



VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL Alumni News

Spring 2009

Charitable No. 88970 8467 RR

VIC HIGH WELCOMES GRADS FROM THE '20s, '30s, AND '40s

by Alan Perry (VHS '74)

Victoria High School was electric on Saturday June 14, 2008, as about 350 alumni gathered at the oldest high school in Western Canada to meet old friends, reminisce, and enjoy a festive homecoming and tours.

The Homecoming, which was organized by the Vic High Alumni Association, attracted grads from as far away as Denver and Ottawa. The most senior grads present were Pat Dunn, VHS '28, who turned 98 in August, and 96-year-old Evelyn Miller (nee Foulds) from the class of '29.

The Vic High Choir welcomed the grads as they assembled in the historic Lawrie Wallace auditorium, which still has its original seats dating back to 1914. Vic High's renowned Rhythm and Blues Band also entertained the crowd.

Victoria's Mayor Alan Lowe, who was Vic High's Prime Minister in his 1979 grad year, addressed his fellow alumni. Mayor Lowe thanked the grads for their leadership and for sacrifices they had made through the Depression and subsequent wars, telling them they had been superb role models for the generations that followed.

Vic High legend Tommy Mayne, who graduated from Vic High in 1935 and taught History and Drama at the school from 1945 to 1978, was honoured by the Association with an auditorium seat named after him.

Tommy's wacky Calamity Players, along with his drama productions in the 1940s and '50s, were among the school's most beloved traditions.

Outgoing Alumni Association President Roger Skillings, an Associate of Canada's 2010 Olympics and its "Own the Podium" program, was surprised to have the school's podium named after him.

Roger was Vic High's Prime Minister in his 1968 grad year and is now the CEO of Canadian Sport Centre Pacific and Ambassador for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

After the auditorium ceremonies, grads headed to the memorabilia-lined Roper Gymnasium to meet old friends and recall their years at the oldest public high school west of Thunder Bay.

Vic High is now 133 years old. The first two buildings, dating from 1876 and 1882, were replaced in 1902 by one designed by Francis Rattenbury, renowned as the architect of Victoria's Parliament Buildings. But Vic High rapidly outgrew the Rattenbury



Mayor Alan Lowe (VHS '79) and Evelyn Miller (VHS '29)

building, and its current home opened in 1914.

World-famous artist Emily Carr attended Vic High (1888-89), as did noted architect Samuel Maclure (a member of the first class in 1876-77), sports writer Jim Taylor (1955), and long-time Victoria MP and Cabinet Minister David Anderson (1955). These are only a few of our many famous grads.

Posters created for and displayed at the Homecoming, featuring pictures of VHS students in the '20s, '30s and '40s, are on display on our website, www.vichigh.com, as are additional pictures of the Homecoming.

INSIDE

ANNE TENNING - MASTER TEACHER/P3 • STEAM ENGINE/P3 • ALUMNI STARS/P4 • ARCHIVES/P5

SEAT SALE/P6 • REUNIONS/P7 • DONATION AND MAIL/P7



CHAIR'S REPORT

**Keith McCallion
(VHS Principal
1989-1994)**

It is my honour to chair the Vic High Alumni

Association. I did not graduate from this great school (Belmont, class of '65). But as principal of Vic High from 1989 to 1994, I quickly learned that it was a school with a unique and special place in Victoria, the province and, indeed, all of Canada.

During my teaching career I taught in and was vice-principal or

principal of seven different schools, of which six were high schools. To me, the ultimate accolade for Vic High came from my wife Marguerite. She said that, of all the schools I served in over my career, VHS was her favourite. She said that the "feel" of Vic High was unlike any of the others, that there was never a time that she came to the school when a student would not ask her if she needed directions, or if she was looking for someone, and could they help.

Nothing has changed. VHS students of 2008/09 are terrific young people in pursuit of their best academically, athletically, artistically and socially. Your Alumni Associa-

tion supports these great kids in a variety of ways. At the same time, we are continuing to work to preserve the history and traditions of Vic High.

All Alumni are important to us. Please contact us if you would like to become more involved with dedicated grads from this finest of schools.

In closing, I would like to thank Roger Skillings for chairing the Vic High Alumni Association for five years. He provided strong leadership and dedication to the Association. I am pleased to say that he continues to be involved as an active member of our board. Come give a cheer!



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Stephen Bennett

An eventful first semester ended with a flourish: our annual Fine Arts Night on December 10.

About 800 students, parents, teachers and friends were on hand to enjoy the incredible talent of our students displayed in their artwork and performances. Evenings like this are only possible through the hard work of Vic High's dedicated staff, especially those in our Fine Arts department.

One of our teachers, Anne Tenning, received a national honour this past November. She was one of only six teachers chosen from across Canada to receive the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. Anne

went to Rideau Hall Ottawa to receive her award in person from Governor General Michaëlle Jean. We are very proud of Anne and her accomplishments with our students.

In late December we celebrated our scholarship students with a small awards ceremony and reception. Thirty-three deserving students received a variety of scholarships and bursaries, including those provided by the Alumni Association in the amount of \$7100.

In January we held our Showcase Evening to show off the school to prospective students and their

parents. There were displays from each department as well as performances by our Pop Choir, drama and dance students. We had a marvelous turnout for this event, with about 350 people attending. We feel very confident that many of them will choose to come to Victoria High School because of the excellent programs that we offer, not to mention the incredible staff members who provide those programs.

As I write this, the whole school is looking forward to our Valentines Dance in February, sponsored by the Leadership class, and our major production of the musical *Rent* in March. It is bound to be a great show.

Victoria High School continues to be an amazing place with incredible history and a very bright future. We are without question indebted to the support that you, through the Alumni Association, provide for the students of Victoria High School.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY JUNE 1, 2009

5:15 PM

VIC HIGH STAFF ROOM

EVERYONE WELCOME

VIC HIGH STUDENTS HONOURED AT FALL AWARDS CEREMONY

by Keith McCallion

In December, Alumni members Ruth Ferne, Don Kissinger and Keith McCallion attended the school's Fall Awards Ceremony. On behalf of the Alumni Association, they presented cheques totalling \$7100 to thirteen outstanding young grads. The awards recognized the students' achievements in academics, fine arts, technical education and athletics. All these terrific young men and women will use the funds to further their post-secondary education.

These funds are derived from annual income of the Association's permanent Endowment Funds that were launched in 1976 and added to since then. We thank Alumni members for their generous contributions that make these awards possible. For a list of the 2008 scholarship award winners, please visit our website at www.vichigh.com.

VIC HIGH'S ANNE TENNING – MASTER TEACHER

by Keith McCallion

Vic High staff members continue to excel in providing the very best teaching to today's learners. Last November, Anne Tenning, a Vic High grad ('93) and now a Vic High teacher, received the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

Anne traveled to Ottawa with her sister and Victoria School District coordinator Nella Nelson, who watched with pride as Governor General Michaëlle Jean presented Anne with her award.

A member of the Chemainus First Nation, Anne received this award for her work in creating and teaching First Nations History 12. (Interestingly, most of the students enrolled were not aboriginal.) Anne has taught at Vic High for seven years, and is currently completing her Master of Education degree; her thesis examines high-achieving



aboriginal high-school students in senior level sciences.

Our Alumni Association is celebrating this extraordinary achievement by providing a framed photograph of Anne with Her Excellency for display at Vic High. Have a look for it near the main office next time you're visiting the school.

STEAM ENGINE

by Jim Connor

(VHS engineer 1986-1999)

Recently, Mr. Ernie Wirtanen (VHS '35) came to visit Vic High and our Archives. During our conversation he indicated he'd like to see our original 1914 steam engine, which is on display on the 4th floor.

So – up we went in the elevator to examine the steam engine. As we did so, we observed that a protective glass case and electric motor drive would be needed to show the rotation of the flywheel, piston rod, governor's belts and other essential parts. Mr. Wirtanen generously offered to donate the funds that this work would

require. Estimates were obtained by the school board, and Ernie quickly sent a substantial cheque to cover the cost of the project.

Of all the steam engines that have operated in Victoria, only a few survive in working order – the ones that come to mind are the Victoria Fire Department's Steam Pumper Engine (the Redfern) and those at the Maritime Museum and Heritage Acres on the Pat Bay Highway.

Considering the enormous influence of the steam engine on our modern world, we should feel proud to have ours intact and safe. Could Vic High be the only place in BC with its original steam engine working and on site?

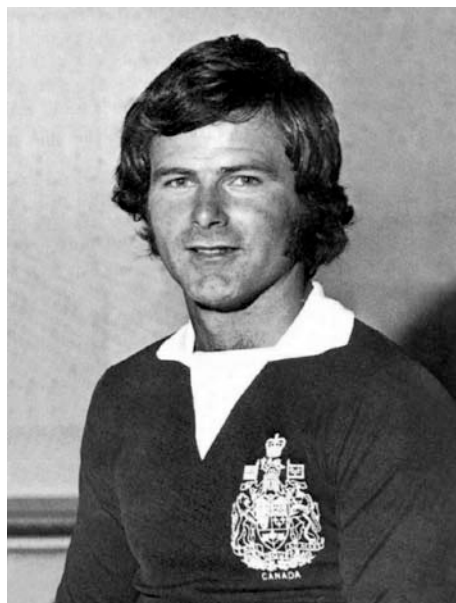
After graduating from Vic High in 1935, Ernie Wirtanen became a successful electrical engineer. He founded Wirtanen Electric Ltd of Edmonton and two successful pre-apprentice electrical schools. He moved back to Victoria in 1994, but he still commutes to Edmonton on business (at age 91!) Just recently Ernie received an honorary doctorate from his university – the Milwaukee School of Engineering. You can view a wonderful video of his achievements at www.youtube.com.

Because of Ernie's contribution, students, staff and visitors will be able to enjoy this bit of local history at Vic High. We are very grateful to him for his generous contribution.

MORE ALUMNI STARS IN THE VHS GALAXY

by Barry Gough (VHS '56)

Here's a trio of prominent contemporaries – all VHS grads – whose achievements bring laurels to the school.



Soccer great **Brian Robinson (VHS '68)** was recently inducted into the Victoria Sports Hall of Fame. He joins other athletes, coaches and builders who have been honoured for their outstanding contributions to sport and community health. Gordon Hartley, VHS '36 and longtime teacher at Vic High, was also inducted in 2008.

Brian was a star of the VHS soccer team, as he was of other teams on which he played – Lansdowne Junior High, Vic West, and Victoria United of the Pacific Coast League. A quick, powerful midfielder, he won a Western Canada Soccer League title with the Victoria Royals, then was selected as a 19-year-old to play with the Canadian national team. He also played a season with the Vancouver Whitecaps. Brian credits a variety of coaches for his success. “People

behind the scenes make such a difference in your life,” he says.

Brian played more than 40 international matches for Canada, including one in Mexico before 100,000 fans, in which he scored a goal. In international competition he found himself playing against men who played the game for their living – whereas in Canada all the players had other regular jobs, but would get together for three weeks and be expected to play at the highest standard.

In 2006 Brian was inducted into the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame. Nowadays he continues his work in soccer with the Prospect Lake Soccer Club. Hard work and perseverance have been his hallmark. “I always made the team, because I always gave my best.” We salute him.

Lianne Charlie (VHS '99) is a rising star in History and Indigenous Studies, currently at the University of Victoria. After graduation she took a GAP year, working in England at a YMCA adventure camp alongside many others from Commonwealth nations. Then came extensive global travel, first to Europe, then South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. After completing a three-year University Transfer Program in Education at Camosun College, and another year abroad, she entered UVic to do History with a minor in Indigenous Studies. She's now in grad school, writing on



indigenous perspectives of 20th-century British Columbia, and in July she is on to a Pacific Leaders graduate student fellowship from the BC government. While considering a PhD in History, she's also keen to do a family history project on her father's heritage in the Yukon.

Lianne has warm memories of Vic High. “I was thinking the other day about how much I loved gym class with Ms. Blackstock. She took us on field trips for gym. We went bowling, ice skating at the old Memorial Arena, and played pitch-and-putt at Henderson Park. She did so much for us as students, and even more as a coach. I feel so lucky and privileged to have gone to Vic High while she was still there – it just would not have been the same without her.” We will watch Lianne's progress with keen interest and pride.

Roger Steed (VHS '58) is a

distinguished engineer, former naval officer, author, and still performing professional oboist. Born near Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, he and his younger brother came with their parents to Canada in 1949, first to Saskatoon and then to Victoria, attending Central Junior High and Victoria High School. He likes to tell a story of how the Band teacher, Roland Grant, found him an oboe in the instruments cupboard and handed it to him expectantly, knowing how difficult it was to play that double-reed instrument of treble pitch and plaintive tone. But the instrument proved to be golden in Roger's



hands. Before long he was playing in the Victoria Symphony as well as our award-winning Vic High Band.

Roger graduated in Engineering from the University of Toronto. Meanwhile he had entered the Royal Canadian Navy as a cadet and was commissioned lieutenant in 1966. After working as a design engineer at Dupont of Canada in Ontario, in 1969 he joined Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd as Fuel Handling Commissioning Engineer for the Pickering Generating Station project. In 1972 he was invited to join Ontario Hydro, and in 1975 to NB Power as a member of its Point Lepreau Generating Station staff, first as fuel handling boss and later technical supervisor, Nuclear Materials Management. It is good to know that such potentially hazardous materials were in the safe hands of our own Roger Steed.

His oboe rested quietly until 1988, when he joined the Saint John Symphony (now Symphony New Brunswick) and played in it for 20 years. He has also played several concerts with the PEI Symphony.

Roger is also a prolific historian. His books include *Canadian Pacific in the Selkirks* (1993), *Diesels in the Maritimes and Newfoundland* (1995), *Canadian Warships Since 1956* (1999) and *Nuclear Power in Canada and Beyond* (2007).

Roger and his wife Ruth have three married children and four grandchildren, and the fifth one is expected. It was a great thrill for him to attend the 50th reunion of the VHS class of '58. We look forward to his early return to Victoria and to keeping alive the memories and traditions of Vic High.

Please send us the names of other possible stars so that we can add to our galaxy in future issues.

ARCHIVES UPDATE

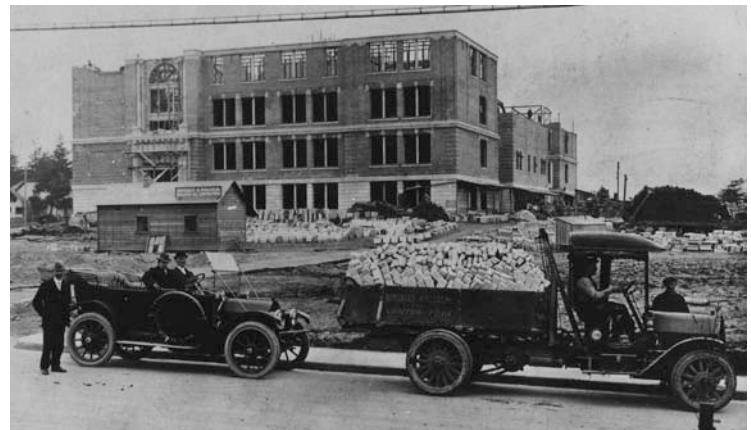
by Jill Wallace (VHS '66)

A new addition to the school Archives recently arrived in the form of two original Vic High school clocks. One unit is the master clock from the office, 4½ feet tall by 2½ feet wide, with a long pendulum. It sent out a signal to satellite clocks in each classroom. The other is a classroom satellite, 16 inches in diameter. Do you remember those, in their solid oak frames? Both clocks are now battery operated, and hang proudly in the Archives.

The clocks were presented to former Vic High principal Duncan Lorimer on his retirement in 1979. The Lorimer family has kindly donated them to the Archives for display and safe-keeping; our thanks go to Dunc's wife Betty and their daughter Janet McBride for bringing these clocks back home.

The Archives is open every Tuesday morning while school is in session, from 9 am to 12 noon. Volunteers Jim Connor, Frank Taylor, Faith Reimer and Jill Wallace are hard at work preserving the wonderful photos and records of life at Vic High.

Faith is busy



Vic High under construction c.1913

WE NEED YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

In a new initiative, the Vic High Alumni Association will be e-mailing Alumni members periodic bulletins with news of interest to Vic High grads and friends. Please visit www.vichigh.com to read the story of **John Newbury**, Vic High's first Governor General's medal winner in 1876, a piece written by John Adams and Denis Johnston (both VHS '67). Upcoming will be an article on **Tommy Mayne**, who has recently celebrated his 90th birthday. Please ensure that we have your e-mail address so that we can send you our bulletins.

VIC HIGH SEAT SALE

by Keith McCallion
and Alan Perry

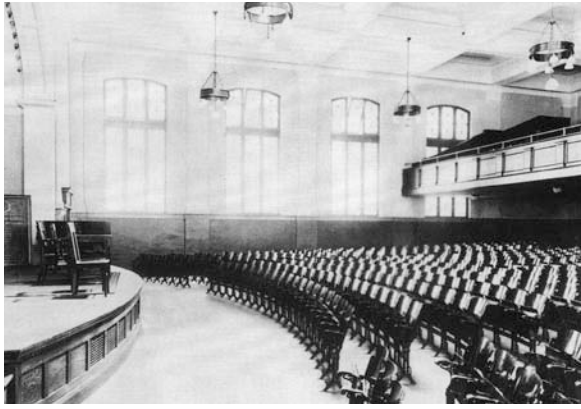
*Own a Piece of History for
Just \$200!*

The Vic High Alumni Association is proud to announce a new fundraising program: a "seat sale" in Vic High's historic Lawrie Wallace Auditorium.

Each donation of \$200 buys a plaque that is permanently affixed to a seat in the Auditorium. Through word of mouth, over three dozen seats have already been snapped up. The first two dedicated seats were gifts from the Alumni Association to Pat Dunn (VHS '28), our oldest living grad, and Tommy Mayne (VHS '35), a legendary Vic High booster who taught at the school for over 30 years (1945-78).

Already a number of Alumni have purchased seats, including Victoria's former Mayor Alan Lowe (VHS '79). Memorial gifts have been received from families of the late Principal Harry Smith and the late Lawrie Wallace, a key founder of the Alumni Association. Several Association board members have also purchased seats.

All the capital from this sale will be invested to support the Association's activities in perpetuity. The money that is raised through this sale will be deposited with and managed by the Victoria and



Vancouver Foundations. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations.

The seat sale initiative, over and above our regular fundraising, will provide continuing support for the Association's activities, as expressed in our mission statement:

1. To preserve and celebrate the heritage and traditions of this great school
2. To support and promote Victoria High School's vitality in its present social and educational context
3. To serve as a communications link for alumni, now and in the future.

Although the Association is entirely volunteer, its operations cost over \$15,000 annually. This money supports scholarships, the Alumni newsletter, reunions, the website at www.vichigh.com, the archives and annual projects for today's students.

For information about purchasing your customized seat plaque, please visit our website at www.vichigh.com. Or you can call Alan Perry at 250-883-1103 or Keith McCallion at 250-588-5062. (Please don't call the school – they are busy working for today's students!)

COME GIVE (MORE THAN) A CHEER

by Ian McKinnon (VHS '66)

Through the Alumni Association and its endowment, many of you have supported today's students at Vic High. The endowment has provided major scholarships and bursaries for decades.

But the Association contributes to today's school in other ways too. Some recent examples include:

- Providing \$1,000 in seed money and helping to raise an additional \$35,000 to convert two vehicles from gasoline to electric power, a co-project of the school's automotive students and environment club
- Helping the revitalized Vic High rugby team travel to a mainland tournament
- Supporting the Performing and Visual Arts students' production of *Rent* in March 2009.

The Association serves Vic High's alumni as well as today's students. We produce this annual newsletter, we support and assist in reunions, and we organized the Homecoming featured on page 1. We created an alumni website, and we recently developed a way that alumni can use it to keep in touch with one another. And our dedicated volunteers operate the school archive – a remarkable resource!

We need your support to continue these services. The recent economic downturn has not only hammered savings and endowments but also put more pressure on students and the school, making it harder to fundraise for special activities.

Please send your donation using the form on page 7 or online at www.vichigh.com. All donations to the Association are tax-deductible, and we have a strong Board that manages them well and uses them carefully.

Thank you for your continued support.

Don't forget to visit and register at

www.vichigh.com

Our website contains information about the school, the Board of Directors, reunions, copies of the newsletter, archival pictures and much more. It is a great tool for helping alumni to keep in touch with Vic High and each other.

REUNIONS

See up-to-date information at www.vichigh.com/reunions

Class of 1949 – 60 Year Reunion

Wednesday and Thursday, June 17-18, 2009

On Wednesday, there will be an afternoon get-together from 3 - 6 pm at the University Club, followed by dinner at 6 pm. On Thursday, there will be an informal breakfast at the Embassy Inn. Contact Vera Creelman at 250-386-8876 or veragene@shaw.ca

Class of 1959 – 50 Year Reunion

Saturday and Sunday, June 27-28, 2009

Contact Sue (Humphries) Thompson at 250-595-5050 or suepvic@shaw.ca

Class of 1961 – 50 Year Reunion

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 6-8, 2011

Sharon Chow (250-704-9877) and Hugh Skillings (hskillings@shaw.ca or 250-592-6229) are planning a 50 year reunion in **May 2011**. Please provide contact information to them and to www.vichigh.com

Class of 1967 – 40 + 2 Year Reunion

Saturday June 6, 2009

The reunion will be held at the Gorge Vale Golf Club. Check the website at bigmouth.ca. Contact Barb James or Dennis Bater through www.vichigh.com/reunions

Class of 1968 – 40 Year + 1 Reunion

Friday and Saturday, June 5-6, 2009

On Friday, there will be a welcome reception and dinner with entertainment at the Wardroom, CFB Esquimalt. On Saturday afternoon, there will be an Open House at Vic High followed by Happy Hour at

the Fernwood Inn. Check the website at www.vichigh68.com. Contact Jo-Anne (Dahl) Botten at 250-385-4729 or jbotten@shaw.ca, or Mary Ann (Glover) Roueche at 250-592-9604 or maroueche@shaw.ca

Class of 1969 – 40 Year Reunion

Saturday October 3, 2009

Contact Dianne (Ingram) Bentley at 250-479-9708 or dianne_bentley@telus.net. Registration form available at www.vichigh.com/reunions

Class of 1972

We meet every couple of months for lunch. If anyone is interested in seeing photos of the lunches, or being added to the e-mail lunch list or added to the grad list, please call Beth (Morrison) Barnes at 250-386-7272

Class of 1979 – 30 Year Reunion

Saturday August 22, 2009

There will be a Reunion Hoedown and Barbeque. Contact Alan Lowe at alanlowe@shaw.ca or Shirley Young at shirley.young@gov.bc.ca. Please send us your e-mail address and any others you have for 1979 grads.

Class of 1999 - 10 Year Reunion

June 2009

The class of 1999 is planning a reunion in June. Please send contact information to Katie Hughes at katiehughes_is@hotmail.com

Joe Lindo, a proud graduate of the class of '68, and his partner, Joe D'Aurizio, financial planners at Dundee Wealth, are the official sponsors of the class of '68 "Forty Plus One Reunion"

THANK YOU!

DONATION AND MAIL FORM

We appreciate your contributions to assist us in supporting Vic High and its students. *However, even if you cannot contribute at this time, please use this form to update your address and e-mail address or do this by e-mailing us at alumni@vichigh.com.*

Name: _____ [Surname at Vic High: _____]

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone Number: () _____

E-mail: _____ VHS years: _____

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____ *(We will send you a tax receipt)*

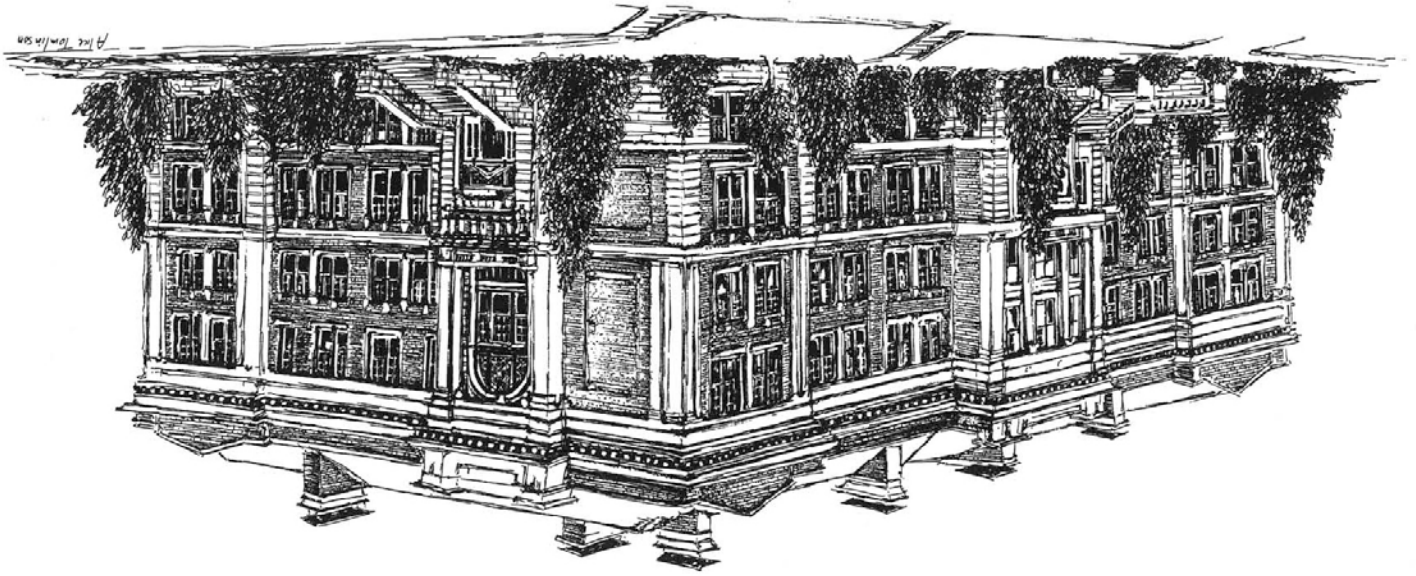
Enclosed is my cheque payable to the Victoria High School Alumni Association OR

Use your Visa or Mastercard to make your donation online at www.vichigh.com or at www.canadahelps.org

I would like to make my donation in the memory of _____
(Please supply name and address of the person to whom we will send a notification of your donation.)

Please enroll me as a new lifetime member of the VHS Alumni Association (\$25).

For the Alumni Association privacy policy, please visit our website www.vichigh.com



Alumni News
VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL



Victoria High School Alumni News
1260 Grant Street
Victoria, B.C.
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