

Thomson TRADEWINDS

DAVID & MARY THOMSON C.I. ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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What's Next for Thomson?



The photo to the left was taken in the fall of 1969, when Thomson was just ten years old. It comes from the end-papers of the 1970 Tom Tom (hence the lower quality reproduction). Once you have taken in the mini-skirts and other fashion fads of the day, plus the fact that the school population was almost exclusively Caucasian, check out how the front facade compares with that in the photo below, taken in April 2008, as Thomson closes in on 50 years.

The most obvious difference today is the expansion of the Resource Centre, with no windows, and the school's name moved forward to that windowless wall. Less obvious is the fact that the front entrance no longer involves steps and railings. Oldtimers from the early 1960s will realize that even by 1969 there had been major changes,

as we lost the fancy fountain that never worked properly and had already expanded the Library and the Cafeteria out towards Lawrence Ave.

In some ways, the old school is showing its age in the 2008 photo. Hence a major initiative by the Toronto District School Board to consider a revitalization program that also involves Bendale B.T.I. and the neighbouring feeder schools and buildings to the north of Thomson: Edgewood, Donwood and the former Highbrook. That process has filtered into the Alumni community as a rather stark rumour: they're going to tear down Thomson!

Perhaps "they" will! But at the moment, the staff and students of all these schools and the wider community that they serve are meeting in committees to examine the future under three headings: programs, facilities, and finances.

"Programs" involve curriculum that meets contemporary needs. "Finances" obviously involves how to pay for what the committees decide they want. It is "facilities" that could involve major upgrades, complete replacement, combining buildings and the like.

If you pass by the front of the school, you'll notice the sign-board has dates for ARC meetings in the Bendale library. ARC is the Area Review Committee, with representatives from each school. The meetings are open to the public for input, and there is one to go, on April 28 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., which Alumni are welcome to attend. You can check out www.tdsb.on.ca/program_revitalization for information and updates. Thomson has also set up a blog to discuss activities and plans, including a very up-beat visit from the *Toronto Star's* architecture critic, Christopher Hume, on school buildings that inspire. You can log in at <http://abelweb.abel.yorku.ca/schormenki/schoolmerge/blog/>.

The timelines for this process guarantee that nothing drastic will happen before we celebrate our 50th. We are hoping for the week-end of May 1-3, 2009, but have not received Board confirmation as we go to press. We'll let you know!



Profile: Mark Ainsworth

Ernie Tucker continues his series on members of Thomson's boys' volleyball teams of the '70s and '80s

When he signed up for the Hunter's Glen Junior Public School volleyball team, **Mark Ainsworth** thought he was going to learn new skills and have some fun; he didn't realize he was making a lifetime decision, the results of which would continue into the next generation.

Mark moved on to Thomson Collegiate and came under the influence of **Pete Salter**, geography teacher and volleyball coach. He also became a teammate and friend to people like **Steve Lowen, Dave Brown, Jeff Russell, John Ionidis, Dave Chambers** and, later, **John May**. After his first year on the senior team, **Don Yaschyshyn** arrived as coach, and Thomson's dominance of OFSSA volleyball began; for Mark, this would result in two provincial championships.

Asked for his most memorable high school moments, Mark, not surprisingly, focuses on those championships. The first took place at Hamilton, in McMaster's gymnasium. Observers recall that Mark soon determined that the extremely high ceilings allowed him to serve the ball straight up, with no spin, the result being a "knuckleball" that few defenders could bump. Many aces were recorded this way, and the final outcome was the Redmen's first gold medal at OFSSA.

Mark remembers the second championship as even more difficult. "That first year, somehow we were expected to win," he recalls, perhaps because of the fine record the team had in the many weekend tournaments in which Yaschyshyn had them compete. In Kingston, with many of the veterans gone, the core had to blend a number of talented newcomers into the team. However, after a very tough semi-final match against the Kapuskasing Colts, Thomson cruised to its second gold medal; the dynasty had begun.

After graduation, Mark worked for a year before heading to the United States for a spot on the Rutgers University squad. His university career blossomed, however, when he returned to Canada and the York Yeomen. Joining the team in 1978, Mark led York to three OUAA championships in four years. He was an OUAA All-Star four times and All-Canadian in 1979-80. In 2005, he was inducted into the York University Hall of Fame.

Of even more importance to Mark during his career at York, he met **Sylvia**, a basketball and European handball athlete who,

perhaps understandably, took a sudden interest in volleyball, especially after they were married in his second year. To this day, she continues to compete in the sport.

Mark's days in volleyball did not end with his graduation, either. As a teacher of Design and Fabrication as well as Phys. Ed., he coached school teams at both Mary Ward and Francis Libermann Catholic Schools. During eleven years of coaching at each school, he continued to visit the OFSSA championships, winning an OFSSA silver medal with a boys' team from Mary Ward and gold and silver medals with boys' teams at Libermann to go with gold and bronze in the girls' competitions.

In addition to school teams, Mark also founded the Scarborough Falcons, whose teams have also known great success. In addition to a number of provincial championships, his under-18 boys won silver at the Nationals in 2001, following up with the gold in 2002.

The next generation has its Ainsworths on the volleyball courts as well. **Graydon**, 21, a 6'8" senior, is completing his education studies at Indiana/Purdue at Fort Wayne, where his team has been ranked as high as second in NCAA play. Gray was awarded Midwestern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association All-Academic honors for 2007. He was also setter for the bronze-medal Ontario team at the 2005 Canada Games. His sister, **Samantha**, 19, is also the recipient of an athletic scholarship. An Art History major in her second year at Purdue University, she is currently playing Division I NCAA after a stint on the Canadian Junior team.

Clearly, it's been a long and memorable ride since that elementary school kid decided to give a new sport a try.



The beat goes on: Mark (right) with son Graydon at the 2005 Canada Games.

Pub Night Excellence Continues on Friday, May 2

Story and photos by Bob Doi



Our Fall Pub Night, held this time on a Saturday, has shown that turnouts are comparable to those held on Friday nights. Our November 17th night out at Tapps barely beat the arrival of Old Man Winter. Our beloved Maple Leafs were still in the playoff race and we watched them shut out arch-rivals Ottawa Senators 3 – 0 on the many well positioned TVs. This was our third consecutive Pub Night held at Tapps (Why tinker with success?), and once again the turnout was approximately 40 of your former classmates. Between the hockey game, the music and the camaraderie of old friends, it was a lively night out as the photos will attest.

Photos are always available to view if you join the Thomson Alumni Yahoo Group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dandmthomsoncollegiate/>).

We will be looking at a possible future Pub Night back in the Pickering/Ajax area, which also proved successful back in 2006. Unfortunately, our Shoeless Joes



locale changed ownership and has been undergoing renovations in recent times. So until that time, we are pleased to announce that our Spring 2008 Pub Night will once again be



held at TAPPS Restaurant, 5630 Finch Ave. East (north side), just east of Markham Road. Parking entrance is off Tapscott Road, behind the restaurant, one stop-light east of Markham Road. We've decided to move back to a Friday this time; so mark May 2nd (8:00) on your calendars and join us in our celebration of the arrival (We hope!) of the warm weather.

