

Thomson TRADEWINDS

DAVID & MARY THOMSON C.I. ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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Remembering a Dynasty



Members of Thomson's 1979 championship Senior Boys Volleyball team pose with a collection of the trophies they won that year.

Back row: Martin Rooney (manager), John Lee, Philip Gray, Larry Rodricks, Jim Lawrie, Tony Gibson, Jamie Stoddard, Don Yaschyschyn (coach).

Front row: Alex Chang, Jon Russell, Jeff Ireland, Ray Lamey (captain), Tom Ormsby, Roger Morito

Reunions

- As promised last issue, we are holding our spring Pub Night down east in Ajax! Shoeless Joe's, at 100 Westney Rd. S. (west side, just off the 401) (905-426-1900). An upstairs section is reserved for Friday evening, May 26, from 8:00 on! We picked the date to coincide with the 50th anniversary reunion for **Hunter's Glen Public School** the next day, May 27. Also upcoming, both on May 6, are the 50th celebrations for **Donwood** and **McCowan Rd. Public Schools**. For details, contact the schools. Finally, any Class of 1981 members interested in a 25th reunion in the fall? Contact **Bob McBride** (b_mcbr@yahoo.com).

In Thomson's forty-seven-year history, no single sports team has been able to match the record of our Senior Boys Volleyball squad, winning twelve consecutive Scarborough titles from 1974 to 1985. Obviously, in the days of five-year secondary school student careers, the teams changed personnel quite often. One constant from 1975 to 1984 was Coach **Don Yaschyschyn**. Since Don is retiring this year from a very successful high school teaching and coaching career, we thought it would be fitting to salute his days at Thomson with an update on his career and those of some of the players.

The project was the brainwave of **Ernie Tucker**, who put together the profiles on the following pages. He considers it a work in progress; so look for more updates in future issues. We are sure he won't mind if we also update readers on Mr. Tucker's post-Thomson career as well.

Whether you were part of the teams, part of the crowds jammed into the gyms to cheer on our heroes, or just interested in bragging about what happened before or after your time at Thomson, we hope you will enjoy our Volleyball Special. Success breeds success and notable achievements are indeed worth celebrating.

Don Yaschyshyn



Coach Yaschyshyn today

In 1974, **George Boyce** and **Ernest Tucker** took over a hot volleyball squad that had been left coachless by the departure of **Pete Salter** from Thomson's Geography Department to the warmer climes of the Niagara Peninsula. After a year of sponsoring a senior and a junior team whose skills clearly exceeded their own fondest dreams of volleyball expertise, both George and Ernest approached **Jim Myrvold**, head

of Boys' Phys. Ed., and recommended he hire, for a current vacancy in his department, a "real volleyball coach."

What Jim got was a devotee of basketball, **Don Yaschyshyn**. But he was, or became, a "real volleyball coach;" in his ten years as coach of Thomson's Redmen, he won ten consecutive SSSAA volleyball titles. Most amazingly, in all that time, he never coached the Redmen to a regular season loss - not even in a single game. During that incredible streak, "Yas" won seven OFSSA gold medals (in 1975, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1984), one silver (1977) and one bronze (1982).

Asked for his most exciting memory, Yas' response was: "1978. With Ray, Roger, Tom, Bruce, Harry and the others, most of whom could have played junior, we weren't expected to win." But, of course, they did. And Yas' teams continued to win. In fact, the Redmen's winning ways continued into 1985, when, under coach **Mike Cafferata**, they met

Yas' Midland squad in the Scarborough finals. Both teams were undefeated at the beginning but, at the end, the Redmen prevailed, despite the presence of **John Child**, future Olympic Volleyball medallist, in the Midland ranks.

Yas went on to further coaching success at West Hill and latterly, at West Humber Collegiate, from which he will retire this June. Still, he remembers those Thomson teams as "special, those were good guys."

Volleyball didn't cease in the Yaschyshyn line, however, as his son, Brian, played at the OVA and Erindale levels before his current career in logistics.

After retirement, Don plans on filling many of his leisure hours as a golf ranger and, naturally, golfing. But he also has plans to referee some volleyball; the game is still in his veins.

John May

John May says volleyball has been his life. Having played on the team at John McCrae, he remembers peering through the gym windows upon his arrival in Grade 9 at Thomson with a teammate from the McCrae days. They agreed, "These guys are good!" and the friend decided not to go out for the junior team. John, however, did go out and **Al Riddell**, who was coaching during a work-to-rule campaign, put him on the roster.

John joined the senior side in 1976. He thus became a part of the golden era of Thomson Volleyball as the Redmen won the O.F.S.S.A. AAA championship in 1976 and were finalists in 1977.

John then went to Brigham Young University, where he was a walk-on for the volleyball team before returning to York University to join ex-Redmen **Mark Ainsworth** and **Dave Chambers** on a powerhouse squad that won the Ontario University title in 1979, 1980, and 1981. As John points out, he was ever fated to graduate as a finalist, since the York team lost in the championship in 1982.

During this time, John began playing beach volleyball, particularly focusing on his partnership with **Ed Drakich**

through the 80s. This led to participation in the Association of Volleyball Professionals and, ultimately, John's new interest in the promotion of volleyball. Many Torontonians remember one of John's more newsworthy local promotions, the Ashbridges' Bay stop on the International Beach Volleyball Tour from 1998 to 2000.

This success was followed by an invitation to help organize the highly successful Olympic Volleyball finals in Sydney, Australia, where Toronto locals, **Mark Heese** and **John Child**, took the

bronze medal.

It was a natural move from there to coaching, and John made the move. The next four years found him coaching Heese and Child for the Athens Olympics, and his work in this area continues.

Not that John has abandoned playing the game itself. This last year found him paired with another ex-Scarborough Solar, **Jim Cook**, competing in the World Masters' Volleyball Championship in Edmonton, where they brought home the silver medal.

Married for seventeen years, John has two sons. Not surprisingly, both Garrett, 13, and Reid, 11, play volleyball at a very high level, with Garrett ranked at the top of the Ontario under-14's. Volleyball may well be John May's life - and his legacy.



Some of the 1976 team pose for the yearbook: **Ross Jong**, **John May** and **Coach Yaschyshyn** in the back row; **Wayne Brooks**, **Bob Armstrong**, **Dave Chambers** and **Bruce Dillon** in front.

Roger Morito

Roger Morito, as setter, was a key element of the Thomson Senior Volleyball teams of 1978, 1979, and 1980. During those years, the Redmen swept through league play, the Toronto District Championships and OFSSA titles.

Although Roger never mentioned it, this writer remembers more than one tournament from which the Redmen returned triumphant, with Roger clutching the MVP award. Perhaps equally rewarding were the rare occasions when Roger, offered a spike opportunity, would put it away to the thunderous applause of his teammates.

Roger's best sports memories focus on the Thomson years, but perhaps the most vivid concern 1978, his first year as a senior. With teammates like **Ray Lamey**, **Jim Lawrie**, **Larry Rodricks**, **Jon Russell**, **Tony Gibson**, and **Jamie Stoddart**, the Redmen stormed into Ottawa for the OFSSA championships. In the semi-final match, Thomson played Saunders of London, featuring, among others, **Jeff Glass**. In a best-of-three match, the Redmen prevailed, but it took two hours! The finals, won over Guelph, seemed simple after that.

After Thomson, Roger went to Waterloo in pursuit of his high school dream of a career in chiropractic. He played varsity ball in 1981 and 1984 - maybe it didn't have the same spark as the Redmen teams.

After four years at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College and two years in practice in North York, Roger began his own chiropractic office on Lapsley Road, in the Markham-Sheppard area.

His pastimes include travel - to such exotic locales as the Amazon, Australia, Rio de Janeiro and Sri Lanka. He took up golf, seriously and avidly, in 1992 and, having dabbled in squash at the Balmy Beach Club, he became involved in that club's hockey program around 2000.

Asked about wife or children, Roger replies that taking charge of fourteen golf clubs is more than enough for him.



Disco Don presides over his 1978 charges and some of their winning hardware.

*Back row: Jon Russell, Ross Jong, Jim Lawrie, Larry Rodricks, Bruce Dillon, Jamie Stoddard, Coach Yashchyschyn
Front row: Ray Lamey, Tom Ormsby, Harry Prapevessis, Roger Morito, Tony Gibson*

Ernie Tucker



Mr. Tucker at Thomson's 45th Anniversary party

It was always **Ernie Tucker's** intention to spend his entire teaching career at Thomson, and we are sure the many students who still remember him fondly would have supported such a dream, but falling enrolments saw him declared surplus after 18 years!

So in 1990 he moved to Sir Oliver Mowat C.I. as Assistant Head of English. After three years, he applied for a combination of Library and English at Wexford C.I., a posting which really attracted him and which he really enjoyed until his retirement in 2002. Wexford is now the Arts School in Scarborough, and Ernie had great success incorporating the Art and English programs in many creative ways.

Retirement proved short-lived, since he immediately

accepted an invitation to join the faculty of the Toronto French School in the autumn of 2002, and he's still there. The school, on Lawrence Ave. just west of Bayview, offers the International Baccalaureate program with its accompanying high academic standards. Student competitiveness is also very high. Ernest, as he is known in those hallowed halls, feels honoured to be part of that scene, and he was also pleased to recruit an old Thomson colleague, **Charlie Hawkes**, for a one-year post there teaching Economics.

He confesses that his athletic endeavours have become more limited since he blew out his knee playing squash and his shoulder playing golf. But he still walks and cycles from his home base in Toronto's Beach district. Wife Patty is on hand to handle any further medical emergencies.

Toronto-area grads can usually count on being greeted by Ernie at the doors of St. Paul's Anglican Church each December, where he hands out the programs for the Toronto Star Annual Christmas Carol Concert on a Saturday afternoon. And, as this issue's profiles indicate, he does enjoy keeping in touch!

