

Thomson TRADEWINDS

DAVID & MARY THOMSON C.I. ALUMNI NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2017

60 - AND FAREWELL!



At Thomson's 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2009, many alumni attended for what they thought would be a last chance to see the old school before it was torn down. Well, it's still there!

But in a message sent to students, parents and teachers in early March, the Toronto District School Board announced that the long-awaited new school is scheduled to open in September 2019, a "four-storey state-of-the-art facility" which "will accommodate 1509 (*sic*) students from

grade 9 to 12" and "will include learning spaces for science, music, visual and media art, construction technology, culinary arts and environmental sustainable development (including an urban farm) as well as gymnasiums."

The old school, as well as Bendale Business and Technical Institute, will continue to operate until the new school opens, and then both old schools will be torn down, to be replaced for the most part by residential development on their present sites. But before then we hope to be able to sneak in a 60th anniversary celebration along with an official farewell in the spring of 2019. Your Alumni planning group have already held initial discussions on how to combine the two celebrations. As with all milestone anniversaries, we are thinking of a Saturday afternoon open house at the school for alumni to return and renew friendships, while also having a last look at familiar scenes. There is usually a pub night the same evening; so we're exploring suitable halls in the area. We'd like to add one further event, possibly the weekend after the open house: a "farewell concert" to bid goodbye to the Stan Farrow Auditorium, involving performers of all types from all eras, including the present.

The exact schedule will depend on when/if the school and a banquet hall are available. We hope we've had early enough notice to be able to find convenient dates. But we're setting the scene now so that you can keep April to June open for travel back to Scarborough. We'll be working with the school administration, staff and students on preparations. If you'd like to help, we'd love to hear from you. If you'd like to be part of the auditorium show or recruit your favourite stars from whenever, let us know also. Re-creations of songs and scenes from stage productions or comedy and other routines from assembly programs are one possibility, but not the only approach. We'd especially love to headline those of you who have gone on to success in showbiz or entertainment fields, doing whatever!

Keep checking our Alumni website (www.thomsonforever.ca) or your social media contacts for developments. You can also pass along suggestions or questions via either of those avenues. This time, we think it really will be the end! And you need to be there.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Alumnus Bob Doi, Class of 1978, catches up with Shirley Turchet, a now-retired former Thomson teacher.

Like many of you, I often wonder what has become of former classmates and teachers from our high school days. For us baby boomers, reminiscing is often a part of many gatherings with friends and family. My wife, Laura, and I are fortunate in that we still have over a dozen close friends and even more casual friends from our days at Thomson whom we still see on a regular basis.



Artists Jean Rennie (from left), Yildiz Unsa and Shirley Turchet show some creations at the Markham Group of Artists' 35th anniversary art show and sale. The show continues until Oct. 30 in the atrium of Cornell Community Centre.

In the Fall of 2016, I happened to be reading our local Markham Economist & Sun newspaper and a photo/name caught my eye. The article was talking about the 35th anniversary art show and sale by the "Markham Group of Artists". **Shirley Turchet** was mentioned and was included in the photograph. I thought to myself, "Could this be the same Mrs. Turchet who taught me Grade 13 English and actually made studying *King Lear* almost enjoyable? Could this be the same English and Theatre Arts teacher who inspired my love for musicals and theatre (the Mirvish family thanks you) through my involvement in *The Music Man* (1977 as a photographer) and *Howdy Dude* (1978 as a cast member)? There was only one way to find out.

I reached out to her via our Alumni Association to discover that she was one and the same, living in the same community as I did and belonging to The Markham Group of Artists, a vibrant organization of artists in the Markham area since 1981 (www.markhamartists.org). After she retired, she got involved

with art after submitting an article on hobbies (hers being art) to the Retired Teachers of Ontario magazine. The following is some information that Shirley has graciously shared with us.

"I used to sketch a bit, but had never gotten into anything artistic before (except for drama). Thanks to a neighbour, I joined a small group (The Schoolhouse Group of Artists working out of Lemonville Community Centre) that paints together weekly and invites guest artists in to teach us new techniques. I started with tight little pen and ink scenes from my photos on my frequent Italy trips, as my in-laws had retired to a town near Venice. Then I took a course at Haliburton School of the Arts near my cottage. The artist was someone whose painting was very forceful and dynamic, and she wouldn't let us draw first or even use a paintbrush. We had to pour, scrape, splash and use hardware tools. It was so much fun I branched into abstract and collage.

"I also joined the larger Markham Group of Artists and work on their show committee. Getting into juried shows was quite scary at first, but very validating. It's a great networking avenue and a collegial group of people with similar interests.

"My husband and I are now wintering in Florida, and I started a little art group in my development, where I paint over garage sale canvasses and 'teach' a bit with the other 'old folk' there. I have donated many artworks to charity auctions and I do pencil portraits of the new babies in the family as gifts, as well as making portraits of a couple of friends or relatives who have passed away. This is very heart-warming. I consider myself a 'hobby artist' but do enter several shows a year to cover my hobby's costs! We even have an Art on the Dock show at the cottage with many wonderful artists on our Lake Kennisis. The hobby has become a bit of a passion, and I'm even in the midst of a fairly large work on commission right now, which is exciting."

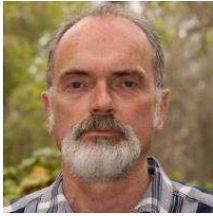
We at Thomson were blessed to have Shirley share her knowledge and talents with us from 1974 to 1987. She's also proof of the old adage that many people seem to be even busier in retirement than they were whilst in the work force. I'm also happy to report that Shirley became a proud grandmother for the first time in 2016. She says "It's a whole new lease on life!" Thank you, Shirley, for sharing your time with us. (If you google Shirley Turchet, you can find samples of her art work.)



Outdoors with the Schoolhouse Group of Artists

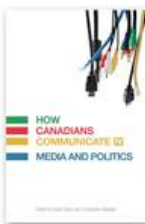
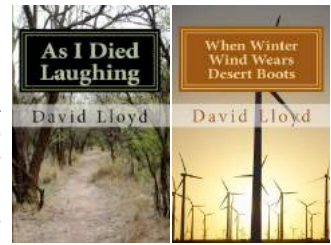
THE WRITE STUFF

We conclude the survey of responses, begun last issue, from Thomsonites whose work has appeared in print



David Lloyd attended Thomson from 1969 to 1972. After that he left Canada to travel the world, spending most of his adult life in Israel, first on a kibbutz and then in a small community in the Negev desert. His published novels are *As I Died Laughing* <<https://www.amazon.ca/As-Died-Laughing-David-Lloyd-ebook/dp/B00WK86S9M/>> and *When Winter Wind Wears Desert Boots* <<https://www.amazon.ca/When-Winter-Wears-Desert-Boots-ebook/dp/B011S6TMRQ/>>. He has also been writing a blog for over five years

entitled “Why I May Still Be Canadian”, an irreverent look at all things Canadian and Israeli by a Canadian expat who somehow ended up in self-exile somewhere in the empty expanse of the Negev desert <<http://stillacanadian.blogspot.co.il/>>.



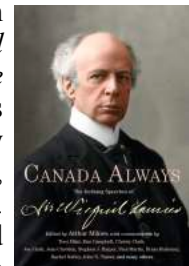
Christopher Waddell was at Thomson from 1965 to 1970. He went on to U. of T. Scarborough for his BA and to York for his MA and PhD (in Canadian history). He is presently an associate professor at the School of Journalism and Communications at Carleton University, Ottawa, which he joined in 2001 and where he served a associate director and then director of the department from 2006 to 2014. He also holds the university’s Carty Chair in Business and Financial Journalism. Prior to Carleton he spent



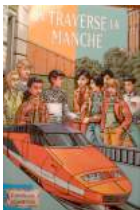
about 20 years as a journalist with the Financial Post, GHGlobe and Mail and the CBC. He has written many items for these publications/broadcasters, but has also co-edited two books, to which he has contributed chapters. You can check them out at <<http://www.aupress.ca>> by typing in his name for “books edited by...”



Arthur (Art) Milnes (class of 1985) is celebrating his latest publication (October, 2016), *Canada Always: The Defining Speeches of Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, a kind of sequel to his best-selling *Canada Transformed: The Speeches of Sir John A. Macdonald*. The new book includes Laurier’s greatest speeches between 1864 and 1919, with commentary essays by present premiers Notley and Clark, former premiers Rae, McGuinty, Charest, Redford, Romanow, and Campbell and even Rt. Hon. Tony Blair of the UK. Thomson alumnus **Tom Harrison**, Art’s best friend from high school and now a recognized scholar of legal history at Queen’s Law School, has also



contributed an excellent essay. Art began working on the book while serving as a speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper. He invites Thomsonites to email him at arthur.milnes@sympatico.ca to “arrange a steep discount off the cover price”.

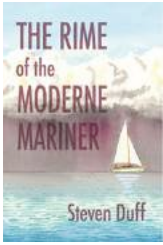


Bob Williams taught French and English at Thomson from 1969 to 1978. During his association with Copp Clark Pitman/Longman, he wrote eleven French readers for secondary school, His co-author was Ian Fraser, Head of Modern Languages at Upper Canada College. There were three series of books: *En Europe*, *Châteaux Canadiens*, and *Lecture Jeunesse*. Writing these was a labour of love, but Bob is also still enjoying the royalties for books written so long ago!



In a similar vein, **Stan Farrow** (Classics and English 1959-1994) was part of a five-person international editorial team revising *The Cambridge Latin Course*, North American Fourth Edition. The team produced a textbook, a workbook and a Teacher’s Manual for four separate Units of the course. They were photographed in 2001 (Stan on the right) at the unveiling of the first two Units.

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THE WRITE STUFF *cont.*

Steven Duff, Thomson's Head of Music 1967-1989, is perhaps our most prolific author, penning seven novels, with an eighth in gestation. In chronological order they are *In the Land of the People Apart* (1985) about the Jesuit mission to the Hurons, 1634-1850; *The Wanderer's Storm-Song* (1988) about LaSalle's North American explorations (reality television in book form); *Raiders of the Lost Barque* (2000), an adventure story for young boaters, set in the Parry Sound area, to which Steven retired; *Hunter of Dreams* (2002), centering on the work of Alexander Milton Ross, a Canadian



doctor/naturalist, and the Underground Railway - the book of which Steven is most proud; *The Osterling Weekend* (2006), the silliest thing he has written, loosely based on his experiences at Scarborough Music Camp near Parry Sound; *Witnessing the Badger* (2008), with the same cast as *Raiders*, involving a surprise encounter with the real Lake Michigan ferry, *Badger*; and *Rime of the Moderne Mariner* (2014), a dark portrait of a marine artist who battles a lifetime of depression and seeks relief through his love of sailing - a sometimes uncomfortably autobiographical novel intended to show that depression is an illness rather than a character flaw. In addition to writing (including over 100 articles for wide-ranging magazines) and sailing, Steven is also on the board of the Festival of the Sound and is an avid painter. He admits he has failed "retirement", but would love to hear from former colleagues and students and could even help you obtain copies of any of his books. His email address is mishmash@cogeco.ca and his telephone number is 705-774-9200.

PEOPLE NEWS

*Anthony Raymond
Curt Petrovich
Jennifer Valentyne
Helena Wehrstein*

We have received word of the death of Thomson alumnus (from mid-1980s), **Anthony Raymond**. A very fit man, he succumbed shockingly to a heart attack. Two news items from the broadcasting industry concern Thomson alumni. **Curt Petrovich** (class of 1980), a long-time C.B.C. reporter, had his battle with PTSD outlined on both radio and television specials in early 2017. Reporting from political hot spots and natural disasters finally caught up with him in 2013 after Typhoon Hayam in the Philippines. He doesn't even remember his trip home. Both he and his wife, **Yvette Brend**, were brave enough to talk about his illness in these programs. On a happier note, fans of **Jennifer (Peck) Valentyne** (class of 1986), still smarting from her sudden departure from CITY-TV's *Breakfast Television*, can now switch their morning allegiance to Toronto's Q107 radio, where she has joined the team on *Derringer in the Morning*, weekdays from 6 to 10 am. And to end, another piece of good news. In our profile of **Helena Wehrstein** (class of 1967) in the Autumn 2015 edition, she made a plea for tracking down her classmate, **Karen MacDonald**. Success! Karen Lechner was roaming the internet last year, noticed Helena's name and Thomson connection, tracked down her website and contacted Helena. The two had their first talk together in 49 years! Incidentally, Helena's website (check out her artistic initiatives) is www.helenawehrstein.com.

PUB NIGHT - APRIL 29

With Borsalino's now defunct, we've decided to try a return visit to the Scarborough Town Centre **Boston Pizza** for our annual Pub Night on Saturday, April 29. The restaurant is in a small complex on the north-east corner of Progress and Brimley near the Town Centre. You can access the plaza from Progress, turning north (towards the 401) at the Canadian Superstore entrance or from Brimley northbound turning right just north of Progress. When you enter the restaurant ask for the Thomson Alumni group, or head left towards the bar. We'll be at the far end beyond the bar. See you there starting about 8 pm.