



VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL Alumni News

Spring 2011

Charitable No. 88970 8467 RR



OPEN HOUSE AT FAIREY TECH

After over 60 years of service, the F.T. Fairey technical building is being replaced. A new tech wing, now under construction, is scheduled to open in September 2011, after which the old Fairey Tech will be demolished.

Current and past staff will be holding an Open House at Fairey Tech on Saturday June 25, from 9

am to 1 pm. The theme will be to remember the “old” and celebrate the new!

Come and bid farewell to your beloved bandsaws and drill presses before they move into their brand-new digs. And keep an eye on the Alumni Association website for breaking news – go to www.vichigh.com and click on News.



Top: Artist's conception of Vic High's new technical wing
Bottom: Stu Gibson's class in the Fairey Tech machine shop, early 1950's

THE SECRET SIXTY

by Keith McCallion

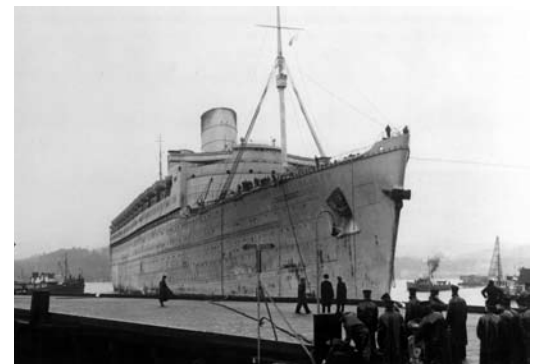
One of the most intriguing stories of Vic High's past is the "Secret Sixty," a group of Vic High technical students recruited to work on a top-secret project during World War II.

In February 1942 the Cunard liner *Queen Elizabeth* – the largest ship in the world – slipped quietly into Esquimalt Harbour. After having been converted to a troopship a year earlier, she now needed some maintenance, and the Esquimalt drydock was the only one on the Pacific coast large enough to hold her.

Sixty boys were recruited to clean the ship's boilers, presumably because of a wartime labour shortage. For security reasons, everyone was instructed not to talk about the mammoth ship. Although the *Queen Elizabeth* towered above her surroundings and was visible to all Victorians, there were no reports in the media about her presence.

The Alumni Association had heard rumours of the Secret Sixty in recent years, but informal appeals had elicited no information. However, a conversation with

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The Queen Elizabeth in Victoria, February 1942. You can read a recent newspaper report by googling “Times Colonist Secret Sixty.”

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Coming Soon: Vic High Literary Hall of Fame - watch website for details



CHAIR'S REPORT

Keith McCallion

Being the Chair of your Alumni Association brings many

rewards. I would like to share just a few of them that I've enjoyed in the past year.

I was privileged to meet and talk with two Vic High grads who have made national and international reputations for excellence in two very different areas. One was Hans de Goede (VHS '71), who played rugby at Vic High under the late Tillman Briggs and went on to captain Canada's national rugby team. Another was Ian McDougall

(VHS '56), a member of the Order of Canada and one of the top jazz trombonists in the world. Greatness!

We take special pride in giving out scholarships and bursaries each year to graduating students. However, our largest single award actually helps to keep someone *in* school. Each year the Association gives out \$1200 (\$100 per month for 12 months) to one deserving student who needs help to stay in school. There is no application process: a nominee is recommended by the school's counsellors and principal. This year's recipient lives with a friend's family with only a small amount of support from her parents. With your help, along with that of principal Randi Falls and the teachers and support staff, she has already collected enough credits to

graduate this spring.

I've especially enjoyed working with your Association's executive. They volunteer thousands of hours and work so hard to support alumni and the school that the word "inspire" hardly seems adequate. Not only do they contribute an enormous amount of time and energy, they are also among the most capable people with whom I have ever worked.

Looking ahead, we are now starting to focus on celebrating the 100th anniversary of the current school building in 2014. Alan Lowe (VHS '79), architect and former Victoria mayor, will chair the planning committee for this major milestone in our school's 135 year history.

Come give a cheer!

WELCOME TO VIC HIGH'S NEW PRINCIPAL

The 2010-11 school year opened with a new leader in place for Vic High. Randi Falls is the 26th principal of the school since 1876, and the first woman! Randi rejoined the Vic High staff from Lambrick Park Secondary, where she was Principal for the past five years.

A native of Calgary, Randi moved to Victoria with her family when she was 13 years old. She completed her schooling at Central Junior High and Oak Bay Secondary, where an inspiring biology teacher ignited her interest in science. Randi pursued BSc studies at UVic, where she began to consider a career in teaching. She continued on at UVic with a teacher training program.

Randi's first teaching job was at Vic High beginning in 1986, joining Ron Blasner, Barry Camp and Bruce Chan in the Science Department. She remained at Vic

High for the next 11 years, teaching mainly Biology 11 and 12. At the same time, she became involved in professional activities at both the school and district levels. For example, she chaired two of the school's accreditation committees, and served on district committees that evaluated portfolios of students who were challenging courses. She also served on the district's "Action Research" teams that explored new approaches to teaching philosophies and methods.

These encounters with wider issues in education piqued her interest in school administration. In

1997 she became Vice Principal at Arbutus Junior Secondary, and in 1999 moved to Lambrick Park where she spent six years as Vice Principal and five years as Principal.

What would attract a successful teacher to shift into administration? Randi comments: "Of course I miss the engagement with students in my science classes. But administration allows for not only that piece, but also more focused engagement with students, whether one-to-one or in whole classes. In addition, the Principalship allows for building a school culture with staff, students and parents through shared vision and values."

"I particularly enjoy the genuine pride and fondness that the staff, students and alumni have for Victoria High School. I hope my tenure as Principal will continue the strong traditions here, and I feel honoured to be returning to my first school."

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY JUNE 6, 2011

5:15 PM

**VIC HIGH STAFF ROOM
EVERYONE WELCOME**



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Randi Falls

I started my teaching career at Victoria High School 25 years

ago, so it is a particular pleasure to be writing to you in my new role as Principal.

Fall is an exciting time for everyone at Vic High. This year we welcomed a strong cohort of new Grade 9 students, with 48% of them earning Honour Roll recognition in November.

December was a very busy month at the school. We recognized our students' wealth of visual and performing arts talent with our Fine Arts Night; we celebrated our First Nations students' academic success with a dinner and awards night; and we distributed close to \$80,000 in scholarships and bursaries to Vic High's Class of 2010 at another awards ceremony. Contributions from the Alumni help these

graduating students further their pursuits, whether in university, fine arts or technical programs.

Our fall and winter sports (Rowing, Field Hockey, Soccer and Basketball) are now complete. We were pleased to field competitive teams in all these sports; some of our coaches are Alumni and we appreciate their continued contributions. Rugby has started, in the muddy season as usual! Those of you who remember Tillman Briggs will recall heady years for Rugby at Vic High; we have two great coaches helping this year, and I'm confident we will be very competitive.

We are already preparing for next fall's course organization, with plans to expand our offerings to include new courses in Marine Biology 11 and Fashion Design 11 and 12. The teachers at Vic High continue to offer a wide range of both new and continuing courses that engage and challenge our students.

The most visible event this year has been the development of a new Technical building on the north side

of the school. Construction is on track for this amazing facility which will house new Auto Body, Mechanics, Carpentry/Joinery and Metal shops. The new facility will open in September 2011 as we move to a "single campus" school. Our present Fairey Tech staff is working with former staff members and the Alumni Association to organize an event in June to recognize the "old" and celebrate the new.

On behalf of the students and staff, my grateful thanks go to all Alumni for your continued support and in particular to the Chair, Keith McCallion. I worked on Keith's staff when he was Principal of Vic High and was very pleased to see him on this board. His connections and his commitment to Vic High continue to be great assets for the Association and the school. The team of volunteers in the Archives add a lot to the school as well.

As always, we welcome Alumni to visit our school – please come by and introduce yourself in the main office.

GLOBAL TV CELEBRATES BACK-TO SCHOOL WEEK AT VIC HIGH

by Roger Skillings (VHS '68)

Each September, Global TV selects one school in BC to highlight in its special "Back to School Week" coverage. In 2010, that school was Vic High. On September 9, an informative and thoroughly enjoyable morning of Global TV coverage showcased Vic High's unique combination of academic, technical and performing arts programs.

Global's morning show co-host Steve Darling interviewed Vic High graduates, students, parents, teachers, and the new Principal,

Randi Falls. All coverage was filmed right at Vic High, much of it broadcast live. Many of Vic High's unique features were highlighted, including the First and Second World War memorial plaques, Lawrie Wallace Auditorium, Memorial Stadium, Fairey Tech building and programs, the Vic High Dancers, and the celebrated Rhythm and Blues Band. There were also many shots of Vic High's stunning exterior and main hall.

Fascinating information was revealed regarding Vic High's "Secret Sixty" (see page 1) by one of the actual participants, 1942 grad Jack Weber. Victoria *Times-Colonist* film critic Michael Reid described some

of the Hollywood movies that have been filmed at Vic High. Principal Randi Falls spoke of the importance of the student-led Remembrance Day ceremonies and of the new tech building under construction. Interspersed throughout the coverage were Vic High Archive pictures that are displayed in the Roper Gym and elsewhere in the corridors.

We are working with Global TV to make the entire coverage available on our Alumni website. We will notify you by email when it's ready to be viewed. You will be delighted! The interviews did us all proud and captured many of the qualities we love about the school.

JIM TAYLOR WINS BRUCE HUTCHISON AWARD

by King Lee (VHS '58)

Vic High grad Jim Taylor (VHS '55) is a Canadian icon in the fields of sportswriting and humour. In more than half a century of professional writing, he has published at least 13 books and over 8000 newspaper columns. In addition, he has been inducted into three halls of fame and given two lifetime achievement awards.

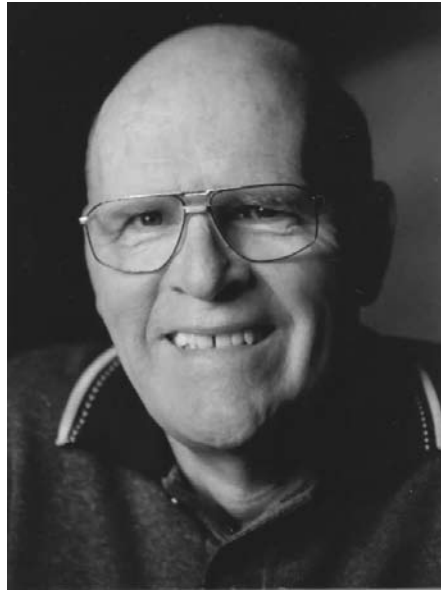
Jim's most recent honour is the Bruce Hutchison Lifetime Achievement Award, which he received in November 2010 – the first time the award has honoured either a sportswriter or a humorist! The award is named for another Vic High grad who also became an iconic Canadian journalist: Bruce Hutchison (VHS '17).

Jim says that, every step along the way, someone has lent a helping hand or allowed him to do things his way. At Vic High, it was the late Stan Murphy, journalism teacher, who gave him both a hand and a shove.

Jim remembers attending his first journalism class, when Murphy told students that if they wanted to read comic books they could sit in the back. He invited serious journalism students to occupy the front seats, and Jim accepted the invitation.

Murphy must have spotted the talent in Jim because when Jim Tang, the late sports editor of *The Daily Colonist*, phoned Murphy to see if he had any writing prospects to fill a sudden vacancy, Murphy immediately thought of Taylor.

Murphy asked his second-year journalism student to come in after school, which terrified Taylor. When they met, Murphy told him that there was an opening in *The Daily*



Jim Taylor is a member of the Canadian Football, BC Sports, and Greater Victoria Sports halls of fame. He has received a lifetime achievement award from Sports Media Canada as well as the recent Bruce Hutchison Award for his contributions to journalism in BC. You can read Jim's acceptance speech by googling "Jim Taylor Bruce Hutchison"

Colonist sports department.

Taylor recalls saying "That's nice," and proceeded to wish the best to whoever got the job.

"You've taken it!" Murphy informed a startled and somewhat unhappy Taylor. ("I knew from the time I was six years old I was going to write," he says, "but it sure as hell wasn't [going to be] sports.")

"Why me?" asked the bewildered Taylor.

"Because you can write," came the reply. After Murphy threatened to kick him all the way down to Jim Tang's office, Taylor reluctantly went and accepted the job.

So, while attending Grade 12 at Vic High, Taylor got up at 4:45 each school morning, delivered the *Colonist* on his paper route (he wasn't going to give up his day job, just in case the writing thing didn't pan out). Then he attended classes until 3:15 pm, rushed down to the

newspaper office to work in the sports department, often until 1 am, and grabbed about three hours of sleep before starting the routine all over again.

That left homework and, later, detentions for not doing his homework, by the wayside. Taylor said he kept a mental tab on his detentions, even though he couldn't serve them because of his 4 pm starting time at work, a concept not understood by his teachers.

Taylor says that as a result of that gruelling schedule, he never learned how to study or do homework and was socially inept, never learning how to dance, skate or swim. He graduated from Vic High on a Friday and became a full-time sportswriter the following Monday.

Taylor chuckles as he recalls being shut out of typing class due to crowding and being coerced into taking Latin instead. He proudly boasts that he never opened his Latin textbook. He did enrol in typing class finally, but to this day he is probably the most talented and prolific four-finger (and an occasional thumb) typist in Canada.

"I will always be very, very grateful to Vic High," Taylor said in one of his rare serious moments. "In terms of a career, I owe everything to Stan Murphy."

Vic High Archives Open for All Alumni

Jill and Faith would want us to remind you that the Vic High Archives is open to visitors every Tuesday that classes are in session, from 9 am to noon. Our volunteers would be happy to show you the collection or help with research questions. Or you can email them any time at alumni@vichigh.com, or phone the school at 250-388-5456 and leave a voice-mail message.

FAITH REIMER HONOURED FOR HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VIC HIGH ARCHIVES

by Jill Wallace (VHS '66)



Faith Woodward's
grad photo, 1942

Today, we tend to take the Vic High Archives for granted. This rich collection of records and photos documenting the history of Vic High exists largely because of the remarkable efforts of one dedicated person, Faith (Woodward) Reimer (VHS '42).

In 1974, as planning commenced for the celebration of Vic High's 100th anniversary, Principal Duncan Lorimer approached Faith, then a Social Studies and English teacher at Vic High, and asked her if she would take on the task of creating the Vic High Archives.

Faith was the perfect person for the job. A 1942 grad, she returned to Vic High in 1967 to do her practicum and began teaching at the school in September 1968. Faith loved Vic High, she loved history, and she had amazing organizational skills. She approached this daunting challenge with enthusiasm and determination. Thus the Vic High Archives was born.

To start with, a great number of

historical records were found throughout the school – in the attic, in the basement, under stairwells, and in various nooks and crannies. The records included student registration cards from 1916 onward, exam results and attendance records dating back to the 1890s, handwritten correspondence from Principals dating back to the same era, a complete run of *Camosuns* since its founding in 1906, programs of concerts and plays, photographs dating back to the 1880s, and uniforms and trophies of school sports teams.

Faith created an accession system to organize and catalogue all these discoveries – and more – a system we continue to use this to this day. In addition, contributions began to flow in from Alumni, adding to the collection.

By the time of Vic High's Centennial celebration in May 1976, an enormous amount of work had been done. Peter Smith, author of the history *Come Give a Cheer*, paid tribute to what Faith had accomplished in two short years, describing her efforts as “truly heroic.” He noted that the collection was much more than a “sentimental hoard of academic nostalgia,” but rather “a significant historical resource” that reflected the social history of Victoria and southern Vancouver Island.

Faith's work in the Archives didn't end with the 1976 Centennial. She

continued to volunteer in the Archives until 2009 when ill health forced her to retire. Over the course of 35 years (1974-2009), Faith was responsible for accessioning 1873 items of the 2193 items recorded in the Archives – 85% of the records!

To honour her contribution to the Archives, last year the Vic High Alumni Association voted to name the Archives room the **Faith Reimer Room**. On June 1, 2010, a Tea was held at the Archives to honour Faith and unveil the plaque naming the room. The Tea was attended by current Archives volunteers, friends past and present, and of course Faith's family (including three of her four siblings, all Vic High grads from the 1940s, and her three children, two of whom were Vic High grads in the 1960s). Faith was recognized as being the guiding mind, spirit and workhorse behind the Archives. Without her remarkable combination of intelligence, dedication, persistence, perspective and attention to detail, the Vic High Archives would not be what it is today.

Faith spoke that day about how she loved every moment of the time she spent developing and enhancing the Archives. A labour of love, indeed.

Sadly, Faith passed away on July 16, 2010. The recognition of her contribution to the Archives gave her great pleasure in the last weeks of her life.

Jill Wallace, QC (1948-2011)

A longtime linchpin of the Alumni Association and editor of our newsletter, Jill Wallace passed away on March 1 after a lengthy battle with cancer. A celebration of her life was held at Vic High on March 10, in the auditorium named for her father, attended by more than 600 friends and family.

If the Alumni board were to name an MVP, it would surely have been Jill! Her family wrote a beautiful tribute that was published in the *Times Colonist*: you can read it by googling "Gillian Patricia Wallace".



Faith and Jill in the Archives, 2008

from page 1...

Dr. Don Elder (VHS '43) brought the welcome news that a patient of his, Jack Weber, had been one of the "Secret Sixty." I contacted Mr. Weber, and he provided us with a written memoir which is now housed in the Vic High archives.

Mr. Weber rode his bicycle to the dockyard each day from his

parents' home in James Bay. Armed guards were posted along the E&N Railway lines and at Colville and Admirals roads, while Royal Canadian Navy corvettes patrolled the harbour entrance looking for Japanese submarines.

Mr. Weber's recollections resulted in his appearing on Global TV's back-to-school special which aired

live from Vic High in September 2010. He was also featured in a *Times Colonist* article about the Secret Sixty, which resulted in still more archival finds: Youbou resident Allan Scott saw the article and had photographs (which were forbidden) of the ship in drydock. These photos are now also in the Vic High Archives.

REUNIONS IN 2011

Watch the Reunions page at www.vichigh.com for breaking news. Whatever years you were at the school, you can enable reunion organizers to find you by updating your email address on this website.

Class of 1951 – 60th Year Reunion

Date: Saturday June 18 at 1830 Thrush Road at Shawnigan Lake, north of Victoria.

For information and/or details, contact Rosemary Gibson (nee Leason) at jackroseg@shaw.ca, or telephone 250-743-5077, or snail mail at Box 66, Shawnigan Lake, BC V0R 2W0.

Class of 1961 – 50th Year Reunion

Date: May 6 and 7, 2011

Details: Details to follow. Please provide contact information and register your email address at www.vichigh.com

Contacts:

Rick Acres raga@shaw.ca
Sharon Chow 12507049877@pcs.rogers.com
Peter Haylett phaylett@shaw.ca
Dorothy Hosie pilcherd@shaw.ca
Russ Leach rfleech@shaw.ca
Pat McMurchy (250) 479-1545
Barbara Nipp (250) 388-7177
Genevieve Sawatsky
gmgoodenough@shaw.ca
Hugh Skillings hskillings@shaw.ca

Class of 1971 – 40th Year Reunion

Date: August 13, 2011

Details: Dinner and dance, 5 pm, Langford Legion, featuring Blue Moon Band. Thanks to all who have made this a "not to be missed" event. Please register soon – while tickets last!

Contact: ekell@shaw.ca or phone (250) 642-4010 for more information

REUNIONS IN 2012

Classes of 1952 and '53 – 60th and 59th Year Reunion

Date: June 1, 2 and 3, 2012

Details: Planning is underway for a reunion of 1952 and 1953 grads. We need grads to update their addresses, phone numbers and email addresses at www.vichigh.com

Contacts:

1952 grads: Barry Jenner, 250-477-3496 or email jennerbk@telus.net.
1953 grads: contact Pat Girvin, 250-386-7091 or email pgirvin@shaw.ca

Class of 1962 – 50th Year Reunion

Date: June 21 and 22, 2012

Details: Plans currently include an illustrated stroll through the halls, meet-and-greet at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, and a BBQ lunch on the Friday. Please update your contact information at www.vichigh.com and spread the word. If you can set up a website or help in other ways, we'd love to hear from you.

Contacts:

Bill Hoyt, 250-658-4908 or email

bhoyt@shaw.ca

Linda Bell, 250-727-0546 email

ladybug01@shaw.ca

Vicki Berry (Rigby), 250-658-2500 or email golf99@shaw.ca

Rob Peacey, 250-598-7817 or email rob.peacey@shaw.ca

ONGOING 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 email lunch list or to the grad list, please call Beth (Morrison) Barnes at 250-386-7272.

Class of 1948

The Class of 1948 meets for lunch on the first Wednesday of November each year. The get-together is held at 1pm in Samuels Restaurant. The contact is Ken Leighton, 250-652-2686 or email kenleighton@telus.net

RECENT REUNIONS

There were at least seven grad class reunions in 2010, with celebrations held by the grad classes of 1940, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1968 and 1970! To see reports from the organizers, go to www.vichigh.com and click on Reunions, then Reunions in 2010.

If you haven't been to a Vic High reunion lately, maybe you should help organize one! For planning suggestions, see our website under Reunions.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The Vic High Alumni Association works hard for you and the school in four important areas:

1. Supporting alumni through events such as reunions and special celebrations, and by enabling you to reconnect with each other via our website.
2. Helping today's Vic High through scholarships and bursaries, and by supporting special activities such as sports and the arts. These areas are often under the greatest financial pressure, but add so much to school spirit.
3. Keeping alumni informed about news of Vic High and its alumni through the website and this newsletter.
4. Building, managing and maintaining the remarkable Vic High Archives. For 35 years it has provided amazing resources for class reunions and family research all free of charge.

By the responses we receive, we know that these services are

important to you. However, we can maintain them only if you continue to help support us.

We use your donations to pay for services such as the newsletter, website, and Archives. We also work at continually building up our endowments that provide stable funding for scholarships and other support for today's school. We keep our endowment funds – currently with over \$200,000 in capital – at arm's length, managed by the Vancouver and Victoria Foundations. We do not use any paid fundraisers.

We know that the past few years have been difficult for many people and their investments. Unfortunately, it is at just such times when the “extras” that mean so much to school life are most at risk.

We ask for your continued support. Please donate by using the form below or online through www.vichigh.com. We send tax receipts for all donations.

Vic High, its students, and your fellow alumni are depending on you.

EMAIL ADDRESSES PLEASE

To ensure you receive our Newsletter and Bulletins, please check www.vichigh.com to make sure we have your email address.

Click on **Find Alumni**, then on your **grad year**, and flip through **Next** pages to find your name. If the E-mail column indicates **Not On File** then click on **Register** at the top and follow the instructions.

There is no cost for registering on our website, for contacting other Alumni through the website, or for receiving email copies of our newsletter and bulletins. You can also read past issues by clicking on **News** at the top of the screen.

SEAT SALE

For only \$200, you can have a commemorative plaque permanently mounted on a seat of your choice in the Lawrie Wallace Auditorium. For details, go to www.vichigh.com and click on Support Us, then Seat Sale.

For a photo of the plaques, see the recent Bulletin we published on Dorothy Evans, former orchestra teacher at Vic High: go to www.vichigh.com and click on News, then Bulletins.

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: () _____

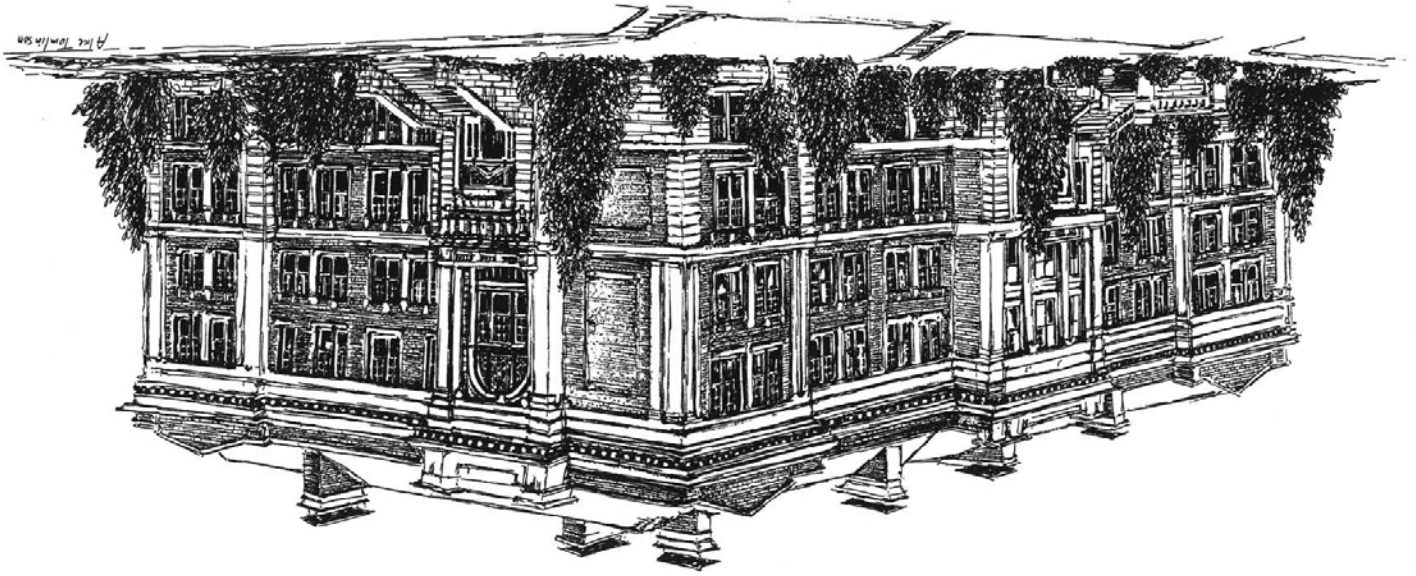
E-mail: _____ VHS years: _____

\$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).



Alumni News
VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL



Victoria High School Alumni News
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