

THOSE WERE THE DAYS.... Attending TH&VS from the mid to late 1950s to 1960 has left me with vivid and enjoyable experiences and memories, yes there were a few hurdles but those notwithstanding, it was a very vibrant and engaging time: teachers, classmates, events, classrooms, halls, and extracurricular activities. Definitely our teachers are the pillars around which our memories are centred. Where to start? What to say.

The following is a kaleidoscopic trip down the TH&VS Memory Lane, not a chronological one. One of my earliest memories was the purchasing of my text books and text supplies at Timmins Stationary and wrapping them in book covers to protect them in the hopes of selling them the following autumn. Then off to Kresges or Woolworths to buy a large zippered 3-ring binder, paper, and those little circular white reinforcements. Going in late August to be assigned a locker signified for me the end of summer. In Grade 9 we were assigned lockers in the basement but by Grade 12 we had been elevated to the ethereal reaches of the second floor.

I remember being in Mr. Stonehouse's Grade 9 class on Tuesday, October 4, 1955, (yes I had to check the specific date) to hear the final inning of the 7th game of the World Series in which the Brooklyn Dodgers defeated the New York Yankees 2-0. Which teacher thought of this? That Mr. Rose permitted it, showed a different side of the supposed austere and stern educator or perchance was it Mr. Runnalls, the Vice-Principal.

Then, there was conscription in Grade 9, being forced into compulsory military spring training for the Inspection of the TH&VS Army Cadets. It was not just the U.S.A. that had the draft, Timmins High had the draft too. I recall awards were handed out for various activities but one, in particular, was for 'sharp shooting'. Yes Timmins High had a firing range which was located in the basement beside the Automotive Shop. Not that I was very good, but rather it was the first time that I used a real weapon, not the famous comic book Red Ryder air rifle (B B Gun). Whether it was Mr. Clark or Mr. Jury who was in charge, the number one concern was that all 22-short shells were accounted for at the end of the shooting.

As my time at Timmins High progressed, I gained a high regard for the commitment that most of the teachers and administrators had for their students. Miss Wilson, the French teacher with the unmanageable hair that she tried to tame in front of her classes with a huge comb and failed but was dedicated to her French Club. After handing back a test, she would announce to the class that the French Club would start the next day and it was 'voluntary', yes 'voluntary'; voluntary on her part and compulsory on anyone who obtained less than 60% on the test. I also remember Miss Wilson bicycling, yes bicycling, to the Timmins Golf Club to play a round.

Grade 10 was an opportunity to accept or reject a course and not being inclined to languages; I rejected Latin (sorry Miss Cunningham) straight away and opted for Art with Miss Seccombe. Ahh, Miss Seccombe, the wonderful artist and graduate of the Ontario Art College who had us drawing charcoal works of her stuffed owl or loon or the dried skull of a cow!! We thought we had arrived when she introduced us to using oil paint. She



broadened our horizons of artists in Canada and not just the Group of Seven but also Canadian ones of the 40s and 50s. The introduction to the artists of the Renaissance, Baroque and Impressionist periods all enriched my later trips to Greece, Italy and France. I still remember Harold Town coming to Timmins to jury our student art in the courtroom of the Timmins Town Hall.

Enter stage right, maybe left, the wonderful Miss Anderson. I remember her driving her car to school, a 2 door Chevrolet, at least I thought it was a Chevy. She was one tough marker and teacher who did not tolerate ignorance or fatuity. I remember well being assigned to read, silently in class, a short story from one of our books titled "University Days" by James Thurber and there we were, Frank Trenouth and I, doubling over with laughter at the character in the story who did not know an example of a 'means of transportation'. Lily Anderson just looked down at us and gradually a smile spread across her stern face as she peered at us over her glasses. I like to think 'she chuckled'. Thank you, Miss Anderson, for your high standards.

Miss Quinn, the small willowy botany teacher that I had on the second floor in Grade 9. Until I had her, I never knew plants had sex (fertilization)...the anthers, stamens, carpals sepals, and pistils. She was a dedicated promoter of botany to be sure.

Then we had Miss Bourne with her large jars of formaldehyde creatures, bulletin board at the back with paper clippings of articles and items all concerning the world around us. When classes changed, she would be in the hall outside her classroom, ensuring that no one would go "up" the "down" staircase.

Mr. Birkenshaw was my grade 11 teacher of algebra. Do I want to remember 'quadratic equations', well not at this stage of my life but he did make it come alive back then. When we had a spare because the weekly assembly was cancelled, he regaled us with his World War II stories, especially his shore leave in Alexandria, Egypt, and the 'illicit picture postcards' that were being sold by the local Egyptians.

Mr. Jury, Chester Jury, taught Physics, the subject that those in Grade 13 appeared to fear the most or would not take. You deserve a medal and a half. How many remember Mr. Jury walking to school most mornings and treading home each night with his leather brown accordion brief case.

Mr. Dye appeared on the scene to replace Mr. Hartman. Mr. Hartman was a lover of the chalkboard and in Grade 10 from him I ended up with copious notes on North American history. Then in Grade 12 Mr. Dye, came on the scene. From him I gained a respect and love for the post Renaissance/Reformation periods of modern history. Dick Buell and I were introduced to formal Oxford debating by Mr. Dye and we were recruited to be on the TH&VS Debating Team and to go up against Father O'Gorman School. Our inexperience showed and we lost a close 'fought' match, to which I accept full responsibility for being too nervous.

Mr. Stonehouse, I thank you. Your descriptions of the past primarily of Ancient, Roman, Mediaeval, Renaissance and Reformation history spurred me to investigate the past. With Mr. Hartman and Mr. Dye as well, my love for the past resulted in my becoming, yes, a High School History Teacher and I have never regretted it.

Then there was the day in Miss Wilson's class that we learned the French national anthem and upon being dismissed to go to our next class several of the brazen young men in my class broke into a rousing, though somewhat off key, rendition of "La Marseillaise".

Mr. Fennell, my grade 11 English teacher, always had an aphorism in the top left corner of the 'blackboard'. As well I remember him being instrumental in having *The Scroll*, the TH&VS monthly paper, published and I believe it only cost a nickel.

In the autumn we were able to buy our way out of school for 25 cents on a Friday afternoon, then to trek all the way across Timmins to the Hollinger Park to watch the Blues, our football team, play against Kirkland Lake, North Bay or Kapuskasing.

Then there was the world's smallest basketball gymnasium. It was located 4 steps down from the first floor. On one side there was only one foot between the boundary line and the wall. Trying to throw the ball into play along that wall required some real skill.

These are some of my mental snapshots and like the pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope they create a beautiful design in my mind's eye of a time that was rich with energetic teachers, spirited students and a vibrant atmosphere. I look back on my time at Timmins High with fondness and gratitude.



Preston Street Entrance of TH&VS