It's the modern equivalent of attention deficit disorder.

Cell phones have been shown to be more detrimental to driver performance than other distractions, such as tuning a radio or talking to passengers while on the move. This isn't because of the physical problem of trying to steer and talk at the same time, however. Rather it's because drivers are paying more attention to the content of telephone conversations and less to road conditions around them, says Jason Telner, a York PhD student in psychology. Telner is researching the relationship between bilingualism, cell phone usage while driving, and driver performance.

Telner notes that researchers such as York psychologist Ellen Bialystok (previous story) have shown that bilingual people appear to possess cognitive and performance advantages in attention-demanding, multi-tasking laboratory situations compared to monolinguals. Bialystok's findings attributed this performance advantage to their more developed cognitive executive functions which they use to manage two languages simultaneously.

But until Telner's experiments, no one had tested whether bilinguals might also have increased immunity to driving performance impairments because of their cognitive advantages. In other words, can bilinguals more safely talk on the phone while driving, compared to monolinguals?

"This research has relevance to large multicultural cities in Canada such as Toronto, as well as Quebec, that have a high percentage of residents who are bilingual," says Telner. He notes that in Quebec alone 40 per cent of the population is able to speak at least two languages fluently, according to Statistics Canada.

To test whether bilingual people are better drivers while using cell phones, Telner conducted a series of experiments at York's Driving Lab under the direction of David Wiesenthal, a professor in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Health. Telner tested 35 monolinguals and 47 bilinguals. Their performance was evaluated in a virtual driving environment using a computer driving-simulation program which measured a series of safety benchmarks including speed and lane deviation. The experiment consisted of driving conditions without a cell phone, and driving conditions with a hands-free cell phone where participants were engaged in simulated conversations in English.

"We found bilingual participants were better able to handle the extra task of speaking over a cell phone when driving, compared to monolinguals, relative to their own driving performance without a cell phone," says Telner. The bilinguals' level of safe driving did decline, but not nearly as much.

The research, Telner adds, is only the beginning of investigating the role bilingualism plays in minimizing the driving impairments caused by distraction from speaking over a cell phone while driving. The increased attention capacity – and ability to better manage cognitive resources in situations with multiple tasks – may be the means by which bilinguals are able to handle the extra task of speaking on a cell phone when driving, he suggests.

"The implications of these findings are that perhaps regions that have a high number of bilinguals – such as Quebec – will not need to adopt policies that prohibit the use of cellular telephones while driving or using other mobile devices such as BlackBerries, GPS systems, iPods etc.," says Telner. He even posits the possibility that drivers in these regions should receive auto insurance reductions compared to regions with low numbers of bilinguals. However, he notes, "Many more research studies would need to be conducted before any existing policies can be changed or any new policies considered." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RSQUARED



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The Darkest Time

York and the Azrieli Foundation team up to publish memoirs by aging Holocaust survivors in Canada.

BY MARTHA TANCOCK

MARGUERITE ELIAS QUDDUS has never forgotten the day the Gestapo arrested her Jewish father, a Ukrainian immigrant furrier in Paris, and sent him to sure death in Auschwitz concentration camp. It was 1942 and she was six. Her worried mother put Marguerite and younger sister Henriette in the protective care of a Catholic agency, then waved goodbye. When the war ended, the children were reunited with their remarried mother and resumed life in Paris. In the 1960s, Marguerite immigrated to Canada with her husband and, like so many Holocaust survivors, rarely talked about those dark times.

Years later, she returned to Paris for a last glimpse of the about-to-be-demolished building where the family had lived above her father's shop. The visit unleashed a flood of memories, and Marguerite, an artist, spent the next year feverishly painting. Only then was she able to write what she wouldn't speak.

The result is *Cachée*, one of five memoirs published in the first *Azrieli Series of Holocaust Survivor Memoirs*. The series was launched last fall as a joint project of the Montreal-based Azrieli Foundation and York University to preserve and share the memoirs of those who survived the Nazi genocide of European Jews during the Second World War and made new lives in Canada.

Marguerite is 72 now, among the youngest Holocaust survivors still living. "So there is an urgency to collect as many testimonies as we can," says Sara R. Horowitz, chair of the series' editorial board and director of York's Centre for Jewish Studies, which works with the foundation to produce the memoirs. "That first-person voice – the voice of memory – is very different from a historian's account."

As they grow older, those who felt they had no listeners to stories they desperately wanted to tell now feel compelled to leave a record. David Azrieli did – and that inspired the prominent Montreal architect and developer to help others do the same.

Azrieli was 17 when the Germans invaded Poland in 1939. He and his brothers fled to Russia, but when the Germans followed close behind, he made his escape on foot through Uzbekistan and Iran and finally to British-run Palestine. "I was never in prison and I was never in a camp," says Azrieli. But he lost his parents, his sister, one brother and his extended family. Fifty years later he and his daughters retraced part of his route and 10 years after that he produced his memoir *One Step Ahead*. "My daughters were never satisfied that I had told them the whole story. I wrote my memoir because I wanted them to know."



At the October launch of the publishing project, Azrieli said, "One story at a time brings a different dimension to the tragedy that befell our people. Writing the stories has liberated the survivors. We were a

free people in a free society, but still we felt we couldn't talk about it for many years. We are free at last to tell our stories. We are alive and our enemies were defeated."

Since the Azrieli Foundation, headed by Azrieli's daughter Naomi, put out the call, 200 manuscripts – in English, but also in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, French and Yiddish – have flooded in from across Canada. Eight will be published every year and distributed free to schools, public libraries and anyone who asks. Each book features an artful cover, family photographs, an introduction to provide historical context, and maps. "It was very important to us that the memoirs be of very high quality and look enticing to read," says Horowitz. "The idea is to educate, not to turn a dollar." The project could go on for years. "There's no definite terminus. We will keep on publishing as many of them as we can." For many reasons.

"When we read about the Holocaust and see where prejudice can lead, these memoirs act as antidotes to prejudice," says Horowitz. They also "anchor the voice against Holocaust deniers."

Like the diary of Anne Frank, the memoirs are vivid, compelling accounts of how people reacted to daily degradation and deprivation under German occupation. Horowitz, a scholar of Holocaust literature, says Jews sacrificed and risked much to keep diaries. "People would give up on sleep when they were tired and trade in food to get candles and paper and pens. Under the Nazis, it was illegal to keep diaries, so that compulsion to keep a record was quite extraordinary. These memoirs are a continuation of that."

They are also a "very Canadian story," she says. Like other immigrants, European Jews "came here disadvantaged. They



BEFORE THE FALL: Azrieli as a teen in Poland

came without possessions. Many came alone. They were really starting from zero. They built lives here. Most Canadians would find this contiguous with their own stories."

The accounts tend to be understated, adds Horowitz. "People don't see themselves as heroes. They see themselves as ordinary people getting on with life. They contend with feelings of loss and bereavement, but they move ahead. If we didn't print their memoirs, we wouldn't understand that resilience." ■

Nano Mechanic

Biochemist Gerald Audette is at the cutting edge – sometimes literally – of work with cellular proteins.

BY DAVID FULLER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDSAY LOZON

HE DOESN'T WEAR COVERALLS or skin his knuckles reefing on lug nuts, but you could call Gerald Audette a kind of high-end mechanic. He spends hours taking sophisticated machines apart to see how they work. The difference between Audette, a professor in York's Faculty of Science & Engineering, and those in the automotive fraternity is the size of the mechanisms they work on: his are microscopic – and alive. Welcome to the world of bionanotechnology, where lean protein machines are the stars inside your body's cells, meeting, greeting and passing on DNA in an endless dance that few have ever seen close up.

Using a process called X-ray crystallography, Audette and his lab team are making detailed studies of how proteins, the engines of cellular processes, work and how that might point the way to new methods of treating disease. By understanding the physical structure of proteins, Audette says, researchers can learn about processes such as how bacteria transfer DNA to other cells. Then they can design more specific drug treatments for cancer or the new superbug bacteria and viruses. "You need to know the nuts and bolts of what's going on," Audette explains, looking through his collection of 3D protein portraits.

Audette's research was the basis for a successful \$1.6-million joint application to the Canada Foundation for Innovation with York biology professor and fellow crystallographer Vivian Saridakis, whose study of a specific protein and its biological function requires the same equipment. The two found out in June last year that their proposal for an X-ray diffractometer, the first one at York, and a cryocooling system to keep their crystal samples safely chilling at -180 C had been accepted. "This brings us onto a level playing field with other researchers," Audette explains.

The method he and Saridakis use involves purifying a protein so it can be turned into a crystal that will reveal its component parts when X-rayed. By combining visual clues from the resulting images with computer models of protein structure, Audette can locate the individual pieces of hardware on each protein and discover how it physically transfers DNA to adjacent cells. "It's like building a 3D puzzle and the image is our guide," says Audette.

Once scientists understand how proteins work, he explains, drugs can be developed to suppress or modify a protein's function and reduce cell damage from cruder, less discriminating drug compounds. The process can also help speed up the development of therapeutic drugs by eliminating a lot of trial and error. "By having a structure to guide our design, it allows us to rapidly zero in on what kinds of compounds we need to synthesize. Instead of screening 100,000 compounds, you're now screening a hundred," he says.

Like any mechanic with a creative flair, however, Audette wasn't content to leave the proteins the way he found them. He wanted to customize a few to see what would happen. As a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Alberta, he once suggested cutting a tail-like section off one protein, to see if it would help with a related problem of producing enough sample for study. The result was a classic "eureka" moment when he discovered the section rapidly began growing longer, much longer, after being cut. That set him on his second research path – developing biological nano "wires" or tubing that could replace carbon filaments used in the manufacture of nanotechnology. "Everything nano has carbon nanotubes in some variety or other," Audette explains. "The problem is, as we branch out into more biological applications for these things, we're finding that carbon nanotubes, which are made of soot, induce cell death – they are toxic. Our system is completely biological in origin."

His passion for science came naturally to Audette. As a boy in St. Albert, Alta., he helped his mother, a nurse, do blood-group testing. His father has a PhD in analytical inorganic chemistry and helped him find a place in graduate studies at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. His other passions, when he's not dismantling proteins, include the Japanese martial art of kendo – he's a third-degree black belt at his club in Mississauga – and playing with his young son. As an enthusiastic new faculty member (since 2006), Audette is equally excited to be at York in the early days of its degree program in biochemistry, launched in 2003. And once "Prairie Kendo Vagabond", as he's known to bloggers, gets all his new equipment installed, he can settle in to some serious tinkering in his tiny garage. ■

FILM

How lawyer Jerry Levitan turned his experience at 14 with John Lennon into an Oscar-nominated short – and heady times in Hollywood.

BY DAVID FULLER ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG

HEROES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT to Jerry Levitan (BA '76, LLB '79). As a child whose parents survived the Holocaust, he dreamed about Superman and sticking up for people. As a teen in high school, he worshipped the Beatles and especially John Lennon, the loveable cynic of the band who was speaking out against the Vietnam War and singing Give Peace a Chance. Like millions of '60s kids, the 14-year-old was a devoted fan desperate to show his hero how much he admired him. Unlike most of them, however, Levitan managed to meet Lennon and speak to him in person. It was a life-altering decision that would lead, 39 years later, to an Academy Award nomination and his own moment in the glare of celebrity.

On May 26, 1969, Levitan found his idol and wife Yoko Ono in their room at Toronto's King Edward Hotel during their "bed-in for peace" tour of Canada. Posing as a reporter – but fooling no one – Levitan asked Lennon for an interview and, to his delight, received an immediate yes. He returned that evening to record a 40-minute discussion about the Beatles and Lennon's anti-war message, and take pictures. Afterwards, he couldn't wait to tell his classmates, "I met John Lennon". But exultation turned to anguish when no one believed him until, weeks later, he got his film back from the lab. Worse still, Levitan almost lost the most important artifact: the audio tape. After lending it to Toronto's CHUM radio for that night's news as compensation for the use of their recorder, he fought for weeks to get it back and did, but only after standing in the station's lobby and screaming for it. Levitan's encounter with the Walrus, as Lennon calls himself in the 1967 Beatles song I Am the Walrus, is a story he's recounted many times since. He calls it a defining moment in his life.

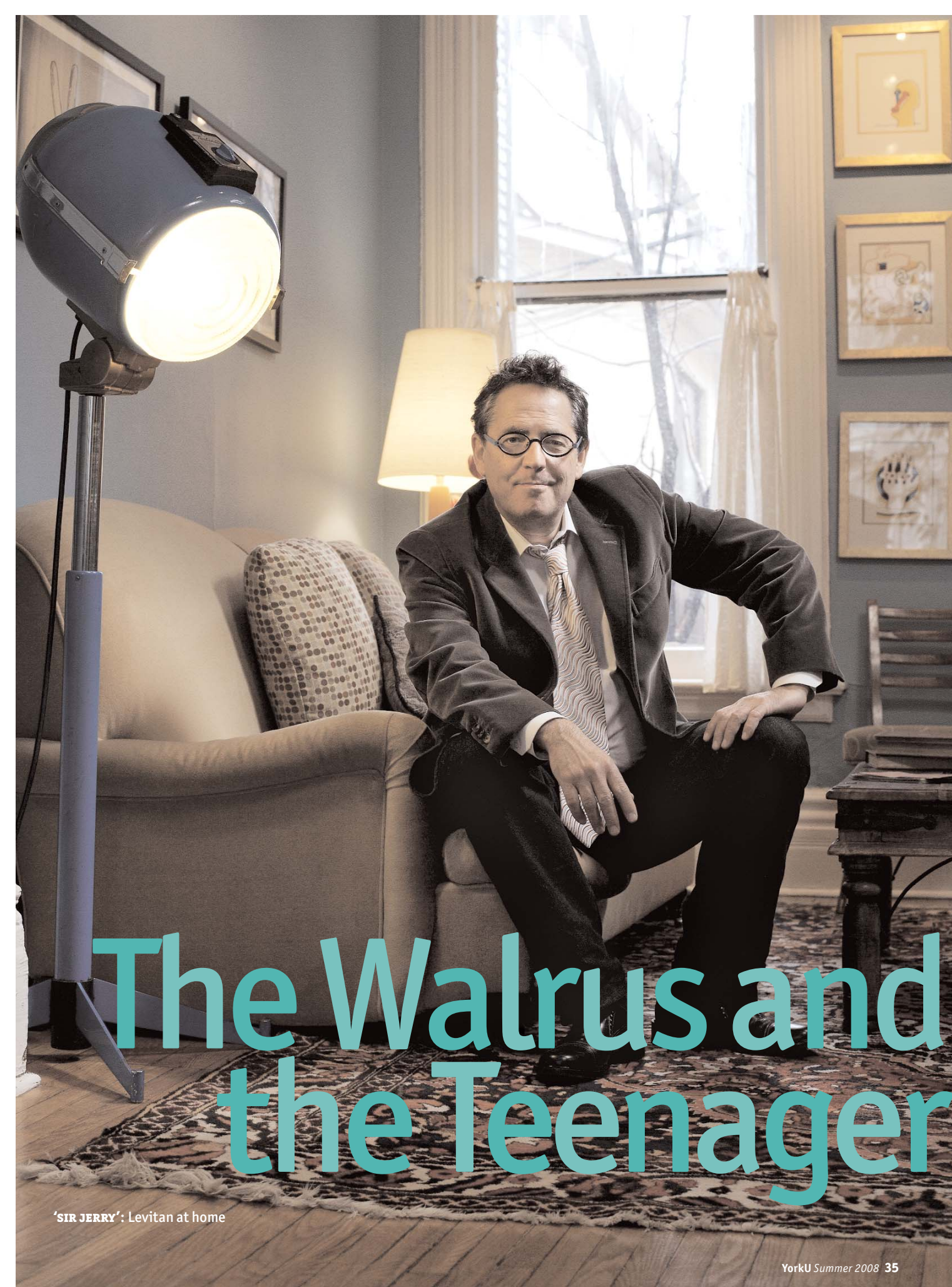
In the years that followed, though, Levitan tired of telling the tale and kept the tape and photos in a drawer, while he concentrated on his studies in York's Faculty of Arts and Osgoode Hall Law School. After graduating from Osgoode in 1979, he became, in his words, "a cowboy litigator", working at a large Bay Street firm where he mounted a successful Supreme Court challenge to Ontario's Sunday shopping law. In 1990 he opened his own practice, where he later argued the

Ontario teachers' libel suit against premier Mike Harris and, in 1998, defended a group of Kingsville, Ont., high-school students who had been strip-searched by school officials. Like Superman with a Lennonesque penchant for controversy, Levitan fought for his clients and was getting noticed.

But professional notoriety came at the expense of his personal life. After his second marriage ended in divorce, he suffered a breakdown and took a sabbatical to nurture his creative side. He turned to music, writing songs for his two-year-old daughter, and became the children's entertainer Sir Jerry. He even did some acting. It was during this personal renaissance that Levitan decided it was time to do something "quirky and off the wall" with the Lennon tape. "For decades people had been trying to talk me into selling my material, doing documentaries, doing films," he says. "I got sick of it. Ultimately, I thought, I'm just going to do something for myself and end it." He decided to make his own movie about "his story" and began a search for a young artist to make a short film. Through friends, he met animator Josh Raskin, who introduced him to illustrator James Braithwaite. "The first drawing I saw from James," says Levitan, "I thought, Oh my God, the guy's got the aesthetic of John Lennon, he gets the '60s in a twisted, contemporary way. That sold me right away." With \$30,000 of his own money and \$20,000 from CTV's Bravo!FACT (Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent), Levitan, with Raskin as director, produced a five-minute animated film, titled *I Met the Walrus*, in about 13 months. "When it was finished, I said, OK, I'm happy and that was it," he says. "I had no intention or pretence to submit it to film festivals."

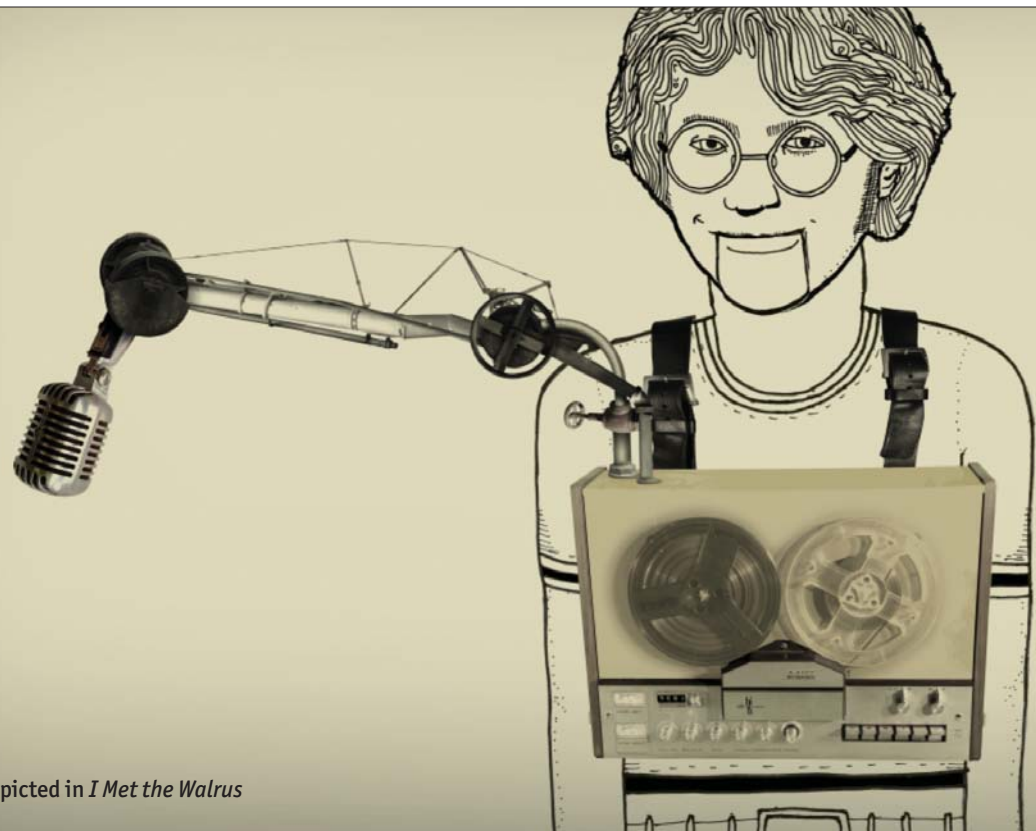
But Raskin and Braithwaite and the folks at Bravo!FACT were keen to try, and entered *Walrus* in the Brooklyn Film Festival. Other entries – and then invitations – followed for events in Canada, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, France and the US, including the prestigious Sundance Film Festival and the American Film Institute's AFI Fest. Curiously, the Toronto International Film Festival, citing stiff competition, turned the film down, although they later named it one of the top 10 Canadian short films of 2007.

I Met the Walrus started to win recognition and awards. At



The Walrus and the Teenager

'SIR JERRY': Levitan at home



At 14: Levitan, as depicted in *I Met the Walrus*

the LA Film Festival, the buzz about being short-listed for an Oscar became serious. When the film won Best Animated Short at AFI Fest, pundits began touting it as a sure-fire nominee for Best Animated Short Film – and Levitan’s little project dragged him into the maw of the beast known as Hollywood. “That’s when things started to get out of control,” he says as he recounts a Tolkienesque tale of Oscar lust and media frenzy. “People went crazy, behaved poorly – people close to me,” he says. “They were appropriating my story.” It was an insanely busy time with hundreds of requests for interviews from major US networks and international print media – all of which were managed skilfully by CTV’s media department at the behest of CEO Ivan Fecan, a fellow York graduate.

Then came an urgent demand for a copy of *I Met the Walrus* from the producers of the official Oscar promotional film. Levitan held out, wanting Ono’s approval first. His response touched off a crisis that threatened to ruin what had become a glorious tribute to his hero. At a screening of the film the week before

the Oscars, in Osgoode’s Moot Court, Levitan arrived late, blaming that day’s snowstorm. What really delayed him was a three-hour harangue from officials in Hollywood who accused him of pulling a stunt to promote his vanity project. Not only did the slight offend Levitan’s sense of purpose in making the film, but their insistence that he forego approval threatened to put him in bad graces with Lennon’s fiercely protective widow, who he had just met for the second time at an event in Las Vegas a month earlier. (She had squeezed his hands emotionally, remembering the bed-in with John. At the same heady event, he was addressed as “Sir Jerry”, with a grin, by Sir Paul McCartney.)

Talking to Hollywood that day, “I was thinking, I wish I hadn’t done this,” he says. “I told them, I don’t want to end my story with ‘I’ve pissed off Yoko Ono’.” After the post-screening lunch at Osgoode, Levitan got a return call in a Keele campus parking lot from Ono’s lawyer, saying she was aware he had handled everything with great integrity and he could do whatever he wanted. The clip made it into the promotional film to

the relief of Academy executives.

When *I Met the Walrus* didn’t win the Oscar (it went to *Peter and the Wolf*), Levitan reverted to character as the audacious teen who snuck into Lennon’s hotel 39 years ago. With the credits rolling on the big screen at the Kodak Theatre, he stopped Jack Nicholson, the reigning king of Hollywood, and introduced himself as an “Oscar loser”. Nicholson kibitzed with him and planted a dramatic consolation kiss on Levitan’s girlfriend, dancer Anisa Tejpar. Then it was off to Elton John’s charity party to enjoy the afterglow of his almost-Oscar moment.

The following day, when the media calls stopped, Levitan could only reflect on his experience – about why he made the original decision that began “his story” and about the sequel, where he lived for a moment in the clamour that Lennon endured for years and that finally killed him in 1980. “I wanted my hero to know who I was,” Levitan says. “I wanted him to know how much I loved him – and for him to like me. And I accomplished all those things. Now I understand it.” ■

YORK PEOPLE



Shernett Martin

Teacher, author

In the Blood

IT TOOK ALMOST 30 YEARS BUT SHERNETT MARTIN (BA '95) says she finally came to terms with the fact that she has a painful, life-threatening disease. She did it by writing *My Friend Chantal Has Sickle Cell Disease*, a hardcover children’s picture book she and her husband published last year about the incurable blood disorder. “I always wanted to be a journalist in school and I love to write,” says the 37-year-old teacher-librarian in Toronto’s Jane-Finch community. It was there, at Stilecroft Public School, that she met fellow alumna Laura Martin (BEd '06 and no relation), a teacher-candidate with fine arts training who offered to illustrate “Chantal’s” story. Shernett’s teaching career began in her native Jamaica, where a student in her class died from the disease. That set her thinking about all the help she’s had from others, especially her mother. “She heard years of me asking ‘why me’ and finally said to me, we can’t say ‘why you?’” Shernett, who has been in a coma, had hip replacement surgery and suffered a heart attack as recently as December, is determined to beat the odds posed by the disease, which get tougher in middle age. “I won’t let it define me,” she says. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KC ARMSTRONG

Charlotte McGhee

Art appraiser

No Antique



ONE DAY, CHARLOTTE MCGHEE (BA '98) glanced around a friend's parlour and noticed a rare art nouveau-style Handel lamp perched on the piano. "Did you know that lamp's worth \$18,000?" the 32-year-old art appraiser asked. Her stunned friend gingerly shifted the lamp to a safer spot. His was the kind of you're-kidding reaction McGhee hopes the camera catches when she tells owners their heirloom portraits or garage-sale landscapes are worth thousands on the CBC's "Canadian Antiques Roadshow".

Young, stylish and female, McGhee breaks the stereotype of the middle-aged, bow-tied, British-accented antiques expert. But she couldn't have found a more suitable career. At York, she studied visual arts, then switched to cultural studies. "I decided I wanted a career in art rather than a career as an artist," she says. After a year teaching English in Prague, she spied a Toronto ad for an assistant appraiser and sensed her destiny. Eight years later, McGhee hung out her own shingle – M&G Appraisals – in Orillia, Ont., an art and antiques generalist keen to specialize in "red-hot" Canadian art. Insurance appraisals pay the mortgage, but nothing beats an auction for heart-stopping windfalls – like the time last-minute bids on eBay soared to \$1,500 for a watercolour she bought for \$45. "We all want to get rich," says McGhee. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDSAY LOZON

The Space Race

York Libraries seeks support for more study spots for students



LET'S GET TOGETHER: Learning Commons at University of Massachusetts

YORK LIBRARIES' VISION for the future includes hundreds of new study spaces, comfortable couches and enhanced access to special collections. Ultimately, it's about creating spaces that best reflect the way students learn, research and excel. "Today's students require two types of spaces – active spaces for collaborative learning and quiet spaces for individual study," says University Librarian Cynthia Archer. "At Scott Library we are striving to provide students with both."

Scott is already one of the busiest academic libraries in the country, but it must keep pace with York's population growth. For comparison, the University of Western Ontario has one seat in the libraries for every seven students, while at York, 17 students vie for each place to study. Correcting this is a priority. Last fall, 200 quiet study spaces were added to the third floor of Scott thanks to a generous gift from its namesake's legacy, the W.P. Scott Charitable Foundation. It is hoped these types of renovations can be duplicated on both the fourth and fifth floors, providing an additional 230 spaces.

On the second floor, funding would create a Learning Commons, a space

dedicated to collaborative and active learning, complete with multimedia meeting rooms, comfortable seating for group work, and access to writing centre counselling and other academic services. "These types of spaces are being developed by many universities," explains Archer. "Engaging students in the learning process now means more than textbooks; it requires us to rethink the diversity of spaces and resources we make available. That's what a learning commons is all about." The University of Massachusetts opened its learning commons in 2005, and 79 per cent of students report visiting either daily or more than once a week.

Rethinking the diversity of spaces and resources also means involving the online environment. A recent commitment of \$1 million from the Scott family will create the W.P. Scott Chair in E-Librarianship, placing York on the cutting-edge of innovation in our digital age.

York is pursuing other fundraising priorities for its six libraries, including renovations to Glendon's Frost Library and to existing archive and special collections space within Scott. These renovations will ensure York has the first-class

libraries required for a leading international institution for interdisciplinary research and teaching.

The ambitions of York Libraries are supported by the fundraising efforts of the York University Foundation and its York to the Power of 50 campaign. One of the campaign's four fundraising priorities is infrastructure, which includes new learning spaces. Donors at all giving levels can help. For more information, contact Tanling Yeung, chief development officer, York Libraries, York University Foundation at 416-650-8210 or tyeung@yorkfoundation.yorku.ca. ■

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

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

TARGET: \$200 million

CURRENT LEVEL: Over \$150 million

TIME SINCE LAUNCH: 19 months

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

PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

ALUMNI

News:



Shared Passions

Alumni groups get personal

WITH 200,000 alumni located across Canada and around the world, chances are that no matter where you live, you're not far away from another York grad. And you may have more than just geography in common – from field hockey to urban planning to black history and culture, Yorkies share a wide variety of passions.

With that in mind, the Alumni Office is working actively with grads in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond to help them explore their passions and connect with others who feel the same way, by building a network of

alumni groups. "Local alumni groups are a great way for people to do what they love – and to find others who share their connection to York," says James Allan, director, alumni, at York.

"New York City, for example, is a place where it's important to have a strong local network. Our 'York in New York' group is helping York grads in the Big Apple support each other and the University. We provide a framework for York grads to find each other and work together, whether it's organizing a regular pub night or encouraging local NYC high-school students to choose York for their education.

"On the other hand," Allan continues, "the recently-launched York University Black Alumni Chapter – YUBAC – isn't limited to any one locale. It's based in

Toronto, but the group is open to alumni from around the world who are interested in enhancing York's black community through networking and mentorship."

Nominations Open for 2008 Brydens

The alumni of York University distinguish themselves by redefining what it means to succeed. Each year, York celebrates alumni who have attained extraordinary achievements and made remarkable contributions to York and to their communities by presenting them with these Bryden Alumni Awards:

- OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD
- PINNACLE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
- REDEFINE THE POSSIBLE AWARD
- ONE-TO-WATCH AWARD
- LOCAL HERO AWARD

If you know a great York grad who is making a difference in the world, visit the Bryden Awards nomination Web site to download a nomination form, at yorku.ca/alumni/bryden. The nomination deadline is June 13, 2008.

ALUMNI

But "York in New York" and YUBAC aren't the only groups getting active recently. The last year has seen a flurry of activity in alumni groups, with new branches established in Calgary, Ottawa and Israel, and volunteers coming forward in Hong Kong and Vancouver. The groups in Ottawa and New York have already hosted their inaugural events and the others will be launching shortly.

At the same time, a number of groups for grads with a variety of interests have been

gathering steam. YUBAC, the McLaughlin College Alumni Chapter, the York U Alumni Chapter and the Masters in Environmental Studies at York Planning Alumni Chapter (MYPAC) have all been hosting events this past year and helping alumni foster their own personal interests.

"We're thrilled to see so many York grads coming forward to work together," says Allan. "We know that our community is filled with passionate people and it's great to see that one of their passions is York!"

For more information about alumni groups – or to find out how to start one – contact

Lindsay Reid in the Alumni Office at reidl@yorku.ca or 416-736-2100, ext. 33732. ■

Looking for Talent? Hire a York Student

The Career Centre has launched a job posting system to reach York's talented students.

If you or someone you know is looking to hire a York student, the new system lets you:

- post a variety of opportunities including: part-time, full-time, on-campus, summer, internship and volunteer positions;
- manage student applications electronically;
- collect application documents – for example, batch resumés – and download or view them online.

The system is free, quick and easy to use. See it at yorku.ca/careers/employers.



A LOT IN COMMON: (opposite, left) Sayma Hai, York U Alumni Chapter president (far left), with Yasir Khan, Yumi Hotta, Krishna S. and Adeyinka Daramola on a chapter boat cruise; (opposite, right) York U's Laura Caporusso (left), Christie Adams and Yulia Popov; (this page, above) Ottawa Alumni Branch members at their launch event in February; (top right) at the gathering for YUBAC's launch, former federal cabinet minister and Canada's first black MP, Jean Augustine (third from left), stands with alumni Karen Devonish (left), Michelle Hughes, Velma Morgan, Sonia Ellis and Michael Tulloch; (bottom right) Atkinson Associate Dean Gervan Fearon (left), Augustine, York President & Vice-Chancellor Mamdouh Shoukri and James Allan, York's director, alumni, at the YUBAC launch.



yorku.ca/alumni

- Share your news – submit a Class Note
- Learn about alumni events and special perks
- Get on the list and sign up for our alumni e-newsletter



ALUMNI

Class Notes:

1970

Pacter, Carol (née Giverts) (BA Winters) retired after 31 years of teaching business and psychology for the Toronto District School Board. She now runs a UPS store in Stouffville, Ont., with her husband and their two children. Her son Aaron will graduate from York next year with a computer science degree, at which time Carol plans to return to York and resume her studies.



1970: Carol Pacter and son

1972

Martin, John A. (BA McLaughlin) was recognized as Outstanding Professional Fundraiser for 2007, by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Minnesota Chapter, for his longstanding personal and professional commitment to philanthropy. The tennis enthusiast and avid volunteer is married and has four children. He summers in Toronto and lives most of the year in Hilton Head, SC.

1973

Shuman, Risa (BA Vanier) recently retired as senior producer of "Saturday Night at the Movies" for TVOntario. She continues to contribute to CBC Radio One's "The Sunday Edition", discussing all things cinematic with host Michael Enright.

1974

McVanel, Sharon (BA McLaughlin) and husband **Brian McVanel** (BA Spec. Hons. '73 Winters) own and operate McVanel Communications Inc., a marketing and graphic design



1972: John A. Martin

1975

Kotseff, Lawrence (MA) recently joined Fusion Homes as vice-president of planning & development, currently building homes in southwestern Ontario.

Simeone, Michael (BA '74 Bethune, MBA) came out of retirement in 2006 to start Artisano Bakery Café Ltd., a group of casual restaurants in the GTA. The first opened its doors in 2006 in Etobicoke and two new locations are scheduled to open in Oakville this year.

1978

Hawkins, Sandra (MES) shifted careers from social science policy researcher with the federal government to interdisciplinary visual and media artist in 1997. Her paintings, videos and installation artworks are shown across Canada and internationally. Located in Ottawa, she teaches workshops and is the author of several books.

1979

Oughton, John (BA '72 Vanier, MA) works as a learning and teaching consultant at Centennial College in Toronto and runs a micro-mini press, Sixth Floor, which produces pocket-sized books. His fifth poetry collection, tentatively titled "Time Slip",

will be published by Guernica Editions within a year.

Thorp, Veronica (MES) has worked as a freelance science/environment writer for the last 15 years in Hobart, Tasmania, in her native Australia. Her interests include coast care (re-vegetating the local bush land) and converting her lawn into an ornamental kitchen garden.

1983

Fox, John P. (MES) has lived in Zurich for the last 14 years working in investor relations with ABB, a large power and automation technologies firm. He lives with his oldest daughter while his son is studying in Toronto and his youngest daughter studies in the UK.

Fraser, Brian (PhD) celebrated the fifth anniversary of his company Jazzthink, which uses live jazz to stimulate leaders to imagine better ways of engaging their followers through conversations. He is the author of *Jazzthink: Playing with the Stuff of Success* (2004) and is currently working on "Swing: Finding Your Leadership Groove". He lives in North Vancouver with his wife Jill.

Gilormini, Patrick (MBA) is working towards his PhD, which looks at the impact of storytelling on corporate social responsibility, at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.

McLean, Margaret (BA Winters) now lives in a Toronto retirement home after losing her husband of 60 years in 2000. She has since self-pub-



1983: Brian Fraser



1984: Lance Goddard

lished a book of poetry, *Life Story*. In a diverse family that includes seven nationalities, Margaret has six grandsons, one granddaughter, six great-grandsons and one great-granddaughter.

1984

Dinsdale, Cynthia (BA Spec. Hons. Stong) has taught innumerable art, craft and kids cooking classes from her home in Picton, Ont., and she currently teaches art through the local community college. Cynthia is happily married and has two teenage children.

Goddard, Lance (BFA) is a producer of documentary films and the best-selling author of several books depicting Canada's contribution to the allied effort in the Second World War, including his latest, *Hell & High Water - Canada & the Italian Campaign*. He is currently working on further book, screenplay and documentary film projects.

Gouda, Naguib (MBA) stepped down as executive director of alumni & advancement services at York University earlier this year to become executive director of member services at the Ontario Medical Association. During his four years at York, he transformed the Alumni Board, oversaw improved data collection and management, increased alumni participation and strengthened the bonds between the University and its largest constituency.

1987

Borins Ash, Irene (BA Winters) is a photographer as well as a social worker & speaker whose focus is helping people develop healthy

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YOU DESERVE THE BEST
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THE YORK UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AND THE PRIVILEGES THAT IT OFFERS

ALUMNI MATTERS, the alumni e-newsletter that delivers the latest news and special offers

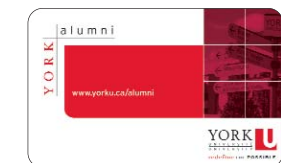
PERKS that give you privileged access and great savings on products and services

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ALUMNI

Class Notes:

aging attitudes. Her recent exhibit, *Aging is Living – A New Perspective*, provided a glimpse into the positive side of life in a long-term care facility. She is currently working on her second book to be published in the fall.

Kailuweit, Kai (BA Bethune) has lived in Guatemala since 1990. In addition to working as a financial adviser to Dresdner Bank Switzerland, he is involved in flying and importing & selling ultra light aircraft.

1988

Lawson, Sherry (BA Bethune) has worked as director of corporate affairs & public relations at Casino Rama, Ont., for the past eight years. In her spare time, she travels with her husband, plays golf, reads slasher novels and spends time with her grandchildren, Paxton and Harper Josephine. Her first book, a non-fiction collection of biographical stories, called *I've been shot at, what's your excuse?*, was recently published.

1989

Gupta, Ravinder (BAS Hons. Atkinson) has worked as a tax auditor for Canada Revenue Agency since 1993 at its Mississauga office. She lives in Brampton, Ont., with her husband and their two children.

Lam, Herman (PhD) now runs his own consulting business in Toronto, after 18 years of service with Glaxo-SmithKline. He also serves as president of the Calibration & Validation Group, a non-profit scientific organization which focuses on validation and pharmaceutical analysis.

Polycandriotis, Spiros (BA Hons. Stong) works in the European Union's diplomatic service and is presently based in Brussels. His previous assignments include Barbados, Chad, Luxembourg and Zimbabwe. He is married to **Linda Van Duynhoven** (BA '91 Vanier) and they have four children.

1990

Linkvist, Michael (BA Hons. McLaughlin) went back to school to

pursue a career in radio and in 2005 landed a morning show in Fort Frances, Ont. In 2007, he moved to Vancouver to work at 95 Crave, and currently does the afternoon-drive shift at QX104 in Winnipeg.

Sone-Cooper, Lori (BA Hons. Vanier) owns HR Alliance Consulting & Coaching in Toronto.

1991

Friendly, David (MES '74, MBA) recently moved to Lunenburg, NS. As he slowly eases into retirement, David continues to consult on emergency response management and safety management systems auditing.

1993

Keith, Alan (MBA) is vice-president of 20|20 Skills, an international Internet-based human resources assessment & consulting firm based in New York.

Robitaille, David (BA McLaughlin) was recently named country leader for IBM Canada's corporate citizenship and social responsibility programs, based in Markham, Ont.

1994

De Angelis, Lori (BA Hons. Vanier) completed a post-graduate journalism diploma at Humber College in 1996 and now works as a TV news reporter on CHCH News Morning Live in Hamilton-Halton-Niagara. Her husband **David Pighin** (BAS '95, Atkinson) is manager of budget & corporate analysis at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. They've been married for 7 years and live in Etobicoke with their newborn baby boy Alessio Pighin.

Graham, Wanda (MFA), an actor and playwright, received the newly created "Established Artists Recognition Award" for theatre from the Nova Scotia Arts & Culture Partnership, in Oct. 2007. Among only five others honoured in the province, the committee cited her "tenacity in never shying away from difficult material".

McPherson, Jeffrey (BA Hons. McLaughlin) received a doctorate in 2006 from the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University, where he is now an instructor. He is the recent recipient of the 2007 McMaster Students Union Faculty Teaching Award (Social Science).

Vadera, Peter (BA Calumet) has been a tax auditor for the Swedish Internal Revenue Service, corporate taxation area, since 1999. He lives near Stockholm.

Zammit, Joseph (BA Winters) is department head of special education, business and computers in a Mississauga secondary school in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. He has spent the last 18 years working with special needs students.

1995

Knight, Andy (PhD) was recently appointed executive director of the new Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, located in New York. He is also an external associate with the York Centre for International & Security Studies (YCISS).

Murray, Kristina (BA Founders) currently works as a professional realtor and opened her own company, Distinctive Real Estate, in Nassau, Bahamas. She is married and has one son.

Stern, Amy (BA Hons. McLaughlin) recently resigned from her job of 11 years as a recreation coordinator at a nursing home in Kitchener, Ont., so she can be home with her two children in Waterloo, Ont.

1996

Baker, Kevin (BA Spec. Hons. '94 Atkinson, MA, LLB) works at the College of the North Atlantic as VP for its Qatar project, a CNA-run college of technology in the Middle Eastern country. He lives in Stephenville, Nfld., with his wife Kellie and their three children Kendra, Kristian and Kameron.

Fan, James (BAS Atkinson) is president of BOSS Inc., a print and document management company in Mississauga, Ont.



1987: Irene Borins Ash with David Suzuki at exhibit



1994: Lori De Angelis

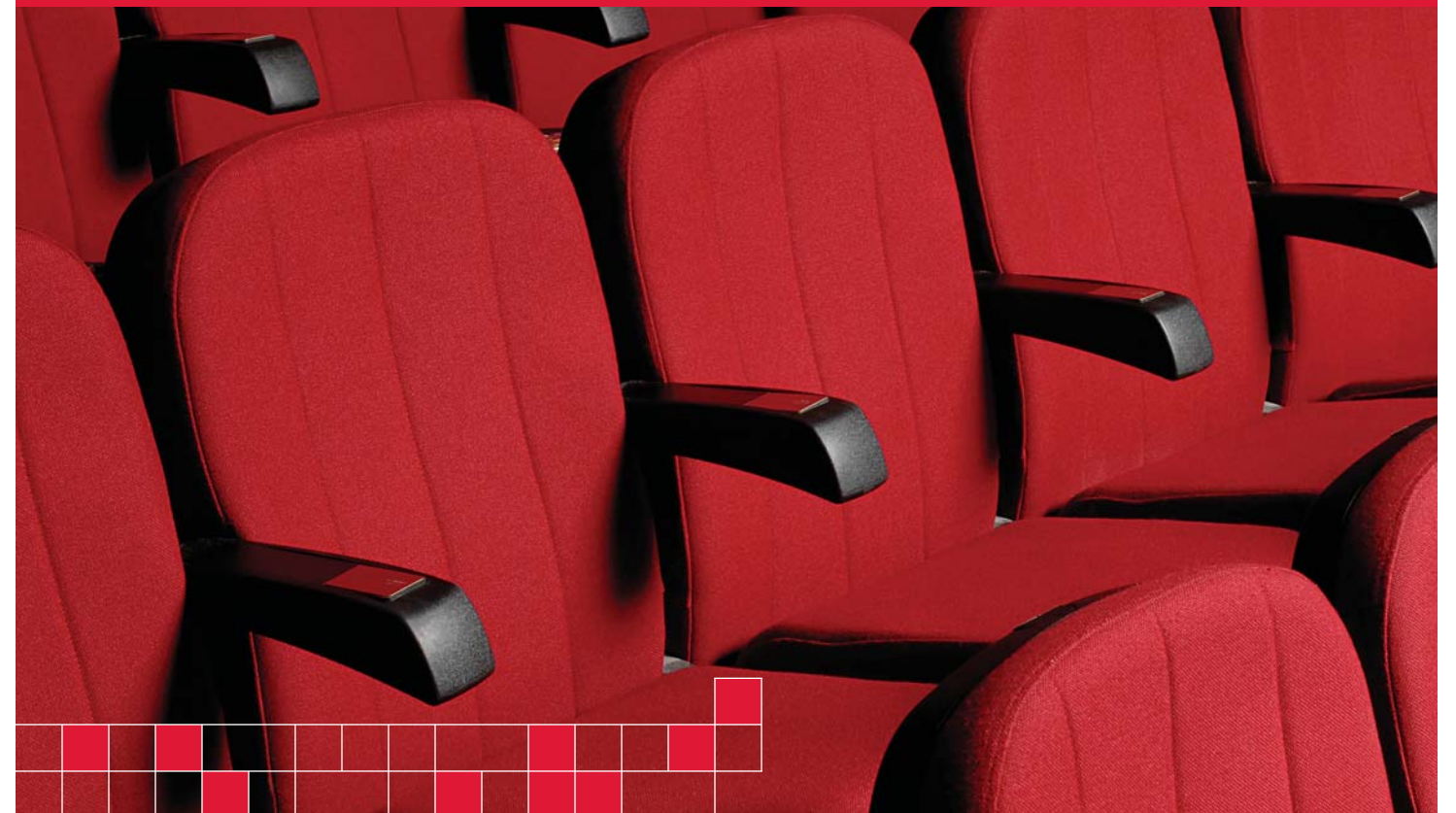


1994: Wanda Graham



1995: Andy Knight

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Class Notes:



2007: Michael D'Urzo in Hong Kong

James, Angela (BES Hons. Bethune) lives in New Plymouth, New Zealand, working as a project manager for a local government and loving it. She is married with sons aged 7, 4 and 2.

Morse, Michael (MFA '87, MA '90, PhD) teaches in the Cultural Studies Program at Trent University in Peterborough, Ont. He is active in the jazz and creative improvisation music scenes, and composes for diverse artistic collaborations. He has one son and one daughter.

Temple-Smith, Joyce (BA Atkinson) has worked as executive director of Malton Neighbourhood Services, a United Way multi-service community agency in Mississauga, Ont., since 1998. She recently obtained five years of funding to provide after-

school programming for "at-risk" youth as well as three other youth groups.

Wolk, Neal (BA Hons. Vanier) works as a transmission operator for Corus Entertainment. He will celebrate his first anniversary with wife Debbie this year. They live in Thornhill, Ont.

1997

Dewan, Rajeev (LLB) is a listing director at the Dubai International Financial Exchange in the United Arab Emirates.

1998

D'Amico, Jennifer (BA Hons. Bethune) has worked at Downsview Services to Seniors for the past 15 years, in various capacities devel-

oping community-based programs and services for seniors and disabled adults in the west portion of North York. Jennifer is married and has three children.

1999

Meek, Chanda (MES) is working on her PhD at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, trying to understand the resilience of social-ecological systems in Arctic Alaska.

Tripodi, Stefano (BSc Spec. Hons. Bethune) is a partner with the Toronto law firm of Hackett Simpson Tripodi LLP, where he practices civil litigation with a focus on entertainment and employment law.

2000

Garant, Pamela (BA Hons. Founders, BEd) teaches high school history and social science at All Saints Catholic Secondary School in Whitby, Ont.

Hackel, Deborah (BA Hons. '97 Glendon, BEd) has returned to teaching with the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board after her maternity leave. Her son Duncan will celebrate his first birthday in May.

Taylor, Jason (MES) was recently named executive director of the Utah Society for Environmental Education in Salt Lake City, the only non-profit dedicated to promoting environmental education in the State of Utah.

Teeluck-Molnar, Mala (née Teeluck) (LLB) will celebrate her first wedding anniversary in September.

Webb, Michael (BSc Spec. Hons. Stong) and his wife will celebrate their daughter's second birthday in September.

2001

Dixon, Sheri (BA Hons. Founders) works for a major computer company in Markham, Ont. She is also co-founder and agent for the live entertainment company, BLuSouL.

Johnson, Casey (BA Founders) is owner of StoneCastle Communications, a PR & media relations, consulting and creative services company in Dundas, Ont. She also created the comic "T-Duck & Dillon", and is author of the recently published *The e-Entity* (iUniverse Inc., 2007).

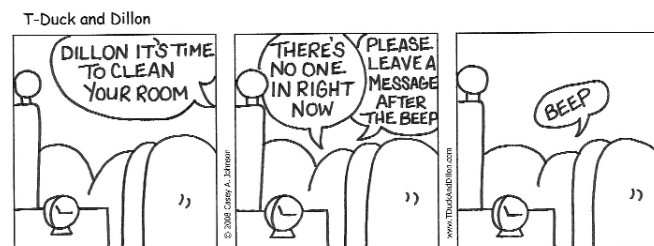
Miller, Sandy (BA Hons. Calumet) moved to Halifax after graduation, where she resided for six and a half years working in several group homes and small option homes. After completing further studies, she relocated to Brampton, Ont.

2002

Cauchard, Sandra (BA Hons. McLaughlin) was married in August 2006. She is a vocational rehabilitation consultant for NRCS Inc. in Barrie, Ont., helping injured workers return to work.

Kung, Grace (BFA Spec. Hons. McLaughlin) played the lead role in *A Nanking Winter*, at Toronto's Nightwood Theatre earlier this year.

Leonio, Rizza (BBA Spec. Hons. Calumet) successfully completed the last requirement for the CGA designation exam and has since joined the TSX Group in Toronto as a financial analyst.



2001: Casey Johnson's comic strip



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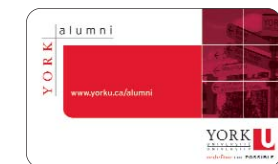
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Class Notes:

2003

Gross, Dov (MBA) was recently appointed president of Paperless Intelligence Inc., a document management and document workflow solutions provider based in Toronto.

2004

Jordan, Brianne (BA Spec. Hons. Stong) will celebrate her first wedding anniversary with husband Peter in September.

Vidon, Philippe (PhD) is a professor of earth sciences at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. He lives in Indiana with his wife Elizabeth.

2005

Bridson, John (BA Spec. Hons. Vanier) is working towards his masters in public ethics at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. Upon comple-

tion he is considering doctoral studies in ethics.

Champagne, Yvan (EMBA) is managing director of the Carbon Reduction Fund, launched in Toronto in 2007. The non-profit fund's mission is to source and develop high-quality carbon offsets for organizations.

Devoy, Desmond (BA Hons. Stong) married his college sweetheart last October at Holy Name of Mary Roman Catholic Church in Almonte, Ont.

Silva, Joseph (BA Hons. Founders, BEd) has returned to Toronto to work with the Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, after working in Ottawa with the federal government's Department of Finance.

Smith, Alison (BA Spec. Hons. '03 Stong, MSc) is a PhD student at the University of Waterloo investigating brain activity and behavioural changes associated with two-



2006: Michelle Aguiar

handed movement training, in healthy and stroke-patient populations.

2006

Aguiar, Michelle (BA Hons. Stong) will celebrate her first wedding

anniversary in September. An account manager, she has worked at the music publishing company, ole, in Toronto since graduation.

Bastian, Tara (BA Hons. Calumet) is executive assistant to the president of Baha Mar Development Company Ltd., a multi-billion-dollar hotel development project in the Bahamas.

Mendoza, Leslie (BA Bethune) recently purchased a new condominium and was promoted to a senior position with Carlson Marketing in Mississauga, Ont.

2007

Ashraf, Meesum (BA Stong) will celebrate his first wedding anniversary in November and is excited about his post-York transition to working full-time in Toronto.

Channer, Christine (BA Glendon) was recently promoted to executive

Class Notes:

assistant to two vice-presidents at CI Investments, Toronto. She plans to return to York for postgraduate studies.

D'Urzo, Michael (BA Spec. Hons. McLaughlin) is a full-time magician and is founder & creative director of Mega Magic. He recently finished a two-month tour across China and was featured on the Comedy Network's "Keys to the VIP" in Nov. 2007. He was part of a group of York magicians featured in *YorkU*, Summer 2006 (yorku.ca/yorku).

Gasenzer, Mathew (BA Hons. Glendon) currently studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. He hopes to soon teach English and history at the secondary school level.

Mediratta, Rahul (BHS Spec. Hons.) is working towards his MSc in comparative social policy at the University of Oxford, UK.

Miraglia, Franca (MFA) serves as vice-president of the Playwrights Guild of Canada's national council in Toronto. She has written several full-length plays, including *Platinum Travel Club*, which was produced for a three-week off-off-Broadway run in 2005, and *Last Days of Graceland*, recently presented by Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille in March-April.

Pawlowski, Bartosz (BFA Spec. Hons. Winters) has been invited to study cinematography at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles, where he will graduate with an MFA in 2009.



2007: Franca Miraglia

Pereira, Aaron (BSc Hons. Bethune) is pursuing his studies at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in Toronto.

Radjpoust, Sepehr (BA Spec. Hons. Glendon) was accepted into a joint LLB-MBA program at Ottawa University, but chose to defer his admission in order to focus on his growing online business, Snailmailme.com.

Thompson, Elliot (BA Hons. Glendon) is pursuing a master of science in education degree at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY.

Yorgiadis, Alike (BA Hons. McLaughlin) is enrolled in the first year of her LLB in the Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa.

IN MEMORIAM

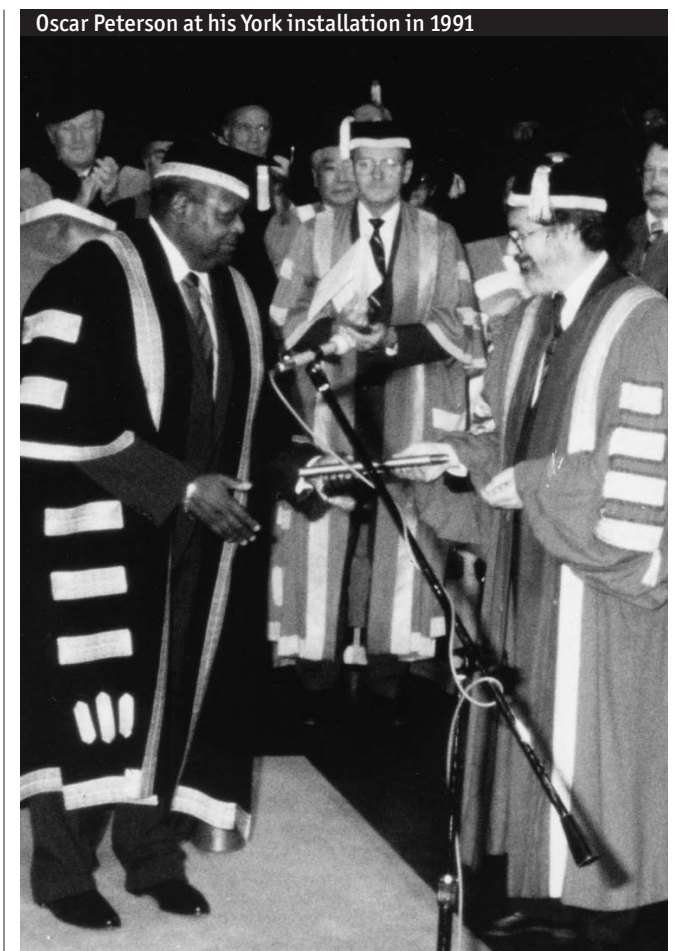
Dermer, Jerry, professor in York's Schulich School of Business, died at 66 of lymphoma on Jan. 23. He had taught strategic policy and management at York since 1980.

Garigue, Philippe, principal of Glendon from 1980 to 1987, died at 90 on March 25. An anthropologist educated in Paris and London, he created Glendon's International Studies Program, among the first in Canada. He was an officer of the Order of Canada.

Heller, Jules, founding dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts (1968-1973), died at 88 in Phoenix, Ariz., on Dec. 28. The Bronx-born printmaking expert was a key force in the development of the Joan & Martin Goldfarb Centre for Fine Arts on the Keele campus. He received a York honorary degree in 1985.

Le Dain, Gerald, dean of York's Osgoode Hall Law School from 1967 to 1972, died at 83 on Dec. 18. Le Dain, who led a landmark commission on marijuana use and went on to become a federal Supreme Court justice, oversaw Osgoode's move from downtown Toronto to York's Keele campus. He received a York honorary degree in 1976 and was a companion of the Order of Canada.

McDonald, Donald C., a Fellow of York's McLaughlin College, died at 94 of heart failure on March 8. The former leader of the Ontario Co-operative Commonwealth Federa-



Oscar Peterson at his York installation in 1991

tion and its successor, the Ontario NDP (1953-1970), taught at McLaughlin and was very active in the college's life.

Nicholls, Ralph, distinguished research professor emeritus in physics, founding director of York's Centre for Research in Earth & Space Science (CRESS) and an officer of the Order of Canada, died at 81 on Jan. 25. He founded CRESS and the Department of Physics soon after arriving at York in 1965 and was still involved with the University when he died.

Peterson, Oscar, internationally renowned jazz pianist and chancellor of York University from 1991 to 1994, died of kidney failure in Mississauga, Ont., on Dec. 23, aged 82. As an adjunct professor in York's Department of Music from 1984 to the late 1990s, the man Duke

Ellington called the "maharajah of piano" established several student awards in the jazz program. A recipient of an honorary doctor of letters from York in 1982, he was made an honorary governor of York in 1995 and was a Fellow of McLaughlin College. Peterson was also a companion of the Order of Canada.

Plourde, Charles, economics professor in the Faculty of Arts and the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal & Professional Studies from 1976 to 2004, died at 69 of cancer on April 4. He received international recognition for his groundbreaking research in natural resource and environmental economics.

Seeley, John, former York sociology professor, died at 95 in Los Angeles on Dec. 16. He was a founding faculty member, joining York in 1960. ■

How I track the decline of the songbirds. **BY BRIDGET STUTCHBURY**

Wings and a Prayer

IT'S EASY FOR ME to break the ice at a cocktail party. When asked the inevitable question of what I do, I sometimes answer "bird detective". Yes, I hide miniature radio-tracking devices on songbirds like the wood thrush and Acadian flycatcher and begin a stake-out. Listening carefully to the tell-tale beeps on my hand-held receiver, I follow unsuspecting philanderers through the forest as they sneak off to have a one-minute stand with the next-door neighbour. I even do DNA testing on their kids so the evidence of infidelity (one out of every three females cheats on her

I follow unsuspecting philanderers as they sneak off to have a one-minute stand.

mate!) will stand up in the court of scientific journals.

This detective has turned her attention, and her tracking skills, to solving a more sobering mystery. Our songbirds are gradually disappearing, and the silent spring that Rachel Carson feared does not seem like such a far-fetched fable after all. At least two dozen species of songbirds have suffered a significant drop in numbers since the 1960s, over 30 per cent in some cases, and include birds like the rose-breasted grosbeak, wood thrush, eastern kingbird and bobolink.

The size of a population depends on credits and debits, just like the balance of your bank account. Breeding produces new recruits for the next summer (credits) and the deaths of adults during migration and on their tropical wintering grounds removes individuals from the population (debits). When populations are on a downhill slide, reproduction is not keeping pace with adult mortality.

Seems simple enough to figure out; just measure how many offspring are produced each year. With some patience and practice, just about anyone who doesn't mind tromping around forests (mosquitoes, black flies and all) can learn how to find bird nests, count how many eggs are laid and then see how many nests evade detection by hungry blue jays, crows, squirrels and chipmunks. The trickiest part of measuring a bird's

Bridget Stutchbury is a professor of biology in York's Faculty of Science & Engineering and author of *Silence of the Songbirds: How We Are Losing the World's Songbirds and What We Can Do to Save Them* (2007).

success in raising a family is following the fate of the little nestlings after they leave their nest, the so-called fledgling period. This is where the bird detective comes in; radio-tracking allows me to find the fledglings and know their fate.



Hooded warbler nestlings, for instance, hatch out of their tiny egg as wriggling little pink embryos with naked bodies and closed eyes. When they hop out of the nest at the ripe old age of nine days, they are awkward, bulgy-eyed early teens with short stubby tails who cannot even fly. Still, it is safer for the young birds to leave home than to be sitting ducks in a nest full of noisy brothers and sisters. The parents continue to feed their increasingly mobile offspring for another three to four weeks until the kids are fully grown and ready to leave their parents for good. The fledglings are hard to find because they are smaller than a cell phone and well camouflaged, a needle in a forested haystack!

My students and I found that only 20 per cent of hooded warbler nestlings actually survived the three-week fledgling period. One victim's remains, and the still working radiotag, were found underground in a chipmunk burrow, and another's signal was tracked to a moving object, a satisfied garter snake! Another was found mauled, its radiotag chewed up by a feral cat.

When all the threats are taken into account, a female hooded warbler produces only one-fifth of a daughter, statistically speaking, each breeding season. So she would have to live for five years just to make the equivalent of a single daughter who survives to become a mother herself. This would be an unlikely event indeed, since most warblers live only 1-2 years at best. If I suffered the same prospects as a hooded warbler, I would have to give birth to 10 children just to have one daughter produce any grandchildren!

Migratory songbirds are slowly going down the drain because not enough young survive to replace the parents who die each year. If we do not help our songbirds, I may soon have to raise eyebrows by answering "bird undertaker". ■