

ALUMNI ECHO

INSTITUTE OF CHILD STUDY 45 WALMER RD TORONTO, ONTARIO M5R2X2

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ICS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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ICS spirit of giving travels to Africa

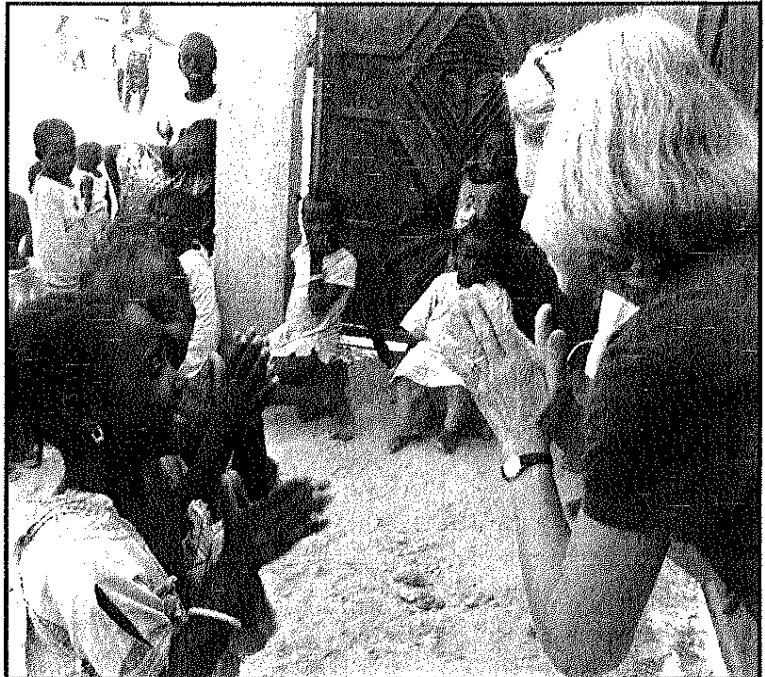
By Nora Underwood.

It's been two years since ICS teacher Anne Cassidy hung up her notebooks at 45 Walmer Road and packed her bags for The Gambia in West Africa. But even half a world away, she still inspires ICS students.

Anne has turned her talents to working for the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). In Africa, she was shocked to discover how difficult books were to come by; some children may only share a textbook in their classroom while many others have not ever seen a book let alone held one. When she moved to The Gambia, Anne took some of her own collection to share. Once they discovered the stash, children started knocking on her door, yelling "Booko! Booko!," the Mandinka slang word for book, and she would haul out her little library. That was the impetus for the "Booko Project."

The goal of the project is to collect and provide student teachers with a variety of reading material—mostly picture books—to supplement textbooks in their own classrooms. In a wonderful circle of giving, the first group to jump on the Booko bandwagon was the ICS Activist Club—a grade 5/6 initiative Anne had started during her ICS years.

Under the guidance of teachers Daina Bloom, Richard Messina, and Judith Kimel, students wrote letters to corporations requesting donations. There were lots of turn-downs, but, adds Bloom, "Once the first donation came in, it spurred them on to try again."



To date, ICS kids have raised about \$3,000 and have collected a stunning assortment of more than 800 books!

Sending them to West Africa is the next hurdle. One 20-kilogram box costs about \$170 to ship and there are five boxes worth. But by mid-May, the arrangements have been made for shipping and the books will be on their way to the children in The Gambia. It's been a win-win situation -- ICS students have learned about how Gambian children live and in turn brightened their days through books.



Nora Underwood is a writer/editor and ICS parent

December 5th, 7 pm -- ICS presents the 2007 Robbie Case Memorial Lecture by Howard Gardner (Harvard Professor) speaking on Multiple Intelligences.

Place TBA

RSVP to reserve a free seat: 416 934 4515 or rfarb@oise.utoronto.ca

Basement clean up reveals clues to ICS past

By Margaret Polanyi

When the Stuart family recently packed up the home that had been in their family for 90 years, they discovered a cache of notebooks that evoke the early years of ICS.

It was 1935 and Mary Alice Burton (see photo) was a six-year-old student at Windy Ridge School—a private progressive school which later merged with the Institute of Child Study. In tidy printing, Mary Alice describes events and excursions, both real and imagined.

“Upper grade went to the museum,” she writes on Valentine’s Day, 1935. We were studying Roman Britain so we went to see the Roman things such as some frying pans the Romans cooked with. We saw baby mittens and dolls and other toys of the Roman children. Then we went to the museum tea room and had our Valentine party.”

The same year, Mary Alice reports: “We are going to take a pretend trip to Holland. We are going down to the Cunard line ticket office to make our plans and buy our tickets. We have made passports.” Later in her scribbler there is a note to her parents. “Dear Mother and Father. We invite you to our Dutch party on Wednesday afternoon. We hope you will come. From Mary Alice, Upper Grade.”

When the Stuart family donated the family souvenirs to ICS this spring, the school was delighted to expand its collection of artifacts from the days of Windy Ridge—complete with recipes, poems and details of school life in the 1930s.

The discovery also brought back memories for my

mother, Sue Davidson Polanyi, who taught music at Windy Ridge in the early 1950s. The school was in a house on Balmoral Avenue near St. Clair Avenue. My mother remembers a front hall crammed with children’s boots – and a reception desk guarded by Miss Margaret Findley (aka Finny) “who knew every child and what was right or wrong with them.”

The school was under the direction of prominent psychologist Dr. William Blatz, who was already overseeing St. George’s School for Child Study and was asked, in 1930, to take over Windy Ridge as well.

“Windy Ridge was a place where teachers and students were encouraged to express themselves openly,” says Sue Davidson Polanyi. “I had children pretending to be camels while singing Are You a Camel or Aren’t You a Camel?”

She worked closely with kindergarten teachers Eleanor Hamilton and Flora Morrison, whose dalmatian often attended class.

“From modest beginnings, thanks to Dr. Blatz, came a group of very capable people who had talent and an interest in child psychology. There was an understanding and respect for children in their early years.”

In 1953, Windy Ridge joined the Institute of Child Study (the name that had been given to St.

George’s School in 1939). My mother remembers the move to the present location at 45 Walmer Road because she rode nervously in the moving van with the school piano.

“I thought the new building was a fabulous place – bigger, more children, and much busier – but with the same prevailing approach. The spirit of those early days was still felt in the hallways.”



1935 June Play, Windy Ridge Day School, 177 Balmoral Ave.
L to R: Goodwin Gibson Jr., Mary Alice Burton Stuart and Joan Chalmers

Margaret Polanyi is a Toronto communications specialist. She attended ICS from 1964 to 1971

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? ICS CLASS OF 1987



*Front row (standing, L-R): Teo Paul, Mark Gryski, Roland Edmunds, Christopher Trebilcock, Nicholas Biderman.
Middle & back row (sitting, L-R): Cara Bennison, Idella Sturino, Katy Harris-McLeod, Shi Yen (Jennifer) Mak, Tessa Barlow,
Tina (Trina) Apostolopoulos, Joanna Slater, Kaija Vogel, Simon Withers, Tony Lettieri*

Blast from the Past - Twenty years after this grade six photo with teacher Ted Hunter was taken, what is the class of 1987 up to? Tessa Barlow decided to find out:

Tessa Barlow received a MFA from Columbia University. She worked in Canadian television (Traders and The Associates) and at The Shaw Festival before moving to the world of public relations and corporate communications. Tessa currently lives in Toronto with her husband and works at Direct Energy in Internal Communications.

Cara Bennison completed a degree in Environmental Studies at the University of Toronto. Cara and her husband run the Barlovento School of Spanish in Toronto, where Cara is the school administrator and teaching assistant. Cara has applied to teachers' college for the fall and perhaps one day she'll be back at ICS.

Robert Crothers is currently a solicitor with Clifford Chance in London, England. "Having sneaked off early from ICS, I completed primary school and part of secondary school in Papua, New Guinea before returning to Toronto. University took me to the UK. I am now married and slowly coming to terms with adulthood."

Alexander Evis attended the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania where he got a BSc in economics and an MBA – and met his future wife. He has lived in Manhattan since 1999 and is currently trading currency and commodities for Goldman Sachs.

Mark Gryski has lived in Vancouver since 1994. He works for the CBC as a news cameraman and is attending the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design/BCIT studying graphic design. Beginning in 1995, Mark worked for CityTV as an assignment editor, live truck operator and news cameraman before moving to Victoria in 1999 to help build the TV station now known as A-Channel Victoria.

continued on next page

Katy Harris-McLeod now lives in Vancouver where, following university, she attended a 3-year intensive contemporary dance program. Katy has danced her way across Canada. She and two other dancers formed The Tomorrow Collective and work as dancers, choreographers, and teachers.

Tony Lettieri lives in Bolton, Ont., with his wife, 6-year-old daughter, Anastasia, and 3-and-a-half-year-old son, Alessandro. Tony has a degree in marketing from Ryerson University, and is working towards getting his license as a sheet metal mechanic.

Teo Paul lives in Paris cooking five-course dinners in people's apartments.

Joanna Slater is a staff reporter for the Wall Street Journal in New York. After university, Joanna spent seven years in India and Hong Kong working as a journalist. She then did a fellowship at Columbia and stayed on to finish a master's in international affairs. "I'm getting married this summer to a lovely guy who I met -- of all places -- on a Bollywood film set!"

Idella Sturino attended McGill University for journalism. She worked for CBC TV's nationally televised debate program Counterspin with Avi Lewis, and has spent the past 4 years as a producer for CBC Radio's morning program The Current. Idella lives in Toronto with her husband and 11-month old son.

Chris Trebilcock graduated from The Film Program at Ryerson University in 2000. Since then, he has been working as an assistant director on numerous TV shows and feature films, such as Puppets Who Kill, The Surreal Gourmet, and Sarah Polley's Away from Her. Currently he's writing a novel about a boy who wants to be a superhero, and "will be drawing on many of the experiences and wild stories we all made up together over the years at ICS."

Kaija Vogel graduated from Queen's University and worked in the film industry in Toronto and Los Angeles as an Art Director and Production Designer. She now lives in London, England and has combined her interests in architecture, film, and fine arts in the field of 'narrative spaces.' Kaija started her own company, General Observation, and creates video, sound and multi-media installations to recreate the sights, sounds and experiences of different locations for galleries, exhibitions, theatre designers and architects.

Simon Withers is married and has a 5-year-old daughter, Andrea. Simon lives in Toronto and works as a software developer for a local computer firm.



WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

We welcome updates, inquiries and comments.

To contact us, or to get on our mailing list,
email the Alumni Association at:

icsalumni@oise.utoronto.ca

Visit the ICS WEBSITE at: www.oise.utoronto.ca/ICS

Memories of ICS field trips: **MUD, SNAKES AND A VW VAN**

By Ginny Leuty

A sturdy pair of rubber boots has long been an essential item in every ICS student's wardrobe. ICS founder Dr. William Blatz believed field trips were an integral part of learning as they took children out of the classroom and into the real world. Even today, this philosophy continues as ICS students venture everywhere from Camp Tawingo in the dead of winter to Ottawa, Quebec City and an annual pilgrimage to Sandbanks Provincial Park.

I was a student at ICS during the 1970s, and some of my best memories are from the incredibly creative field trips. Grade Four was a big year for rubber boots as my teacher Russ Fleming was the field trip guru. He built a 15 foot-long terrarium in the classroom. In September we slugged through the marshes and ponds of Caledon and Lake Simcoe to collect snakes, tadpoles, frogs and turtles. Back in the terrarium, we followed their life cycles and behaviour. Then come June, out came the rubber boots again as we returned to the ponds and released the creatures back into the wild.

Art class also involved the occasional boot-clad outing. Nick de Pencier (class of '78) has a vivid memory of a journey taken in the indispensable field trip vehicle, art teacher Dorothy Medhurst's green Volkswagen van. In the days before mandatory seatbelts, the class would squeeze in to fill the bench seating. Any available floor space was covered with small classroom chairs and more kids would be wedged in! On one particular trip Nick remembers the van tailpipe coming loose on the Gardiner Expressway. Never deterred, Miss Medhurst quickly fixed the problem by sliding under the van on her back and rigging up the tail pipe with a coat hanger. Off they continued to Miss Medhurst's secret clay source beside a creek on the Niagara Escarpment to collect the raw materials for subsequent art classes. Miss Medhurst's interests also led to fossil and mineral hunting expeditions.

While field trips such as these were standard at ICS during those years, I had the privilege of being on one very unusual venture, again led by Russ Fleming. Fleming, a native of New Liskeard Ontario, decided it was time to take the city kids out of the city and go north. We were studying the province's early history and natural resource industries like mining and logging.

We spent the year creating imaginary maps, and papier mache models. The year's worth of studies culminated with a trip to the Abitibi Pulp and Paper Mill and an open pit and shaft mine in Cobalt, Ontario.

In June, off we went, a group of grade 3 and 4 students, teachers and parents in a fleet of station wagons and a Winnebago. Along the way we billeted with families in New Liskeard. At the Cobalt mine we donned hard hats to descend into the dark recesses of the shaft. The highlight of the trip came after a four-hour train ride on the Polar Bear Express that took us to Moosonee on James Bay. From this makeshift town of portable housing we hopped in boats and crossed the still cold waters to Moose Factory, an island that boasted one of the original Hudson's Bay trading posts. I still remember how the windows were boarded over – it spoke of another time.



In Grade Six, teacher Ted Hunter continued the tradition of adventurous outings. Two weeks before our graduation, he took us on one last field trip, this time to the Scarborough Bluffs. Not wanting to disrupt the learning experience the teachers stood back and watched as the girls became stuck in the watery mud at the base of the bluffs. As we struggled to free ourselves we were sucked even deeper. After a while the only solution was to ditch the boots, race out of the mud and return to school in our filthy socks. With our rubber boot days of ICS nearly at an end, it seemed fitting to leave several pairs behind, buried forever in the mud at the bottom of the Bluffs.

Ginny Leuty attended ICS from 1966 - 1975 and is an ICS parent

REUNION: CLASS OF 1979

Many hadn't seen each other since leaving the schoolyard in June 1979. So you'd think a reunion after all that time might be a bit tense. But last June, it was all laughter and smiles when some members of the class of '79 got together for an evening of memories. Special surprise guest was Kindergarten teacher Gerry Mabin. Seated in the same formation as their grade four class photo:



*Back Row: Brien Lewis, Derek Williams, Andrea Stager, Carol Hood, Peter Dneiper, Gerry Mabin.
Middle Row: Billy Harris, Murray McCutcheon, Leanne Weld, Dorothy Carson, Gillian Dinning.
Front Row: Nina Abdelmessih and Sam Linton – now mothers of ICS students*

**If you want help organizing your own class reunion, please contact
Robin Farb at ICS to get in touch with classmates. 416-934-4515 rfarb@oise.utoronto.ca**

ICS wins Tech Teach Award from Columbia University

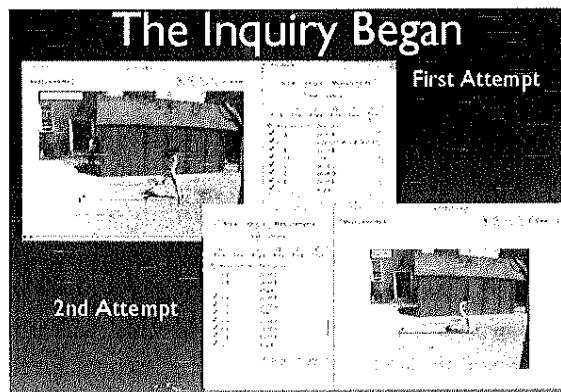
In 1968, Olympian high jumper Dick Fosbury shocked audiences when he added a flip to his technique. Forever called the Fosbury Flop, the twist won him a gold medal.

A similar sense of experimentation in sport has won an award of a different kind. ICS teachers Richard Messina and Ben Peebles recently won a Tech Teach award from Columbia University for their research marrying mathematics and phys ed.

Making science and math meaningful has been one of the holy grails in education. Students were asked how they could improve their long jump. Using a computer program, they measured and charted the various angles and speed at take-off before the jump. What if they took off with a spin, or sped up at the last second? They tested various theories. The process left the students with a

solid grasp of basic geometry. In the end, the students exchanged ideas about how technique affected performance.

The process proved to the students how valuable it is to have experiments that don't work. The students also became very comfortable with sharing even the negative results. And in the end, studying math actually made their long jumps longer.



The Alumni Echo is edited by Sam Linton and designed by Lynne Dalglish