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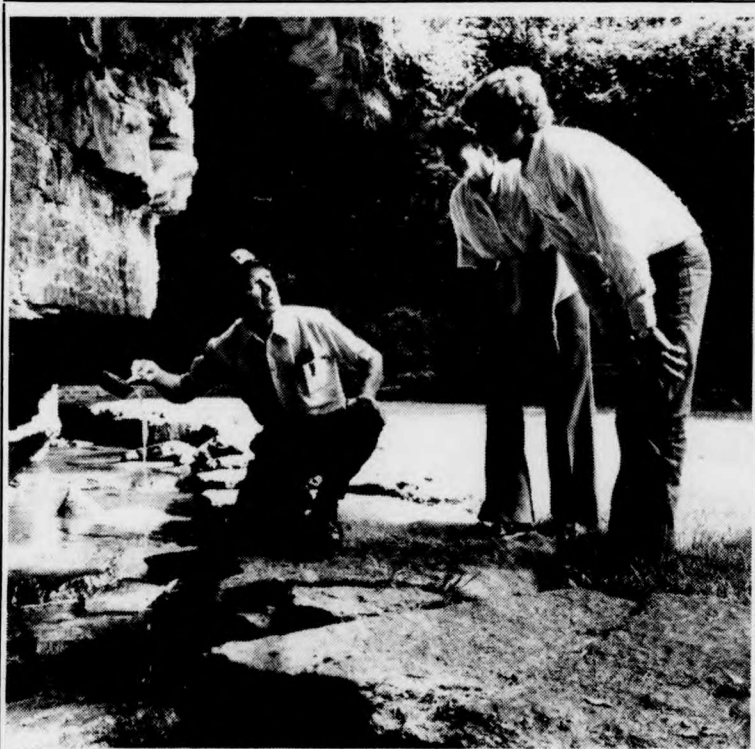


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SPORTS Cont'd

York business grad is brains behind Blue Jay calendar

By LORNE MANLY

September 10, 1977: Toronto Blue Jay third baseman Roy Howell drives in nine runs, leading the fledgling expansion club to a 19-3 victory over the New York Yankees. It is the most runs scored against the Bronx Bombers in 50 years.

May 4, 1980: Otto "The Swatto" Velez slugs three home runs, still a Blue Jay record, in the first game of a doubleheader against the Cleveland Indians. Velez adds one more in the nightcap.

Offering long-time Blue Jay fans a chance to relive the club's past and newer fans an opportunity to soak up some baseball history, Charles Kirk, a recent York MBA graduate, conceived the 10th Anniversary Blue Jay Calendar. A Blue Jay trivia tidbit accompanies each day of the year and photos of the club's milestones are featured throughout the calendar.

Kirk came up with the idea of a calendar chock-full of history and trivia after the Blue Jays' success in 1985, when they captured the American East crown. Despite losing to the Kansas City Royals in the championship series, baseball fever had gripped on the Toronto psyche. Blue Jay paraphenalia was everywhere and Kirk saw an opportunity to put his business knowledge toward something he enjoyed doing.

As he drew nearer to the end of his MBA programme, Kirk began job hunting. "But I didn't want to work for anyone," Kirk said, "I wanted to be my own boss." Working on the Blue Jays' tenth anniversary calendar was the answer to this dilemma.

Kirk, now 32, completed his undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Guelph in 1977, and his first job was at a correctional centre in the city working as a researcher for the head psychologist. There he investigated the differences between violent and non-violent criminals, making up a questionnaire and conducting many of the interviews. But this job paid poorly and Kirk began moonlighting selling Filter Queen vacuum cleaners to make ends meet.

After working at the centre for one year, Kirk went straight to Filter Queen, working full-time and soon receiving his own franchise. But he became disillusioned with this life and started thinking about an MBA. "I could do the practical in business, like the selling door to door," Kirk explained, "but the theory and finance—I was lost at it. I burnt out like many in the business field and I went back to school for this business theory."

His girlfriend, Liz Voogjarv, had already obtained her MBA from McMaster and she encouraged Kirk to return to school. With this added push Kirk enrolled at York in January 1984.

Blue Jay fever peaked in October of last year and even though he was still taking courses, Kirk embarked on a project that would take thousands of hours to complete. "I only had two courses to go," Kirk said, "and they weren't that taxing."

His first step to making the calendar a reality was to obtain the Jays' permission, a challenging task to say the least as the Jays are very protective of their corporate image. "It took two or three phone calls before the Jays actually gave me a date to see them," Kirk recalled. "They told me not to spend too much time or money on it (the presentation), but by then I had already spent 500 hours on the calendar before I met them. If I had gone in there with any old mockup that I had put together in a couple of hours, (the Jays) would not have given me the time of day."

But (the Jays) gave Kirk the right to produce the calendar after all, leaving him overjoyed. "I was ecstatic," Kirk said. "This proved that maybe it wasn't

just me that thought it was a good idea. 'Till you get feedback (on a project) you don't know if it's a good idea only in your own head or one that has business feasibility." Obtaining the licensing rights confirmed the feasibility of the venture, and boosted Kirk's confidence sky high.

Kirk thought that the hard part was over, but the long hours and numerous hassles were just beginning. "I thought pictures would be easy to get hold of," Kirk said, "but it took an awful long time." Kirk first approached the Toronto Star but the first two photographers he asked said no to his entreaties to buy their photos. But after he spoke to Mike Walton, the head of promotions at The Star, he received full co-operation. "Permission was the hardest to get from The Star but The Star has been the most helpful (of any newspaper) since . . . They have helped me with graphic design, where to advertise, and might use the calendar as a giveaway," Kirk added.

After sifting through thousands of photos, Kirk whittled his selection down to the final 22 that make up the calendar. He then had to clear the pictures with the Jays, since the organization had final say on the contents (both pictures and facts) of the calendar. This, along with Kirk having to wait until the end of the 1986 season before releasing the calendar (in case the Jays won the pennant), were the only conditions of Kirk's licensing agreement with the Toronto ballclub. But the Jays okayed every photo and piece of information Kirk presented to them.

The only thing Kirk feared the Jays would reject was the cover shot of Doyle Alexander after the Jays clinched the pennant last October against the New York Yankees.

"I had some doubts the Jays would say no as he had been ripping management," Kirk said. "But it was a picture of him being carried off the field (by teammates). That signifies an event, not an individual player . . . and the Jays didn't mind."

Kirk has a strong admiration for the way the Jays conduct business. "They've been very helpful with advice," Kirk said, "and they're always available. They're a good organization; they make you feel that what you're doing is worthwhile."

Work on the calendar has dominated Kirk's entire life since late last year. "I've been putting in 60 hours a week," Kirk said, "I haven't had a holiday since I started but I won't burn myself out because I really like the job."

Producing the calendar has been a sizeable financial risk for Kirk. Kirk's expenses so far are nearing \$60,000 and he won't see any return on his investment until at least

February as the calendars are being sold on consignment. Kirk's initial loan was for \$20,000 but that was spent long ago. "I've asked him (the loan officer) for another \$20,000 or \$30,000," Kirk said. "Now, I have to go back in and plead my case."

The culmination of a year's labour is nearly at an end for Kirk. He recently received final approval for the calendar and it will reach the stores at the beginning of October. It will sell for \$8.50, a price Kirk finds very reasonable. "I priced calendars last year, ones that had comparable paper (quality-wise) and good colour pictures," Kirk recounted, "and they were about \$10 or \$11."

Kirk needs to sell between 20,000 and 25,000 calendars to break even, and he fully expects to reach this figure. "I think the calendars could be one of the hot items this Christmas," Kirk said. "It would make a great stocking stuffer." Kirk is so confident his venture will be successful that he has begun preliminary enquiries into another sports related project involving history (although not necessarily a calendar). This time Kirk has set his sights even higher, aiming at the American market. Taking into account Kirk's dogged determination exhibited over the past year, his ventures should prove profitable.



Charles Kirk

Soccer Yeomen's third loss of season leaves them in precarious position

By JAMES HOGGETT

The York Yeomen soccer team may find themselves behind the eight ball after splitting last weekend's home stand. Their record now falls to 1-3, and playoff hopes are in doubt.

On Saturday the Yeomen impressively defeated RMC Redmen 3-0, but were thumped by the Queen's Golden Gaels the next day by a score of 3-1.

Before their weekend home stand

the Yeomen played the Toronto Blues at Varsity stadium.

In the game against RMC the Yeomen performed a complete turnaround. Whereas in their previous two games York started off the first half flat, this time they attacked the Redmen vigorously. Despite the sloppy field from the rain the previous night, which made footing unstable, York managed to score three goals. York pressed RMC in

their end and the Redmen's defence could not hold back the Yeomen's strong attack for long. Anthony Robbins, a second year law student, opened the scoring for York on a blast from about 30 feet out, and the York defence did not allow the Redmen a good shot on goal the rest of the first half.

"We played really well despite the harsh conditions," Robbins said.

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