

People

The man behind the city's VIP social site M5 ➤

News

The week Toronto got a lot pricier. M3 ➤

Events

Walks, talks and shows in our brand new listings M6 ➤

SECTION M SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2007

GLOBEANDMAIL.COM

Globe T.O.



RICHARD FLORIDA » THE HEAD OF THE CREATIVE CLASS



'The cultural life is buzzing. ... And yet everywhere we go we are met by Torontonians who seem mystified that we would move to what they imply is a second-rate city.' KEVIN VAN PAASSEN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Wake up, Toronto – you're bigger than you think

Richard Florida on his adopted city's central role in a new world order built not around nations but around mega-regions

Torontonians are a funny bunch. In the short time since my wife and I moved here, I've discovered a truly great city. I've got to know a growing number of unbelievable neighbourhoods – Little Italy, Greektown, the Beach and more. I've walked through the majestic ravines, eaten a fantastic egg-and-peameal-bacon sandwich at the St. Lawrence Market, tried some glorious micro-brewed beers, and even seen a hip-shaking performance by Shakira at the film festival. Our welcome at all levels has been memorable. When we told the two young Middle Eastern men who were installing an audio system in our home that we were looking for some spicy Asian food, they returned on a subsequent visit bearing a delicious – and free – takeout meal from their favourite Burmese-Indian restaurant.

We're now calling home a lovely family-friendly neighbourhood that is in easy walking

distance of the city's core. The streets are safe, schools are good, immigrants are welcome and neighbourhoods allow for a mix of people by income, work, ethnicity, sexual orientation and lifestyle. The cultural life is buzzing, the restaurants are world-class, and there are beautiful lakes to escape to just a short drive away. On top of everything else, I've been given the opportunity to run a pioneering think tank at a renowned business school.

And yet everywhere we go we are met by Torontonians who either seem mystified that we would move to what they imply is a second-rate city, or seem to be seeking some kind of validation in our answer.

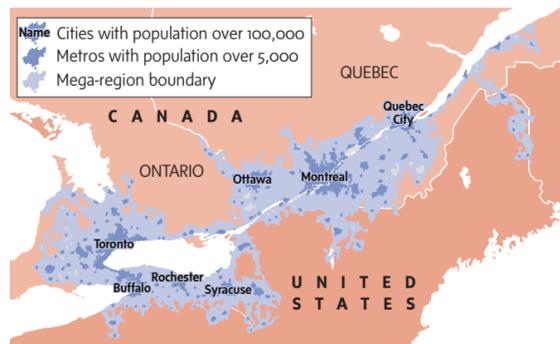
Here's all the validation you need, Toronto: Our city is on the leading edge of a critical change in the global economy.

» SEE 'FLORIDA' PAGE M5

SEE 'BARBER' ON DOWNTOWN LIVING PAGE M3 ➤

Mega-region: Tor-Buff-Chester (or Tor-Buff-Loo-Mon-Tawa)

Toronto is the nerve centre of a mega-region stretching from Buffalo to Quebec City, with \$530-billion in economic activity.



TRISH McALASTER/THE GLOBE AND MAIL SOURCE: TIM GULDEN, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND; KEVIN STOLARICK, MARTIN PROSPERITY INSTITUTE

HE'S OUR MAN

Richard Florida, bestselling author and globetrotting creativity guru, is now also a Globe and Mail contributor.

The renowned economist and researcher will be writing a monthly column in the Focus section, and will also take part in a series of articles for Globe T.O. in which he will get to know his new city by visiting iconic Toronto places and events.

The first piece in the series, on Nov. 10, will be set in Kensington Market.

As well, Prof. Florida's popular and lively blog will now be available through Globeandmail.com. Readers can find it at www.globeandmail.com/blogs/creativeclass.

FIVE THINGS » YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TORONTO THIS WEEKEND

1 BATS ON THE AIR Hockey sticks will be put aside for a little pastime from down south called the World Series. Baseball fans will mob sports joints like Shoeless Joe's and Wayne Gretzky's for Saturday's Game 3 showdown between the Colorado Rockies and Boston Red Sox, at 8 p.m., and Game 4 on Sunday, same time.

2 ZOMBIES ON THE STREET For the weekend night closest to Halloween, the costumed populace will be out, dressed in their sexiest personae for parties like the Muzik Mansion Masquerade Ball, or as zombies for the Thrill the World event at York University, celebrating the Michael Jackson tune's 25th anniversary.

3 PEACE ON THE MARCH You already know that a few Canadians are against the war in Afghanistan. It'll be more obvious today when the traffic is interrupted as part of a Canada-wide day of protest. The Toronto Coalition to Stop the War expects thousands of marchers, meeting at the U.S. Consulate on University at 1 p.m., then heading to Gerard, over to Yonge, and ending at the Moss Park Armoury on Queen Street.

4 AUTHORS ON THE LOOSE For one more day, the streets – well, more likely the bar at the Westin Harbour Castle – will be populated by scribes such as Ian Rankin or actor-turned-writer David Thewlis who are in town for the International Festival of Authors. Keep your ear out for slurred Shakespearean references and bitter comments about publishers.



KEVIN HEWITT

5 WINE ON THE BLOCK Fine wine connoisseurs will be considering lots – the auction sort, not the parking kind – tonight at the Ritchies Auctioneers' 17th Annual Fine Wine Auction, presented by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. One lucky bidder will leave with two magnums of a 1964 Mazis Chambertin Grand Cru, valued at \$2,400. See M6 for more info.



Yucel still has Two Thousand and Seven Volkswagens for you.

And even though you may only need one, it's best to have them all to choose from. Yucel will gladly show you our (beautifully priced) 2007 models still in stock – Rabbits and Jettas, Passats, Touaregs and GTIs, Eos, New Beetles and City Golfs and Jettas. You'll be spoiled for choice. And we're here to spoil you even more with the personal, expert and friendly service our people, such as Yucel, are known for.

600 Wilson Avenue, just east of Dufferin and across from the Yorkdale mall. Tel: 416.741.7480 www.yorkdalevw.ca



Yorkdale Volkswagen
We're here for you



LAUNCHED » A NEW COLUMN ABOUT THE CITY'S TRENDSETTERS

The talented Mr. Edmiston and his social-networking web adventure

AMY VERNER
COOL WATCH

averner@globeandmail.com

Tara Reid and Tyler Brûlé don't share much in common. She's the half-baked blond actress best known for her enlarged breasts; he's the Canadian branding guru and Wallpaper* founder who recently launched Monocle, a new magazine for deep-pocketed intelligentsia.

But these boldface names represent two of the 3,262 members (as of Friday) on PeLiMe.com, a private online community for creative types that happens to be filled with talented and/or talked-about Torontonians.

Among the standouts: Dan Kurtz of buzzworthy band Dragette, gallery owner Georgia Scherman, restaurateur and architect Marc Kyriacou, magazine publisher Michael King, photographer Paul Alexander, and Robin Kay, who heads the Fashion Design Council of Canada.

People also come from far-

flung locales: Beirut, Lisbon, Buenos Aires, Shanghai. Some boast recognizable surnames: Kipton Cronkite is Walter's son and Charles Annenberg is the descendant of newspaper baron Walter Annenberg. Others just sound chi-chi: Milena-Christina Acimic-Furstenberg from New York or Martine Martel Van Doorne from Monte Carlo.

PeLiMe (which rhymes with "key lime" and is a truncation of People Like Me) launched two years ago as a pet project conceived by London-based Web designer Maxwell Lamb and J. Harry Edmiston, an aspiring film producer who currently lives in Toronto.

Twenty-four years young, Mr. Edmiston has spent time in London, Johannesburg, Beijing, Taipei and New York. With a pedigreed accent, longish hair and distressed Euro-prep fashion sense, he's intriguing to a fault. "Where did he come from?" is a question often asked among regulars at his favourite hangouts: Caffe Doria by day and Amber by night.

And let's not forget the Spoke Club, the invitation-only hideout where the membership often overlaps PeLiMe. Its president, Michael Shore, counts himself a friend of Mr.



'Where did he come from?' KEVIN VAN PAASSEN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Edmiston's and acknowledges that they share similar objectives. "The Spoke Club tries to bring artists together within a specific space, and meetings between artists are meant to be accidental," he wrote in an e-mail from Australia.

Now, Mr. Edmiston wants to leverage the cachet of its members (who are permitted 50 invitations each) while carefully avoiding the cyber-circus scenarios otherwise known as Facebook and MySpace.

He's hoping to secure a deal with film producer and member René Bastian (*L.L.E., Trans-america*). Making members' content (films, music, etc.) available to non-members for a fee could generate the revenue necessary for the site to remain exclusive. "We don't want to open the membership to hundreds of thousands because it won't benefit anyone," he says.

The challenge Mr. Edmiston faces is this: Torontonians always seem eager to join something touted as private, but they fall short in the follow-through.

Rumblings around town suggest that the Spoke Club never lived up to expectations and falls short in its execution of good food, good service and overall energy.

Strange which private clubs become successful: ASmall-World online and Soho House in New York and London are ogled by outsiders. Meanwhile, PeLiMe and the Spoke Club remain underused despite their potential.

Some members admit they don't check in very often. "I've never used it. Don't use any social networking sites. Waste of time methinks," Mr. Brûlé wrote from Milan.

Arts lawyer Paul Bain made a valid observation: "The fundamental problem is that there really aren't many people like you, because you're unique. So do you want to be part of a club or do you want to be unique?"

He underscores that "people like me" refers to similarly minded individuals, but the double entendre (people like me ... they really like me!) also applies. "Love the guy," Ms. Scherman said.

Although he exercises full discretion about members, Mr. Edmiston cannot shake his bon vivant reputation. Of Toronto, he applies the maxim: "It's a great place to live. It's a great place to leave. It's an even better place to come back to."

Funny, the same could be said of his site.

FROM PAGE M1 » FLORIDA

Being a mega-region means thinking like one; building a high-speed rail line would be a start

It has a chance not only to redefine itself but to forge an inclusive and sustainable model of that ongoing change that harnesses the full creative potential of every person.

In fact, there is so much going on here that the city and its people are unaware of the scope and power of Toronto.

What has happened is that the mega-city has become the nerve centre of one of the world's greatest mega-regions, a trans-border economic powerhouse that stretches from Buffalo to Quebec City. It's important to recognize this, because mega-regions have replaced the nation state as the economic drivers of the global economy.

A glimpse of this new reality came earlier this month when The Globe and Mail revealed that Canadian Football League owners were negotiating to bring an National Football League team to Toronto, and that the most likely and logical choice of available teams was the Buffalo Bills. The Bills are now seeking permission to play two games at the Rogers Centre next season. The move makes sense because the market for American-style football in Toronto is huge, but even more so when you think of the Buffalo-Toronto corridor in a way that was fashionable before 9/11 but has gone mostly unmentioned since: as a single economic entity – a mega-region, in other words.

I know both cities pretty well. I lived in Buffalo in the early 1980s, teaching at the University of Buffalo as a visiting professor en route to getting my PhD at Columbia University. I endured some large snowstorms, lived in the terrific Elmwood neighbourhood and ate my share of chicken wings and beef on weck. At that time, Buffalo and Toronto shared few links, and people told me how, back in the 1950s and 60s, Buffalo, with its manufacturing muscle, was the stronger city.

These days, Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area are the economic success story. But, border or no border and heightened post-9/11 security notwithstanding, the two cities are effectively part of the same mega-region – let's call it Tor-Buff-Chester – with 22 million people and \$530-billion in economic activity, making it the 12th-largest mega-region in the world and fifth-largest in North America.

You might ask where such a clunky name like Tor-Buff-Chester could come from. I'm to blame. In the summer of 2002 while speaking at a conference on economic development in Buffalo, I was asked to offer recommendations on the city's economic revitalization. My answer: Partner more closely with Toronto and Rochester to form the new region of "Tor-Buff-Chester!"

It was only later that I realized how on-target that initial suggestion had been. Because, since that time, working with Tim Gulden of the University of Maryland and my research team at the Martin Prosperity

Institute at the Rotman School of Management, we have used satellite pictures of the world at night to estimate the economic activity of the mega-regions of the world.

Ours are the first such estimates ever: Much to my surprise, international statistical agencies – such as the United Nations and the World Bank – collect mainly national data. No one collects systematic data on cities and regions around the world. And none of them looks at regions that defy conventional borders.

According to our definition, mega-regions are made up of two or more contiguous cities and their surrounding suburbs, and generate more than \$100-billion in annual economic output. Looked at this way, the mega-region centred in Toronto and Buffalo stretches to Guelph, Waterloo and London to the west, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City in the east, and includes Ithaca, Syracuse, Rochester and Utica in the United States. If I knew then what I know now, I might have given it the more accurate, if even clunkier, moniker "Tor-Buff-Loo-Mon-Tawa."

In North America, only the mega-regions of Bos-Wash (Boston-New York-Washington), Chi-Pitts (running from Chicago through Pittsburgh), LA-San Diego-Tijuana, and Charlanta (Charlotte through Atlanta) are larger. In the rest of the world, Tor-Buff-Chester is outflanked only by Greater London, Greater Tokyo, Osaka-Nagoya, Amsterdam-Antwerp-Brussels, Rome-Milan-Turin, Frankfurt-Stuttgart and Barcelona-Lyons.

Tor-Buff-Chester is bigger than the San Francisco-Silicon Valley mega-region, Greater Paris, Hong Kong and Shanghai, and more than twice the size of Cascadia, which stretches from Vancouver to Seattle and Portland. Its economic might is equivalent to more than half of all of Canada's. If it were its own country, it would number among the 16 biggest in the world, with economic output bigger than that of Sweden, the Netherlands, or Australia.

Clunky sounding or not, mega-regions are the real economic engines of the global economy. The 10 largest account for 43 per cent of the planet's economic activity and more than half of its patented innovations and star scientists who generate pioneering breakthroughs, while housing only 6.5 per cent of its population. The top 40 produce 66 per cent of the world's economic activity and more than eight in 10 of its patented innovations and most-cited scientists, while being home to just 18 per cent of the world's population.

All of this convinces me that place, not statehood, is the central axis of our time and of our global economy. What it means for Toronto is simple: A mega-region needs to think and act like a mega-region, not like a bunch of separate cities with empty space between them. For instance, Tor-Buff-Chester needs regional invest-



Richard and Rana Florida have made Toronto their home: 'For the first week or two we didn't sleep.' KEVIN VAN PAASSEN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

ments in transportation – a real high-speed rail line between all the cities, for instance, and one that crosses borders. Mega-regions benefit from global hub airports like Toronto's Pearson, New York's JFK, Chicago's O'Hare or London's Heathrow. Direct flights from Pearson to Asia are a major plus for the entire mega-region. But the best way to get around one is not by plane or car but by fast rail. Europe has this one figured out.

Fixing the border problem will be key. As an American and frequent traveller to the States, I know that much of the problem is generated by Homeland Security paranoia of American authorities. But the mega-region needs to proactively figure this out. There's lots of coverage of long lines of Torontonians trying to get to Buffalo to take advantage of the strong loonie. But huge amounts of trade go through those borders, and the ability of business travellers to get quickly from one destination to the next is critical to economic success of mega-regions. Tor-Buff-Chester needs fast, safe and efficient border crossings. It needs to be a priority to show the rest of North America how it can be done.

In spite of the border hassles, a transnational mega-region has real advantages. Regions on the U.S.-Mexican border take advantage of low-cost Mexican manufacturing while stationing high-end design and management on the U.S.

side. There are pioneering cooperative efforts along that border: Our group initiated the world's first bi-national downtown, Wi-Fi, and arts and cultural centre between El Paso and Juarez.

And as the U.S. restricts immigration and sees a decline in foreign graduate students, the Canadian part of Tor-Buff-Chester could grab them. Microsoft recently opened a lab in Vancouver to attract foreign-born talent for that very reason.

At Pearson last week, when a flight we were taking to Washington, D.C., was cancelled, an airline clerk came to our rescue, personally walking us to a competing airline's counter and making all our new arrangements. Like everyone else, he asked us, "Why Toronto?" – apparently oblivious to the extraordinary kindness he was showing us.

No, we moved to Toronto for excellent reasons. This place is really, really big and getting bigger. It just needs to recognize it in itself.

» Richard Florida is a professor at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management and Academic Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School. He is also the founder of The Creative Class Group (creativeclass.com) in Washington, D.C., which develops strategies for business, government and community competitiveness, and author of the bestselling books *The Rise of the Creative Class* and *The Flight of the Creative Class*.

THE FLORIDAS' SOCIAL CALENDAR

They're gorgeous, they're smart, they're wildly successful and, as of this fall, they're also the toast of the town.

Meet Richard and Rana Florida – he, the head of the new Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School of Management, she, the chief executive officer of Creative Class Group, and, together, the most socially sought-after duo in Toronto.

"We arrived on Aug. 22, the night of the big Rotman welcome dinner and for the first week or two we didn't sleep," says Richard, 49. We are sitting in the couple's newly renovated Rosedale house, paying a quick visit before they jet off to D.C. for an overnight speaking engagement. Both husband and wife are tall, slim and dressed to minimalist perfection – the ideal complement to an airy house furnished in contemporary classics by Corbusier and Starck.

With a schedule that includes upcoming appearances in California, Australia, Atlanta, Tokyo and Memphis, it's amazing that the Floridas manage to get out at all – but they do.

While Mayor David Miller may still be planning the official public welcome next week, that hasn't stopped the Floridas from creating society buzz. Since moving north from D.C., they have partied with

Ben Affleck at the OneXOne event, attended a CITY-TV party with Walrus publisher Shelley Ambrose and Mary Powers, the senior vice-president of corporate communications for Bell Globemedia, and taken a tour of the Art Gallery of Ontario's new Frank Gehry wing.

Since then, the mucky-mucks at RBC have hosted them at a Maple Leaf's game, writer Linda Frum has invited them to an intimate gathering at her house and they recently got chummy with Sandra Pupatello, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, at a speaking event in Windsor.

"I'm from Michigan," Rana says, "so we really hit it off."

The Floridas are gregarious, stylish and fashionably controversial. Richard's bestselling book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, posits that a city's prosperity has a direct correlation to the number of "high bohemians" it is home to.

Rana, who runs the business side of their intellectual cottage industry, is also the social convener. She enthuses about the warmth Torontonians have shown them. "They say D.C. is characterized by a combination of northern hospitality and southern efficiency," she laughs.

"Toronto is the opposite."

» Leah McLaren