



INSIGHT

CITYSCAPE

We watched, and admired, this year

The Star's People to Watch in 2014 lived up to their promise

JENNIFER BILL TORONTO STAR

Their impact was felt across Toronto as the Toronto Star's People to Watch in 2014 took centre stage and flourished before our eyes.

From playing in two World Cups to helming WorldPride Toronto to putting a Canadian spin on the Justice League comic books, our People to Watch showed why they remain worthy of our attention.

> Antonija Kreso: The 29-year-old Toronto researcher has been digging deep into the biology of cancer. The University of Toronto medical school student, who has a PhD in molecular genetics, has been looking for new colon cancer drugs that can stop tumour growth in its tracks.

"We are looking at new molecules to target colon cancer cells and we have found several that may be promising targets," she said from the Hospital for Sick Children pediatric emergency department, her current placement. "We're very excited."

This year, Kreso's work was published in several top scientific journals and she received two major honours: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Lap-Chee Tsui Publication Award and the Lucille Williams Award in Cancer Research from U of T.

> Knia Singh: Caribana Arts Group's first Canadian-born chair is pulling out all the stops this year so he can see a successful 2015 Caribana season in his final term.

"I want to see the legacy remain," says Singh, 40, a second-year student at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School, who has held the Caribana position for three years. "I want to make sure our presence is felt, our traditions continue and the cultural impact on the community is there."

Singh is also among a group of activists challenging the controversial police practice of carding, and he continues to mentor young people in his community.

"I want to ensure youth are treated fairly," he says. "I share with them that anything's possible, it's about discipline and believing in what you are doing."

> Matt Johnson: Matt Johnson, the young Toronto filmmaker behind the 2013 indie film The Dirties, is mopping up vomit. He is surprisingly upbeat. It's the night after a wild Christmas party for the staff of his production company, Zapruder Films, and he's been cleaning for three hours. Why him? "I lost a trivia game."

Recent bad luck aside, there was much to celebrate this year, as Johnson, 29, and fellow filmmakers Matt Miller and Jared Raab (one of the Star's People to Watch in 2011) opened Zapruder.

The team is currently working on a slate of projects: Operation Avalanche, a "fake documentary" for Lionsgate on the 1960s moon-landing program; a pilot for FX, which Johnson describes as an "insane, reality-bending comedy" for Sacha Baron Cohen's company, Four By Two; a documentary on the rise of



They will make an impact this coming year, from comic books to cancer research. To accompany our profiles, and in homage to 2013's word of the year, we asked each of them to send us a selfie



Antonija Kreso A13



Kevin Beaulieu A13



Knia Singh A14



Ben Peterson A14



Vincent Pratchett E4



Petra Collins E4



Matt Johnson E4



Ebony Oshunrinde E1



Sura Yekka S1



Jeff Lemire IN1

Toronto band July Talk; and a not-your-average John A. Macdonald biopic, with funding from Telefilm Canada. "We turn it into a thriller, like a Star Wars story, showing (Macdonald) as the Darth Vader of Canadian history."

> Wondagurl: She has been creating beats for nearly 10 years, and she doesn't turn 18 until Dec. 28.

The Brampton rap producer, whose breakthrough came at age 16 when she created a beat that caught the ear of Jay-Z, has been spending ample time in the studio, producing a track with P Reign, a hip-hop artist out of Montreal affiliated with Drake, American rapper Travi\$ Scott and, well, "the list goes on."

Wondagurl, whose real name is Ebony Oshunrinde, is staying mum on the bulk of her upcoming collaborations, but says the artists she is working with are "big." With a production credit on the Jay-Z song "Crown," which garnered her a Grammy nod with the nomination of Magna Carta Holy Grail for Best Rap Album, it's no surprise so many are lining up to work her.

"I listen to these people all the time, and now I'm producing tracks with

them — that's a really good feeling."

> Kevin Beaulieu: Steering the ship for WorldPride Toronto 2014 was "a life moment" for Kevin Beaulieu. The executive director of Pride Toronto was thrilled when the city won the bid to host WorldPride, the annual celebration of LGBTIQ communities.

"It really was a wonderful moment for the city..." says Beaulieu, 43. "It had a positive impact on people's lives here and abroad." WorldPride was also a "big success" in economic terms. The economic impact was \$719 million for the city, according to the Pride Toronto 2014 annual report.

After three years, Beaulieu is leaving his post on a high note and says he wants to keep working on a community level.

> Jeff Lemire: The Toronto writer/artist is surprisingly grounded for someone straddling three comic book universes.

Lemire, who worked exclusively with DC Comics for five years, will debut his first works in March for Marvel Comics. He is working on his sixth original graphic novel, Roughneck, due out in 2016.

This year he brought the Justice League of America north, morphing it into the DC superhero team Justice League Canada and introducing a new teen member, Equinox, the first Cree superhero. She joined Animal Man and Green Arrow, two characters Lemire has written in the past. "She added a unique flavour to the book," he says.

Lemire, 38, was approached this past summer by Marvel to re-launch its critically acclaimed Hawkeye series.

"Marvel is a new experience for me, with a different set of characters and a different universe to work in. I'm still feeling my way around it, but they are letting me bring my personality to the work."

> Ben Peterson: Producing free content can get old quickly. This is where Mind Market, Toronto media entrepreneur Ben Peterson's newest venture, comes in.

Mind Market, which had its soft launch last month, is a free tool that lets users create their own publication, customize its look and put it behind a pay wall.

"There are a lot of people out there who are producing premium con-

tent but with a heck of a hard time monetizing it," says Peterson, 37. "Over time, our columnists will develop a solid and reliable monthly source of income."

Users determine how much they want to charge per month to access their publications, and then sell subscriptions.

Peterson, a son of former Ontario premier David Peterson, is also co-founder and CEO of news curation site Newsana, as well as a co-founder of Journalists for Human Rights.

"People have thousands of followers on Twitter yet they haven't made a cent after producing content which is of use to their followers," says Peterson. "This is a (widespread) problem... with the creative class."

> Sura Yekka: Playing soccer in the upcoming FIFA Women's World Cup in Canada has been a long time coming for teen Sura Yekka. The Mississauga soccer star has been kicking her way to this goal since she was 6.

Yekka played in two World Cups this year, the FIFA U17 (under 17) in Costa Rica and the FIFA U20 here on her home turf.

"Playing in both was essentially a dream come true," says Yekka, who turns 18 on Jan. 4. "It was amazing and humbling at the same time."

The right fullback, who is in Grade 12 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel and is set to attend the University of Michigan, says she will continue to train for the 2016 Olympics, but first she will play among the world's best female players in June.

"That's the ultimate World Cup dream," she says. "These past two were the warm-ups for me."

> Vincent Pratchett: Fans of Toronto firefighter/author Vincent Pratchett's fantasy tale of 10th-century China will be happy to know The Raven's Warrior is just the first in an anticipated trilogy.

The 59-year-old father of two is writing his second novel, set for a 2016 release. The past year has been punctuated by awards for Raven, including a bronze Independent Publisher Book Award.

"It's been very exciting," says Pratchett, a martial arts master who after 24 years as a firefighter is soon to retire. "The interest that my book created was quite profound."

> Samuel Getachew: The 38-year-old community organizer, journalist and activist has been crusading to have a stretch of Danforth Ave. near Greenwood Ave. designated as Little Ethiopia, the first official African neighbourhood in Toronto, and in Canada.

With "very few supporters" this year on city council, Getachew's team has adopted a bolder strategy, even tracking some councillors down at their favourite pubs. It seems to be working.

"(City councillors) seem to listen to us more than ever before," he says. "Now it's becoming more of a mainstream idea. We're very excited."

> Petra Collins: The photographer could not be reached before press time.

Look for 10 to Watch in 2015 in next week's Sunday Star, Dec. 28.

EASIEST

9x9 Sudoku grid for Easiest level

HARDER

9x9 Sudoku grid for Harder level

HARDEST

9x9 Sudoku grid for Hardest level

SUDOKU

How to play Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row (nine cells wide), every column (nine cells tall) and every box (three cells by three cells) contains the digits 1 through 9 in any order. There is only one solution for each puzzle. For more information on the puzzle, visit www.sudoku.com.

This week's solutions available next Sunday

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

9x9 Sudoku solution grid 1

9x9 Sudoku solution grid 2

9x9 Sudoku solution grid 3