A NEW VENTURE

Janet Bannister, HBA’92, continues to see opportunities after Kijiji success
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ADOPT A MUSTANG
Western boasts of a massive brain gain

Western recently welcomed three top minds on the brain to campus from their previous research homes at top British universities. Tim Bussey and Lisa Saksida, an internationally renowned wife-and-husband team of cognitive neuroscientists, joined Western after collaborating on game-changing research for the past 15 years at the University of Cambridge. The pair specialize in understanding cognition – learning, memory, perception and attention – and developing and discovering new techniques for translating data acquired in pre-clinical trials to the clinic, where the findings can be used to better investigate what happens in the human brain when patients are suffering from neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.

Bussey, named Western Research Chair in Cognitive Neuroscience, and Saksida were both appointed as professors in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry’s Department of Physiology and Pharmacology. Also serving as core members of Western’s Brain and Mind Institute, they will continue to advance their unique touch-screen systems and any other future software designs at Robarts Research Institute and its Centre for Functional and Metabolic Mapping.

Jörn Diedrichsen joined Western from University College London, and plans to continue his work developing better treatments for strokes and spinal cord damage in humans.

In his new laboratory, based at Western’s renowned Brain and Mind Institute, Diedrichsen will use robotics to study human movement to develop better treatments for strokes and spinal cord damage in humans. Diedrichsen, Western Research Chair in Motor Control and Computational Neuroscience, was appointed a professor in the departments of Computer Science and Statistical and Actuarial Sciences. He investigates fine motor control, in part, by using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) at Western’s Centre for Functional and Metabolic Mapping at Robarts Research Institute.

Jarislowsky Gift

Western is poised to move to the forefront of central banking teaching and research in Canada, thanks to a recent generous donation from The Jarislowsky Foundation announced May 9.

The $2-million endowed gift, to be matched by Western, will establish the Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair in Central Banking in the Department of Economics at the Faculty of Social Science, with the aim to encourage excellence in teaching and research in areas essential to central bank policy and decision-making.

The Jarislowsky Foundation, based in Montreal, was founded by Canadian businessman and philanthropist Stephen Jarislowsky in 1991. Since then, it has established 29 chairs in Canada in a number of fields, including education, medicine and art.

“Our main aim and focus is excellence. We try to do things in areas which make people in our age think,” Jarislowsky said. “This chair was designed to make people think about central banking. Central bankers have achieved an enormous influence on the lives of all people, and it is a big responsibility to get people to think about central banking. This chair is a big objective.”
Weaving together the romance between a woman and her horse and the wonder and majesty of whales earned David Huebert the CBC Short Story Prize. The English PhD candidate penned *Enigma*, a tale of a woman who is wrestling with ending the life of her beloved horse and the challenge of her partner, Serge, to understand and empathize with this heartfelt pain. The story is intertwined with references to a whale-watching excursion at Digby Neck on the Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia. Huebert's story will be published in Air Canada's *enRoute* magazine. He will receive a 10-day writing residency at The Banff Centre and $6,000 from the Canada Council for the Arts.

“It’s crazy. I was overwhelmed and surprised and suspected it was a prank,” he joked. “I was obviously deliriously happy.”

Huebert wrote *Enigma* for the contest and based it on his personal experiences with horses, particularly his mother’s and sister’s love and relationship to the animals, as well as a personal adventure whale-watching. Huebert joins company with some of Canada’s best writers who received CBC Literary Prizes and went on to receive national and international acclaim since the program began in 1979, such as Shauna Singh Baldwin, George Bowering, Camilla Gibb, Frances Itani, Michael Ondaatje, Leon Rooke, Carol Shields and Michael Winter.

**Scotiabank gift fuels digital banking future**

In order to address the rapid change within its industry, a Canadian banking giant has invested in Western students with an eye toward “home-grown Canadian innovation.” In March, Brian Porter, Scotiabank President and CEO, announced $5 million in funding to create the Scotiabank Digital Banking Lab at the Ivey Business School. The funding is part of a collaborative partnership between Scotiabank and Ivey, focused on digital banking, which will help generate thought leadership and develop future talent in the digital space.

**PhD candidate wins CBC Short Story Prize**

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Leaving an Extraordinary Legacy

“I am proud to be a donor to Western’s football program and am inspired by its tradition of excellence. I am forever thankful for my Western experience and hope that by including Western in my Will, I can help to create opportunities for generations of students to come.”

Robert Nash, BA’66

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extraordinary.westernu.ca
Putting Crunch to the Test

The Beltone Anechoic Chamber, housed at Western’s National Centre for Audiology, supports a wide range of research projects requiring a highly controlled sound field environment, with fields such as Music, Audiology, Hearing Science and Engineering all making use of this facility. Well, you can now add tacos to that list. Taco Bell Canada took over the chamber to shoot a commercial for their new Cheetos Crunchwrap Slider, using the room’s sophisticated and specialized material to minimize sound reflection and external noise. ‘YouTube star’ Dan James (TheDanocracy) starred in the commercial, which began airing across Canada in March.

Western joins a global community of universities, businesses, cities and other groups in signing the Paris Pledge for Action, committing to doing its part to limit the global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius. The ambitious target was set at the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference in December.

“Our university has joined more than 1,000 signatories around the world in signing the Paris Pledge in support of immediate climate change action. This pledge is a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with a goal of meeting or surpassing the targets set at the recent COP21 (2015 Paris Climate Conference) conference,” Western President Amit Chakma said.

Western is already a leader in greenhouse gas reductions, having mitigated emissions by 12 per cent since 2009, he noted. “This has been achieved even as our campus population continues to grow. This is a remarkable achievement,” he said.

There are 11 buildings on campus with or in the process of achieving LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, including LEED Gold-certified Claudette MacKay-Lassonde Pavilion, and McIntosh Gallery and Stevenson Hall/Lawson Hall, which are both LEED Silver certified buildings.
Western names written among the stars

You don’t look up Peter Jedicke’s phone number. You look up for it.

Asteroid (5899) Jedicke orbits the sun, somewhere out there, floating between Mars and Jupiter among tens of thousands of other ancient celestial pieces of real estate. Discovered on Jan. 9, 1986, the rock was later named for Jedicke, BA’76, MA’97 (Philosophy), brother Robert Jedicke, BA’84, of the Institute for Astronomy, University of Hawaii, and sister, June Jedicke-Zehr.

It has been a point of pride for the former president of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

So much so, Jedicke somehow convinced a Bell representative to change his phone number to his asteroid number.

“I have always had an interest in all the oddball parts of astronomy, little things that everyone overlooks,” said Jedicke, a Fanshawe College professor since 1980. “The researchers, they don’t have time for the little bits of fluff and fun that go on – the anecdotes, the stories, the human side of all that.

“But I have always made time for it; I have always looked after that.”

Over the years, the Jedicke Brothers have been responsible for naming dozens of asteroids, including many named after famed Western scientists and sites.

Jedicke admits his effort is not unique. (In recent years, Physics & Astronomy’s Paul Wiegert has spearheaded naming asteroids after mostly former and current professors in the department.) But for him, the name game ties directly into his passion for spreading the word.

“To me, this is all about outreach, about astronomy. It gives me a chance to talk to folks about this thing that I find so exciting,” he said.

Asteroids are rocky, airless worlds that orbit our sun, but are too small to be called planets. Ten of thousands of these minor planets are gathered in the main asteroid belt, a vast doughnut-shaped ring between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. Asteroids that pass close to Earth are called near-earth objects.

Asteroids (11980) Ellis. Kerry Ellis, PhD’94, chief engineer on the international Leonid Storm monitoring project at the Meteor Physics Lab at Western.
Asteroid (12014) Bobhawkes. Robert Hawkes, PhD’79.
Asteroid (12050) Humecronyn. Hume Cronyn, namesake of the Hume Cronyn Memorial Observatory, which opened in 1940.
Asteroid (12125) Jamesjones. James Jones, a Physics and Astronomy professor.
Asteroid (12317) Madicampbell. Margaret Campbell, PhD’02, and Physics and Astronomy professor.
Asteroid (12343) Martinbeech. Martin Beech, PhD’93, formerly of the Meteor Physics Lab at Western.
Asteroid (12353) Martinbeech. Martin Beech, PhD’93, formerly of the Meteor Physics Lab at Western.
Asteroid (14026) Esquerdo. Gil Esquerdo, research assistant for Western’s Near-Earth Asteroid Physical Study project.
Asteroid (14060) Patersonewen. Paterson Ewen, artist in Visual Arts who had an interest in astronomy.
Asteroid (14065) Flegel. Mike Flegel, HBSc’82.
Asteroid (14092) Gaily. T. Dean Gaily, Physics professor.
Asteroid (14203) Hocking. Wayne Keith Hocking, Physics and Astronomy professor.
Asteroid (14619) Plotkin. Howard Plotkin, Philosophy professor.
Asteroid (14697) Ronsawyer. Ron Sawyer, BA’05.
Asteroid (14994) Uppenkamp. Wolfgang Uppenkamp, a Modern Languages and Literature exchange student in 1974-75.
Asteroid (15025) UWOntario. Western.
Asteroid (15846) Billfyfe. William Fyfe, former Science dean.
Asteroid (15887) Daveclark. David Clark, MSc’00.
Asteroid (16192) Laird. Elizabeth Laird, former Physics professor and radar pioneer.

By Jason Winders, MES’10
Richard Meen remembers it being a cursory introduction, yet one that perfectly fit his bill.

Decades ago, Meen, MD’63, visited New York City to deliver a lecture for a canine education program. A Toronto-based psychiatrist, he was president of the Canadian Kennel Club at the time. His counterpart at the American Kennel Club, among the world’s most prestigious registries of purebred dogs, greeted Meen and wasted no words in introducing him to the class.

“I remember the introduction being very short. He got up and said, ‘I want to introduce you to Dr. Richard Meen. He picked a 3-year-old German shorthaired pointer named CJ.

“Dogs have been a great counterbalance for psychiatry. It’s a totally different kind of thinking and a different kind of behaviour,” he said, adding his practice over the years largely revolved around working with vulnerable populations, street youth and individuals in the provincial justice system.

“Jeffrey Masson, a psychoanalyst trained in Toronto, trained in the 1960s when I was also doing training at the University of Toronto. He has written several books on animals, and one of his last books was about dogs. He talked about how dogs humanize people, not the other way around. And I agree with that,” Meen said.

“I’ve been touting for years the important role of canines in our lives, that the reality is, we developed better because of dogs. We got out of the cave, they helped us hunt, helped us guard and protect,” he continued.

“When you look at purebred dogs, each breed has a very specific purpose related to man’s needs, and that’s how they evolved. They’ve always improved the quality of our lives. I’ve always seen it as a great balance, and they’re the only living history of man’s journey on Earth.”

Best in show

Richard Meen, MD’63, proves he is a breed apart

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“I remember the introduction being very short. He got up and said, ‘I want to introduce you to Dr. Richard Meen. That was the first purebred dog I ever had,’ he said.

“What started as an aesthetic interest, formed into a weekend hobby and, eventually, became an inextricable part of Meen’s life. He developed an affection for various breeds, including the Russian wolf hound and the Skye terrier, among others. He started to breed dogs and got involved with the Canadian Kennel Club, eventually becoming president, working with international clubs.

“And now, as an old man, I judge,” he laughed. “And I show dogs.” Not only does Meen judge, he was the judge at the 140th Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show last February. He nabbed the top post at the event when he was selected to judge its top category, Best in Show. It was an appointment the American Kennel Club kept secret for about a year “in order to avoid whispering and influence peddling.” It’s all very hush-hush, very serious stuff, he explained.

Meen was the sixth foreign judge, and third Canadian, to make the selection of the top award for the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. He previously judged at Westminster on four other occasions, including judging the Terrier Group in 2007.

“It’s exciting. It was a great honour. It’s probably the most prestigious dog show in the world. It’s not the biggest, but dogs come from many different countries and people come to watch from around the world. About 3,000 entered. Different judges selected the last seven, and I got to decide which came closest to the breed standard. You’re not judging dogs against each other; you’re judging dogs against the breed standard, and the one that comes closest to the breed standard is the one you put up.”

As top dog, Meen picked a 3-year-old German shorthaired pointer named CJ.

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By Adela Talbot, BA’08, MA’11

PHOTO BY IAN CRYSLER

Best in show
While technology is still decades away from instilling ethical protocols directly into robots, everything behind the scenes is up for discussion – codes of ethics for engineers who design the robots, standards for companies to abide by in terms of materials and marketing, even ownership of the data collected by the robot living with you. The intimate details these machines gather from our lives, and the intimate spaces they find themselves in, make the job imperative.

“It is widely recognized that there will be negative side effects to the use of these robots. That doesn’t come as a surprise to anyone,” van Wynsbergh said. “What is surprising is that there is no money to study these issues, no pathway for collaboration between academics and companies. We found that surprising. It is not a good way of going about doing things.”

Initially, the London native headed to Sheridan College to study Musical Theatre. But her time on the stage was fleeting. “As much as I loved it, and as much as I loved the energy and enthusiasm of that life, I wanted more intellectual stimulation,” she said.

That desire led her to study Cell Biology at Western with eyes on medical school. During her second year, she toured the newly opened Canadian Surgical Technologies & Advanced Robotics (CSTAR). At that moment, a correction was made.

Opening in 2000, CSTAR is the only Canadian training centre for the da Vinci Surgical System, and has produced a number of Canadian and world firsts in computer-assisted, minimally invasive and robotic surgery. Intrigued, van Wynsbergh joined CSTAR as one of its first research assistants.

“They gave me a shot. And it was my first insight into robotics,” said van Wynsbergh, who continued her work there for three summers. “It was exciting to be there at the very beginning.”

She credits Surgery professor Dr. Christopher Schlachta, CSTAR Medical Director, with being the constant voice pushing her “to ask better questions and think deeper about why I was doing the research I was doing.”

That led her to question how a surgeon felt about using “this cold, cold code.”

“…”That we work together to pave the way for robotics to enter society in a responsible manner.”

Innovational Research Incentives Scheme Veni Grant to study the ethical issues of service robots and was named one of the 400 most successful women in the Netherlands under 38.

“And it was all because of the conversations I had with Dr. Schlachta and the incredible, once-in-a-lifetime opportunities I had at CSTAR,” she said.

van Wynsbergh stressed her work is about raising public awareness of the issues surrounding artificial intelligence, the burden of demanding responsibility within the industry will be on the back of consumers who demand it.

“The technology is still at this early, early stage. That is the most exciting part about it,” she said. “If we can ask the right questions, and come up with even preliminary answers, we have a chance of shaping how the technology is going to benefit society. We would like to show that these considerations shouldn’t necessarily be a choice.”

THE ADVENT OF ETHICAL ROBOTICS

By Jason Winders, MES’10

Alumna is helping shape the ‘humans behind the robots’
Hamou connects with internal councils within governments. In her role, the London, Ont.-born American Public and Media Relations Director for the Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. Based in Istanbul, Turkey, the organization is a collection of pro-democracy groups from both inside and outside Syria, widely supported by Western and Gulf governments. In her role, the London, Ont.-born Hamou connects with internal councils within Syria and international media outlets to get the message out.

"The important part of my work is getting across the stories of the normal, everyday people – the people facing all of this that the regime is doing, all of this that the regime has been doing throughout the revolution. I try to bring those stories across."

Born the daughter of a Lebanese mother, whose family goes five generations back in Canada, and a Syrian father, whose family still calls the Middle Eastern country home, Hamou and her activist-advocate heart have deep roots. Her father is politically active in Syria – the kind of active that draws attention. He had been imprisoned, even tortured, under former Syrian president Hafez al-Assad, father of current Syrian president Bashar Hafez al-Assad. His visits to the country even today still draw official eyes.

Hamou’s first visit to Syria as an adult did not come until she finished her undergraduate degree at Western. Once there, however, she fell in love with the people, the culture. When pro-democracy protests erupted in March 2011, after the arrest and torture of teenagers who painted revolutionary slogans on a school wall, she stood ready to help.

"It wasn’t even a protest at first. It was just words. Somebody wrote something on a wall. But you felt something was happening. And then I started getting messages from people in Syria saying ‘It’s started! It’s started!’ I was so excited we were going to do this. We were going to bring democracy to Syria. I was so full of hope and happiness."

"For my dad, this was personal. For me, this was personal."

As the revolution dawned, Hamou was working with London North Centre MP Glen Pearson, but when he lost to Conservative Susan Truppe in the 2011 Federal Election, Hamou was free to follow her heart. She reached out to her connections in the country. Pitching her potential pitch to bring democracy, she was recruited to do everything from government to media relations.

Admittedly, it was an uphill battle from the start.

"Those Assad groups were really good. They had the machine in place to get their message to the world. We had nothing. We were starting from scratch. We were starting from zero."

But the stories got out. Slowly. She found herself connecting, with major international media, mainly “all these awesome American journalists,” including working with New York Times best-selling authors Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan on their book, ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror.

"We were quite successful with that. But it really didn’t change public policy,” she said with obvious frustration in her voice. “There were so many things working against our message, our mission and what we were trying to do.”

Her darkest hour came in August 2013. That month, rockets containing the nerve agent sarin were fired into two opposition-controlled suburbs near Damascus, Syria. Investigators said the attack could only have been carried out by Syria’s government, yet the Assad government blamed rebel forces. Hamou does not like to talk about numbers without names, but the numbers were staggering and many of the names are still unknown. Death toll estimates range from 280-1,729 men, women and children. Media reports called it the deadliest chemical weapons attack since the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s.

The attack was a direct violation of U.S. President Barack Obama’s ‘red line’ issued in remarks to reporters a year prior to the attack.

"When the massacre happened, we had assurances from the Obama Administration. We had spoken with them. We asked, ‘If Assad crosses the ‘red line,’ will Obama go after Assad?’ They promised they would,” she said.

The four or five days after the attack were a blur of phones calls, emails and waiting.

“And then, when they said they weren’t going to do it, that’s when I thought something was up. Something was going on bigger than us. There was nothing we could do. The revolution was still going to be a revolution, but we had to do it without outside help. It was going to have to be organic and from within the people. It has gotten really complicated since.

“I still look back on that day and wonder what happened.”

Everything has fallen to chaos since. More than 5 million people have fled the country, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey have struggled to cope with one of the largest refugee exoduses in recent history. Even more refugees have sought safety in Europe. A further 6.5 million people have been displaced inside Syria.

The civil war has evolved significantly. After Obama refused to act, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces saw its influence on the ground erode. An opportunity had been missed.

Today, Hamou still works with the coalition connecting journalists with sources inside Syria, as well as doing think tank work to solve challenges facing the Syrian people. She also works with non-governmental organizations, including the United Nations, in providing relief to refugees.

When Canada welcomed more than 25,000 Syrian refugees, after the Liberal government rolled out its refugee resettlement in November 2015, Hamou helped resettle many of them in London. And while a worthwhile pursuit, she stresses the world cannot forget why these refugees exist.

“Everyone is so focused on refugees. But we aren’t focused on change public policy,” she said with obvious frustration in her voice. “There were so many things working against our message, our mission and what we were trying to do.”

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Commitment to family, music, community keeps alumnus spinning

The weight of responsibility has never been lost on Mark Furukawa, BA’90 (English). As a recent university graduate, Furukawa didn’t have the money to seize an opportunity to open a Hamilton, Ont., location of the famed record store Dr. Disc. So, he turned to his parents for financial support. “They were happy to see me happy,” he said. “They are very selfless people.”

The amount Furukawa required was almost exactly the amount his parents had saved in the bank. The couple were interred during the Second World War in the Japanese internment camps in British Columbia. As part of the government redress, his parents were given $21,000 each. Furukawa needed a $40,000 investment.

“With a great deal of gratitude and even more of an impetus to succeed, I used the investment for the shop,” he said. “I consider myself very lucky. It’s different when you borrow from the bank – when it is ‘blood money’ from the Second World War, you have a lot more desire and a can’t-fail mentality to keep going.”

For the last quarter century, Furukawa has survived – and thrived – in an ever-changing downtown that had a strong music and community open up its wallets to support his vision, he knew “we are here to stay.”

After some lean years due to the rise of digital music downloads, Furukawa noticed the industry was starting to shift. A return to vinyl, for both nostalgia and a desire for analog sound, was breathing new life into a struggling industry.

“People thought that convenience was the only way people consume music,” he said. “What they missed out on is people like to collect things that have a history to them and a preciousness to them that digital formats can’t afford.”

The demographics of those buying record players had also changed and crosses the generational spectrum. Vinyl records bring back the social aspect of listening where I played it and who I listened to it with.”

Vinyl records back the social aspect of listening to music, Furukawa continued. The image of a person wearing headphones and listening to a private playlist doesn’t allow for the public enjoyment of music.

“We are a conduit between local music and the listeners,” Furukawa said. From promoting local concerts, to setting up a stage in the parking lot adjacent to the store for performances during the Supercrawl festival, Furukawa takes a grassroots approach to running his business and is quick to partner with those people and businesses.

“As a self-described “Bart Simpson” of education, by taking the long road to completion, Furukawa enjoyed spending his days at Dr. Disc and learning the business. “Back then, you had to find the places that had the best music. As a student with a limited budget, I had to find the best store with the best selection. If I could work there, it was a bonus because I could get a discount.”

Building on his experience as a DJ at his high school dances, Furukawa worked the turntables at The Spoke and Rim Tavern and downtown clubs, and was an on-air host at CHRW Radio, later taking a spin as the assistant music director for the radio station.

The lessons he learned in the classrooms of English, Music, Film Studies and Art History, he said, directly apply to his business practices today and fostered a commitment to lifelong learning.

In spite of the struggling local economy, Dr. Disc’s cash register rang in more than $10,000 on its opening day. When Furukawa saw the community open up its wallets to support his vision, he knew “we are here to stay.”

From helping you to discover new musical talents to letting you know where to go back to his roots, providing more room in his shop for selling new and used records, as well as providing space and visibility for new and upcoming local artists. The re-launch of the store signified another shift in the business, one that dovetailed a change happening in the City of Hamilton. The former Steeltown was moving out of the shadow of Toronto and recommitting itself to supporting local artists.

“We are a conduit between local music and the listeners,” Furukawa said. From promoting local concerts, to setting up a stage in the parking lot adjacent to the store for performances during the Supercrawl festival, Furukawa takes a grassroots approach to running his business and is quick to partner with those who share his philosophy, including throwing on his DJ headphones to run the turntable at a local restaurant.

From helping you to discover new musical talents to letting you know where to get a good cup of coffee, “Dr. Disc is a place where you can experience all things Hamilton,” he said. 
Athletic history resurfaces as century-old trophy unearthed

By Paul Mayne

Elizabeth Grasby had no idea why a worn and faded, two-foot tall Sterling silver trophy was still kicking around her office after almost 25 years. But she couldn’t find it in herself to toss it.

“I’m not one to discard old files and records, which is probably why I didn’t discard the trophy,” said the Director of the Ivey Business School’s Pre-Business Program. “If I know what something is, it’s easier to throw it out. I didn’t know what it was, and therefore, didn’t throw it out. I looked at it and I thought, I better hang on to it.”

While no one really knew who the cup belonged to, or why it was even there, it continued to tag along each time Grasby’s area relocated – which, since 1993, has included two moves within the old Ivey Building, over to Somerville House, down to the Arthur and Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building and, finally, about three years ago, a return trip to Somerville House.

With space and storage at a premium, Grasby knew the trophy couldn’t hang around much longer and, still unwilling to toss it away, contacted the one person she felt would know if the wobbling trophy contacted the one person she felt would know if the wobbling trophy was a boon or a bust – Kinesiology and sport carried on under the head of the university. In 1916, the Board of Governors, 1916.

In February 1914, the first meeting of an amalgamation of the Arts and Meds Athletic Associations was held, and the Western University Athletic Association (WUA) was born to promote, finance and control athletics and sport carried on under the head of the university. In 1916, the Board authorized and implemented an annual ice hockey championship cup.

The record of ‘Inter-Faculty Championship’ competition in hockey begins with the inscription on the trophy reads: W.U.A. Inter-Faculty Hockey, Presented By The Director of the Ivey Business School’s Pre-Business Program, unearthed what has since been determined to be the oldest athletic trophy in Western sports history. (PHOTO BY PAUL MAYNE)

The trophy will be passed along to director of Sports and Recreation, Therese Quigley, who, after a little refurbishing, plans to display the newly found historic piece in the trophy case of Thompson Arena.

The 35-year-old Ferguson wrote, in part:

“Tonight we break the bonds that have united us for the past years. We have breathed the same atmosphere, striven manfully in the same ranks, thought the same thoughts, gone in and out together, shared one another’s laughter and one another’s burdens – but here our paths diverge. … Whatever the future may have in store for us, let us act our part consistently with the dignity and honor of our profession, as well as the claims of common humanity.”

To read the full text, visit alumni.westernu.ca/alumni-gazette.

Timmerman’s roots run deep at Western. Along with her paternal great-grandfather, her father, Dr. Robert Ferguson, MD’33, and paternal grandfather, Dr. John Irwin Ferguson, MD 1900, graduated from the university’s medical school.

On her mother’s side, her great-grandfather, the Rev. J.W.P . Smith, served as Canon of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London and Chaplin to Bishop Isaac Hellmuth. In the early 1870s, Smith assisted Hellmuth in raising money for a new university and even gave $500 personally to the fund.

When Western opened its doors in 1878, Smith became Secretary of the Senate and Registrar. He was Bursar of Huron College from 1884 until his death in 1914.

Josephine (Ferguson) Timmerman, BA’84, recently uncovered the handwritten valedictorian speech her great-grandfather Dr. Robert Ferguson, MD 1890, delivered to his graduating medical school class more than 125 years ago.

Born July 5, 1855, Dr. Robert Ferguson was the son of Alexander and Elizabeth McLachlan Ferguson. He attended Owen Sound High School and Queen’s University. He trained as a Presbyterian minister, but found that type of work was not his calling. He began teaching in Owen Sound, Woodstock and, later, London, where he began taking courses in medicine. He graduated with an MD from Western in 1890.

In 1896, he joined Western’s Department of Therapeutics. He completed postgraduate work at Western Reserve University and New York Postgraduate School and returned to Western to found his instruction in gynecology and obstetrics. In 1920, he was appointed to Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology. He died in 1927.

The eloquent, hand-written speech is a tribute to the soaring oration of the era. It is in near-perfect condition thanks to generations of family care. The 35-year-old Ferguson wrote, in part:

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Pages from the past

Dr. Robert Ferguson, MD’1890

Phillis Timmerman’s handwritten valedictorian speech, delivered more than 125 years ago, has been found, preserving the eloquent speech for Western’s future generations.

Along with her father and grandfather, Dr. Robert Ferguson, MD’33, Josephine Timmerman, BA’84, recently uncovered a handwriting valedictorian speech her great-grandfather, Dr. Robert Ferguson, MD 1890, delivered to his graduating medical school class more than 125 years ago.

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While the annual alumni magazine is a vehicle to share the pride and happiness of our profession, it is always an honor to receive number of the graduating class we need to read the full text, visit alumni.westernu.ca/alumni-gazette.
Alex Paterson offers campaign insights from the digital edge

Building the perfect beast

Alex Paterson never wanted to control the beast; he simply wanted to keep it fed. And as a member of the Liberal Party’s digital campaign team during the 2015 Federal Election, he saw firsthand what that would take.

“You have all these people out there, all these people who want to support you and your campaign online. You need to give them tools to defend you, and work with you, to do just that,” said Paterson, BA’08 (Media and Public Interest). “Your supporters are looking to you to provide them with stuff. Give it to them.”

In Canadian politics, pundits of all political stripes saw the Liberal Party campaign, led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, as a triumph of new thinking in new media. It was no longer a question of taking a traditional political campaign and cramming it into a new space, but using new tools to create new ways of campaigning and, perhaps more importantly, new ways of understanding a candidate.

“As opposed to packaging or focus-group testing a candidate, what we did was use digital tools particularly well to bring people to see who he really was, to get people used to who he was as a leader. We embraced who Justin is,” Paterson said. “People are pretty shrewd about it, a long-view on where media was headed, the idea of locking myself into a one-dimensional journalism path became less appealing. When given a choice, there was Western, already thinking about media in every since of the term.”

Since Western, Alex has spent the last decade working in communications, campaigns and public policy. He jumped from his “dream job” as a CBC Newsworld producer to take on a job with Greenpeace, running the environmental activist agency’s communications on everything from the G-8 Summit in Toronto to Oil Sands tours for international media. He was drawn into the political arena while pursuing a master’s degree in Ottawa.

“I get to work in that interesting grey area, that cool space between media and politics and policy and academia and business. We don’t really have a vibrant think tank culture in Canada,” Paterson said. “We are a rare bird, a spot for people who are progressively minded, to come and talk about issues that are facing Canada, not just today, but on a longer horizon.”

Today, he serves as Director of Communications and Operations for Canada 2020, overseeing the organization’s communications, events, research and online initiatives.

“You cannot run a campaign without a solid digital plan. It doesn’t guarantee success if you have one, but it guarantees failure if you don’t have one.”

Paterson, who among numerous duties manned the campaign’s Facebook page during the debates, was recruited to the campaign from Training for Progress, a not-for-profit organization he co-founded that educated more than 100 progressive campaigners on campaigning in the 21st century. His message to them in class was the same on the campaign trail – a strong sense of self!

“If you know Justin, and his approach to people and politics, there was no disconnect to his presence online. It was very much packaged around who he is,” Paterson said. “If you looked at other campaigns, they were swinging in the dark. What is going to stick – maybe if we go down this road, maybe if we try to make it more like this. I am not saying we didn’t make adjustments during our campaign, but if it all started with a very strong sense of self and a strong voice online – and that will always matter.”

In 2008, then-U.S. Sen. Barack Obama and his team drafted a blueprint for campaigning in the age of social media. In 2012, that team improved on it. That changing landscape was just dawning when the Guelph, Ont.-raised Paterson was drawn to Western’s Media, Information and Technoculture program.

“I won’t pretend I didn’t think the program sounded cool and that’s what drew me to it,” he laughed. “But the more I thought about it, it was about packaging or focus-group testing a candidate, what we did was use digital tools particularly well to bring people to see who he really was, to get people used to who he was as a leader. We embraced who Justin is,” Paterson said. “People are pretty shrewd online; people know they are being sold to in politics. But that doesn’t make the job of selling acandidate’s message any easier.”

Although his work faces forward, he still values his past.

“I see elements of what I started out doing at Western every single day,” he said. “My path started at Western. I would not be doing what I am doing right now, living in that interesting area between politics and government and media, if not for the program I took there.”

By Jason Winders, MES’10
Janet Bannister, HBA’92, continues to see opportunities after Kijiji success

If you’ve ever bought or sold something on Kijiji, you’ve experienced Janet Bannister’s brainchild first-hand. Bannister, HBA’92, founded Kijiji Canada, which has become the largest and most visited classified site in the country. She later led Kijiji Global, which included businesses in Europe, the United States and Asia. Her success with the company was unparalleled and, at the height of it, she walked away.

“I realized I wanted to be there for my son. I thought, ‘Ugh I’m missing out.’”

While at the time a bold business move, every decision Bannister has made in her successful career has led her to where she is now — overseeing 10 start-up companies as a general partner at Real Ventures, a venture capital firm.

“What I’ve realized is, through my career, I’ve jumped back and forth from consulting to operating roles. While I love operating, I think it makes me a better business person, and I’ve had some success there, I actually prefer advising, consulting and mentoring.”

The perfect mix for a venture capitalist.

And while it wasn’t always clear where her career would take her, she knew the entrepreneurial spirit she had cultivated from a young age would serve her well.
“Students get stressed out about should I do this, should I do that? The reality is, often it takes years. And people shift and change and you don’t really know until you get there. If you do something you love, and at the same time, you are learning and growing, you are in a better position than you were yesterday.”

Bannister’s keen sense of adventure and willingness to explore the world was born at Western with an exchange in her fourth year that later landed her a position at Proctor & Gamble in Brussels, Belgium. It was an opportunity to be immersed in a place with history and culture. It would not be her last international experience; it was just the beginning.

After spending four years at Proctor & Gamble, she took time off and went backpacking around southeast Asia for four months. She was offered a position with McKinsey & Company when she returned.

“I was single and young and wanted to work as much as I could on interesting projects and was happy to go anywhere.” Bannister explored parts in the United States, Montreal, Vancouver, Ireland and Poland. Bannister went on to say, “I realized this was a bigger problem. Canadians spend a ton of time online but they were very reluctant to purchase online.”

It was then she explored different models that might work in Canada. “I thought maybe classifieds would work better where you buy online but you transact in person.”

And that’s when Kijiji was born.

When Bannister came back she noticed eBay was doing a great job of getting people to the website but their conversion (the ability to get those consumers to do something) was half of what it was in other countries. She tried to make changes to their approach but soon discovered it wasn’t going to close the gap.

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It was then she explored different models that might work in Canada. “I thought maybe classifieds would work better where you buy online but you transact in person. And that’s when Kijiji was born. She recognized that while craigslist was going strong, it wasn’t going after the market aggressively. Bannister saw this an opportunity to do something more entrepreneurial and interesting. She convinced the executives at eBay in Silicon Valley to let her launch Kijiji in Canada. Although eBay agreed, they didn’t want to put a lot of resources behind it.

While Bannister was getting product categories ready, executives in California were busy working on creating a name. And it wasn’t one Bannister liked immediately. “They called and said, ‘We’ve got the name—it’s Kijiji. It means village in Swahili.’ I said ‘It’s what? How do you spell that?’ I wrote it down and couldn’t even read my own writing with all of the j’s and i’s. I thought, I don’t really care what it means, you’ve got to be able to spell it.”

But Bannister decided it wasn’t a battle worth fighting. “It is what it is. We will just have to live with it and make the best of it.”

In line you figure out what you can change and what you live with.”

After successfully launching in Montreal and Quebec in French, Bannister went on maternity leave. She came back six months later and the business in Quebec was doing so well she convinced eBay to roll it out across the rest of the country.

“We didn’t have much budget and my philosophy was to focus on a couple of different marketing levers and on the user experience and it went well, it really took off.”

With all her success in Canada, Bannister was promoted to head global Kijiji business. She tripled revenue in one year and launched the site in the United States, Belgium, Switzerland and Austria.

Despite much success leading the international division of Kijiji and travelling the world, Bannister had a young son at home. She was missing too much of his life, “I remember my husband said to me once, ‘What if you just quit?’ And I said, ‘I don’t just quit, I work.’ It felt like such a wimpy thing. I thought, I don’t really care what it means, you’ve got to be able to spell it.”

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Taking the leap

Jason Soloway and his quest for a culinary community

It's now or never. That's what a little voice inside his head said to Jason Soloway, BA’95, MA’99, approaching his 40th birthday. It's now or never to move on from being a vice-president at New York’s Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies and to dive headfirst into running restaurants, something Soloway wanted to accomplish before it was too late.

"I had kicked around the idea for a couple of years, and I wasn't sure how to make the leap," he said. Soloway, at 44, decided to make the transition by enrolling in New York’s Institute for Culinary Education (ICE), focusing on culinary management. "I saw it as a way to build relationships and strengthen my connections in the industry," he remembered. "And there was a sense of relief of not having this internal conversation anymore of will I, won’t I, I just went for it."

Going for it has given Soloway the kind of success he was striving to achieve. He owns two restaurants in New York, Wallflower in the West Village and The Eddy in the East Village. While at ICE, he was a partner in a neighborhood bar, called Mother’s Ruin. To say Soloway is immensely busy with his ‘restos’ is an understatement.

His restaurants have enjoyed favourable reviews from critics and on sites like Yelp and OpenTable but Soloway feels the shiniest glow of pride when industry folks keep coming back. "To get a nice following of chefs and cocktail industry insiders – that’s when you know you’re doing something right."

What Soloway hopes to create with his restaurants is making these spots feel like home. "There are millions of people in New York City," he said, "and despite all that, they are looking for a sense of belonging, of community. And bringing that community feeling to my restaurants comes from my days of doing something similar at Bronfman."

"It’s an alchemy of their resume, with a sparkle in their eye, and start asking applicants with ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’" Soloway said, "If they respond, ‘I want to own a restaurant one day’ with a sparkle in their eye, and start to describe it in painstaking detail, that tells me they have the fire in their belly and are a little mad. These are all qualities I consider desirable in the restaurant industry."

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While managing the many branches of this charitable tree, Soloway said the work “wasn’t chequebook philanthropy: we were looking for a social return on investment.” In his 10 years there, Soloway understood the need for “people to buy into from different communities, and they got more involved when following their dollars.”

It’s not much different at Wallflower and The Eddy, Soloway noted. Patrons want top-notch customer service, they want to feel welcome. Those values are so ingrained at these restaurants that Soloway ensures the bar is front and centre in the space, and when customers first walk in, if the host and manager don’t greet them, bartenders are asked to welcome them “to get the experience started on the right foot."

That community feeling goes back to his days at Western. Soloway was following the footsteps of his father, who graduated from Western with a law degree, and his sisters, aunt and several cousins who also graduated from the school. "I felt a strong connection to Western thanks to that history," he said.

Another aspect of London life also stuck with Soloway. "The craft beer movement was starting to take off (when I was at Western) and would usually be served in pubs with a warm, welcoming and homey environment. That sort of vibe always speaks to me and is something that I try to inculcate in my restaurants."

He remembered the overflowing passion of several teachers at Western, such as when he took classes with professor Madeline Lennon who taught him Western Literature. "She was a god in the arts world, and I loved how much she appreciated the arts," Soloway said.

Looking ahead, Soloway would one day like to launch a restaurant in Toronto. "It’s a far more frightening opportunity, but I want to be open to the idea," he said.

Soloway is looking forward to parenthood. His wife Lauren gave birth in March and Soloway welcomes the challenge. “I anticipate this will be much harder than running two restaurants in NYC. Bring it on.”

PHOTO BY PETER HURLEY

"There are millions of people in New York City, and despite all that, they are looking for a sense of belonging, of community."

By David Silverberg
Between his first and second year at Western, Rory Capern, HBA’00, MBA’04, witnessed the “power of the web” for the first time. “I saw this magical place erupting,” he said of his Silicon Valley consulting stint in 1998. “I knew right away I wanted to be involved. I was absolutely smitten by the web really early on.”

Since those days, Capern has often found himself on the ground floor. In 2011, he joined Google Canada – during “a time of meteoric growth” – as its head of partnerships. He was the company’s 34th employee. They now have well over 300.

Two years later, Twitter Canada opened its offices in Toronto, and with his appointment as managing director earlier this year, Capern became just its 37th employee.

A builder by nature, and lover of small-team environments, Capern felt the Google-to-Twitter jump was the right move at the right time for him and, by “happy coincidence,” for Twitter, as well.

As part of the global executive, Capern keeps a constant bridge between Canada and head offices in 36 cities on six continents, and communicates daily with senior management in the company’s San Francisco, Calif., headquarters. He refers to Canada as an important innovation market for Twitter globally – both in terms of revenue generation and strategy.

“Canada is widely understood as an extremely fast-adopting market with a partner ecosystem for innovation and risk. We’re willing to try things first – and faster – to get an edge. It’s likely we’re never going to be bigger than the United States in the context of revenue. So, the question becomes, how do we gain significance for the Canadian operation in the context of a global company headquartered out of the United States? We can be faster. And we have a more nimble market. We have a higher appetite to try new things. And we’re all looking to build incremental value to our global organizations out of this country beyond revenue.”

Capern steps into the lead role at Twitter Canada at an interesting time in terms of the future utility of the service. “It’s a mature company, but one with tremendous upside to it still – it’s really exciting.” But it’s also a challenging time for the iconic social media brand. Its user base – 320 million worldwide – isn’t growing at the expected pace.

“We have this massive base of users who are extremely connected to the platform. They are very vocal. What we need to do now is define what Twitter is to a broader cross-section of the world to make it a bit more approachable and easier to understand for a first-time user or for those returning to it after a long time away,” Capern said. “When someone walks into Twitter, it’s not always clear to them what they should do next.”

Capern likens that experience, half-jokingly, to an existential crisis. “What am I really interested in? Who do I want to follow? Those are sometimes hard questions. Our focus is on trying to make sure users are aware of the vast array of people and the nature of topics out there they can follow and the richness they can get. It’s really about trying to articulate the power of Twitter as a public network.”

Capern’s passion for the platform shows when talking about users who have been able to, as he says, “unlock the power of Twitter.” “I’m speaking to more and more users who describe their own use of Twitter in ways that are incredibly inspiring – community groups who are mobilizing, teachers who speak to their students’ parents exclusively using Twitter, all kinds of different, fascinating use cases about public good. I don’t think that’s totally clear.
Capern fondly recalls Ivey Business School professor Ann Frost, who taught him Organizational Behaviour. “I thought it was going to be the fluffiest course ever, but it wasn’t. In fact, it was probably one of the most formative courses of all the ones I took there. Ann and I did a research paper together when I went back to do my MBA and her perspective on managing teams and how organizations are formed has become the bedrock for how I built my own career.”

As an Entrepreneur-in-Residence at Ivey, Capern finds it reinvigorating and inspiring to connect with current Western students. “Every time I drive back down the 401, I’m reminded the economy is in good hands. We have a good batch of thinkers that are coming out of Ivey and Western who can carry it all.”

THE TWEET SPOT

According to Twitter Canada Managing Director Rory Capern, HBA’00, MBA’04, these Twitter users are getting it right:

@PGATOUR
“When I’m not able to watch the tour, I’m getting these amazing video clips at the exactly the right time. They’re doing an excellent job of connecting people live.”

@JohnTory
“As a Torontonian, I’m getting really important information from him and his account on key things that are happening in the city. For example, I didn’t know it was Toronto’s birthday until John Tory told me on Twitter! I’m connected live to our mayor and I’m getting important information I might not get otherwise.”

@kanyewest
“He’s very vocal on Twitter, and always creates interesting conversations around him. Almost every week there’s something interesting happening with him. It’s not necessarily always positive, but it’s an exceptional use of the platform to communicate thoughts and ideas with millions of people at a time.”

Let’s get coffee.

By joining Western’s exclusive hub in Ten Thousand Coffees, you can make a meaningful impact – one coffee conversation at a time.

Developed for Western alumni and students worldwide, Western’s exclusive hub offers users an easy way to search, schedule and connect online or in person.

Good things happen over coffee. Great things happen when Western minds connect. Join the movement by saying yes to conversation.

For more information visit: alumni.westernu.ca/10kcoffees
By Curtis Rush, BA’76

I have survived life as a deadline writer. After 40 years in newspapers and magazines, my last day at the Toronto Star will be April 30. I am 63 and going out a little early. But it’s time.

In my final days, I’ve been a sports deadline writer, covering the Maple Leafs, the Argonauts and the Toronto Rock of the National Lacrosse League. But I’ve also worked as a crime reporter, general assignment reporter and, on the other end, as an editor.

My nerves are a little frayed and my hands are a little gnarled from arthritis. But after writing and editing for four daily newspapers and one magazine, I’m proud to say I’ve never missed a deadline.

This streak goes back to Western and any essay I turned in. I hate being late for anything, I think it’s in my DNA. Even if I meet a friend for drinks or dinner, I am always the first one to arrive. That’s a trait that has served me well with the Sarnia Observer, Edmonton Report magazine, the Toronto Sun and the Toronto Star.

I suppose I just don’t want to disappoint anyone. I don’t like it when people are late for me.

I’ve always lived by the fact that if you miss deadlines, you’ll soon be out of work. It’s no secret sports writers are the fastest writers in the business. I don’t think you can teach speed writing. You have to learn it on the run.

When sports teams wrap up their games at close to 11 p.m., you have no choice but to write fast.

At the Toronto Star, our first sports deadline for the next day’s Ontario edition is 11 p.m. If you miss that, the editors will put in a filler story, and your name will be mud. They won’t hold up the presses. The next deadline is at midnight for the Metro edition for customers closer to the city.

Over the years, deadlines have been pushed up. We used to have a final print deadline of 2:05 a.m. for West Coast games. In this era of 24-hour news, deadlines are every minute for online media.

After a Maple Leaf morning skate, sports writers are constantly tweeting updates and firing out news flashes from inside the dressing room. There is a constant rush to be first, but I never wanted to sacrifice accuracy for speed.

Newspapers, of course, have hard deadlines and you are held accountable. After each shift, editors write internal notes to the higher-ups explaining what pages were released and at what time.

That’s why I get tense when the clock strikes 11. It gets worse at midnight. That’s when I have to file my complete story with quotes from the coach and players.

Over the course of a game, you have to develop the knack for typing and watching at the same time. Stoppages in play are gold for writers. That’s when you get your best work in.

It’s tense on the other end too. I know. I used to be a copy editor, and your job is to do a quick edit, slap a headline on and send it to the presses.

If you needed to go to the washroom, too bad. You should have gone earlier. No one goes to the washroom at 11 p.m. It’s the quietest place in the newsroom.

After you file for 11 p.m., your stress isn’t going down. It’s going up.

On the way to the locker rooms, you must wade through thick crowds. There is no express elevator for the writers. Although it’s against my nature, I’ve had to be a little aggressive to get around tipsy fans clogging my route. The coach’s press conference is held right after he addresses his team. I can’t afford to miss it.

The worst trek is at Montreal’s Percival Molson Stadium, home of the Alouettes. The press box is hundreds of feet up and there is no elevator.

After I file my game story, I must quickly bound down the stadium steps, rain or snow, dodging empty beer cans and wobbly fans, cut across the field, do my interviews and clamber back up to the press box to refile.

I’ve learned, at 63, if you’re not in shape, being a deadline writer is hard on the cardiovascular system. I won’t miss the rush. I think deadline writing is for young legs and quick hands. In both of those areas, my body is betraying me.

Relaxation will be a whole new skill to learn. With a lot of practice, however, I’m hoping that when the clock strikes 11 p.m., I’ll be either in bed or cracking off the TV, with an empty beer can beside me.

Here’s to the sweet taste of being a former deadline writer.

Curtis Rush, 63, has been working as a newspaper deadline writer for 40 years, including the last 35 at the Toronto Star. He wrapped up his career at the end of April as a sports writer. Over his career, he has been both a copy editor and writer. He has never missed a deadline.
Sonja Salmon, ACS'92, has no interest in your butterflies. As a young Bay Street executive, Salmon traveled the world, living her life out of suitcases. Really, really ugly suitcases.

“I was always conscious of my personal brand. When I traveled, it was important to me to represent myself just as I would as if I were at home,” she said. “But when it came to luggage, my options were either a man’s bag or a man’s bag where they changed the colour profile, threw some horrendous pattern on it and called it a women’s line—‘Here, this butterfly version, this is what we have for women.’ That was what was on the market.”

She knew there had to be a better solution.

Born and raised in Mississauga, Salmon was the oldest of three girls. Marcia Salmon, MLIS’01, and Angela Salmon, ACS’01, both followed their older sister to Western, a place “where she knew she was supposed to be.”

After earning an LLB, JD and MBA, and working in various corporate positions, Salmon used the skills she acquired in classrooms and boardrooms and applied them to overhead compartments.

Flying to the United Kingdom, to Hong Kong, to destinations around the world, she became aware of the challenges facing female travelers first hand.

“Here I was, spending time on what kind of trench coat or purse I wanted, and the luggage never fit in,” she said. “It was consumer frustration with not being able to find something in the marketplace I felt should be there.”

Inspiration struck while she prepared for yet another trip by zipping her shoes into a Ziploc bag. “That is when the shoe dropped. I thought, I can do this, I can do this better than anyone has done it up to this point,” Salmon said.

She wrote the first draft of a business plan in that hotel room.

Today, Salmon is the CEO and Founder of Ebby Rane, a global brand of luxury luggage and accessories designed to enhance the travel experience. Her collection is anchored around the Quartermaster, a nifty piece of stylish luggage that rolls like a “custom closet on wheels.”

Launched in January 2014, Ebby Rane – named for her businessmen grandfathers Ebby Salmon and Clarence Rainford – has exploded. The company has been featured in The Wall Street Journal, Travel & Leisure, Martha Stewart Weddings, Good Housekeeping and InStyle.

With product lines expanding, and eyes turning to further growth in the United States, Salmon, who is married to L. Gregory Fletcher, BMus’88, BEd’93, continues to see opportunity.

“It has been a fun run so far,” she said. “But we’re excited about what the future holds.”

By Jason Winders, MES’10
Voice of Alumni

Alumni volunteers creating awareness, taking action

By John Eberhard, BA’66, LLB’69

We welcome spring on the hill and a campus community that prepares to celebrate the Class of 2016. It is a time to reflect and plan for renewal. Each of us, as Western graduates, has been fortunate to receive a world-class education. Our journey spanned deep friendships, created trusted networks and enabled us to gain valuable insights into our chosen vocations. At times like this we can also look back to those who helped us – those who served as mentors, who offered sage advice or were able to open a door to begin a conversation that gave us a boost at a time when it was needed most. Sometimes the smallest act of kindness can mean so much.

There are multiple ways to support our alumni and student networks. Ways to volunteer in Alumni Association activities. Ways in which we can return a favour, connect with a fellow Mustang or be part of the alumni conversation. In recent months you have seen advertisements for our new Ten Thousand Coffees initiative. Our success has been visionary and we thank the more than 3,000 alumni who have registered and begun to participate.

Volunteerism is not about “it” but rather about what you and I can do for someone else. For our Alma Mater. Each can make a difference.

We are grateful to the alumni who support a team or a student. We salute those who return to campus, speak to students in the classroom through an invitation from a faculty member or coach. We recognize those who engage in quiet conversations with a prospective student and share stories of the Western experience. We thank those who give their time or treasure to ensure that the next generation has every chance to make their own difference.

Opportunities to participate in Association activities are available to you no matter where you call home. This is achieved through our extensive branch network, through digital learning opportunities and very soon through our new Twitter and Instagram accounts dedicated to Western Alumni and friends. Events are held in regions world-wide. We encourage you to become more involved. The unique vocational diversity of our Alumni membership provides us a special opportunity. It is that multiplicity which collectively goesies members to unleash an enormous force for good. We continue to offer Western Serves community events and we are happy to assist you help your local community alongside other alumni volunteers.

The Alumni Association’s Board of Directors recently hosted a series of round table events in nine cities. We met with alumni to listen and to improve our programs. We sought to strengthen our communications and deepen our impact. In the coming months we will present a renewed Strategic Plan to guide the next few years as we continue to inspire all alumni to share a lifelong commitment, pride and passion for Western.

This is my last time to hold the pen on the Voice of Alumni column. In June, we will welcome David Simmonds, BA’07, to the presidential role. We will also welcome two new directors to our Board of Directors. I am pleased to invite you to join us on campus on June 16 for our Annual General Meeting. It is the perfect opportunity to learn about the Association, meet the team and, of course, enjoy our beautiful campus.

I extend my sincere thanks to each and every Mustang who has created awareness and taken action to help strengthen our vibrant network.

Join us for Walrus Talks. It’s your destiny.

Presented by Western Alumni, The Walrus Talks Destiny will explore human potential and how we become the people we are through opportunity, ambition and circumstance. The event is scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, June 16, in the Paul Davenport Theatre, Talbot College. Tickets are $20 ($12 for students). The Walrus Talks is a national series of events produced by the charitable, non-profit Walrus Foundation as part of an educational mandate to provide forums for conversations on matters vital to Canadians. Each event offers lively, thoughtful, inspiring, riveting, smart, new thinking from scientists, writers, performers, scholars and leaders of business and the arts. This year’s event brings some of Canada’s most inspiring minds to share thought-provoking ideas exploring destiny in all its forms, including:

Elaine Overholt, B.Mus ’75, performance and vocal master;
Mark Daley, BSc’99 PhD’03, Associate Vice-president (Research), Western;
Kevin Newman, BA/B, anchor/correspondent, CTV News;
Markham, anchor/correspondent, CTV News;
Ryan North, writer of Romance and/or Juliet, To Be or Not To Be, and creator of Dinosaurs Comics;
Karina LeBlanc, goalkeeper for Team Canada and UNICEF ambassador; and
Stephanie Duhaime BA’03, BSc’03, former charge d’affaires of Canada’s diplomatic mission in Iraq.

Get all of your alumni benefits.

Email is the primary way we communicate with our alumni to let them know about all the benefits available to them. Updating your email address ensures you receive the latest news from Western, information about alumni services and discounts and details about Homecoming and alumni events in your area.

Stay current by confirming your email address at alumni.uwo.ca/connect/alumni. Western Alumni card

To learn more and view our events, visit alumni.uwo.ca/careermanagement

Alumni Career Management

Western’s commitment to your success doesn’t end at graduation.

Western alumni now have exclusive access to opportunities and tools designed to help you advance in your career or transition to a new one. As a Western alumni or alumnus, you can:
- learn through online tutorials and tip sheets
- engage on Western’s exclusive Ten Thousand Coffees hub
- post or search job opportunities on Western’s Career Central
- discover how to stay in touch with fellow alumni on LinkedIn

Whether you are a new graduate or experienced professional, Western can help.

Find us on Facebook

Western Alumni

Get all of your alumni benefits.

We have your mailing address but do we have your email address?

Email is the primary way we communicate with our alumni to let them know about all the benefits available to them. Updating your email address ensures you receive the latest news from Western, information about alumni services and discounts and details about Homecoming and alumni events in your area.

Stay current by confirming your email address at alumni.uwo.ca/connect/alumni. And you can also request a Western Alumni card to gain access to exclusive services and discounts.

Questions? Contact alumni.uwo.ca for more information.
ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

PLEASE NOTE: Class Notes notices, like all portions of the print magazine, appear in an online version of Alumni Gazette and the contents may turn up during a web search. Publicly available personal information may be collected for the purpose of updating alumni records as well as for the purpose of recognizing outstanding achievement or distinguished service by alumni in University publications. Western reserves your privacy. At any time you have the right to request that your personal information cease to be used to recognize outstanding achievement or distinguished service in University publications. For more information or to make a request about the kinds of contact you would like to receive, please contact the Operations Administrator, Advancement Services, 519.661.4784 or 1-800.420.7519, fax 519.661.4922, e-mail advser@uwo.ca.

In Sydney, Australia, Western alumni gathered at the home of Chancellor Jack Cown and Alumni Board Member Sharon Cown for a regional consultation dinner on a rainy autumn evening in March. The Western grads fondly recalled their shared history at Western, and the night was filled with discussion about the university’s future on a global stage. The Australian alumni included Joe O’Keefe, BA’05, Patrick Fortune, BA’74, LD’75, Luther Power, BA’51, Jack Cowan, BA’64, Sharon Cowan, BA’64, Joe Nagy, BA’51, Ian Davis, MBA’77, Jonathan Lerner, BA’52, and Catherine Greer, MA’53.

1960s

Douglas Auld, BA’64 (Economics), has been reelected chair of the Wellington, Dufferin, Guelph, Board of Health.


Peter B. Forbes, BA’65 (History), has retired from his law practice in Barrie. He resides at Port Dover, Ont., with his wife, Martha Burke. He was recently made an Honorary Life Member of Lion Lale Hunting Club, after 47 consecutive years of hunting. He continues to serve as a member of the Small Claims Court Judge.

Bob Howard, BA’66, MA’67, retired after 52 years of teaching French at the elementary, secondary and university levels in both France and Ontario. His mentor was the late Dr. Darile Leonardon of King’s University College. In the early 1960s, Bob worked with Leonardon teaching French to children in Grades 2-4 at Byron Public School in an experimental after-school program before French became part of the Ontario curriculum.

Reva Nelson, BA’69, has her third book published, Appone Chick-A-Boom, a memoir of backpacking alone through Europe for the year after graduation. She has also retired from 20 years as a professional corporate seminar leader and speaker, and 10 years as a teacher-volunteer with the Toronto District School Board. A former Gallery Theatre actress in London, Nelson is now acting and writing plays again, with Alumnae Theatre in Toronto.

1970s

Don Hunter, BEC’70, was appointed chair of the Independent Research Committee of CIBC Mutual Funds.

Curtis Rush, Honours BA’76 (Journalism), retired from the Toronto Star on April 30. In his 35-year career at the Star, he took on editing and writing assignments from news to business to sports. Since 2013, he has been a sports writer. In all, he had a 40-year newspaper career that included positions at the Toronto Sun, Edmonton Journal and Sonoma Observer.

1980

After working in the investment business for almost 30 years, including a year as the President of the CPA Society in Toronto, Jennifer Lynne Witterich, MBA’84, decided to walk away from the business. Her first novel, My Mother’s Secret, became an international best-seller and is translated into nine languages. She has subsequently written other books and produced a CD with songs she wrote.

Recently, Witterich spotted a bird trapped in her parking lot and did not know how best to rescue this bird. She ended up contacting an organization called Toronto Wildlife, which was able to capture the bird and release it again. So delighted with this outcome, she made a donation, but then decided to go one step further! She produced a short called, Journey to Nipponia, about the search for what makes us happy, and then donated all the profits to Toronto Wildlife. The show played at the Winter Garden Theatre in Toronto.

Jennifer La Chapelle, MSc’86, will serve as Vice-President/President Elect of the Ontario Public Library Association for 2016-17.

Andrew MacEwen, BA’86, recently held senior positions at the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions and TD Bank, where he helped build and lead for several years, the enterprise risk management function for the entire organization.

1990

Bruce Schellenber, HS’70, joined Coast Capital Savings, of Surrey, B.C., as its Chief Risk Officer in February. Schellenber has recently held senior position at the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions and TD Bank, where he helped build and lead for several years, the enterprise risk management function for the entire organization.

In December 2015, Mike Kennedy, MBA’85, participated in the Judo Ontario Christmas training camp — “four of the toughest, most grueling days I have ever gone through in a good 40 years…” What the hell is a guy like me, a man who turned 58 this past November, and someone who was never athletically talented even in the best of times, doing practicing a martial art like judo? At a time when most guys my age are spending the holiday season with a warm cup of coffee, reading the paper or watching TV, what am I doing in the middle of every morning of the last four days, drenched in sweat and gasping for breath? What do I have to prove? Why am I putting myself through this, especially at my age?” Kennedy was prompted to brown belt.
It’s the rare occasions of the extraordinary that make the ordinary worthwhile for Daniel Abboud. “As a filmmaker – as a freelance – it’s very difficult to say ‘no’ to a project, because you have to pay the bills. Projects more often than not end up being pretty mediocre, nothing special. But the reason we do those mediocre, not-so-great projects that fill time is to survive until we get to do movies like Born to Be Blue,” said Abboud, BAF’90. For nearly two decades, Abboud has worked as a Toronto-based camera person, and as a Steadicam operator since 2007, lending his talents to commercials, some daily series, network gigs and feature films. In between projects, he persistently pestled Canadian cinematographer Steve Cousins, looking to partner on a project. Abboud pressed on until his resolve bore fruit.

“I have harassed Steve over and over, for I don’t know how many years – this time I guess it just paid off,” Abboud said of his most recent project, Born to Be Blue, a 2015 Canadian drama film written and directed by Londoner Robert Budreau. Born to Be Blue tells the story of American jazz musician Chet Baker, who is portrayed by Ethan Hawke. The movie, shot in and around Sudbury, Ont., premiered during the Special Presentations section of the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival.

Born to Be Blue, a “10 Most Influential (Psychology),” was named by Kathy Denton, BA’84, MDIV’87, received the Outstanding Law Clerk Award for 2015 from Maia Bent, President of the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association.

Colleges and Institutes, by The Georgia Straight magazine. Denton started working at Douglas College in 1993 as a faculty member. From there, she rose through the ranks to become chair of psychology, dean of humanities and social sciences and then vice-president academic and provost before being appointed president last year.

Dr. Tom Freeman, MDIV’02, married with his family to Jersey in the Channel Islands Financial Ombudsman. He received degrees in nursing, financial services provided in or from the Channel Islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark and also assists other countries to design their own financial consumer protection structures through the World Bank and the OECD.

Kathy Denton, PhD’92 (Psychology), was named among the 10 Most Influential Female Administrators of Metro Vancouver Public Universities, an alumnus and faculty member, recently published the 4th edition of the textbook of Family Medicine.

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Dmitry Anastakis, BA’93, was elected to the College of New Scholars Artists and Scientists of the Royal Society of Canada. A professor of Canadian history at Trent University since 2004, Anastakis recently won the international Hayley Prize for the best book in business history for his 2014 book, Acornstorm: The Struggle for a Canadian Car Industry from OPEC to Free Trade. His most recent book is a book of the Provincial Kingdom: Canadian History since 1967 through Market, Execution, Assassination and Suicide.

After a round-the-world odyssey, Jan-Oliver Schmidt, BA’03, finally met ‘The One’ back in North America in Houston, Texas. Nicole Christine Brende and Schmidt were married in Gates Mills, Ohio, in October, 2015. They live in Houston.

Jan Wu, BSc’03, married Ingrid Wu on May 24, 2015.

Claire McCague, PhD’04, is celebrating the publication of humorous science fiction novel, The Rosetta Man, by EDGE-Lite Science Fiction.

Dr. Jennifer Hall, PhD’04, a lecturer in Early Years/Primary Numeracy at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, was recently awarded the Monash Student Association Outstanding Teaching Award for the Faculty of Education (2015). These annual awards, based on student nominations, recognize an exceptional educator in each faculty.

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of British Columbia this July. Over Christmas, Catharina and Nathan visited Western on a sunny afternoon. They are now proud to say they both were at Western at the same time, together. They plan to world in Banff, Alberta, in March of 2017.

Omar Ha-Redeye, BA’10, was awarded the OBWA Foundation Award on Nov. 9, 2015, for exceptional contributions to the legal system and public legal education. The senior recipient of the award was Hon. Justice Stephen Goudge.

Alper Ozdemir, MBA’10, recently became the Vice-President, Central Services at Rekane Home Comfort.

Karen Yang, MBA’10, and her husband, Andrew Lee, welcomed their first child, Chleo Lee, on Dec. 5, 2015. Mom and baby share the same birthday.

Michael Goodman, MBA’11, and Alexandra Bosswieod Goodman, MBA’10, were married on Aug. 28, 2015, in Toronto. The couple met at Western in early 2008.

Jonathan Hindley, BA’10, recently secured his first permanent full-time position after graduating. As the Corporate Customer Service Coordinator for the City of St. Thomas, he will be assisting with developing and implementing a new Customer Service Plan and a consolidated Corporate Customer Service location.

After graduating with a degree in Civil Engineering, Ahmed Talha, PhD’14, went back home and was assigned as the Chairman of the Civil Engineering Department at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. He successfully completed one year in this assignment in September 2015 and had his assignment renewed for another year.

Ashley Gillian, BA’14 (Religion), and Michael Schalter, along with new big brother Benjamin Schalter, announced the birth of Connor Schalter, born Nov. 20, 2015.

Steven Kelly, BA’14 (Religion), and Riley Hart, BA’14 (English Literature and Language, Honours), BB’09, were recently engaged on the campus where they met.

When Natalie Bonifacio, BA’12, met her roommate’s brother, Stephen Arnold, Dec. 12, we’re guessing she didn’t have the pages of the Alumni Gazette Class Notes section in mind right away. However, the couple started dating in fourth year, only to marry on Oct. 17, 2015, in Bolton, Ont. And here they are today on our pages. They now live in Owen Sound, where Stephen is a partner in a law firm and Natalie is an Educational Assistant.

Anna Gray (Mavrogiannis), MA’08, PhD’10, was named an Officer into the Order of Merit of the Police Forces for her RCM career in human resources, criminal intelligence and national security by David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, in May 2015.

Andrea Brochu (Sweiger), BHS’15, BScN’09, and Derek Brochu gave birth to their first children – a set of twins – named Oliver Grant and Sloan Alexandra on Oct. 20.

University of Ontario Institute of Technology professor Janette Hughes, PhD’06 (Education), was appointed Canada Research Chair, Technology in February. Hughes, Associate Professor and Assistant Dean (Research and Library Education), with the school’s Faculty of Education, uses of emerging digital media and interactive tools that challenge traditional curricular and teaching/learning assumptions and practices.

Kathleen Sutherland, MEd’09, shares that big brother Joey and big sister Elizabeth are excited to announce the birth of their little baby brother, John, on Dec. 5, 2015.

Catherine Eckerley, BA’10, and Nathan Madigan, BSc’11, announced their engagement on Dec. 21, 2015. Despite their time at Western overlapping from 2007 to 2015, they did not meet until 2015 in Calgary. They instantly bonded over their purple pride when Nathan invited Catherine to attend a Rick McGhie Heads West alumni event. Catherine works for Alberta Transportation as an Infrastructure Engineer in Calgary. Catherine will be completing her Master of Occupational Therapy degree at the University.

Priyanka Kumar, BA’06 (Math Sciences), a Wellness Coordinator working in Mississauga, had a baby boy, Xavier Cristo, on May 4, 2015.

Patrick Carnegie, BSc’10, welcomed son William Christopher Carnegie on Feb. 22 in Waterloo, Ont.

Catherine Eckerley, BA’10, and Nathan Madigan, BSc’11, announced their engagement on Dec. 21, 2015. Despite their time at Western overlapping from 2007 to 2015, they did not meet until 2015 in Calgary. They instantly bonded over their purple pride when Nathan invited Catherine to attend a Rick McGhie Heads West alumni event. Catherine works for Alberta Transportation as an Infrastructure Engineer in Calgary. Catherine will be completing her Master of Occupational Therapy degree at the University.
The Final Say

With Lauren Pelley

The ‘local hangout’ sitcom trope always makes me chuckle. No one has time to hang out at the same bar every week, drinking the same beer, talking about the same things, laughing with the same people. It’s not how life works. Unless, of course, you’re at Western.

The opening notes of Rick McGhie’s ‘Country Roads’ hit the airwaves instead, drowning out John Denver’s wistful lyrics. I don’t know when it happened, but at some point, this became every Wednesday night.

My ragtag table of regulars would slide into The Spoke through the back door, bypassing all the crowds. With cheap beer in hand, we’d spend the next three or four hours railing on about student politics, essays we hadn’t written yet, and our hash-hush romantic entanglements. We were on a first-name basis with the manager and gave the stink eye to our sworn enemies, the smarmy student council kids drinking at a nearby table. That bar was our Central Perk. Our Cheers.

It was, for a brief and beautiful time, our second home. And then it ended – abruptly, I assume, but I can’t remember my last ‘Rick Night’. It must’ve taken place sometime before I graduated in 2011, and I’m sure we talked about how it was the end of an era. Or maybe we didn’t.

Was there any sort of fanfare, when the cast of my old favourite sitcom we can play those reruns are frozen in time. We need them in the moment and we can’t replicate them. But just like an old favourite sitcom, we can play those reruns – those memories – any time.

Lauren Pelley, BA’10, MA’11, is a Toronto-based multimedia journalist and reporter at the Toronto Star.

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A journey that began in remote northern Manitoba has taken writer and musician Tomson Highway (BMus’75, DMus’93) to 57 countries and counting. His plays, which shine a light on Indigenous people, are taught and performed the world over and have made an indelible mark on Canadian culture. He describes his life as “a magic carpet ride of the very first order.” His love of word and song started at Western.

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