

thomson TRADEWINDS

DAVID & MARY THOMSON C.I. ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN, 2008

www.thomsonforever.ca



Remember that address! It will be the official web-site for David and Mary Thomson Collegiate's 50th anniversary celebrations on Saturday, May 2, 2009. It has been five years since the group assembled above gathered for a rather informal 45th in 2004. We hope to need at least 100 such photos to capture all those who will be back at the old school next year.

A joint Staff-Alumni committee has begun the planning process, but there will be many developments in the months ahead; so the website is your way of keeping up-to-date. And, for the first time, you will also be able to use the website to purchase tickets and souvenirs in advance - please! It will help with planning and avoid disappointment on your part if you don't wait until the day to get enthused.

What do we have planned so far? To begin the day-long celebration, former staff members will get a chance to reunite at a Staff Brunch at the school in the morning. Then in the afternoon, we'll throw the doors open for 50 years worth of former students. We'll have rooms arranged by decades, plus other areas of interest to help you find classmates and fellow team, club and showbiz members - and teachers as well, if you have favourites you'd like to see again.

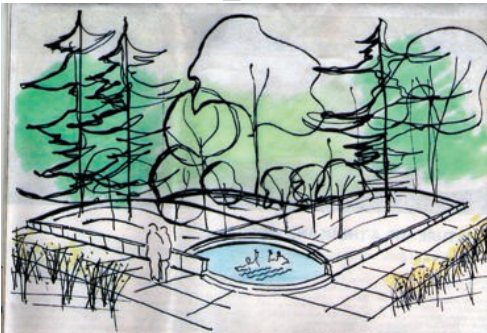
In the evening, there will be a big social get-together at The

Embers. (You can call it a "pub night" if such things appeal to you, but if you don't like pub nights, come anyway and call it something else!) There will be a cash bar, plus food (not a dinner, but more than nibbles) to go with plenty of conversation. The Embers is at 781 Warden Ave., a bit south of Eglinton. There will be time over dinner for classes or individuals to organize their own mini-reunions.

Obviously, a lot of work is involved both in the planning stage and on the day of the events. Can you help? How about publicity? All you media types, spread the word. How about helping with the website, which **Bill Stratas** (1977) has set up? We need to keep it current and attractive. Do you have connections with caterers, with hotels, with souvenir producers? We also need photos, reminiscences and volunteers to handle editing and printing for a souvenir booklet or DVD. Of course, we need greeters, registration table hosts, decade room hosts, etc., etc. on the day.

If you can help out in any way, there will be a chance to interact on the website. You can also use your Alumni Membership renewal form to volunteer or make suggestions. Above all, keep the date open and keep friends and family informed of what's happening. We don't want anyone to miss the celebration because they didn't know!

Update: Plans for the Thomson C. I. Site



A play area with a wetland and pond that would fit after stores is one among architecture students' suggestions for a proposed Scarborough school campus.

Old school, new approach

Due to declining enrolment, unpopular school closings loom yet again. But is there another way? A Scarborough neighbourhood, U of T architecture students, and school officials have an idea...

DANIEL GIRARD
 The prospect of closing schools usually leads to angry meetings full of disgruntled families arguing that neighbourhoods are at risk. Not in Scarborough, this time around. Three school commissioners in the Lawrence Ave. E-Midland Ave. area actually want Toronto public trustees to shut their half-century-old buildings within a few years. In their place, they call for a campus of bright, new, eco-friendly classrooms, auditoriums and high-tech shops for about 2,000 students

from junior kindergarten to Grade 12. Then, a playing field and track, community green space and a large open park or two will support recreation to residents of condos and townhouses which might rise on the edge of the new property. The development of that area would help finance the expanded school facilities. "They want quite something out of it. That's the key," says Elaine Williams-Diess, mother of a newborn and two daughters in Grade 11 at David and Mary Thomson Collegiate Institute, which opened

On August 31, in the middle of Labour Day week-end, when even those who might usually be in a position to read the Toronto Star were off enjoying the end of summer, an article appeared in the Ideas section with a very upbeat report on the status of plans for Thomson's future. Accompanied by drawings which invited architectural students to dream of the possibilities, Daniel Girard, Urban Affairs Reporter for the newspaper, outlined how, thanks to input from all segments of the school community, the possible "closing" of Thomson and/or its neighbouring schools had become an opportunity to create an exciting new educational facility from the ashes of the old.

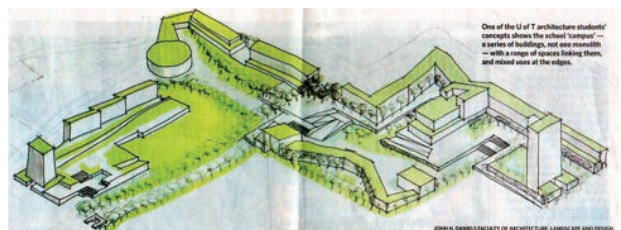
Alumni member, **Bob Doi**, circulated the article to our email data base. The article may also still be available to those who can access the Star on-line. A small sample is reproduced in reduced size to the left. You can also keep yourself updated on progress by checking the Toronto District School Board website and finding the menu item on Program Revitalization. In January the Board will be voting on a proposal from the Area Review Committee which wrestled with the future of the various sites in the area. Here is a summary of the main recommendations to date:

- Donwood Park Junior Public School and David and Mary Thomson C. I. are to be re-established as a Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 integrated facility on one

campus with an Information and Technology theme. Local trustee **Scott Harrison** will push to keep the Thomson name for the secondary school facility because of its historical importance in Scarborough.

- Admission to Grades 9-12 through the present Thomson attendance area will include programming appropriate for all post-secondary destinations, regardless of the special "theme" of the school.
- There will be a Life Skills Centre with focus on development of independent living skills and some intensive support programs for students with developmental disabilities.
- A specialized program centre will be set up for a maximum of 500 students in Grades 11 and 12, across the entire Board, to include: conference event management and hospitality services linked to an auditorium and conference centre to accommodate TDSB staff development; medical science, health and well-being linked to a fitness and gym facility; and environmentally sustainable development linked to an urban farm on the campus.
- There will be a Parenting and Family Literacy Centre.
- Space will be shared with the Continuing Education Department after regular school hours, in the evenings and on weekends through the permit process.
- Bendale Business and Technical Institute will be disbanded, with students instead attending their home school.
- Edgewood Public School will remain a JK-8 facility, but its Intermediate attendance area will no longer include that of Donwood Park (which now will have its own Grades 7-8 program in the new integrated facility with Thomson).
- Edgewood will pilot a middle level experiential learning program.
- Edgewood will include a Parenting and Family Literacy Centre.
- All government levels, community service providers and athletic organizations will be approached to determine whether they wish space (with the proviso that they must bring their own capital funding and operating funding).
- There will be team administration and equity between elementary and secondary partners in the new facility.
- Ministry approval will be sought to advance the time line for Board approval.

Of course, the present economic downturn could mean that all these plans remain a dream and that renovations, rather than replacement, may be the order of the day. But it is obvious that a lot of thought has gone into these recommendations, and every effort has been made to keep students, parents, staff and community residents informed and involved as the process has moved along. The Alumni community is obviously not a prime concern, but with a 50th anniversary coming up, you do want to know if the school you attended will still be there in May - and for how long afterwards! We hope this update will let you know that the building will certainly be intact (if aging!) for the anniversary. And we invite you, if you are interested, to keep in touch regarding developments as they occur.



One of the U of T architecture students' concepts shows the school 'campus' — a series of buildings, not one monolith — with a range of spaces linking them, and raised areas at the edges.

Celebrating Thomsonite Accomplishments



Congratulations to **Carolyn Kay** (Class of 1976) who received the prestigious teaching award, “Best Professor in Ontario,” in June, 2008. The award, given by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Association, is selected annually by a group of ten professional peers. Six professors are honoured each year. Carolyn is on the History faculty at Trent University. She is shown receiving the award from Henry Mandelbaum, Executive Director of the OCUFA, at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.



In our last issue, we mentioned that **Stan Farrow**, a Thomson staff member from 1959 to 1994, had won the Distinguished Alumni Award for 2007, presented by Victoria College, University of Toronto. The ceremony took place at a dinner at Vic at the end of April, 2008, with a number of Thomson Alumni in attendance to show their support. Among them was **Gisele Gauthier** (Class of 1969), who brought along her camera and arranged to be photographed with Stan in the Vic foyer.



Bill Stratat (Class of 1977) is giving a very appropriate two thumbs up at the portal of the NORAD Cheyenne Mountain Complex in Colorado. He was invited to deliver the civilian keynote address in Colorado Springs for the 50th Anniversary Gala of the defence organization on May 12. The US Defence Secretary and the entire top brass of the American and Canadian armed forces were on hand for the

impressive ceremony. In the course of the black tie evening, Bill found himself in a photo-op between Paul Bouchard, General, Canadian Forces; Deputy Commander, NORAD (left below) and Gene Renuart, General, USAF; Commander USNORTHCOM and NORAD (right below).

Bill was the Valedictorian for his graduating class at Thomson. But who knew that would just be a warm-up for this?



Alumni membership renewal forms are enclosed with this newsletter. Please keep your membership up-to-date - and use the reverse side of the form to volunteer for 50th Anniversary assistance. Think May 2, 2009!

Mourning Thomson Losses



Allen and Madge Kerr as parents of the groom (David) in 1990. Madge's mother was a Thomson - another family connection to our school.

Al Kerr, who was the principal at Thomson from 1983 to 1985, died this past summer at the age of 80. It is a bit ironic that as we gear up for our 50th anniversary, we should lose the man who was at the helm when we celebrated the school's 25th in 1984. He had just been transferred from R. H. King Collegiate, following their 60th anniversary in 1982 and landed here in time for another big effort. We think

he was ready to enjoy retirement after those major events.

Al began teaching Mathematics in Scarborough at Scarborough Collegiate, just before it became R. H. King. He was a large man physically, but a gentleman in the best sense of the word. He was firm but fair in his philosophy. And he was also a talented singer, with a life-long interest in music.

His connection to our school was far greater than the two years he spent here, since his three children, **David**, **Brent** and **Andrea**, each attended Thomson for all or part of their high school careers. We extend to them our sympathy and share with them happy memories of a "big" man.



Stephen Hill is smiling in this photo, taken at his Scarborough home, and that's how his friends and classmates will remember him best. But it is difficult to smile when you have lost "the life of the party" to a heart attack at the age of 45. Especially when there was no warning and no chance

to prepare, if you ever can, for such a loss.

Overflow attendance at his funeral attested to the many friends he had made at Shoppers Drug Mart, at Thomson, in the community, and wherever he brought his friendly, supportive outlook.

To those friends, to his wife and three young children and to his parents, who never expected they would be burying a son, we send our condolences and prayers.

(Stephen was a student at Thomson in the late 1970s and early 1980s.)

We know there must be many similar losses that have not appeared on these pages. If you know of news we should share, celebratory or sad, pass the word along to any Alumni member or to the Tradewinds editor at: stanleyfarrow@rogers.com

Pub Night at Tapps, Friday, November 21

Do we need a fall pub night with the big reunion coming next May? Why not? It can help defer the pre-winter doldrums and give us a chance to reconnect and spread the word for the 50th. So your Alumni planning committee, in its wisdom, has decided on Friday, November 21 as the date and Tapps as the place, any time after 8:00 pm. As the photos below, from our spring get-together on May 2 (a familiar-sounding date!) indicate, we have found Tapps a popular venue for these gatherings. The manager will be setting aside an area to the left of the bar, as you enter, for Thomson types to mingle. Tapps has added Friday evening entertainment this year; so they have put us as far from the dance floor area as possible to allow for conversation while the music is playing.

For those of you coming for the first time and for others who need the reminder, Tapps is located at 5630 Finch Ave. E. a block east of Markham Rd. Parking is in a lot behind the restaurant which you access off Tapscott Rd. by turning north (left) off Finch at the stoplight and left again at the first parking entrance. Bring yearbooks, cameras, whatever, to reminisce.

