



Musings

Fall 2008

www.malverncollegiate.com

From the Malvern Red and Black Society

c/o Malvern Collegiate Institute, 55 Malvern Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4E 3E

Message from the President Vandra Masemann

Greetings to you all. I hope you are having a good summer. We are sending this issue of the *Musings* out early this year because we want to remind all the 50s and 60s Malvernites about the **upcoming Reunion, Rock and Roll Meets Peace and Love, which will be held at the Balmy Beach Club at the foot of Beech Ave. on September 27 from 12 noon to 5.00 p.m.**

All are welcome. Please register on the MRBS website or the paper form.

This has been a very good year so far for the MRBS. We held a very successful **Early Malvernites Reunion in May** at the school, and over 80 Malvernites from that era turned out for a concert, diploma ceremony, luncheon, archival display, tour of the school, and social time.

We have also worked in the archives every month, answered your inquiries, activated our website and email links, liaised with the virtual groups of Malvernites that exist in cyberspace on the pages of Facebook, and participated in the everyday life of the school. As part of our commitment to the present school, we are enclosing a fund-raising letter from the Onward Malvern Foundation, which invites you to contribute to the new Fitness Room at Malvern. Please read it and consider giving a donation.

It has been five years since our Malvern Centennial Reunion. The MRBS has existed as a group for nearly five years. It was founded to marshall the enthusiasm of those who attended the Reunion, and to reach out to other Malvernites with the aim of

“keeping Malvernites in touch.” Our main vehicles for doing so are this Newsletter, our website, and our emailings. Each regular and email edition of the *Musings* costs nearly \$1000 – over \$500 for postage, \$300 for printing, and \$180 for emailing. These expenses have been covered by your donations up to now, but since the initial enthusiasm has waned, contributions no longer keep up with our costs. At our recent meetings, the Executive has discussed ways of covering them. Suggestions included charging a subscription and/or membership fee, cutting out our paper edition, creating an online payment system, or asking for general donations. In order not to exclude anyone, we decided on the fourth option for now. We may have to revisit this decision if we fail to raise sufficient funds. We welcome any other suggestions you might have.

Therefore, we urgently ask for your support. **Please consider making out a cheque to the Malvern Red and Black Society for \$20 annually as a tangible token of your support.** Mail it to 55 Malvern Avenue, Toronto, M4E 3E4. Thanks so much to those who have already contributed.

NOTICE OF MRBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Saturday 8 November 2008
from 1.00 to 3.00 p.m.**

**It will be held at the school (enter from the
North Parking Lot on Swanwick Ave.).**

**Notices of the first-floor classroom
number will be posted on the outside
doors.**

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE MRBS CONSTITUTION

The Executive of the MRBS is proposing a change in the MRBS Bylaws. The aim is to regularise the acceptance as a quorum of the total number of those present at the Annual General meeting, as members do not show up in large numbers for the AGM. The proposed change is worded as follows: “Quorum, for meeting of members, for the transaction of business of any meeting of the members, shall consist of four (4) directors and as many members as are present to replace “twenty (20).” Please send any comments on this proposal to the MRBS before we vote on it at our Annual General Meeting in November 2008. A two-thirds majority vote of the Executive is required to change the Bylaws.

Malvern 50s & 60s Decades Reunion, Rock & Roll Meets Peace & Love, at the Balmy Beach Club on 27 Saturday September 2008

All Malvernites and teachers from these decades are welcome to come and meet old friends, renew acquaintances, catch up on the past, and enjoy the award-winning Malvern Band playing under the direction of Mr. Bill Mighton, as well as the Malvern Alumni Band. Tunes and songs from these decades will highlight the day. From 12 noon till 5 p.m. If you have not already done so, please pre-register and/or volunteer online at www.malverncollegiate.com or by mail using the paper form.

The following article about the Early Malvernites Reunion in May 2008 appeared in the *Beach Metro News* June 2008.

“This was the best party I have been to in years!” was a comment overheard at Malvern’s Early Malvernites Reunion, on Thursday 15 May. The Malvern Red and Black Society (MRBS) organized the reunion to honour its earliest members and to give current students a sense of their high school and its people’s history. By all accounts, the day was a huge success. Approximately 80 alumni/ae attended, and greetings and best wishes were received from Malvernites as far away as England and the United States.

Current students participated in a variety of ways. They directed parking, escorted alumni/ae into the building, provided entertainment, served lunch, interviewed alumni/ae as primary sources for history projects, and taped and photographed the proceedings. The principal and staff and the MRBS Committee members organized the sequence of activities and made sure that everyone was taken care of all the time.

After registration, the alumni/ae were escorted to the auditorium, where they watched a Power Point presentation of 1930s and 40s material drawn from the Malvern archives while listening to musical selections from the Big Band era played by the Malvern Dance Band. Its members were more than a little short on sleep, having traveled all night from Ottawa, where they had played in a competition and had won several awards. The ceremonies began with the entrance of the Colour Party, three students, one female and two male, who were dressed in World War II uniforms and carried flags from the period. The guests were welcomed by the principal, the president of the MRBS, and two student representatives. The keynote address on Life in the 1930s and 40s was delivered by Dr. David Hayne, one of

Malvern's most distinguished alumni, who had also delivered the 1938 valedictory address in the same auditorium.

One of the highlights of the events was the presentation of honorary diplomas to those alumni/ae who did not receive them because they were called upon to serve their country either overseas or on the home front and missed their graduation ceremony as a result. This was the first time that Malvernites had ever received honorary diplomas. Certificates of appreciation were also given out.

After closing remarks, a musical interlude followed with what for many was the highlight: three young female students sang an *a capella* performance of the iconic World War II song sung by the Andrews Sisters, *Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy*. It brought the roof down as five generations of Malvernites rocked! One alumna who had sung the song herself noted that the harmonies were perfect.

Guests were then treated to a catered lunch in the library, which was filled with 20s, 30s, and 40s archival materials, including rugby sweaters, Malvern Muses, commencement programmes and many photographs.

Life in the 1930s and 40s

Dr. David Hayne

The 1930s.

The 1930s were the decade of the "Great Depression" that followed the stock market collapse of 1929. This was a long and deep recession all over the world, and in Canada, before we had unemployment insurance or medicare, it created great hardship. Thousands of men were out of work, prices and wages were depressed, and many families were living in near-poverty or were absolutely destitute. Governments made half-hearted efforts to provide financial relief, which many Canadians were too proud to accept.

If men feared unemployment, women had only limited outlets for their talent and skills. It was generally accepted that a married woman should be supported by her husband and that she should be at home looking after her children. Her career possibilities were limited: on leaving school she could be a teacher, a nurse, or a clerical worker in an office, the sort of work that is now done by computers. Even as a teacher, she might have to resign if she got married. The professions (medicine, dentistry, engineering, pharmacy, chartered accountancy) were largely closed to her. As there was no divorce in Canada except by an Act of Parliament, marriage was a lifetime commitment. The thirties ended with the declaration of war in September 1939: the Second World War had begun.

1930s Technology:

By today's standards, the technology of the 1930s seems primitive: few families owned cars, and in Toronto most deliveries were made by horse-drawn vans. If we wanted to go somewhere in the neighbourhood, we walked. Long distance travel across Canada was done by train, because there was no scheduled air travel and no Trans-Canada Highway to drive on.

In our homes, most of us still had wood or coal-burning stoves in our kitchens, ice boxes instead of refrigerators, and we washed our dishes by hand. With no refrigerators, there was of course no frozen food. Some homes didn't have telephones. We couldn't even imagine having copiers, fax machines, video games, i-pods or cellphones: we couldn't have afforded them anyway, and there were no credit cards to enable us to buy things we couldn't pay cash for.

1930s Entertainment:

You are probably saying to yourselves: in that dull kind of world, what did they do for amusement? Surprisingly enough, until the

war began to affect us, we were a very happy generation.

We played lots of sports, not in the highly organized way you play today, but on sand lots, in schoolyards, on frozen ponds and outdoor rinks, where we played baseball in the summer, hockey in the winter, and football (which we called rugby) in between. The prestige sport at Malvern was football, and we all went to the games on Friday afternoons. Since we didn't have a swimming pool, if we wanted to swim, we walked down to Kew Beach and swam in Lake Ontario, which was usually freezing cold. We also went to the movies a lot (we called it "the show"). Since 1930 we had "talking" pictures; they were cheap and the programs were long, with no advertising.

If we wanted to listen to music, we had to go home to do it: there was no portable music. At home we could turn on the radio, crank up the phonograph, or sing around the piano. No TV, of course, until 1952, and then it was black and white at first. Our favourite musical activity, apart from playing in the Malvern Band, was dancing. Dances could be as simple as an afternoon tea dance at school, or as elaborate as a semi-formal dance once or twice a year. Semiformal meant that the girl wore a long dress and the boy wore his Sunday suit. The remarkable thing about our Malvern dances in those days was that we danced to LIVE music, small combos for small dances and eight or ten piece bands for big dances. If you want a sample of the music, tune in to the Lawrence Welk Show on Sunday on PBS: they still play the "big band" music we danced to.

We didn't "hang out" in shopping malls, because there were no shopping malls. Our place for casual meeting was the boardwalk along the beach from Balmy Beach Canoe Club to Woodbine Avenue, which we walked in our hundreds on summer evenings and on weekends. It was a great

place for talking to your friends, for picking up girls or meeting boys, and if you stayed there long enough, you saw everybody.

We dated in couples rather than in groups: dating could be going out for ice cream or a milk shake, or going to a big school dance. Some couples were "going steady," which might lead to an engagement and marriage years later: there are lots of cases of Malvernites eventually marrying Malvernites. The "Pill" didn't exist, so premarital sex was risky and rare, and unmarried mothers got little sympathy. Finally, nearly everyone smoked, which may explain why there are so few of us left today!

The 1940s:

I've been asked to say something about the 1940s, but it will be very general, because I wasn't at Malvern in the 1940s. The first five years of the 1940s were war years; the last five were post-war years of reconstruction. The war had little impact for the first few months: for the largely Anglo-Saxon population of Ontario this seemed to be a just war against German expansion and occupation, and men began enlisting. By 1941 or 1942, women too could enlist in the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWACS), the Women's Division of the RCAF, and the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRENS). As the country slowly mobilized its resources for total war, certain occupations were classified as essential, and many factories converted to war production under orders from Ottawa. For the first time, there was full employment and women found jobs in government offices, war factories and agriculture. Rationing of sugar, tea, coffee and meat began in 1942, and soon afterward men in certain age groups began to be conscripted (drafted). The war brought tragedy to the homes of a number of ex-Malvernites who were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner (e.g., John Craig). On the home front, Malvernites and their families did what they could to support the war effort:

writing letters and sending parcels to the troops, knitting socks and scarves, and buying war stamps and war bonds.

When Victory in Europe came in May 1945, and a few months later in Japan, veterans soon began returning to Canada. By the end of the year, they were flooding back, looking for jobs, resuming their education, or using their veterans' allowances to buy a lot and build a house. There were still serious shortages in civilian goods: cars reappeared, but they had to be ordered weeks in advance, and lumber and nails were in short supply, as

I found out when I tried to build a house. It was only about 1950 that the conversion to civilian life allowed a period of prosperity to begin and Canada started to modernize. Malvernites in the 1940s lived through these two difficult periods, war and post-war. Thank you.

Dr. David Hayne was valedictorian at Malvern in 1938.

MALVERN COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

JOINT REUNION OF 1950s AND 1960s DECADES "ROCK & ROLL MEETS WITH PEACE & LOVE"

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2008, 12 NOON UNTIL 5:30PM

LOCATION: BALMY BEACH CLUB, AT THE FOOT OF BEECH AVENUE AT PARK AVENUE IN THE BEACH

Note: Limited parking in this area. Carpool or take public transit (Queen Street East). Come and meet former friends and share the memories!

REGISTRATION FORM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2008

Malvernites and friends of MCI who attended/graduated during the decades of the 50s and 60s are invited to attend this joint reunion by one of the following methods:

1. Sending an email to us incorporating the registration information below to either –
 - rctennyson@aol.com (1950s) or
 - 1960s@malverncollegiate.com
 Please include the word "Malvern" in the tag or subject line.
2. Completing and returning this form by regular mail to

Malvern Red and Black Society
Malvern Collegiate Institute
55 Malvern Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4E 3E4

REGISTRATION:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER (IF NO EMAIL ADDRESS): _____

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOLUNTEER? TO HELP EITHER ON THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE IN TORONTO OR ON SEPTEMBER 27 WITH SETUP (10:00A.M.) OR CLEANUP AFTER EVENT (5:00P.M.), SEND EMAIL TO rctennyson@aol.com.

Permission to Post My Name on the MRBS Public Members' List

YES, I _____ (maiden name) _____ Class _____ or teacher/staff /other _____ give my permission for the Malvern Red and Black Society to include my name and class year/teacher status/other status only, on the MRBS website members' list. No other personal information will be divulged, without obtaining my further permission. All personal information will be subject to the MRBS Privacy policy. If I am replying by email, I permit the MRBS to use this email as legal proof of my giving permission.

Members' Signature: _____

Date: _____

No reply means that you DO NOT give us permission to post your name on our Members' List.

1. Financial Donations

I am pleased to donate to the MRBS the amount of \$(CDN) _____ to assist in covering administrative expenses. All monies will be utilized in accordance with the MRBS Charter. I understand that the MRBS is not a charitable status organization, so my donation will not be tax deductible. Make your cheque or money order out to, 'Malvern Red and Black Society' and mail to Malvern Red and Black Society c/o Malvern C.I. 55 Malvern Avenue Toronto, Ontario Canada M4E 3E4.

Please enclose a note with your donation, to answer this question:

- **Yes**, I give my permission for the MRBS to post my name on their website, in acknowledgement of my donation.
- **No**, I wish to keep my donation confidential.

2. New Members' Registration Form

Please include all information requested and email to redandblack@malverncollegiate.com or mail to the MCI address above. Email is greatly encouraged, to reduce our mailing costs.

First Name

Last Name:

Maiden Name:

Class Year:

Are/were you a teacher at Malvern?

Other Status (e.g. parent, staff):

Mailing Address (with postal/zip code):

Province /State & Country:

Email Address:

Phone number (with area code):

NOTICE: Use of any personal information is subject to the MRBS Privacy Policy. You can correct or remove your information by replying to our mailing address or email address above.