

Andrew Pyper On writerly envy / **School Spirits** Campus ghost tales / **Sunnier Days** Solar power's new-found lustre
Gum Control The case for universal dental care / **Romy Shiller** A courageous memoir / **Big Blue** Canada's fastest computer

UofT Magazine

AUTUMN 2008

Fear of Numbers
Why do so many kids
struggle with math?

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I am passionate about providing innovative engineering solutions to the globe's most pressing energy challenges.

Our team of 150 volunteer students designs and assembles one of Canada's top solar cars to compete at the international level, while building awareness of renewable energy technology using solar cells. I have been working with the U of T Blue Sky Solar Racing Team for seven years, as Manager the last three years and continuing this year as an alumnus, to coach and mentor a new team equally as passionate about the environment as I have become.

Being a part of Blue Sky has taught me about the crucial need for viable sources of renewable energy, like solar cells.

Many members of our team worked up to 40 hours per week to build Cerulean, the solar car that raced in last year's Australian Panasonic World Solar Challenge. Amazingly, we finished ahead of all other Canadian teams, and 12th overall – words cannot describe how proud I felt at that moment. After all the countless hours of sanding, logistics and project coordination, I knew it was worth it all.

There's nothing that will be able to top my solar car experience at U of T and without the support of sponsors like MBNA Canada, this type of student activity wouldn't be possible.

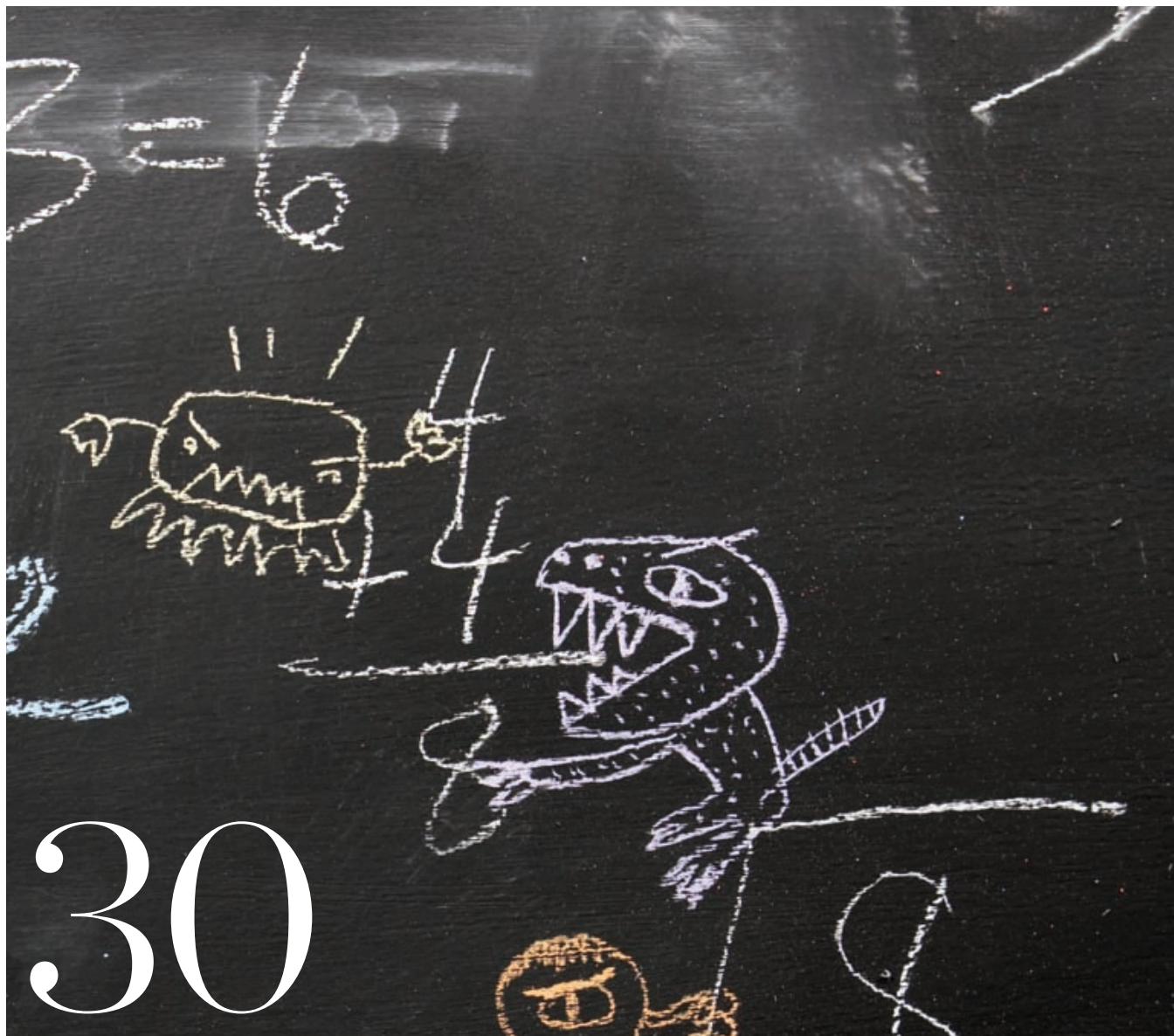


Andreas Marouchos
BAsC 2006; MEng 2008



U of T's latest solar car, Cerulean, positioned on its side charging its solar cells

Autumn 2008



Fear of Numbers A lot of kids struggle with math. But Professor John Mighton believes that, with the right approach, any child can excel

by *Cynthia Macdonald*

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Departments

“My life could be very ordinary ... but in fact it is extraordinary”

Author Romy Shiller, p. 54



A new use for Toronto's abandoned buildings



How Ann Schofield Baker took on U.S. Homeland Security – and won



The majority of students commute to class. U of T is finding new ways to engage them

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Our New Look

A fresher, more assertive visual style for U of T Magazine

A COLLEAGUE ASKED ME RECENTLY what it was like to work on a magazine redesign. We'd been toiling away on the project for several months with a high degree of anticipation, so I ventured that it was like having a baby.

"Except no one tells you they don't like your baby," she replied, exposing an imperfect analogy.

Well, the "birth" took place – not too painful. And the result is in your hands. What do you think? You may have already formed a first impression, but let me tell you where this new design came from and how the magazine's content has changed.

Earlier this year, we hired Underline Studio – a small, award-winning Toronto design shop, to come up with a new look for *U of T Magazine*. We wanted to mirror what we felt was the character of U of T: dynamic and intelligent, elegant and clever. At the same time, recognizing the age range of our readers, we felt the design needed to be clear and easy-to-read, yet still youthful and energetic in tone.

Grads sometimes wrote in to ask about the logo on the magazine's front cover. "Why tricolour? Why not blue and white?" So we got rid of the tricolour and the block letters, and replaced it with a completely new masthead that better reflects U of T's visual identity.

The inside pages are cleaner and more streamlined, with more white space and clearer fonts. The new design uses Clifford for the main body-text, Chronicle Display, Acropolis and Helvetica Neue – all selected for their legibility and flexibility, important qualities of good magazine design.

We've introduced a new group of photographers and illustrators to give the magazine a fresher, more assertive visual style. You'll notice more graphic elements to illustrate smaller stories. We're also using more graphics within feature articles.

The back cover, which used to carry an ad, now highlights an important event – or series of events – happening at the university.

"Time Capsule," our new back-page item, tells the story of an event or person from the university's past. We've grouped university news stories in the "Life on Campus" section and articles about alumni in "All about Alumni."

We've expanded the calendar and moved it closer to the front to ensure alumni know about the vast number of U of T events available to them. There's more sports coverage in "Life on Campus," with a full page devoted to intercollegiate teams and athletes. Leading Edge will continue to highlight how research by U of T professors and students is making a difference in the world and in the lives of Canadians.

There are several ways for alumni to contribute to the revamped magazine. First, we welcome letters to the editor and are always open to story suggestions.

For a new item called "First Person," we're seeking ideas for short personal essays by alumni about an interesting experience they had or the work they do. (In this issue, *Globe and Mail* political correspondent John Ibbitson, a 1979 Trinity grad, writes about his experience covering the American presidential election.)

We're looking for U of T couples who feel they have a story to tell. You can be married or not, as long as both partners are grads. (Read about architects Peter Tan and Christine Ho Ping Kong on p. 56.)

We also want to hear about your favourite *something* related to U of T – a prof, course, place on campus, roommate, club, sport, etc. If you have an idea for any of these items, please e-mail me at scott.anderson@utoronto.ca.

Finally, let us know what you think of the new design – if you like it, of course, but even if you don't. I promise not to take it personally. – *Scott Anderson*

Abc

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ACROPOLIS

Write to us! We want to know what you think. Send e-mails to uoft.magazine@utoronto.ca or mail to *U of T Magazine*, 21 King's College Circle, Toronto, M5S 3J3. Letters to the editor may be edited for clarity and length.



“He says our oil and gas industry should get carbon credits for exporting our resources and fuelling global warming. Hilarious!”

– *Len Wiseman* BSc 1962

Sly Harold

Regarding “Battle on Vimy Ridge and Other Stories” (Summer 2008), I’m delighted that Harold Innis had the good fortune to survive the Second World War and subsequently enlighten me – and many other former U of T students. Did anyone else make note of the sly humour he shared with his classes? The witticism I remember most clearly is: “The reason for the superiority of the cavalry over the infantry is that the cavalry always has the intelligence of the horses to fall back on.”

While on the subject of the military, I should mention that the experience I had in the Canadian Officers’ Training Corps in 1942–43 while attending U of T was excellent. I subsequently trained at a British artillery officers’ school, and what the University of Toronto offered was just as good.

– *Kenneth L. Morrison* BA 1948 VICTORIA,
MA 1949
THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO

Is He Serious?

At first, Mike Spence’s letter in the summer issue (“Caution on Carbon”) angered me. Then, I realized he’s joking, right? He says our oil and gas industry should get carbon credits for exporting our resources and fuelling global warming. Hilarious! Then he suggests that David Suzuki’s books and travel are part of the problem. But he also talks about other pollutants and population growth, which makes me wonder if he means to be serious after all. Using his reasoning, the chances that the world will tackle the population problem are slim – our economy might be affected!

– *Len Wiseman* BSc 1962
LIVELY, ONTARIO

Hot Under the Collar

Your article “Smoke and Mirrors” (Spring 2008) seems to accept global warming as a fact, though I have not seen any proof that carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas. To date, the whole case for global warming

is based on a hypothesis. Even so, our governments seem to be ready to impose severe economic restrictions because of unproven statements. To act on Kyoto with present theories is, in my opinion, treasonous. Produce scientific data before you express dangerous opinions.

– *R. F. Smith* BSc 1948
CALGARY, ALBERTA

The Role of Research

With respect to the “President’s Message” in the Spring 2008 issue, David Naylor’s ongoing campaign to entrench the concept of a two-tier university system (research/graduate-intensive versus primarily undergraduate) is being viewed as increasingly notorious by those of us working for smaller institutions.

The same voices that argue for increased research intensiveness in Canadian universities justify their calls for funding by arguing that only active researchers can provide high-quality instruction to undergraduates. How can smaller universities attract and maintain research faculty if we are discriminated against in development of graduate programs, since grad students are the true engine of university research? Don’t our undergraduates deserve to be taught by instructors versed in the latest research findings? How can we provide good instruction and research experience to our undergraduates if we don’t have viable research infrastructure and graduate teaching assistants?

Research funding should be based on creativity of ideas and ability to train

Letters

highly qualified personnel, not on the size of the originating institution. The total research funding and graduate enrolment in small universities is hardly worth David Naylor's time and concern. We have enough challenges without the "big kids" picking on us.

– *Mike Szarka* PhD 1993,
UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY,
OTTAWA, ONTARIO

David Naylor responds:

U of T is proud of alumni such as Mike Szarka who contribute to post-secondary institutions in Canada and around the world.

Mr. Szarka's letter suggests that I advocate a simple two-tiered system of higher education with undergraduate-only and research-intensive universities. That's incorrect. Many university administrators, including me, support a diversified portfolio of institutions. My

concern is that this diversity is diminished as more institutions try to become more research-intensive in more fields.

I don't think any larger universities have proposed pulling dollars back from small institutions such as UOIT. Our concern arises instead with inconsistent funding systems that don't put Canada's research-intensive institutions on a level playing field with international peers.

For example, federal grants fund only the direct project costs of doing research. Several years ago, the federal government added funding to help defray the institutional costs of research. This program offers extra entitlements for smaller universities, even though the research programs with the highest institutional costs tend to be concentrated in larger universities. In 2007-08, UOIT had \$264,000 of external federal grants, and received 56 cents on the dollar in top-up payments for institutional costs. That's

roughly the level of institutional cost coverage that major American universities receive. U of T, with \$39.2 million, received 21 cents on the dollar. I agree fully when Mr. Szarka argues that funding should not depend on the size of an institution!

The issue isn't UOIT versus U of T or small versus big. It's about building a diversified portfolio of institutions with clearer mandates and mission-specific funding, and supporting research excellence consistently and generously wherever it's found.

Corrections

The article "U of T Launches School of Public Health" (Summer 2008) did not include two graduate programs – nutrition and health promotion – among those that the new school offers.

Nine U of T Varsity athletes have won Rhodes Scholarships since 1965, not 1995, as was reported in the Summer 2008 issue. *U of T Magazine* regrets these editing errors.

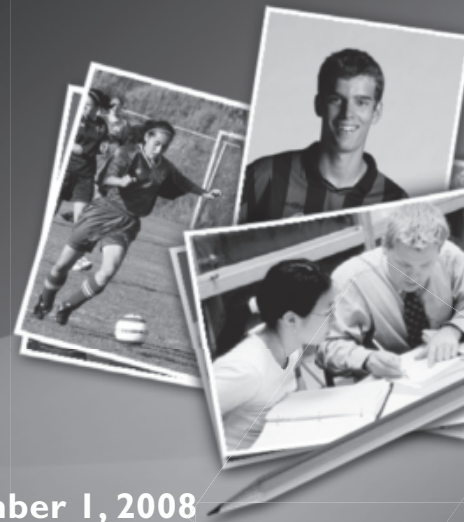


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Behind the Scenes

U of T couldn't succeed without its dedicated and talented staff



OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, the University of Toronto has put considerable energy into improving the student experience on all three campuses. We've developed more opportunities for undergraduates to engage in research and small-group learning. We've invested in new recreational and athletics facilities, and created spaces specifically for our many commuter students. We've also provided more recognition for great teachers, and paid close attention to teaching in all our academic personnel decisions.

Our faculty, many of whom are international leaders in their fields, help students develop skills and knowledge so they in turn can assume leadership roles. But our staff also has a huge impact on student *and* faculty experiences at the university. Our staff members provide administrative expertise and support to our faculties and departments, keep computer networks functioning, prepare food, raise funds, maintain our buildings and grounds – and perform countless other jobs that are vital to keep U of T running smoothly. Without the creativity and dedication of a highly motivated staff, we simply would not be one of the best public universities in the world.

Finding and retaining the best possible staff, then, is central to our mission. That's why, even though our staff members are capably represented by 22 separate unions at the bargaining table, we can't afford to define staff relations solely on the basis of collective agreements. And that's also why, last year, we conducted a survey of our 10,000-plus staff and faculty about their work experience. According to our survey consultants, U of T fared well compared to other large public-sector institutions. Employees across the university expressed a strong sense of pride about working here. Eight in 10 said they felt motivated in their job, and an even higher number said they felt "proud" to work at U of T.

Not everything was sweetness and light. Responses to questions about workload, stress and life balance indicate that we need to look more carefully at the demands we place on staff, and at ways in which we can support employees more effectively. That's no surprise given the major growth in enrolment in the last decade. Staff indicated concerns, too, about opportunities for personal growth and development.

Our efforts to create a fulfilling workplace are getting us noticed, however. We've appeared on MediaCorp's list of Canada's top 100 employers for the past three years. Earlier this year, MediaCorp named U of T one of the country's 25 Best Diversity Employers. U of T is also one of the top-10 family-friendly employers in Canada, according to *Today's Parent* magazine. Working with our unions, we offer a wide range of employee services, including generous health benefits, training and career development, and recreation centre memberships. The university has also designed programs to help employees care for elderly relations, deal with child-care emergencies and support their children's post-secondary education.


The university honours staff annually with prizes for outstanding contributions. In keeping with our mission, the Joan E. Foley Quality of Student Experience Award recognizes a staff member who has made a significant contribution to improving academic or extracurricular student life on campus. The Stepping Up Awards honour staff who significantly help advance the university's mission to rank among the best public universities in the world. The Chancellor's Award recognizes outstanding staff, and some faculties offer their own awards as well.

When it comes to employee satisfaction, however, I think U of T offers something much more important than awards or great services or competitive salaries. Higher education and advanced research together represent causes that people from any walk of life can support. Staff members know that, notwithstanding individual frustrations with aspects of their work, the mission of the university is fundamentally valuable to society and idealistic in orientation.

That's very helpful to U of T, because, in a globally competitive society, no organization can afford to lose exceptional employees. Our success has always been about people – great students who become great alumni, great faculty and great staff. We are fortunate that so many talented people have come here in search of fulfilling careers – and have stayed because of our ability to provide them with one.

Sincerely,
David Naylor

Calendar of Events

 **MORE EVENTS!**
Check out the latest campus happenings at www.utoronto.ca

OCTOBER
4




Scotiabank Nuit Blanche @ U of T.

Toronto's free, all-night celebration of contemporary art returns to the St. George campus with events showcasing local,

national and international artists. From sunset to sunrise, discover exhibitions, performances and installations at Hart House, the U of T Art Centre, the Faculty of Music and the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape & Design.

On Tower Road, filmmaker Atom Egoyan and artist Phillip Barker offer *Adoration Street*, a 20-metre installation featuring a streetscape of suburban houses. And more than a dozen artists working in a variety of disciplines explore the aesthetic possibilities of the car in *Vehicle*, an installation on Hart House Circle near University College.

||  For details, visit www.arts.utoronto.ca, or contact (416) 946-3813 or artszone@utoronto.ca

ALUMNI

Chancellor's Alumni Receptions.

U of T Chancellor David Peterson hosts alumni receptions across Canada this fall. Sept. 16 in Thunder Bay; Sept. 24 in Ottawa; Sept. 28 in Victoria; Sept. 29 in Vancouver; Oct. 5 in St. John's; Oct. 6 in Halifax; Oct. 28 in Windsor. For venues and times, see the back cover, or visit www.alumni.utoronto.ca/ regional, or contact Teo Salgado at (416) 978-2368.

October 2, New York City

Rotman School Integrative Thinking Speaker Series.

"Why Business People Need to Think More Like Designers Think," with Tyler Brülé, editor-in-chief of *Monocle* magazine, Prof. John Maeda, president of the Rhode Island School of Design and Prof. Roger Martin, dean of the Joseph L. Rotman School of Management. \$79 US. 4–6:30 p.m. Venue TBA. Register at rotman.utoronto.ca/events

October 25, Toronto

Varsity Blues Swimming Quadrennial Alumni Dinner.

Reception at 6 p.m., dinner at 7:30. Great Hall, Hart House, 7 Hart House Circle. Contact byron.macdonald@utoronto.ca

October 30, Toronto

SHAKER caters to young professionals. This event is aimed at east-end Toronto alumni. 7:30–10 p.m. Venue TBA. Contact Kim Tull at tull@utsc.utoronto

November 6, Toronto

Engineering Alumni Association Awards Banquet.

Reception at 6 p.m., dinner at 7. Tickets \$100 per person, \$1,000 per table. Great Hall, Hart House, 7 Hart House Circle. Contact Mary Butera at (416) 978-4941 or butera@ecf.utoronto.ca, or visit www.skulealumni.ca

November 10, Toronto

Food for the Imagination.

Dinner and conversation with author Paul Quarrington. \$135. 6:30 p.m. Bonnie Stern School of Cooking, 6 Erskine Ave. Contact Sabrina Chang at (416) 978-5881 or sabrina.chang@utoronto.ca, or visit www.alumni.utoronto.ca/foodfortheimagination

November 27, Toronto

Snowflake.

A holiday reception for queer alumni. Free for alumni; \$10 for non-alumni. Contact Sabrina Chang at (416) 978-5881 or sabrina.chang@utoronto.ca, or visit www.alumni.utoronto.ca/LGBTQ

November 29, Toronto

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown.

Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* characters come to life in this children's musical. Post-show ice-cream party for U of T alumni and friends. \$16. 2 p.m. Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, 165 Front St. E. Contact Sabrina Chang at (416) 978-5881 or sabrina.chang@utoronto.ca, or visit www.alumni.utoronto.ca/charliebrowns

May 28 to 31, 2009, Toronto

Spring Reunion 2009 honours

alumni who graduated in a year ending in a 4 or 9. For more information, contact (416) 978-5881 or spring.reunion@utoronto.ca, or visit www.alumni.utoronto.ca/springreunion

Wildflowers of Manitoba, by Noam Gonick and Luis Jacob, will be part of this year's Scotiabank Nuit Blanche at U of T



PHOTO: JOSH CORNELL

EXHIBITIONS

September 22 to December 19
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
Where Duty Leads: Canada in the First World War. Books, letters, pamphlets and propaganda posters mark the 90th anniversary of the end of the Great War. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. 120 St. George St.

October 29 to December 14
Doris McCarthy Gallery, U of T Scarborough
Bill Burns: Bird Radio. A viewer-activated "bird-call" station transmits calls outside of the gallery. Tuesday to Friday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Sunday, noon–5 p.m. 1265 Military Trail

September 16 to December 6
University of Toronto Art Centre
Beaver Tales: Canadian Art and Design. 100 artworks illustrate how artists, designers and craftspeople over the last two centuries have created works inspired by motifs of Canadian identity. Tuesday to Friday, noon–5 p.m.; Saturday, noon–4 p.m. 15 King's College Circle

FESTIVALS

September 24
Hart House Quad
U of T Film Festival Screening and Launch Party. Reception at 7 p.m. features live music, film loops, cash bar and hors d'oeuvres; screenings at 8:30 p.m.

MUSIC

October 4
MacMillan Theatre
University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra. David Briskin debuts as conductor in a program featuring Christopher Theofanidis's *Rainbow*

Body, Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5* and Beethoven's *Triple Concerto*. 7:30 p.m. \$18 (\$10 seniors/students). Faculty of Music box office: (416) 978-3744

October 19
Convocation Hall
Organ Spectacular. Solo recital by American organist Todd Wilson. 2 p.m. Tickets \$15 (\$10 for students, seniors and members of the Royal Canadian College of Organists) through www.uofttix.ca, (416) 978-8849

October 30 to November 2
MacMillan Theatre
Il Matrimonio Segreto. Students in the Faculty of Music's opera division and voice department perform *The Secret Wedding*. Thursday to Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 2:30 p.m. \$26 (\$16 seniors/students). Faculty of Music box office: (416) 978-3744

November 3
Walter Hall
Chamber Music Series. British cellist Steven Isserlis performs with pianist Connie Shih in sonatas by Britten and Poulenc, Mendelssohn and Schumann. 7:30 p.m. \$25 (\$15 seniors/students). Faculty of Music box office: (416) 978-3744

REMEMBRANCE DAY

November 11
Soldiers' Tower
Service of Remembrance. Carillon prelude 10:10–10:30 a.m. Service 10:30–11 a.m. Reception at Hart House follows. Contact: (416) 978-0544 or www.alumni.utoronto.ca/tower



The Meeting Place, U of T Scarborough
Remembrance Day Ceremony. 10:45–11:15 a.m. Visit www.utsc.utoronto.ca

South Building, U of T Mississauga
Remembrance Day Ceremony. 10:45–11:15 a.m. Visit www.utm.utoronto.ca

SPECIAL EVENTS

October 18, U of T Scarborough
October 25, St. George campus
October 26, U of T Mississauga
Fall Campus Days. For prospective students and their families: a day of information sessions, campus and residence tours, and visits with U of T professors and students. For more information, visit www.utoronto.ca/fallcampusdays

SPORTS

September 20
Football
Toronto Blues vs. Queen's Golden Gaels. Come cheer on the U of T football team! Pre-game parade of intramural athletes and half-time performance by the Rameses Shriners Marching Band and Colour Guard. 1 p.m. Varsity Centre, 299 Bloor St. W.

October 9
Football
Toronto Blues vs. Western Mustangs. The Blues' final regular home game marks the 50th anniversary of the team's first Vanier Cup championship. 7 p.m. Varsity Centre, 299 Bloor St. W.

October 24 to 26
Field Hockey
OUA Women's Field Hockey Championship. The top university field hockey players in Ontario

compete for the provincial crown. Varsity Arena, 299 Bloor St. W.

November 15
Ice Hockey
Minor Hockey Night, Toronto Blues vs. Concordia Stingers.

Gift bags, activity stations, contests, prizes and an autograph session with the Varsity Blues men's hockey team. Tickets \$1 for children 12 and under. 7:30 p.m. Varsity Arena, 299 Bloor St. W.



Tickets for these sporting events, unless otherwise noted: \$10; free for U of T students and children 12 and under; \$5 for youth and non-U of T students. For more info, visit www.varsityblues.ca

THEATRE

October 1 to 18
Hart House Theatre
King Lear. Starring veteran Toronto stage actor Peter Higginson as Lear and directed by Jeremy Hutton. Wednesday to Saturday, 8 p.m.; Oct. 18 matinee, 2 p.m. Tickets \$20 (\$12 for seniors/students). 7 Hart House Circle. For tickets, (416) 978-8849 or www.uofttix.ca

November 12 to 15
Hart House Theatre
Banana Boys. Five young Chinese-Canadian men struggle to find their place in contemporary Canadian society. Wednesday to Saturday, 8 p.m. Nov. 15 matinee, 2 p.m. Tickets \$20 (\$12 for seniors/students). 7 Hart House Circle. For tickets, (416) 978-8849 or www.uofttix.ca

ILLUSTRATION: GRAHAM ROUMIEU

Photo: ISTOICA.com Original story: the Varsity Magazine, January 29, 2008, thevarsity.ca

Playwright (13 plays and counting), receiver of rave reviews,
theatre company founder and U of T alumnus
AGE 23

John Walker

YOU ARE ALUMNI

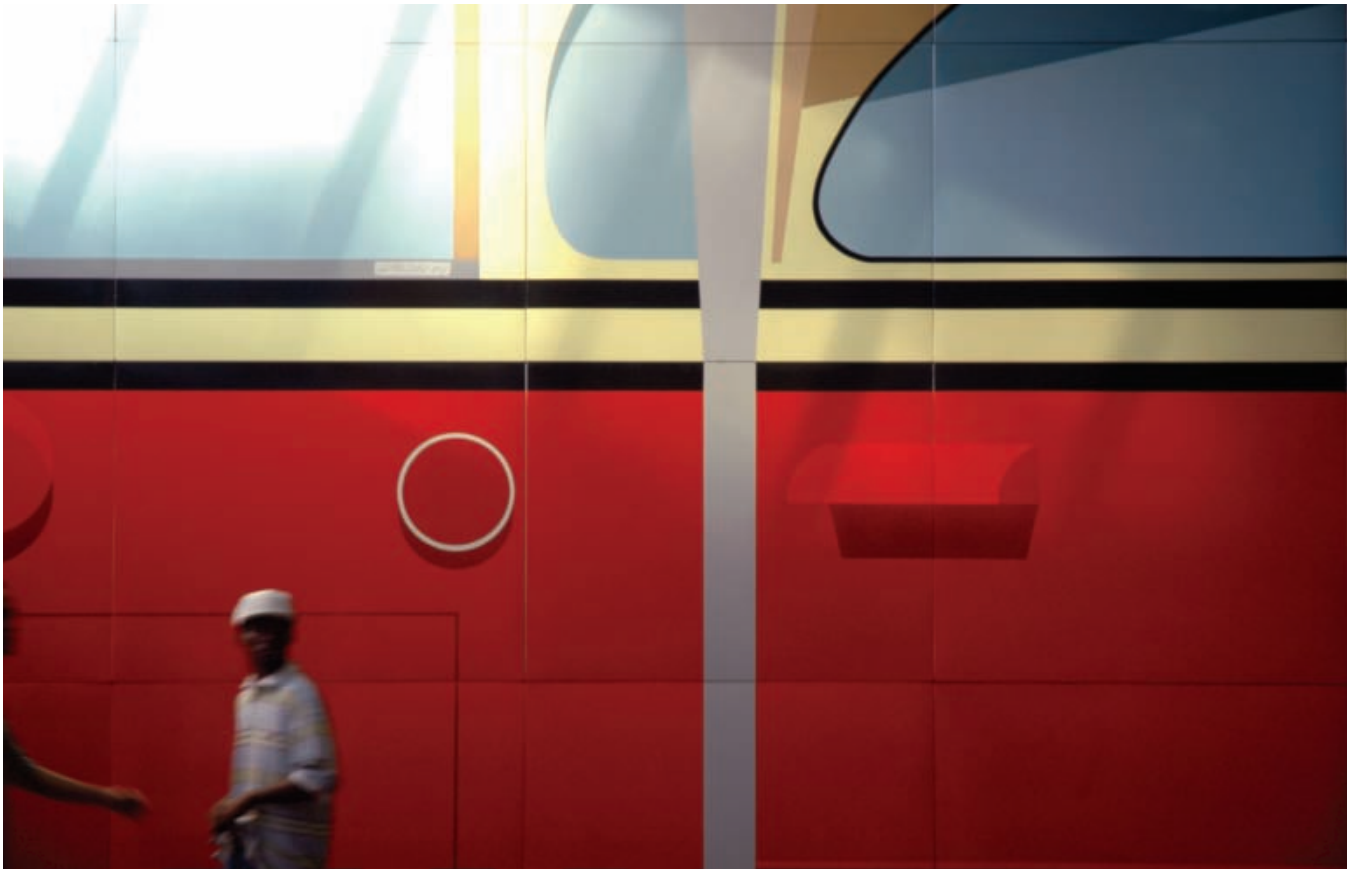
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alumni.utoronto.ca/newgrad



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

Life on Campus



In Transit Commuter students find places to idle at U of T

The bed-headed undergrad, slouching the half-block from dorm room to lecture hall with seconds to spare, is a cliché of TV and movies. But that's not what most University of Toronto students will experience this fall; the majority of them commute. Some live nearby, but many live

further out, scattered across the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. In all, it's estimated that roughly 85 per cent of U of T students commute to one of the three campuses.

One of them is Jay Merc, a second-year film major studying at the St. George campus. Merc, 21, lives with her parents in >>>

>> the east end of Scarborough – “practically Pickering,” she says. “I’m living at home to save money, and the commute is a sacrifice I have to make.”

Merc’s daily trip to campus is a whirlwind tour through Toronto’s public transit system. She walks 15 minutes to the nearest bus stop, and rides about half an hour to the Scarborough Rapid Transit line. At Kennedy Station, Merc transfers to a TTC subway. She then rides west to St. George Station, from where she walks to class. Total travel time: up to two hours. In the evening, repeat in reverse. “It’s so taxing on your reserves,” says Merc. “You come home, and you just have a short amount of time to relax, and you have to get right back to the books.”

Long commutes aren’t just a drag for individual students; every minute spent on the road instead of in classroom discussion or extracurricular activities gradually erodes campus community. A recent National Survey of Student Engagement shows that students with long commutes rate their university experience lower than those in residence or living nearby.

Luckily, U of T has several facilities and programs to help commuters spend more quality time on campus, and more are on the way. A proposal to build a Student Commons on Devonshire Place includes club and society offices, study, lounge and prayer space, and dedicated services for commuters, such as a bike repair area. (Students voted to support the commons in 2007 with an increase to their incidental fees, and plans will be submitted to the Governing Council for approval this year.)

Last fall, University College opened its Commuter Student Centre, a space that provides room for off-campus students. “The whole intention behind it was to provide a home base for people who are between classes and want to get involved,” says Nona Robinson, dean of students at UC. To that end, the centre throws meet-and-mingle events for commuters, and is home to the Commuter Student Dons, an off-campus version of residence dons. Other colleges have similar facilities; the latest is Innis College’s commuter student lounge. The University of Toronto Mississauga offers a carpooling program. And in February, the Ontario government contributed \$15 million to expand the number of study spots at Robarts Library by 50 per cent – crucial for commuter students to be able to work on campus.

Merc has considered options for moving closer to campus, but it would mean sharing a house or apartment with classmates – and on her budget, it would be pretty cramped. “I can’t handle sharing a bathroom with that many people,” she says with a laugh, “so I guess I’m just going to have to stick it out.” – *Graham F. Scott*



Brain Gain Many talented Canadian researchers are returning home from the U.S. And it’s not for the maple syrup

FOR BUDDING YOUNG scientists, especially those in the life sciences, it’s almost a rite of passage: you finish your PhD and then leave Canada to do post-doctoral research. The destination, more often than not, is the United States. “You stay there until you become marketable for a faculty position,” says Stephane Angers, a 34-year-old assistant professor at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy. In fact, many end up pursuing an academic career south of the border.

Prof. Angers is studying how various diseases cause the body’s routine cellular signals to go awry, and is developing strategies to prevent this miscommunication. He earned his



Ephemera



On evenings in late July, Philosopher's Walk transformed into *As You Like It's* Forest of Arden with exiled court members, disguised lovers and musical shepherds. The Shakespearean classic was staged by Canopy Theatre, in partnership with Hart House Theatre. Just as Shakespeare's audiences experienced open-air theatre in The Globe, these outdoor summer productions – which now attract more than 2,000 people – have made plays accessible in a downtown setting, proving that “All the world's a stage.”
– *Nina Haikara*

undergraduate degree at McGill University, completed his doctoral thesis at the University of Montreal and then did four years of post-doctoral work in Seattle at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute on the University of Washington campus.

In 2006, Angers faced the difficult decision of where to establish himself. Typically, American universities entice talented researchers with substantial funds to set up their own labs – from \$800,000 to \$1 million, says Angers. Traditionally, Canadian universities haven't been as generous, forcing scientists to share lab space, equipment and research assistants. “In Canada, those start-up funds could be as low as \$75,000 or as high as \$300,000,” he says. U of T's offers were usually at the higher end of this range, but were still well below what peer American institutions offered.

Since 2000, however, the Canada Research Chairs program and Canadian Foundation for Innovation have gone a long way toward correcting the imbalance by helping persuade talented academics to either return to Canada or immigrate here. The foundation is an 11-year-old federal program that helps underwrite the capital costs of cutting-edge research,

especially the purchase of state-of-the-art lab equipment. It awarded Angers a one-time grant of \$400,000, which topped up funds that U of T and the Ontario government provided. Coupled with a Canada Research Chair salary of \$100,000 a year for five years, the conditions for Angers to come back to Canada became “much more competitive,” he says.

Angers isn't the only scientist to have returned home. U of T holds 257 Canada Research Chairs, 34 of which have been filled by academics who were recruited back to Canada. Another 40 have immigrated here from abroad.

The Canadian Foundation for Innovation has played a major role in this brain gain. U of T has received \$36.5 million in foundation grants associated with Canada Research Chairs. Since 1997, the foundation has committed \$3.8 billion to almost 6,000 projects at 128 research institutions.

The upshot is that when U of T and other Canadian universities go to the U.S. to bring back homegrown academic stars, a foundation grant and Canada Research Chair salary guarantee prove to be highly effective magnets. “It makes a difference,” says Angers. – *John Lorinc*



Willcocks St. Makeover

This design, submitted by Paul Cravit (BArch 1972) and his team at CS&P Architects in Toronto, won a U of T competition last spring to make the intersection at Huron and Willcocks streets more pedestrian-friendly.

CS&P's proposal imagines the intersection as a "civic room for the university and for the city." Outside the Lash Miller building, a new

pond becomes an ice rink in winter. At Sidney Smith Hall, amphitheatre-style steps connect the western deck to an enlarged café patio below – creating an ideal spot to view outdoor theatre on a new stage to be constructed outside the Earth Sciences Centre. The university and the city will begin discussions about the project this fall.

Overheard



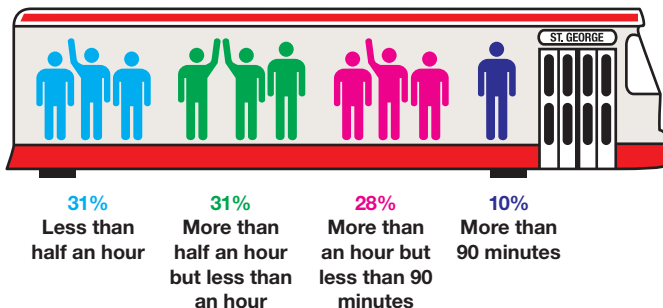
Our time of knowledge and creativity requires diversity. Human potential is the great leveller. It defies and obliterates the social categories we have imposed on ourselves. It defies gender. It doesn't care about race. It annihilates ethnicity. It means that *all* are required to contribute.



Richard Florida

Professor of Business and Creativity, and director of the Martin Prosperity Institute
June 20th Convocation for the Rotman School of Management

Poll | How long is your commute to campus?



U of T is a commuters' school. And as the university and city have grown, so have the distances that students travel. For some, that means getting up at 6 a.m. for a morning class, or arriving home at midnight after an evening lecture. But the time spent on public transit doesn't seem to bother students as much as the cost of using it. When asked to name one thing that U of T could do to improve their experience here, the most frequent request (from 12 per cent of respondents) was a more deeply discounted transit pass. Several students asked for more recreational and study space and a few wanted libraries and other buildings to stay open 24/7.

This highly scientific poll of 100 U of T students who live off campus was conducted on St. George Street in early July.



Fellowships for Global Health

Two newly graduated doctors will work in southern Africa – and learn about international health issues

A NEW FELLOWSHIP IN THE department of family and community medicine will allow two newly graduated family physicians to travel to southern Africa and learn first-hand about global health issues.

As part of the innovative one-year program, to be launched next summer, the trainees will spend six months in Toronto doing clinical and academic work designed to strengthen their knowledge of global health initiatives. Clinical responsibilities will focus on health problems that are common in the developing world, such as pregnancy-related conditions, infectious diseases and HIV. During the second half of the program, the trainees will work as family doctors in a hospital or clinic in Malawi or Zimbabwe.

The Toronto stint will prepare the doctors for the challenges of dealing with global health issues before they arrive in Africa, says Katharine Rouleau, an assistant professor and co-ordinator of post-graduate training, international programs, in the department of family and community medicine. The time abroad will provide important hands-on experience in a developing country. Ultimately, the program is designed to give Canadian family physicians interested in global health the skills they'll need to serve communities effectively in both Africa and Canada. "Our trainees often think they are going out there to help," she says. "But it doesn't take long for them to realize they have a lot to learn from our partner communities in Africa. Humility is a key ingredient in medicine – and that's a valuable lesson to come back with."

For the resident, gaining clinical experience in a low-income country also highlights the vital roles that food, sanitation and clean water play in the health of a community, says Rouleau.

The new program receives financial support from the Bram and Bluma Appel Global & International Health Fellowships Fund. Mark and Gail Appel created the fund earlier this year in memory of Mark's parents. – *Scott Anderson*

Art in Venice U of T curator Barbara Fischer is headed to the 2009 Venice Biennale with artist Mark Lewis

THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS has selected U of T gallery director Barbara Fischer and Hamilton-born artist Mark Lewis to represent Canada at the 2009 Venice Biennale of Visual Art, a major international exhibition of contemporary art.

Fischer, director of the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, will curate a short, silent film by Lewis titled *Romance*, which uses the classic film technique of rear projection combined with state-of-the-art digital technology. Although Lewis is the film's creative force, Fischer will manage the exhibition's logistics, handling everything from fundraising to installing the work to creating an accompanying publication.

Lewis, who lives in London, England, shoots his films using 35-mm film, a professional crew, actors, cranes, sets and special effects. He edits them, and then transfers the final product to laser disc or DVD to project them in the gallery. Unlike mainstream feature films, Lewis's works critique conventional cinema, encouraging viewers to be aware of the clichés, conventions and fragmentary nature of film. He examines the different ways that a work of art can be both



In Mark Lewis's *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening* (2003), pedestrians' shadows are seen upside down

experienced in time and represent time. Fischer calls Lewis's cinematic art "quietly majestic."

For Fischer, who will travel to Venice next June, the biennale marks a high point in a 25-year career devoted to researching and curating contemporary art in Canada and the world. "My passion in life is to make contemporary art more visible," she says. "This is a huge honour." — *Elaine Smith and Scott Anderson*

PHOTO: MARK LEWIS

People



University Professor **Anthony Pawson** of molecular genetics is the first Canadian scientist to be named a Kyoto Prize laureate by Japan's Inamori Foundation. The

international award honours those who have contributed to the scientific, spiritual and cultural betterment of humankind. Pawson, an investigator with Mount Sinai Hospital's Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute, is the laureate in basic sciences. His work on cancer cell signalling – particularly how to switch off growing cancer cells – forms the basis for new approaches to cancer treatment.



The University of Toronto Cities Centre has a new director: U of T civil engineering professor **Eric Miller**, who

took over last July. Miller was formerly director of the Urban Transportation Research and Advancement Centre. The City of Toronto uses a modelling system he developed to forecast regional travel demand in the Greater Toronto Area. Miller succeeds Professor Emeritus Larry Bourne, who served as interim director since the centre's inception in 2007.

Dr. Paul Santerre has been appointed director of the Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering (IBBME). Santerre served as associate dean of research and director of the Dental Research Institute for the Faculty

of Dentistry with cross-appointments to IBBME and the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering.

Conductor **David Briskin** has brought his talents to the Faculty of Music: he is now the director of Orchestral Studies and conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Briskin is also the music director and principal conductor of the National Ballet of Canada, and served as music director of the Masterwork Chorus and Orchestra.

In January, Professor **Seamus Ross** will succeed Professor Brian Cantwell Smith as dean of the

FAR LEFT PHOTO: LIAM SHARP

Cinema Gold Lionsgate gift to Robarts a boon – and not just for film students

A CANADIAN FILM AND TELEVISION DISTRIBUTOR has made what University of Toronto officials are calling the largest-ever gift-in-kind to U of T Libraries.

Vancouver-based Lionsgate Entertainment has donated its entire archive, covering materials related to almost 4,500 movies and television shows it has produced and distributed dating back to the 1970s, to Robarts Library.

Brock Silversides, head of the Media Commons at Robarts and the university's film archivist, calls the collection a "de facto" history of Lionsgate and the film industry in Canada, and says the materials will appeal to scholars in a range of disciplines beyond cinema studies.

The gift includes almost every film and television show that Lionsgate and its predecessor companies, such as Cinepix, has ever produced or distributed. Materials include raw footage, rough cuts, outtakes, still photos and trailers, as well as the master videotape or 35-mm theatrical release print – the full scope of what's created during the making of a feature film or TV show.

Silversides says English students are likely to appreciate the collection's scripts and film adaptations of literary works. Legal files and contracts will appeal to those in entertainment law, while business students can examine the packaging (including ads, posters

and DVD and VHS enclosures) to see how movies were marketed. "It really goes well beyond people who like watching films," says Silversides. "As a cross-section of popular culture, it covers the gamut."

The Lionsgate gift, which covers both Canadian and international productions, includes some 14 million feet of film, 550 boxes of printed files, 1,600 pieces of graphic art, 47,000 photographs and hundreds of soundtracks. Among the well-known titles are director Bruce McDonald's *Hard Core Logo*, Claude Jutra's *Kamouraska*, David Cronenberg's early features *Rabid* and *Shivers*, and the Leonard Cohen documentary *I'm Your Man*.

Recently, Robarts received a similar gift from Toronto's Shaftesbury Films, covering that company's archive from the late 1980s onward. Shaftesbury specializes in adaptations of Canadian literary works by such authors as Carol Shields, Margaret Atwood and Timothy Findley. – *Scott Anderson*



PHOTO: COURTESY OF MAPLE PICTURES

Lionsgate Entertainment has donated materials related to almost 4,500 films and TV shows, including *Hard Core Logo* (above), to U of T

Faculty of Information. Ross is currently professor of humanities informatics and digital curation at the University of Glasgow. He is also associate director of the UK's Digital Curation Centre.

Emmanuel College will have a new principal in January: **Mark Toulouse** comes to the college from Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University, where he served as professor of American religious history. He has also held positions as associate dean, dean and executive vice-president.

Varsity Blues



Ending the Streak? New football coaches talk about what it will take to win

THEY MAY HAVE THE TOUGHEST JOB in Canadian university athletics, but Bob Howes and Greg DeLaval say coaching U of T's football team to its first victory in almost seven years will mean taking things one game at a time.

Mental preparation will be crucial, they say, as the team looks to snap its string of 49 consecutive losses – a Canadian

university record. Their message to the players: concentrate on each game, not the streak. "Our job is to take the focus *off* of winning," says DeLaval, U of T's new interim head coach. "The players get so focused on winning that they forget what they're supposed to do on the next play.

The team will also have to learn how to preserve a lead. Too often in the past, the Blues have gone into the fourth quarter with an advantage, only to lose the game. "That's a challenge," says DeLaval.

The presence of veteran receivers Mark Stinson and Cory Kennedy and quarterback David Hamilton should help. Bob Howes, whose role is interim director of football, is optimistic about the team's defence but worries about a potential lack of depth on offence. "We'll have to use who we have, and that's smart players, skilled players and some veterans," he says.

Howes and DeLaval both held coaching positions with the Blues in the mid-2000s. They refuse to make any predictions about the team's prospects this fall, except to say that every opponent will be tough. Among last year's weakest Ontario University Athletics teams, U of T arch rival York has a new championship-winning head coach who is "fired up and ready to go," says DeLaval. Windsor will be looking to rebound after a particularly bad year, while Waterloo has excellent coaching. "No one wants to lose to U of T. It says a lot about your program if you lose to us," says DeLaval. – *Scott Anderson*

For dates of upcoming home games, see Calendar of Events, p. 11



Bajan Sensation

They attended U of T together, trained together and last spring, lifelong friends Martyn Forde and Terrence Haynes realized a dream, qualifying for the Olympics together.

Forde and Haynes were born in Canada, but met in Barbados where they attended the same elementary school and swam

competitively. In 1998, when they were in their early teens, they met Blues' swim coach Byron MacDonald. He had brought the University of Toronto team to Barbados for training camp. "I guess it's just fate that we ended up at U of T," says Haynes (BASc 2007), who started university one year before Forde, 23.

In July, both men were training intensively and preparing mentally for the race of their lives. Haynes,

who participated in the 2004 Summer Olympics, planned to draw on his experience in Athens for this year's Games. "The night before my race [in Athens] I didn't sleep at all," he says. "I want to go into this Olympics more relaxed."

Each was pleased to share his Olympic experience with a close friend. "I've been on countless meets with Martyn," says Haynes, 23. "We both learn from each other and continue to push each

other forward."

The two swimmers joined Blues teammate Colin Russell, who swam for Canada. – *Michelle MacArthur*



“Students don’t have great riches. But we have our time, our energy – and meal credits”

– Olivier Sorin on the inspiration for Students Against Hunger



Lunchtime Express Five years and thousands of meals later, Victoria students are still delivering lunches to those in need

WHILE ISSUES SURROUNDING POVERTY continue to be debated at City Hall, a student group at Victoria College is making an immediate difference.

Students living in residence often reach year’s end with unused credit on their meal plans. Students Against Hunger (SAH) converts donated meal credits into bagged lunches for

the homeless in Toronto.

Olivier Sorin, a former don at the Margaret Addison residence, recalls the meeting in fall 2003 when students on his floor conceived the idea. “We realized that students didn’t have great riches,” he says, “but had intangible resources. We had our time, our energy – and we had these meal credits.”

In partnership with the Burwash Hall cafeteria, Sorin and the founding executive members created a meal credit bank, and the donations began pouring in. They haven’t stopped. Last year, SAH distributed 50 meals each week, through the soup kitchen at nearby Church of the Redeemer. Since the group’s inception, students have delivered thousands of meals to those in need.

This year is SAH’s fifth anniversary, and plans include reviving a popular program that sees volunteers deliver meals and mentor elementary school students at several Regent Park locations. During the winter term, they’ll also resurrect the “university for a day” experience, which

brings these same children to U of T to learn about options for post-secondary education.

For many Vic students, donating through SAH has become a normal part of residence life. Sorin (BSc 2003, MA 2004), who still volunteers with the group while completing his PhD in French literature, can see that the direct approach is still paying off. “When I walk along Bloor Street in the dead of winter, and see a homeless person with a Students Against Hunger bag, I know we’re having a positive impact on someone’s life today,” he says. “And I know that other volunteers see that too – that’s why they still get up at 6 a.m. to bag lunches, that’s why they still knock on doors to drum up donations. When you put these small things together in a big group, you can do incredible things.” – *J.P. Antonacci*



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Nearly 1,200 students, staff and faculty lost their lives while serving in past conflicts. Now their memorial is showing battle scars.

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SOLDIERS' TOWER MEMORIAL FUND

Leading Edge



Sunnier Days

High energy prices are giving solar cells a new-found lustre

Since the oil crisis of the 1970s, environmentalists have been touting the benefits of solar power. But the technology has lagged behind the enthusiasm. Producing electricity from even the most advanced photovoltaic cells still

costs more than producing it from conventional sources.

Recently, however, high fuel prices and advances in photovoltaic technology have reignited interest in solar power and placed it on the cusp of widespread adoption, says Nazir >>>

>> Kherani, a U of T engineering professor developing higher-efficiency solar cells.

Kherani, who has cross-appointments in electrical and computer engineering and materials science, says the ongoing challenge is to find a way to cheaply and efficiently convert energy from the sun into a form we can use, such as electricity.

In a lab in the Galbraith building, Kherani and his colleagues have developed a technique for depositing ultra-thin layers of silicon film on crystalline silicon wafers to create an electric field and allow current to be more readily extracted from the cell. The room-sized arrays of steel tubes and vacuum chambers conceal the minute precision involved. Using low-temperature processing techniques to minimize stress on the materials, Kherani is creating a prototype cell with layers of silicon film that are as thin as one nanometre – which is one-billionth of a metre. Kherani's challenge is to optimize the electrical and light-absorbing properties of each ultra-thin layer, as well as the entire cell, to draw out the maximum current.

Most of today's photovoltaic cells work at 15 per cent efficiency, meaning they can convert 15 per cent of the solar energy they absorb into electricity. Kherani hopes to push that figure up to at least 20 per cent.

If energy prices remain high, Kherani says that in the next five to 10 years solar power could reach grid parity – the point at which energy obtained from the sun costs no more than energy obtained from the various sources that currently power the world's electrical grids. (Regions with the most sunshine will generally reach parity first.) At that point, he says, "Photovoltaics can really take off because the economic barrier is no longer there."

Backed by a \$5-million grant from the Ontario government, Kherani is especially interested in taking solar energy mainstream, locally and internationally. "For the developing world, in particular, solar energy has the potential to transform living conditions to a standard that is not dissimilar from ours by simply tapping an energy source available locally." – *Dan Falk*



Gimme Shelter Students propose a new use for abandoned buildings

TORONTO HAS 200,000 PEOPLE WAITING for affordable housing; it also has hundreds of abandoned buildings. Two members of the U of T community believe that these problems present a novel solution for each other.

David Wachsmuth, who graduated with a master's degree in urban planning last spring, and Shiri Pasternak, a second-year PhD student in geography, are the co-ordinators of Abandonment Issues, a coalition of Toronto housing activists. In February, the group proposed a new bylaw – dubbed Use It or Lose It – to the city's Affordable Housing Committee. The bylaw would allow the city to expropriate abandoned buildings and renovate them into affordable housing. City staff are now studying the proposal and a council vote is expected in the fall or winter.

"There are plenty of examples of buildings across the city that are either in fine shape right now, or have been in fine shape and are now deteriorating," says Wachsmuth. Often, owners simply board up buildings because they hope to sell the property in the future at a higher price. Wachsmuth says this kind of speculative ownership hurts neighbourhoods.

Similar bylaws are common in the U.S., where abandoned buildings are a more serious problem (Detroit and Philadelphia, for example, each have more than 30,000 such buildings.) Although the number of neglected properties in Toronto is far smaller, Wachsmuth says the bylaw represents "a small, tangible and relatively painless difference in making sure there's housing for the people who need it." – *Graham F. Scott*



The Big Idea

Gum Control The case for universal dental care

CANADA'S UNIVERSAL HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM stops, for a series of complicated and unpalatable reasons, at the gum line – a boundary not recognized by the human body. According to Jim Leake, a U of T professor emeritus of community dentistry, this artificial dividing line leaves tens of thousands of Canadians – especially low-income families, First Nations people and children – without adequate dental care.

What's most lamentable, says Leake, is that, not so long ago, Canada was inching toward a comprehensive dental care system. Across Canada, government spending on dental care as a portion of total dental spending rose from just one per cent in 1960 to a high-water mark of 14 per cent in 1980. The numbers started to fall in the 1990s when the provinces

began cutting dental funding. Today, about two-thirds of Canadians rely on private dental insurance, and access to a dentist's care – unlike a physician's – is largely determined by income: the more you make, the more likely you are to receive dental care.

But, as Leake notes, our current system – often described as a partnership between governments, employers and insurers – relies on government subsidy in the form of a tax benefit for employer dental plans: the premiums that employers pay for their staff are not considered part of the employees' taxable income. This lost tax revenue, about \$3 billion a year, has to be made up from somewhere else.

Who makes up the difference? We all do, including the one-third of Canadians who don't have a dental plan and pay for dental care in after-tax dollars – if they can afford it. Perversely, says Leake, low-income, non-insured individuals end up paying higher taxes to help finance the dental care of their wealthier neighbours who are fortunate enough to have a private plan.

Not surprisingly, Leake argues that we're getting it backwards. Many Aboriginal Peoples and children in low-income families have high levels of tooth decay. This is worrisome because researchers suspect a link between poor oral health and diabetes and geriatric pneumonia. Individuals with diseased or missing teeth also have trouble finding jobs.

A few municipal public health departments offer free dental care to the disadvantaged, but Leake points out that these arrangements merely illustrate how neglected Canada's dental care system has become. He believes Canadians should consider universal dental care built around a government insurance system. But given funding constraints and opposition from the dental profession, he would accept a policy that ensures dental care for vulnerable populations.

At the same time, Leake says that to improve access to dental care, he would like to see dentistry folded into Health Canada's plan to establish clinics offering a wide range of health care services – not just the medical care offered by physicians. "Dentistry should be very much part of it," Leake says. At the moment, however, no one's reaching across this yawning divide. – *John Lorinc*

Lingo

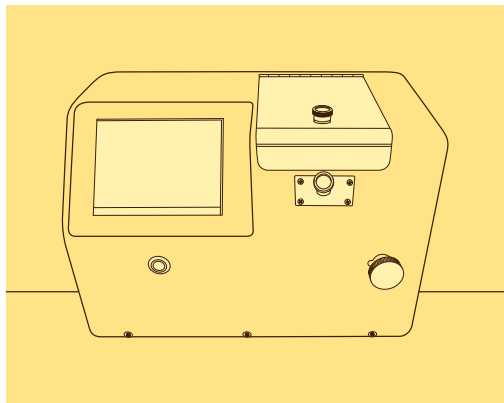
Wii-hab 

At the Hospital for Sick Children, physical therapist Jo-Anne Marcuz (MScPT 2003) is using Nintendo's popular Wii video game system to help kids recovering from a broken bone or who have a chronic illness such as arthritis. Physiotherapy can be

painful and some kids find it boring. The Wii, with its motion-sensitive controller, entices kids to move in ways that mimic traditional physical therapy exercises. It also distracts them from the task at hand – and that can mean faster improvement.

Prototype

Blood Work Portable device would offer hospitals a quicker way to test patients for infectious diseases



IN A HOSPITAL, a quick and accurate diagnosis can save a patient's life. This was never more apparent to Torontonians than during the 2003 SARS crisis. Yet pinpointing the cause of a patient's illness can require several days of lab work, testing first for one disease, and then for another.

Dr. Warren Chan, a professor at U of T's Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering, has come up with a solution:

a portable device that analyzes a blood sample for several different infectious agents. The best part: the test results are ready in under an hour.

Chan's device uses sets of tiny, cell-sized microbeads contained in a vial. Each different type of microbead is filled with a colouring agent and coated with molecules of an infection that the technician is testing for. When a blood sample is added to the vial, the molecules on the microbead attach to any matching molecules they find in the blood. Then, a second colouring agent coated with the same molecules is added to the vial. With this method, an infectious agent in the blood creates what Chan calls a "colour sandwich," or bar code. His device then reads the bar code to pinpoint the infection.

"We can't see the infection," says Chan, "but we're visualizing the bar code to identify the infection." One vial can hold as many as 15 sets of microbeads, meaning that a single test can screen for up to 15 different infectious diseases.

Marlex, an engineering firm in Ancaster, Ontario, has built a prototype of the device that is the size of an extra-wide breadmaker and weighs 40 pounds. Users input information through a touch screen. At the end of the test, the results flash onto the screen. Chan hopes that Marlex can eventually make the as-yet-unnamed machine smaller and lighter and simpler for medical staff to operate.

The big question now is: Will it be the first to market? Chan's lab recently received a \$7-million Ontario research grant to further develop the device. "A lot of companies are attacking the same problem from a different angle," he says. "It's a race. But the great thing is, science moves faster when there's competition. And regardless of who wins, it's going to be beneficial for everybody." - Lisa Bendall

Findings



Gene affects sweet tooth

Ever wonder why you take three sugars with your coffee and your colleague takes none? A new study by University of Toronto researchers has found that individuals with a specific genetic

variation consistently consume more sugary foods.

The study, published in the journal *Physiological Genomics*, offers the first evidence that a variation in the GLUT2 gene – which controls sugar entry into cells – may cause some people to prefer foods high in sugar.

According to Ahmed El-Sohehy, the study's senior researcher and a professor in the department of nutritional sciences, the discovery might have implications for how to manage obesity and diabetes – which are affecting a rapidly growing number of people throughout the world.




Frogs and salamanders descended from common ancestor

Frogs and salamanders may not look much alike, but evidence from a U of T research team suggests they evolved from a common ancestor about 290 million years ago.

The team, which included U of T Mississauga biology professor Robert Reisz and

researchers Jason Anderson and Diane Scott, studied a fossil of an animal that exhibits features of both frogs and salamanders. The ancient creature had two fused bones in the ankle, a characteristic normally seen only in salamanders, but also a wide skull and large eardrum similar to a frog's.

Learning about the evolutionary history of frogs and salamanders is important, because they are particularly sensitive to environmental degradation and give us insight into how humans are changing the global environment, says Reisz. "These animals survived largely unscathed from before the age of dinosaurs and mammals through a mass extinction 70 million years ago. That they are now under pressure tells us we are doing something to our world that has never happened before."

||  Read more about the latest U of T research at www.research.utoronto.ca



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Q&A

Ask an Expert

Alan White

The Credit Crisis



Rotman School of Management finance professor Alan White spoke to editor Scott Anderson recently about the ongoing crisis in credit markets. The crisis was triggered last year by rising mortgage defaults in the U.S.

We've been hearing about the credit crisis for a year now.

Why isn't the situation improving? This sort of crisis cannot be resolved until the U.S. acknowledges the problem and takes actions to deal with it. People have lost a lot of money and everyone is reluctant to admit it.

Will people have to fully acknowledge their losses before things turn around? To a large extent, yes. Japan went through a similar real-estate collapse in the early 1990s, and for a decade their banks refused to write off bad loans and start over again with a clean slate. The good news is that Americans are pretty good about taking their lumps. Their banks have already taken about \$380 billion in write-downs. But they'll probably need to take billions more.

Could things get as bad in Canada? No. Our banks don't take as extreme positions as U.S. banks do and they are more closely regulated. We also have a better regulated mortgage industry.

If American banks were making questionable loans, shouldn't the regulators have stepped in? An acquaintance who left the U.S. Federal Reserve 10 years ago said they were concerned at that time with the rise of housing prices and the potential for an asset bubble. But regulators are owned by politicians,

and as long as things are going well politicians are reluctant to say, "Stop doing this."

Rating agencies such as Moody's are supposed to assess investment risk. Yet they didn't sound the alarm in this case.

Is there something wrong with the models they're using?

The people at Moody's told me that one of the problems in this case is that people were lying on their mortgage application forms – about their income, for example. That's more of a problem with the assumptions that go into a model than with the model itself.

Aren't the banks supposed to verify that information? That's normally the case, but there have been major changes in the American mortgage business. The bank used to do it all. Now, a mortgage broker finds the borrowers and gets the bank to take on the mortgages. The bank takes them on and then sells them to someone else. Before you know it the loan has moved halfway around the world. As a result, no one took responsibility for verification.

These crises have been happening periodically for longer than 20 years. Do the principles that govern the financial system need to change? The principles have to do with making rules so people have incentives to behave properly. You sometimes read about a bank, for example, that loses a huge amount of money because an individual did something bad. Then you talk to the people in the bank and they say, "Yeah, people knew that the individual was doing something bad and had complained about it, but management said, "Leave him alone, he's making money." The incentives to comply with the rules are sometimes outweighed by the apparent profits to be made by breaking them.

Are we trying to guard against greed? We have to guard against aggressive individuals trying to generate large profits.

What are the next danger spots? They always come in new markets in which most people don't have a lot of experience, and a few clever people figure out how to work the system. Beyond that I couldn't say.

Meals on Wheels

Here's a new angle on community building. Earlier this year, students in the master's program at the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture designed and built a mobile kitchen that comes with a barbecue, seats 50, and provides bins for garbage, recycling and composting. Made entirely from recycled and donated materials, the wood-and-steel contraption's three sections (just one is shown here) fold up and fit together on wheels, requiring just two people to transport it from place to place. The students developed the eco-friendly banquet-on-wheels with Toronto's Mt. Dennis Community Association, which used it this summer at several neighbourhood events. The students say their portable picnic is a prototype – they don't plan to build any more. But the blueprints are available if you'd like to build your own. For more information, visit www.moleculararchitecture.blogspot.com.



Big Blue U of T and IBM are assembling Canada's most powerful supercomputer



NEXT SPRING, THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO will flip the switch on a machine that will rank among the top 20 supercomputers in the world.

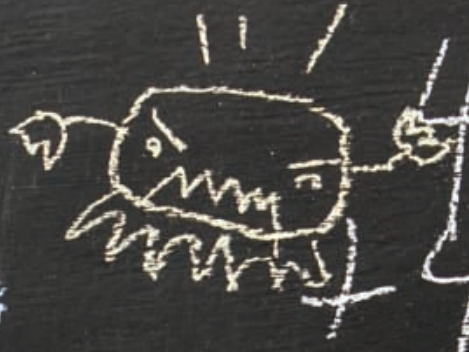
When it's booted up in April, the mammoth system – composed of 30,000 individual central processing units (CPUs), or cores – will blaze through calculations at a peak speed of 300 teraflops (short for trillion floating operations per second). That's about 30 times faster than Canada's current largest research computer.

A companion supercomputer, designed to handle different types of computational problems, will include fewer but more powerful CPUs and operate at a speed of about 60 teraflops. Both computers will be housed in a new data centre that U of T and IBM are constructing in a warehouse north of Toronto.

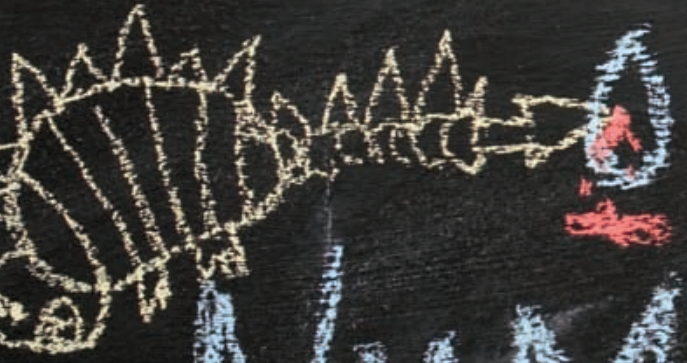
Richard Peltier, the scientific director of the project and a U of T physics professor, explains that the larger system

is designed to solve problems involving vast amounts of data, in which each piece of data is unrelated (or only moderately related) to most other pieces of data. Experimental physicists will use it to examine particle collisions produced by the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland, for example. The smaller computer is designed for fields in which each piece of data influences many other pieces of data, making it suitable for studying such areas as climate change and fluid turbulence.

Peltier says the powerful new computers are now a standard research requirement in disciplines as disparate as genetics, chemical physics and aerodynamics. They will allow Canadian researchers to remain competitive with their international counterparts. "Most fields are now deeply involved in high-performance computation," he says. "You really can't do modern research without it." – *Scott Anderson*



FEAR



NUMBERS



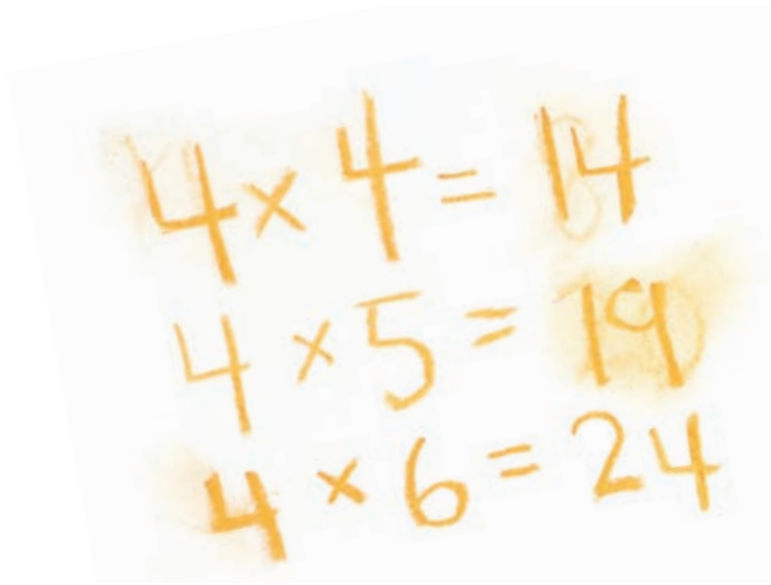
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Why do so many kids struggle with math?

By Cynthia Macdonald
Photography by Paul Weeks,
portrait by Sean J. Sprague



The first time it happened, we were in Grade II: six or seven teenagers, in line at a doughnut shop. I felt an urgent tug at my sleeve.

“Cynthia,” my friend D. whispered, pulling me away. “Do I have enough for coffee?”

He opened his palm to reveal a damp cluster of nickels, dimes and quarters. It was far more than the 50 cents needed for a cup, but D. had no way of knowing that.

Now, I wasn’t much of a math student myself, but at least

I could count change. Later, I found out that several others in the group had also been acting as after-school accountants for D. – an eloquent, funny boy who nonetheless lacked even the most basic arithmetic skills.

How many people like D. walk among us? There may be many. According to a recent federal government report, only half of Canadians have the numeric skills and knowledge “necessary to function well” in society. Illiteracy is a much-discussed problem, but its sibling – innumeracy – goes relatively unnoticed. Perhaps it’s because we have long internalized the idea that, while reading is necessary, mathematical ability is the gift of a chosen few.



John Mighton, founder of the math tutoring program JUMP, uses words such as “disaster” to describe the state of student numeracy in Canada’s public schools

“Stand firm in your refusal to remain conscious during algebra,” Fran Lebowitz once wrote. “In real life, I assure you, there is no such thing.” Lebowitz was wrong, of course: mathematical reasoning is necessary all through life, affecting decisions we make in personal finance, travel, cooking and real estate, to name just a few. Our collective inability to analyze data has left us at the mercy of politicians and their advisers, who likely also quail in the face of math. “Innumeracy,” wrote math professor Lynn Arthur Steen in his 1997 book, *Why Numbers Count*, “perpetuates warfare, harms health and weakens families.”

Today, the Canadian public school system still turns out teenagers who are left puzzled at the cash register. Earlier this year, the *Toronto Star* reported that one-third of community college students in Ontario are in danger of failing first-year math. This could be linked to the fact that one-third of all high school students are currently registered in applied (non-academic) courses. A 2004 study showed that 60 per cent of these students were also failing, or close to it.

A small cohort of kids have always “just gotten it,” but the

situation is frightening for those who don’t—especially in a work climate where some firms now administer standardized math tests to prospective employees.

Newfangled instructional methods are always being tried in an effort to right things. The 1960s saw the introduction of “new math” as a panicked response to Russia’s Sputnik program, which was thought to be the result of the country’s superior educational system. The method confused parents, was roundly mocked by satirists such as Tom Lehrer and Charles Schulz, and died within 10 years. More recently, President George W. Bush convened the National Mathematics Advisory Panel to arrest the lag in American science and engineering capability. (In 2006, the United States scored 25th out of 30 countries on the math portion of the Program of International Student Assessment. Canada, reassuringly, scored 7th.) Its final report advocated yet another overhaul of how math is taught.

John Mighton (BA 1978 VIC, MSc 1994, PhD 2000) would agree that the state of North American math education is far from ideal. The eminent

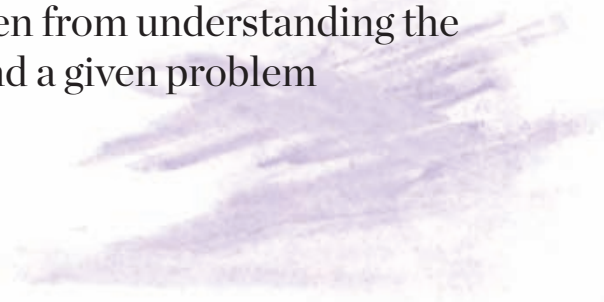
playwright, teacher, author and U of T adjunct math professor has long been the Chicken Little of arithmetic, using words such as “disaster” to describe the state of student numeracy in Canada’s public schools. The tutoring program he started in his Toronto apartment 10 years ago (known as JUMP, short for Junior Undiscovered Math Prodigies) was originally designed for struggling inner-city kids, but is now gaining respect in classrooms as far afield as England and South Africa.

Mighton is routinely portrayed as a back-to-basics saviour, rescuing children from the inquiry-based (also known as reform) math that is currently the fashion in Toronto schools. It’s a reputation that makes JUMP attractive to those of a more conservative educational bent. But while it’s true that his system stresses pencil-and-paper work, learning concepts in steps, computational fluency and extensive review, it would be wrong to say he wants things the way they used to be.

More than anything, Mighton says, we need to change the culture of self-defeat that persists in so many math classrooms. The change he seeks is as psychological as it is pedagogical. “As early as Grade 3 the kids notice which kids in the class are



Reformers tend not to be as pencil-and-paper-bound as Mighton is. They believe a dependence on traditional algorithms prevents children from understanding the processes behind a given problem



smarter, and which ones are less capable academically,” says the 50-year-old polymath, who’s also the author of two books (*The Myth of Ability* and *The End of Ignorance*) that reinforce this point. Mighton contends that the time-honoured practice of sorting children into A, B and C groups only worsens math phobia: “By the time kids are streamed in high school, they’ve lost any motivation to do math or engage in it.” Two separate studies on JUMP, conducted by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at U of T, suggest that the program increases math confidence.

Despite this, Mighton can’t get a break at home. This past May, consultants employed by the Toronto District School Board reached into their pencil cases and jabbed him with a set square. The board issued a position paper on his methods, condemning JUMP as a form of “rote, procedural learning where students memorize very small computational steps with little to no conceptual understanding.” This is another way of saying that Mighton wants to give students the top-down directive that $4 \times 4 = 16$, instead of guiding them to discover on their own that 16 is equal to four groups of four.

Documents like this infuriate Mighton (to the extent that he can be infuriated: quiet and firm, he shares a birthday with Gandhi). The statement, he says, is “completely full of misinformation. They’ll say *this* is the correct way to teach – but we didn’t say that *wasn’t* the correct way to teach! We actually advocate the same thing, but they’ve never looked closely at our program.”

The Toronto board adheres to the reform style of teaching that has become increasingly popular over the last 15 years. Reformers tend not to be as pencil-and-paper-bound as Mighton is. They believe a dependence on traditional algorithms prevents children from understanding the processes behind a given problem. To this end, they often link math concepts to real-life situations, use concrete objects and encourage

group work. They emphasize the importance of understanding mathematical concepts over computational ability, stressing the “why” over the “how.”

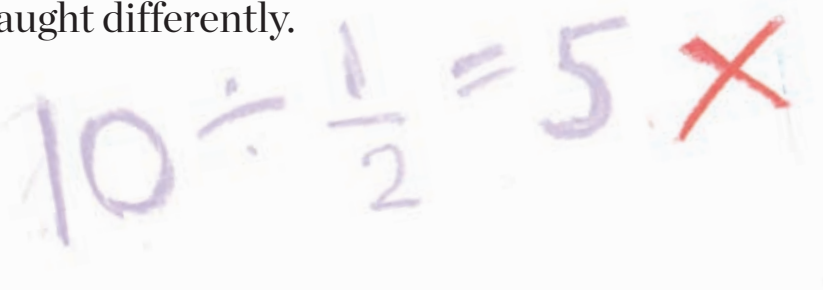
But are the two camps really so far apart? Thumbing through Mighton’s Grade 4 workbook, I see that he, too, advocates the use of materials such as card games, coins and fingers. He also stresses that a concept be learned before an algorithm (such as long division) is introduced. “John Mighton is a friend of mine,” says reform math advocate Barry Onslow, a retired professor of education who contributed to the development of the current Ontario math curriculum: in short, someone you’d think would be Mighton’s enemy. “People want to have this polarization,” he says. “They want things to be black or white. They aren’t. There are many shades of grey.”

Nevertheless, other reformers still view Mighton as Mr. Drill and Kill. Some Toronto teachers who want to use JUMP are specifically told not to by their principals, and have to sneak its tenets into their lessons. This is not the case in Vancouver, where JUMP methods are openly embraced. “Are people more backward out west?” Mighton asks. “Why is it we are being welcomed there, when people are forced underground here? And would they welcome our program if they weren’t getting results?”

A similar battle is being waged in California, the centre of what’s become known as the Math Wars. For almost two decades now, reform and basics advocates have been at each others’ throats, amassing research and mounting publicity campaigns to support their respective sides. Remember the Reading Wars, which pitted whole-language modernists against phonics traditionalists? Trade letters for numbers and you get the idea.

Some reformers condemned the National Mathematics Advisory Panel’s final report, released this spring. They thought it was too rigidly basics-oriented in nature. Reading it, however,

Children in Asian countries persistently score higher on international tests than their counterparts in North America, but this is not necessarily because they are taught differently. Maybe they just study harder



one sees that its language is quite even-handed: “To prepare students for algebra, the curriculum must simultaneously develop conceptual understanding, computational fluency and problem-solving skills,” it says. “Debates regarding the relative importance of these aspects of mathematical knowledge are misguided. These capabilities are mutually supportive.”

The fact is that traditionalists such as Mighton and reformers such as Onslow share many ideas. Perhaps the way to mathematical salvation lies in seeing what they have in common, instead of what divides them. We forget that when a war is being waged, children know about it. In the 1970s, students such as D. and myself saw “new math” disparaged every day in cartoons and newspapers. It made us mistrust the entire subject.

If there is one idea that unites the math fixers, it is this: *Children must understand what they are doing.* Today, D. would likely be diagnosed with a learning disability, but no matter. Both Mighton and Onslow believe that if he’d only been taught *why* he was performing mathematical operations, he too could have succeeded. “Why do we invert and multiply?” Mighton asks a group of teachers gathered for one of his training sessions on a sunny spring morning. We are all learning how to divide fractions, something we’d done in Grade 7 and now have completely forgotten. There is a rule for it, but no one’s ever taken it apart to show us the machinery. Mighton does, and we all breathe a sigh of relief before putting the idea into practice ourselves. We do not move on until everyone gets it.

Barry Onslow’s approach is more direct, but that might not be a reform thing – that might be Barry Onslow. “What’s 10 divided by a half?” he asks me. “If I said that to you, what might be your instant reaction?”

“My instant reaction would be to freeze up completely,” I tell him.

“But if I said you have to give me an answer...”

“Oh, all right then,” I stammer. “Five.”

“That is the answer that most people would give,” he says, “because you think of 10 sheared in half. But that’s not what it means. What it means is, how many halves are there in 10 wholes?”

Even I can easily see that it’s 20; divorced of meaningless symbolism, the idea makes perfect sense. But will I remember this later? “Your experience in school was one of memorizing rules,” Onslow tells me. “And if you forget those rules, then you forget your math. But if mathematics makes sense, you don’t need a lot of rules, because it fits into a framework.”

The scary reality remains, however, that math failure seems to persist for some kids, no matter what instructional method is used. When I speak to my own children’s math teachers, they complain about everything *except* methods. Scarce resources, disparate knowledge among students and their own anxiety are much bigger problems.

Children in Asian countries persistently score higher on international tests than their counterparts in North America, but this is not necessarily because they are taught differently. Maybe they just study harder. With more homework, shorter holidays and fewer extracurricular distractions, it’s said that an average Chinese pupil enters university with two more years of education than a Canadian one.

And teacher quality is important. “I read this paper recently where they looked at factors such as gender and socioeconomic background, and they found that everything was washed out by teacher effect,” Mighton says. “If you have a good teacher, all those other things aren’t so important.”

Regardless of the teaching method, learning math is like walking a tightrope – it requires sharp attention and a constantly active mind. One slip and you fall off. Expecting each student in a class of 30 to follow along at the same pace is



asking a lot, especially in an era of video games and three-minute music videos.

“The research in psychology suggests that attention is the key to everything,” Mighton says. “If you’re not harnessing attention, keeping it focused, then the brain is not developing. I think a lot of things that used to train attention, like how to stay on task, to focus, how to look for patterns in things – all those deeply important cognitive skills – aren’t being fostered in kids. One of the effects is that kids have more attention problems now.”

Culturally, we have also done children a disservice by depicting mathematicians as geniuses, lunatics or both. Movies such as *A Beautiful Mind* and *Good Will Hunting* (in which John Mighton played a small part, both as a consultant and an actor) and the television show *Numb3rs* all command public interest, but their heroes tend to be tortured loners who sit above and apart from the rest of us.

According to Onslow, math is anything but a solitary pursuit. “How do we learn?” he asks. “Do we learn in isolation? We have to get our ideas out in the open where people can discuss them. That way, they can see why some of their thinking might be faulty.” Similarly, Mighton stresses active, rather than passive learning, though JUMP is less language-based than most reform classes (so that, among other things, ESL students will not be at a disadvantage).

It should be mentioned that Mighton himself was no child math prodigy. “Sometimes I did well, but sometimes I did terribly,” he says. Although he eventually earned a PhD in mathematics, he almost failed calculus in his undergraduate years at the University of Toronto. None of this surprised him. As a child, a glance into his older sister’s psychology textbook had convinced him that geniuses reveal themselves early; he was not one.

Mighton turned to the consolations of philosophy, earning a master’s degree in the subject from McMaster University in 1978. It was during this time that he developed his own life philosophy: that genius – or at the very least, extreme success – might just be something you can program.

He read Sylvia Plath’s *Letters Home*, which was revelatory. “It was clear that she taught herself to write by sheer determi-

nation,” he says. “She did everything she could to train herself, including writing imitations of the poems she liked.”

Plath’s method worked for Mighton, and he has since become one of the country’s most successful playwrights. His approach is strikingly methodical. For Mighton, a so-called creative work does not erupt like Krakatoa in the artist’s mind. It is a tightly constructed puzzle, given shape and nurtured by the proofs of those who’ve gone before. “There are patterns, structure and logic in the arts,” he says. “It’s very similar to mathematics.”

His is a highly democratic vision of genius, open to the hardworking and the strongly encouraged as well as the gifted. Ironically, this is something Mighton figured out on his own. The traditionalist’s journey, then, has actually been reformist in nature, built on ideas he discovered and mastered for himself. It’s an example of how patterns and the connections between them can be found in so much of what we do – proof that mathematical *thinking*, rather than the memorization of formulas, is an essential skill to develop.

Every good math teacher agrees on at least one thing: math is a subject of lifelong importance, and not a childhood torture on the order of bra-snapping or dodgeball. Onslow advocates family math nights to reacquaint math-anxious adults with the subject. Mighton believes in later math learning, particularly in a climate of rising concern about brain fitness in the aging population. “It’s almost an evangelical experience when adults go back and find that they’re smart enough, because many people carry a great burden of feeling stupid from school. It has a great psychological effect. People forget the adjustments they went through to deal with this stuff,” Mighton says.

“Don’t know much about algebra,” Sam Cooke once sang; “don’t know what a slide rule is for.” Cooke thought the mere knowledge that one and one is two would be all he needed for true happiness, but math educators such as John Mighton and Barry Onslow think differently. They believe that happiness and advanced math are not necessarily mutually exclusive. One day, the rest of the world may even agree with them. Now, what a wonderful world *that* would be.

Cynthia Macdonald is a writer in Toronto.

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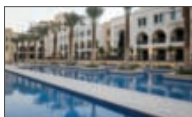
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(Barcelona & San Sebastian)
\$3145 + air



June 2 - 10
Alumni College in Bohemia
(Czech Republic)
\$2595 + air



June 7 - 18
Flavours of Burgundy &
Provence (France)
From \$3240 + air



June 22 - July 4
Cruise the Baltic Sea &
Norwegian Fjords (Norway to Russia)
From \$6670 + air



June 23 - July 6
Alumni College in Ukraine
& Romania
From \$2195 + air



July 1 - 8
Alaska Discovery
From \$3995 + air



July 30 - Aug 7
Alumni College in Iceland
\$2995 + air



Aug 15 - 23
Alumni College on the
Rhine River (Germany)
From \$2595 + air



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Passage of Peter the
Great (Russia)
From \$3095 + air



Aug 22 - Sept 2
Celtic Lands (Ireland, Scotland,
Wales, England & France)
From \$5740 + air



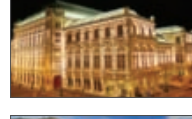
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Mediterranean (Turkey, Italy &
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French Alps
\$1499 + air



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Prague Discovery
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Italian Riviera (Italy)
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Photography by Raina+Wilson

Death Becomes Him

Novelist
Andrew Pyper goes in
for the kill

By Alec Scott



A

NDREW PYPER PROPOSES meeting at a Starbucks in the Queen West neighbourhood of Toronto, near where he lives. Interesting choice: It is in a fictional version of this same branch of the vast coffee-shop chain that the protagonist of Pyper's latest novel, *The Killing Circle*, tries to conjure up his own work of fiction.

Since rain is expected we sit safely inside. The author of four novels and a short-story collection, Pyper, 40, explains that, unlike his protagonist, he doesn't write much in cafés. Instead, he soldiers away in front of a computer in the basement of the modest Victorian home he shares with his wife, Heidi Rittenhouse, their one-year-old daughter and a Jack Russell terrier. "I



try to start writing first thing in the morning, even before showering," he says. "Just grab a piece of toast, throw on some sweatpants and go at it." He laughs at the unsexy picture he's

painting: "The writing life – how glamorous, right?"

However forbidding the writing life may be, it's the focus of Pyper's latest book, which sets a serial killer loose in a circle of aspiring authors. Released in August by Doubleday Canada, *The Killing Circle* contains gleefully nasty thumbnail sketches of Toronto wordsmiths, from a ball-busting editrix at a *Globe and Mail*-like daily to a has-been novelist with perverted sexual tastes. Pyper skewers a Giller-esque literary award with particular delight. "This book was my most fun to write," he says. "There are a lot of figures my colleagues will recognize."

But the book is more than a *roman à clef* stocked with in-jokes for Toronto's publishing crowd; it depicts the city's increasingly outsized aspirations through its writers. "I was trying to capture the psychological makeup, the character of Toronto now," says Pyper (LLB 1995). "It has finally become the world-class place that everyone was trumpeting it as 10, 20 years ago. You can be a journalist, a novelist, a documentary filmmaker, a dancer from here and do fine now." Pyper's own considerable success proves the point; his novels have attracted six-figure publishing contracts in New York, London and Toronto.

"There's now this ambition here," continues Pyper, warming to his theme. "All these people who come from Saskatoon or Moose Jaw who want to become something, sometimes without knowing what that thing is – the having of dreams and that terrible wanting to the point of toxicity. We've become this beacon for people to come here and attempt things. But with that comes the underbelly of failure and the frustration of not getting what you want."

In *The Killing Circle*, this striving city almost becomes a character who mocks the protagonist, Patrick Rush, a failed journalist and blocked wannabe novelist, for his manifold shortcomings. Ultimately, the anti-hero's all-encompassing desire to succeed leads him into a dangerous trap. He steals a story from a member of his writing group. Soon, he and his son become the targets of a vengeful force.

This new novel – perhaps Pyper's best – could sit comfortably between noted thrillers by Patricia Highsmith and Ruth Rendell. Or it could share space on a CanLit shelf with, say, Timothy Findley's *Headhunter* and Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride*. These Toronto-centric books also belong to that rare hybrid, the literary page-turner. "I hate when people dismiss books as just genre novels," says

Pyper, faulting the critics who slot his output only in the thriller category. “I don’t pretend to have written a contemplative, deeply philosophical book. But it’s hard to do those things that sometimes we assume are easy: to grab readers and not let them go, to keep them up at night until they reach the last page.”

PYPER’S OWN LIFE doesn’t have the makings of a thriller, but it has had some twists and turns. His light-blue tennis shirt and retro Clark Kent glasses suggest a clean-cut good guy, but this is a man who – intriguingly – has described his hometown of Stratford, Ontario, as “a great place to appear good and behave badly.”

Pyper is the fifth and final child of Presbyterians who emigrated from Northern Ireland to the festival town. His father is a retired ophthalmologist and his mother trained as a nurse. As a boy, Pyper read a lot of books and hoped he might, one day, get to write them. “I was a de facto only child, because there were eight years between me and the next brother. Like a lot of only children, I turned to the nerdier pursuits of books and writing and ... making things up.”

Later, he would find other, less wholesome escapes. “There was trouble to be had,” he tells me, “small-town trouble.” He smoked pot between shifts as a waiter at a gourmet restaurant where he once served Canadian literary doyenne Alice Munro. And he gathered with his pals around impromptu bonfires on the fringe of town – until the cops showed up.

McGill and Montreal offered more sophisticated pleasures. There he pursued a bachelor’s and master’s degree in literature, absorbing the then-trendy postmodern theorems – which he occasionally sends up in his fiction. Instead of pursuing a doctorate, he opted for a law degree at U of T: “I was and am more of a generalist by nature; something about specialization strikes me as inappropriate.”

There was another factor. “So many of my biggest decisions have been based on girlfriends,” he says a little ruefully. “My girlfriend at the time was studying law. I was in love with her, and she said we’ll be lawyers together and it’ll be great.” When she broke it off halfway through his first term, he nonetheless carried on through three years of law school and a year of articling. In the mid-1990s, he was called to the bar. “I knew very early on that I wasn’t going to be a lawyer, but I was brought up to believe, wrongly I think, that once you start something you never quit – real Presbyterian stick-to-it-iveness.”

“I was trying to capture the psychological makeup, the character of Toronto now,” says Pyper. “It has finally become the world-class place that everyone was trumpeting it as 10, 20 years ago”

While at law school, Pyper toiled away at the short stories that would be published as *Kiss Me* in 1996. This collection foreshadows the gothic turn his work would take; in one story, for example, a boy is disfigured in a barbecue accident. There’s also a strikingly heartfelt rendering of a teenager’s first brush with love. All of his books have at least one relationship – between lovers, friends, father and son – of almost otherworldly tenderness.

After articling, Pyper followed another girlfriend, Leah McLaren. She was waitressing at an Annex eatery in Toronto, but decided to finish her undergrad at Trent University in Peterborough. Pyper applied for, and was named, writer-in-residence at Trent’s Champlain College. (McLaren went on to become a columnist for the *Globe and Mail* and write a novel herself.) Out of the time Pyper spent labouring at Trent – the “Canadian Berkeley” he affectionately calls it – would come his first big success, the internationally best-selling, multiply translated *Lost Girls*.

IN *THE KILLING CIRCLE*, Pyper presents the writer’s world as far from rosy. Extreme professional envy comes with the territory. When a 24-year-old woman lands a major book contract with a New York publisher (early in the novel), the deal is announced in a bar filled with would-be and has-been authors. The surge of jealousy in the room, as Pyper describes it in the book, is “powerful enough to alter the environment.”

Having succeeded as a novelist (each of his books has sold well, and international film producers have options on three of

Pyper has faced his share of such snark attacks – and also much praise. While British critics dollop out complimentary blurbs for each of his efforts, at home he has sometimes had a tougher ride

his four novels), Pyper has occasionally been on the receiving end of such envy. Early in his career, the *Globe and Mail* published an admiring, lighthearted profile of him and local contemporaries Russell Smith and Evan Solomon, labelling them Toronto's up-and-coming "Book Boys." The trio made fun of time-honoured Canadian literary tropes and traded gibes about the designer duds they were wearing. The piece raised some hackles for championing the young men as the next big thing. "We went along with the interview because we thought it would be fun," says Pyper. "Who wants to read another profile about writers' contemplations of war and hurt?"

In his new novel, Pyper awards success capriciously, bestowing it on his hack journalist anti-hero Rush for the story he stole from a colleague in his writers' circle. Under these circumstances, literary success doesn't smell particularly sweet for Rush: "It's the fourth interview of the last five hours, and I'm not sure I'm making sense any more. A *New Yorker* staffer doing a 2,000-word profile. A documentary crew from Sweden.... And now a kid from the *National Star* who I can tell is planning a snark attack from the second he sits across from me and refuses to meet my eyes."

Pyper has faced his share of such snark attacks – and also much praise. While British critics dollop out complimentary blurbs for each of his efforts, at home he has sometimes had a tougher ride, particularly for his sophomore effort, *The Trade Mission*. "He seems more intent on following Grisham than Faulkner," local blogger Michael Bryson once sniffed.

Pyper can't stand such snobbery, the divisions of writers into people-pleasers and artists. To his mind, too many literary types

look down on storytelling, while lauding ponderously written navel-gazing. "The so-called beach reads actually take a lot of work ... as much refinement as, if not more than, 500 pages about gazing out to sea and memories-of-my-grandmother."

Pyper finds it ironic that a slew of new creative writing programs are churning out writers of contemplative, "gazing-out-to-sea" fiction, just as the public's appetite for such works is drying up. "When I started working on this book I was musing about this curious social phenomenon of the declining number of readers with the corresponding dramatic rise in creative writing programs and MFA programs and church-basement-how-to-write-your-bestseller groups. There's this paradox of more and more people wanting to write, while as a society we seem to be caring less and less about reading."

When leading a writing workshop, Pyper's message to aspiring authors is simple: It's the story, stupid. "I'm a big outliner," he says. "Don't write your way into it. Challenge and test the story; poke it." Pyper's advice reflects his own approach to writing. "I'm not a Virginia Woolf, doing spontaneous and poetic noodlings, letting the vibrations of the universe speak to me."

He's now outlining the plot for his next book. "This is the worst point in the cycle, the in-between-books stage. There's an itchiness. You wonder: What's next? What am I doing?" Pyper doesn't feel good unless he's producing at least 500 words a day from his sensory-deprivation tank in the basement. "I know percolation is necessary, but the common-sense, Northern Irish, Presbyterian side of the brain is saying, 'Bullshit, get back to work.'"

Typically, he knows where he's heading: In his next book, it'll be a fictionalized version of his hometown of Stratford. Men of his vintage who went through a horrific experience together in their youth will get back together to assess how their lives are going – and to process that long-ago trauma.

"It'll be an opportunity to explore the ways I've observed men of my age connect with each other, the way they maintain these relationships through first marriages and the arrival of children. They've been alive long enough to begin to see if their lives are going to kind of work out – or not."

The fact that things are working out for Pyper hasn't dulled his critique of the narrow – sometimes nasty, sometimes nice – world he inhabits. Ultimately, though, he marches to his own definition of success, hoping readers will keep turning the pages until the very end.

Alec Scott graduated from U of T's Faculty of Law in 1994.



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KING LEAR

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SCHOOL SPIRITS

Tales of the supernatural
abound at U of T

BY JOE HOWELL

“THERE WILL BE A COUPLE OF MURDERS ON THIS WALK,” Richard Fiennes-Clinton tells the people gathering on a June evening for a tour of U of T’s haunted buildings. “Well, a couple of murder stories,” the ghost stalker clarifies with a grin.

As the small group assembles outside the Royal Ontario Museum, Fiennes-Clinton – who offers Toronto walking excursions through his company, Muddy York Tours – tells the tale of Celeste, a 19th-century girl who playfully haunts the planetarium. Turning onto Hoskin Avenue, the group hears about John Strachan, the founder of Trinity College who died on November 1, 1867, and is said to appear to students who stay out too late on All Hallows Eve. Then there’s the stone face in Hart House that some say dripped water – or is it cried? – out of one eye a couple of years ago.

It seems that the St. George campus, with its history of colourful characters and eerie Gothic buildings, is a natural dwelling for the supernatural. Add in the large number of people who wander the grounds late at night and a handful of mysterious deaths over the years, and it’s not surprising there have been so many spooky sightings.

U of T English professor Marlene Goldman is writing a book titled *The Politics and Poetics of Hauntings in Canadian Fiction*, which explores the meaning of ghost stories. She says ghost tales are repeated through the generations because “we just love to be frightened.”

“We’re happy to think that there is a mysterious aspect to human experience and to the world,” she says. “We’ve been to the moon and we’ve been close to the bottom of the sea, but we still have the sense that we really haven’t mastered it all. Ghosts are uncanny reminders of our limitations.”

Goldman also says that our habit of telling and retelling ghost stories may be an attempt to cleanse ourselves of past misdeeds. “Very often, I think ghosts are tied to our most egregious behaviour: the ghosts of the Holocaust, or the ghosts of the Japanese internment, or the ghosts of the native peoples who were wiped out by illnesses, such as smallpox. We have a kind of collective historical memory whether we want to admit it or not. So the artists and writers in our society do us the favour of conjuring ghosts so that we can work this injustice through. There’s something socially beneficial, maybe even therapeutic, about ghost stories.”

Socially beneficial? Therapeutic? Or just plain scary? You be the judge. But don’t blame us if these creepy tales keep you awake tonight.

Duelling Stonemasons

A Russian stonemason, Ivan Reznikoff worked on University College, the crown jewel of U of T’s collegiate Gothic architecture, during its construction in the mid-19th century. By his own



Newspaper more than two decades ago. According to Sokolov, Reznikoff reappeared on a chilly, foggy evening in 1889.

That night, a student was walking across campus when he encountered a tall man clad in black, with lank hair spilling out from under a pointed witchlike hat. The stranger told

admission, Reznikoff was not a clever man, but he did enjoy his work. And he was betrothed to a woman named Susan, whom he loved madly.

However, Reznikoff’s happy existence came to a brutal end late one night in 1856.

He had failed to notice a cruel joke that the project foreman, Paul Diablos, was slowly playing on him, right under his very eyes. Diablos had spent weeks carving a pair of stone gargoyles. One morning, while Reznikoff was admiring Diablos’ handiwork, the foreman asked Reznikoff if he recognized one of the grotesques. Reznikoff was aghast: one of the gargoyles was him. Diablos had carved his face into a hideous stone mask.

Reznikoff swore he’d get his revenge. In the middle of the night, he returned to the gargoyles (which you can still see today by the southwest corner of UC) and began to carve Diablos’ visage into the other one.

Then, Reznikoff suddenly disappeared without a trace. He simply vanished, and the foreman replaced him with another stonemason.

History might have forgotten Reznikoff had student journalist Louis Sokolov not resurrected the tale of the murdered stonemason in a Halloween edition of *The*



Rumours of the supernatural swirl through the college all year long. Students past and present whisper of inexplicable phenomena within Massey's walls...

the student he had a story to tell. The night was cold so they decided to talk in the student's residence room. There, the two finished a bottle of rum, while the ghost of Reznikoff recounted how he had died so long ago.

"One night I stayed late, working feverishly to finish the gargoyle," he began. "I heard a girl's laugh then Diablos' voice saying, 'See the dull-witted Russian.' I crouched on the scaffolding and looked down. There, below me, stood Susan embracing the wily Greek, Diablos. Rage gripped me, but I could do nothing."

"The next morning, steeled by alcohol, I attacked Diablos with a double-bladed mason's axe. My first blow missed. My axe stuck in a wooden door. Diablos slipped through the door, but I pursued him. He ran up the stairs and hid near an uncompleted ventilation shaft. I did not see him until it was too late. His knife plunged into my side. He then hid my body in the shaft and said nothing about it."

In the morning, the student awoke with a hangover and an empty liquor bottle in his room. His mysterious drinking buddy had vanished.

Two years later, much of University College burned in the Great Fire, but the door with the axe-wound in it can still be seen in UC's southwest corner. And workers digging through the rubble discovered something strange: inside a ventilation shaft a skeleton wearing a belt with a buckle stamped with the stonemason's emblem.

The Prisoner of Christie Manor

The building at the northeast corner of Wellesley Street and Queen's Park Circle is a holy place: the Sisters of St. Joseph lived there for many years and in 2009 it will become the home of Regis College, the Jesuit Graduate Faculty of Theology. But back when Scottish baker William Mellis Christie (who founded the



cookie company known today as Mr. Christie) owned the manor, the building was to hold a terrible secret.

Legend has it that when William Christie passed away in 1900, his son, Robert Christie, moved back to the family home with his wife and concocted an evil plan. Robert is said to have trapped a woman in a secret, windowless room at the heart of the manor. Only Robert and a butler had any idea of the woman's imprisonment.

Seasons passed in which the captive woman's only human contact was with the butler, who periodically dropped off supplies. The woman eventually went mad from the solitude, and hanged herself with a bed sheet. The butler is said to have buried her corpse in neighbouring Queen's Park under the cover of darkness.

According to the tale, Robert's guilt over the suicide ate away at him, and he began to lose the fortune his father had accrued. Soon, he could no longer afford the mansion and sold it to U of T.

The unfortunate female students of the Sisters of St. Joseph continued to pay the price for Robert's purported misdeeds. After the concealed room was discovered and then converted to a study, a woman entering the room alone late at night would find that the door suddenly swung shut behind her, trapping her inside. No amount of force could pry the door open, so the woman would have to pound on the heavy door until someone heard her. Then, her rescuer would effortlessly open the door from the other side. If no one heard the woman's plea for help, she would be forced to spend the night alone and terrified in the former prison cell.

Some say the room contains a foreboding presence. Perhaps it's the ghost of the prisoner forcing other women to endure the same hopeless misery and loneliness she felt when she was trapped inside. Others believe that the lingering spirit is Robert, and that his malevolent soul continues to do harm even beyond the grave.

The Master Returns

Some ghosts write their own stories. Robertson Davies, the first master of Massey College, is perhaps one such poltergeist. Davies died in 1995, but he may be helping keep alive a tradition he started 45 years ago.



As Massey's master, Davies was in the perfect position to institute customs for future generations. For the 18 years he presided over Massey, Davies captivated the crowd at the annual Christmas party (known as Gaudy Night) with humorous and spectral stories of his own invention. He usually set these tongue-in-cheek tales in Massey College and played with the conventions of the ghost genre. The story that began it all, "Revelation from a Smoky Fire," involved a master from 100 years in the future visiting Davies himself. The rather pale traveller from 2063 didn't know who Davies was!

Davies began this tale with a brief preamble aimed at the skeptics in his audience. "I am a more than ordinarily fanciful person, I am extremely nervous, and I don't find anything intrinsically improbable in the notion of a ghost," Davies said. "But I can assure you I found [what I am about to tell you] a disquieting experience."

Davies might not have convinced the doubters, but listeners found the experience of Davies' storytelling so enjoyable that

he kept spinning a new yarn every year. After his retirement in 1981, Davies published the tales in a collection called *High Spirits*. He also told his fellow faculty members that, given his druthers, he'd haunt Massey College himself one day.

Davies may have gotten his wish. A guest still reads one of his ghost stories every Christmas, and rumours of the supernatural swirl through the college all year long. Students past and present whisper of inexplicable phenomena within Massey's walls – phenomena that began the day that Davies did (or didn't) leave us. Kari Maaren, president of the Massey College Alumni Association, says she has heard about many strange occurrences – wraithlike figures that, when you look at them too closely, disappear into thin air; objects that mysteriously move or show up in unlikely locations; thuds and crashes coming from empty rooms; and an impossible shadow in the 2005-06 class photo that looks just like a man. It seems Robertson Davies lives on at U of T – in one form or another.

Joe Howell is a fourth-year English student and the editor-in-chief of The Strand, Victoria College's student newspaper. He grew up next to a graveyard.

These ghost stories are, in all likelihood, wholly or mostly imagined. They are not meant to call into disrepute any people (living or dead), companies or organizations.

Favourite Haunts

An Electrifying Presence

When I was a first-year engineering student, my lab partner and I were working on an electronics assignment in one of the old labs in the Wahlberg Building. We were having some trouble with a circuit we'd been asked to build and analyze, and we were scratching our heads over what should have been a very simple problem to fix. Eventually, we noticed a man watching us.

He wasn't the course professor, and he wasn't one of the lab technicians or tutors. He asked us

what was wrong, and we told him we didn't know. We had built the circuit exactly as described, but it was not behaving as expected.

The mysterious man told us to double-check our wires because they sometimes break. We took his advice and soon found that, indeed, there was a broken wire. We replaced it and completed the assignment. We turned to thank him, but he was no longer there. Surprised, we asked the other people in the lab where the man had gone. No one else

could remember seeing anyone who matched his description. Neither of us saw this man again during our time at the university.

Maybe he was an older professor who had retired or moved on. Or perhaps he was Emil Wahlberg himself, helping out a couple of frosh in the building that had been named after him so long ago. (Insert spooky music here.)

Leo Cornitale
BASc 1997

We asked alumni to share tales of spooky encounters they had while attending the University of Toronto. Read others at our web site, www.magazine.utoronto.ca. Or send us your own tale of a haunted campus by e-mail to uoft.magazine@utoronto.ca, and we'll add it to the list!



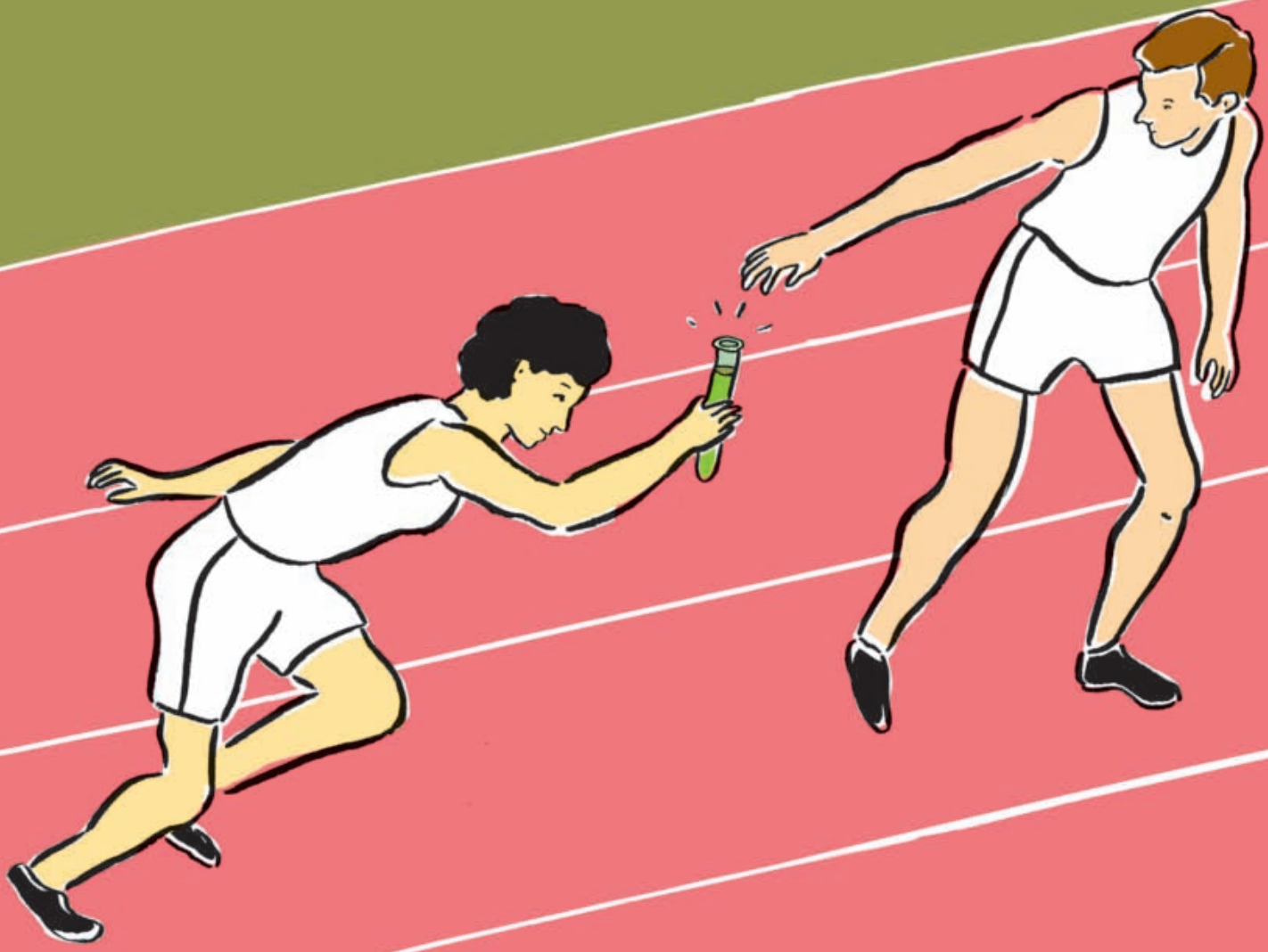
Faster and more open collaboration among scientists could yield a wealth of discoveries

FLOOR 3A OF THE VENERABLE BANTING INSTITUTE on College Street looks like any other biochemical lab in the world. Refrigerators hum, technicians titrate and researchers cogitate at workbenches separated by ceiling-high storage cabinets. Lab gear fills the shelves along the walls and there's a continuous buzz of intellectual activity.

This is the Toronto home of the Structural Genomics Consortium, an international non-profit research group. As ordinary

as it may seem, the consortium's lab is actually the centre of what director and CEO Aled Edwards hopes will be a new way of doing the science of drug discovery.

Edwards, a 46-year-old professor of structural biology, sprawls on his office sofa, props sandal-shod feet on a coffee table, and notes that "there are dark days coming for the development of new medicines." Only one drug candidate in 10 makes it through the hideously expensive clinical trials process



An open approach to science “speeds up the metabolism of scientific inquiry. Valid discoveries will be more quickly confirmed, and bogus claims will be exposed sooner,” says Prof. Don Tapscott

and last year only 17 new medications received regulatory approval to be sold in the North American market. That “discouraging number” is the lowest in recent history, Edwards says.

A key barrier, he says, is the misuse of intellectual property claims. Edwards argues that too many scientists and corporations turn discoveries that should be available to everyone into their own secret possessions. This is where the consortium comes in.

With financing from industry, governments and trusts, the group aims to identify the three-dimensional structures of 2,400 key human proteins (as well as a few from human parasites) and then make them publicly available. Anyone could then use the protein structures for any purpose – even to create profit-making drugs.

The idea runs counter to the prevailing industrial ethos of patenting every discovery and innovation, no matter how minor, as soon as possible, if only to keep them away from the competition.

Comparing the two approaches, Edwards says opening up knowledge of human proteins to the world is “certainly the right way to go.”

FOR MOST OF US, PROTEIN IS WHAT WE NEED for a balanced diet, along with fruits and vegetables. But to a biomedical researcher, proteins are simply us. Most of the organic compounds in the human body are proteins (DNA is one vitally important exception) made up of combinations of simpler chemicals called amino acids.

The estimated 22,000 human proteins carry messages between and within cells. They recognize and communicate with each other in complicated ways that are largely determined by their shape. The three-dimensional structure of a protein governs how it interacts with the rest of its biochemical world.

From the point of view of the pharmaceutical industry, proteins are targets for drug development. Choose the right protein, block it or enhance it properly, and you have a medication. But it’s not really that simple – witness the 90 per cent failure rate of potential drugs.

The current intellectual property model doesn’t make it any easier. For example, about 20 per cent of potential drugs fail because they turn out to be toxic in humans. A test that could predict toxicity would therefore be useful to a drug company and would probably increase its success rate.

But that “Toxotest” – as Edwards calls the hypothetical discovery – would be only a first version, an initial draft. The drug company that developed it would almost certainly keep it under wraps, preventing the cross-pollination of ideas that might revise it and improve it.

Under a model of open innovation, the test would be made freely available. Researchers all over the world would be encouraged to use it and, more importantly, to make it better – not for monetary reward but for public recognition and scientific kudos. The result, in the long run, would be that all companies developing medications would have a better chance of successfully navigating them through clinical trials.

EXACTLY WHY THE DRUG DEVELOPMENT process is broken is complicated. Regulatory hurdles are high, the public’s tolerance for risk in medications is low and big pharmaceutical companies tend to be poorly organized. According to Edwards, however, the biggest problems are gaps in our knowledge of human physiology.

“At the end of the day, if you don’t know what’s going to happen when you put a molecule into a human body, it’s a lottery,” he says. The consortium aims to help scientists make better guesses about which drug candidates will work and which won’t.

In some respects, the idea of a more collaborative scientific method is similar to the open-source software movement. Such open innovation systems “demonstrate that greater value can be realized when firms selectively share their intellectual property,” says Don Tapscott, an adjunct professor at U of T’s Rotman School of Management.

With open software, a program’s code is made publicly available, allowing computer engineers anywhere to work on it, leading in theory to better software programs. The practice seems

to bear out the theory – the popular Firefox web browser is an example of an open-source program that competes on roughly equal terms with Microsoft's proprietary Internet Explorer.

Tapscott, the co-author with Anthony D. Williams of *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*, says that an open approach to science “speeds up the metabolism of scientific inquiry. Valid discoveries will be more quickly confirmed, and bogus claims will be exposed sooner.”

In physics, scientists have been using an open approach for years. They post early drafts of papers online in “pre-print” archives. Eventually, after much back-and-forth, some of the research goes on to formal peer-reviewed publication. The online process, as Tapscott observes, ferrets out flaws and confirms validity much faster than in the old days when all research first saw the light of day in paper journals.

Tapscott believes the potential for a more collaborative approach to science extends far beyond drug discovery. “A new economics of intellectual property is starting to take shape,” he says. “Increasingly (and to a degree paradoxically) firms in electronics, biotechnology and other fields find that maintaining and defending a proprietary system of intellectual property often cripples their ability to create value.”

Tapscott argues that the existing proprietary system is starting to topple under its own weight of secrecy. In its place will be more open sharing, using Web 2.0 tools such as blogs, wikis, shared bookmarks and tagging.

Harvard Business School professor Karim Lakhani calls this kind of collaborative work on a problem “broadcasting.” In a 2007 study, he and colleagues found that when 166 previous unsolved scientific problems selected from companies' research laboratories were opened to outside scrutiny, a solution was found for a third of them.

“Opening up the scientific problem-solving process,” they concluded, “can yield innovative technical solutions, increase the probability of success in science programs and ultimately boost research productivity.”

Surprising as it may sound, the notion of scientific collaboration is relatively recent. The followers of Pythagoras, the Greek whose name is associated with the famous theorem about the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angle triangle, collaborated among themselves, but were forbidden to reveal their secrets to outsiders. Scipio Ferro, an Italian who first figured out how to solve equations of the form $x^3+mx = n$, kept this knowledge secret for 30 years.

But in modern times, scientists have been rewarded – by acclaim, tenure and sometimes cash – for publishing their work. And publication is traditionally the first step in what is a kind of slow collaboration with other scientists all over the world.

Edwards says that what his consortium is doing in its three labs in Toronto, England and Sweden falls within this slowly collaborative tradition. The difference now is that they want to speed things up. So, when he and his colleagues have identified the shape of a protein – as they have done for more than 700 proteins so far – they immediately deposit the infor-

mation in a protein data bank.

Publications follow later, Edwards says, but they're still an essential part of the process. The time-honoured practice of peer review ensures that any findings are scientifically valid. And for the author, publication in a peer-reviewed journal confers respect from peers. Since most scientists don't choose their line of work for the money, there need to be other rewards. “The buzz for scientists is when everybody knows that you discovered something,” Edwards says. “That's what drives us.”

SOME CORPORATIONS HAVE BEGUN TO LEARN that by aggressively protecting their intellectual property, they may, in fact, be stifling scientific progress. Some are warming to the idea of open development.

The members of the Structural Genomics Consortium, which include several large pharmaceutical companies, have pledged \$30 million a year through 2011 to support some 200 scientists and technical staff at the University of Toronto, Oxford University in England and the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden.

For their contribution, the pharmaceutical giants hope eventually to gain information that will allow them to make better decisions about what drugs to test in the highly expensive game of clinical trials.

Running a clinical trial is like paying between \$30 million and \$300 million for a lottery ticket, with poor odds of winning. “It's virtually a crapshoot,” says Edwards. The consortium's work won't change the price of the ticket, but the odds of winning may improve. In the long run, this will be good – not only for the pharmaceutical industry but for the rest of society – because more drugs will make it to market faster.

The current model of drug development still works, but it's yielding fewer results. “We're spending more and more and more and we're at best treading water,” Edwards says. In his model, industry pays up front for an encyclopedia of information that individual companies can use as they see fit, with the hope of improving the odds of developing a winner.

Not everyone is convinced the open approach will work, however. Some universities are reluctant to give up the chance of getting in on the ground floor of a blockbuster discovery, even though the odds are extremely low. If they continue to focus on that small probability, says Edwards, the science will grind to a halt. Most corporations (with some laudable exceptions) remain wedded to the patent-everything approach, he says, even though just about everybody agrees the current drug development model is broken.

Edwards says these hurdles can be overcome if he and his colleagues can present a convincing alternative. “We're going to need to create the case for open domain – we are the vanguard,” he says. “The best way forward is just to do it. We'll walk the walk and people will say, ‘Look, it works.’”

Michael Smith is a science writer in Toronto.



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All about Alumni



Justice for All Lawyer Ann Schofield Baker took on U.S. Homeland Security – and won

U of T alumna Ann Schofield Baker (BA 1993 VIC) is used to high-stakes cases. As a trial lawyer who practices trademark and intellectual property litigation in New York City, her corporate clients routinely have hundreds of millions of dollars at interest. But when Schofield Baker took on a pro bono case last year representing Amina Mudey,

a Somali refugee fighting for asylum in the United States, there was more than money at stake.

"I am not used to trying cases where someone's life is on the line," says Schofield Baker. But when Mudey's case came to be heard before an American immigration court last summer, "I was up against a trained Department of Homeland >>>

A Memoir of Courage

Romy Shiller awoke from a five-month coma determined to rebuild her life

ROMY SHILLER (MA 1992, PHD 1999) STRAINS TO SPEAK, throwing her whole head into every word. Once an able-bodied actress and academic, the fallout from a brain tumour and subsequent coma has left her confined to a wheelchair and struggling with basic movement. But Shiller, 43, has found a new voice through her passion for writing. She recently self-published her memoir, *You Never Know*, which she typed with “one bent finger.”



Intense headaches sent Shiller to a Toronto hospital in 2003, where she was told that she had a brain tumour. Doctors soon performed surgery to remove it. After an additional operation to drain fluids collecting in her brain, Shiller descended into a five-month coma. When she awoke, she was afflicted with Akinetic Mutism, a partial paralysis that made it difficult to speak or move. Shiller progressed slowly, first squeezing her mother’s hand and then blinking. Her first post-coma word was “no.”

Before the coma, Shiller had earned both a master’s degree and doctorate in drama from U of T, studied voice at the Royal Conservatory of Music and performed “female to female drag” with The Greater Toronto Drag King Society.

You Never Know includes Shiller’s contemplations on pop culture and psychic phenomena, and traces her ongoing recovery, which includes daily physiotherapy and speech therapy. Shiller, who lives in Montreal – close to her family and aided by full-time caregivers – accepts where she is now. As she recently observed, “On the whole, I feel incredibly fortunate. My life could be very ordinary, which would be fine, but in fact it is extraordinary.” – *Sarah Treleaven*

My Favourite...

Prank



In the fall of 1962, members of the engineering executive set up a mock opening of the new subway station at College and University. The station was, in fact, far from finished. We recruited a law student who did a great impression of John F. Kennedy, decked him out in a morning suit and perched him on a small platform. (Why not Prime Minister Pearson? Yawn.) “Kennedy” made a speech to formally open the incomplete station and afterward the Lady Godiva Memorial Band performed. We entertained many passersby, and I think some of them thought the ceremony was real.

F. Ron Yorston (BASc 1963)



>> Security prosecutor, whose job it was to send Amina back to Somalia – where she promptly would have been killed.”

Mudey arrived in the United States seeking political asylum early in 2007. A member of a minority ethnic group in Somalia, she and her family had been repeatedly attacked and threatened at home. After Mudey’s father and three siblings were murdered, her mother sold the family home for \$2,500 – enough for one ticket to New York.

Upon arrival in the U.S., Mudey was brought to a detention centre in New Jersey, and asylum proceedings began. Schofield Baker’s voice still rises slightly in anger when she talks about the treatment Mudey received. Exhausted, hungry, disoriented and in shackles, Mudey was misdiagnosed by doctors as psychotic and prescribed Risperdal, a powerful drug often given to schizophrenics. “She had been put under oath and

questioned twice without a lawyer, while she was drugged,” says Schofield Baker.

As Schofield Baker dug deeper into the mistreatment Mudey had received, the case consumed her. “I felt like the entire weight of the U.S. government was against both of us,” she says. In September 2007, however, Schofield Baker and her client prevailed, and Mudey was granted asylum in the U.S. She is currently learning English and going to school full time – supported in part by Schofield Baker’s law firm, McKool Smith, which recently established a trust. Schofield Baker testified before the U.S. Congress in June about the problems with the immigration system she witnessed first-hand.

Schofield Baker has now picked up her corporate law work again, but is looking to do more pro bono work in future. “This was certainly one of the most rewarding life experiences that I’ve ever had.” – *Grabam F. Scott*



Toxic Trespass investigates the chemical soup around us

IN *TOXIC TRESPASS*, WRITER AND DIRECTOR Barri Cohen (BA 1984 Innis) investigates the health effects of the murky toxic soup that surrounds us and what corporations and various levels of governments are doing to protect Canadians from them. The unsettling answer is “not nearly enough.”

In the last 50 years, tens of thousands of often unregulated chemicals have been introduced into our air, water, food and consumer goods. Of greatest concern to Cohen is that children’s growing bodies are most susceptible to these pollutants, many of which we know little or nothing about. “No known safe levels” becomes her refrain throughout the documentary.

Cohen’s interest in the subject became personal in 2006

when her 10-year-old daughter’s blood was tested for chemicals as part of an Environmental Defence campaign. The results were alarming, and yet typical of what you’d find in any young urban Canadian today: traces of heavy metals, carcinogens and even the long-banned pesticide DDT. These chemicals have been linked to learning disabilities, asthma, behavioural issues, childhood cancer and even altered DNA.

While there is growing scientific evidence of the connection between illness and pollutants, government research is incomplete at best. Cohen asks why Canada isn’t more aggressively seeking answers, and solutions. She meets inde-

pendent researchers who persist at connecting the dots between what they call “excess” deaths and hospitalizations and our increasingly toxic environment, but representatives from Health Canada and the polluting industries would not be interviewed for this film. (Cohen learns that Health Canada suppressed a study linking pollution to disproportionate death and illness rates in Windsor, Ontario, saying that it would cause “hysteria.”) She suggests this dubious government strategy isn’t accidental. After all, if there are no known safe levels for a chemical, then neither industry nor government needs to deal with the repercussions of toxic emissions.

The documentary raises chilling questions about the toxic effects of Canadians’ industrialized lifestyle, and about how effective our federal government is at protecting the public interest when in conflict with the powerful industries for whom polluting is just a part of doing business. – *Lisa Rundle*

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Toronto: A City Becoming Edited by David Macfarlane

In his forward to *Toronto: A City Becoming* (Key Porter Books), editor David Macfarlane (BA 1975 TRIN) considers the best vantage point from which to survey the city. He muses, “Perhaps in a city that is changing as constantly as Toronto changes, a partial view – from the side of a parkway, close to the old brick works – is the best we shall ever have.”

Toronto: A City Becoming offers a series of “partial views” through essays and art. The book’s premise is that the city is undergoing a

transformation – but that the direction of change is debatable. U of T geographer Meric Gertler dissects the city’s planning policies, while writer John Allemang (BA 1974 TRIN) ponders the dissolution of Toronto’s reign as a “city of churches.” Linda McQuaig (BA 1974 UC) argues that Toronto is increasingly dominated by the wealthy. The cityscapes of Michael Awad (BArch 1992, MUD 2002) grace the cover. Urban areas, being the constantly morphing concrete creatures they are, remain difficult to define. But each essayist helps create a long view of the Toronto we live in – and the Toronto we are headed for.

The Two of Us

Peter Tan and Christine Ho Ping Kong



PETER TAN AND CHRISTINE HO PING KONG (both BArch 1996) live in Toronto in a house they built together. In addition, they've built their own architecture firm, Studio Junction. They met while studying at U of T, are married and have two children.

Peter "I remember the first time I noticed Christine. That was in a third-year housing studio in 1993. The following year we went to Florence together to study. We started going on excursions to different towns, and it was in Luca [near Venice] that we had our first memorable date – but we didn't call it that. When we finished school, we worked for a year and then went travelling through Asia for nine or 10 months. We spent every hour together. When we came back, I remember calling everyone Christine regardless of whether they were male or female. So many times during those months, it was the first word out of my mouth."

Christine "It's much more of a strain on a relationship to build a house with somebody than to travel with somebody. You have a very big goal and limited resources, so there's a lot to overcome. Our house represents a lot of our thoughts and



Peter Tan and Christine Ho Ping Kong designed and built this house together in Toronto's Junction neighbourhood

ideas on architecture and how we would like to live. The ground floor is open concept, and the whole house is based around a centre courtyard. We have a common design aesthetic, and working together is very natural. There's no downtime and it's not totally seamless; it requires a lot of communication. But because we're in the same business, we understand each other." – *Sarah Treleaven*



Iron Granny At 65, Louise "Iron Granny" McGonigal is not letting her age slow her down. The two-time half-Ironman champion competed at the Ford Ironman USA in Lake Placid, New York, in July, placing first and setting a course record in her age group. McGonigal (MEd 1986 OISE) said torrential rain made for a gruelling race, especially the last segment – a marathon. (Triathlons have three components: swimming, cycling and running.) The former teacher trains 12 hours a week and teaches Pilates at the YMCA near her home in Orillia, Ontario. This summer, she entered several races to gear up for the half-Ironman race in Clearwater, Florida, in November, where she's gunning for her third straight win. Not surprisingly, McGonigal has no plans to settle quietly into retirement. "Training for triathlons is a big part of my lifestyle."

First Person

Will Barack Win? Trinity grad John Ibbitson writes from the front lines of the most exciting American presidential race in modern history



I FIRST SAW BARACK OBAMA IN THE FLESH in Columbia, South Carolina, in December 2007. Thirty thousand people had waited for hours to receive his powerful message of hope and renewal.

He greeted them with “Look at the day the Lord has made” and ended with “Let’s go change the world,” and during the 40 minutes in between, I stood there, transfixed, realizing that I had made a horrible mistake. Hillary Clinton was supposed to have the Democratic presidential nomination wrapped up. I

had written as much. But I had not seen Obama in action. This was not a politician. This was a force of nature.

“It is probably impossible for Barack Obama to overcome Hillary Clinton’s organization and the support she commands within the senior ranks of the Democratic Party,” I wrote that night. “But the impossible sometimes happens in politics.”

At least I got that right.

Covering the primary campaign turned into a whirlwind tour of the United States: listening to the worries of villagers in Amana, Iowa; testing the political currents in Houston; driving through an Ohio snowstorm; rolling in a campaign bus through the soft twilight of the Indiana prairie.

The battle between Obama and Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination pivoted daily from thrilling drama to political farce to Shakespearean tragedy. Now we are engaged in an epic contest between Obama, a young, charismatic but inexperienced challenger, and John McCain, a wily, veteran maverick senator – at a time when Americans believe, as never before, that their country is going in the wrong direction and in need of fundamental reform.

The United States is still a young, dynamic country, whose people are blessed with unquenchable and completely justified confidence in their nation and its future. Lately, that national self-confidence has been tested, but it is, perhaps, the only thing that most Americans share. As for everything else, no matter what you say about America and Americans, the opposite is equally true. They are friendly and angry, charming and rude, loud and – actually, most of them are loud, at least compared to most Canadians.

And yes, they still struggle to bridge the terrible chasm between the races. It darkens Americans’ lives. But that gap is finally starting to narrow. And an African American has at least an even chance of becoming president.

Americans of every class and colour and region remain a generous, open-hearted people, in love with life and their country, and fiercely determined to defend their liberty. They thrive on their own contradictions and don’t care in the least what you think of them.

It has been a high privilege to be able to tell their stories. I’m having the time of my life.

John Ibbitson (BA 1979 TRIN) writes on American politics and society for the Globe and Mail. His next novel, The Landing, will be published in September.

Milestones



She has translated more than 125 of Canada’s French-language works into English. Now literary translator **Sheila Fischman** (BA 1957 UC) has won a \$50,000 Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prize. Fischman has translated the works of such prominent Quebec writers as Anne Hébert, Marie-Claire Blais and Roch Carrier.

Nine U of T alumni and five faculty members were recently named to the Order of Canada. Justice

John C. Major (LLB 1957), who served on the Supreme Court of Canada for 13 years, and architect **Raymond Moriyama** (BArch 1954) were named companions of the order. The following alumni were appointed officers: **Victor Ling** (BSc 1966 VIC), a geneticist who researches why certain cancers become drug-resistant; Senator **Landon Pearson** (BA 1951 TRIN), who advocates for the rights of youth; novelist **Audrey Thomas** (MEd 1972 OISE); and **Paul Thompson** (MA 1965) of Stratford Festival Theatre. Named members were: neurologist **Vladimir Hachinski** (MD 1966); **Tim Inkster** (BA 1971 UC), co-founder of The Porcupine’s Quill press; and **Rudolf Kriegler** (MA 1958, PhD 1966), a scientific pioneer in Canada’s high-tech sector.

The faculty members named Order of Canada officers were: English professor and writer **George Elliott Clarke**; and Professor Emeritus **Raymond Breton** of sociology. Named members were: Professor **Michael Marrus** (BA 1963 UC, MSL 2005) for his studies on the Holocaust; Professor **John Speakman** (BA 1948 TRIN, MD 1952) of ophthalmology; and Professor **George Zarb** for his leadership in prosthodontic dentistry.



Spring Reunion 2008
Writers Rebecca Rosenblum (left) and Elizabeth Hay share a laugh before hosting a Stress-Free Degree session, part of Spring Reunion, in May. Hay (BA 1973 VIC) read from her Scotiabank Giller Prize-winning novel, *Late Nights on Air*, while recent grad Rebecca Rosenblum (MA 2007) read from her first short-story collection, *Once*. Several thousand alumni returned to U of T to attend Spring Reunion events, which included tours of the new Varsity Centre, the garden party at the President's Residence and the Chancellor's Circle Medal Ceremony.

PHOTO: DONNA SANTOS

60 Seconds With

Roselyn Dyck-Cieszkowski



It's been a good year for Roselyn Dyck-Cieszkowski (BSc 1997 New College), manager of her family's Niagara-on-the-Lake winery, Cattail Creek. The family has been growing grapes for Niagara-region vineyards for more than 30 years, but has never made their own wines – until now. Turns out, they are really good at it. Their Barrel-

Fermented Vidal Icewine earned a gold medal at the prestigious Cuvée Awards. Other honours followed for their Off Dry Riesling. Writer Lisa Rundle asked Roselyn for the back story, over a glass of very fine wine.

When did you first begin working in the wine industry? My first full-time job directly in wine was as a “cellar rat” at Inniskillin, doing everything that no one else wants to do: cleaning hoses and vats. The wine business is not as glamorous as people love to think.

The job title is a bit of a tipoff. Ha! That's an unofficial job title. I didn't know about it until it was too late. But that job made me realize I was really interested in the people side of things.

And how do you find it when people, like me, come in and know absolutely nothing about wine? I'm a sommelier. So

when I go to taste any wine, there are all these categories and expectations I bring to it. Your brain can get in the way. But the people who come in and say, “I don't know anything about wine” are the best people to taste with. They tell it like it is.

You write the labels for Cattail Creek. Is that something you enjoy doing? It's a real challenge. There are a lot of ways that wine people will describe a wine that to the general population sounds incredibly unappealing.

Like what? New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs have been described as having the flavours of asparagus and cat's pee. There's a wine called Cat's Pee on a Gooseberry Bush – because that's the classic description of a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. But, who would want to drink that?

Not even the biggest cat lovers. And manure. The classic Burgundian Pinots have what we call a barnyard smell. I was telling a customer that as I poured him a taste of our Pinot Noir, and let's just say he was skeptical.

So introduce us to your wines in a more flattering way. If your wines were at a party, what kind of party-goer would they be? The ice wine would be one of the crazier people. A bit of a comedian. With a lot of different facets to his personality. The life of the party.

A guy, hey? Yes. But the Off Dry Riesling is definitely a girl. The stylish one.

What's her Sex and the City type? Carrie, definitely. Now, the Dry Riesling, she's reserved. You have to talk to her before she lets you know who she is really.

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In recent issues, we've featured stories about a U of T professor's pioneering approach to treating pain, the daring mission of War Child Canada founder (and alum) Samantha Nutt, the early days of the Faculty of Forestry and promising young grads whose ideas will shape Canada's future.

Inside each issue, you'll find coverage of the university's latest research findings, events on campus, notable

alumni and the big ideas that make the University of Toronto such a fascinating place.

In the past two years, the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education have recognized *U of T Magazine* for excellence in writing and photography with 16 awards, including a bronze for "best magazine."

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1968

Year of the Activist

A debate 40 years ago marked the start of a greater say for students at U of T

On October 10, 1968, hundreds of students, staff and faculty gathered in front of Hart House under sunny skies to see Steven Langdon, president of the Students' Administrative Council, take on University of Toronto president Claude Bissell in a debate over the role of the university in Canadian life.

Langdon argued that the university and its students should adopt a more activist stance, setting out to correct society's injustices. Bissell countered that the university must protect its political neutrality to avoid skewing academic hiring and curriculum on the basis of ideology.

The event kicked off a year of intense activism at U of T.

Inspired by the student movement in Canada and abroad, Langdon wanted to ensure that students would be represented fairly in a new model of university governance that Bissell had proposed. For much of the year, Langdon lobbied for a greater student voice in university decisions.

Langdon, a former MP who lives in Ottawa, says the historic debate marked the beginning of a shift in the U of T *Zeitgeist*. "It turned out to be the start of a positive engagement between students and the administration. This was pretty rare among the conflicts occurring in universities at the time."

— Sarah Treleaven

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Chancellor's Alumni Receptions

FALL
2008

David Peterson likens U of T's highest ceremonial office to that of an ambassador. He's an untiring advocate for the university, and this fall will hit several Canadian cities to speak to alumni about new developments at their alma mater and to encourage them to stay involved. "We're gathering up the flock," says Peterson. "Our alumni are some of our greatest assets and we want to include them in the great mission we are on."

As chancellor, Peterson is responsible for conferring about 14,000 degrees in some two dozen convocations a year and representing alumni at university events. In the past year, the former Ontario premier has spoken at U of T alumni receptions around the world, from Barrie to Hong Kong. "I think most people are enormously pleased to be a part of the U of T family," he says. "The mood at these events is always happy."

Join David Peterson at alumni receptions in the following cities and venues on the dates provided. Questions? Contact Teo Salgado at (416) 978-2368 or teo.salgado@utoronto.ca

Sept. 24, 6-8 p.m.

Ottawa

Fairmont Château Laurier,
Adam Room
1 Rideau Street

Sept. 28, 4-6 p.m.

Victoria

The Fairmont Empress,
721 Government Street

Sept. 29, 6-8 p.m.

Vancouver

The University Women's Club of
Vancouver at Hycroft, West Wing
1489 McRae Avenue

Oct. 5, 4-6 p.m.

St. John's, Newfoundland

Ryan Mansion
21 Rennies Mill Road

Oct. 6, 6-8 p.m.

Halifax

The Lord Nelson Hotel,
Georgian Lounge
1515 South Park Street

Oct. 28, 6-8 p.m.

Windsor

Art Gallery of Windsor
401 Riverside Drive West

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