



South Collegiate Alumni Association  
Spring 2013



# LIONS' PRIDE

*Virtus Repulsae Nescia Sordidae*

## SCAA keeps Garnet and Grey from fading away

by Sandy Ross ('79)

Some 15 years ago, alumnus **Bill Janzenberger ('73)**, and **Pete Telford (staff, 1978-98)** spearheaded the foundation of the SCAA (South Collegiate Alumni Association) – in part, to set up academic bursaries and help preserve our school history. With both goals fulfilled and ongoing, other meaningful benefits spilled over from this affiliation, thanks to enthusiastic focus and leadership, recruiting others.

Today, it's believed ours is the only high school in Ontario with an annual fall Homecoming and, in the Thames Valley District, one of just two or three with its own alumni association. No surprise there. Most alumni have always felt South holds a uniquely warm sense of family, collegial bonds connecting us.

*"When we established SCAA in 1999, I had no idea it would grow and develop to this extent. We've been approached by a half-dozen high schools for advice on how to build an alumni association. I guess they recognize we've done several things right! Most significant, though, are endorsements of the staff, school administration, and the Old South community for 'jobs well-done'. That makes it all worthwhile."* **Pete Telford**

Since setting its 1998 constitution, the SCAA has boasted executive boards of over 30 volunteers through the years, spanning classes of 1940 (late **Bill Christiani**) to 2007 (**Dan Knight**) as well as alumni who were staff, including Pete himself. In fact, Pete is the only original board member still serving on the SCAA. **Carolyn MacVicar ('80)**, another original board member resigned just recently, but remains on the Reunion Committee. (See SCAA Profiles on page 3)



### Lions give back ... abundantly!

True to Bill and Pete's early vision, SCAA has donated over \$60,000 to the school to date. About two thirds (\$45K) has been presented in the form of student awards at Commencement. Another award given annually honours a peer-nominated staff member.

Another \$10K went towards a grand piano, \$5K helped build a new gym floor, and more recently, \$1K paid for hardware for a new auditorium curtain. Interestingly, it was the school's 'Roar for the Floor' fundraising campaign that inspired an additional, monumental gift from an individual alumnus, **Matt Giffen ('85)**.

In this case, our football field was the beneficiary. Matt was moved to create a lasting memorial to his late father, **James Giffen ('49)**, because *"he played football on this field 60 years ago for Coach Ernie McTavish"*. When Matt himself was in Grade 9, a struggling 5<sup>th</sup> string quarterback, he and his Dad practised together on South's field – *"some of my happiest memories"*, Matt reflected. Aptly called the **James A. Giffen Field** – sporting revitalized turf, bleachers, track paving, and a high-tech score board – its 2007 dedication began the first of our annual Homecoming events.

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## Homecomings and reunions

Homecoming has proven a remarkable success, each attracting crowds of up to 2,000 roaring fans – winning prestigious endorsement by Tourism London’s Cheryl Finn, who “recognizes this event as a critical part of sport tourism in London”. **Dan Knight ('07)**, of Day2Knight Events, was key in securing sponsors’ dollars and organizing these Thanksgiving weekend events of Lions football, BBQ, and libation on the parking ramp. An Alumni Golf Tournament has also been added in the past few years.

Also since SCAA’s inception, South marked two major birthdays – a 75<sup>th</sup> in 2003, attended by 2,500 people, and this 85<sup>th</sup>. The former expanded our network of alumni, and with it, support for South. And the reunion committee’s insights, gained from orchestrating the 75<sup>th</sup>, gave birth to a ‘Lessons Learned’ manual, free to alumni keen to run their own class event.

## Keeping the “Lions” of Communication Open

Since SCAA’s early days, *Lions’ Pride* newsletters have created warm connections for some 2,500 readers, twice yearly. Interesting content comes thanks to your letters, news, and article contributors. Nods also to editors over the years: **Alayne (Fulton) Kleser ('93)**, **Ken Steele('83)**, this wordsmith **Sandy Ross ('79)** and since 2005, **Connie (Woods) Weir, ('66)**. While print copies are still the bulk of deliveries, online archives are linked in ‘latest issue’ notices emailed to 1,800+ alumni.

Our online presence launched a decade ago, [www.southalumni.ca](http://www.southalumni.ca), and its contact management is thanks to **Digital Echidna** – a significant donation by owner, **Andrew McClenaghan ('97)**. Later, ‘word-of-mouth’ expanded with a companion site, [www.south1928.ca](http://www.south1928.ca), so named to be useful both for this 85<sup>th</sup> and any future milestone reunions.



More recently, a **Business Directory** was initiated to showcase entrepreneurial alumni, free online at our SCAA home page. Not yet listed? There will be a quick sign-up form at SCAA’s reunion booth. Alternatively, contact directory manager, [scaa-dir@sandyross.ca](mailto:scaa-dir@sandyross.ca), 519.871.word (9673).

## Namesakes, facelifts, honour rolls, film rolls

Proving preservation is valued by SCAA, we successfully reinstated the original **‘London South Collegiate’** name (from its interim South Secondary School), gaining board approval in 2009. Signage is changing to reflect that and, with watchdog nudging by directors like **Knute Dohnberg ('65)**, media are re-learning our correct name for news items.

Among SCAA’s many restorative projects, we’ve refinished and relocated the original Honour Roll display tablets at the front entrance; engaged UWO’s Archives Program graduates to establish a proper archive system for LSCI, securing its own room (219); initiated restoration and display of Students’ Council photos in the cafeteria; catalogued a collection of 16mm films (300+ films from the old Film Arts Program); and begun converting these films to DVD.

*“We should really remember and thank ‘Stormin’ Norman’ Hargreaves for retrieving and storing as many student films as he was able, when it looked like they’d be lost forever. A few years ago, classmates and I had a look through the archive for films we’d worked on, and were thrilled to find several there. It was*

*a unique program, and the films are truly a treasure that’s worth preserving.”*

**Pete Martin ('77)**

Garnet + grey = green? You bet! Landscaping is another SCAA focus and in 2009, we began a **Beautification Project** for South’s exterior. Fanshawe’s Landscape Design students presented 35 proposals – some on view at the Reunion. Now, we need inspired helping hands and a few green thumbs to take this project forward. To dig in, register at SCAA’s reunion booth or email us anytime at [contact@southalumni.ca](mailto:contact@southalumni.ca).

More specific to the Reunion, we initiated improvements to LSCI’s entrance, both outside (gardens and signage) and inside (lobby and front hallway). Vice-Principal, **Todd Woollings ('89)** – SCAA board liaison to LSCI Administration – worked closely with **Teri Levack’s** art students for the visual creativity in many such signs and displays – all in time for our 85<sup>th</sup>.

## Nostalgia and stewardship

So, SCAA’s history of achievement is impressive, yes? But then, our alma mater’s entirely deserving. Maybe it’s moved you to show appreciation and loyalty to South. You can join the SCAA for just \$10. To be more engaged, consider board service, which is for this member at least, a rewarding mix of nostalgia and stewardship – paying forward while remembering back. Friendships in school were important, certainly, but being able to rekindle them at life’s ‘half-time’ ... priceless!

**Sandy Ross (.ca), class of 1979, Word’s Worth**