



Alere Flammam

The newsletter of the Lisgar Alumni Association
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Lisgar Team Wins Gold at Canadian Improv Games

Adrian Kiva

Lisgar Collegiate's very own improv team, affectionately known as Jimmy, took home gold at the national Canadian Improv Games this spring. This is not the first time Lisgar has distinguished itself on the national improv stage. In fact, our school has a history of excellence, having finished high in the standings at a national level over the past years.

The makings of this improv dynasty can be traced back to the arrival of a very special mentor, Jimmy's full-time coach, none other than the kind, insightful, and talented Ms. Kathleen Klassen. Ms. K began coaching Lisgar's improv team in 1996, and the team has qualified for nationals most years since.

The reason for this success has to do with Ms. K's philosophy. Ironically, it is Ms. K's devaluation of scores and standings that cause Lisgar to place so high. The emphasis is on the integrity of the team and exploration in the practice room. It is about discovering new things, and bringing about confidence, self-esteem, and resilience.

According to Ms. Klassen, the strength of a team does not come from a competitive drive, but from heart, discipline, connection to each other, willingness to learn, and confidence. In fact, I was told that one of the things

that made our team so successful this year was the joy we projected onstage.

In my opinion, this is what sets improv apart from many other competitive pursuits such as sports, awards, scholarships—many things found in a student's life. Improv adds another level. Improv is understood and brought to its full potential by students who are able to "play." The ability to fully commit to the reality created on stage, without fear of judgment, is what makes improv such a rewarding experience.

I enjoy the improv practice sessions because of the connection I forge with my teammates—a connection I do not have elsewhere. I love seeing this new and unexplored side of my friends. We are eight people immersed in a world of collaborative and spontaneous creation. And of course I love the performances. The teams project a palpable energy which the audience reflects back at them.

Along with the ability to invent witty dialogue on the spot, improv hones a panoply of skills: listening, teamwork, communicating, supporting each other, understanding, contributing through positive action... the list goes on. So much so that it is my (highly biased) opinion that no other activity directly endows its practitioner with more useful life skills than improv. How fitting that the most whimsical of pastimes should have the most powerful effect on the self!

Since the inception of the Canadian Improv Games in 1978, over a hundred thousand student improvisers have passed through the Games, graduated, and taken the improv skill set



IMPROV CHAMPIONS: Lisgar's team poses with teacher Kathleen Klassen after winning national gold.

into the real world with them. Before the Games, one of the founders was helping at-risk students in New York help themselves through improv. That attitude of self-improvement through togetherness has remained an underlying philosophy of the Games. Improv is about community.

Ms. K sums it up very well: "Improv teaches people a different way of being in the world. I believe that we become what we practice. When we practice creativity, joy, and hard work we become more joyful, creative, hard-working people. The world is full of

people waiting to be happy: 'When I get that job, get into that university, buy that car, have that much money, I will be happy.' On an improv stage you can't wait. You make a decision and commit fully. Improv provides tools for people to practice authentic expression, which can be used in all areas of life, even when life gets challenging. It's like yoga or meditation—only funnier."

[Editor's note: Adrian Kiva has performed with the improv team all four years of his time at Lisgar, and is graduating this spring.] ■

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Your Alumni Association is in need of new volunteers to join the executive, especially a **treasurer** to manage the finances. If you live in the Ottawa area and would like to learn more, please get in touch with us by phone or e-mail!

Members' Forum

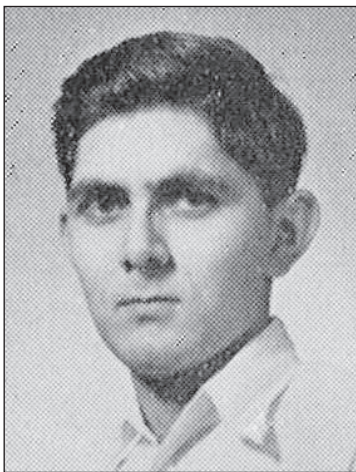
Dolly Smith (Anderson, 1954) wrote: I've just read the article about Thelma Gray in the Spring 2013 issue. Her brother, Alex Gray, was in my Chemistry class—we shared a work station and he kindly helped me learn to use a Bunsen burner safely!

Marcia Almey (Krantzberg, 1957) e-mailed: I was amazed to read the piece by Boudewijn van Oort in the Spring 2013 issue. I was one of his classmates. I had no inkling of any of this. As far as I can recall, he was a very good student and he won a Rhodes Scholarship, a high honour indeed. As far as I know, he never talked about his ordeal with his classmates at Lisgar. Reading his piece, I can well understand why. It must have been a terrible experience for him and his family. Please give him my regards. I hope that he is well, healthy, and finally happy.

Leith Shenstone (2004) e-mailed to ask if there were any plans for the Class of 2004 to get together to mark their 10th anniversary.

Rabeem Rauf (1958) wrote: I just received the latest school communiqué. I am an avid reader and as such

just finished reading it. I sit with a marker and underline a name to remember to return to it later. I am saddened by seeing the name Margery Hayward in the In Memoriam section. She was Head Girl in 1958 and we worked closely, as I worked as a photographer on the yearbook. I was leaving Canada that year, as my father was High Commissioner of India and he was transferred to Belgium. I remember that I invited Margery and her boyfriend Ron Swerdfager for dinner after the graduation ceremony. I remember also my first day at Lisgar. We had just arrived in Canada a few days earlier. I sat down next to Eva Waddell in History class, where Mr. Carruthers was the teacher. I later learned that he was a former wrestler. After learning that I was new to Canada, he took me to the Parliament Buildings to watch the daily debate. I also remember fellow classmates Aage Sandqvist (an aspiring physicist), Earl Maseronald, and of course Rich Little. I returned to Canada to study Architecture at McGill University but did not enjoy it. A few years later, I enrolled at Toronto's Teachers College and was fortunate enough to get a job teaching in Drayton. It was a pleasant job working with Mennonite children. I then transferred to Guelph for 12 years. I retired in 2003 and am now a freelance writer. I have recently written a book entitled *Essays on Religion/Placebo Pills*, which is about religion and its correlation to terror-

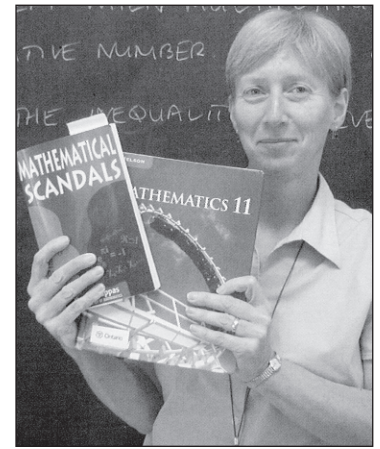


RAHEEM RAUF: Avid reader's 1958 grad photo.

ism and radicalism. I'd love to hear from any of my former classmates.

The National Youth Orchestra of Jamaica, directed by Ann McNamee (1972), will perform at St. Joseph's Church on the evening of Tuesday, August 5. Ann's work with the Youth Orchestra was profiled on the cover of our Spring 2012 issue.

Teachers Derrick Grose and Ingrid Van de Walle both retired from Lisgar this year. Derrick took a circuitous route to the school, where he became teacher-librarian in 2008, having taught in Nigeria for two years before acquiring a B.Ed., and then in Oxford House, a fly-in community in northern Manitoba, and Thicket Portage, a Métis community on the Hudson Bay Railway. No doubt he learned his multitasking skills there, where he was required to regulate the water levels in the sewage lagoon and pump furnace fuel from a railway tanker car! Ingrid arrived at Lisgar a decade earlier, in 1998, to join the Math Department, supervising the Math Contest Club and overseeing math contests. She compares teaching to



RETIREMENT: Math teacher Ingrid Van de Walle.

climbing a mountain—a task we undertake to challenge ourselves and to inspire others, and to help them in turn achieve greater heights. "I think that teaching is the highest calling," she says.

David Shoemaker (1988) is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the National Basketball Association (NBA) in China, where he oversees all of the league's business and basketball development, including television, digital media, marketing partnerships, global merchandising, events, and new initiatives. Prior to joining the NBA in 2011, Shoemaker

Lisgar 175—Time to get to work

Our 175th anniversary reunion will be held in May 2018. If we want it to be up to the standards of past reunions, we need to roll up our sleeves and get going. Four years may seem like a long time, but it goes by pretty fast when you're preparing for something on the scale of a Lisgar reunion.

That's why we are asking interested parties to join the Alumni Executive at a first planning session in the Lisgar Library on Monday, October 20, at 7 p.m. We will be discussing every aspect of the reunion, from events to fundraising to student involvement, and we need volunteers to get on board and maybe entice a few old classmates to join in as well.

Our last reunion featured such things as a golf tournament, a breakfast for former staff, an Athletic Wall of Fame induction, a gala dinner, a spe-

cial assembly, a highly successful fundraising campaign for auditorium renovations, decade rooms, a barbecue, a reception at Rideau Hall, and the list goes on. More than 1500 Lisgarites from Ottawa and around the world came through our doors that weekend, and a very good time was had by all.

The 175th will build on this experience and try to go one better, but it needs your help. We will need to designate a campaign chairperson, establish an organizing committee, and find the right people to head up the teams. Of course, a lot of the work will take place much closer to the reunion date, but by starting now, we can keep the workload light and the last-minute panics to a minimum.

Please come and join us. It's going to be a fun ride!

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Join for both of them.

Miss Bishop: Give me a sentence with the word etiquette in it.
Pete Chance: The dog got hungry and etiquette.

ATE A KID?: Peter Chance (1939), who wrote in this spring, had a moment of fame in the 1937 *Vox*.

served as president of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA). A corporate and commercial litigator, Shoemaker began his career in 1996 as law clerk to the Right Honourable Antonio Lamer, Chief Justice of Canada, following his graduation from the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Law, where he finished first in his class.

Peter Chance (1939) wrote: If you reverse my age (93), you arrive at the year I graduated from Lisgar—where I spent five very happy years. I am grateful to be on your mailing list. There's always something of special interest—even the obits! My brothers, David and John, were both graduates. John was Head Boy and Editor of the *Vox* in his senior year, and David was Captain of the Cadet Corps.

Gerald Fagan (teacher 1962) e-mailed: It was a distinct pleasure to teach at Lisgar for one year—I believe it was in 1962. My lovely lady and I left Ottawa after the one year but remember very fondly that first year of teaching baptism. I taught for about 16 or so more years, and changed occupations. Life as a conductor of orchestras and choirs has been my profession since that time, and at present I hold the position of Artistic Director of the Bach Music Festival of Canada. Over the years, it has been a pleasure to conduct at the National Arts Centre, and on one occasion during rehearsals, I walked to Lisgar and strolled the hallway where I taught

English, History, and Music. I was stopped by a very alert young lady who informed me that I should not be in the hall. I deemed it a pleasure to know that the standards of the school were still being maintained and that as a stranger I was not welcome. No explanation on my part was needed, as I knew that the beautiful teacher was only interested in her students. The tiny incident brought back so many happy memories of standards, discipline, and high expectations. All these things I learned as a young and very naive teacher from a very forgiving and thoughtful staff and administration.

Claire Rennie (2003) married Leo Crane on August 11, 2013. Claire graduated from Montana State University in 2009 and the University of Calgary School of Medicine in 2013.

Ian MacDonald e-mailed from Comox, BC: I've just taken the opportunity to read the excellent article regarding Jack Shapiro in your publication. As a former Ottawa Tech student of Jack's (or Mr. Shapiro, as we dutifully acknowledged him in his English class) I would very much like to send him a respectful hello and best wishes for the future.

Charles "Charlie" Hill (1962) is the Curator of Canadian Art at the National Gallery of Canada, where he has worked for over 40 years, and was responsible for the recent exhibition *Artists, Architects and Artisans: Canadian Art 1890–1918*. A short video tour featuring him is still available on the National Gallery's website.

Trudy Bradley (teacher 1982–2006) e-mailed: What a great issue. I got it today and read each and every page. It must take many hours of hard work to get it ready. It was a superb read. Thank you for all your efforts and others involved. ■

In Memoriam

BAILEY, Mary (Moxley, 1943) passed away on November 11, 2013. She graduated from the Royal Victoria Hospital in 1947 and pursued a nursing career in Montreal, Toronto, Halifax, and Ottawa.

COATES-HOPKINS, Sally (Carling, 1944) passed away on April 30, 2013. She enlisted in the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service ("Wrens") immediately after graduation and served as a wireless operator decoding Japanese signals.

FEE, Harry (1947) passed away on September 6, 2011.

FRASER, Donald (1954) passed away in January 2014. A lawyer, he joined the newly-formed department of law at Carleton University in 1967, playing a key role in its early growth. He was also a senior labour arbitrator.

FULFORD, Ethel (Moffet, 1950) passed away on November 4, 2013.

HEENAN, Mike (1962) passed away on February 9, 2014. He was co-captain of the football team at Lisgar, and later a poet, lecturer, scholar, editor, and newsman.

HOLLAND, Nancy (Wyatt, 1944) passed away on October 16, 2013. She studied music at the University of Toronto.

KNIEWASSER, Andrew (1944) passed away on November 8, 2013. Andy's foreign service postings took him and his family to Athens, Beirut, Cairo, Caracas, and Paris. In 1963, he returned to Canada as General Manager of Expo 67, and was awarded the Order of Canada for his contributions. He remained in the public service after Expo, becoming Senior Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade, and Commerce. In 1972, he left the public service to become the President and CEO of the Investment Dealers Association of Canada, where he remained for 20 years.

MACLEOD, Donald (1945) passed away on May 3, 2013. Don joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and flew in the Korean War airlift with 426 (Transport) Squadron. He then served in Alberta, Nova Scotia, France, and Ottawa over his 21-year career.

MCCOLGAN, Katherine (Smith, 1936) passed away on March 8, 2014. She developed a lifelong love of literature while a student at Lisgar, becoming a librarian at Carleton University.

MUNRO, Sheldon (Ross, 1955) passed away on June 20, 2013. She graduated from Macdonald College and then interned at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. She also worked in Hamilton and Ottawa.

MEAKIN, Asalyn (Hodgins, 1956) passed away in 2013. Asalyn would meet every summer with six of her Lisgar girlfriends. She sang in the Savoy Society's first concerts, and had a 33-year career in real estate.

PHILLIPS, Raymond (1937) passed away in February 2014. He briefly attended Queen's University before joining the Navy in 1939, and was already at sea when war was declared. He served aboard HMS Southampton, HMCS St. Laurent, and HMCS Haida, including escort duty across the North Atlantic. After the war, he earned his wings in England and flew from the carrier HMS Triumph. He later commanded HMCS Antigonish and HMCS Fraser, and was Commander at HMCS Venture (cadet training). After retiring from the Navy, Ray continued his service to Canada with a number of federal departments.

ROEBUCK, John (teacher 1966–75) passed away January 13, 2014. [Editor's note: see article on p. 6.]

RONEY, Ruth (Gardner, 1945) passed away on March 6, 2013. She was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for years of fundraising for the Navy League of Canada and Royal Canadian Sea Cadets.

THOMAS, Rosemary (Lorrain, 1947) passed away on December 9, 2013. She worked for the Dominion Bureau of Statistics before marrying Ottawa lawyer Robbie Thomas.

WILLIS-O'CONNOR, Hugh (1944) died on September 3, 2013. He met his future wife, Margaret Bishop (1944), at Lisgar. He served as Flight Officer during WWII, and worked for the Canadian Bank Note Company for 37 years, in Montreal and Ottawa. ■

Life Members

We are delighted to report that five alumni have become Life Members since the last issue of *Alere Flamman*: Inge Adams (Laursen, 1956) Michael Dillon (1957) Gordon Kaye (1958) Phyllis Rackow (Fried, 1945) Eric Schouten (1993)

From the Lisgar Archives: Notes from “Down Below”

Joy Heft

One of the ongoing archival pursuits over the last decade has been to complete the collection of *Vox Lycei* dating from 1912 housed at the Ottawa Public Library. Over the years we have donated 25 of the missing editions, the latest the 125th anniversary edition, from 1968, which recently came into our possession. There remain only the 1922 and 1990 editions to be provided. We do have these copies in the school collection, which is our first priority, but would appreciate donations of either year.

Speaking of *Vox Lycei*, the Association has purchased a very interesting volume that came recently to our attention. Entitled *The Ottawa Collegiate Institute Junior Lyceum (“Vox Junioris Lycei”), Ottawa Collegiate Institute, 1914-1918*, the book is a handwritten manuscript containing student writing including editorials, school gossip, poetry, and humour. The book was purchased by the Association at a cost of \$400, with generous donations from Sylvia Kershman and Elizabeth Hale. We plan to make it available on our website.

Another item of potential interest, though much more costly, has also recently emerged, thanks to the attention of Doug Arrand (1961, teacher 1967-2000). An 18kt gold pocket watch presented by fellow staff and students to Mr. John Thorburn, sixth principal of Ottawa Collegiate Institute, upon his retirement in December 1881, is offered for sale by an antique

pocket watch collector. It is in perfect working order and is still in the jeweler’s presentation box with a typewritten note of the presentation in it. An account of the presentation is included in the 1903 OCI history book. The collector is prepared to sell it to the Alumni Association at the \$3,500 value of the gold it is made from. Might purchase of this watch be a possible 175th anniversary fundraising goal?

In the course of consolidating records regarding Memorial Hall (the main entrance to the school) some errors have come to light. A chance discovery calls into question information regarding the identity of the figures depicted on the window in the entrance. The file states that they are of Torquato Tasso, Italian poet (1544-1595); Ben Franklin, printer, author, scientist, statesman, philanthropist, diplomat (1706-1790); Ludwig von Beethoven, German composer (1770-1827); Sir Isaac Newton, English mathematician and natural philosopher (1642-1727); Dante Aligheri, Italian poet (1265-1321). A document within the file indicates that the names are etched on the glass viewed from the inside and that the information was confirmed on November 27, 1981. Incorrect information from a now forgotten source was printed in the spring 2011 edition of *Alere Flammam*. The other error involves the incorrect recording of John Hallinen among the war dead from World War II, whereas he was a victim of World War I.

Finally, in this year of the Sochi Winter Olympics—how far away they

seem now—the archival showcase was put to use in the mounting of a display featuring the Lisgar alumni who have a connection to the Winter Olympics: Ann Heggveit, two-time Olympian, 1956 in Germany and 1960 in Squaw Valley, USA who won two gold medals for skiing in the latter (slalom and combined); Ralph St.

Germain, who was a member of the gold-medal-winning hockey team in the Winter Games of 1936 in Germany, scoring six goals in five games; and Bud Clark, who was a member of the national Ski Team in two Olympics, Lake Placid, in 1931, and Germany, in 1936, and subsequently Director of the Canadian Olympic Committee. ■

Bob Derry: 26 Years at Lisgar

Robert Derry, the newest member of Lisgar’s Quarter Century Club, having begun teaching at Lisgar in 1987, retired in February of this year. After graduation from the University of Toronto, Bob (or Bobino, as he is endearingly known to some of his former colleagues) taught in Mali with CUSO for two years prior to completing his teacher training at the Ontario College of Education, and subsequently taught for one year in Fort Frances, in northern Ontario. His experience in Ottawa, dating from 1970, included Woodroffe, Fisher Park, and finally Lisgar, where he spent the majority of his career.



OLD-SCHOOL FIGURE: Teacher Robert Derry.

Bob continued to wear a suit and tie and carry a briefcase throughout his career and he cut a familiar, old-school figure on the premises—our own personal Hercule Poirot, you might say. He was considered among his departmental colleagues as a helpful and unflappable presence, an excellent administrator, a proficient scholar of French grammar and of Latin, and the “go to” person in difficult circumstances. His students appreciated him for his knowledge, predictability, good nature, and sense of humour, and he particularly enjoyed the age group he worked with. “It keeps you young,” he says. For his part, in addition to his teaching of French, Bob feels he made a contribution to Lisgar by keeping Latin alive and starting up the Latin AP program. He says he will miss the Latin, comparable to doing crosswords or Sudoku.

Beneath all this lay an intriguing persona with many interests he pur-

sued assiduously throughout the years. Among these were the study of Esperanto, the practice of Taiko drumming, and the playing of the bagpipes—which remains a current involvement. In fact, he recently received the Governor General Award for Caring Canadians, along with four others representing the band “The Sons of Scotland,” which performs in seniors’ homes and for charitable fundraising, as well as at sports events. Other eclectic sidelines include small-scale farming—he gardens and has raised chickens and bees—and what one might call “culinary experiments.” One of these involved an unusual non-alcoholic potion, kombucha, a fermented tea which he drank regularly from a wine glass during the lunch break. He is also interested in the paleo diet. One can wager that, along with his intention to engage in hiking and travel, Bob will tackle new and interesting pursuits with the same vigour he has always demonstrated. ■



HISTORICAL FIND: A gold pocket watch given as a retirement gift to Lisgar’s sixth principal in 1881.

Interview with Naomi Loeb—Journalist, Teacher, Traveller

Did you grow up in Ottawa?

Yes. My grandfather came to Ottawa after first emigrating from Russia to Cincinnati, where he had a sister. It must have been summer, because he found it too hot! So he came to Ottawa, where a brother was a fur trapper with the Hudson's Bay Company up north. My grandfather loved it and stayed. My father, one of six brothers, was born in Ottawa and went to Lisgar as well. Believe it or not, we had some of the same teachers—Louis Meng and Lorne Rentner, to name a few.

What connections has your family developed, having lived here for several generations?

My grandfather, Moses Loeb, started M. Loeb Ltd, a wholesale confectionery and tobacco business. After he died in 1951, my father expanded it and brought the IGA franchise to Canada from the US. The company grew and prospered and my father believed in giving back to the community—hence the Loeb Building at Carleton University and numerous other charitable legacies.

Do you have any memorable moments from your Lisgar days?

I remember wonderful and inspiring English classes with Dorothy Bishop, and the quiet competence of Miss Meech, who taught history. The aforementioned teachers (Meng and Rentner) often asked which of the six Loeb boys my father was—somewhat surprising for a teenager 30 years later. It speaks to Mr. Rentner's excellence as a math teacher that I excelled at trigonometry. Many girls of my generation were given the impression that we were not good in math, but he disabused me of that notion. My sister and I were among the first to be in the accelerated class that completed five years in four. I didn't mind it at the time, as I was not the most serious student, I'm embarrassed to say; that only changed in university. It meant that I graduated very young—16! But I loved the social life, and was Grads Editor of *Vox Lycei*, the school magazine, which combined two of my interests: people and communication.



CAREER IN BROADCASTING: Naomi Loeb (1964) worked as a journalist before turning to teaching.

What path did you follow after high school?

I went to the University of Toronto where I studied French and Italian, then on to Columbia University where I got an MA. After Columbia, I lived in Boston and New York, working in communications and the women's movement. After a year in Turkey, I ended up in Edmonton, where I began my 20-year career in broadcasting, primarily with the CBC. In the late 70s I moved back to Toronto, where I've lived ever since, but with sojourns in other places such as Paris. After my TV career, I worked in business with my father for about eight years in the mid-90s, then on a whim obtained an ESL Teaching Certificate. I taught at York University for four years, and then part-time at Seneca College for another six. In 2009, I took a semester off and went to Tanzania to pursue a long-time dream of teaching in Africa. I enjoyed it so much that I returned in the fall of 2012 for a year, teaching at a school for underprivileged girls.

What did you do with the CBC?

I did numerous things but was mostly in television, on air (although I also did occasional radio guest-hosting gigs). I started in Edmonton in French news and current affairs as a production assistant on the late night shift. It was 1975, International Women's

Year. I was part of a group that started a women's magazine, *Branching Out*. I was being interviewed on the French channel and the then-Head of News and Current Affairs, Peter Herrndorf, happened to see me. He thought I had on-air potential, and the rest, as they say, is history. I was on the air in Edmonton for a year, then moved back to Toronto, and started as a features reporter on the supper news hour. Then I co-hosted *The Kowalski-Loeb Report* and later had my own weekly current affairs show, *The Loeb Report*. From there, I became a features reporter at *The Journal*. My last gig was co-hosting *Monitor*, another current affairs program.

How has media changed since you started working in the field?

Almost completely. When I started in the mid-70s, we shot our news stories on film, and worked on manual typewriters! So there has been a complete revolution in technology. But also the nature of programming across the board has been transformed. We were able to focus on longer pieces, and content was king. The idea of "factual entertainment" (reality shows) would have been unheard of. Content is still important, but it is now being delivered in so many different ways. So I would say it's been a total revolution and it'll go on for some time to come.

How has it been to have lived in so many places?

One always benefits from living in different places. I think people should travel whenever and wherever possible, and get out of their comfort zone. It's always preferable to live in a place rather than rush through as a tourist, but sometimes even a brief exposure can give one a taste for more. My early travels were in Western Europe, so while things were different, the culture shock was obviously not comparable to Turkey and Tanzania. If you have the right attitude, an open mind, and a willingness to forget the creature comforts of home, travel can be a life-changing experience.

What prompted you to fulfill your dream of teaching in Africa? What inspired this dream?

I wanted to go with CUSO (a non-profit volunteer organization) right after undergrad in 1968, but my parents would have had a coronary. So I didn't do it—until now! All my kids were gone and both my parents had passed away, so there was no reason not to go—except fear, and in my book, that's not a reason not to do something. I went for a short time in '09 for two months of teaching in Tanzania and two months of traveling across southern Africa. My second trip was for one year, and who knows what the third will be. I can't explain what the inspiration was; Africa has always been a place I've been drawn to. When people ask if I'd teach elsewhere, I can never summon up the enthusiasm I have for Africa—the rhythms, landscapes, people, music, sunshine—it really gets under your skin.

Do you have any advice for current students at Lisgar?

Well, I'm a dinosaur from their vantage point, and it's a very different world in many ways. But some things don't change. Experience as much as you can, and don't worry too much too early about "what you want to be." Live life and don't be afraid of taking risks or making a "wrong" decision. There are no wrong roads, just different routes to move forward. ■

Remembering Music Teacher John Roebuck

Robert Hursti

In the spring of 1966, while I was teaching at Champlain High School, a decision was made to re-introduce a string music program to Lisgar in a format similar to the one at Nepean High School. Students west of Bronson Avenue would still be eligible to take strings at Nepean, but those east of Bronson would go to Lisgar. Jane Dobell, Board Chairperson, was excited about having two programs, giving all students in the city access to this orchestral opportunity. Wright Neil, the principal at Lisgar, was very keen on the project and gave strong support to the endeavour.

The band music teacher at Lisgar at the time was moving on, so it was the ideal moment to make a fresh start with the two parallel music programs to be offered at Lisgar for the 1966-67 school year. I was to move to Lisgar to introduce the new string program, and would be working with a fellow by the name of John Roebuck, who would be new to the Board after teaching band in Hawkesbury. He and I first met in the parking lot of Champlain High school in June of 1966, where we got acquainted and discussed a few ideas for our new life at Lisgar in the fall.

Since the parallel programs of winds and strings was not yet fully established, I taught some English classes to fill in my teaching timetable, and John did likewise in history. Running a double program meant that we had to be frugal in our spending, because unfortunately the budget remained the same as for previous years. We did quite a bit of scrounging, including doing most of our instrumental repair work and borrowing music from other schools, and ultimately as the program grew we searched for idle instruments in other schools as well.

Wright Neil was very supportive as we established an envied all-around music program. Soon we were weaned off the other subject teaching areas and we were both teaching music full time. In those days it was a custom to have a musical group in the auditorium pit for all assemblies. John and I rotated the band and orchestra for these special occasions. It was always a co-operative effort on our part.

John and I came from different music backgrounds, but that probably contributed to our success as a team. He was from England, and from a wonderful band tradition, and I was from a University of Toronto, Conservatory

string, and orchestra one. John was a wonderful flute player and I was always impressed at his command of the lower register and over-all technique. When I hear Moe Kauffman's "Swinging Shepherd Blues" I always think of John. During the war he served as a submariner and played in groups at the Palladium in London. He used to tell me stories about performing in the band, playing as a back-up to the *Carry On* comedy series. John was certainly a character, and very entertaining.

Savvas Lithopoulos (1976), a former student, spoke eloquently at John's memorial service about his contribution to the musical life at Lisgar and the respect he had earned from his students. The successful double program in orchestra and band is alive and well today. John played an important part in establishing a good foundation in 1966 and subsequent years. He moved to the elementary panel in 1975.

[Editor's note: John Roebuck passed away in January. Robert Hursti, who contributed this piece, taught at Lisgar from 1966 to 1992. He still loves to play, and we have shared on our website a few links to videos of him performing.] ■



MUSICAL PARTNERS: John Roebuck and Robert Hursti, pictured in the 1975 *Vox*, taught together at the time Lisgar's string music program was started.

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