



ALUMNI ECHO

INSTITUTE OF CHILD STUDY McCarthy House, 45 Walmer Road, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2X2

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ICS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Building Blocks

By Tim Powis

If you Google the name William Blatz, you'll find a link to an episode of the old CBC debating show *Fighting Words* that originally aired in April 1956. Three panelists – novelist Robertson Davies, poet and professor Frank Scott, and Dr. Blatz – are on hand to discuss a proposition put forth by that week's guest provocateur, the English writer J.B. Priestley, who smokes a pipe and speaks with an intimidatingly upper-crusty "Oxbridge" drawl. Priestley's statement of contention is that Americans "grow up with a deep desire to be liked" and become "shocked and very angry" if they sense that you don't like them.

Dr. Blatz is first into the fray. He argues that

Priestley's proposition is doubtless true, but so what? In wanting to be liked, Americans are no different from anyone else. "Who of us doesn't want to be liked?" he asks rhetorically. "Oh, there's the odd person who sits on top of a flagpole, perhaps. But the Englishman, the German, the Russian, everyone – it's something that they get in childhood. It's a necessary aspect of childhood."

That is a very Blatzian thing to say.

Most ICS parents and alumni are aware that ICS's distinctive approach to teaching is based largely on the ideas of Dr. William Blatz (pronounced "Blots"). He's the bald, bespectacled fellow with the bow tie and moustache whose portrait hangs in the school's reception area.

Less well known is that Blatz's academic background wasn't actually in education. His ideas about teaching grew out of his work in an altogether different field.

"He was an unusual educator in that he came from a psychology standpoint, and from his work in physiology as well," explains Carl Corter, a child-development professor at OISE/UT and a member of ICS's academic faculty. "He worked in a facility at Hart House that was rehabilitating soldiers after the First World War, and that work led him to believe that people had to be active participants in their own rehabilitation. He later applied those ideas to education."

To this day, those ideas form the basis of ICS's emphasis on critical and creative thinking, on viewing every student as developmentally unique, and on involving parents as a third and vital party in the educational "partnership." In fact, ICS was founded in 1926 as a pioneering nursery school (it was ICS's example that resulted in the Ontario legislation at the end of World War II enabling nursery schools to be set up in the province) where education researchers could discreetly observe the children – and with an associated, mandatory "parent education" program.



It wasn't until 1953 that ICS, through a merger with Windy Ridge School, expanded beyond the crucial nursery level.

"He believed it ought to start early," says Corter. "He was influenced by ideas at the time that you couldn't begin this kind of education when kids were school-age. So the school was founded with a nursery and a parent-education program that stressed things like the importance of parents reading books to kids." Dr. Blatz, who never shied away from venturing over the top, could present a daunting figure to those parents. He often admonished them with such pronouncements as, "There are no problems with children; there are problems with parents."

Most important of all, perhaps, was the school's insistence on treating kids not as mere receptacles of knowledge, but more – to use a word that probably wasn't used back then – holistically. "It was about the whole child, not just about academic learning or even cognitive development," says Corter. "It was about developing the child's personality and mind, and the attitude to learning. Dr. Blatz had ideas about the security of children and how that affects the way they move from immaturity to maturity."

Which brings us back to that 1956 telecast, and the universal (not just American) desire to grow up feeling liked. After all, any kid who feels disliked is likely to feel insecure. Feeling liked, or at least respected, is the key to security. And Dr. Blatz's "Security Theory" was the foundation on which his educational concepts were built and remain standing. "Certainly the school has evolved in terms of methods of knowledge building and using technology," says Corter. "It's less of a lab school than it was in Dr. Blatz's day. Back then, every child was part of a longitudinal study, whereas today we have optional studies. But the progressive ideas he had are still right there in the heart of what the school believes and practices."

Tim Powis is the father of Lucy ('05), Henry ('08), and Isabel ('08).

CONGRATULATIONS

to past parent **Gillian Graham!**

Gillian won a 2007 Arbor Award from U of T in recognition of her many leadership roles and exceptional volunteering for ICS. Gillian is the mother of Sam Bailey ('98), James ('01) and Emily ('03) Graham, and wife of Ron Graham. Ron and Gillian currently serve on the ICS Advisory Board for the Capital Campaign.

Teaching Parents

By Sharon Bird

Forty ICS parents and teachers are gathered in a basement classroom, perched on chairs meant for bottoms decidedly smaller. Divided into several groups, they are avidly discussing the how-tos of inculcating a sense of philanthropy and social responsibility in their wee ones. People speak animatedly. There's a lot of laughter. The energy and excitement among the participants are palpable.

The evening's session is one of several designed and implemented by ICS's Parent Education Committee. Topics over the last couple of years have included children and the Internet, nutrition and lunchtime, the whys and wherefores of homework, and strategies for encouraging conflict-free routines at home. The sessions - some held before school, some in the evening - have included a variety of experts, including child psychotherapists, nutritionists, family counsellors, and teachers and parents themselves. Says committee chair Marla Schacter: "Coming up with the topics is really a group effort between parents, teachers, and the principal, all of whom sit on the committee. We want to make sure the sessions have some synergy with what's happening at school and also that they're reflective of ICS's values."

Although the current committee is only two years old, parent education is a tradition at ICS that dates back to its inception in the 1920s. Initially, Dr. William Blatz, the school's founding principal, had a mandate to develop not only a nursery but also a parent education program. Parents were in fact required to attend classes; at the time they were considered far too emotional to be effective at child rearing and were instructed in the "scientific" techniques of the day. Now sessions are more reflective of issues that concern us today and they facilitate our desire to come together as a community.

Sharon Bird is the mother of Alec ('08), John ('10), and Will ('12) King.

The Coffee Moms

By Alison Broverman



Carol McClennan, Sue Foster, Kate Rounthwaite & Jacqueline Harvie

Although their kids have been finding old ICS chums on Facebook, former ICS moms need no such technology to arrange a reunion: they've still got their old class lists. Kate Rounthwaite, Carol McClennan, Jacqueline Harvie, and Sue Foster can't say why they've kept them all the years since their youngest kids graduated from ICS, but the lists definitely came in handy this past winter as the four women were planning a coffee klatch to catch up with old friends whose kids are now in university and beyond.

Kate, Carol, Jacqueline, and Sue* have had a

standing Sunday coffee date with each other for years – they grew close as ICS moms and stayed in touch even when they no longer had their children's school in common. But this past fall, they decided to organize a bigger get-together and see how some of the other "old moms" were doing.

Joan Wepler generously offered to host, and on a snowy February morning (few were deterred by the snow – nostalgia trumps bad weather), about thirty women whose children had graduated from ICS between the late '80s and the late '90s met again.

"It really felt like old home week," says Sue. "We talked about everything: new business ventures, what people's kids are doing, whose kids are married, whose kids have kids, wouldn't it be great to be a grandma, how great everybody looked, everyone's health."

This coffee reunion probably won't become an annual event, but Sue and her "coffee ladies" would like to try and plan one every two to three years. Until then, there'll always be Sundays.

*Full disclosure: Sue is my mom, and sometimes Kate, Carol, and Jacqueline have coffee at our house. This is my favourite, because I get to catch up on all the old ICS gossip. Also, they bring pastry!

Alison Broverman graduated from ICS in 1993. She has since mostly recovered.

56 and 58 Spadina Road, site of future Spadina wing for ICS!

AN OPEN LETTER FROM DR. JANE GASKELL, DEAN OF OISE

It gives me great pleasure to announce that OISE has recently acquired the property at 58 Spadina Road to add to the footprint of the Institute of Child Study (ICS). We are very grateful to the many supporters of the ICS Capital Campaign for their generous contributions that have made this purchase possible.

Since its establishment in 1925, the Institute of Child Study has occupied several locations within the University of Toronto's St. George campus. In 1953, ICS moved into its existing location at Leighton Goldie McCarthy House at 45 Walmer Road. In 2000, the property at 56 Spadina Road, immediately east and backing onto 45 Walmer Road, was purchased. This resulted in the establishment of the Robbie Case Seminar Room for the MA program, the Jackman Art Studio for the ICS Lab School, as well as other research labs and offices.

The acquisition of the adjacent 58 Spadina Road site paves the way for further expansion of the ICS facilities in order to address a variety of additional space needs, including a multi-purpose gymnasium/auditorium. Detailed project planning will begin immediately, following the University of Toronto's prescribed process for capital projects.

This is an exciting next step of the plan to transform ICS into an exemplary facility dedicated to understanding children's development and advancing children's education. Outreach into the broader educational community will be strengthened with a more prominent and public presence on Spadina in what we expect will be an architecturally distinctive landmark just steps from the Spadina-Bloor subway station.

Special thanks go to Robin Farb, the ICS Capital Campaign director, and to Joe Weinberg, OISE's chief administrative officer, for their successful efforts in this acquisition. I also want to again thank all of the generous supporters and volunteers who have been instrumental in helping us transform the Institute of Child Study, and we look forward to the continued support of the OISE and ICS communities as we embark on this next phase.

For further information, please contact Robin Farb at (416) 934-4515; rfarb@oise.utoronto.ca

Remembering Val Ross

(1950 – 2008)

There are not too many in the ICS community who didn't know Val Ross, given the three generations of ICS connections and her own warm, open, and inquisitive nature. Val was an award-winning and highly respected journalist with a huge passion for the arts who for many years, and until her death from brain cancer, worked at the *Globe and Mail*. Val wrote the award-winning book *The Road to There: Mapmakers and Their Stories* (2003) as well as *You Can't Read This* (2006), and her biography of celebrated Canadian author Robertson Davies was completed in the last weeks of her too-short life.

Val Ross attended ICS from 1953 through 1961, and her younger brother, Phil, was at the school between 1959 and 1966. Val and husband Morton Ritts were ICS parents, and their three children – Max ('94), Madeleine (Maddy, '00), and Zoe ('02) – all attended ICS and continue to be part of ICS by serving as class reps. Val's mother, Erma, worked at ICS for thirty years supporting faculty and activities at the Lab School. Val never really left ICS as she was a founding member of the ICS Alumni Association, an organizer of the 75th Anniversary Reunion, a member of the *ECHO* editorial committee, and a regular contributor to the alumni newsletter.

There was a remarkable celebration of Val's life on Feb. 23 at the University's Massey College, attended by hundreds of friends and family. Below is a reprint of the wonderful tribute to Val written by two of her ICS friends, Barbara Laskin ('61) and Margaret Weston ('61).

Reprinted with permission from the Globe and Mail: Barbara Laskin of Ottawa and Margaret Weston of Auckland, New Zealand, write about Val Ross (March 10), whose obituary appeared on Feb. 18.

Val Ross was that most special of friends, the oldest and the best. We were classmates at the University of Toronto's Institute of Child Study. We invented new horizons, new species, new worlds, and together we wrote a book. Even at 9, her writing had the elegance and brevity of wit that characterizes her later style. We repudiated capitalism and buried our combined wealth on a Muskoka beach. Val once tossed her last nickel into a crowded subway car "just for the effect."

In 1966, we had tickets to see the Beatles but, to protest the commercialization of it all, we gave them away on the street. We shared adventures in swinging London of the late sixties. We lived through each other's experiences of adolescence, lovers, and children. Her creativity was breathtaking, as was her talent for living.

Our later lives took separate paths, but we always reconnected with ease and a continued intensity of affection. The energy she devoted to maintaining friendships over more than 50 years was remarkable.



Photo by Mary Janigan

Friends and family of Val Ross have initiated the Val Ross Memorial Fund to honour Val's memory at ICS and the University of Toronto. In consultation with her family, the options of how Val can be remembered at ICS/UofT will be explored.

**To donate, please contact Robin Farb at ICS:
rfarb@oise.utoronto.ca; 416-934-4515.**

The Truth about Lies

By Peter Steen

Parents of the world be warned: if what Kang Lee says is true, then almost all of your children are liars. For more than a decade, Lee – ICS parent and the Institute’s director – has led groundbreaking research into the basis and development of lying. What he’s discovered has changed how we view deception – and has even made a mark on Canadian law.

“Great apes and humans are the only observed beings on Earth that lie,” he says. “We’re not hardwired to lie but we are hardwired for language,” and from that comes our social use of verbal falsehoods.

Lee says youngsters may use three types of lies: black, white, and blue. According to his studies, black lies are the kind “kids everywhere use” to avoid getting into trouble. White lies that protect people’s feelings are also used worldwide, but for different purposes. “In North America and Britain, they are sanctioned by the parents” as a sign of social maturity, whereas “in traditional cultures based on Confucian or Taoist beliefs, modesty requires white lies.”

Blue lies – “the kind the police use” (in reference to perjury inspired by the classic “thin blue line” of law enforcement solidarity) – also differ depending on where you live. “North America endorses lying for an individual, but lying for your group is found more in East Asia.” Lee notes that the “group” changes as children age: from classroom to school to country.

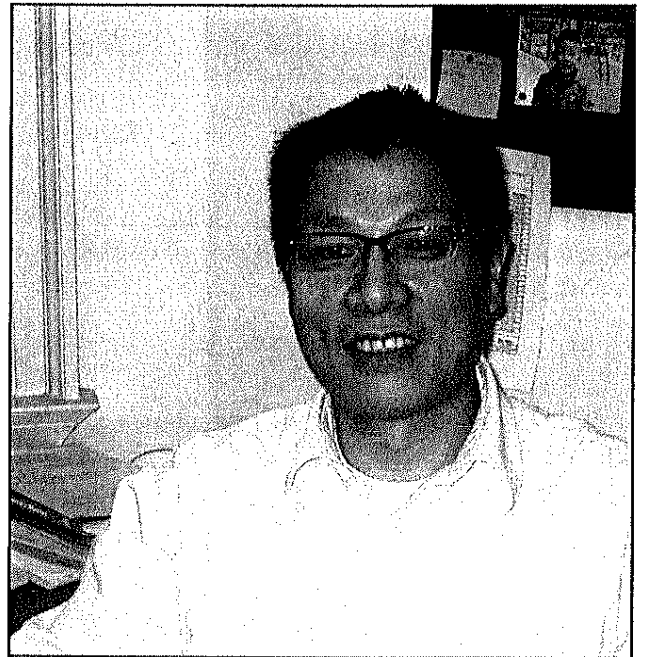
In Canada, attitudes have evolved thanks to Lee’s research. From Victorian times until the 1980s “the old legal view was that children wouldn’t lie under oath,” and the Child Evidence Act simply required kids to demonstrate their understanding of truth and non-truth.

Lee’s chance meeting with a law professor sparked a ten-year study that eventually proved that kids do, indeed, lie on the stand. These findings resulted in changes to the act in 2006; children now are simply asked to promise to tell the truth, which Lee’s research indicated would result in a 20 percent decrease in lying.

But if lies, especially white ones, are used in consideration for others, what’s in store for parents of autistic kids, who have a diminished capacity for such perspective and empathy? According to Lee: they too will become scamming fibbers, “but it comes later” than usual.

So far, research shows that only kids with ADHD don’t lie.

Or so Kang Lee would have us believe.



Around ICS, Peter Steen is better known as Mr. Carol Stephenson. He is the father of Emma ('06) and Charlotte ('09).

On May 21st at 7 pm at OISE Auditorium, ICS presents the 2008 Leighton G. McCarthy Memorial Panel:
ACTING ON A VISION FOR UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE:

Integrating early childhood education and support services for families. Panelists include:

The Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain, Hon. Ken Dryden, Justin Trudeau, Prof. Carl Corter, City Councillor Janet Davis, United Way’s Frances Lankin, and ICS alumnus Paul Tough (ICS '79).

Paul, the son of former ICS teacher Anne Tough, is now an editor of the *New York Times Magazine*.

His book about the Harlem Children’s Zone, *Whatever It Takes*, will be published in September.

Current ICS parent and CBC host & author Evan Solomon will be the moderator.

To attend, please register by contacting: Jeannie Tam at 416-934-4526, jetam@oise.utoronto.ca

Where it All Began

By Samantha Linton

You probably remember Megan Follows with her long red braids and a straw hat telling off Marilla Cuthbert in the 1985 *Anne of Green Gables* TV series. Or, more recently, as the thespian who pops up on the bill at Stratford or Soulpepper. What you probably didn't know was how much of an impact Follows feels her early years at ICS had on her development as an actress.



First professional "head-shot" taken while in grade four at ICS

Follows attended ICS for the full nine years. And while you could say acting is in her blood (her parents are actors Dawn Greenhalgh and Ted Follows), she remembers the exact moment in Miss Hennessey's grade one class when the "acting" bug bit. "We acted out a play called *The Day the King Changed*, and I got to play the king. It was a great moment for me. It was a comedy, I got a lot of laughs and I was hooked," she says.

These days Follows splits her time between Los Angeles (where, in addition to work, she's renovating her house and raising two teenagers) and Toronto, where she'll soon be hitting the stage with her mother, now 71. The pair will play mother and daughter in a Soulpepper production of *'Night Mother*.

Follows' mother was a big supporter of the

ICS philosophy. During the 1970s, the school's breezy creativity stood out against the public system's rigid curriculum. Follows recalls Mrs. Wicks turning out all the lights and reading Sherlock Holmes aloud by candlelight and music teacher Mrs. Helliwell making waves out of her long chiffon scarves. "And I just adored Miss Medhurst's art classes where we'd make sculptures out of lint from the dryer and paint with spices."

Follows' mother no doubt also loved the school's now infamous hot lunch program. "I sure hated those beets," Follows laughs. "But thank God they had a meal. As the daughter of theatre actors who got home in the middle of the night, they weren't exactly getting up to make breakfast!"

The nurturing environment at ICS also encouraged one of Follows' first original acting roles. In grade five, she and her pal Heather Grey created their own variety show called *Stupid and Smart*. "It was a running comedy show like *Abbot and Costello*. We would write the skits, rehearse them, and then we were allowed to perform them in front of the class."

Field trips for the budding actress included hikes in Elora Gorge and spelunking in Ontario caves. Back at the rambling old Leighton McCarthy house, she would roam the halls freely, often choosing to curl up in her favourite reading nook on the windowsill of the grand main staircase.

Rose-coloured memories? She thinks not. "When I acted in my first series *Matt and Jenny*, I had to miss the last term of grade five. I remember being totally divided. I loved working. But I loved school too. It was hard leaving."

Sam Linton is an ICS parent and alumnus - class of 1979.

Two Volunteers Welcome to Join New ICS - OISE Advisory Board for Lab School

Dr. Jane Gaskell, Dean of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, invites nominations of ICS Lab School graduates or their parents for the Institute of Child Study Laboratory School Advisory Board. This new structure will serve to augment the close relationship already in place between ICS and the leadership at OISE. Enclosed with this issue of the ICS Alumni Echo you will find a letter from Jane Gaskell and a nomination form for the two spaces open on the Advisory Board for ICS alumni or alumni parents.

Where are They Now?

THE CLASS OF '88
by Tessa Ohlendorf and Laura Richmond

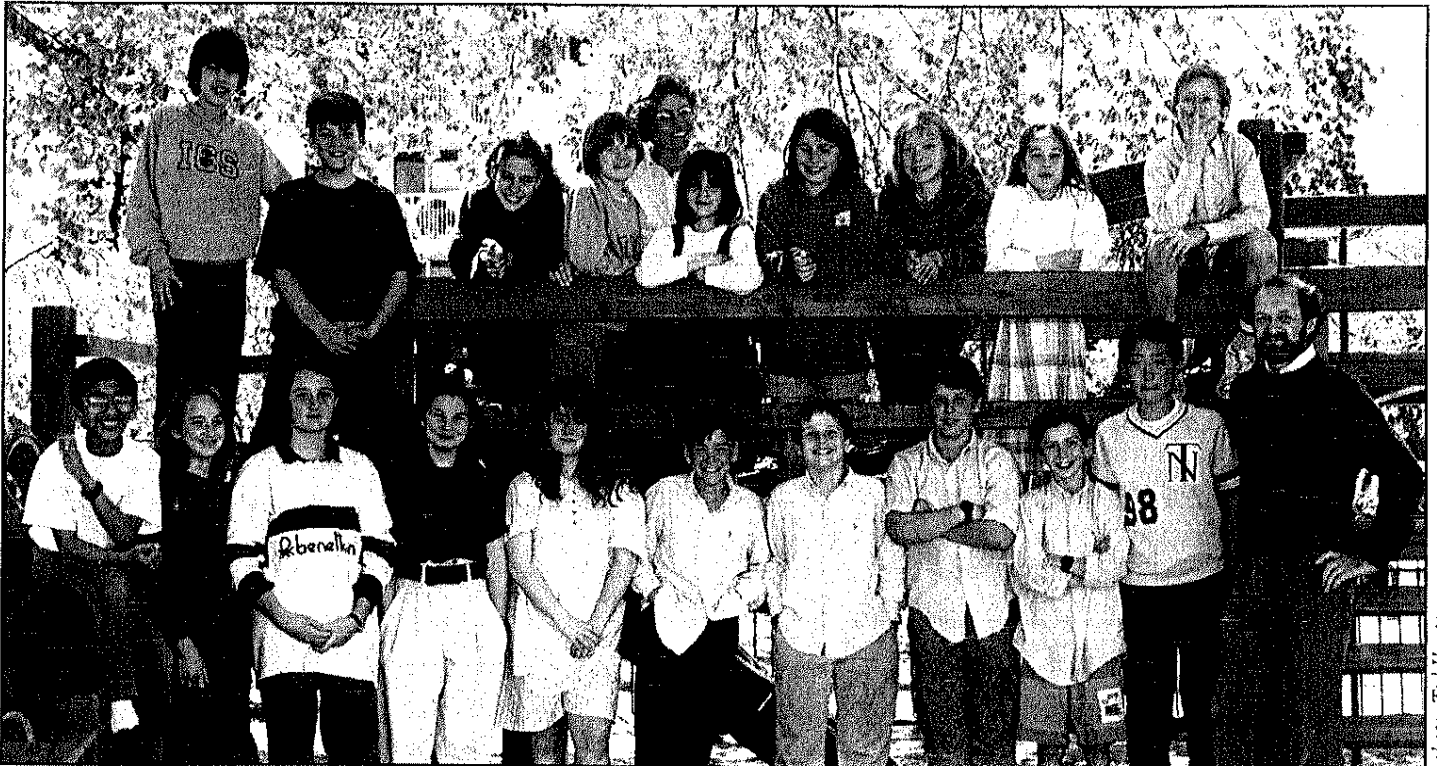


photo: Ted Hunter

Back: Eric Fehlberg, Geoffrey McGrath, Cory-Ann Freeman, Beth Mackenzie, Perri Camisso (Fr. teacher), Maria Mylopoulis, Sarah Bevan, Tessa Ohlendorf, Andrea Brueckner, Liam Cole
Front: Sharad Bhargava, Meara Sullivan, Erin Grimes, Laura Richmond, Rebecca Birkett, Gavin Tong, Brendan Cape, Andrew Davies, Simon Wright, Samuel Lee, Ted Hunter

Sarah Bevan - living on Bowen Island in BC and working at a law firm in downtown Vancouver as a research lawyer.

Sharad Bhargava - after living in Toronto, lived in Istanbul, Virginia, and Chicago, and now in Kansas. Marketing job with Colgate-Palmolive until December before another move. Planning a wedding in Toronto.

Naomi Bodemann-Ostow (now Lubich) - living in Berlin, where she is writing her PhD in Costume History and Comparative Literature and working at the Jewish Museum. She and her husband have a baby daughter, Miriam.

Andrea Brueckner - graduated with a B.Comm from U of T, then to NYC to study fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Worked in the industry with top designers before launching her own handbag line. Planning a September wedding.

Brendan Cape - lives in Toronto with his wife. Is a forensic accountant, studying to become a business valuator. Plays amateur hockey, finished 23rd season as goalie.

Andrew Davies - graduated from McGill in psychology, then obtained a college diploma in media design. Now living in Toronto and working as a web designer for a large online business.

Eric Fehlberg - graduated from Cooper Union in NYC with a degree in Fine Arts. Has worked as a graphic designer and started his own design firm in 2000 specializing in protective equipment for military operations. Now freelancing as a set designer for TV commercials and music videos.

Cory-Ann Freeman - lives in Toronto and teaches grade 6 in Peel. Has her own athletic therapy practice. Runs marathons, and is planning her upcoming wedding.

Julian Kuerti - studied engineering physics at U of T while serving as concertmaster and violin soloist with the Hart House Orchestra. Studied conducting in Europe and is now assistant conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra working with music director James Levine.

Sam Lee - graduated in engineering from U of T. Worked for TDCanada Trust and now with CIBC, is a VP in investment banking specializing in mining and natural resources. This work has taken him to Sydney, Australia, but when not travelling he lives in Toronto.

Beth Mackenzie - spent a year in Glasgow but now living in Toronto; hopes to join her brother in Tanzania next year. Is teaching high school English in Scarborough as well as literacy remediation. Coaches skiing, plays hockey, and takes improv classes.

