

Thomson Tradewinds

DAVID & MARY THOMSON C.I. ALUMNI NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN 2018

COMING ATTRACTION



Mid-October composite photographs of the new school show construction moving ahead. The top photos were taken from the top of Brockley Drive. The bottom two photographs were taken from the parking lot behind Bendale B.T.I.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALUMNI MEMBERS

This edition of Thomson Tradewinds is the last we will be distributing in hard copy. Like many other organizations, we have decided to operate with only electronic copies of our publication, since so many of you have already made the switch. We are also working toward having membership renewals online. But for this year, we're continuing the membership form enclosed with this newsletter and the old-fashioned "cheque in the mail" format. Membership cost will now be standardized at \$10 for everyone. Still an amazingly good price for keeping in touch and supporting our alumni's efforts, especially in an anniversary year.



ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

At Thomson's annual Awards Assembly, October 18, we presented plaques to this year's two winners of the Thomson Alumni Award, "awarded to one female and one male student from the grade 9 class of 2017-2018 who have distinguished themselves through leadership and participation in the school community." Here are brief profiles of the two winners.

Anam Mian's quiet demeanor masks a self-assured and talented young woman. In her first year at Thomson she served as a Grade 9 representative on the TLC (Thomson Leadership Council). That involved helping to organize a number of events, the most memorable of which (for her) was the Spirit Assembly. Academically, she maintained an above-85 average in all her subjects. When she was asked to pick a favourite subject, she selected Phys Ed, with Math and Science close behind. Sadly, she was not successful in trying out for the volleyball team last year, but intends to join the badminton team this year.

She has an older sister and brother, both of whom graduated from Thomson. She finds the school very welcoming and has very positive feelings for the school.

As for career plans, she still has a number of choices in mind: a lawyer, an accountant or a doctor.

(Anam asked that we not take her photograph for this article.)



Bryan Zouhair shares a number of accomplishments with Anam. He was also a Grade 9 rep on the TLC, helping with the production of a winter concert, an ACE lunch and parent-teacher interview night. He was a member of the Future Aces program. Academically his average has remained around the 85% mark. And his favourite subjects, in order, are Math, Science and Phys Ed.

His older sister graduated from Thomson last year, and he has two younger brothers, in Grades 1 and 7. Like Anam, he and his siblings were all born in Canada, but his parents come from Lebanon and from Nigeria, probably not a common mix! He likes Thomson, finding it more diverse than many other schools he has heard of, offering more opportunities and connections.

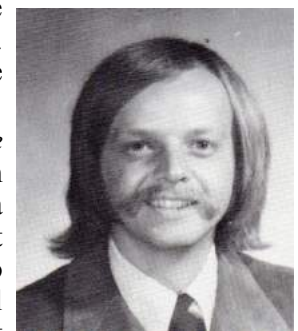
Beyond Thomson's walls, he is involved this year in Leadership by Design, a program for African-Canadian Grade 10 students. And he certainly exhibits many of the positive traits of a future leader. As for career plans, he is very definite: he intends to enroll in the University of Toronto at Scarborough, aiming to become a neurosurgeon.

For this article, we interviewed our two winners in the front office at Thomson. **Nicholas English**, the Vice-Principal responsible for Commencement-related items, called them out of class for their interviews, and in both cases, their first reaction (in one case also from the teacher of the class) was that they were in trouble. Nicholas was glad that, unlike in his more common responsibilities, he was able to put their worries at rest.

FORMER THOMSON TEACHER MAKES HEADLINES

Bob Williams, from our Modern Languages Department 1969-1978, recently became a media star. In his words:
In mid-August, my 96-year-old mother received a letter from Canada Post threatening to stop mail delivery if she did not install front steps to an 8 1/4 inch rise to make the mail slot more accessible. Her 10 1/2 inch rise was considered a safety hazard to the letter carrier. To avoid a costly repair, I purchased a large rural-style mailbox and placed it on a lower step so the carrier could avoid the "climb". But the following day the new box was disregarded and the mail was still put through the slot in the front door.

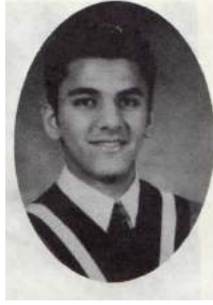
I fired off a Letter to the Editor of the London Free Press (*Bob and his mother now live in London, ON*) outlining our plight. In response the paper sent a reporter and camera man for an interview. My saga made headlines in all the Sun Media newspapers across Canada and was picked up by the CBC and local radio stations, requesting interviews. You don't mess with a 96-year-old! Two local contractors telephoned in sympathy. Within two weeks new steps and railings were installed (a \$2800 job) for free. (The squeaky wheel does get the grease.) I sent off another letter thanking all who "stepped" up to bring about a satisfactory conclusion to this episode.



1976 yearbook photo



OBITUARIES



Harold Hughes
(1964 yearbook)

Shehbaz Butt
(1991 yearbook and
2018 newspaper)

Bob Gentile
(1971 yearbook)

In January, we lost one of the “first pure Thomsonites”, **Harold Hughes**, who was a member of the Class of 1964. Many schoolmates will remember him as “the big guy who played the big tuba” in the school band. Immediately after graduation he began work as a controller for a large mechanical company, obtaining his accounting degree through five years of continuing education courses while at work. He married Carol Edward, his high school sweetheart, and they raised two daughters while moving around Canada and the United States. In 1985, Harold switched careers and joined Carol in real estate, buying and managing rental properties in Solon, Ohio. He was 72 when he died. We offer our sympathies to Carol and the family.

In July, news reports covered the fatal crash of a plane at Buttonville Airport, just north of Toronto. The pilot was Shehbaz Butt, 46, a graduate of Thomson in 1991. He was an anesthesiologist at Markham-Stouffville Hospital, well known for his mountain-climbing adventures. He was two mountains shy (Mt. Everest, thwarted by an avalanche in 2014; and Mount Vincent Massif in Antarctica) of his goal to climb the highest peak in each of earth’s seven continents. He used his Everest expedition to raise funds for his hospital. He avoided death on his mountain challenges by careful planning and training, and he was also an accomplished pilot, so there’s no accounting... To his wife, Ramona, his four children and his colleagues, friends and family, we offer condolences.

Finally, students from the early 1970s may remember Bob Gentile, who began his teaching career at Thomson in 1970 and was a member of the English Department until 1975. They will not be surprised that his personality and talents led him into administration, from which he retired in 2002 as principal of Woburn Collegiate. One interesting bit of trivia is that he hired Brian Farrow, Stan’s son, to teach Music and Phys Ed at Woburn - and Brian is still there!

60 YEARS - A BANNER EVENT



If you drive by the school in the near future, you won’t see this banner - yet! But obviously we’re in the process of designing and manufacturing a public announcement of the big event planned for next May. That’s not all we’re designing. Keep checking the website advertised on this mock-up to stay up-to-date on our plans. We will be putting together a selection of souvenirs that you can order online from the website. We already have an outline of the events posted there, and next year you’ll be

able to order tickets for the gala pub night at JC’s Banquet Hall on May 4, the Farewell to the Auditorium program on the evening of May 11, and, for present and former staff, the Staff Brunch on the morning of May 4. The Open House May 4 from noon to 4 pm is, as these events usually are, free! We anticipate a larger-than-usual attendance for a 60th because it is also the last chance to visit the “old school” - to be replaced in September by the building whose construction is pictured on our front page.

Of course, our small but energetic Alumni Committee can’t do all of this alone. So please consider volunteering (the membership form has a spot for that) to help out in any capacity you can. We’re also still canvassing for performers at the Farewell to the Auditorium event. For Toronto T.V. fans, we can announce that Thomson alumni **Tom Hayes** (award winning TV news journalist) and **Jennifer (Peck) Valentyne** (T.V. and radio personality) have agreed to act as onstage hosts for the program. There are close to a dozen and a half “numbers” already. So you need to set all the dates aside for our celebrations.



SPRING PUB NIGHT, MAY 5: THE FROG AND CROWN

Perhaps it was the location (O'Connor Dr. on the Scarborough border) or perhaps it was the anticipation of possible news regarding next year's 60th anniversary celebrations that drew a larger than normal crowd to our annual Pub Night at the Frog and Crown. Over 30 alumni attended, including many first-timers and even a few from the 1990s' and 2000s' graduating classes. Several of us took advantage of the planned evening and talked amongst friends over dinner, sampling some of the pub grub prior to the evening's event.

The highlight of the evening was the announcement of the dates (May 4 and 11) and planned activities for the 60th. Lots of buzz among the attendees and many follow-up discussions and comments heard throughout the evening, including the first offer (from **Patti (Paddle) Loach**, 1977) of entertainment for the May 11 Auditorium Farewell. Several Class of '78 alumni in attendance have already begun plans for a 40th (1 year late) class reunion/dinner between the Open House and the Pub Night on May 4. Other scuttlebutt heard throughout the night involved construction of the new school (photos on the Alumni website and on our front page).

The next year promises to be extremely busy as we approach the 60th, as well as the new school opening. Our Alumni look forward to having all of you attend the various functions. We are always looking for new ideas to attract more of you and for volunteers to help run the events. If you have thoughts you'd like to pass along or services you could volunteer, please email us at info@ThomsonForever.ca and/or DMThomsonAlumni@gmail.com. And you can keep up with news on our website: www.ThomsonForever.ca.

Pub Night report and photographs courtesy Bob Doi

