

Generation X-cellent

Never Underestimate anybody under 30

By Brian Salvatore '03

Brian Salvatore '03 is a public relations major. After graduation, he hopes to start a career in public relations and continue the success of Rowan's Xers.

The much touted and often tarnished Generation X has been labeled as a pack of selfish, cynical slackers—but not these under-30 alums. Recommended by professors and mentors, these Rowan Xers are polished after just a few years on the job. They've built already-remarkable careers and although their fields of expertise vary, they all shine.

Jason Weber

Lights. Camera. Baseball. Jason Weber '97, a producer for Major League Baseball Productions, took lights, a camera crew and a baseball player and created a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



The communication graduate produced a two-hour special on Cal Ripkin, legendary retired third baseman for the Baltimore Orioles. The special aired on ESPN's "The Season" on Oct. 26, 2001. Weber and his crew followed Ripkin on and off the field, from the time he stepped off the plane at spring training to his last game. "I was involved in shooting, interviewing and editing," says Weber. "It was the most amazing experience I've had so far."

His production roots date back to Rowan's Channel 5 and Rowan Radio. Weber was sports director and had his own radio show on WGLS. "I learned so much about production that really put me ahead of others," says Weber. "The radio station was up to par with the best technology."

Upon graduation, Weber interned at ESPN's public relations office in New York City. That opportunity led to working in ESPN's production studios in Bristol, Conn., on programs such as SportsCenter, Baseball Tonight and

many others. "It was the greatest learning experience in TV sports," he adds.

Weber, a Nutley resident, is currently piecing together a Derek Jeter biography that will air on the new YES network, the all-Yankees channel in New York. "Working with MLB Productions has presented me with opportunities I couldn't have achieved elsewhere in sports television," says the South Jersey native. "Someday, I hope to cover a World Series involving the Phillies."

David Lawyer

In a matter of five years, David Lawyer '96 went from dealing with companies whose revenues were \$25 million to handling those with numbers beyond a billion. He is assistant vice president of National City Bank's transportation, equipment and leasing division in Philadelphia.

With a team of nine, Lawyer originates and manages banking relationships for clients. His division's portfolio exceeds \$800 million of credit and asset-backed exposure to Fortune 1000 companies.

"Working with Fortune 1000 companies allows you to work with large and small organizations," explains Lawyer. "It gives you a good range of working in informal and formal environments."



Lawyer started his banking career as a credit analyst, then became a capital market analyst for Corestates Bank. When First Union purchased Corestates in 1998, he became a senior analyst.

In college, Lawyer wanted to understand how institutions function financially. He interned at Rowan's Business Office and Recreation Center, tracking

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revenue. "These internships taught me how to develop budgets and create spreadsheets," says Lawyer. "Now I use these skills everyday."

Lawyer, who lives in Washington Township with his wife, awaits the completion of their new home being built in Monroe Township. In May he graduates from Rutgers' MBA program with a concentration in finance. He hopes to share his knowledge of credit analysis in the college classroom. "I would love to teach at Rowan," Lawyer says. "It would be great to be a part of the outstanding program already established."

Sarah Friedman

Most people say they walk to the beat of their own drum. As the manager of tele-funding and direct-mail for the Philadelphia Orchestra, Sarah Friedman '00 works to the beat of an entire orchestra.

Friedman got her start in fundraising at Rowan. While she was studying radio, television and film, she was a phone-a-thon



assistant for the annual fund campaign in the Alumni Relations office. The opportunity changed her focus from television to fundraising. "Working for them was a great experience," says Friedman. "I found it rewarding talking with people everyday and helping an institution grow."

Now, at the Kimmel Center, Friedman listens to more than ringing phones. "Besides helping the growth of the arts, I get to hear beautiful music everyday," she says. "I can hear them rehearsing from my office. You can't find too many jobs with such an advantage."

As for her future, Friedman hopes to climb the ladder to director of fundraising and development. "I would love to stay with the orchestra forever," she says. In her free time, Friedman volunteers for Friends United in Need, a social and community service organiza-

tion that coordinates food drives and fundraising events for non-profit groups. "The organization helped me become socially involved when I moved to Philadelphia," she says. "I also try to stay socially involved at Rowan by participating in the alumni events. It is always great to return to a place that gave you so much."

Adam Gustavson

Adam Gustavson '96 says illustrating children's books is a picture perfect job. "Children's stories allow me to use my imagination," he says. "They are so much fun."

Gustavson has painted six illustrations for a John Grisham story published in Oxford American magazine. His children's books include *The Day Eddie Met the Author* by Louise Borden and *Where the Big Fish Are* by Jonathan London.

At an early age, Gustavson discovered his drawing skills. He attended Rowan as an illustration major and produced prints for Venue and worked on the staff of D'Kine. After graduation, he earned a master's degree in illustration and visual essay from The School of Visual Arts in New York City. "It just made sense to become an illustrator," explains Gustavson. "It has always been with me and it has always been something I've cared a lot about."

To illustrate children's books, Gustavson relies on his ability to consistently draw characters throughout a story. "You live with the characters and their scenarios for six months or so," he says. "You start to feel like you are a part of the story." His fourth book, *Bad Dog Dodger* by Barbara Abercrombie, will be available in the spring.

Today, Gustavson lives in West Orange with his wife and son. He teaches art appreciation at Passiac County Community College and enjoys speaking about art and his work at area ele-



mentary schools and public libraries. "I find it rewarding educating those without a strong art background," says Gustavson. "I enjoy sharing my experiences."

Spike Cook

The first day of college for any student can be terrifying. Spike Cook '97, dean of student affairs for the Camden Academy Charter High



School in Camden, makes sure it is one of the most rewarding. The school provides a pre-college atmosphere with a long-term goal to expose students to college campuses in the area.

Cook started at the Camden Academy as a school-to-work counselor for the eighth grade. His jump to dean of student affairs gave him many responsibilities such as handling enrollment, teaching classes, advising students and developing student activities. "It is such a rewarding feeling to help a new program flourish," says Cook.

Cook first taught at Union County College in Philadelphia where he developed a desire to help high school students after watching incoming freshmen struggle. "So many students were never exposed to the college atmosphere," Cook says. He started Camden Academy's freshman immersion program, which allows students to spend a week on Rowan's campus. "Involving my alma mater is a great feeling," adds Cook. "The University's support is great for the program."

In his free time, Cook offers his services to the March of Dimes and runs in area races to raise funds for charity. He also considers starting his own business and tries to take part in alumni events whenever possible. "Rowan invested so much time in me," says Cook. "I just try to give back whenever I can."

Byron Bustos

His wish to serve the public followed Byron Bustos '99 through college to his job today. As an evaluator for the

Office of Inspector General for the United States Postal Service, he handles congressional inquiries, complaints and investigations within the Postal Service umbrella.

In May 2001, Bustos earned his master's degree in public administration from Seton Hall. He started working for the Inspector General's Office in June 2001 in New Jersey and was later transferred to Virginia. Bustos' job includes receiving complaints from congressmen who receive them from the public. Then he assures they are handled in a timely and professional manner.

At Rowan, Bustos was president of the student government association, which helped point him in the direction of public service. "Working with the board of trustees and the president of the University made me realize I wanted to become involved with public service," he says. "They treated you like a person, not a student."

Bustos resides in Alexandria, Va. but dreams of possibly returning to Passaic to run for mayor or become a U.S. Representative. In his free time, he teaches English as a Second Language at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria. He is grateful for the opportunities he encountered at Rowan. "Rowan gave me a lot of confidence," said Bustos. "I don't think I could have experienced such a great atmosphere elsewhere."

Dan O'Neill

Dan O'Neill '00 spent four years searching for missiles as an electronic warfare technician in the U.S. Navy. Today, as manager of business development for the Brownstein Group, an advertising agency, he searches for ideas to help businesses and organizations achieve their bottom-line. O'Neill



serves accounts such as Microsoft, Krispy Kreme Donuts and First Republic Bank.

In June 2000, O'Neill planted himself in the Philadelphia region as an associate public relations account manager. He traveled the promotion ladder unusually quickly—he was promoted twice within a year and a half. O'Neill, who served as president of the Public Relations Student Society of America and received the Anthony J. Fulginiti Medallion, an award given to the top graduate in Public Relations, credits Rowan and the communication department for his success. "My relationship with the professors allowed me to land two internships," explains O'Neill. "I even met my current boss at a PRSSA event."

Today, the Blackwood resident, engaged to marry Carina Krueger in April 2003, divides his free time as a mentor for the American Association of Advertising Agencies and as a member of the International Association of Business Communicators. He also returns to Rowan for speaking and mentoring engagements. "One of Rowan's greatest assets is that I wasn't just a face in the crowd," says O'Neill. "You are given the opportunity to work with professional people everyday. Rowan and the communication program gave me so much and I feel I should give back."

James Whitescarver and Pete Kuzma

Many musicians dream of signing with a big record label someday. James Whitescarver '98 and Pete Kuzma '99 are on the path to turn that dream into reality.

Whitescarver, an acoustic guitarist and vocalist, and Kuzma, a keyboard player, assembled Malcolm Bliss, a modern rock band. Roommates since their Rowan days and now in Haddon Heights, they are creating and recording work to be pitched to major labels such as RCA and Sony.

Kuzma's work as musical director for Jill Scott, an R&B and hip-hop recording artist, has opened the door for Malcolm Bliss' recording opportunities. On tour



with Jill Scott and performing on such shows as "The Late Show with David Letterman," and "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno" have allowed Kuzma to develop contacts throughout the industry. "These gigs really helped me become part of the music scene," he says. "It is just like being part of a family."

Whitescarver follows a slightly different beat than Kuzma, teaching music at Haddon Heights Elementary School and directing the fourth, fifth and sixth grade choir. "I never considered elementary school until I did my student teaching," says Whitescarver, who plans to marry Erin Duncan '98. "Working with the kids keeps me calm throughout the recording process. It is just a lot of fun to watch them showcase their talents as I teach them the basics of music."

Partners in their band and their musical dream, Kuzma and Whitescarver are optimistic and realistic about their goal. "This opportunity is exciting," says Whitescarver. "But we have learned not to get excited until the signatures are on the paper."

Jennifer Locane

Jennifer Locane '99 tiptoed around her dream of becoming a professional dancer. The only thing that delayed her was a desire to obtain a college degree. Locane did both—she graduated from college and dances in Detroit as a rockette in the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, which performs in six cities across the United States



every year.

Attending college before pursuing a dance career was not an easy decision for Locane. The environment and advantages of college helped her decide. "I wanted to experience college for college," she says. "Dance is a risky business. Some days they want tall. Some days they want short. I decided a degree would be my best choice."

Rowan was the right choice for Locane. While working toward her degree, she remained involved with dance, choreographing homecoming dances for her sorority, participating in the Rowan Dance Company and teaching dance to area youths.

After earning her undergraduate degree in business, she shuffled off to New York. "I just decided to go audition," says Locane. "I knew if I wanted to jump start a career in dance it would have to be in New York."

In the future, the Hamilton resident hopes to combine dancing with her academic discipline. "My degree helps me see the business side of dancing," she explains.

"Someday I want to enter the business and production side of things. I want to make the decisions."



Bob Jones

Bob Jones '00 seems to always be one step ahead of everyone else when it comes to technology. He is an account manager for Sensors Unlimited, a Princeton firm specializing in near-infrared technology used in the telecommunications industry.

Jones, a member of the first engineering class at Rowan, sells new technological products to scientists and engineers that help them in their research. He travels and meets with different scientists throughout the year. "With my job, you are always seeing the cutting edge of technology," says Jones. "The tough part is

when you know about these great projects before everyone else, but you can't tell anyone."

The electrical and computer engineering major discovered Sensors Unlimited at a career fair at Rowan. "That was one of the best things about the program at Rowan," he says. "The department always went out of their way to expose you to any job opportunity." Jones narrowed his choices down to the small Princeton company after ten other interviews.

In his spare time, Jones and his classmate John Sausman '00, handle work for Information Technology Outsourcing, their consulting firm that designs engineering software for small companies at a low cost. As for the future, the Yardville resident hopes to move into a management position. "Being able to combine both engineering skills and business skills has opened the door to success for me," says Jones. "I am just focused on moving up the ladder."

Kelli Lewis

"Dr. Tumminia always said he saw me in fundraising," says Kelli Lewis '96, director and

supervisor of the annual fund at Teachers College, Columbia University. "He was right."

Lewis is currently working to raise \$1.35 million toward a total of \$6.9 million, the annual fund goal for the Campaign for Teachers College. "The change that comes about when you raise money is that you realize the campaign is the life blood of the college," says Lewis. "The institution would not be able to advance without the help of an annual fund."

As an advertising major, Lewis planned to become a top executive in the field. Her first job was in advertising, but she eventually real-



ized her love was fundraising.

"Fundraising was what I knew," explains Lewis. "Raising money for a good cause and watching the growth of an institution is just a more rewarding feeling."

Lewis dates her fundraising experience back to her days at Rowan when she assisted the phone-a-thon for the annual fund in Rowan's alumni office. While earning her master's degree in public administration at Seton Hall, she helped establish their annual fund and took on the title of assistant director.

Lewis, who will wed Christopher Gonzalez in October 2002, hopes to further her career in fundraising and do some consulting. "Fundraising is going to be my career path," says Lewis. "I just enjoy making a difference."



Alison Roberts

Alison Roberts '97 stands in the spotlight a little differently than others—her stitching and design take center stage. Roberts is the costume supervisor for the Arden Theatre Company, a full-service professional regional theatre in Philadelphia.

With an actress for a mother, drama was a part of the Metuchen native's childhood. "My mom always took me to the theatre and my dream was to be an actress," says Roberts. "That's how I developed my love for the theatre."

Roberts entered Rowan as an aspiring actress. She accepted a work-study job during her freshman year in the costume shop while she auditioned for shows. "I thought it might be fun," explains Roberts. "My main focus was still acting."

Acting slowly moved backstage as Roberts found herself more involved with costuming. She made costumes for her classmates' shows at the lab theatre, a student-run organization on campus. "I went out and found work for

myself," she says. "I learned a lot on my own. The more I did costuming, the more I preferred it over acting."

Upon earning her master's degree in costume design and technology from Illinois State University, Roberts settled down in Philadelphia with the Arden Theatre Company. She constructed and made major alterations to nearly 60 costumes for one of the Arden's biggest productions, *Baby Case*, a play about the Lindbergh baby kidnapping. "The arts are a great way to escape the real world," says Roberts. "I look at theatre as always trying to reach out to people."



Herb Mitschele

Herb Mitschele '00 will always be a kid at heart, which is helpful for someone in the business of play. He oversees the engineering and design team for Manley Toy Quest and handles the international sales department. Mitschele started playing with his toy career during an internship at Matchbox and Mattel his senior year. "I was not really sure what I wanted to do," says Mitschele. "Once I heard toys, it sounded fun. I thought I would give it a shot." Upon graduation, he was given the position of associate product manager.

After a few years with Matchbox and Mattel, he took a position with Manley Toy Quest where he was given the opportunity to create and develop toys, not just market them. He also travels six out of 12 months every year. "I always wanted to travel," Mitschele explains. "Now I get to travel the world and talk about toys."

Last year, Mitschele took part in creating *Techno*, the remote controlled dog, which became the number one toy in the industry. He is currently developing *Six Flags* water park items.

When he's not on a plane or promoting toys, Mitschele enjoys playing baseball and football. He also dreams of hav-

ing his own company. But for now, the Manhattan Beach, Calif., resident focuses on making children smile. "It's a great feeling to see excited children in the toy stores," he says, "especially when it is because of a toy you created."

Greg Warren

On a typical day, Greg Warren '97 may use his knowledge and skills to fight a common cold or cardiac disease. He is in his residence training to become a doctor of internal medicine. Warren, a biology graduate, rotates out of three hospitals in the Hartford, Conn., area. He handles shifts ranging from 10 to 36 hours. "Sometimes you are on call and you stay all night," explains Warren. "Other times you stay because you are waiting for secure status on one of your patients."

After finishing his undergraduate studies at Rowan, Warren attended medical school at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, School of Osteopathic Medicine. "I was always interested in science," says Warren. "It was either conduct research and teach or become a doctor. I wanted to help people, so I chose to be a doctor."

Warren, a Middletown, Conn., resident, finds positives and negatives to his career. "It's gratifying to help people everyday," he says. "You also never stop learning. On the other hand, you develop such a close relationship and responsibility for your patients. It can be a lot of pressure."

Returning to New Jersey is one of Warren's goals. "I would love to stay in the academic world, training and working with students," he says. Now he focuses on completing his residency and finding spare time to jog. "You don't have too much time," adds Warren. "But sometimes, you can get away."



Paul Parkinson

Paul Parkinson '97 constantly sees double—and he's happy about it. He is a senior current product engineer/lead engineer for Hewlett Packard Middleware Division in Mt. Laurel and has the luxury of controlling his twin laptops and twin toddlers at home.

Parkinson writes software maintenance patches and enhancements that help link wireless devices and browsers with corporate legacy systems. These systems allow corporate information to be accessed from any place at any time.

As an accounting major, Parkinson started playing with programming on the side by creating a tax form application for one of his tax courses. "I took an MIS course and it opened my eyes to the tight connection between business and tech systems," says Parkinson. "I saw firsthand how people were literally replaced by software programs."

Upon graduating, he was hired at Music 123.com and then moved on to HP. With the dynamic growth of the Internet, Parkinson's skills were a hot commodity. "It was an exciting time for the Internet industry," says Parkinson. "The technology even gave me the ability to work from home."

When the computers are shut down, Parkinson enjoys reading about related Internet technologies or spending time with his wife and twin girls in their Mt. Royal residence. "I hope to teach a course in the future," Parkinson says. "In today's world, it's not only good to use a skill, but to understand it and have the ability to pass it on to others." ■

