



## South Collegiate Alumni Association

Fall 2023

# LIONS' PRIDE

*Virtus Repulsaе Rescia Sordidae*



## Remembrance of Things Past

by Ian McKercher ('65)

Full marks and gracious thanks to the volunteers of the London South Collegiate Alumni Association for organizing the 100th reunion in May this year. I drove 630 kilometres to attend and wasn't disappointed. The reunion scored high marks in three distinct areas.

### The Building

The first delight was finding the 95-year-old building still trim and in fine fettle. The heritage value of venerable institutions is often neglected. Not LSCI. It was like being reunited with a favorite aunt, unseen for 58 years, to find her still radiant. South was cleaner and brighter. Kudos to the maintenance staff and updated lighting. The few physical alterations were all improvements. The library had doubled in size. Stairwells have been moved, likely at the insistence of the fire marshal. The central courtyard had been roofed over and turned into a spacious and useful atrium.

### The Event

The Friday night meet-and-greet in the cafeteria and gym provided a genial, informal welcome. There was much bifocaled squinting at name tags beneath fuzzily familiar faces. The Decade Rooms were a captivating display of memorabilia carefully saved and protected. The alumni profiles and interview videos were an excellent update on perplexing questions like "Whatever happened to that kid, Von somebody, who was always in trouble in **Miss McRoberts's (staff, 1931-69)** algebra class?" It's hard to imagine the time and effort that went into researching and preparing all this material for display. It was also a treat to be part of the Reunion Store set up in the library where school souvenirs could be purchased, and books written by former students perused.

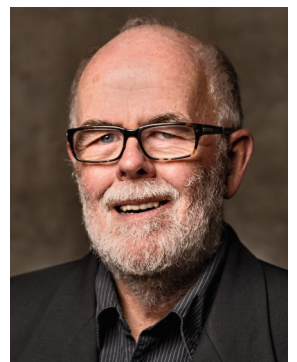
### The Marcel Proust "Madeleine Moment"

In his novel *Remembrance of Things Past*, Marcel Proust immortalized the Madeleine, claiming that each time he tasted the petite butter cake, it evoked a surge of memory and nostalgia reminiscent of his childhood home. Being back at South's 100th Reunion evoked such a memory surge in me, releasing a cascade of recollections long hidden in the shoebox we all had stashed at the back of our parents' linen closet.

I remember **Trish Nelligan ('67)**, who grew up on Briscoe Street, down the street from my home. I remember her winning the girls' public speaking contest in the auditorium before a full audience of students. That achievement got her picture in the London Free Press. As "Kate" Nelligan, she went from South to a successful acting career on Broadway and Hollywood, earning an Academy Award nomination for her role in *Prince of Tides*.

I remember playing on **Ray Johnson's (staff, 1961-64)** Junior Football Team. Recent South grad **Ross Spettigue ('62)** assisted, helping to drill and train the linemen. I was a terrible football player but was benevolently kept on the team and was sent in for kick-offs. Although riding the bench, I've never been in better physical shape than I was that year.

*Continued on page 2*



I remember a student tour of the *London Free Press* building on Richmond Street. We had a chance to observe the artistry of Merle “Ting” Tingley as he quickly sketched half a dozen cartoons with his mascot, Luke Worm, in the corner. A row of Linotype operators explained proudly that their machines had revolutionized typesetting.

I remember helping to make hundreds of paper flowers out of yellow, blue and pink Kleenex. We made an accordion fold of each Kleenex tissue, tied a pipe cleaner around the middle, then frizzed the edges so it looked like a carnation. These decorations helped transform the gym into a “Winter Wonderland” for the Senior Prom.

I remember playing Captain McLean in **Frazer Boa’s (staff, 1964-72)** school production of *Tea House of the August Moon*. An appreciative cast chipped in and bought Frazer an elaborate dressing gown with an oriental motif.

I remember a trip to Forest Hill Collegiate in Toronto to check out their Prefect System, since South was about to set up its own Prefect System and was looking at models.

I remember when South principal, **Don Freeman (staff, 1929-64)**, had a heart attack during the Christmas holidays, and died the following June. A number of senior students attended the funeral where we met former Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker, who attended by virtue of being married to Mr. Freeman’s sister, Olive.

I remember Grade 13 Departmental Exams. Not fondly. The three-hour exams were a crap shoot with your whole year’s credit riding on the outcome. They were brutal, compelling many of us to do a “post-grad” year at South, for a second shot at getting the marks necessary to enter university. The silver lining to that experience was that university exams were a breeze by comparison.

So, like the *Great Gatsby*, we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past....

*EDITOR’S NOTE: A big thank you to Ian for accepting my invitation (or should I say plea) to write something for the fall newsletter. A former high school English teacher who has lived most of his adult life in Ottawa, Ian has devoted much of his time to writing since retiring in 2005. The author of 4 novels (with a 5th one in the works), he participated in the Reunion Store during the May Reunion. His first two books were historical fiction set in Ottawa during the lead up to WWII. For his 3rd and 4th novel, Ian shifted genre to write mysteries. Fortunately, many of the same characters are featured, including Frances McFadden, the spunky & resourceful young woman who appealed to so many readers in his first two novels. For more information, check out Ian’s website: [ianmckercher.com](http://ianmckercher.com). PS. I have read all four of Ian’s books and highly recommend them.*



Ian with his book display at the Reunion Store

## **A SUCCESSFUL REUNION FOR THE CLASSES OF 1967 & '68**

We are delighted to announce the success of the double reunion of grads from '67 and '68 last May at Highland Country Club. Approximately 75 to 80 people showed up, including a few extras ... Greg White, Sue Cornell, Bruce Ling, Pete Burger and Bill Culp. Fran Wigston, Joanne Mayhew, Wilf and Joyce Fryday and Ric and Marlene Hodgson added to the fun.

Lovely venue, good food, interesting displays and lots of conversation.

A good time was had by all.

**Rev. Anne Beattie-Stokes ('67 class rep)** and **Alison (Cricket) Ferguson ('68 class rep)**

## A LOOK BACK AS THE SCAA PREPARES TO CELEBRATE ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2024

by Pete Telford (staff, 1978-98)

In the fall of 1999, a group of 20 South alumni got together and drew up plans for an “alumni association”. A key issue for this group was how to create a list of South grads which would allow for communication of the new association’s plans and goals.

Each of the 20 agreed to list the names and contact information for 10 people they knew who were South Grads. Using an Access program, a preliminary list was begun. Alumni members **Carolyn MacVicar ('80)**, **Ken Steele ('82)**, and **Lorraine Bergsma ('66)** did the early legwork of expanding the base and by the end of 2000 there were 3700 names on our list.



A twice-yearly Alumni Newsletter was formally instituted in 2002. Cost of printing and mailing the first issue was \$2282. Due to the large cost, it was decided to institute a “sponsorship fee” and guarantee future mailings to those who were willing to contribute \$10 to the scheme.

In 2003, as the SCAA prepared to celebrate South’s 75th anniversary, alumnus **Andrew McClenaghan ('97)** masterminded the establishment of an Alumni website – which provided the opportunity to make available digital copies of the newsletter, a practice which has continued to this day. For those who wished to receive print copies we continued to produce and mail 300 of each issue.

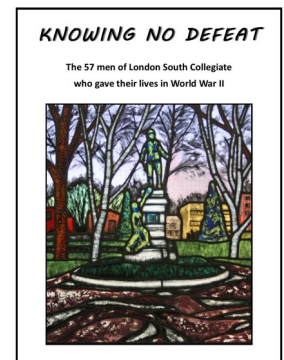
Today, we are almost completely “on line”. Our website now directs alumni to access a wide array of topics, announcements, and reminiscences about South Collegiate, both past and present, and this service will continue into the foreseeable future. Although the newsletter will no longer be mailed to alumni, we are working to make sure that the content remains relevant and of interest to alumni.

*EDITOR’S NOTE: As indicated previously, Pete has been part of the SCAA from the beginning, its longest serving, and dare I say, most dedicated executive member. After serving as President for several years, Pete remains on the executive as Past President.*

## PRESENTATION AT CALVARY UNITED CHURCH

by Connie Weir ('66)

In late September, Pete was approached by Old South resident and former South teacher, **Katie Farrow (staff, 1991-98)**, about doing a presentation at Calvary for Remembrance Day. Aware of the book that we had published, *Knowing No Defeat*, the topic would be the involvement and contributions of Old South residents to the war effort during WWII. Obviously, there would be a particular interest in people who had also been members of Calvary. Pete contacted me and we agreed to do the presentation on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> to “Champion”, an over 55 group that meets at the church every Wednesday.



In 2019, while we were still selling copies of our book, I did a presentation at Metropolitan United Church. I had produced a 20 slide PowerPoint to accompany my talk and used this as the starting point for this presentation. I deleted some of the sample profiles I had included to make room for some new ones, including two of South’s war dead who had also been members at Calvary. Pete & I divided up the presentation content, with him handling the intro and closing material while I discussed the 7 profiles we had decided to include in our 25-slide PowerPoint. Based on the comments received following our presentation, I feel confident in stating that our presentation was very well received. Calvary minister, Kerry Stover, asked if I could send him a copy of all 8 of South’s war dead who had attended Calvary and I was more than happy to do that.



## **A PASSIONATE LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR LIONS' PRIDE**



*Editor's Intro: A dedicated as well as very popular teacher at South for 23 years, Ian Underhill is well known to many alumni. We thank him for taking the time to pen the letter below.*

This letter contains both ardent praise and a fervent plea...

The newsletter you are reading has to be one of the best high school newsletters in the world. It has consistently featured really interesting articles and stories from South's 100 year history. So many of you have commented on how much you look forward to each edition, and how much it allows you to keep in touch with former classmates. And all of this is due to the talent and diligence of one person: Connie Weir. As Connie gradually retires from her position as editor, she should be both praised and thanked for her amazing contribution to South Collegiate.

And now the plea! We cannot allow this publication to die. What we need is for someone, or two of you, or even a small group of you, to step forward and, with Connie's assistance, take over the role. If I were twenty years younger, I would volunteer, but as I approach my mid-eighties, I know that my time has passed. We have so many talented grads at South. Surely, we can find a way to keep this incredible newsletter alive.

**Ian Underhill**

**Teacher, 1969 - 1992**

### ***MY THOUGHTS AFTER 18 YEARS AS WRITER/EDITOR/DESIGNER OF LIONS' PRIDE***

As I indicated in the last e-blast, although I have officially retired from the SCAA executive, I am still actively involved in a number of ways, including continuing to serve as editor of the newsletter until a volunteer can be found to take my place. If you think that volunteer could be you, then please contact us for more info. I have all kinds of material I can share to help you, including the templates I have used on Publisher. There is also no reason why the job can't be done by more than one person. Two co-editors would mean that each volunteer would only have to look after one issue per year. Something to think about...

I was incredibly touched by Ian Underhill's praise of my work as well as his plea that we not let the alumni newsletter die. After 18 years at the helm, it would be a very sad day for me if that were to happen. To get the material for this issue, I sent out several emails asking alumni if they would consider writing something. I am so pleased that enough material was submitted to produce an 8-page newsletter this fall, but what happens next spring? My hope is that after reading the material submitted by various alumni, enough of you will realize that you could write something for the newsletter too. It would be so wonderful to know that I can count on alumni being willing to submit something whether it be one paragraph or a complete article. I look forward to your replies...

OTHER NOTES...

**IN MEMORIAM POSTS:** When the October e-blast was sent out, the first two posts had already been made. A third was made in late October with another one coming soon. If you haven't checked this section out yet, please look for it under "News" on the alumni website ([southalumni.ca](http://southalumni.ca)).

**100 YEARS OF LIONS' PRIDE PROFILES:** All seven alumni profiles from the 2000's have now been posted on both the alumni Facebook page and the website (under "Projects"). The response so far has been very encouraging. My plan is to post two or three profiles every month, so all alumni have the opportunity to read them. I'm quite sure that even those who attended the Reunion had the chance to read only a small percentage of them.

**SECRETARY POSITION:** Since we have not had any alumni volunteer to take on this job, Pete Telford has agreed to do it for the time being. We hope, however, that someone will step up to the plate before too long... PS. Our next meeting is February 7<sup>th</sup>.

## Matt's Thoughts on the May Reunion

Thanks to the organizing committee for all the hard work needed to organize such an incredible 3-day event. Special mention to Connie Weir, Knute Dohnberg & Pete Telford for all of their tireless efforts.

It was a great weekend seeing old friends and teachers and reliving some of the great memories that we had at South. The beer was cold and the banter was hilarious.

It was great to reminisce with so many people from many different years about the fun and amazing experience we had together at South. It was also a chance to raise a glass as we mourned the loss of our great coach and teacher Glenn MacDonald.

Such a tribute to South to see all the folks that made the trip from distance. I look forward to the next one.



### Matt Giffen ('85)

*EDITOR'S NOTE: As most of you probably know, Matt has been a huge supporter of both South and the SCAA for many years. Not only did he donate money for a new football field, The James A. Giffen Memorial Field, as a lasting memorial to his father, a '49 grad, but he also donated money for a weight room at the school. He attended our fall Homecomings from 2007 to 2011 and the following comments from his pre-game address at the 2007 event are worth repeating here:*

*"South is an incredible school. The fact is South has always been an over-achiever, punched above its weight. We were never the biggest school, never had the best facilities, but we always excelled... We always had the best school spirit, this innate feeling that we were part of something special."*

*It should be no surprise to anyone that Matt was one of the 150 alumni nominated for a profile or that his company, Bench Brewing, was asked to supply the beer, wine & cider for the May Reunion bars.*

## A FEW MORE PHOTOS FROM THE MAY REUNION...



## 75th Anniversary Award Winner: Stacey Farr

by Ross Spettigue ('62)

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Award for 2023 is being given to a teacher who is a South Lion to the core. **Stacey Farr**, a member of the PHE staff at South, has willingly accepted assignments teaching Science, Family Studies and Special Ed. Seeing the need, she initiated a Breakfast Club with her Special Ed class to provide early morning nutrition for students at South.

An OUA All-Star basketball player at Brock University, Stacey was the team captain of the 2003-04 Badgers and held many of the school's team records. After obtaining her undergrad degree, she received her teaching qualifications from Wayne State University (Michigan), making the Dean's list for academic excellence.

In addition to her classroom responsibilities, Stacey has coached the senior and junior basketball teams in both the girls' and boys' divisions. She also agreed to coach the inaugural girls' softball team this past year when no one else volunteered. Stacey's 2023 senior boys' basketball team won both the TVDSB Central and WOSSA titles and placed well in the OFSAA Championship Tournament last March in Windsor. In addition, Stacey is the Convenor for high school basketball, including both the girls' and boys' divisions in the Thames Valley Region.

At the London Sports Hall of Fame Dinner in November, Stacey was presented with the **London Region Interscholastic Coach of the Year** award. (See note below)

Stacey is also the staff representative on the SCAA and worked diligently with the Reunion Committee to ensure that South's recent 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration was so successful.

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Award is presented to "a staff member who has contributed significantly to making South a quality school". As Stacey joins the excellent group of teachers who have won this award over the past 20 years, the Directors of the SCAA wish to congratulate her and thank her for everything she has done.

### *Secondary Spirit of Sport Winner - Stacey Farr*

(material taken from an article posted by Michelle Lang on [tvraa.com](http://tvraa.com) on Nov. 6th)

*For close to 30 years there has been one constant in Stacey Farr's life – basketball. Stacey's passion for the sport... has seen her win championships at both the high school and post-secondary level and at the Master's Athletes level.*

*While attending Central she was a two-time OFSAA silver medalist which propelled her into an outstanding collegiate career at Brock University. In fact, she was the women's team Most Valuable Player for the 2003-04 season...*

*Stacey represented Canada at the Turin (Italy) 2013 World Masters Games in the 30-34 bracket winning the gold medal. She continues to play competitively, with her team hosting and winning the 42nd Ontario masters championship in the 40+ this past June...*

*And as a coach: She builds positive relationships with all of her players and they know they can count on her for support. When she's not coaching her athletes she is out watching them compete in their other sports. She is a true ambassador of South athletics.*



Stacey & Ross with the 75th Anniversary Award plaque



Stacey with Michelle and her "Spirit of Sport" Award

# Those Were the Days...

by Thom McClenaghan ('55)

I was born in Old South in 1937 at 119 Langarth Street. My grandparents and their family had emigrated from Scotland in 1920. They landed at Montreal and proceeded directly by rail to London. My Grandmother's sister, Jemima Spencer, had emigrated earlier and resided at 127 Langarth St. The house at 119 was for sale and my Grandfather purchased it. A tiny house with just 4 rooms and an outdoor privy, it was heated by the kitchen stove.

At that time, Langarth St. was very close to the city's southwest boundary and there were numerous empty lots. These lots served as places where the neighborhood children played. One day there were baseball diamonds. On another day there might be a tree house under construction or an imaginary trail to the South Pole. Imagination was a critical element in play. One of the more spectacular tree houses was located at the end of Erie Ave. Constructed by the Erie Eagles, it even had a stove in it. Although the hut is long gone, the huge Oak tree is still there.

Most residents subscribed to the *London Free Press* in those days and there was always a scramble to get a good paper route. I delivered the newspaper to the people on Langarth St. for over six years. In the three blocks from Wharncliffe Rd to Wortley Rd. there were 145 customers. This generated \$10.00 a week for me, almost a king's ransom at that time! To say that I knew everyone on Langarth St. is an understatement. When I was collecting the money (\$.25/week) for the newspapers, many people wanted to share a recent tragedy or some good news and a joke. Curiously, I still know the names of most of the people who lived on Langarth St. at that time. One of the people who lived in the upstairs apartment at 125 was Dr. Don Sutton and his newly wed wife. He later became the Principal of Wortley Rd. Public School and subsequently the Director of the London Board of Education.

By the time that I was 8 or 9, we were free to explore on our own. One of my favorite places was Corry Auto Wreckers, located at the west end of Emery Street. It was important to make sure that the guard dogs were chained! Another popular spot, now Euston Meadow, was a former gravel pit we called "The Pit".

The Coves was a very special place as well. When you saw guys with winter coats on in the summer you knew they were hunting each other with their BB guns. The coats reduced the sting of the BB's. In winter there was skating. The best time was right after a January thaw when you didn't have to shovel snow, the ice was like glass and you could go like the wind from Cove Rd. to Springbank Drive. Pickup hockey games often had 20-25 guys on each team.

One of my first experiences after starting South in September '49, was at an assembly. Some senior boys sprinkled hydrogen sulphide on the radiators on the way into the auditorium. I'll leave the rest to your imagination...

One of my most interesting experiences occurred when J.B. West was moved to South from Central to teach Latin and Ancient History. He had taught at an American School in Europe and had a collection of 35mm slides of Roman and Greek buildings which he showed in the auditorium before school began. I never missed a single showing.

My last little story dates back to grade 13. One of my classmates (bored, I suspect) lit his comb on fire and threw it into his empty desk. Smoke started to come up through the hole in the desk top. Pandemonium ensued. This chap subsequently became a professor at Imperial College in London England, which is affiliated with the University of London. He also became a world renowned expert in rocket fuel!

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Another of South's alumni recognized in a profile at the May reunion, Thom was described as an "Educator & Conservationist" and well deserves that title. The Nature Park at Arthur Ford Public School exists because of Thom's efforts when he was the principal. He also played a leading role in the creation of Friends of the Coves Subwatershed Inc., which resulted in the area being designated an ESA (Environmentally Significant Area).*

*Thom's most recent environmental effort took place this fall. Knowing the value of trees in absorbing greenhouse gases and providing habitat for wildlife, Thom began to gather nuts – almost 3000 acorns from a neighbour's oak tree and 1000 hickory nuts from two trees on Front Street. With the help of volunteers, the plan is to plant all the nuts at Euston Meadows, an area currently being naturalized and linked to the Coves ESA.*



*Based on efforts like these, you can see why Thom was awarded the Latornell Leadership Award in 2016 for his "outstanding contribution to the field of conservation" and the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers in 2017.*

## UPDATE ON SCAA ACTIVITIES

**TEAM TENT:** In June 2019, the SCAA voted to fund the purchase of a tent to provide a portable shelter and resting area for many of South's teams: Track, Cross Country, Soccer and Football, as well as for school events such as the Relay for Life, or alumni events such as Homecoming and the Gathering on the Green. And then COVID struck and all project plans were put on hold.

Well, that hold has officially been lifted. At the SCAA meeting on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, the Executive voted unanimously on a motion to go ahead with the purchase of a 10 x15 tent, the full cost of which will be paid by the Alumni Association. This fall South was the only school without a shelter tent at the TVR cross country meet.

**LEGACY GIFT:** The tent described above is not part of our planned 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary legacy gift since it was approved over 4 years ago. Although a discussion took place at the last executive meeting, no decision was made on what that gift might be, apart from the belief that it should be something of a lasting or ongoing nature that is appropriate for a 100-year tribute. We are prepared to take our time and get this right, but in the meantime, we are looking for input from alumni as well as South staff.

IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE SEND THEM TO US AT [contact@southalumni.ca](mailto:contact@southalumni.ca).

**2023-24 YEARBOOK:** In the October e-blast we reported that preliminary plans had been launched for an alumni-sponsored yearbook. With no yearbooks produced in the last 10 years, the valuable archival record they represent has been lost. We received word recently, however, that a new teacher at South, Randy Rose, has undertaken to create a 2023-24 yearbook and has assembled a crew of students to work on in it. Very welcome news, indeed! The SCAA has made an offer to help if needed. Paying for copies of the yearbook for the students who work on it is one thing we thought we could do.

**ALUMNI DATABASE:** All updated information from the Reunion registration has been entered into our database. There were over 500 new entries/corrections. If you didn't attend the reunion and you haven't been getting the regular e-blast updates, then PLEASE SEND US YOUR UPDATED INFORMATION.



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### Support the Alumni Association!

Although we are no longer mailing out the newsletter, any donation that you send will be much appreciated, as we still have expenses and are committed to supporting a variety of worthwhile school projects..

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_

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*Send cheques, payable to the South Collegiate Alumni Association, to the mailing address in the box on the left or make donations online with e-transfers ([donatescaa@gmail.com](mailto:donatescaa@gmail.com))*

*Please check the alumni website (Click on "DONATE") for information on the security question to use*

**THANKS!**