



South Collegiate Alumni Association

Spring 2024



LIONS' PRIDE

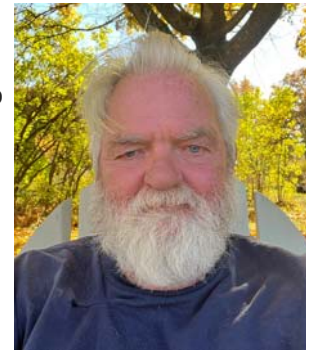
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My Bookends... Memories of Growing Up in Old South

by Wayne Burt ('73)

Long ago, I entertained the idea of writing a book called *My Bookends*. Recently, I decided to revisit the idea and include it in a book entitled *Footprints in Time*. The latter pertains to my later critique of academic philosophers, while the former is about my early introduction to academia.

My Bookends is essentially about growing up in the neighbourhood where Tecumseh Public School and South Collegiate form the archetypal bookends holding the block together. The short story version of this memoir is shared below. It awakened some cherished memories which I hope you enjoy....



As a child growing up, my world consisted of the block bordered by Tecumseh, Baker, Langley and Belgrave Streets. Tecumseh Public School was on one corner and South Collegiate on the other. They were “My Bookends”, with the public ice rink in between. The school's playgrounds and fields filled the remaining open area. It was the complete package for any young Canadian and for eighteen years, I lived and breathed the lifestyle of the neighbourhood, forming my academic, social, athletic and working life within these boundaries.

Looking back, some 50 years later, it's as if an inner “philosopher stone” has transformed those experiences, reflecting more brilliantly than ever the expanding circles of memories that mirror my days at South and Tecumseh. If South is the ocean, Tecumseh is the river that feeds into it.

We resided a few doors down from Tecumseh School and the two school playgrounds became extensions of my educational environment, receiving equal, if not more, of my time compared to the classroom. The neighbourhood's ice rink was then open-air, and as children, we would willingly clear away the snow to earn additional skating time. This contributed to my progression in hockey, as I advanced to AAA levels. In summer the ice rink became a basketball court, where we spent endless hours practising, culminating in a city championship in my final year at Tecumseh.

During the prolonged summer days, my friends and I engaged in friendly competition at the playground with other local parks, proudly representing our community. My familiarity with the neighbourhood was extensive, thanks to managing two newspaper routes and assisting the local milkman with deliveries on Saturdays. I also delivered prescriptions and food for Turner's Drug Store. This routine ensured I was well-acquainted with every doorstep and milk box in the area, and more importantly, with the people.

I fondly remember as a child, observing all the South sports teams, cheering them on with their victory march and attending their school shows. They were our big brothers and sisters in the neighbourhood. The school shows were an enchanting experience that made me feel as though I was part of a Broadway production.

Continued on page 2

I was particularly captivated by the leading actress in *Bye Bye Birdie* (1969). Influenced by these performances, I recall walking home and singing songs from the show while standing under the streetlight, impersonating the leading man of the show.

The river flowed into the ocean when I graduated from Tecumseh in 1968 and entered grade 9 at South. I remember anxiously walking through the front doors of South. My stirred-up soul was in sync with the winds blowing leaves outside. Once the big man on the other end of the block, now I was the small man on this end. Being a part of the city sports scene, however, I was familiar with many of the other boys in grade nine, and girls, as girls do, find their way into your heart along the way.

I played basketball and volleyball and was on the student council from the get-go. I played hockey outside of school, representing London in city leagues. By this time, the former outdoor ice rink had been replaced with Farquharson Arena, where I worked part-time while at South. The school has a history of fine athletes and I was fortunate to have played on teams with some of them. The female athletes always were a class act in themselves and I was one of their biggest fans. Sports provided a heartbeat inside and outside of the walls. Of course, there were also the Friday night dances after our basketball games.

As previously mentioned, I loved the school's shows. In 1970, a musical production of *Oh What a Lovely War* took to the stage, followed by *Anything Goes*. The following year, and for my final year at South, the shows were moved to the Tostal upstairs. **Mrs. Woodman** drew upon the work of artists, writers, poets & philosophers to put together productions like *Any Fresh Egg* and *Apocalypse*, shows that made us aware of the archetypes and symbols from the depths of our unconscious.

It was then that Mrs. Woodman, who was also my English Teacher, pulled me out of the gym and into the theatre. Indeed, it transformed my life, as later I went into the arts, studying in New York and Germany and teaching classical painting and drawing in Toronto. When Mrs. Woodman left South the year I graduated, she asked me to assist a London artist in making a collage from pictures in our archives of past South stage productions. The work was installed in the Tostal.

We had an amazing English dept. There were special courses in creative writing and Canadian literature, as well as extracurricular drama and dance. I recall being introduced to Leonard Cohen by **Mr. Underhill**. I would walk into parties with a record by Cohen and another by Bob Dylan and they wouldn't get much playing time. But fast forward several years... Dylan won the Nobel Peace Prize for literature (the first songwriter to do so) and Leonard Cohen's songs are legendary today. His haunting words and voice echo through the halls of music. In my post-South years, I would often help others with their university essays on subjects that I was not even taking at the time. It was because of the depths we covered at South, that enabled me to do so.

My graduating class commissioned me to do a mural for the cafeteria. It was on canvas about ten feet by five. It was of a child breaking out of a cosmic egg while an old geometer drew a circle in the sand. The sky had many coloured atoms, symbolic of a cross and science coming out of it, after a surrealist Dali painting. With the help of friends, we gathered up barnwood for the frame. I cut out black-and-white images from *Time Life* magazines showing the horror of war and poverty, created a collage and shellacked them to the barn wood.

About a year later, I learned that it had been removed from the cafeteria because the new principal found it to be unsuitable. A friend later salvaged the canvas part for me. Today, I reflect on it, as it is so relative in today's world. The horrifying images of war appear daily in the news. Religious and political conflicts take the stage as science plays its part in the game. It is life, the reality that we face and have the responsibility to do something about. To me, that is what education is about. The ability and will to create positive change.

Final Note: I have intentionally left out the names of my many friends. I did not want to miss anyone, so I'm sending a collective school hug to all. The agony of defeat and joy of victory, the tears, the fears and the laughter will always be an endless ocean of happiness. It was indeed a wonderful time.



MEMORIES OF SOUTH... INCLUDING MY FAILURES...

by Bill Hennessy ('55)

Before South I had never seen a basketball. But in my second year I really wanted to play. So, after the team was selected, I asked **Mr. McTavish** if I could practise with the team, which he agreed to. So, I got a uniform and was centre because I was tall. I attended all practices and suited up for every game. I was not allowed to play though. Scoring by each player was posted on a bulletin board and of course I finished the season with zero points.

I couldn't learn French. 70 percent of my study time was on French. I think I passed grade 9 French with a mark in the low 50's. But that was the last passing grade at South. There is, however, a happy ending. I needed a language at Western but had failed twice. I tried Spanish but failed again. Then I tried Waterloo and failed there too. On my second try, to my delight, I discovered I was a visual learner. So half way through the course, I stopped going to labs, and stopped writing out vocabulary and simply did visual study. I got 76 on my final. Of course, Western wouldn't accept that, but did give me a credit, so I could finish my degree there.

I loved tennis and played often. At my best, I could occasionally drive my serves into the corners with a spin. So, somebody put me on the men's doubles for WOSSA. I partnered with Sven... who was really good. On tournament day I was so intimidated that I just lobbed my serves, so they were easy returns. The other team started hitting all the balls to me, so Sven suggested I play the net. I think I made one point during the whole match. At one point, I noticed my mom and dad were sitting in the stands. Very embarrassing.

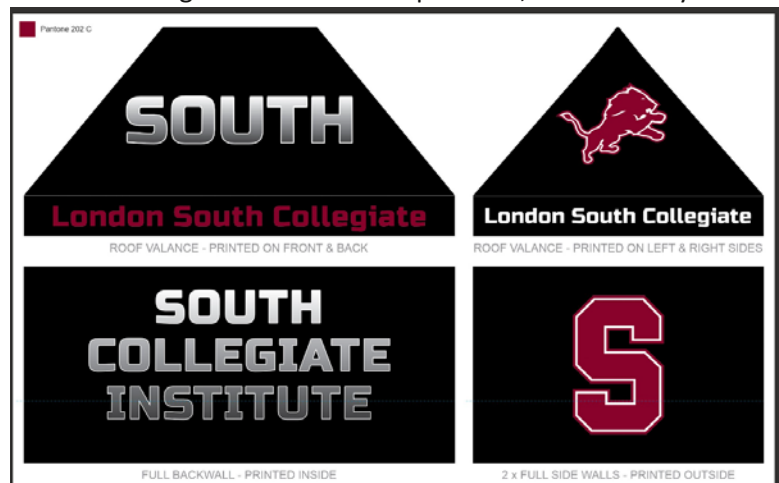
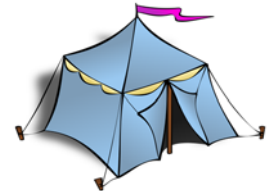
EDITOR'S NOTE: Sadly, I discovered that Bill had passed away when I tried to email him a copy of this page. Unfortunately, the respondent did not include any details about his death, just asked that his email address be removed from our database. I couldn't find an obituary online, so have no way of gathering the needed information for an "In Memoriam" post, which is why I thought it appropriate to honour him by including the piece of writing he sent us last December. Bill may have been focused on his failures in this article, but he can certainly be commended for his openness, humility and self-deprecating sense of humour. Not everyone is willing to talk about their past in this way and his honest self-appraisal is nothing short of admirable. REST IN PEACE, BILL.

The Long Awaited Tent

by Norma Evans (staff, 2000-2017)

Just before Covid hit, we were approached by **Sam Sidler**, Head of South's Phys. Ed. Department about the need for a school tent to accommodate numerous clubs and teams at South. We, as the Alumni executive, unanimously voted to support this request. Unfortunately, due first to Covid and then the SCAA being busy with planning the 100th Reunion, the tent did not get ordered until December 11, 2023. I am pleased to announce that a 10' x 15' tent has now been purchased and delivered. It will be used during Track & Field Competitions, Girls and Boys Soccer Tournaments, Cross-Country Meets, Boys Baseball Tournaments as well as the Relay for Life Event, the Robotics Team Competitions and by the SCAA during the Gathering on the Green.

Last fall, the need for this purchase was emphasized when the South Cross-Country team was the only school that had no tent for shelter from the elements or to gather as a team at meets. On the right is a mock-up of what the roof, side walls and back look like. I hope to be able to provide you with a picture of the tent set-up in the near future.



PEG (PARNELL) HERBERT (1968)



- ⇒ FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of the NGO, HELP LESOTHO
- ⇒ Holds a Ph.D. in Education, specializing in educational and developmental psychology
- ⇒ A former social worker who taught graduate courses at the University of Ottawa for 10 years
- ⇒ Founded **Help Lesotho** in 2004, after witnessing the suffering from AIDS, poverty and famine in Lesotho (www.helplesotho.org)
- ⇒ **Mission Statement:** It is the mission of Help Lesotho to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS by promoting education, gender equity and youth leadership development
- ⇒ By 2005, the work was so extensive Peg committed herself to it full-time and spends 2-4 months every year in Lesotho
- ⇒ Help Lesotho has now reached over 300,000 people to date with more than 65,000 graduating from its intensive programs to build resilience and leadership
- ⇒ Wrote a children's book for the organization's 10th anniversary about gender equity called **A Girl in Lesotho**
- ⇒ *I am passionate about the rights of girls and women and gender equity in all forms as the key to resolving many other issues*
- ⇒ Selected by the Financial Post as one of the Top Charities to support in Canada in 2015 and was one of the first 100 of 86,000 charities in Canada to achieve Imagine Canada Accreditation
- ⇒ **NUMEROUS AWARDS:** The National Child's Day "**Woman of the Village**" Award; the Women of Distinction Award: Business, Professional and Public Sector; winner of the **Women of Influence Award, Ottawa**, nominee for the national top 25 Canadian Champions of Change Award and the prestigious **Government of Canada Meritorious Service Award in 2017**



EDITOR'S NOTE: HELP LESOTHO is celebrating its 20th Anniversary this year, so I wanted to share Peg's profile, created for South's 100th. I realize that many of you did not have the opportunity to read it at the Reunion and know you will appreciate her impressive story. When I asked her if she would share some additional thoughts and memories with us, she readily agreed. I was delighted, as I'm sure you will be too.

PEG'S MESSAGE...

I retired last year (I finally got the memo) so all this is very fresh in my mind. I appreciate Connie's invitation to add a bit to this because I wish I could tell you about the amazing, well-trained and loyal local staff in Lesotho who administer 22 highly impactful programs to build resilience, gender equity and leadership in Lesotho, a small country landlocked within South Africa. I also wish I could share stories of the generous and loyal donors who fund them. I have had the privilege to take the leadership I learned, in part from South, to help others who desperately need it and who are eternally grateful. In this time of existential angst and fractured mental health, it is important to remind ourselves that there are multitudes of people 'out-there' working tirelessly to make the world a better place. Vulnerable people want to help themselves; they just need a bit of support – as we all do. I welcome this opportunity to encourage you to find, actively support and advocate for effective leaders and organizations that do make a difference. We are all in this together and that is both a truism and an opportunity.

Thank you for your interest and for what you do to make the world a better place.

Peg

PS If you are interested, my letters from the very beginning, written only while in Lesotho, are posted here:

<https://helplesotho.org/?s=Peg%27+letters> (more recent letters are found on the blog)

More of my story is here: <https://helplesotho.org/?s=founder>

Ted Hessel: Alumnus, Member of a 4-generation Family & Honoured Western Volunteer

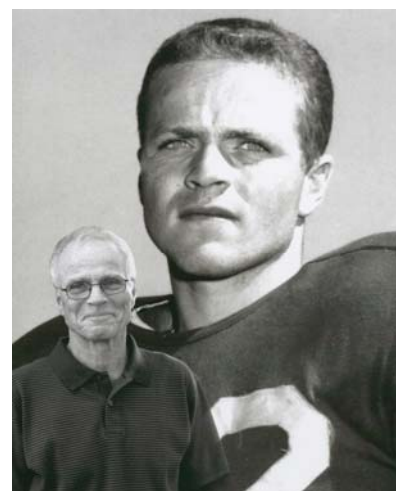
by **Connie Weir ('66)**

A 1953 grad, Ted Hessel is also a staff alumnus, spending five years (1971-76) at South as a Phys Ed teacher and Coach. More recently, he was a member of the organizing committee for South's 75th Reunion (2003). He helped to plan many aspects of that successful reunion, including the giant "75" made by students on the school football field and then photographed from the air.

Ted's connection to the school has always been a strong one and spans four generations, beginning with his mother, **Lenore (McIntyre) Hessel ('30)**. His wife and high school sweetheart, **Libby (Riley)** is a 1952 grad, while his older brother **Keith**, now deceased, graduated in 1950. Both of Ted's children, **Jeffery & Heidi Hessel** attended South as well, graduating in 1979 and 1981 respectively. Heidi, whose husband **Geoff McMurray** was a 1980 grad, sadly passed away from cancer in 2006 at the young age of 44. Her son **Riley McMurray**, a student at South at the time, went on to graduate in 2008, extending the family's line of South grads into the 4th generation. Keith's son & daughter are also South alumni: **David Hessel ('75)** and **Susan (Hessel) Simpson ('75)**, while Sue's daughter, **Emily Simpson ('05)**, is another 4th generation South grad.

Ted has contributed a lot, not just to South but to his other alma mater: Western University. During his undergrad years at Western, he played for the Jr. Varsity Colts. After graduating in 1958, he served with the Canadian Air Force in Germany until returning to London and UWO, earning his BA (Hons) in Phys Ed from Western in 1967 and his B.Ed in 1969.

His pride in Western led to his long involvement with the "W" Club and later, the **Western Mustangs Athletic Alumni (WMAA)** and the **John P. Metras Sports Museum**, founded in 1984. Ted's friend, Free Press Sports reporter Bob Gage, served as curator of the museum from the late 1980's until he passed away in 2009, leaving over \$1 million to Western Athletics, including the museum. Taking over the curator's job, Ted oversaw a significant expansion of the museum's collection. In addition to donating his large collection of personal memorabilia, he made it his mission to collect and digitize all of Western's team photographs.



An article in our Spring 2012 issue, acknowledged Ted as the recipient of the 2011 **Dr. Ivan Smith Award**, Alumni Western's highest honour: *The Fall 2011 issue of the Alumni Gazette describes Ted's award as "a fitting tribute" that acknowledges his "tireless service to Western" as a member of the Alumni Association, the 'W' club and the Senate. "His advocacy for sport history at Western in unsurpassed."*

In January 2015, the **Mustang Honour Circle** was launched. This program was created to recognize volunteers who have made a significant contribution to sport and recreation at Western, and Ted was one of the first 10 inductees honoured. Acknowledging his vital role in chronicling the history of Western Athletics, they highlighted his important role in the 100th Anniversary of Western Athletics, providing the majority of the photos and items used to celebrate the anniversary, including those featured in the university's anniversary book *Mustangs 100: A Century of Western Athletics*.

In the August 2021 issue of the WMAA newsletter, Dennis Hirschberger praised Ted's contributions to Western: *"He spent countless hours, over almost three decades..."* The article, entitled "The Gift of Time", concludes with the following words:

The only way we can repay Ted for his lifelong devotion to Western, the WMAA, and to athletics, is to acknowledge his time and effort, his gracious and passionate leadership, his quiet and humble demeanor, in these paragraphs. It just doesn't seem enough.

Ted celebrated his 90th birthday with friends, colleagues and family at a party at the Ceeps on December 29th. Our belated best wishes. We hope he had a wonderful time!

TED HESSEL: WORTHY OF A PROFILE, BUT ONE WE UNFORTUNATELY MISSED...



ALUMNI IN THE NEWS....

IAN MCKERCHER ('65) has a new book in the works. His fifth novel, **Home & Away**, is due off the presses in September. It opens with four short but strikingly impactful sentences:

*"This is not a war story. This is an in-spite-of-the-war story.
War is a capricious guest. Fickle at best, and seldom at best."*

The story line weaves together the wartime experiences of Bank of Canada secretary, Frances McFadden, in Ottawa with those of her boyfriend, Paul Roderick, in occupied France.

The introductory quote from Scott Westerfeld sums up the theme:

"Maybe this was how you stayed sane in wartime: a handful of noble deeds amid the chaos."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Those of you who attended last May's 100th may have chatted with Ian in the library where he had a display of his books in our Reunion Store. As an alumna who has read all four of his previous novels, I can tell you I am excited about the release of his new book this fall.

BILL FRANKS ('73) has published an E-book on Amazon. The book's title is **One Canadian, One Scotch, One Beer!** It chronicles the author's solo travels in Scotland where 21 whisky distilleries were visited and many whiskies not available in Canada were enjoyed. So, if travelling to Scotland on your own to explore the whisky trail appeals to you or someone you know, have a look.

BEAU DIXON ('92) is not only one of the 150 notable alumni who was recognized with a profile at South's 100th Reunion but he also performed for us! The multi-talented actor, playwright, musician & music director was back in London recently to perform the role of Colonel Mustard in the Grand Theatre's production of the popular comedic murder mystery **Clue**. Those of us who had the good fortune to see this production will know that Beau did an outstanding job in the role. Upcoming projects include workshopping a musical that he co-wrote in Harlem, New York last summer. He also co-wrote another musical that he'll be performing in at the Stratford Festival in August. It's called **Shape of Home: Songs in Search of Al Purdy**. Another busy year for Beau and we wish him the very best.

ANDREW McCLENAGHAN ('97), also one of the 150 alumni profiled for South's 100th, is well known as the tech entrepreneur who founded Digital Echidna in 2002. After the company merged with another local tech firm, Northern Commerce, in 2020, the company became the largest digital agency in London. Now Andrew has embarked on a new entrepreneurial enterprise with the purchase of **The Bicycle Café** on Thames Street. Located on the ground floor of a highrise, just off the Thames Valley Parkway, Andrew is excited about his newest business venture. Describing himself as a relative newcomer to the biking culture, he says he didn't take up serious cycling until the COVID pandemic's forced shutdowns and closures. He stated in *The Londoner* article (Feb. 1, 2024) that he *"had also been thinking about climate change as something I wanted to work on"*. In 2023, after several stops at The Bicycle Cafe, he bought 20% of the business. In January 2024, however, he purchased the business outright, when the owner moved to BC. Founded in 2018, the Bicycle Café now employs 10 people. You can sit on their patio and enjoy some food and coffee before looking at some of their amazing bikes. Sounds like a great idea, doesn't it.

JAMES McINNES ('98) is another alumni whose profile was displayed at last May's 100th Reunion. After launching Canada's first vegan fast food restaurant in 2017 and opening their own manufacturing centre in 2018, James and his wife went public in 2021, rebranding their company as **Odd Burger Corporation** (formerly Globally Local Technologies, Inc). As Co-founder and CEO, James was featured in the Feb. 8, 2024 issue of the *Londoner*, after the company opened its 13th location at Western's food hub. He was quoted as saying it was *"extremely exciting to not only launch it here at Western University, but to be the first in Canada to launch on a university campus"* (offering 100 per cent vegan fast food). A Western grad himself, James considers the food hub *"the perfect location to introduce young people to a sustainable plant-based diet"*. Western's director of hospitality, Colin Porter, agreed, citing the growing student demand for vegan food options. In addition to another London location at 645 Commissioner's Rd. E., the company has expanded to Hamilton, Oakville, Waterloo, Oshawa, Toronto, Whitby, Windsor, Calgary and Regina, and has plans to open more franchises in Ottawa, Edmonton, Vancouver & Victoria.



Looking over the first edition of the *Confederate* (Nov. 1958), the first student publication since the demise of *The South Wind* in 1949. L to R: Tom Crerar (Staff Advisor), Kee Dewdney ('59) (Editor), Don Crawford ('59) (Circulation Manager) & Barbara Brooks ('59) (Copy Editor)

Some of you may remember seeing this photo before. It was on the cover of the Spring 2012 issue, featuring an article by former teacher, **Tom Crerar**, entitled "Remembering the *Confederate*". In the article, Tom described the *Confederate* as "the brainchild" of its first editor, **Keewatin Dewdney** and went on to talk about the 12 year history of the student newspaper (1958-69, then revived briefly in 1971).

It seemed appropriate to republish the photo here for two important reasons: Kee Dewdney passed away in March and was included in the most recent "In Memoriam" post on the alumni website, along with four other alumni.

Secondly, after a number of years without a student newspaper, a new one was recently launched.

Called the **South Star**, 5 issues have been published so far. Nickolas Romanoff, the teacher overseeing the project, has requested permission to publish some of the 150 alumni profiles displayed at the last May's 100th Reunion. We were very happy to oblige and have already sent him three profiles that will be part of their historical column in the next issue. New copies are published at the beginning of the month and Nick wanted interested alumni to know that they are welcome to pick up an issue from their custom news stand by the office.

Final Reminders: Please remember to check out the "In Memoriam" section on the alumni website. It's under the "News" heading on the Homepage.

Also, if you want to check out any past issues of *Lions' Pride*, such as the one featuring Tom Crerar's article mentioned above, you can find all the past issues on our website.

EXCERPTS FROM THE APRIL 1ST ISSUE OF THE *SOUTH STAR*, THE NEW STUDENT NEWSPAPER

Sports:

While it may certainly not look like it, Spring is in the air which means our last sports teams for the 2023/2024 school year are starting up! Soccer for both boys and girls are in their tryout times and it's not too late for you to take part. Track and field has also started.... Finally, Boys Baseball is also underway and rumor has it that Girls Softball is trying to start a team so try and rally some friends to make it possible. However, we can't forget about our badminton team who is halfway through their season. They're working hard at tournaments and quad meets to refine their skills for the upcoming TVRAA day.

Student Council:

Thank you to everyone who came out and made the Starry Night Semi Formal Dance a night to remember. We hope you had an incredible time! An even bigger shout out is needed for all the teachers and volunteers who made the night possible and kept everything safe and running smoothly. A fun packed spirit week has been planned after the solar eclipse.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The SCAA wishes to congratulate Nickolas Romanoff and all the students involved in the creation of this new student newspaper. Future issues of the *South Star* will contain details about the upcoming Dance Show and Senior Art Show.

UPDATE ON SCAA ACTIVITIES

GATHERING ON THE GREEN, SATURDAY, JUNE 1ST: Once again, the SCAA is planning to have a booth at the “G on the G”, one of Wortley Village’s most popular neighbourhood events. It’s a fun day and a great way to promote the Association. Hope to see some of you “on the Green”!

NEW SCAA DIRECTORS: As you may recall, last May’s Reunion precipitated the postponement of our AGM until October. Five members of the Executive retired at this time, but we happily welcomed four new members to the Board: **Nicole Hamilton (1998), Lorissa Sinasac (1996), Heather Lynch (1997) and Kate Stenning (2021)**. We are still **looking for a new Secretary**, however, so please contact us if you feel able to take on this role! Also, please note that we are returning to the usual May time frame for our AGM, this year on May 1st. We are hoping to be able to hold the meeting in the newly renovated library, but watch for confirmation of the location in the April e-blast.

LEGACY GIFT UPDATE: A number of interesting suggestions have been put forth, the most recent one being that we commission a suitable piece of art to be displayed in the new Art Room. Another suggestion was a framed display entitled “100 Years of South Sports Champions”. While no final decision has been made yet, we hope to be able to announce one soon. Any additional suggestions? Let us know ASAP as this is likely your last chance for input.

WEBSITE & FACEBOOK POSTS: Just a reminder that although the “In Memoriam” section is no longer included in the newsletter, regular posts are being made on the website: <https://southalumni.ca/in-memoriam/>. Six posts have been made since last September. “In Memoriam” is one of the 3 sections listed under “News” on the home page. The 150 Reunion profiles are also slowly being posted on the website under “Projects”. The profiles of all 19 alumni nominated from the 2000’s are now posted there, as well as on the alumni Facebook page.



SCAA’s Annual General Meeting

Wed. May 1, 2024 - 7 PM

Location TBA

All interested alumni welcome!



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

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City	Province/State	Postal/Zip Code

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Home Phone	E-mail

Graduating year _____

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THANK YOU!