

# Thomson TRADEWINDS

DAVID & MARY THOMSON C.I. ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SPRING, 2011

## The Amazing Bucket List Race

In January, two Class of '78 alumni knocked two items off their bucket list. **Laura (Viana) Doi** and **Bob Doi** celebrated their 25th Anniversary (2 years late) by exploring Antarctica and swimming in the Antarctic Ocean. Since swimming in the Arctic Ocean three years ago, this experience meant they had now travelled on every continent and had swum in every ocean in the world. The ocean temperature in both the Arctic and Antarctic was around 0C. Salt water freezes when it's below 0C, so it was still swimmable. As Bob says, he was a man going in, but not so much coming out... This latest adventure was like living 18 days in a National Geographic documentary: whales, seals, albatrosses, elephant seals and hundreds of thousands of penguins. Seven of the main species of penguins were spotted from as close as 15 feet away, sometimes even closer if they approached you! It was a fantasy expedition, a perfect way to top off the list.

Like their favourite reality show, "The Amazing Race," these world travellers love to experience new cultures and new adventures. They have now hit close to 40 countries (without even touching most of Europe), every province in Canada and a vast majority of the U.S. states. It's amazing what you can accomplish when you don't have children... Favourites of these avid hikers have been Alaska; the Galapagos Islands; Petra, Jordan; trekking the Himalayan Mountains in Nepal; safariing in Kenya and Zimbabwe; spotting Polar Bears in the Arctic Ocean north of Norway; snorkeling in the Great Barrier Reef and, of course, tracing the steps of the explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton in Antarctica. So much still to see and so little time! Future plans include China, India, New Zealand, Madagascar, Tanzania, Rwanda and Greece, to name a few. Their favourite travel company (with 8 trips under their belt) is the Toronto-based and Canadian-owned GAP (Great Adventure People) Adventures which specializes in small groups travel, eco-tourism and sustainable tourism.



## Inside this Issue



Catch up with **Ruth Russell** (page 2) in "retirement" as she continues her library work in Hungary. Left, she leads a Young Bible Club in Budapest with the help of a translator.



And what has **Art Milnes** been up to lately? On page 3 read about a very special ceremony in Ottawa for which Art was the catalyst. Any campaign advice for the P. M.?

# Profile: Ruth Russell

Ruth Russell arrived at Thomson in 1961 as the school's head librarian and remained in that capacity until her retirement in 1993. She saw the facilities grow from a single classroom to a double (juniors on one side, seniors on the other, and a task for Ruth checking all the books and materials to place them on the appropriate side) to the huge expansion across the eastern front of the school in the later 1960s (6800 square feet - with a magenta carpet!) and later, of course, the transition to a "Resource Centre" with electronic as well as print facilities.

During her years at Thomson, Ruth was also a very active supporter and staff advisor to the Inter-School Christian Fellowship, sharing her deep and enthusiastic faith with students, some of whom have become life-long friends. So it will come as no surprise to those who knew her then to find that in retirement she has managed to combine her librarian expertise and her faith into a very busy and rewarding life.

Her first adventures were in Austria, doing library work in a 15th-century castle, where there is a Christian Study Centre in the Alps, then to the Black Forest Academy, an English-speaking Christian missionary school in Germany, and even up to the Alaska Bible College library. The next year she returned to the Black Forest Academy as full-time librarian. There, the staff were praying for a new Christian school that had just opened in Budapest, Hungary. Ruth was at first unsure of where Budapest was, but took off in a VW Jetta with a friend to drive there.

She was appointed librarian at the International Christian School of Budapest the following year. She has fallen in love with this beautiful city and has continued to serve there in various capacities. After two years as a librarian and two years as library coordinator, Ruth decided to shorten her time overseas. She then tackled a three-year stint (several months a year) cataloguing books for the library at the Operation Mobilization Training Centre, after which she returned to ICSB as a volunteer. A couple of years ago, a young library technician was found who could work full-time.

This opened the door for Ruth to move to the Greater Grace International School, with a more flexible schedule, handling some library work, especially teaching research skills to classes for their library projects. Meanwhile, for several years, Ruth had also indulged in a special love, leading Bible Studies with various individuals throughout Budapest and also a study on the university campus for students there. This has always been with English-speaking people, but this



*Ruth prepares Budapest students for a visit to the library.*

past fall, Ruth accepted a new challenge of studying the Bible in Hungarian, with a Hungarian colleague to assist. Also, with the help of a translator, she spent several weeks leading an after-school Bible club for seven- to nine-year-olds in a large Hungarian public school.

Another life-long involvement has been with the international Bible-reading organization, Scripture Union, whose guides Ruth has been using for her personal daily Bible study since the age of 11. She spent 24 years on the Board of Scripture Union Canada, and is now nearing 10 years with their Hungarian counterpart. Also, in Budapest, in addition to their regular prayer meetings, Ruth continues to write scripture study notes, which are then translated into Hungarian, for their youth publication, *Utjelzo (Signposts)*.

These days, Ruth's itinerary involves spending October to November and February to early May in Budapest. Like all her colleagues, she is a volunteer, covering all her expenses from her own retirement income. She rents a condominium apartment year-round in Budapest and also has her own car there, where trying to park is an adventure in itself!

She returns home in December to her Bridlewood-area house (where she and her parents moved in 1967) in time to prepare for seasonal celebrations. These always include the International Christmas Camp on Mary Lake near Huntsville, run by the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. The leaders are all practising Christians but the campers, largely foreign students at Ontario universities, are not. They come to explore and learn.



*Christmas Camp, with a Chinese leader and a Hungarian camper*

For many years, Ruth has been a "clan leader" and also has led a seminar on "The Joy of Bible Discovery." There is also a chance she enjoys, while there, for cross-country skiing.

Each June, Ruth attends the conference of the Association of Christian Librarians, held every year at a different university in the USA. There are 400-500 in attendance, many of whom have become good friends. Then it is off to her cottage (built by/for the family the year before she was born) near Bobcaygeon for July and August. There are visits from church groups and friends, plus time for gardening, swimming, rowing and visits to others' cottages.

A full and fulfilling retirement!

# Ottawa Revisited - More Thomson Connections

In our Spring 2010 Tradewinds, we celebrated the swearing-in of a new Justice of the Federal Court of Appeal, **David Stratas**, a Thomson alumnus from 1979. Well, here it is just one year later, and your intrepid reporter has made the journey to Capital Hill once again for another imposing ceremony with a Thomson twist.

This time, the Thomson connection is **Arthur (Art) Milnes**, an alumnus from 1985 (the year he also served as Student Council President). Art is the Inaugural Fellow in Political History at Queen's University Archives in Kingston, ON. In that capacity, he has just had published *Unrevised and Unrepented II*, a collection which he has edited of the speeches of the Right Honourable **Arthur Meighen**, ninth Prime Minister of Canada, and a man considered by many to have been the finest orator and/or parliamentarian to have served this country. He himself produced a volume of his speeches in 1949, with the same title (minus the "II"). Art has selected the best of these and added others in his new book.

Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** has written a Foreword to the book, and Meighen's grandson, Senator **Michael Meighen**, has added an Afterword. But perhaps of greatest interest to Thomsonites will be the fact that Art Milnes has dedicated the book to the memory of **K. R. (Bob) Brown**, the Head of History at Thomson who first piqued Art's interest in Meighen by "bequeathing" to him a three-volume biography of the man, when Mr. Brown had to retire from teaching because of ill health.

In the course of preparing the volume, Art discovered that, through some oversight, Arthur Meighen's portrait in the Centre Block was never officially dedicated. He mentioned this fact to **Peter Milliken**, the Speaker of the House of Commons. Soon the wheels were in motion for a proper ceremony, to take place on February 16, 2011, with plenty of important people in attendance, but among the audience was a small representation from Thomson.

Bob Brown's widow, **Joann**, was able to attend along with two of her sons, **Ken** (all the way from Florida) and **David**, plus David's wife, **Linda Nakamura**. Appropriately, David teaches history at Macdonald Collegiate in Scarborough and Linda is presently retired from the same department. Also in attendance were **Charlie Hawkes**, who succeeded Bob Brown as Head of History, and **Stan Farrow** (your humble reporter) with his wife, **Barbara**.

The dedication ceremony included the august group posing in the photo below, all of whom gave worthy speeches:



On the left is Senator Meighen. **Marjory LeBreton** is the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Prime Minister Harper probably needs no introduction. Speaker Peter Milliken admires the portrait of Arthur Meighen. And Art Milnes stands proudly with the hard copy of his book.

The program also included the singing of the National Anthem by **Priscilla Wright**, a noted performer from the 1950s and 1960s, who is Arthur Meighen's granddaughter. Noted actor, **Christopher Plummer**, also made an appearance via video, reading Arthur Meighen's moving tribute to Mr. Plummer's great-grandfather, **Sir John Abbott**, Canada's third Prime Minister. It was certainly a day to wallow in history and degrees of separation.

At the reception following the ceremony, Art was kept busy signing autographs in copies of his book. He continued walking on a cloud for most of the evening, especially when he was invited (a command appearance, it would seem) up to the Prime Minister's office for a chat, mostly about Sir John A. Macdonald and other elements of Canada's political history. This was Art's first extended conversation with a sitting Prime Minister. (He has quite a history of getting to meet former P. M.'s of Canada and Britain, as well as former presidents of the USA. He will shortly be part of a gala ceremony on the Carter plantation in Georgia to celebrate another volume he is producing on the Carter-Canada connection.)

If he was late arriving at a celebratory dinner later that evening, we could all understand!



*The Thomson connection: Charlie Hawkes, Joann Brown, Art Milnes, Stan Farrow at the post-dedication reception*

# Fall Pub Night at Tapps

*Photos and a report on our last Pub Night, November 20, 2010, courtesy Bob Doi.*

On a brisk, November Saturday evening, 20 alumni braved the pre-December chill and gathered at Tapps Restaurant and Pub to dine, knock back a pint or two, reminisce and celebrate prior to the Christmas rush. The regulars welcomed back a couple of long-lost alumni whom we hadn't seen for several years. Despite the low numbers and the Maple Leafs losing 2-0 to our long-time rival Montreal Canadiens, spirits remained high.

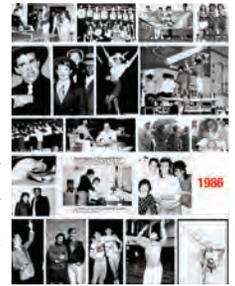


We are always looking for new ideas to attract more of our alumni and volunteers to help run some of these events. Please drop us a line at "www.ThomsonForever.ca" or reply to one of our Pub Night email blasts or <Info@ThomsonForever.ca>. Here's hoping to hear from you soon!



## And our spring pub night?

We invite you to celebrate warmer times (we hope!) with our spring pub night on the evening of **Friday, May 6**. We've found a site closer to Thomson C. I. and, we think, more inviting. The **Boston Pizza** branch in the Scarborough Town Centre extension off Brimley just north of Progress, has agreed to set aside an area for us for drinks and whatever else you fancy - starting at 8:00 pm. And, as a further incentive, we expect to be able to unveil our 50th anniversary wall project, in one form or another, for you to check out (in somewhat larger form than the 1986 segment to the right!). So round up a group and drop in for refreshments and reminiscences.



## In Memoriam



**Edith Stevenson**, the widow of Thomson's first principal, **J. Ross Stevenson**, died this past winter at the age of 101! The photo at left shows Mrs. Stevenson being introduced by principal **Donna Benson** at Thomson's 40th anniversary in 1999. A petite and gracious woman, she was the perfect complement for her husband, an imposing man in both stature and personality. She took a keen interest in the goings-on at his schools, often showing up at social functions for both students and staff. She was a classy lady, and we're proud that she's part of our history!

**Rick Scott** was a student in those early days at Thomson, graduating in 1962. He would return to Thomson as a history teacher before moving on, completing his career as the very popular Head of the History Department at Macdonald Collegiate (where, interestingly, **Bob Brown's** son, **David**, was a colleague.)



Rick's far-too-early death this past winter was a reminder to his classmates of two earlier tragedies in his life. His older sister, **Wanda**, who taught Rick English at Thomson, died in an accident in Europe while teaching on exchange, and his high school sweetheart, **Christine Happe**, died of cancer before they had been married very long. Rick's photo is from our 1970 yearbook, when he was a Thomson teacher. We send our sympathy to his family and friends.



Just as we were going to press, we learned of the death of **Marg Killey**. Like Rick, she had a double Thomson connection, but as a staff member and as a parent. She was our Public Health school nurse for much of the 1960s and into the 1970s. (Her photo is from the 1966 yearbook.) Her sons **Randy** (1970) and **Chris** (1976) both graduated from Thomson. Scarborough residents of more recent times got to know her from the gardening columns she wrote for the Mirror newspaper. We know all her family will miss her energetic enthusiasm, and we send them our sympathy.