



"Promoting and maintaining a sense of community among all Riverdallians."

Spring/Summer

Happy Holidays

June, 2003

**Riverdale Welcomes
New Principal
Ralph Nigro**

Ralph Nigro, a graduate of Harbord Collegiate Institute and the University of Toronto, returned to R.C.I. as principal in February, 2003. He began his teaching career in 1988, teaching history, French and Special Ed.

Mr. Nigro spent eight years at Danforth C.I. & T.S. where he was Head of History and Gifted Program Facilitator. In 1998-1999, he was Head of History at Riverdale Collegiate.

Principal Nigro comes to us from Nelson A. Boylen C.I. and Newtonbrook Secondary School where he served as Vice-Principal.

All Riverdallians extend their most sincere welcome and good wishes to Principal Nigro and look forward to interesting and challenging times ahead.

**Well Wishes to R.C.I.
Retirees:**

Bonnie Drechsel
Roswitha Seliger
John Fallis
M.S.

Centennial Anniversary

May 11-13, 2007

THANK YOU

**for your
continued support
in preparing for
RCI's 100th Birthday.**

**Please join our
planning meeting
held**

7:00 P.M.

in school staffroom:

Wed. Sept. 10, 2003

Mon. Jan. 12, 2004

Tues. June 8, 2004

**Riverdale Picture
Collection
&
Centennial Book
Update**

You are one of over 12,000 people who have attended and benefited from R.C.I. and you are being urged to be part of the **Alumni Picture Collection & Restoration Project** and the **Centennial Book**, both of which will celebrate in 2007 over a century of service to the community. We need your pictures, anecdotes, volunteer time as class/decade reps and workers and your financial support!

This year an additional 17 beautifully framed pictures have been added to the collection. A brass plaque identifying the donor is attached to donated pictures.

Your stories describing your Riverdale days are urgently needed for the **Centennial Book**. We would like all the decades well represented and we urge you to send us your anecdotes about life at Riverdale.

If you would like to be part of our centennial efforts, please contact us and/or send your material to the school. Contact information may be found in masthead on page two. M.S.

Scholarship Fund

Your continued support of the Alumni Scholarship fund is very much appreciated and your Alumni Association would very much like to say "Thank you" to those who have contributed, and encourage all to support this very worthwhile initiative. Your contribution is invested and the revenue generated is used to guarantee a \$1000. bursary that is awarded annually to a deserving Riverdale graduate to help with the ever-increasing costs of postsecondary education. We would like to increase the opportunities for this bursary, and we are asking for your support. You will receive a tax receipt for your gift. Please consider us in your annual charitable donations and make your cheque to Riverdale Collegiate Institute Charitable Foundation. M.S.



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& associates of
the Institute.

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Principal Ralph Nigro

It's a real pleasure to come back to Riverdale Collegiate Institute and an honour to assume the duties of School Principal; and follow in the footsteps of Linda Grieve. I was last at Riverdale during the 1998/1999 school year, and it is still the wonderful place that it was when I left.

Despite a "work to rule" that began in March of this year, our students have still been able to take advantage of a multitude of co-instructional activities offered at R.C.I. Our music students took part in the Kiwanis Festival this year and once again represented Riverdale with great pride. Our many sports teams have again this year demonstrated their commitment to teamwork and fair play. A real credit to their coaches! Our annual variety show, *Kaleidoscope*, was a great success as well as our drama night in April.

These are only a small sampling of the many opportunities that our students have to get

involved in school life at Riverdale. These activities would not be possible without the efforts of a dedicated and caring school staff.

On March 19th a reception was held to recognize the students who achieved honour roll status. Parents and guardians were also invited to take part in this very special event. In all, 266 students achieved honour roll status.

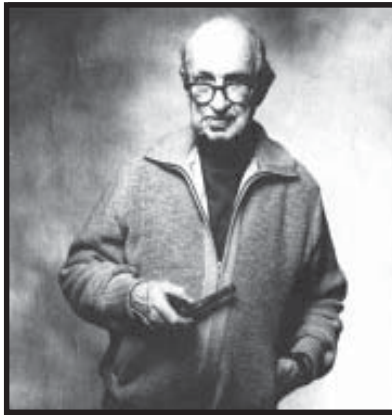
As we look forward to the end of the school year, planning is well underway for our athletic banquet, prom and commencement exercises in November.

This year we will be saying goodbye to retiring R.C.I. teachers, Rosewitha Seliger, John Fallis & Bonnie Drechsel. Rosewitha is Head of Moderns and has served at Riverdale since 1969. John has worked in the Riverdale History Department for his entire 32-year teaching career. Bonnie is the Head of Library and has served at Riverdale since 1981. We thank Rosewitha, John and Bonnie for their service to Riverdale and wish them well in their future endeavors.

We welcome all alumni to our next meeting Tuesday, June 10th, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in the RCI Staffroom. We are always looking for new volunteers to assist us with the planning of our 100th Anniversary Celebration in 2007.

Writers In Our Midst

(Editor's note: Future newsletters will include excerpts from Richard A. Hazzard's article "Writers in Our Midst" to be published in the 2007 Centennial Booklet. M.S.)



Author Morley Callaghan

Morley E. Callaghan (1903-1990) - perhaps our most famous alumnus - was a novelist, a writer of short stories and a columnist for the *Toronto Daily Star* where he met Ernest Hemingway.

Callaghan studied at Riverdale Collegiate from 1916 to 1921. He acquired there a taste for American literature. Callaghan also liked sports, serving as junior captain of the football team and as pitcher on the baseball team.

Soon after his graduation, he sold his first story to the *Toronto Star Weekly* and entered the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto. He was called to the Bar in

1928, but took Hemingway's advice and became a writer of fiction. His first novel was *Strange Fugitive* (1928); his first tome of short stories was *A Native Argosy* (1929). Only during the Depression, however, did Callaghan reach his stride with *Such is My Beloved* (1934), *They Shall Inherit the Earth* (1935) and *More Joy in Heaven* (1937). There, he attained an economy of style and a lucidity of expression although his mood was often dark. Both he and Hemingway remained ardent friends and boxers. Callaghan described their boxing match at the American Club in his autobiographical *That Summer in Paris* (1963).

Callaghan won critical acclaim outside Canada. The American critic, Edmund Wilson, named Callaghan in 1965 as, "perhaps the most unjustly neglected novelist in

the English-speaking world."

In his later years, Callaghan recalled his student days at Riverdale with much affection.



Riverdalian Callaghan

"Looking back on it now," he wrote, "I see it as a happy place in a lot of sunshine... football, baseball and public speaking were a few of the many activities that attracted me."



The Riverdale Collegiate of Morley Callaghan

**Riverdale Collegiate &
Alumni Host
Metro Debating
Tournament**

Judy (Gribben) Endacott

R.C.I. hosted the regional finals of the Metro Debating Championships on February 8th, and 36 Riverdale Alumni volunteered to serve as judges for this huge event. Fifty teams consisting of two debaters each competed. The teams were from public, private and Catholic high schools across the GTA. They had to debate both sides of the resolution: "Is the United States the greatest threat to world peace?" It was evident the amount of research and training that had gone into the presentations. For the most part, the debaters presented with confidence and poise and could defend their position with skill. That they had closely followed current events and had researched extensively was evident in the scope of the evidence presented. I learned that teens could present evidence and draw logical conclusions, even if some of the "evidence" was a little weak. I was glad I was not pitted against any of the teams we judged!

In the afternoon with 15 minutes to prepare, the teams had to defend or oppose the resolution: "Be it resolved, the Raccoon should be the official animal of Ontario." Minutes into the first debate, I wondered how I could possibly choose a winner?

Apart from one little attack of nerves, the teens were well spoken and organized. Different approaches to the resolution meant that the two debates we judged brought different evidence in support of their position, and I got to be impressed all over again!

It should be noted that there were more judges per debate (3 or 4) than in any other year of the event's twenty-year history! This is largely due to the participation and generosity of our Alumni! We were very much appreciated by the organizers, especially Bert de Vries, a current Riverdale teacher. I am so glad I was not alone! Many thanks to Doug Allen, Freda Barrett, Mr. Brown (husband of alumna Michelle Scrimgeour-Brown), Elaine Dalzie, Graham Mills, Ety Green, Linda Grieve, Ken Johnston, Shirley Miller, Joy Montgomery, Dorothy Nash, Joe Nash, Barbara Newby, Karin Normann, Maureen Oldfield, Janet Pond, Leah Prizeman, Hugh Prizeman, Lynn Rogers, Frances Share, Doug Slade, Lynn Slade, Alberta Stinson, Clare Stubbings, Joyce Wall, Verna Watson, Jerry Wells, Frank Yao, Judy Endacott, Mike Schmidt, Mr. Garner, Aloysius Siow, Angela Fitzsimmons,

At the end of the day, North Toronto C.I. came in 3rd and Riverdale came in 4th! Both are in the Metro East District and the result is considered excellent! Two RCI debaters,

Alexander Banks and Mohammed Shuriye, placed in the top 9 and will compete in the Provincials. I heard many favorable comments about RCI itself, from parents and teachers from other schools. All in all, it was a great day for Riverdale youth and Alumni. I had fun in spite of my misgivings.

We wish the Riverdale team all the best in the provincials and congratulate all participants on their accomplishments.

Mailing list note: All of the alumni judges" listed in this report are not on record in the Alumni database. Please forward your contact information to the school or use the email addresses listed in the masthead to ensure that we always have your street & email addresses and your phone & fax numbers. This way we can keep you up to date on important events.



**Dianne Duff
Miss Riverdale 1954**



**Gretchen Bohme
1915 - 2002**

Gretchen Katherine Bohme, a graduate of St. Hilda's College, University of Toronto, served as secretary of Riverdale Collegiate for 35 years, retiring in December, 1978. She was immensely popular with both staff and students as was evidenced by a wonderful, capacity-filled testimonial dinner held in her honour in the Great Hall of Hart House, University of Toronto at the time of her retirement from Riverdale.

As well as being a shrewd bridge player, Gretchen was a keen outdoors person and spent considerable time canoeing and sailing at Bass Lake and Lake Couchiching and very much enjoyed the cottage life and skiing in the Meaford-Collingwood-Orilla area. She loved travel and along with her 1930's Amelia Earhart suitcase and crimson red sleeping bag would venture off to the scenic wonders of beautiful British Columbia, the marvels of Manitoulin Island and the restful serenity of the Mediterranean.

She was a surrogate grandmother for her nephews and nieces and was described as "...a kind generous and thoughtful person who enjoyed a good laugh with family and friends." All Riverdalians will attest to this. M.S.



**Martin Applebaum '55
Daughter Samara**

Thank you, Marty, for your yeoman effort and inspiring chairmanship during our preparations for Riverdale's 75th Anniversary celebrated in 1982.

You and your superb contribution to the wonderful success of the 75th has come up frequently in our deliberations as we organize and plan for Riverdale's Centennial Celebration in the spring of 2007. Your address to the student body following the '82 celebrations still rings true as Riverdale continues to change and grow in both philosophy and practice in meeting new demands and servicing a diverse, sophisticated and ambitious student body. In your words, Marty, R.C.I. continues to evolve into a "justifiably proud, multicultural launching pad for tomorrow's leaders." And again we thank you for your contribution in '82 toward that goal.

Life is made up of memories, good and not so good; and though it may not be possible "to go home again" in the real sense of that expression, it is our most sincere wish to see you visit with us soon.

Riverdale extends to you and your new family every good wish and good fortune in the years ahead.

M.S.



John Tran '90

(Editor's note: John, a superb Riverdale student and engineering scholar, is an extra-ordinary young person who has accomplished much in his short years. The following is his story of flight from Vietnam, a saga of courage, pain & joy. John was also one of my very best yearbook editors. M.S.)

Always Saigon

I am from a city called Saigon in the southern part of Vietnam (it is now called Ho Chi Minh City but to me it will always be Saigon). It was a city populated by a majority of Chinese people. During the turn of the century, many merchants and entrepreneurs settled in Saigon from various parts of China in the hopes of making a fortune. My great grandfather, for example, started a large factory in Saigon, which produced parts for steam engines around 1900. My grandfather (mom's dad) and all of my uncles continued this line of work until they left Vietnam. My other grandfather (who passed away when I was two) also settled in Saigon from China. He was a carpenter, but also built houses. He married my beloved grandmother who was a native Vietnamese woman (but she had to learn Chinese because my grandfather refused to speak Vietnamese). The Chinese population in Saigon was so large

that in many schools, the Chinese language is compulsory beginning at the elementary level, much like French is here.

Many Hong Kong folks very frequently ask members of my family how come we speak Chinese so fluently (without any trace of a Vietnamese accent). My parents would reply very simply, "We are Chinese! Why should we not speak it fluently?" My brother and I would reply, "We do too have accents, eh! Canadian accents!"

Farm of Bees

I can vividly remember the climatic scene that hot afternoon in April, 1975. I was sitting by the back window on the second floor of my grandmother's house. The bright blue canvas of the sky was painted with flying machines as far as I could see. The image was like a farm of bees, busily buzzing away at their tasks. Some had a propeller on the top and some had two. Some had a red cross on the body and some were painted with a camouflage of many shades of green. I had no idea what was going on. I only knew it was marvelous.

I must have sat there for many hours because the sky gradually darkened and mosquitoes started to bite. The next morning my father held my brother and me by the hands and took us down to the streets. This was yet another marvel. There were broken guns everywhere. I headed to pick the handle of one up but was very quickly pulled back by my father. In the distance were a couple of abandoned tanks. A few teenagers popped the lid, jumped in and somehow managed to make it move about five meters before being stopped by some nervous

adults.

That afternoon, a parade of missiles, tanks and trucks of North Vietnamese soldiers rolled through the main streets of the city. My father, my brother and I stood in front of my aunt's bicycle shop and watched - my brother and me with marvel and my father with disgust - as the display of power was presented. In the mist of the sounds of engines and cheers from the soldiers, I heard my father bitterly mutter, "They won..."

Nine Days, Eight Nights

The drama that shaped a part of my existence began on the first day of May, 1979 (which was ironically exactly four years after they won). We boarded a wooden boat at a small village not too far from Saigon - all hundred and fifty of us. After settling some initial problems (like people bringing too much on the boat), we were on our way. The way we left was considered 'open' which meant the local officials had knowledge of our actions. This was done by bribing the officials with a few bars of gold. The other way of flight was to go secretly, as many who have arrived at Hong Kong had done.

I knew that we were leaving our home - forever. However, I did not know where we were going. Whenever my brother and I whined about going home, my mother would comfort us by saying that we are going to America, where we will eat apples and chocolate and enjoy all the things we did not have in Vietnam. We were going to live in a big house and to have a car and above all to be free. All I saw in the distance was the water touching the sky and nothing else in sight - no land, no America, no apples and chocolate, no house, no

car. The route we took was via the Gulf of Thailand. The first two days were not too horrific, except for the seasickness that afflicted almost the entire boat. Lemon juice with sugar seemed to help. We still had plenty



of fresh water and there was still enough food to feed everyone.

However, as the days rolled by food supplies began to fall short and fresh water became scarce. By the end of the journey, we were down to a bottle cap of water for each person three times a day. We were in the midst of vast body of water, all of it undrinkable.

We were robbed three times during the trip. The first encounter with another boat on the sixth day was actually a welcoming sight at first. I recall a few men waving a white flag and a few women yelling "Hello" in English. As the approaching boat came closer in sight, it was evident that they were not about to become our friends. On the boat were men who carried guns and knives. They were Thai fishermen whose part-time job was to rob Vietnamese refugees. They took all that was in sight, including a spare engine in which were hidden many bars of gold. They took rings, necklaces and anything that seemed valuable.

The next encounter came the very next day. The pirates ransacked what was left on our boat. After about two hours of rummaging, we were left alone. Within hours, we encountered a third bunch of bandits. This time there was nothing

they could take. Or was there... Our third group of captors forced us to get aboard their vessel and actually fed us. I especially liked the squid. Meanwhile, back on our boat we later learned, some of the pirates were raping the few young women on board. When they had finished with us, they pointed us in the direction of Malaysian waters.

Death of One, Birth of Another

On the eighth day we encountered yet another ship. This time it was a Malaysia naval vessel five times the size of ours. They promised to pull us into land, but according to the captain, we ended up further in the opposite direction. On this same day, a woman who sat in front of us died of a heart attack. She was eventually buried in Malaysian soil. She left behind a husband and two kids. She also left behind a life that had been a constant struggle for freedom. The next day, my aunt gave birth to a baby daughter. This symbolized a new beginning for all of us. That same day, land was in sight - a small island that was our stepping-stone to freedom. We spent fifteen days on this island before being shipped to a refugee camp in outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. After four months in the refugee camp, my family received an interview with Canadian immigration officials. We were accepted, I'm certain, because my father told the nice Canadians in French that he loved the cold and that he swam in ice water all the time in North Vietnam. Canada has been good to us and Riverdale provided a good start. It was also where I met my future wife. Thank you, Riverdale, and may you continue to serve our community with generosity.

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN SEAT-SALE-SUPPORTERS. TO DATE 151 SEATS HAVE BEEN SOLD AND THEY ARE GOING FAST. GET YOURS NOW AND HELP THE 100th ANNIVERSARY FUND. TAX RECEIPT WILL BE SENT TO YOU. (See application insert).

Donor: Recognition of:

Judy Endacott	Ken Endacott
Charles Bull	Philip Fairman
Riverdale Alumni	Linda Grieve
Steve Nitsopoulos	Angelo Nitsopoulos
Judy Endacott	
Dr. William Price	Shirley A. Price
Shirley Dalglish	

(Lynda H. Franklin
Ian Waldron Gretchen Boehme
Sharon Murphy Koor)

Bob Nicholls	Sr. Football Team
	1970 TSSAA Champs
George Richards	Dr. Wm. Selby Rogers

John Marjoribanks	The Marjoribanks Family
Joe Tsang	Stu Ling Tsang-Wong
Joe Tsang	Joe Ding Ming Tsang
Joe Tsang	Jim Hung C. Tsang
Jim & Peggy Karas	
Beryl Rome	Barry Taylor



**Rosalind Lee
Miss Cheerleader 1970
Varsity Stadium**

News from the Websites

Karin Normann

At <www.classmates.com> there are 1780 Riverdalian signed up at this time. Almost 350 signed up since my last report. I contacted all of them, telling them of our Alumni Meetings and the preparations for our Centennial Celebration. Nearly 200 read my message (Classmates informs me when the message was read) but only 10 responded and gave us their email address so that we can contact them and mail them the necessary information.

On a brighter note, you can check out the new, up-dated Alumni website at <<http://www.web.net/ericn/rcaa/>> and offer your constructive criticism, ideas and suggestions to me at <knormann@cogeco.ca>. I am really looking forward to your input, so please email me soon. We would like to be able to replace the Alumni Section of the Riverdale website by September 1, 2003.

Anniversary Venues

Lynne Slade

I have contacted some of the downtown hotels and they really don't want to get into the details of pricing for any of the ballrooms etc. unless we, at Riverdale, can guarantee a reservation of 500 rooms for the night of May 11th, 2007. The only place I have written material from is the Metro Convention Centre. They require an upfront deposit of \$5000.00, which is not refundable. Once a booking is made, some of the details can be defined. The closest anything can be firmed up is 90 days prior to the reunion. A figure of \$75.00-\$100.00 per person is only a vague cost at this point in time.

I would like to ask anyone who receives this letter to suggest further venues to consider. I can be reached at:

<duglin@sympatico.ca>

Alumni Mailing

List Notice:

On mailing label, your grad year now appears. If it is incorrect, please send me correction. This information is important for the decade and year reps in organizing activities. **Also, please send me your phone number and email address.** You may drop a note to the RCAA at the school or use my email address listed in the mast-head.

Thank- you,

Judy (Gribben '77) Endacott,

New Members

Howard Birnie

Here are the latest alumni to become members of our association. Please pass the word to your fellow Riverdalian so that they may join as well for the lifetime fee of just \$25. If you haven't yet become a member, it's time that you did so! Simply complete the newsletter membership insert and send it to R.C.I. with your cheque for \$25.00.

Samuel Cockburn	(?)
Heather Davidson	(1970)
Bruce Mather	(1953)
Dianne (Chow) Parnell	(1961)
Patricia Poscente	(?)
William Price	(1967)
Donald Roberts	(1955)
Beryl (Taylor) Rome	(1958)
Heather (Lawson) Dinsmore	(1956)
Terry Dinsmore	(1955)
Jane (Slattery) Stevenson	(1965)
Shirley (Robertson) Dalglish	(1952)

Don Creighton	(Staff)
Jim Tsang	(1985)
Siu Ling (Tsang) Wong	(1984)

THESE ALUMNI ARE LOST. DO YOU KNOW WHERE THEY ARE?

Douglas Cook	(1967)
Eleanor (Saunderson) Deyell	(1946)
Marietta Kaempfer) Evans	(1969)
John Grills	(1961)
Michael Johnston	(1987)
Vivian Kirkpatrick	(1935)
Jean (Wells) Lockerbie	(1947)
Clifford Relf	(1975)
Ann Scott	(1964)
Ling Won	(1987)
Eddy Wong	(1979)

If you have a current address for any of the above, please contact Howard Birnie at (416) 485-1848 or <hwbirnie@sympatico.ca>

NEED CLASS REPRESENTATIVES FOR REUNION DECADE ROOMS

Alex Fokine

Fellow Riverdalian (and that includes all those that attended RCI even for 1 year), we have the following Decades represented for the upcoming 100th:

Irene King & ETTY Green	50'S
Judy Endacott	70'S
Colleen Peacock	80'S

Now you are probably wondering why should we get involved now? It is only 2003 and the Reunion is in 2007. Well, this is the BIG ONE, 100 years of RCI. To put it in historical perspective, Riverdale was started when Wilfred Laurier was Prime Minister and the Union Jack was the National Flag of Canada. We need to have more people involved with helping the RCAA. We need people to find the oldest living graduate (at the 75th Reunion it was Merrill Stafford, Class of 1917). Who will it be for 2007, someone in the Class of 1927?

If you do not want to get involved in organizing your class within the various Decades, then please call someone who is good at organizing. We do not want anyone to miss this Reunion, for it will be another 25 years until the 125th. Start making contact with your classmates now.

-Irene King (Early 1950's)
Telephone # 416-429-3176
(Home)

-Etty Green (Late 1950's)
Telephone # 416-431-7887
(Home) or email
<ouagreen@hotmail.com>

-Judy Endacott (1970's)
Telephone # 416-778-1449
(Home) or email
<kjael@idirect.com>

-Colleen Peacock (1980's) email
<Colleen_Peacock@hotmail.com>

To serve as a rep please contact Alexandra Fokine at telephone 416-698-0597 or email <herta@idirect.com>

