

Thomson Tradewinds

DAVID & MARY THOMSON C.I. ALUMNI NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2001

Embers in the Rain

Pub Night remembered by reporter Bob Doi and photographer Karen Forrest



May 25th marked the fourth year that the Thomson Alumni Committee has organized a Pub Night for Thomson Alumni. Despite a heavy downpour of spring rain, approximately 50 - 60 alumni braved the elements for an entertaining evening at the Embers Prince George Pub. Although the crowd was understandably not as large as at the 40th Anniversary Pub Night held in the same location, a good time was had by all who attended. The celebrants included a group of '70s grads who were not even aware of the Pub Night, but just happened to be at the Pub at the same time.

People dropped in and out, with most staying for a couple of drinks to talk about the old times and discuss what's currently going on in their lives. One person even brought in several yearbooks, which turned out to be a big hit as people perused them and shared some laughs over fond memories.

Entertainment was provided by the duo known as Black-Eyed Susan. Their combination of contemporary, folk and blues music ensured that nary a quiet moment was experienced

throughout the pleasant evening.

Special thanks to Karen and Bob Forrest for handling the evening's arrangements. We look forward to seeing you all at our next Pub Night in the Spring of 2002. Look for details in the Spring 2002 issue of the Thomson Tradewinds or via our email notification.

Please remember, if you haven't submitted your Alumni annual dues, please do so, in order to continue receiving the newsletter and notification of upcoming events. Check the insert in this newsletter.

In Memoriam

This past summer our Alumni Planning Committee lost one of its most conscientious and enthusiastic members with the death of **Fenno van Zwanenburg**. Returning to work at Canada Customs after a lunch break, he collapsed on the street from a heart attack. He had been battling leukemia successfully, he thought, but the chemotherapy may have taken its toll.

Fenno was a student at Thomson from 1959 to 1963. A rather scholarly-looking and quiet individual then, he had developed quite a devastating wit in the intervening years. He provided our committee with often sage advice from the "real" world, and attended all the events we helped to plan, to lend his support. We will miss him!

Business travels as an SAP Consultant across the U.S. and frequent Florida visits where he could indulge his fondness for all things Disney prevented **Don Yates** from actually serving on our committee, but he never failed to renew his membership and interest in our Alumni since its inception. Don succumbed to kidney cancer in October, 2000, at the age of 38.

His generosity and love to family, friends, and co-workers knew no bounds. He loved to laugh and sing, and he made others laugh, as well, enriching the lives of all he met. With his boundless energy, he lived his own brief life to the full - Mr. Don's Wild Ride! His sister, **Louise Parker**, who includes these memories in a personal reminiscence, concludes her tribute with these thoughts: Work like you don't need the money. Love like you've never been hurt. Dance like nobody's watching. Sing like nobody's listening. Live like it's heaven on earth.

And Remember the Magic.

Principal's Report

an update from Donna Benson

We were all looking forward to the beginning of an "ordinary" school year with eager anticipation, but it was not to be. In mid-August, I was informed that the teachers' timetables would have to be adjusted from 6.5 teaching periods to 6 (out of 8) and this had to be accomplished in time for classes to begin September 4. Well, we managed to meet the deadline. Teachers and most students had timetables on the first day of school. For the next three weeks we worked to ensure that students were in their chosen classes with full timetables. We also managed to register an additional two hundred students who had moved into our area, bringing our student population to 1300, 200 over projection, and significantly higher than it has been for the past 10 years. We are now at approximately 75% capacity and have almost 100 teaching and support staff.

Sadly, during that first frantic week, we were to mourn the passing of **Lou Schnalzer**, our Technical Director for many years, who had retired only in June. This cast a significant pall on our school opening, for both staff and students. Immediately after, we were stunned by the events which occurred on September 11. Our students and staff responded to this terrible tragedy

with compassion and dignity. There was a new understanding of the need to recognize and respect individual differences and that there was no better place to begin than at Thomson.

Our results in the Grade 10 test of reading and writing indicated that although we were close to the Provincial and Board averages there was still work to do. Led by the Literacy Committee, we embraced the concept of literacy across the curriculum. Through the staff's hard work and dedication, our students were as prepared as they could be to write the TEST. The announcement that the test was to be postponed was certainly met with dismay. This does, however, give us time for additional preparation.

Commencement was held on the Thursday before the Thanksgiving holiday and the Awards Ceremony a few weeks ago. These are always happy occasions when we have the opportunity to recognize our students for their accomplishments.

The return of extra-curricular activities and programs has had a very positive effect on the school. Athletics (including football), music, drama, Peace Club, Library Club and many others are in full swing and students and staff are certainly enjoying this return to normalcy!



Hello, Birdie! A group photo from the "Bye Bye Birdie" reunion in May. Thanks to everyone who helped make this 20th anniversary event a rousing success.

Behind the Headlines

PEOPLE

SCARBOROUGH MIRROR, Friday, May 13, 2000 31

In May, the Scarborough Mirror ran an article on **Katie Griffin**, who plays Stephen Baldwin's wife in the soon-to-be-released movie, "Protection." Katie was first bitten by the acting bug in Grade 3 when she starred in a play at Edgewood Public School. Her on-stage expertise continued at Thomson, and, following graduation in 1991, on to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles.

Her versatile abilities have since led to many T.V. appearances, over 100 commercials, and several movies. "Traders" and "Earth Final Conflict" are among her T.V. credits, as well as voice work for "Braceface", a new animation series. Her more recent commercials include Diet Dr. Pepper, Juicy Fruit, and Michelin Tire. As for movies, "Beauty and Power" is due out in the spring, and she has just finished filming "Swindle" in Montreal.

Her work is increasingly taking her away from her Toronto home - she has even applied for a green card for the U.S. - but she still prefers to live here. It's safer, for one thing, and it's also close to family, her life-long supporters. Sister Becky, now a Scarborough teacher, remains her best friend.

Her latest passion is the guitar. She has always had a good singing voice, and has even been trying her hand at writing songs. Perhaps there's a CD in her future, as well.

What most readers of the article would not have known, however, was that the reporter, **Maria Tzavaras**, is also a Thomson grad. As a member of the class of 1994, she "hung out" with Becky, Katie's sister, working on a number of

Up and coming actress balances career, family

By MARIA TZAVARAS

Special to the Mirror

Not many people could say their job made a difference in the world.

But for actress Katie Griffin, it's not just a job, it's a calling. After a year in the TV show "Traders" and "Earth Final Conflict", she has landed a number of movie roles.

Although she's been successful in her own right, she

is also a mother of two children. Griffin said she has a lot of great memories of her time at Thomson.

"I just so much love it," Griffin said. "I had a really great childhood and I have a lot of great memories of my time at Thomson."

In Grade 3 of Edgewood Public School, she starred in the play "The Little Prince". Although she said she didn't realize that acting would become her career, it did make a big enough im-

pression on her. "I really liked people watching what I was doing. I was in a different world," Griffin said. "It was a nice job and I was doing well by the standards."

She then, Griffin's job has been a whirlwind of meetings, filled with excitement and a sense of the need to succeed in the business.

She recently finished shooting a feature film in Montreal starring opposite Stephen Baldwin playing his wife, Gena Rowlands. A couple of weeks ago she wrapped up a commercial shoot in Vancouver for the movie "The Hot Chick".

Of all the roles she's been playing lately, Griffin said her favorite is Thomson.

"I think I'm the best thing about Thomson. When she originally came to Thomson, she was so vulnerable and her teachers were so caring. It's a place where you can be yourself and still be successful."



These are good for Scarborough actress Katie Griffin, who has recently starred in several made-for-TV productions as well as starring opposite Stephen Baldwin in a feature film. Despite the hectic schedule, Griffin never forgets, each day, her roots at Thomson.

Griffin said. "I'm very ambitious, but I'm also very grateful. I'm going to work as hard as I can but maintain a normal life." Paul Thomson, Griffin's former agent, said she has the ability to get a range of roles because of her calm personality and ability to work with people in the industry. As well, he said, she speaks for most.

"She has a very fresh way of looking at things and a real sense of humor. She's not just a super performer and she's very smart. She's a real professional."

Griffin said she's excited with her career as an actor and will still go to school. She said she may be asked to follow the same path as her father, who has a degree in business.

drama presentations and on the Arts Council with her.

Maria's path into journalism led via Centennial College's Bell Centre of Creative Communications, from which she received a diploma in Print Journalism in 2000. She enjoyed the intimate surroundings and the excitement of a new program there. The East York Observer, published every two weeks by the Centre, provided hands-on experience with every facet of the profession.

A year with Kidscreen, a trade publication, followed. Maria got to interview high-powered executives from the world-wide entertainment and marketing field, but spent too much time at an office desk for her liking, writing stories to which she couldn't relate. She left the job, expecting to do some travelling and to look for something which would involve more interaction with people.

Within a week, however, she was offered a freelance position with the Mirror newspapers, which publish local news in the various communities in and around Toronto. She is allowed to find her own stories, of local interest. Her deadlines often involve submitting a different article for, say, Scarborough, North York, and the Beach all on the same day. But she loves it!

No more chains to an office desk. She gets out to meet the people about whom she writes. Her favourite so far was the chance to be part of a St. John's Ambulance program for the homeless, distributing blankets and helping her interviewees, then writing the story to let others know about this work. She has interviewed celebrities and behind-the-scenes heroes, with no limitation on the subject matter. She has also been asked to write a regular column on the Arts in Scarborough.

When her editor suggested she interview this "up and coming actress," she jumped at the chance for a reunion with Katie. The result was an article featuring two alumnae you'll be hearing from again!



Maria Tzavaras

Profile: Keith Woodend



From Pirate King at Thomson to aid worker in Afghanistan via radio host in Southern Ontario, Keith Woodend has sailed a very interesting course.

The Pirate King (in "The Pirates of Penzance" - 1962) was the second of Keith's starring roles in Thomson's first stage productions. He also took the title role in "The Mikado" in 1961. Keith was a grade nine student in Thomson's first year, 1959-1960, but moved on to Midland Ave. C. I. when it opened in 1962.

Following high school, his first "career" was as a bassoonist in Victoria, B.C. Realizing that music was a chancy profession at best, he enrolled in the Radio and Television Arts program at Ryerson in 1967. For the next twenty-two years, he hosted various types of radio shows for CKQS-FM in Oshawa and CFLY-FM in Kingston. He also did freelance commercial narration as well as traffic reporting for the Ontario Motor League and Specialty Traffic Network in Toronto. In addition, Keith has kept up his membership in A.C.T.R.A. for background acting opportunities in movies.

While involved in his on-air

activities, Keith also became interested in a further medically-related career. In 1986 he completed the Ambulance and Emergency Care program at Humber College, with Honours, leading to stints as a paramedic for the City Ambulance Service in Belleville and an Ambulance Dispatcher for C.A.C.C. in Kingston. He added to his resumé an Aeromedical Certificate with Honours from Seneca College (1992), a post-graduate International Project Management diploma, again with Honours, from Humber (2000), work as a Project Officer in the Trauma Access program at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto, and many adventures as a self-employed primary care air ambulance paramedic.

In 1985 he was Logistician for the Kinsman African Medical Relief Team in Ethiopia, providing paramedical support for a large refugee camp. And from December of last year to this past February he worked as Logistician/Administrator for Medecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) in Badghis Province, Afghanistan. He had the opportunity to visit in several homes there, and came away impressed by the friendliness of a people who are not being portrayed as such in the media these days.

Keith has also travelled to South America (escorting a bus tour of young people), Japan, the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Roumania,

North and East Africa, Turkey, and Pakistan. His high school teachers might be surprised to know that he now numbers French and Spanish among his fluent languages.

Over the years he has tackled such diverse occupations as bus driver for Trentway-Wagar Coach Lines; manager of a game and tree farm; teacher of English in Madrid, Spain; central office technician for Bell Canada; and freelance general contractor/handyman. He has been a foster parent, president of a seniors' day centre, publicity director for a regional fair board, Scoutmaster, and computer expert par excellence.



Now the beard is real!

He has won the Carling O'Keefe Creative Writing Award, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters Award, and the President's Letter for top marks in his International Project Management program. On November 14, our ex-Pirate King received the World Vision Award for Humanitarian Assistance.

Keith's wife is on the staff at Humber College and his two daughters are already emulating his adventurous spirit, with the oldest working in Japan. At the moment, Keith considers himself a self-employed semi-retiree, but the pace is slower only in comparison with his busy past. To misquote W. S. Gilbert in "The Pirates of Penzance," he is the very model of a modern Renaissance Man!