It's one of my most cherished memories.

We are certain Igor Sergeyevich Gouzenko had no idea what he started. In 1945, Gouzenko, a cipher clerk at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa, leaked an international incident when he defected to Canada. The move would have gone unnoticed by history, or at least relegated to footnote status, had Gouzenko not brought along more than 100 documents proving the existence of a Soviet spy ring in Canada. The ensuing furor, and intense distrust and paranoia created by the discovery, helped fuel the Cold War. As you might guess, that decision would color the rest of Gouzenko’s life, much of which he spent hiding under an assumed name until his death in 1982.

But his actions also changed something fundamental about how we cover the news. Or, at least, how we review it.

In 1946, the Canadian Press (CP) named Gouzenko its first Canadian Newsmaker of the Year. Ever since, media outlets across Canada and the world have passed each year and, in turn, reflect on individuals who shaped the year that was. Of course, the tradition continued to this day. Last year, the wire service named Gord Downie the winner of the Year That Was.

Before we start looking ahead to 2018 — we take one last look at 2017. Here’s to the year that was.
or Joy Spear Chief-Morris, track and field was an escape. The sport was a place to get away from the world, a place she belonged and, most of all, a place she sensed she belonged and, most of all, a place where she chased dreams she never thought possible. Earlier this year, she was honoured for her dedication to sport and academics with the Tom Longboat Award, an honour that recognizes Aboriginal athletes for outstanding contributions to sport in Canada.

Today, Spear Chief-Morris, BA’17 (History, First Nations Studies), is chasing down her biggest dream yet—training with the prestigious Santa Barbara Track Club, with her sights set on the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan.

Still adjusting to being out of school and training with a new team, she is a talented hurdler and winner of eight Ontario University Athletics medals and seven U Sports national medals.

SPECIAL TO WESTERN NEWS

Only four Canadian musicals in history have seen the light of day on Broadway. In 2017, producer Michael Rubinoff’s Come From Away—a heart-warming tale of kindness and generosity in the face of tragedy—made it five.

Rubinoff, BA’98, LLB’01, who has been the associate dean of Visual and Performing Arts at Sheridan College in Oakville, Ont. since 2011, came up with the idea for the musical in the aftermath of 9/11, when he was a young lawyer articling at a Bay Street firm. At the time of the attacks on the Twin Towers, 38 planes were grounded at the airport near Gander, Nfld., with 6,579 passengers on board. Locals welcomed the passengers into their homes to rest, gave them hot meals, offered showers and even entertained their guests.

Deeply moved by the outpouring of kindness and humanity shown by the people of Gander during such a frightful time, Rubinoff felt others would respond to the story in a similar way. In November, the Mark Gordon Company said it will produce and finance a feature film adaptation of the show.

THE ATHLETE | JOY SPEAR CHIEF-MORRIS

THE SCHOLAR | LEVI HORD

Livi Hord, a fourth-year Sexuality Studies, School for Advanced Studies in Arts & Humanities student, was named a recipient of the 2018 Rhodes Scholarship, an international postgraduate award for students to study at the University of Oxford in London, U.K.

Over the course of their undergraduate studies at Western, Hord led undergraduate research on the use of gender-neutral language in transnational communities, and how linguistic identity expression varies based on grammatical gender systems. This project is part of a larger research to raise awareness of and facilitate research into, transgender identities and experiences, and has been highly regarded and experienced by society. Hord reports a deep passion for engaging through the social and intellectual barriers that remain for those who subscribe to genderqueer identities.

Hord is Western’s 23rd Rhodes Scholar. The award is widely considered to be one of the world’s most prestigious scholarships.

THE SHOWMAN | MICHAEL RUBINOFF

THE AUTHOR | DAVID HUEBERT

Over the past four years, Peninsula Sinking has shed its skin many times. English PhD candidate David Huebert first workshoped the short-story collection in 2013 with award-winning writer and University of Toronto professor David Layton. It was only after one of its stories, Enigma, won the CBC Short Story Prize in 2017 that the book started to take shape.

The final product, which came out in the fall, features eight stories, with Enigma being the shortest. Seven of the eight are set in Nova Scotia, Huebert’s home. The remaining story is about a Nova Scotia expat living in Ottawa.

Having taken a brief hiatus from working on his dissertation to finish Peninsula Sinking, Huebert noted his academic work and his creative work tend to go hand-in-hand.

One of the stories in Peninsula Sinking is forthcoming in Best Canadian Stories. Another is forthcoming in Fiddlehead and yet another in Canadian Notes & Queries.
Ian Luis Suarez knows when it comes to the arts, humanities and social sciences, universities are standing at an impasse. And it will take scholars from these fields to move towards progress, he said.

Named Associate Vice-President (Research) in 2017, Suarez stepped into the newly created position university officials envisioned providing unprecedented support for scholarship in the social sciences, arts and humanities.

The role presents a lot of possibilities for researchers at Western, noted Suarez, who holds a PhD in Hispanic Studies from McGill University, a PhD in Philosophy from the Universidad de Salamanca and has a number of other advanced degrees, including an executive MBA.

While the portfolio is broad, he wants to see the position act as a bridge across disciplines on campus, supporting researchers on the ‘softer’ side of the academy, while simultaneously presenting them with opportunities to collaborate on larger projects.

Jean Christy Bressette, BAY’93, BA’95, DPhIL’01, first stepped onto Western’s campus in 1995, determined to be “an evolving experience.” Thankfully, this was to be the case for an incoming student today.

This past year, Bressette partnered with Alan Weedon, Special Advisor to the Provost and former Vice-Provost (Academic) as co-chairs of the university’s task force to implement its Indigenous Strategic Plan. She is thrilled to play a role in ensuring a welcoming campus community for all Canadian students.

“I believe my gifts have helped me bring awareness to these issues and support all Canadians, and the challenges I face each day are the same challenges where I can lend that to help today’s Indigenous students finding a path,” she said. “Making it better for them makes all my work so worthwhile.”

The Western Mustangs ended a 23-year Vanier Cup drought with an exclamation mark this year, knocking off the defending champion and No. 1 nationally ranked Laval Rouge et Or 39-17 in the Canadian university football championship game last month in Hamilton.

It marked the seventh Vanier Cup for Western and served to avenge the Mustangs’ 2008 loss against Laval in the championship game, also played in Hamilton that year.

Other outstanding efforts from student sport teams included: Men’s Tennis – Canadian University Tennis champions; Women’s Softball – Canadian Collegiate Softball Association champions; Men’s Lacrosse – Canadian University Field Lacrosse Association champions; Women’s Rowing – Canadian University Rowing champions; and Cheerleading – PCA National Champions 2017.

Student athletes representing Western’s championship teams are, from left, Jordan Im (Cheerleading), Chris Merchant (Football), Nicole Baranow (Rowing), Cody Ward (Lacrosse), Rachael Jacques (Softball) and Andre Szilvassy (Tennis).

This year, Western alumna and Canadian opera singer Adrianne Pieczonka, BMus’85, DMus’12, joined them.

In her 30-year career, Pieczonka has graced leading opera stages in Europe, North America and Asia. Praised for being “luminous” and “radiant” on stage, in 2007 the soprano was named an Officer of the Order of Canada, an honour recognizing a lifetime of outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation.

Her stamp is one of five Canada Post issued in time for the 2017 opera season and is part of a collection that celebrates two Canadian-penned operas and individuals credited with bringing modern Canadian opera talent to the world stage.

SPECIAL TO WESTERN NEWS

Jrik Mandawe, BA’17 (Music), was named by the London Arts Council as its first Artist in Residence in 2017. Like the music he creates, he is an ever-shifting landscape. He studied anthropology in Siberia and Toronto, graduated with a music degree from Western and is currently enrolled in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, en route to a career in medicine.

Mandawe became an avid and accomplished athlete in volleyball, basketball, climbing, marathon running and ceremonial dancing. At the same time, he developed an interest in art with lessons in classical piano that morphed into classical and flamenco guitar, as well as photography and filmmaking.

But his art called him and he enrolled at Western as a part-time student while he also took on a staff role as Indigenous Liaison Admission Coordinator with Western Indigenous Services. He graduated this spring as a Gold Medalist – the highest grade-point-average among students in the program – with a four-year Bachelor of Arts in Music (completed in two years). He hopes to become a surgeon, although he is aware of both the push and pull that may lead him into becoming a community physician in Indigenous communities.

SPECIAL TO WESTERN NEWS

Earlier this year, aviators Bob and Steve Dengler, BA’93, were the first father/son team to circumnavigate the globe in a helicopter. The pair, along with seasoned pilot Rob MacDuff, took off from Ottawa July 1 in honour of Canada 150. They made more than 100 stops in 14 countries during their month-long journey.

Throughout the journey, which took Dengler and his father through the Canadian Arctic, and remote locations in Greenland, Iceland and Russia, they photographed and live streamed what they saw, thanks to a helicopter equipped with broadband Internet. They also brought VIP guests on board for “fly-overs” of remote areas. Among them were hockey legend Guy Lafleur, astronaut Dave Williams and internationally renowned photographer Peter Bregg.

PAUL MAYNE // WESTERN NEWS

Camille Inston, a third-year English and Theatre and Performance Studies student, is an accomplished playwright whose works have been produced professionally across the country. Winner of a National Playwriting Contest, she is the co-founder and director of ArtLaunch Theatre Company.

Already a published poet, ex-harpist and Hamilton Music Award-winning singer/songwriter, Inston, 20, was named the winner of a National Playwriting Contest in 2017 for a show she wrote and developed at the Grand Theatre in London.

Following the production of her first foray into theatre, Inston wrote Road, an experimental, “expressionist-esque” show featuring four strangers on a train who flow in and out of each other’s consciousness. On a whim, she submitted the piece to the Grand Theatre, which annually invites submissions from professional and amateur writers in southwestern Ontario, selecting choice pieces for professional staging showcases.

Earlier this year, Road was selected out of 300 plays worldwide to be staged in a professional setting at a festival in Vancouver. It also won the Newmarket National Play Festival competition in which 24 Canadian plays were performed over a weekend in July.

ADELE TALBOT // WESTERN NEWS

THE VOICE | ADRIANNE PIECZONKA

THE ADVENTURER | STEVE DENGLER

THE POET | ERIK MENDAWE

THE PLAYWRIGHT | CAMILLE INSTON
ommissioned by Western's Canada 150 Committee, Engineering student Ethan Kellough created and designed a one-of-a-kind time capsule to help the university celebrate Canada's 150th birthday this past year. Soon on permanent display in the D.B. Weldon Library, the capsule will be opened on Canada's 200th birthday in 2067.

Kellough was given few parameters by the Western's Canada 150 Committee regarding the design—it had to last 50 years in direct sunlight, have a capacity of 1.2 cubic feet and cost less than $1,867. Beyond that, he was free to do what he wanted with the overall look.

While the time capsule has a sleek aluminum finish, Kellough initially made an effort to add a little ‘purple pride’ to the mix, but technology wouldn’t cooperate.

Students, staff and faculty participated with personal messages, insights or reflections for future generations, to be included in the time capsule.

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THE NEXT GENERATION | SARAH SVENNINGSEN

Sarah Svenningsen, who completed her PhD in Medical Biophysics at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, received the John Charles Polany Prize in 2017, presented by the Council of Ontario Universities, which recognizes outstanding researchers in early stages of their career who are contributing to preclinical study of pulmonary disease. Svenningsen is currently a postdoctoral appointment at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

While at Western, Svenningsen was amongst the first in Canada to approach medical imaging technology as a potential treatment tool for asthma. Early on, her research indicated MRI technology could be used to deliver targeted more effective treatment to asthma sufferers. Since then, her research has been scaling up, attracting both patients and health-care providers.

Named after John Charles Polany, recipient of the 1969 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, the prize annually recognizes five outstanding researchers in early stages of their career.

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THE RACER | PETE McLEOD

Pete McLeod, BA’07 (Economics), cannot remember a time when he wasn’t flying while growing up in Red Lake, Ont. The 33-year-old Londoner is an accomplished bush pilot, had his pilot license at 16, pursued aerial aerobatics at 18 and earned his instructor rating in less than a year. This year, McLeod became the first Canadian to claim an overall podium in the Red Bull Air Race World Championship, taking third place at the season finale in October at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Following successes at the North American Collegiate Championships—all while earning his Economics degree at Western—McLeod competed in classical aerobatics internationally, before switching his focus to racing. In 2009, he rewrote history when he became the World Championship Series’ youngest pilot at 25 and became its youngest race winner ever at 30.

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THE FUTURE | TIME CAPSULE

Commissioned by Western’s Canada 150 Committee, Engineering student Ethan Kellough created and designed a one-of-a-kind time capsule to help the university celebrate Canada’s 150th birthday. Scheduled to be opened in 2067 in the D.B. Weldon Library, the capsule will be opened on Canada’s 200th birthday.

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or Madalena Kozachuk, it’s all about bringing history back into focus. And her attempts to do so garnered much attention earlier this year.

The Western PhD student is working to preserve 19th-Century Canadian artifacts by analyzing the chemical elements of daguerreotypes, the first commercially available photographs, which date back to the early 1840s.

The daguerreotype is a unique image on a silvered copper plate which, in contrast to photographic paper, is not flexible. Though very fragile, the mirror-like surface of the plate allowed for accurate, detailed and permanent images. Kozachuk said, and such requires individual and specific needs when it comes to preservation.

To determine the chemical makeup of the daguerreotype, your everyday microscope isn’t going to do the trick. Enter the Canadian Light Source in Saskatoon, which houses Canada’s only synchrotron-based research facility. A synchrotron is a source of brilliant light that scientists can use to gather information about the structural and chemical properties of materials at the molecular level.

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alumni.westernu.ca/connect/awards/merit.html

Patrick Mahon, an accomplished artist and Visual Arts professor, named among the new Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada earlier this fall, is mapping out the calendar year preparing to take the helm of Western’s School for Advanced Studies in the Arts and Humanities (SASAH), a unique-to-Canada program that offers an elite liberal arts education within the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, engages students in hands-on and experiential learning, as well as international travel and exchange options – all under the same degree umbrella. The program graduated its first cohort this year.

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The specialized school, within the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, engages students in a broader and more meaningful way that allows them to see the relevance and impact of larger socio-cultural issues and how they relate to academic study.

In internationally recognized art historian and influential scholar of medieval art, Kathryn Brush’s focus on the histories, theories and practices of art history and visual culture in the 19th and 20th Centuries has made her one of the most sought after researchers for everything medieval.

To say she had a big year would be an understatement. Brush was awarded Western’s Distinguished University Professorship, acknowledging her sustained excellence in scholarship and teaching. She was also named to the Killam Prize for Achievement in Research, Western’s top research honour.

Brush’s sustained creativity and leadership in both the scholarly and curatorial realms has significantly enlarged – and revised – the critical study of art and cultural history in Europe, United States and Canada.

For more information email susan.henderson@uwo.ca or call 519-661-2111 ext 85871
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Paul Mayne // Western News
PAUL MAYNE // WESTERN NEWS

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THE ALLEY | SHOAIB RIZVI

When he came to Canada in 2010, Rizvi experienced a culture in which women received support, resources, encouragement, and the opportunity to start their own ventures, but not in his home country of Pakistan. It was four years ago when Rizvi began waging an uphill battle against the conventional culture of Pakistan by initiating the ‘I Am an Entrepreneur’ campaign, which provides microloans and mentorship training, to provide the resources and drive to start their own ventures, but not the necessary resources.

Rizvi has been a speaker at several high-level conferences on sustainable development, including the World and the Summer Youth Assembly at the United Nations, the Undergraduate Awards Global Summit, and was the youngest person to address the Undergraduate Awards Global Summit in Dublin, Ireland. This past summer, Rizvi was an intern at the United Nations World Tourism Organization and was also selected for a worldwide cohort of 10,000 to attend the University of Cape Town Innovation Lab, a nine-day social innovation session in Cape Town, Denmark.

THE DIRECTOR | JANICE FORSYTH

Janice Forsyth is the new Director of the First Nations Studies program in the Faculty of Social Science. As the program undergoes review and looks toward attaining departmental status, Forsyth is excited by the momentum and institutional support generated by Western’s Indigenous Strategic Plan.

She stepped into the role of FNS director from a position in the Faculty of Health Sciences, which she joined in January 2010, as Director of the International Centre for Mycological Studies. Forsyth, with a degree in history and a passion for the history of Indigenous physical culture and how it can be used to understand the history of Indigenous settler relations in Canada. She is currently working on a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council-funded project on the history of Indigenous First Nations education in Canada, including the National Indian Residential School system.

THE FRONT LINE | SHANE SMITH AND VIVIAN MCALISTER

Shane Smith and Vivian McAlister received support, resources, encouragement, and the opportunity to start their own ventures, but not in his home country of Pakistan. It was four years ago when Rizvi began waging an uphill battle against the conventional culture of Pakistan by initiating the ‘I Am an Entrepreneur’ campaign, which provides microloans and mentorship training, to provide the resources and drive to start their own ventures, but not the necessary resources. Forsyth has been a speaker at several high-level conferences on sustainable development, including the World and the Summer Youth Assembly at the United Nations, the Undergraduate Awards Global Summit, and was the youngest person to address the Undergraduate Awards Global Summit in Dublin, Ireland. This past summer, Rizvi was an intern at the United Nations World Tourism Organization and was also selected for a worldwide cohort of 10,000 to attend the University of Cape Town Innovation Lab, a nine-day social innovation session in Cape Town, Denmark.

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Christine Stapleton, a proven leader in athletics at both the university and national sport level, was named Western's new Director (Sport and Recreation Services) in 2017. Stapleton came to Western with more than 30 years of experience in university sports, serving as an administrator, coach and competing as a student-athlete.

Since the fall of 2015, Stapleton was the Director of Athletics at the University of Calgary, leading all elements of strategic planning and program development, as well as the day-to-day operations. Prior to this, Stapleton served as Associate Director – Athletics, at the University of Waterloo.

Prior to moving into an administrative role, Stapleton had a successful run as coach of the University of Regina's women's basketball program from 1993-2002, winning three conference coach of the year awards, CIAU Coach of the Year in 1996 and 3M Canadian High Performance Coach of the Year in 2001.