

Thomson TRADEWINDS

DAVID & MARY THOMSON C.I. ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1997

PICNIC IN THE PARK

FROM THE EDITOR

As you will be able to surmise from the rest of this page, a picnic proved to be the overwhelming choice of those who sent back ballots in our questionnaire about a possible Alumni activity. About 80% of responses favoured this format, perhaps a wise decision, since a picnic (at least the version we have planned) requires the least organization of the various plans we proposed. Golf tournaments and cruises require pre-registration - and money! For the picnic, we have simply reserved the park, and we invite you to show up for lunch! (Bring your own everything!)

Of course, I must apologize to our far-distant readers, who may find travelling time a problem. Perhaps you can have your own branch-office event - not an impossible idea to consider for the future. **Thomas Browne**, for instance, has volunteered to track down our numerous British Columbia alumni, and you could one day be enjoying a far-west Thomson reunion. How about it?

For those who want to check last-minute details about the picnic, you can contact **Janet Evans** by day (416-751-7184) or evening (416-265-3942), **Joyce McGill** (416-291-3984), or your editor, **Stan Farrow** (416-267-2834). Joyce and Janet are both Thomson Park Alumni, and have added their expertise to help organize this first event. We need more like them!

In other news, we have only two profiles this issue (deadlines!), but we have been able to include, at last, some of the reminiscences you provided in our first questionnaire/membership application. We are always open to suggestions (and volunteers) for profiles, articles, and activities. Keep in touch!



Members of the Thomson Park Alumni (see article on page four) reminisce and check old photographs at their 1995 picnic.

You are invited! So are all Thomson alumni, whether they are official paid-up members of our organization, or simply friends who once went to Thomson C.I.

To what? To our first-ever Alumni event: a picnic in Thomson Park on Saturday, September 13. We have reserved Picnic Areas A and B (both of which have large covered table groupings, in case the weather is unkind) from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. (See the map on page 4, if you have forgotten the layout of the park.) Parking will be limited in the regular parking area (marked P on the map, near the Brimley Road entrance), but there is lots of overflow parking on the hydro right of way just south of the park, off Brimley.

What do you bring? Since our organizational staff is very limited, everything! Bring a picnic lunch,

your own beverages (non-alcoholic please - the park has rules, and we would like to be invited back!) and lawn chairs, if you wish to relax away from the picnic tables. (There is a concession stand, if you want to be really lazy!)

Also, in keeping with the "just show up!" theme, there are no advance tickets to buy, no set time to arrive, and no souvenirs to reserve. If you have children, grandchildren, spouses, etc. who would like to come along, they are certainly welcome. There will be no organized activities, as such; so bring what you need to amuse the family! If, on the other hand, you would like to reminisce and "reunionize" without the kids, you are welcome to do that also.

Rain or shine, come and spend a Saturday in the park and renew old acquaintances!

Profiles

(We have tracked down another grad from the media. Curt Petrovich, fresh from covering the Red River floods, sent us a memoir.)

"Boy, 1980 (my grad year) seems like a lifetime ago. There's no way I could possibly have imagined the road ahead as I walked out the doors of David and Mary Thomson for the last time. After completing a three-year B.A.A. course in Radio and Television at Ryerson, and, in the first few months of it, seriously wondering if I'd made a huge mistake, I floundered in Toronto, working for CJRT-FM and free-lancing for stations like CHAY-FM in Barrie. Oh, God, when I think how desperate I was to get a career going...



"I was convinced I'd made a monumental error in judgment, but early in 1986, on a whim, I visited an old Ryerson journalism professor and unburdened myself. Joan Donaldson was then working with CBC television, and she said if I wasn't afraid of moving out of the city, there was no reason why I couldn't get a job. She referred me to the man who was then head of CBC Northern Service. He liked my demo tape and told me there were two jobs open: one in Inuvik and the other in Frobisher Bay. After hanging up the phone, I rushed to an atlas! Check one yourself, and you'll see how I felt. But I didn't care. It was steady work!

"After succeeding in the board (what CBC calls job interviews), I left Ontario for the first time in my life at the age of 24. It was May, 1986. I remember posing for a photo in my girlfriend's driveway (Sue Grasby, 1980), wearing shorts and a Hawaiian shirt. I was not prepared for the culture shock and Mars-like landscape of Baffin Island: no trees; a community of 3,000 people, mainly

Inuit; and no television save for snowy rebroadcasts of CBC. I was convinced I'd made another monumental error and vowed to leave after six months.

"The Arctic does one of two things to people from the south: it either makes you run screaming back home, or it infects you like a virus. For me, it was a life-changing experience in every way. Sue and I broke up; I fell in love with and eventually married a co-worker. Joanna Awa and I were wed in the Arctic in 1993. My post took me from Alaska to Greenland, from Vancouver to the North Pole, all from my base in Iqaluit (the *real* name of what used to be called Frobisher Bay). I became a regular contributor to the Network, and instead of six months, I stayed six and a half years - until CBC Manitoba offered me a job as a writer-broadcaster with the Winnipeg morning show.

"So I moved again in 1992 and took up residence in the Peg. I guess I must be blessed, because just before cutbacks phased out writer-broadcasters, I managed to work my way into a newsroom job and last year won the National radio news reporter job for Manitoba.

"Every now and then I think back to grade nine. Front row. Ms. Brown, I think it was. After I had read a passage aloud in class, she turned to the other students and said, 'Don't you think Curt would make an excellent news reader one day?' Embarrassed, I never appreciated the comment, because I wanted to be an actor. Now I not only read news, I report it, I investigate it, I have a licence to ask questions, and I think no small part of my confidence and curiosity comes from the four years (yes, I did five years in four - browner!) I spent at Thomson and from many of the great teachers. I could also mention a pair of pedagogues who stopped Sue and me from kissing in the hall one day, asking Sue 'How much do you charge?' I'm not sure about Thomson today, but schools here in Winnipeg now have day care centres for students' babies, gangs are a reality, and it would be nice if all students did to each other was kiss!

"But it's the good memories that I'm left with when I think about Thomson, and there are days when I long for what seems today like the uncomplicated era of the seventies. God, I'm getting old!"

(Curt e-mailed a photo of himself with Joanna at Iqaluit, but technical limitations - the computer's and your editor's - got in the way. Instead, all we have is Curt's grade ten year-book photograph from 1978. Apologies!)

NEWS

Congratulations are in order to Sameen Ahmed, who was selected by her fellow graduates as Thomson's valedictorian for 1997. Sameen can certainly be classified as an all-round student. She is heading for medicine (like her brother, Raheel, the 1993 valedictorian) at U. of T. (Do we foresee a truly family practice?) She is taking a special intensive French course this summer. She was co-winner of the top female athlete award this year. And she is one of two winners from our school of the prestigious Miller Thomson Scholarship, which recognizes community service! Alumni will be pleased to note that Thomson is still home to outstanding achievers.

As a matter of interest, Sameen and Rahel are the fourth pair of siblings named as valedictorians at the school. Here are their famous forebears: Shehbaz (1991) and Aliea (1992) Butt, Robert (1982) and Roslyn (1988) Mounsey and William (1977) and David (1979) Stratas.

A somewhat older "graduate" also merits a special salute. John Moore, an institution in Thomson's English Department since 1966, retired in June, after much soul-searching. Mr. Moore really loved teaching, and many of his former students will attest to his expertise and his ability to share his enthusiasms with them. There will be no more classical music emanating from Thomson's upper halls, and no more enigmatic black-board instructions to follow. We wish John well, knowing that his joy in learning will never retire!

Wilma (Erickson) Canham, one of Thomson's original staff members, is now easing into retirement from Appleby College, a private school in Oakville, where she has taught French since 1981. Her plans for a complete retirement were postponed when she was asked to return this year for just one class, a duty she was pleased to accept, to lessen the withdrawal symptoms from a very active role at the college. In addition to classroom duties, she assisted with the public speaking program at the school, trained students to read at the chapel services, and provided expert guidance with theatrical productions (no surprise to those who remember her fine singing voice and drama experience). And, as is typical in private schools, she and her "great colleagues" on the staff might be called upon to chaperone trips, live in for week-end activities for boarders, etc. etc.! Appleby was originally a boys' school, but has been co-ed for the past six years.

Wilma left Thomson in 1965. She and her husband, John, now retired from a career in town planning with the Ontario government, initially did some working and travelling in the Mid-East. On returning to Canada, Wilma worked in the Education Centre library in Toronto. The birth of Brian (now 25) and Graham (now 23) kept Wilma busy for a few years (but not too busy to teach English to New Canadians for ten years, as she is doing again this summer at Appleby). Both boys are U.W.O. graduates. Brian is with the Royal Bank, and Graham has just returned from Melbourne, Australia, where he worked as a school assistant.

In retirement, John does some consulting and continues to play drums with various groups. Wilma is working on plans to publish some of the French material she has developed over the years. Formidable!



The Canham family: John, Brian, Wilma, and Graham

THOMSON MEMORIES - a collection of reminiscences

There was the afternoon the entire school was let out so we could be at home to watch the final USSR game in the 1972 hockey series *Linda MacLellan '74*

The great "Ernie" kidnapping: Ernie, a stuffed refugee from "Sesame Street", was a mascot of Room 262, for some reason. Suddenly he disappeared. The ransom notes began to arrive, one accompanied by a photograph of poor Ernie languishing in desert sand with military men and aircraft in the background. Clearly he was the victim of Middle-Eastern terrorism. Fortunately he was subsequently rescued (presumably by a Canadian ambassador) and returned weeks later *Ernie Tucker - staff '72 - '90*

Playing cards ("Hearts") at lunch in the cafeteria (Grade 12 and 13) with twelve of my favourite friends was a lot of fun. Thanks to Nancy King, Bill Kerr, Shelagh Maguire, Cindy Smith, Helga Flickinger, Debbie Fraser, Cathy Phillip, to name a few off the top of my head, plus Janet Lowan, Cathy Veal, Lisa Harrison, and Andrea Fowler. *Lorraine Hayne '80*

I admired the support, encouragement, and appreciation parents showed at Commencements, Parents' Nights, or via a note. I always felt the school had a caring family attitude towards staff and students. *Eileen Goudie - staff '72 - '94*

I came in last place in the 1984 Car Rally with *Lisa Ferreira*. The rally was organized by *Brett Sullivan*, and that is probably why we came in last, because of his bizarre directions. *Leah (Cook) Cartmel '85*

I was part of a school trip to Greece in March Break 1973, accompanied by *Mr. Farrow*. We were snowed in at Terminal 2, spent the night there, and did not leave for Athens until the next day: an experience I'll always remember. *Kathy Porter '73*

Our collection of memories includes winning the Junior Football Championship in '77 and Senior Football Championship in '80 (the last time Thomson won a Senior Championship!), *Bye Bye Birdie*, and the Byrons winning ball hockey (amongst other things!) *Don and Kathy (Kightley) Karch '80*

I remember *Annette Funicello's* visit. The former Mouseketeer came to Thomson as part of United Way fundraising in the early '60s *Ronald Powell '63* and *William Downey '65* both mentioned this.

Seeing a boy go from 28 to 64 in Math while I was tutoring him was one of the things that led me into teaching *Stephen Richardson '80*

Autumn of 1978: a field trip and stay-over at Claremont Conservation Area with *Mr. Baxter* and *Ms. Clark* of the Geography Department. Although I did not take photographs on this trip, the ones that were taken by others inspired me to be the photographer I am today. I purchased my camera for Christmas, and the following year I became the Thomson yearbook photographer. I still shoot anywhere from 20-50 rolls of film per year. *Robert Doi '78*

In 1969 we raised \$8500+ for the United Way and walked Miles for Millions (with *Charlie Ketcheson* as our student rep for charities). The money raised was a record for that time. *Carol Neave - staff '67-'70*

"Eugene", our group's mascot, lives in the hearts of all former group members. *Janice (Devries) Hamilton-Dicker '79*

Mr. Butkovich played hockey with the Grade 13 girls and sang "I Feel Pretty" from *West Side Story*. *Pat (Kocur) Aplevich '63*

I remember playing violin with *Ed Moran* and the Science Department during the Christmas Assembly, and enjoying *Barb Shaw's* delicious chocolate chip cookies when walking the picket line during The Strike (I still use her recipe!) *Jane Savage - staff '72 - '76*

I am amazed at the small-world aspect of some Thomson encounters. Two girls from my class (I am still in contact with them 30 years on!) met and married two guys who went on to play in a band together (one of them was my best friend from elementary school in Don Mills!)...though long ago divorced and living all over the province, I still marvel at how this all came together. *David Shaw '65*

