

**New Math Teacher at TH&VS in 1969**

My memory of Timmins High, from a teacher's point of view, is one of a great place to work with the finest people that you will ever meet. My wife Wendy and I started teaching at Timmins High in the fall of 1969. Wendy had just finished her BHS degree at the University of Guelph and I had one year's teaching experience at Orangeville High School, after finishing teacher training at University of Toronto and a BSc at University of Guelph.

As I recall, we were just two of the twenty-seven new teachers that were hired that year. It was not hard to get a job. We met Mr. Bob Menard, Principal of TH&VS in 1969, on an elevator at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. Within minutes of stepping off the elevator, he had us signing a contract that would bind us for the next 2 years. There really was no interview, he must have just liked our looks and said sign here so we did.

It was hard to find two high school teaching jobs in the same community, so we felt that with the \$6,800 wage for each of us we were very fortunate. I did not actually know where Timmins was at the time, but we needed the jobs, so we thought that we would give it a try.



S. Adams, 1 of many new teachers in 1969



W Adams 1969

On our arrival in Timmins, we ended up taking a room at the Empire Hotel. The city was booming at the time, with the huge Kidd Creek mine discovery. Between hockey, hotels, stock market hustlers, miners and new folks like us, Timmins was a fun town to live in. We eventually found a place to live in a cabin at Bob's Lake for a few months, and then we moved into an apartment on Preston Street for \$75 a month. With that, we were set up for our early years until the birth of our son John, and we later moved to our first home in Porcupine when our daughter Sara was born.

Teaching at first was rather challenging. This was before the semester system, so each teacher had six classes of approximately thirty students for the entire year. On top of that, you had hall duty, on-calls, and a detention room to sit with students who had nowhere to go. Over my 22 years at TH&VS, I can honestly say I had a great time. Students came from backgrounds that spanned the world. One of my biggest challenges at the beginning was pronouncing the last names. My younger years were spent in Beeton, a farm town in southern Ontario where there were no French or European names. The only names that I had dealt in my early years with were the likes of Rutherford, Carleton, Spencer, and Pegg and so on. The first couple of days of every school year I spent learning the correct pronunciation of the names of my students.

My favourite classes over the years were Grade 13 Calculus, Grade 13 Economics, the Yearbook, and Grade 9. The most difficult were the grade 10, 11, and 12 advanced classes. It seemed to me, that once students had survived Grade 9, they thought that they knew everything. It was not until Grade 13 that they discovered that they did not know very much and were again trainable. The other great group to teach were the very slow learners. They seemed to know that they would never know much about math, but they very quickly become your lifelong friends. Many still see me around town and are very kind. The advanced students, on the other hand, were worried about passing their final exams, and who can blame them. They just wanted to get on with their lives.

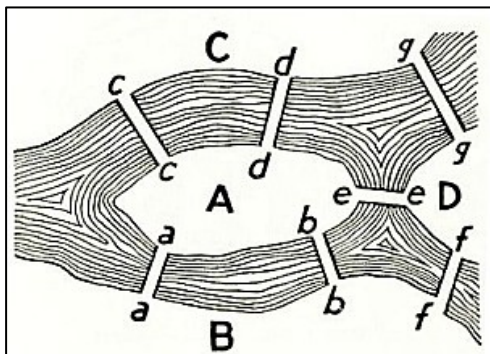


FIGURE 98. Geographic Map:  
The Königsberg Bridges.

To wrap up, I want to confess to a trick that I played on several hundred students each year. You might take time to look up on Google a puzzle called “The Seven Bridges of Königsberg”. It is an exercise that students can almost do, but never solve.

I discovered the evil of my ways when I was confronted by a former student who wanted to know the solution to the puzzle. I had to tell him that there was no solution. No matter how hard you try there is no way to do it. He went on to explain to me that he had just spent the last days with another student friend of his trying to work out the problem. As it turns out, the friend was on his death bed and had worked to his last moment on earth trying to solve this problem. As a

teacher, you never know what students get from or do with what they are taught in your class.

Finally, I hope to renew acquaintances with many former students and colleagues during the reunion this summer. It should be a great time for all.



**TH&VS Mathematics Department 1975**

Left to Right: Al Aiello, Doug Howie, Bob Bonsall, Steve Adams, Gord Spylo, Rob Mathers (University of Waterloo Co-op student), Gerry McNair (Department Head), Gary Lake, Roy Baumgart