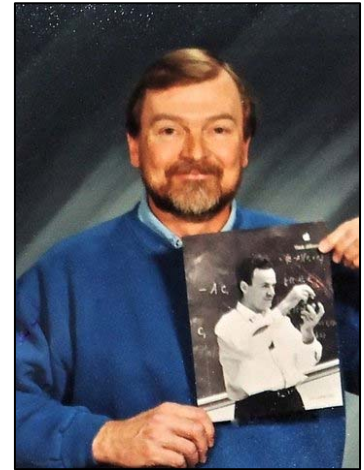


I wasn't entirely sure if I would submit anything to the TH&VS "public forum" for the 2012 reunion. But, seeing as my brother Peter (TH&VS grad 1958) and I have now committed to make the trip from Western Canada together and revisit our Timmins roots, I've decided to jump in with a few comments and memories.

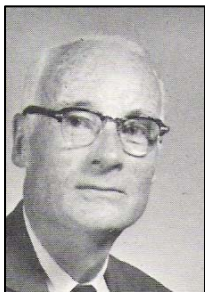
It's interesting to look over some of the old TH&VS photos and tidbits as they have been assembled on the web. I don't have any "Quills" from either 1968 (Gr 12) or 1969 (Gr 13) that managed to survive all the moves I've made in the intervening years. All that remain are memories. But that's OK. TH&VS memories from the 1960s are a mixture of the good, the bad, and the ugly. Not to mention the spectacularly wonderful!



Bob Este with b&w photo of intellectual hero Richard Feynman

So, what do I remember? In this brief description, I'll conveniently leave out the bad and the ugly, recall some of the good, and try to give the "spectacularly best shot.

I'd probably first mention independently reading and questioning "Free Fall" by Albert Camus and receiving very strong encouragement from Miss Anderson to persevere with my deep, authentic puzzlement. I don't remember how I came upon that book -- was it a gift? Probably. I don't recall. But I do remember learning about Jean-Paul Sartre at the same time. It was only later (at Brock University, my first alma mater) that I bought my first Sartre book. An interesting adolescent introduction to formal existentialism. Today, more than 40 years after that introduction, I recently picked up "How to be an Existentialist" by Gary Cox. It hasn't helped much either! But, as always, I am still enjoying the pursuit.



Chester Jury
Science

And I will never forget what I'd have to characterize as a "deep intellectual recognition" from Chester Jury - he could see that both what I observed and thought about, and how I understood what he taught, was somehow different from most other students' ways of learning and enjoying the breadth, beauty and bounty of physics. The best part was he never said "no" or "that's wrong!" He just asked that I describe what I saw when ready, and to do more. Honouring his encouragement, I always did, and I guess I still do. Today, almost five decades later, here I am in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Calgary. I'm not here because of him directly, but he gave a good first push. My sense of awe and appreciation for physics and the worlds it explores and describes has never diminished. If anything, it is stronger than ever. This is as it should be.

I remember Gary Cranmer as being the first fully recognizable and straightforwardly honest and caring adult human being I had ever encountered in the school setting. Very true that other teachers had been good, and through many preceding years, of course, but here was a real person. This was an amazing first engagement with authentic humanism. His brother ended up playing for the Argonauts, I was told. Cranmer had huge hands - surely the most expansive any of us had ever seen. If we had known the terminology back then, we would have

said he was some kind of genetic aberration. He would firmly grip the tops of the heads of any misbehaving students in his history class, and squeeze with increasing pressure as if they were small melons. Never happened to me, but I saw this with quite a few others who would squirm and grimace, and promise to never do anything wrong again. We all thought this was great. This could never happen in the current era. But it worked wonders back then.



Coaches V. Ciotti & B. Heath

The basketball court was a great place to learn, and was always a challenge. I remember trying to play the game, with Bob Heath as our Phys. Ed. teacher, and, with my limited skills, never doing particularly well. But I did a great job of annoying and preventing classmate Ralph Carr from moving up the court. In maximum frustration, he slammed the ball into my stomach. I fell to the floor with the impact. I can remember lying there, doubled over, looking up at him as he stomped off, quite literally spitting with rage. And I felt great! I had completely derailed and embarrassed my opponent! As I felt the cold hardwood floor against my cheek, I knew I would live to fight again on any other day, in any other game, on any other court! I am very much looking forward to sitting down with him at the reunion (and others from our cohort) to reflect on those very important and valuable times when we all navigated forward on the path to maturity.

Maurice Bourdon was very patient and understanding with the mischief that some of us brought to his classroom. One cold winter day I remember we all arrived immediately after lunch, and he was not there - still in the staff room, no doubt. So I led a small group of four or five ne'er-do-wells to pick up his heavy oak desk, quickly remove it from the classroom, and hide it out of sight around the corner quite a distance down the hall. Like mimes acting as keystone cops, we all rushed back in theatrical silence and sat down with our books wide open and pens poised, ready to learn more French. Innocence flooded the room. In walked Mr. Bourdon, and of course he saw in mere seconds that his desk was gone. He looked around for a moment, paused, and then *in seriatim* pointed without error at each of us who had done the deed, and said: "OK, boys, get my desk and bring it back to where it belongs." We immediately did as we were told, and neither he - nor any of us - ever said another word about it. We all passed French.



M. Bourdon, French



So, I guess in recounting these few things, I am highlighting just a few memories about formative times at TH&VS. In so doing, I am thanking all the great teachers from TH&VS who helped shape my first career choice - to be a high school teacher and counsellor. From there I went successfully into business and consulting, then back to teaching, then on to graduate school, into public school administration, then to college teaching, then into the ivory towers of academe and university administration, and now I am deeply engaged in the business and politics of leading global mega-science, and all that entails. Quite a journey, and the challenges are far from over. But it could never have happened this way without the TH&VS experience.



Well, I have not yet mentioned the "spectacularly wonderful", and I am quite sure there is no space left. And given that this memory lane missive is now much too long, I think it's best to wait until opportunities for face-to-face revelations turn up this coming August. Although silver-hair is now both creeping up and thinning out as it does with almost all of us, my memory is actually pretty good of so many things from bygone years at TH&VS in the 1960s. And so, I look forward to a few great summer nights not that long from now - right there in my home town!