

Thomson Tradewinds

DAVID & MARY THOMSON C.I. ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1998

Reunion 1999

Next year, David and Mary Thomson C.I. will be forty years old - a thought not entirely welcomed by those of us who were there at the beginning, and who are obviously forty years older now! Nevertheless, it seems like a good opportunity for a last full get-together before we celebrate the fiftieth in 2009.

Your very loosely organized Alumni committee have agreed to help out wherever possible in putting together a reunion, since the well-publicised chaos in the educational system will undoubtedly leave the present staff and students less able to plan the whole show. We, of course, will need the help of fellow Alumni to pull this off.

The date has not been finalized (it has to be reserved with the new Toronto District Board of Education) but should be in early May. We anticipate an Open House drop-in at the school and a dance in the evening. Depending on response, we could add a Pub Night or other activities.

At the Open House, we will have rooms divided by decades ('60s to '90s) and would love to hear from volunteers who could co-ordinate collection, and possibly display of mementos from that decade. We would probably be selling souvenirs such as tee-shirts, mugs, caps, rings, jackets, mouse-pads, etc. Do you have suggestions? Are you connected with a company that makes such items? Are there other ways you would like to help? Fill in the information on the membership form, and keep May, 1999 open!

Let's do it again!



Our Pub Night in February was a rousing success (see the photos), so much so that we have decided on an encore in September, this time much closer to "home". Janet Evans, our intrepid social organizer, discovered a great loca-

tion five minutes from her home, and just around the corner from the old school. (Again, our apologies to non-Toronto-area readers!)

The Jubilee is a fairly new restaurant which has opened where the old East Side restaurant used to be on the east side of Brimley just south of Lawrence. We've arranged to take



over a whole room on September 26, starting about 8:00 p.m. There will be a D.J. with tunes from your eras, and lots of finger foods and liquid refreshments available to purchase.



Our phoning committee for the last Pub Night helped ensure its success. If you would like to help out by taking a list of names to phone before our fall get-together, let us know on the enclosed form. Mark your calendars and tell your fellow-Thomsonites.

Photo credits: 1, 2: Stan Farrow; 3: Tim Luet.

in memoriam

Jean Osborne 1912-1997

Harvey Bride, Moderns Head in Thomson's early years, submitted this tribute to Jean "with special affection on behalf of former colleagues". He also wonders how many of you remember one of her favourite exclamations, "Honour bright!"



Jean Osborne, well-known mathematics teacher from Thomson's pioneer days, passed away in Kincardine in October, 1997. She had spent the last several years in

Trillium Court, where she had her own living quarters, as well as access to nursing care, as required.

Born in a rural area near the village of Ripley, Jean groomed herself to be a teacher, first in "little red schoolhouses" and then at Ethel Continuation School near Wingham. In the '40s and '50s she taught Mathematics, English, and Phys Ed (plus anything else required!) at Lucknow High School. A true team player, she always had time to help novice teachers like myself. (*Harvey Bride taught at Lucknow 1953-1955 -ed.*) She intuitively demonstrated leadership by organizing field trips and outings, such as theatre parties (in the dead of winter) to the Grand Theatre in London, 80 miles away.

Jean played an active role in the social and church life of the community. This participation seemed to instill in her students a sense of civic pride and duty. Even today some of the successful farmers in the area thank her skilled teaching as they determine solutions to storage and farm management problems. ("Now, this is the way Miss Osborne would have figured it.")

In the mid-1950s, Jean taught mainly Grade 13 Mathematics in the Listowel District High School. Then she was invited to apply to Scarborough for an opening at the new collegiate in 1959. She treasured her years at Thomson, where she was often the first staff member to help organize ticket sales, charity drives, refreshments, and so on. Among former students with whom she continued to correspond was Linda Offenburger, now teaching in Germany.

Outside the classroom, Jean was committed to a well-rounded life style. A good deal of her energy and time were devoted to the Elizabeth Fry Society, which helps rehabilitate young women who have served prison sentences. She also regularly attended plays and concerts. She will be especially remembered for the "thoughtfulness, enthusiasm, optimism, and unflinching cheerfulness" which, according to former Thomson Moderns teacher, Joanne McMinn, made her "a much loved member of a group of colleagues who, after more than 35 years, still make yearly trips to the Shaw Festival." Besides Joanne and Jean, that group has over the years included Marjorie Kaye, Fran Stretton, Evelyn Hunt, and Helen O'Connor.

Another priority in Jean's life was family, especially her sister's four children and their eleven offspring. Her cousin, Dr. James Guest, in his eulogy, praised Jean as "the consummate professional. She loved being a teacher and, in the richest sense of the word, she loved her students. Truly hers was a life to celebrate."

Doug Scovell 1925-1997

We promised a tribute to Doug in this issue, and are pleased that his successor as Math Dept. Head, Iris Brown, agreed to write this profile of her former "boss".



Doug Scovell, the former Head of Mathematics at Thomson, was known as the Silver Fox: "silver" because Doug had gray hair long before other signs of middle age began to appear, and "fox" because he was both clever and mischievous. Some of the numerous jokes he loved to tell required censorship, but Doug was not always concerned about being politically correct.

Doug, a man of strong likes and dislikes, had a wide variety of interests. He was intrigued by mathematics in general and geometric relationships in particular. During his teaching career, which started in Bancroft in 1955, he strove to pass on this enthusiasm. In 1957, he moved to Malvern Collegiate, in Toronto's east end, but Malvern's

loss was Thomson's gain when Doug's career path led to Scarborough in the early 1960s. While at Thomson, Doug took pride in his work with students in the classroom and with students preparing for various mathematical contests. For many years, he enjoyed coaching Thomson's Senior Mathematics Team.

After retiring from teaching in 1986, Doug had more time for his many interests, which included classical music, ornithology, butterflies, astronomy, geology, and skiing. He had a huge library of classical records, an extraordinary collection of butterflies, and a vast assortment of rocks. While indulging in ornithology, Doug travelled to many regions of North and South America and Australia to observe various species of birds.

Doug's strong dislikes included smoking and wasting money. If he had had his way, Toronto schools would have become smoke-free environments decades ago. He considered smoking an asinine activity. Frequently the sly fox caught students smoking in washrooms or stairwells. As for his frugality, his Mathematics colleagues can attest to his careful use of any money allotted to the Department!

Doug spent his retirement years in his dream home in Nottawa, Ontario. In this scenic, quiet area, he continued to pursue his many interests and to entertain his family and friends until he lost his battle against leukemia in November, 1997.

Although other foxes may roam the corridors of Thomson Collegiate, there will never be another Silver Fox like Doug Scovell. He will long be remembered by his students, his colleagues, and his friends.

Stewart Aikman 1939-1998

Stew, Thomson's very popular Art Head from 1967 to 1976 and again from 1985 to 1987, died suddenly of a heart attack in March. We asked his sister, Mary Austin, who teaches kindergarten in Toronto, to fill us in on her brother's career and activities since his early Thomson days.

After leaving Thomson in 1976, Stewart spent several years teaching at Albert Campbell C. I. as Head of the Art Department. He also coached a boys' hockey team there, and super-



vised an after-school Art Club each year.

In 1978 he was given a full year's sabbatical, and travelled and studied under internationally known artists and

craftsmen. While in Europe, he developed new skills in stained glass, watercolours and pottery.

In 1983 he received a Master of Education degree at OISE. He completed his teaching career as Head of the Art Department at Birchmount Park C. I., from which he retired in June, 1997. At Birchmount he coached a girls' baseball team and, of course, an after-school Art Club.

In addition to day school, Stewart taught night school classes at Thomson in painting and pottery. He also taught pottery at Northern S. S. in Toronto. He was a member of the Ontario Potters' Guild, and also an affiliate at the Cedar Ridge Creative Centre in Scarborough, where he taught...pottery! And he was actively involved as a member of the Beach Studio Tour.

For many years, Stewart owned a small farm at Dalrymple, where he also had a studio. Many happy vacations were spent there with his family. After selling the property, he bought a cottage at Snake Island on Lake Simcoe, where he also pursued his artistic interests, and shared precious leisure moments with the family.

Invariably, Stewart and his wife, Debbie (a Thomson grad!), would meet former art students from Thomson, while out for a social evening. He was one of those unforgettable people who was highly respected. Besides Debbie, he is survived by a son Jonathan (26), a daughter Caitlin (16), and twins Kelsey and Tavis (14). He was devoted to his family and they will miss him greatly, as will we all.

A Memorial Trust Fund has been established through the auspices of the Toronto District Board of Education. This fund will be used to help send students to Art Camp every year or to pursue their art education at a college of art. Contributions can be sent to:

The Stewart Aikman Memorial Fund
c/o Mr. Peter Reid
Dr. Norman Bethune C.I.
200 Fundy Bay Blvd.
Agincourt, ON

Profiles



Pat in 1998

Pat (Kocur) Aplevich (class of 1963) says that she is still surprised that someone from a working-class family, who was a "ditzzy dumb blonde" with bad study habits, ended up teaching university, married to someone who became Associate Dean of Graduate Studies at Waterloo, and had two wonderful daughters.

Memories from Thomson include Mr. Butkovich (Phys Ed) playing for the Grade 13 girls' hockey team in a boys vs. girls game, and singing "I Feel Pretty" from West Side Story in the locker room. The teachers who made the strongest impression on her were Miss McMinn (German), Mr. London (History), and Mr. Bride (French). The latter was not her favourite at the time! In

retrospect, Pat found she was very well prepared for French at University, and feels the quality of the curriculum and the power of teachers in Grade 13 in the 1960s was exceptional. Students entering post-secondary school now are less prepared, and achievement levels from high schools are "highly flexible".

Among Pat's very good friends were Carol Kruzic, Andrea and Kay Williams, Ron Hindle, Peter Krien, Christa Hanff, Gabrielle Horvath, Marlene Taylor, Uwe Priller, and Bernie Sauerma. She also wonders what has happened to Sylvia Hutton. (Any guidance from our readers?)

Pat's academic life after Thomson was quite varied. She started in Physical and Occupational Therapy at U. of T., then switched to French, German, and English at Victoria College. Because of a serious car accident, Pat had to leave after her third year, but finished her degree in 1967 at U. of Waterloo. While completing her M.A. in French Literature, she was a graduate teaching assistant, and toured Europe in the summers. She also met her husband, who was then the newest member of the Electrical Engineering faculty. Upon her graduation in May, 1970 with a French scholarship, they lived in Paris for a year.

Pat teaches French at U. of Waterloo to students from all faculties who are not specialists in French. She started part-time in 1971 and became a full-time instructor in 1984. In 1995 she was named Course Development Co-ordinator for Distance and Continuing Education. This position helps faculty members develop material - audio cassettes, video, printed resources - for two basic and one intermediate courses in Business French, to be carried on the World Wide Web. This is a two-to-three-year project, to design pilot courses emphasizing oral language, which will not involve homework.

Her career as a university language teacher has given Pat unusual opportunities to travel during sabbaticals. In 1975-76 she taught English in French government laboratories in Toulouse, she was in Sweden in 1982-83, and she spent 1990-91 teaching French at the University of Texas in Arlington.

Pat has two daughters, aged 23 and 24. The oldest, Noelle, graduated in Honours English from Waterloo and is getting married this year. Her youngest bought a one-way ticket to Vancouver and worked as a ski instructor, but is now an undergraduate.

Since 1992, Pat and her husband have been active in a sailing club, competing in regatta races in a 17-foot Wayfarer on small lakes near North Bay, and on Lake Michigan. They have won trophies, although Pat still classifies herself as "improving". She recommends sailing for marriage enrichment and fun.

Pat, like many grads, feels that the memories of our formative years tend to be selective: we recall more of the joys than of the pain. Thanks, Pat for sharing your own story with us.

Thanks also to Pat's classmate, Fenno van Zwanenburg, for interviewing Pat and penning this profile for the Thomson Tradewinds. Perhaps readers will feel inspired to do likewise for fellow Alumni/ae.



Pat in 1963

