



VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL Alumni News

Spring 2012

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VIC HIGH MEMORIAL TREES REPLANTED AND REDEDICATED



On November 10, 2011, almost a thousand people attended a public ceremony outside Vic High's newly-renovated Vining Street entrance to rededicate the school's memorial maple trees.

The two rows of silver maples were originally dedicated on April 20, 1917, to commemorate the second anniversary of the Second Battle of Ypres. Planted as vigorous saplings, they grew to full height in succeeding decades, providing shade between Vic High's tennis courts and grass hockey field. A few disappeared in recent years, due to damage or disease, and the remainder were removed during the construction of the new Fairey Tech wing north of the Andrews (New) Gym. The old trees survive only on Google Maps: search for the intersection of Vining and Fernwood, then click on the Street View inset.

There was a strong commitment on the part of staff, students, and the school board that the memorial trees would be replaced and rededicated. After broad consultation, the species



Cadets lay a Remembrance Day wreath at one of the new memorial maples

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Dr. Barry Gough at ceremony.

chosen was red maple, in honour of both the original memorial trees and of the maple's symbolic significance to all Canadians.

Current staff and students worked with the Alumni Association to organize the ceremony, which was held as a special version of the school's well-known Remembrance Day assembly. Guest speakers introduced by Principal Randi Falls included Denise Savoie, MP for Victoria and Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons; His Worship



KITCHENER MEMORIAL OAK
 1917
 THIS TREE COMMEMORATES THE LIFE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE'S FAMOUS SOLDIER, FIELD MARSHAL EARL KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR, WHO DIED, WHILE ON SERVICE, 5 JUNE 1916. PLANTED AND DEDICATED 20 APRIL 1917.

Plaque to be installed on Grant Street entrance, while the plaque for the "Kitchener Oak," also planted in 1917, is to be set into a block of granite beside that tree on Grant Street between Fernwood and Camosun.

The text on these plaques was composed by the noted Canadian historian Dr. Barry Gough (VHS '56), who has also written a pair of Bulletins on this topic for the Alumni website: to read them, visit www.vichigh.com and click on News, then Bulletins. Technical support for the casting of the plaques was provided by Fred Packford (VHS '49), a long-time teacher at Vic High and Honorary Director of the Alumni Association.

At the November 10 ceremony, Dr. Gough, now Chair of the Alumni Board, spoke on behalf of our Association. His remarks concluded as follows:

"It is said that Canada came of age by this Great War, and that may be true. But the important message is that in the end an Armistice was arranged, weapons were laid down, and a Peace forged. That a Second War would occur within a generation does not diminish the costs and sacrifices of the First, and it is to this that we return today and in this place, nearly a century after that conflict began and came upon us in Victoria to change our lives forever."

Photos by Jim Buchan



Front row from left: Barbara Strachan of the Canadian Club of Victoria, which sponsored the original plantings in 1917; MP Denise Savoie; Mayor Dean Fortin; school board chair Tom Ferris; city councillor Chris Coleman



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Randi Falls
 It's been a long journey, but well worth the planning and the wait. Our

new Fairey Tech facility opened this September with the official opening ceremonies held in November. Education Minister George Abbott toured the new addition, as well as the historic school, and he was very impressed with the opportunities we provide our students.

Our Remembrance Day ceremony in November was also an opportunity to "Rededicate" the Vining Street memorial maples, as described on pp 1-2. It was wonderful to work closely with our Alumni group to organize a truly memorable community event.

In athletics, one of our most successful Rowing seasons finished in November. Our female pairs team of Allie Eaton and Maria Buhne is particularly strong, finishing first in the City Championships this year. Boys soccer, girls volleyball, and boys and girls basketball all competed this season, and rugby has started its muddy season. Another "team sport" is more dramatic – our

Improv team. This year we won the Island Championships, and our senior team went to Ottawa in April to participate in the Nationals.

Our Graduating class is thriving this year. Three of our student leaders attended a Rotary Youth Leadership Conference in Washington State in March. Rotary International completely funded the conference registration, travel and accommodations for our students. We know they will share their new skills with our younger students when they return.

At our annual Scholarship recognition event in December, over \$87,000 in scholarships and bursaries were awarded to the students from the class of 2011. We are so fortunate to have the Alumni support for these scholarships that allow our students to pursue their post-secondary goals. A list of Alumni award recipients is posted

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY JUNE 4, 2012
5:15 PM
VIC HIGH STAFF ROOM
EVERYONE WELCOME

A HEARTFELT THANK-YOU

The Alumni Association recently received a thank-you note from a current Vic High student. She wrote to us after being notified of a bursary from the Association that will help her stay in school and graduate. Here is an excerpt:

I received this [bursary] because I am living independently and going to high school... [I want to] let everyone who is a part of the association know how deeply grateful I am to receive such a

generous thing. You have helped so very much. I now feel comfortable to drop one shift a week at my employment and focus on my classes I need to graduate. I wanted to let you know this has really affected my life for the better and I look forward to focusing on school and having a successful grad year.

The bursary, called the Gidney Award, was established in 2002 by Metchosin resident Norman Gidney in memory of his late wife Barbara. The Gidney Award provides a small monthly stipend to help keep a

on www.vichigh.com.

Teacher job action has impacted a few of our events this year. Our well-known Fine Arts night, however, went off without a hitch as students stepped forward and organized the entire evening. Teachers continue to inform parents and students of progress and achievement, although the forms of communication are less formal than the traditional report cards.

Vic High is teaming with some members in the community to celebrate the City of Victoria's 150th birthday in 2012 and the role of Victoria High School in the community over those years. The City has approved partial funding for a proposal we submitted in February called "Voices of the Elders." It is designed to create a lasting legacy for Vic High and will hopefully complement our amazing school Archives. Please watch the school's website at www.vichigh.sd61.bc.ca for updates and invitations to Alumni for interviews should this proposal be approved by the City.

As always, we invite all Alumni to come by for a visit to your high school. The school administration is happy to tour you around, and perhaps help you look for your grad class photo.

deserving student in school. The recipient is recommended by the school's Principal, with the advice of the counselling staff. The success rate of this award is 100%.

Each year, Alumni Board members are heartened by the thought that we have managed to help one deserving student stay in school and graduate. In the past few years, with endowment income below normal, we have used your annual donations to top up the award to its usual amount.

JAPANESE-CANADIAN STUDENT HONOURS A KIND VHS TEACHER

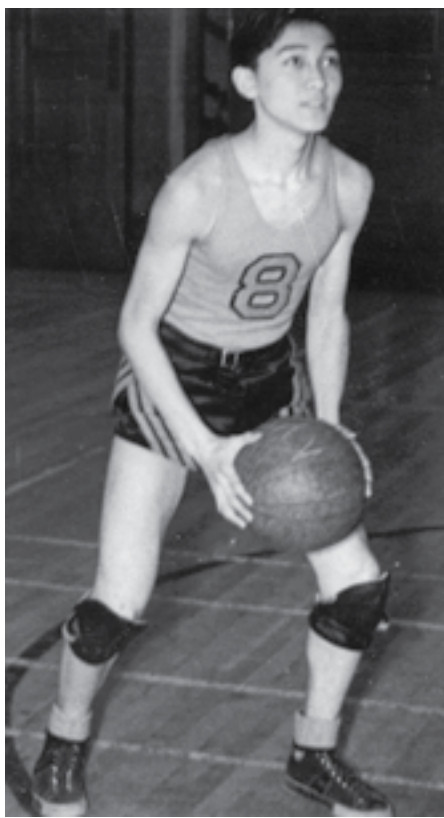
by King Lee (VHS '58)

Yoshio (Yon) Shimizu's final few days at Victoria High School in April 1942 still rank among the saddest of his 88-year life.

But he has chosen to remember happier Vic High days by having a seat plaque placed in the Lawrie Wallace Auditorium commemorating his years at the school and honouring his final homeroom teacher for her kindness nearly 70 years ago.

"I do not become bitter over anything," Shimizu said about Canada's forced removal of Japanese-Canadians from the Pacific Coast and subsequent internment in camps from the B.C. interior to eastern Canada in 1942.

Shimizu was an excellent student, a good athlete, and just two months



Yon Shimizu in his Totem gear

away from his Vic High 1942 graduation ceremony when he was forcibly separated from his family. He was shipped off to Schreiber, Ontario, and put to work as a kitchen helper in a work camp at the northern tip of Lake Superior, where men were building the new Trans-Canada Highway. His mother was placed in an internment camp at New Denver in the B.C. interior.

Shimizu recalls that there were approximately 40 Japanese families living in Victoria at that time. The Shimizu family lived in the area where Hillside Avenue, Douglas Street, Gorge Road and Government Street intersect.

Yoshio Shimizu was born in Victoria on February 21, 1924, and attended Oriental Home kindergarten, Quadra Primary (Grades 1-3) and North Ward Elementary schools (Grades 4-8) before entering Victoria High School in Grade 9. He is the last survivor of six boys and three girls in his family. Shimizu's father, who ran a dry goods store on Store Street near Victoria's Chinatown, died on New Year's Day in 1940.

In the spring of 1942, Shimizu and a half-dozen other Japanese-Canadian students at Vic High were taken away in reaction to the Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the preceding December. They were apprehended under the War Measures Act, which was passed in 1914 and invoked only three times in Canadian history.

On February 24, 1942, three days after Shimizu's 18th birthday, the Canadian government invoked a 100-mile-wide Pacific "protection" zone along the B.C. coastline in which people of Japanese origin were not allowed to live. Their property was seized, their jobs taken

away, and all Japanese men between the ages of 18 and 45 were taken to road-building camps or sugar beet farms across Canada. They were not allowed to work or go to school outside their camps or farms.

When Shimizu's family was informed of their pending fate, Yoshio turned to Vic High's legendary principal Harry L. Smith to help him stay and graduate. But after a week's effort, Smith informed him that the appeal was denied. Attendance records in the Vic High Archives show that Shimizu spent his final half-day at Vic High on Thursday, April 23, 1942.

In his book *Come Give A Cheer! One Hundred Years of Victoria High School* (1976), published as part of the Vic High Centennial celebrations, Smith's son, the late Dr. Peter Smith, wrote about the impact that the internment had on the school. The book records the memories of that dark period by Reg Reid, vice-principal of Vic High in



Outside the tarpaper shack that served as a cookhouse

the Centennial year and a student at the school in 1942.

"He remembers vividly the final morning assembly attended by his Japanese-Canadian schoolmates, a brief but emotional ceremony. Principal H.L. Smith read a favourite psalm and students recited the Lord's Prayer; then everyone filed out of the auditorium quietly, as the doors were held open by Yoshio Shimizu, a popular member of the Grade 12 class. Many of

Yoshio's fellow-students were in tears."

Yoshio Shimizu could not participate in his class graduation ceremony, and did not receive his Vic High graduation certificate. However, his photo and a brief thumbnail sketch appeared in the 1942 Vic High annual, *The Camosun*, which was prepared before Shimizu was forced to leave.

Beside his photo, his caption reads: "YOSHIO SHIMIZU – One of the brightest and most cheerful boys in our Div. whose activities include a great game of basketball and getting down on his knees for the cent-a-week fund."

Anyone can purchase a seat plaque to remember their time at Victoria High School or to honour someone special from the school. Plaques are just \$200 each, and are tax-deductible in Canada. For information on how to order a seat plaque, please visit the Alumni Association website at www.vichigh.com, or contact King Lee at linkin@shaw.ca or by telephone at 250-474-5951.

Peter Smith described the internment of Japanese-Canadians one of the most controversial episodes of the Second World War: "One can understand how, in the early months of the Pacific War, there could have been anxiety about espionage within the Japanese-Canadian fishing fleet (even without evidence of disloyalty). However, the preventative solution now appears unconscionably brutal, as it did then to many Victorians ..."

In September 1988, then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney issued a formal apology on behalf of the Canadian government to all Japanese-Canadians.

Shimizu cannot recall how he was able to enrol in Grade 13 at Toronto's Jarvis Collegiate Institute without proof of Grade 12 completion. Though he remembers a conversation at Vic High during his final days there when he was told he could complete his Grade 12 through correspondence courses, he subsequently received a letter (he thinks from the province's education department) informing him that he did not need to complete the correspondence courses and would be considered a high school graduate.

Shimizu, now legally blind and living with his wife, Norma, in Wallaceburg, Ontario, subsequently attended the University of Toronto and graduated in 1948 with a degree in chemical engineering. He also earned his MBA from the University of Windsor in 1976, the culmination of nine years of studies.

"It was just one of those things," he says matter-of-factly about his family's removal from Victoria in 1942. "You play the hand you're dealt."

Shimizu wrote a 600-page book, titled *The Exiles*, an archival history of the Japanese-Canadian road

camps in British Columbia and Ontario. It is drawn mainly from letters written to Japanese-language newspapers by the men in the work camps. The book was published in 1993 and he donated a copy to Victoria High School.

Shimizu contacted the Alumni Association to purchase a seat plaque in the Lawrie Wallace Auditorium. His plaque reads simply: "Yoshio (Yon) Shimizu, Class of '42, remembering Miss Mary W. Hamilton."

Not only was Miss Hamilton his last homeroom teacher at Vic High, she was also his French teacher for his last three years there. He particularly wanted to remember this kind teacher because she wrote letters of encouragement to him after he was transported to Schreiber. Miss Hamilton was a beacon of light and hope shining towards him from Victoria High School.

For that, he wanted to have her name on his plaque, even though he is unable to travel and probably will never have a chance to see it in person.

Yoshio Shimizu will be awarded a graduation certificate at Vic High's grad ceremony on June 5, 2012 – exactly 70 years after the grad that he never got to celebrate with his own class of 1942!

Photos courtesy Yoshio Shimizu and Tom Hawthorn



Chopping wood at the work camp

REUNIONS IN 2012

Watch the Reunions page at www.vichigh.com for more detailed information and for breaking news. Whatever your grad year, you can help reunion organizers find you by verifying or updating your email address on this website.

Class of 1950 – 62nd Year Reunion

Date: Friday June 1, 2012
Afternoon: events to include a tour of the school, archives, and new Fairey Tech facility.
Evening: Buffet banquet at the Union Club, 805 Gordon Street, followed by live dance music with a no-host bar.

Cost: \$85 per person, all-inclusive
Contacts: Colin R. Moir, 250-477-3463 or crmoir@shaw.ca
 Ron Champion, campersr-h@shaw.ca
Class of 1952/53 – 60th and 59th Year Reunions

Dates: June 1, 2, and 3, 2012
Friday: Tour of VHS followed by Wine & Cheese at UVic, Cadboro Commons
Saturday: Buffet dinner followed by dance music (cash bar)
Sunday: picnic at Fort Rodd Hill
Cost: \$100 per person all-inclusive
 Please make cheques payable to Vic High 52/53 Reunion and mail to: 1952: Blyth Hughes, 760 Walema Ave., Victoria BC V8Y 3B1, 250-708-8882, blythhughes@shaw.ca; 1953: Ruth Timnick, 210 - 1610

Jubilee Ave., Victoria BC V8R 6P3, 250-598-5153, nicktim@shaw.ca
Class of 1962 – 50th Year Reunion
Dates: June 21 and 22, 2012
Thursday: Welcome at the school followed by meet-and-greet at Royal Victoria Yacht Club (no host bar)
Friday: Lunch at the Uplands Golf Club
 Please ensure that your email address and/or phone number has been provided to one of the committee members. Also, please spread the word to your fellow '62 grads. We are currently searching for someone with the technical skills and interest to create a DVD presentation. Please send your memorabilia as a .jpg Bill Hoyt at the email address below.
Contacts: Bill Hoyt, 250-658-4908 or bhoyt@shaw.ca
 Linda Bell, 250-727-0546 or ladybut01@shaw.ca
 Vicki Berry (Rigby), 250-658-2500 or golf99@shaw.ca
 Rob Peacey, 250-598-7817 or [rob.peacey@shaw.ca](mailto:peacey@shaw.ca)
Class of 1972 – 40th Year Reunion
Date: Saturday September 22, 2012
 Dinner/dance at the Chief and PO's Mess, Lyall Street. Other details TBA. Please contact us if you'd like to help, and spread the word to other classmates. Please make sure your contact information on www.vichigh.com is current, especially your email address.

Contacts: Beth Barnes 250-386-7272 or vichighclass72@shaw.ca
 Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/srch.php#!/groups/211596495559710/>
Class of 2002 – 10th Year Reunion
Date: June 23 and 24, 2012
Saturday: Mixer at the Fernwood Inn, with entertainment by the Vic R&B band
Sunday: school tour/walkthrough from 1-3 pm as well as a 'sports day' out on the lawn!
Contacts: Roselynn at rverwoor@uvic.ca, Kristie-Lyn at kristielynmorris@gmail.com, or Sarah at ssteinerstauch@gmail.com
 Please ensure your contact info is up-to-date at www.vichigh.com. Also, your help with any part of the weekend's events would be greatly appreciated! Hope to see everyone there!

Recent Reunions

There were at least four grad class reunions in 2011, with celebrations held by the classes of 1950, 1951, 1961 and 1971. To see reports from the organizers, go to www.vichigh.com and click on Reunions, then Reunions in 2011.
 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.

VIC HIGH ARCHIVES RE-OPENS IN NEW LOCATION

The Vic High Archives is now open in a new and more convenient location. Formerly tucked into a corner near the Vining Street entrance, the Archives had to be packed up last spring due to a reconfiguration of hallways and fire exits for the new Fairey Tech wing. When school re-opened in September, our faithful Archives volunteers set to work

unpacking and reshelving the entire collection in its new location. The Vic High Archives is now located just inside the 100-level Girls' Entrance on Grant Street. The new room retains both its number (100) and its name – the Faith Reimer Room, in honour of the Vic High grad and former teacher who created the collection.

The Archives is open every Tuesday that school is in session, from 9 am to 12 noon. Our volunteers Anne, Debbie, Jim and Frank welcome any enquiries related to Vic High, its staff and students. Please drop in and say hello; or you can write to them c/o the school, or leave a voice-mail message at 250-388-5456.

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The ongoing work of the Vic High Alumni Association is very dependent on your annual donations. Without this support, it would not be possible to maintain Alumni services such as the website and this newsletter.

The Association is a registered charitable organization governed by a volunteer Board. It has four main operations:

1. Keeping alumni informed about news of Vic High and its alumni.
2. Supporting alumni through events such as reunions and special celebrations, and by enabling you to reconnect with each other via our website.
3. Helping today's Vic High students through scholarships and bursaries, and by supporting special activities such as sports and the arts. While these areas are often under the greatest financial pressure, they are vital to the life of the school.
4. Building, managing and maintaining the remarkable Vic

High Archives. For over 35 years it has provided amazing resources for class reunions and family research – all free of charge.

We use your donations to pay for services such as the newsletter, website, and Archives. We also work at continually building up our endowment funds that provide stable funding for scholarships and other support for today's school. These endowments, which currently total over \$200,000, are kept at arm's length, managed by the Vancouver and Victoria Foundations.

We do not do any telephone soliciting or use any paid fundraisers, and we limit our requests to just two per year, in the spring and the fall. This is the spring one.

We know that the past few years have been difficult for many people and their investments. But 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 at www.vichigh.com.

[vichigh.com](http://www.vichigh.com). We send tax receipts for all donations.

EMAIL ADDRESSES PLEASE

Please ensure that we have your correct email address:

1. Go to vichigh.com and click on Find Alumni
2. Select your grad year and scroll through to find your name
3. If the Status column indicates Not On File, then click on Change Form for Alumni under SubNavigation and follow the instructions
4. If we have your email address, there will be an "envelope" icon in the Status column. Click on the envelope, enter your postal code and email address, and select Verify Yourself. Your email address that is registered will be displayed.
5. If the email address you enter does not match the one registered, an error message will appear with instructions on what to do.

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. Past issues are also available on the website.

DONATION AND MAIL FORM

Registered Charity #889708467RR001

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 email; or you can email us at alumni@vichigh.com.

Name: _____ Grad year _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone Number: () _____ Email: _____

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

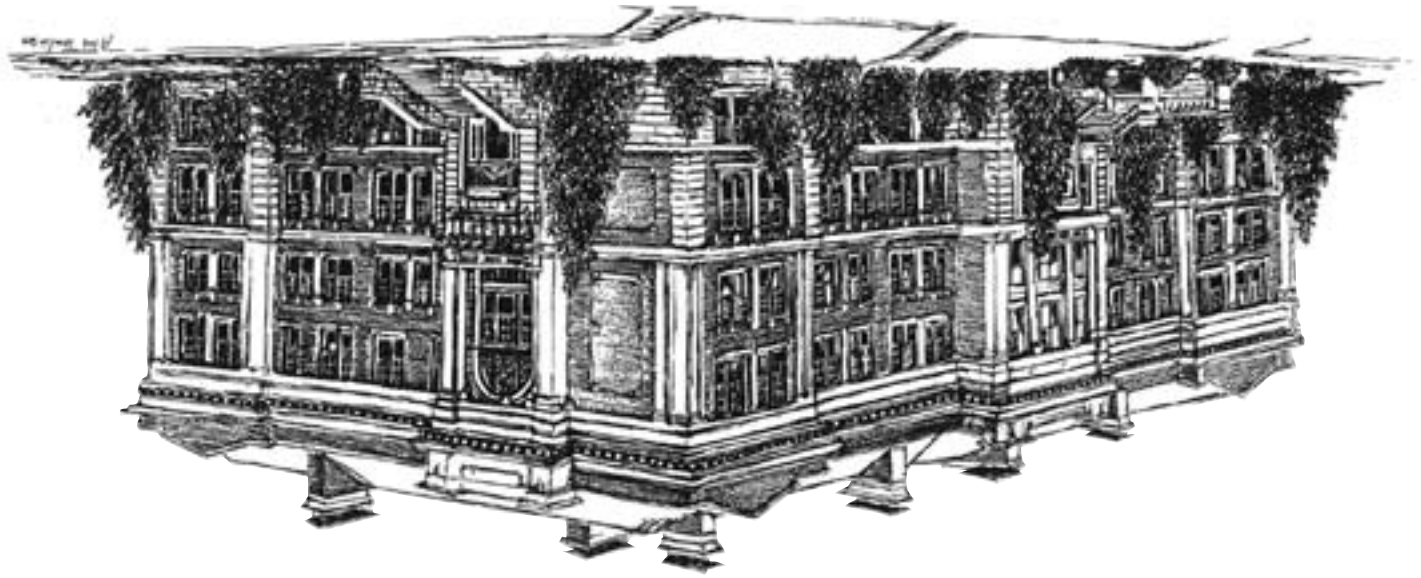
Enclosed is my cheque payable to the Victoria High School Alumni Association OR Use your Visa or Mastercard to make your donation online at www.vichigh.com or at www.canadahelps.org

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

We would like to post the name of donors on our website. If you do not want your name included, check this box.

Vic High Alumni Association • c/o Victoria High School • 1260 Grant St. • Victoria, BC V8T 1C2



Alumni News
VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL



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