

THE BEST AT THE BOOKS

York Region scholars say time management helps them make the grade

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

Michael Erdman makes it a point to find something interesting in every course he takes. It's a little motivating trick he uses to keep learning.

Erdman's technique has obviously paid off — the Thornhill Secondary student finished at the top of the public board's list of Ontario Scholars with a 99-per-cent average in his OAC year.

"I study two or three hours a day but I tell myself it's not a chore if I enjoy doing it and I do," he said.

Erdman is an award-winning debater in English and French, and finished first in York Region this year in English and second in the bilingual category. He also translates for an on-line magazine called Youthography and is working this summer in the shoe department at Sears.

Erdman's commitment to excellence has earned him two University of Toronto scholarships — the \$20,000 George Metcalf scholarship offered to the best student entering the College of Victoria, in addition to a \$7,500 scholarship offered to top students nationwide.

He'll take commerce and Italian, with plans to work in the field of international finance.

Markham District Secondary School student Ashley Pitcher earned a 98-per-cent average to tie for second place region-wide.

She said she works for a good balance between school and her other activities and that helps her maintain good marks.

"It's not like I stay home every day and do homework," she said. "I guess not procrastinating is the main thing and being organized. I'd be lost without my agenda."

Pitcher skates five nights a week at the Markham Skating Club and earned all but two gold levels in the test stream she concentrated on this year.

She also tutors younger students in math and science.

She'll attend the University of Western Ontario, with the help of an \$8,000 scholarship over her four years, and study biology. Pitcher also earned the option of entering the Richard Ivey School of Business

in her third year, but is still deciding what she wants to do — dentistry, medicine or business.

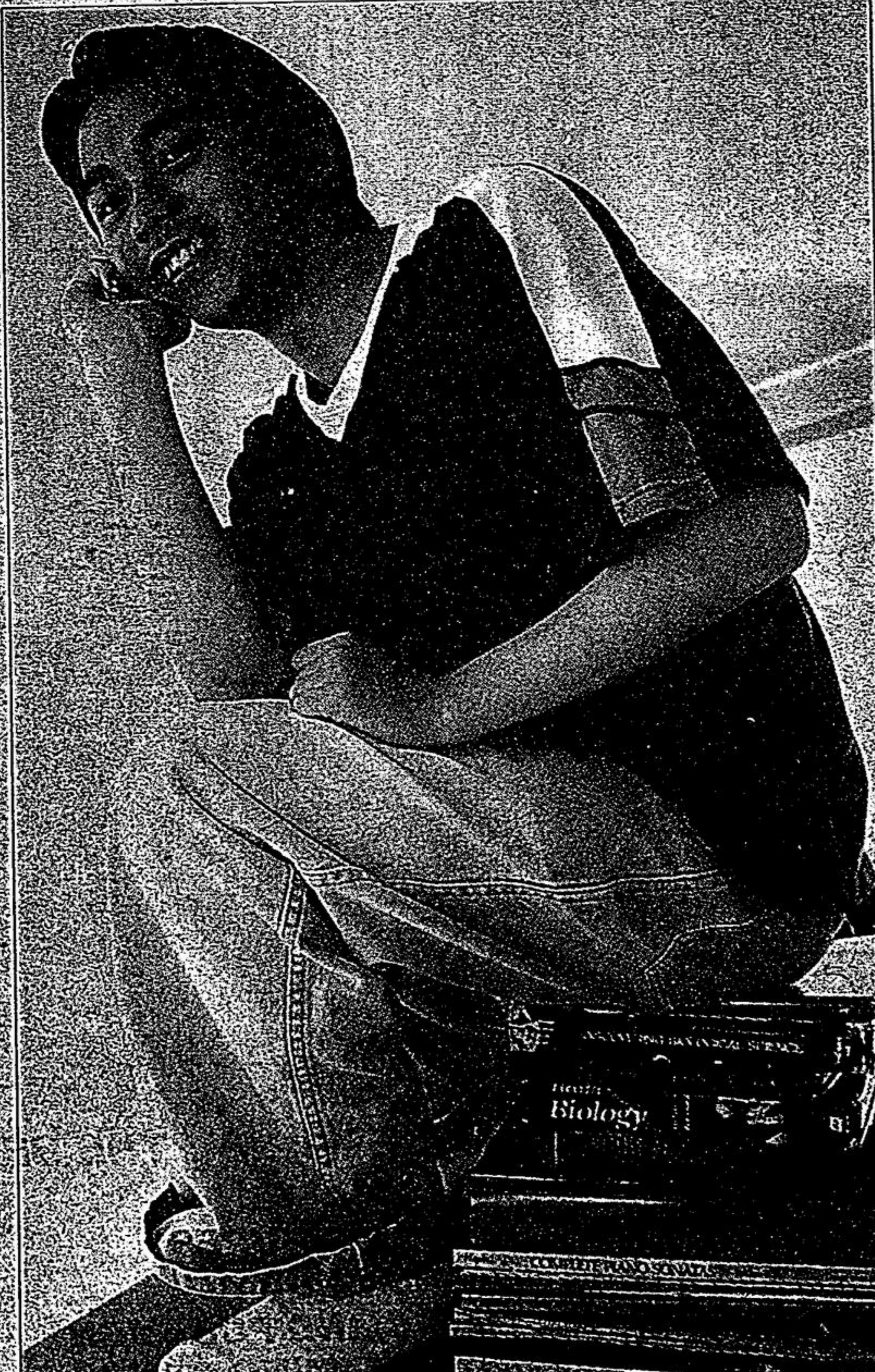
Woodbridge College student Sita Bhella is the other 98-per-cent Ontario Scholar. "Don't be afraid to ask questions," she advised. "It also helps not to leave everything to the

last minute — although I do, that sometimes."

She works as the evening and weekend co-ordinator at York Central Hospital and also sits on the hospital's student volunteer council. As well, Bhella organizes the annual Walk Against Male Violence and the white ribbon campaign at her school. She was awarded \$13,500 in various scholarships and will take sciences at the University of Toronto in September.

Other top Ontario Scholars, all

with averages of 96 per cent or better are: Justin Trotter of Langstaff Secondary School, Donna Won of Vaughan Secondary School, Kelvin Chan of Bayview Secondary School, Shawn Klein at Westmount Collegiate, Cynthia Dahl of Markville Secondary School, Andrew Charles Doxey of Dr. John M. Denison Secondary School, Michael Alan MacLennan at King City Secondary School and Christopher MacMillan of Sutton District Secondary School.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Scholars indulge in hobbies

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

Roderick (Ting-Fung) Cheung doesn't believe in putting things off.

He begins assignments right away, does his studying well before the test and tries not to leave anything to the last minute.

"I don't really have any secret method to studying. I just try to start early," said Cheung, this year's top Ontario Scholar at the York Catholic District School Board.

The OAC student at Brother Andre Catholic School in Markham earned a 98-per-cent average in his last year, finishing at the head of the boardwide class of 677 students who earned an average of 80 per cent or better. Ten students had averages above 96 per cent.

"And you have to concentrate all the time, try not to get involved in too many things," the 17-year-old Cheung said, who must be the only one who thinks his own activities are not too much — piano, vice-president of the prom committee, copy editor of the yearbook, member of the environmental club, peer tutor and pianist.

"I guess you have to have a good management plan," he laughed.

Cheung will begin his first year at the University of Toronto with \$8,500 in scholarship money. He plans to enter the sciences program with a view to a career in medicine — a pharmacist or a doctor, he said.

Francisco Hong-Jun Yun, a graduate of Markham's Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy, placed second with a 97.83-per-cent average. He is out of the country and could not be reached.

Lorenzo Bertucci, a Cardinal Carter Catholic High School student in Aurora, placed third with a 97.5-per-cent average. His mom Lina said she's thrilled for her son.

"He works hard, he studies hard," she said. "He's a very self-motivated, hard-working fellow."



LORENZO BERTUCCI: Scholar works for town of Aurora and volunteers with community groups

we thought he was a hermit for a while."

Lorenzo works for the Town of Aurora's summer camps. He also volunteers at the Willow Estates nursing home and participates in the annual Big Sisters fundraising run at St. Andrew's College.

He will attend the University of Waterloo next fall, with the help of a \$3,500 scholarship and a \$1,500 bursary, and will work toward an engineering degree.

"Obviously, these students worked very hard to achieve these kinds of results and they should be very proud of themselves," said Catholic board spokesperson Joann MacDonald, adding 23 students achieved 95 per cent or more.

The other top Ontario Scholars, earning 96 per cent or more are: Paul Hoevenaars of Cardinal Carter; Katherine Marseu, Timothy Munsie and Edward Young of Sacred Heart Catholic High School in Newmarket; Christopher Ng of St. Elizabeth Catholic High School in Vaughan; Andrew Chiang of Father Michael McGivney in Markham; and Jessica Wing Yin Wong of St. Robert Catholic High School in Thornhill.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Roderick Cheung (above) of Markham says there's no secret method to graduating with a 98-per-cent average. Michael Erdman (left), who earned a 99-per-cent average, finds something to enjoy in all his schoolwork so it's not a chore.

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