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FALL 2015 VOLUME 86
Travel into Toronto on Hwy. 401's HOV (high occupancy vehicle) lane was almost too good for Metroland. The HOV lane is in effect for the

HOV HEAVEN
Durham College Alumni Magazine

Reflections



EXTRA! EXTRA!

DC alumni make headlines in the newsroom

SAVE \$7
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No need to take apart existing strut assembly.
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings! My name is Chris Vale and it is my pleasure to introduce myself as your new Durham College (DC) Alumni Association president. This fall marked the beginning of the post-secondary careers of more than 5,700 students who have chosen DC to continue their education.

It also marked the beginning of a new adventure for me with the alumni association. As a graduate of the Web Developer program in 2003, I have been on the board since 2011 and it is now with great anticipation and excitement that I step into the role of president. With this title comes a responsibility of leading our more than 72,000 alumni into a new era – one which includes the upcoming celebration of providing 50 years of high-quality education to students across the province, country and around the world.

It's hard to believe DC will turn a half century old in 2017. I encourage you to stay tuned to Reflections, our Alumni e-newsletter and our website for stories, contests and memories that are nearly 50 years in the making as we are only two years away from celebrating and reflecting on a major milestone.

I would like to express sincere appreciation and thanks to our outgoing board members and president:

- Lesley Wagner, 2012 Alumna of Distinction and Premier's Award nominee, stepped down as president, five years of service;
- Laurie Beaton, past president, 2000 Alumna of Distinction and Premier's Award nominee, 15 years of service;
- Lillian Jacoby, past president, 14 years of service; and
- Rob Tite, past vice-president, 8 years of service.

We are truly grateful to the retiring board members for their many years of service and dedication in serving the alumni association board.

I am also pleased to welcome three new board members: Heather Bulman, Class of 2015, Vanessa Hughes, Class of 1990 and Matisse Hamel-Nelis, Class of 2015. These new members helped ring in another academic year.

On Sept. 8 and 10, the first-year orientation barbecue took place on the Oshawa and Whitby campuses respectively, where we handed out ice cream to all first-year students



and welcomed them to the DC family. On Sept. 9, Alumni cheered for our teams at the annual Campus Cup where the Durham College men came out on top and the UOIT women were the champions. On Oct. 4, over 30 alumni athletes attended the volleyball alumni games and social at St. Louis Bar & Grill.

Please check with our alumni office for further information on the following upcoming alumni events this fall. We hope to see you there!

Etiquette Dinner Nov. 9
Oshawa Generals Alumni Event Nov. 27

Finally, we are pleased to announce this year's Premier's Award nominees are Debbie Low, Russ Montague and Michele Roberts.

I encourage everyone to follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn and visit our website www.durhamcollege.ca/alumni to view your alumni benefits. You can also follow us on Twitter @alumni_DC.

Chris Vale
President, Alumni Association
Class of 2003

REFLECTIONS

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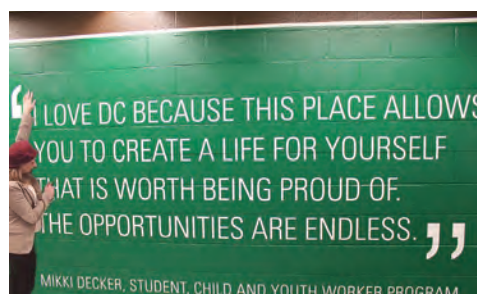
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ART of the Home Run



Jack Lang, catcher for the Durham Lords baseball team hits a home run at an away game this past spring. (SANTORUFO)

BY MICHAELA RAY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JACK LANG AND NICOLE SANTORUFO

Keeping up with academic responsibility while still being involved in other commitments may seem impossible to some students, but Jack Lang has not only excelled in the Durham College Graphic Design program but has also become a star on the diamond.

Upon graduating high school, Lang received a baseball scholarship to attend Niagara Community College in Sanborn, New York. Although he was appreciative of the opportunity, it was in his best interest academically to return home after his first year. He is now in the process of completing a three-year advanced diploma in Graphic Design at Durham College while still pursuing his love for baseball as a member of the Durham Lords baseball team.

A winner on both counts, after only one year in the program, Lang landed himself an amazing opportunity to work as a graphic designer at the Toronto Zoo for the summer.

"Durham College is a great school with great teachers. The experiences I've had so far have given me not only the technical skills, but enabled me to hone my organization and time management in order to earn an excellent job at one of the largest public attractions in Canada," says Lang.

"Durham College is a great school with great teachers. The experiences I've had so far have given me not only the technical skills, but enabled me to hone my organization and time management in order to earn an excellent job at one of the largest public attractions in Canada."

Although only being hired for an entry-level position, Lang was handling more things than were expected of him, thanks largely to the education he received after just one year

in the program. These days he continues to enjoy the close connections that he has made with other students and teachers as well.

"Jack is both a great student and designer. What makes him a great student is that he is highly motivated to challenge himself and expand his already very good technical skill set. What makes him a great designer is he is always pushing the envelope creatively and is willing to go above and beyond expectations," says Brian Ho Sang, Lang's illustration professor.

With his busy academic schedule, Lang also makes time to play as a catcher for the Durham Lords baseball team. He feels that being on a school team is a great college experience because it's an opportunity to socialize and meet new people. He has made good friends and enjoys every opportunity he gets to travel with the team. It is also a great way to experience team building, which can be applied to other parts of the real world.

He hopes to work in a studio in Toronto while also being a freelance artist. Lang also wishes to continue playing baseball through his working years. Ontario has a few senior leagues with ex-pro players and also a semi-professional league that he hopes to be a part of his summers.

"I decided to choose Durham College for a combination of two things," says Lang. "During my research I learned that Durham College not only had one of the best baseball programs in Ontario but also one of the best Graphic Design programs as well. It made my choice very easy. I can honestly say based on my experiences thus far that I made the right one."



Second-year student, Jack Lang, has a great passion for design and even landed a graphic design position at the Toronto Zoo this past summer. (LANG)

Life in BALANCE

BY Ali Cheaib

PHOTO BY ALI CHEAIB

Sometimes there are obstacles that can physically stop a body from functioning properly, however with the willingness to succeed anything is possible. Just ask Durham College grad and business owner Theresa Carter.

Carter a pilates instructor and business owner overcame an intracranial hypertension to continue to pursue her love of aiding people. Her journey began at Durham after enrolling into the Graphic Design program. She graduated in 2004 and was lucky enough to begin working immediately. But as she settled into her new career Carter felt like something was missing. Pilates became like meditation for her. It was a way to get away from all of the distractions in life.

As Carter continued to attend pilates classes, a strong passion began to arise. So she took the ultimate plunge and began her own business. My Balance Pilates was born on March 9, 2007 and attained quite a following. With four classes a week with over 20 attendees, Carter was ecstatic that she was finally able to do what made her really happy.

"I really took the business into my own hands," says Carter. "My background is graphic design from Durham College so I actually did all my own designs and created the website with the help from my husband. I am just trying to progress the business while helping other people. It is the most rewarding feeling to walk into your class and someone might not be feeling comfortable with themselves, and you know what to do to take care of them and make them feel better."

But when Carter began losing feeling on the right side of her body; she knew something was wrong and rushed to the hospital.

After weeks of CAT scans and trips to the neurologist Carter was diagnosed with an intracranial hypertension, which means her spine was leaking. After being immobile in a hospital bed Carter had to go through various physiotherapy treatments. She was not sure if she would ever be able to do pilates again.

"I have done eight MRIs now, three spinal taps and a myelogram," says Carter. "I also went through a blood patch operation where they take blood from your arm and eject it around your spine in an attempt to stop the leak, but it still did not work. So I have been going through all this stress on my body and just constant pain ever since then."

Even through all challenges Carter would never give up on herself, or her students. While undergoing continuous physiotherapy treatments Carter enrolled back in Durham College to study Occupational Therapist Assistant and Physiotherapist Assistant. Drastic improvements with on campus activities and support for students thrilled Carter.

After months of treatments Carter was finally given the green light to return to her pilates classes. At first she was hesitant with her return due to not being 100 per cent, but she knew through perseverance she could continue to motivate the people around her. Today Carter enjoys guiding people to find their inner balance.

"When you can't really do much you begin reading things, and you begin to appreciate things," says Carter. "One thing I learned is that the world is doing its own thing. It is not for you and it is not against you. It is you who decides whether your day is a good day or a bad day."

"There will always be positives and negatives in your life, but when you can turn your negatives into positives you can project that positivity to help others. It is really the most rewarding thing when you know that you really helped someone in need." ❧



Class is in session as Theresa Carter completes a Friday evening pilates class. Carter overcame a physical injury that left her bed-ridden to continue operating her company, My Balance Pilates.

Career services
advisor Anna
DeGrauwe works
hard to ensure
Durham College
students have the
tools to succeed.



Success Matters

BY NATASHA BROWN
PHOTO BY: NATASHA BROWN

Durham College has always gone by the motto “Success Matters,” and there is one dedicated lady on campus who believes it. She proves it every day as she helps students and graduates head off into the real world to follow their dreams.

Anna De Grauwe, a career advisor at the college’s career services, is on a mission to help students be the best they can be as they head into their future. This has been her profession for the past 11½ years and she enjoys every minute of it. De Grauwe continues to give students the keys to success with resumés, cover letters, interview skills and much more. She has no intention of stopping any time soon.

Her drive comes from the overwhelming feeling of accomplishment she has when she is able to be part of a student or graduate’s success. De Grauwe takes pride in guiding students to make all the right moves before starting their career and to utilize all the available resources within the college.

De Grauwe’s favourite part of her job is teaching seminars for classes. She also enjoys discovering a graduate has landed the job they were hoping for.

“I feel thrilled, ecstatic, ridiculously happy, and on a high for a graduate not only when I help them, but when any one of my co-workers does,” says De Grauwe.

Although there are many great things about her job, she admits, it can be challenging when she sees a graduate is struggling because they have not utilized all the options she provided them.

She says, “I dislike seeing someone struggle, whether it’s with the job market or decision making. In particular, when you see a grad six months to a year later who hasn’t been able to find work in their field but wasn’t maximizing all of their skills or their job search documents, that is quite frustrating.”

“I feel thrilled, ecstatic, ridiculously happy, and on a high for a graduate not only when I help them, but when any one of my co-workers does.”

De Grauwe advises students and graduates to put themselves in the employer’s shoes and always ask for advice. She wants to see everyone who asks her for help achieve their goals, reach for the stars and be proud of what they have accomplished. With help from her and the career services team, Durham College continues to see its graduates do big things. Filling the gap between finishing school and finding work is the goal and De Grauwe is determined to do just that. ☐

Curiosity killed the cat

BY TAYLOR SUMMERS

PHOTOS BY: MAT MANSER & ROBERT WEISS

Curiosity killed the cat. That cat could tell you the power of questions. This is where curious cat Taylor Murray's entrepreneurship journey started in the Small Business & Entrepreneurship program at Durham College. She is the owner, founder, and wearer of all hats at Acouskins.

An acouskin is a fabric guitar cover that fits snug to the body of any acoustic guitar without changing the sound at all. It is designed for personalization. She just launched her online store in November 2014. She took a year working on developing her business plan and model at Durham College, where the execution of getting her business off the ground took place.

“I look at my business like a board game. You have objectives, and you have obstacles, and you have competitors.”

“What am I going to do now? So many people in our generation face that question, and they feel that anxiety. They don't really know where to go from there. There's one of two directions you can go: you can sink into that or you can find something to move forward. I didn't know what would come of this program, of the Small Business & Entrepreneurship, but I don't think there could have been a better place for me to start.”

People play music to express themselves, and Murray believes that people will love her Acouskins product for the same reason. It's one thing for her to be excited about her own business endeavor, but when she realizes that she's created a product that other people get excited about, that's when it becomes reality. She wants to reach individuals on a personal level, the same way music reaches people. Ultimately, Murray plans on selling her product online via her web store, at retail outlets and at concerts. She will have to be sure to measure her success and track her sales very closely to see what's working



Murray proudly shows off one of her many fabric guitar cover designs at the Dragons' Den audition. (WEISS)



Taylor Murray is excited about her opportunity to propose Acouskins to the judges of CBC's Dragons' Den. (MANSER)

considering there are so many different channels that sales will be coming from.

Murray learned the value of curiosity and asking questions at Durham. The more you ask, the more you learn. Coming to college and working with other open-minded people was when she noticed she is thriving off of sharing ideas with other entrepreneurs. Great things can happen when you work with other people, especially people who you can toss things out there and collaborate with without any judgment.

“I didn't know what would come of this program, [Small Business & Entrepreneurship] but I don't think there could have been a better place for me to start.”

Speaking of working with other people, Murray has the opportunity to propose her business and product to the famous entrepreneurial judges from *Dragons' Den*. She plans to get popular bands' artwork printed on the skins and is excited about working with other artists and musicians.

“I look at my business like a board game. You have objectives, and you have obstacles, and you have competitors. I love board games, and I love solving puzzles. And if I just continue to look at it like that, I can see it as just an on-going series of puzzles to be solved. That always keeps it interesting, that always keeps it fun, and it's always going to be challenging.”

Making Headlines in the newsroom

BY HEATHER VERMAIRE

PHOTOS BY: COURTNEY CLAYTON AND JESSY LECLAIR

Joanne Burghardt (left), editor-in-chief at Metroland Durham Region Media Group oversees the weekly morning meeting with fellow newsroom staffers. (Leclair)



At 10 a.m. every Thursday editor-in-chief, Joanne Burghardt along with the editors at Metroland Durham Region Media Group sit around the boardroom table deliberating on what stories will be featured in the coming week's newspapers.

The Durham Region arm of Metroland newspapers, which publishes across Ontario, is responsible for eight community newspapers as well as numerous magazines. They are located in Oshawa, which has been beneficial to Durham College (DC) allowing many budding journalists to get their start within the Farewell Avenue building.

"I was hired in the third-week of my four-week placement that we were required to complete for the school at the time, and I have been here ever since." After being hired as a crime reporter, Burghardt has worked in many different positions over her 34 years at Metroland and for the last 24 years she has been the editor-in-chief.

“Burghardt has always supported the program wholeheartedly, and is always willing to take on students or even multiple students.”

Over the years and with the strong relationship that Metroland has created with the college, it is no surprise that many staff members have made the transition into teaching. Brian Legree, the Journalism program coordinator, had previously worked at Metroland for many years before deciding to teach. "Throughout the time that I have been here, the relationship has continually grown and evolved," says Legree. "Burghardt has always supported the program wholeheartedly, and is always willing to take on students or even multiple students."

Having Metroland located right in DC's backyard, it only makes sense the two organizations continue to work together to not only meet their own goals, but to help each other continue to grow. "We have a lot in common with DC," says Tim Whittaker, Publisher at Metroland Media Group. "Geographically, the proximity of Metroland and coverage area; it duplicates what we are trying to do and where our papers go."

Metroland Durham Region Media Group shows work is not always serious. There are plenty of opportunities for staff members to show off their fun and creative side as in this newsroom wall mural. (Clayton)



Over the years, DC has built a strong relationship with Metroland offering placements to students. This April four students from the college's journalism program will get a start at their career in the newsroom. Burghardt, along with Mike Johnston the managing editor, are both graduates from the journalism program and Burghardt knows from first-hand experience how an internship can set you up for the rest of your life. "I was hired as part of my placement," says Burghardt.

Continued on page 9



Publisher Tim Whittaker (left) walks down the newsroom hall past the display of award-winning photos. (Leclair)

“Metroland Media Group, along with Joanne Burghardt prefer our students if they are skilled and can make a contribution to Metroland.”

With journalism evolving, Metroland has branched out from print and has begun accepting placement students from the broadcast program and advertising as well. “Metroland Media Group, along with Joanne Burghardt prefer our students if they are skilled and can make a contribution to Metroland,” says Greg Murphy, Dean of The School of Media, Art & Design.

“We have successfully been able to achieve this as they have begun accepting students from different programs that are offered at the college.” With decades of history behind it, the relationship between Metroland Media Group and DC continues to grow every year.

As the paper chain accepts placement students from an increasing variety of programs, DC will have the chance to show-off even more of the skills its students possess while contributing further to Metroland’s success. ☐



Mike Johnston (right), conversing with a newsroom staffer at Metroland Durham Region Media Group. (Clayton)

It's a Durham College reunion as Alumni group together. From l-r: Joanne Burghardt, Brad Andrews, Brad Kelly, Reka Szekely and Mike Johnston.



Extra! Extra! Read All About It! Durham Grads Find Success At Metroland

BY COURTNEY CLAYTON & JESSY LECLAIR



JOANNE BURGHARDT
Editor in Chief

Class of 1981

"I've been coming through the same door everyday since 1981, but each day is new and never the same."

Joanne Burghardt has always had a passion for writing. Before graduating from Durham College (DC) in 1981 with a diploma in journalism, Burghardt had already secured a job at the Durham local papers owned by Metroland Media Group. Burghardt was hired for a full-time position in her third week of what was then just a four-week placement.

Burghardt has worked at Metroland Media Group for a total of 34 years, starting off as a crime reporter with Oshawa This Week, later becoming the community editor, news editor and managing editor. After 10 years, Burghardt earned the position of editor-in-chief for eight community newspapers in the Durham Region and has held this position for the last 24 years.

As a longtime DC alumna, she has maintained a strong relationship with Durham College. Burghardt has served on the board of governors, the Journalism program advisory committee, taught Intro to Journalism, and has taken numerous journalism students as interns. Burghardt looks forward to continued involvement with the college and believes the relationship will only continue to grow in the future. 📰



MIKE JOHNSTON

Managing Editor - **Class of 1985**
"Styx Rules!"

Managing Editor of Metroland Durham Region Media, Mike Johnston, plays an important role in the news every day. He oversees the newsroom, signs off on stories, and is the one to approach if you have any questions. Another DC Alumnus, Johnston graduated in 1985 and was unlucky enough to be a student during a strike. Although this might seem like it would hold back a student's opportunity for learning, Johnston claims it was because of this that he actually learned how to put out a newspaper (The Chronicle) along with other students for roughly six to seven weeks.

The biggest difference, Johnston claims, between his job now and early in his career, is the advancement in tracking people down. Before, knowing your community was critical. Today, it remains so but now there's an added tool. You can go on Facebook and find a complete stranger within minutes. With over 30 years now under his belt, he recalls it was Durham College that led him to a successful career.



REKA SZEKELY

Reporter - **Class of 2007**

"Your time at Durham is what
you make it."

As a reporter, the hardest people to deal with are often those who are invested in the beat you cover. As a reporter focusing on The City of Oshawa, its politics, crime, community events and everything in between, Reka Szekeley has to deal with this on a daily basis. In her opinion, it's all part of the job, and she continues to report what is right and responsible.

For Szekeley, the best part of working at Metroland is the fact it isn't a job where you come in and do the same thing every day. In fact, she says writing is not even the best part of her job. She loves talking to people, making connections and getting to go to exciting events. She attributes her fast track from the classroom to the newsroom to her mandatory placement. She feels as if the connections between her professors and the editors at Metroland helped to get her foot in the door.



BRAD KELLY

Sports Editor - **Class of 1985**

"Find something you're going to
enjoy doing."

It is 9:45 p.m. on a Saturday night. The game-ending buzzer has just gone off, someone has won and someone has lost. This is where Brad Kelly steps in and his job begins with an interview. As Sports Editor for the Metroland Durham Region newspapers, Kelly says this is the best part of his job. He has a hard time equating it to actually working. He even compares it to a toy department, full of men who fell in love with sports and never grew up.

Having graduated from Durham College in 1985, Kelly has been a reporter for over 25 years. Although a lot has changed in those years, from the slowing of hard copy newspapers to the introduction of social media, Kelly has enjoyed every minute of it. Coming back to Durham College occasionally to cover various sporting events, he also mentions how much the college has evolved over the years, going from just the little Simcoe building to the massive structure most know it to be as today.



BRAD ANDREWS

Reporter - **Class of 2014**

"How did my time at Durham College
help me? It got me the job."

Imagine driving home from work, and you receive a call from your boss sending you off to the scene of a local accident. Your supper might be cold by the time you get home, but it's this sense of unpredictability that Brad Andrews says is his favorite aspect of his job.

Having only graduated from Durham College in 2014, Andrews has already managed to score himself a great job as a reporter for Metroland Media Durham Region, mainly covering the Clarington beat. Although he studied four years at Trent University, Andrews states he learned more in half that time during his stay at Durham College, and will always credit the great hands-on experience he received from the journalism program for where he is today.

Follow your heart but use your brain

BY TYE WOROBESS

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KYLA NORRIS



Public Relations graduate Kyla Norris (above, bottom left) gives back to an initiative close to her heart by raising money for The SickKids Hospital.

Choosing the perfect outfit and stuffed animal companion then heading to school might have been a normal morning for nine-year-old Kyla Norris. But one September morning was anything but normal because this time, she was waving goodbye to her parents before heading into an operating room at Toronto's SickKids hospital. While her classmates were on the bus on their way to school, Norris was on a gurney on her way into a six-hour surgery to have a tumour removed from her brain.

"Constant headaches and double vision led me to my ophthalmologist who then referred me to SickKids to get feedback from other doctors," recalls Norris. "After countless visits with different doctors within the neurosurgery division, I was finally diagnosed with a tumour that needed to be removed called benign cerebellar pilocytic astrocytoma."

Twelve years later, Norris is tumour-free and lives a healthy, busy life as a recent Durham College Public Relations graduate. Norris has always been passionate about helping others, whether it's helping mentally or physically challenged children, or raising awareness or funds for those in need. This interest sparked over 12 years ago thanks to the helpful staff at SickKids. Similar to the people who saved her life, Norris's ultimate goal is to seek meaningful work that allows her to help others,

but in the PR world. She has always found a way to pay it forward, physically, emotionally, and financially, and does it with a contagious smile.

During her time in the two-year, fast-track PR program at Durham, Norris gained the awareness and skills needed to create events and fundraisers that she had only dreamed of putting together. On

the heels of past events she had volunteered for, the program was able to provide the additional skills and experiences for her to organize her own fundraising events such as her SickKids Fundraiser with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology athletics department. Norris spent a great deal of her time volunteering, networking and planning future steps. She has had the pleasure to work with the Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE) Foundation, National Homeshow and Durham Community Foundation. "The PR program's field placements and fundraising class allowed me to preview the non-profit and corporate worlds," Norris says. "I was amazed to see how both sectors can aid people or charities in need."

One of Norris's most remarkable and notable moments during her experience at Durham College occurred while she was in her non-profit field placement with the UOIT and Durham College's athletic department. Having SickKids always in the back of her mind, she had the opportunity to launch and host a fundraising initiative in honour of the hospital. The event took place at the school hockey arena and had great success. Norris was able to secure prize donations that included gift cards to local restaurants, UOIT Ridgeback gear and a Toronto Maple Leafs goalie stick signed by Leafs netminder Jonathan Bernier. Due to her hard work and ambition, Norris raised \$600 for SickKids and ensured that 100 per cent of the money she raised would go immediately to the neurosurgery division at SickKids Hospital. After seeing the success of her fundraising initiative, she knew she was in on the right path and the right program to lead her to bigger opportunities that would eventually raise more money and awareness to support those in need.

Norris currently works as an Internal Communications Co-ordinator for Labelink, a company within the labeling and flexible packaging industry located in Markham, Ont. She continues to use her PR skills within her workplace and ongoing pay-it-forward initiatives such as donating her time and money to charities and non-profit organizations. As she says, she follows her heart but takes her brain along with her.

"I've dreamt about working in philanthropy since I was young," she says, "and I'm working very hard on making that dream a reality."



Reflections on Durham College

BY: **MICHAEL RICCI**

PHOTOS BY: MICHAEL RICCI and CONTRIBUTED

Choosing a post-secondary school is a major challenge for young students leaving high school. With Durham College's plethora of additional features from an on-site gym, to a vetted career services program, Durham College has proven to be a strong foundation of success for many graduates. These are a few testimonials from students attending Durham.



Name: **Cole Stones**, 20

Program: Privacy, Security and Investigation

Status: Attending Student

"Durham College has a wide variety of courses available, which allows students to dabble in a subject they are interested in even if it's not apart of their program through general education."



Name: **Matthew McKillop**, 21

Program: Digital Video Editing

Status: Attending Student, Returning Graduate

"I love Durham College because of the wide variety of personalities that go here. Having a school with so many wonderfully unique people really helps individuals find friends that will last forever."



Name: **Brock Widdman**, 23

Program: Computer Science Three Year

Status: Attending Student

"The thing I love most about Durham College is the amount of interactivity included in the program. The amount we learn throughout the year encourages attendance and engagement while still being fun and enjoyable."



Name: **Olivia Goheen**, 22

Program: Public Relations Advanced Diploma

Status: Attending Student

"I enjoy the various fun volunteering opportunities Durham College has to offer. In my first year, I signed up with Riot Radio and started doing a weekly radio show. By doing that show I was able to talk about my love of music and I found my hidden passion of broadcasting."

Left, Sarah Lavergne prepares her entree dish featuring lamb at a skills competition. (Lavergne) Right, Lavergne presents Ritz Bacon and Original, two products she works on at Mondelez.



CULINARY CHAMPION

brings snacks to the world

BY MADELYN MAILLET

PHOTOS BY CODI LAVERGNE, MADELYN MAILLET

Saturday morning grocery shopping is much better when there are free samples being handed out. But, for Sarah Lavergne, it's just another day at work.

After graduating from Durham College's (DC) one-year Culinary Skills program in 2014, Lavergne received her current job at Mondelez International in May 2014. Mondelez International is one of the largest snack manufacturing companies in the world producing famous brands internationally including Oreo, Ritz, Cadbury and Triscuit, to name a few. Even as a talented chef, Lavergne decided to take a different approach to the food industry by landing a job with research and development department, where she works directly on the development of the savory biscuit brands.

After attending the University of Guelph for five years and receiving a bachelor degree in food sciences, Lavergne decided to further develop her cooking skills at Durham College by enrolling in the Culinary Skills program. During her time in college, she had the opportunity of a lifetime competing in the Ontario Technological Skills Competition (OTSC) and then advancing to the Skills Canada National Competition. She represented the college with great success, and won gold at both levels.

"I loved every minute of it," says Lavergne. "I learned so much and it was such a valuable experience. I'm so grateful to the college and to the culinary skills program for giving me that opportunity."

Not only were the contestants of the competition judged on the taste of the food they prepared, but their final score was also based on how well they saved waste, were they cooking the food properly, how clean the workspace was and whether they used the correct tools.

"Sarah was a very determined and dedicated student," says David Hawey, Chef/Professor, Coordinator of culinary programs. "Her attention to detail, positive attitude, scientific approach to cooking and calm demeanor were certainly key ingredients in her recipe to earning two gold medals."

Now, Lavergne spends her days working within a creative team to develop new product flavours, new packaging and new product concepts. The priority of her department is the commercialization of new products by launching new flavours or packaging. Through that, she works with suppliers to find the right ingredients, then they produce small-scale testing and finally they perform many tastings until the product is just right. Once they are happy with the product,



Lavergne's winning dishes. (Lavergne)

they launch consumer testing and plant trials, which involves large-scale testing within a factory.

“It’s such a teamwork process,” says Lavergne. “There are so many people involved in launching a new product. I love being able to go through the grocery store and see products that I just finished working on.”

Already, Lavergne has been able to travel to different parts of Canada and the US to visit different manufacturing factories to help run plant trials with new products. The knowledge and experiences Lavergne gained from the Culinary Skills Program has enhanced her ability to give feedback on the products and know how to improve it such as knowing when to add more salt or less baking soda.

“While she was a student at DC, Sarah was well respected by her peers and faculty,” says Hawey. “In over 20 years of teaching I’ve seen some great students, but Sarah stands out as truly remarkable.”

In the short time at DC, Lavergne made a lasting impression on the chefs, the program and students striving to compete in the skills competitions. She loves to cook, but will save that for dinners at home. For now, Lavergne will continue to use her knowledge to help produce quality snacks for everyone to enjoy. So, next time you’re eating a box of Mondelēz crackers, just maybe, a DC grad helped create it. 🍪



Durham College proudly displays Lavergne's winning banner from the Skills Canada National Competition in the Centre for Food at the Whitby campus. (Maillet)

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Two is Better than One

BY JORDAN PEGUTTER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDREW GILBANK

For increasing numbers of young people it seems one certificate, diploma, or degree does not land you the much-coveted job.

For Andrew Gilbank, digital marketing associate with Maple Leafs Sports Entertainment (MLSE) this was no different. Despite already going to college it was difficult for him to enter into his career. This was particularly challenging as Gilbank did not have just any job in mind. He wanted a career in hockey, and if it was possible, with the Toronto Maple Leafs. For him that meant one thing, go back to school only a year after graduating from college.

“The other week I was walking down the hallway and Michael Bradley (of Toronto Football Club) introduced himself out of the blue. He must have thought I was important or something.”

Gilbank attended Algonquin College for a few years and received his Advanced Diploma in Advertising in 2013. Despite having employment in his field he was driven by a passion to work in the sports industry. After a few unsuccessful interviews with Ontario Hockey League organizations, he decided to apply to Durham College. In fact, he was encouraged by many of his interviewers' invitations to apply if he ever wanted a career in hockey.

“I essentially was told I had to go back to school. Even though I had quite a few interviews with sports franchises

After attending two post-secondary programs Gilbank was finally able to secure a job in the sports industry as a digital marketing associate.



A lifelong hockey fan and goaltender, Andrew Gilbank was able to secure the ultimate employment with Maple Leafs Sports & Entertainment.

it never seemed to pan out for me,” explains Gilbank. “Every time I inquired about why I did not get hired I was told I did not have enough qualifications. It turned out the guy who was hired took some sports business program. In fact, once or twice I was told specifically the program at Durham was the way to go if I ever wanted to get my foot in the door.”

In 2015 Gilbank completed the Sports Business Management program at Durham. Thankfully for him the perseverance paid off. As a digital marketing associate most of his time is spent on the Toronto Maple Leafs' American Hockey League affiliate, the Toronto Marlies. He could not be happier to have scored such an impressive occupation.

While at Durham Gilbank learned the business side of sport, and was able to network with some of the biggest names in the front office of franchises. However, he still uses the knowledge learned while at Algonquin, and views his role in digital marketing as an advertiser for the team.

“My job is pretty interesting because it gives me the opportunity to bring together both of my programs. If I did not have one or the other I probably would not have the tools to succeed in this fast paced industry,” explains Gilbank. “Whether it is social media analysis, developing graphics, or researching statistics from a previous game I need to recall information from either Durham or Algonquin.”

At the end of the day he quite simply loves what he is doing for a living, and is glad he returned to school for another year. If he had not, who knows whether he could be living this fantasy.

Gilbank says, “It is pretty crazy to think I have access to professional hockey players, and even go into the Leafs dressing room sometimes. And the people at MLSE are terrific. The other week I was walking down the hallway and Michael Bradley (of Toronto Football Club) introduced himself out of the blue. He must have thought I was important or something.”

The woman behind the wall

BY MEGHAN THOMPSON

PHOTO BY MEGHAN THOMPSON

Mikki Decker came to Durham College with a passion for social work, but she could never have predicted just how much of a personal journey it would take her on. Even growing up in her hometown of Bowmanville Ontario, Decker was an obvious leader. She involved herself in everything she could, including a unique placement opportunity called Katimavik, which she participated in after her high school graduation. Decker travelled to Whitehorse, Yukon where she would live for three months. She spent her time volunteering at Yukon Art Gallery with 11 other people, learning life skills such as cooking and money management and volunteering around the community. This opportunity taught her how to be self-sufficient while others such as at the AIDS Committee of Durham Region and the Oshawa Community Health Centre strengthened her professional work skills. All of these experiences proved advantageous for Decker's future career path, but it would be her post-secondary experience at Durham College that would change her forever.

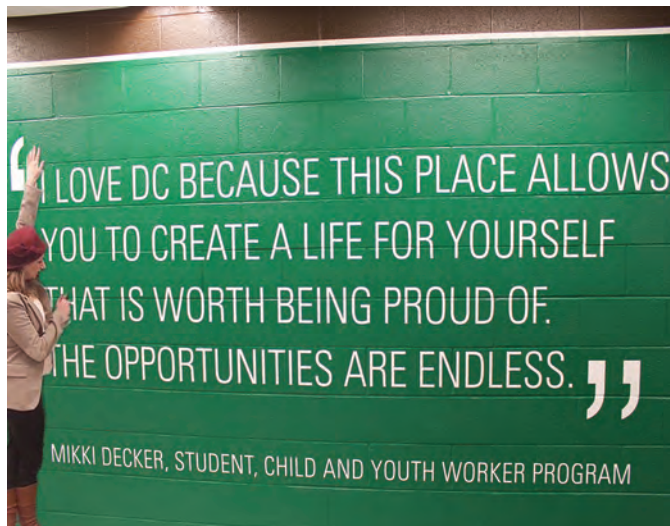
"There weren't surprises for what I was going to be dealing with in terms of clients or what social work is really about. I think that the biggest surprise was seeing myself falling apart about a quarter of the way into the program. That was my biggest surprise, but also the best thing that could have happened to me," says Decker.

“A typical day in the life of Mikki Decker is filled with a lot of laughter, lots and lots of laughter. If I can make it happen, maybe some dancing will happen too.”

Decker attended Durham College for the two-year Child and Youth work accelerated diploma program. A quarter of the way through her first semester at Durham, Decker found herself resonating strongly on a personal level with many of the lessons and case studies featured in the program, so much so that she considered changing her chosen post-secondary path of study.

"I didn't expect for my schooling at Durham to open up my own issues that I hadn't dealt with myself," says Decker. "I realized I needed to start getting help dealing with my stuff, before I could help others deal with theirs. That's where I spent a lot of my time during my first year at Durham College, doing a lot of 'me' work," says Decker.

Decker always harboured an acute interest in social work and in spite of these challenges she was unable to abandon her aspirations. Decker sought help through counselling and persevered through her program, graduating with honours as well as a leadership award.



Decker stands next to her quote on the wall at Durham College's North Campus shortly after all final touches are completed.

"It's okay to work on yourself, mental health is not something to be ashamed of. It's okay to get help and it's okay to walk into a councillor's office. These were all stigmas that I had to shed," says Decker.

Today Decker can be found working hard on her degree for Family, Community and Social Services (FCSS) at Guelph-Humber, but ultimately she aspires to be a professor with a Masters Degree under her belt. She is also currently working at the YMCA in Oshawa specializing in children's programming, but hopes to move into youth leadership or a front desk position. She works closely with the children who attend the YMCA and often watches children grow up right before her eyes.

"What's becoming my favourite part of my job at the YMCA is having a new family come in right from the get-go, especially a family that has struggles or barriers," says Decker. "I bring in my social work background in my head and just knowing that the kids are being taken care of I think is my favourite part now."

Decker may have graduated from Durham with a new sense of direction and a stronger sense of self, but in turn she has physically left her mark on the college as well. A quote by Decker painted on the walls of Durham reads: "I love DC because this place allows you to create a life for yourself that is worth being proud of. The opportunities are endless." This quote was put on the wall in early 2014 and is located on the second floor of B wing, just outside of the main Tim Hortons where it will remain as a permanent inspiration to Durham students. In spite of the mountainous challenges Decker has faced, they have all led to success and happiness not only in her life, but in others' as well.

"A typical day in the life of Mikki Decker is filled with a lot of laughter, lots and lots of laughter," says Decker. "If I can make it happen, maybe some dancing will happen too." ☘

NEVER SKIP

STORIES AND PHOTOS BY NICHOLAS KAZANIWSKY

The Music Business Administration and Management (MBM) program is one of Durham College's most popular. Many graduating high school students are eager to get started on their career and the program differs from others because it integrates real-world experience in running events, operating music labels and booking shows for artists. Every year, a set of passionate young people joins the classroom, all with various personalities and goals. Although everyone offers unique skills and has different end-goals, they all are connected by their passion for music.

TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS

Students in this program are taught skills from the various facets that build the music industry, such as marketing, publicity, artists and repertoire (A&R) and digital design. The program stand out from similar programs in Ontario because the teachers employed have worked in the industry, offering a real-world element in the classroom and with corresponding assignments. Students may have the task of something as small as designing an album artwork to something huge, like creating a marketing campaign.

The professors bring knowledge from years of work experience and organize assignments for young hopefuls based on tasks they would be doing in the industry, such as organizing the Reel Music Festival. The festival is a three-day music event encompassing a demo derby, emerging music talent and panel discussions featuring guest speakers. Program graduates succeed because the professors are dedicated to their success.

"You can't teach anyone compassion. You have to have that. I'm compassionate with my students, I like my students, I like what I do and I like being able to impart that to my students," says Tony Sutherland, an industry professional with over 30 years of experience and a current professor for the School of Media, Art and Design. "One of the things I'm really proud of is when I walk out into the industry and I see students who graduated from the program now working in the various facets within the industry. That really builds up my pride in myself and what I do."

MORE INITIATIVE

The first and second-year students are encouraged to join one of a series of niche groups called initiatives by the professors simply because they want their students to take control of projects. Whether someone's specialty is promotions, marketing or A&R, there is an initiative program for each MBM student.

Free Mind Operations, an indie music label, is one of these initiatives. It operates the same way any record label would perform: the team discovers new artists, books shows and completes marketing strategies. Students work in teams on different areas, such as marketing, production and other facets, then work cooperatively to bring the project to fruition.

Jason Law is a second-year MBM student who has been working with Free Mind Operations since 2013. His role as co-operations manager has allowed him to learn critical skills, but also apply his knowledge in a real-life setting. He gets a feel of how a record label runs, instead of being told how it is done in the classroom.

"Working with Free Mind has definitely given me extra skills other schools probably don't give their students," Law says. "Instead of being lectured for an hour in class on how to do something, say book a show, I was able to use this with my own artists. Obviously there's more to it than just that, but it's cool to be able to do something with my own hands and see it unfold, and learn from mistakes early, so I have a better understanding than just being told 'this is how you do it.'"



PING A BEAT

DURHAM GRAD IN THE BIZ

Everybody loves music, but how many people actually live it? Jen Fox, a Durham College graduate from the suburbs of Mississauga, Ont., is now leading a busy life within the Toronto music industry.

Since graduating from the Music Business Management (MBM) program in 2013, Fox has been working her way through the music industry by holding various positions and even starting her second company, Amplify Music. She started the business with a niche skill that she knew she would be good at; writing grants to the government, third-party companies and private radio sectors asking for money for musicians and companies for tours, albums or business travel. Currently, Fox works full-time as a grants manager for Eggplant Entertainment, a Toronto-based artist management, concert promotion and event production company.

To this day, Fox says networking is a major part of her career, which also plays a big role in Durham College's MBM program. In school, she was both running and attending events and Fox claims the program overall is very hands-on, which is why she feels it greatly helped her for the future.

"It gave me a good overview of what the industry would really be like, and specifically in one of our classes we have a writing assignment where we need to write a grant. At the time it seemed like the hardest thing and now looking back, that's one of the easiest grants I write on a weekly basis," she says. "That was a really good example and just things like time management, dealing with different personalities and that kind of stuff you learn in a school setting."

Due to her connections in the industry from networking, Fox is currently working on a grant for an independent music festival and also production work for Just For Laughs, a comedy festival held in Toronto. She is not only respected within the work field, but also by current Durham College students who hope to achieve similar success in the music industry.

As Jason Law, a second-year MBM student, says, "Jen Fox has always been a hard worker who is willing to connect people to opportunities within the industry. She's professional, but with a friendly approach; I wouldn't mind working with her in the future."

Surprisingly, music was not the direction Fox initially headed within the arts. She attended Cawthra Park Secondary School in Mississauga, majoring in drama for four years. She describes the experience as being similar to the '80s musical

"I couldn't sit down with a script and translate it into iambic pentameter and figure out the arc of character..."



Jen Fox went from Durham College student to music industry professional after discovering her passion in the Music Business Management program.

Fame. After graduating in 2009, she knew that theatre was not the direction she wanted to move forward in.

"I wasn't passionate about it like everyone else was," she says. "I couldn't sit down with a script and translate it into iambic pentameter and figure out the arc of character and things like that."

Aside from attending school, as a teenager Fox started her own promotion company in Mississauga. Although she was only 17 years old, Fox took the business in a serious manner, always with a critical path and marketing strategy. In the end, she found it to be very financially fruitful, but also fun because she got to book her favourite bands for concerts. She eventually wrapped up the company in order to move on to bigger things.

Although happy with her current work, Fox hopes one day to work her way up to the top of the industry chain. Eventually, she wants to be a project manager. Seeing a project peak, brainstorming about it and then the process of going through it and knowing it is completed is her favourite feeling.

As someone so well immersed in everything music, can Fox play any herself? "Bass. I can kind of play bass," she says, "but I'm pretty sure everyone can *kind of* play bass." 🎸

Good deeds, Great rewards

BY MATISSE HAMEL-NELIS

PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLIE GARRETT

When Kellie Garrett walked across Durham College's convocation stage in 1986, it was the beginning of an extraordinary personal and professional journey.

Aside from her impressive climb up the corporate ladder, she always made it a priority to give back to her community in any way she could. As she enters a new phase in her professional life, becoming the president and CEO of her own company, Garrett's willingness to help support her community is as strong as ever.

When *Reflections* featured the PR guru back in 2010, she had just been named one of Canada's 100 Most Powerful Women by the Women's Executive Network and was serving as the senior vice-president of strategy, knowledge and reputation at Farm Credit Canada (FCC) in Regina, Sask.

Fast-forward a few years and Garrett has continued to leave her mark wherever she goes. In 2011, she received the Durham College (DC) Alumni of Distinction award, which honours extraordinary contributions to society by a DC graduate while achieving career success. Then in 2012, she was not only named one of Canada's Top 25 Women of Influence, but she was also bestowed the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Award for voluntarism. Nominated by Dress for Success Regina, an organization that provides disadvantaged women with suitable attire for job hunting, the honour was just the tip of the iceberg of things to come.

"I think that if you look good, you feel better about yourself," said Garrett about her work with Dress for Success Regina. "I'm passionate about helping women. I had coordinated several successful fundraisers for the organization and the nomination for this award was humbling and very gratifying."

In October of 2014, Garrett received another award in recognition of her immense volunteer work within the community. The Canadian Red Cross honoured her with the Humanitarian of the Year distinction for the Province of Saskatchewan because of her extensive voluntarism in a variety of areas within her community including the arts, autism and the Hospitals of Regina Foundation, to name but a few.

"I am passionate about helping women... the nomination for this award was humbling and very gratifying."

"This is my favourite award," said Garrett. "I was shocked when they called me and (I) told them that they should give it to someone I had worked with on the autism cause... they quickly informed me that it wasn't my choice. I volunteer because I believe that we all have gifts that we should share



Kellie Garrett continues to achieve her personal and professional goals as the CEO of her own company, Kellie Garrett Enterprises, which focuses on consulting, speaking engagements, executive and life coaching.

with our communities. Everyone has a cause or two that speaks to them, and I think that if we have any resources at all – time, financial or special talents – that we should give back to those less fortunate. Volunteering is a way of expressing gratitude for all that I have been given."

While Garrett continues to give back to her community, she is also making professional strides. Back in 2010, she had mentioned plans to move away from her then-current employment and pursue her own endeavours. She became the CEO of her own business, Kellie Garrett Enterprises, in 2013 following her decision to step down from her SVP role at FCC. Based out of Regina, her company focuses on professional speaking engagements, executive and life coaching, and offers her services as a strategy and leadership consultant.

"I can't begin to describe how much I love working for myself," said Garrett. "Since I'm an extrovert, I wondered if I would miss the constant contact of working in an office. Much to my surprise, my favourite days are the ones when I have most of the day to work alone in my home office, usually with a cat on my lap. As a senior vice-president, I was blessed with a great work environment at FCC, but I was ready for something different."

Garrett continues to check personal and professional accomplishments off her list, with a book about leadership in the works and a launch of her website in the spring. Her piece of advice for those graduating is to, "live for the day and enjoy it fully, but not at the expense of the future."

alumni UPDATE

1976

BRIAN MACINTYRE

Air Transport Technology

lives in Whitby with his partner Marla Wallis. Upon graduation in 1976 he was employed with Austin Airways in Moosonee, ON. He joined Ontario Hydro in January 1978, retired from OPG in 2010 and has been working on various contracts with OPG since that time.

1977

MARY VISSER KERR

Graphic Design

lives in Guelph with her husband John and is an executive assistant for the University of Guelph.

1979

BRENDA LACKIE (NEE LEWIS)

Engineering Secretarial

lives in Port Perry with her husband Shawn and their two daughters; Aislin and Erin. Brenda is an operations specialist with Ontario Power Generation in Darlington.

1981

NORM BRINN

Electronic Techniques

lives in Pickering and is a staff sergeant for Toronto Police Services.

1982

RICHARD WOLF

General Business – Marketing

lives in Oshawa and is a credit manager for TD Bank.

1988

LINDA MARCO (NEE NOSEWORTHY)

Public Relations

lives in Ajax with her husband Patrick and has two children; Shelby, 24 and Jake, 22. Linda is the director of advancement for the Lakeridge Health Foundation.

1990

VANESSA HUGHES

Business – Human Resources

lives in Whitby and is senior manager, corporate relations and communications for Ontario Power Generation in Pickering.

BRYANT WOOD

Electronics Engineering Technology

lives in Port Hope with his wife Natalie and their three sons; Nathan, 10, Warren, 20 and Alec, 17. Bryant is the chief of police for Port Hope Police Service.

1991

STEVE RAMCHARITAR

Electrical Engineering Technology

lives in Whitby with his wife Trisha and their two children; Steve, 12 and Farah, 8. Steve is an electrical field engineer project technician for Ontario Power Generation. He has great memories from his time at Durham College.

1995

WAYNE EDGERTON

Business Administration – Information Systems

lives in Blackstock with his wife Jenny and their four sons; Joey, 13, Keegan, 11, Cameron, 8 and Logan, 4. Wayne is a nuclear operator for Ontario Power Generation at Darlington.

JOHANNE LAVALLEE

Electronics Engineering Technology

lives in Quebec with her husband Andre and their son Alexis, 6. Johanne is a technical writer for Signalisation Ver-Mac Inc. She is a speaker at a conference in New Orleans about agile technical writing this fall.

1998

REBECCA BROWN (NEE NASH)

Sports Administration

lives in Camden East with her husband Curtis and their two children; Cameron, 13 and Caleb, 9. Rebecca is a box office coordinator for the City of Kingston, Grand Theatre.

1999

MICHAEL MADILL

Human Resources Management

lives in Toronto and is currently the human resources manager at Multimatic Inc. in Richmond Hill.

2000

JENNIFER HAWCO (NEE CHOLEWA)

Environmental Technology

lives in Whitby with her husband David and their two children; Jacob, 7 and Katelyn, 5. Jennifer is a field shift operating supervisor for Ontario Power Generation in Pickering.

RICHARD MCLAUGHLIN

Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology

lives in Port Perry and is a supervising nuclear operator for Ontario Power Generation.

2001

LORNA BROWN (NEE MACKENZIE)

Mechanical Engineering Technology

lives in Bowmanville and is a nuclear operator for Ontario Power Generation in Darlington.

2002

KELLY WATSON

Environmental Technology

lives in Courtice with her six year-old son Sam. She is a chemical technician for Ontario Power Generation in Darlington.

2005

WILLIAM LISCOMBE

Power Engineering Technician

lives in Newcastle with his wife Julie and their two children; Abby, 3 and Gavin, 1. William is an authorized nuclear operator for Ontario Power Generation in Pickering.

2006

JESSICA IVINEY

Office Administration – Executive

lives in Oshawa and is an office support representative for Ontario Power Generation in Pickering.

JOSEPH MATHESON

Industrial Millwright

lives in Whitby and is a mechanical group leader for Associated Tube Canada. He also graduated from Electrician Level 1 and 2.

2007

LISA CIPRIANO (NEE POWER)

Journalism – Print & Broadcast

lives in Scarborough with her husband Helio and their two children, Joshua, 4 and 19 month-old Jake.

Lisa is currently a communications officer for The Scarborough Hospital.

2011

MICHAEL BOYES

Sport Administration

lives in Whitby and is head equipment manager for the Sault Ste Marie Greyhounds.

2012

BRANDON JOHNSTON

Mechanical Engineering Technology

lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and is a manufacturing engineering planner for Magellan Aerospace.

2014

STEPHANIE REDDIN

Legal Administration

lives in Scarborough and is an administrative assistant for The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences.

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