

# A WESTGATE Retrospective



MENNONITE  
**WESTgate**  
COLLEGIATE

**2012**







# Retrospective

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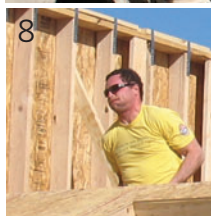
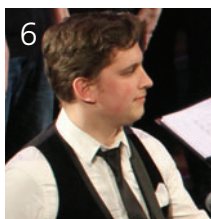


### Retrospective

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Opposite:  
Westgate Middle East  
Study Tour 2012

# The Best Seat in the House

I slung low in the vintage theatre seat. It was a pleasant early June evening, and the air conditioning in what used to be Ellice Avenue's Cinema 3 during my university days pumped out slightly musty cold air, letting me know that I was in a building with much history. It was here that I first viewed *This Is Spinal Tap*, the rock and roll "mockumentary" that has since earned modest cult status. (On that night in 1984, the Stonehenge scene simply brought me to my knees.)

I was here to watch "Indian Summer: A Charity Fashion Show" that a group of our seniors decided to stage mere weeks before their graduation. There are a few high school fashion shows that are annually held by graduating classes in the city, with proceeds commonly offsetting the cost of Safe Grad festivities. This show's profits, though, would be directed towards helping build a school in India. Two Grade 12 girls conceived the idea, and there were many willing hands in their grad class eager to help. Two staff members jumped on board to offer suggestions and to assuage retailers' fears when the respective merchants doled out expensive merchandise to young people they did not really know.

The show was a hit. The Masters of Ceremony were bedecked in fine tuxedos as they introduced the streams of male and female models in their finery; beach wear, evening wear, casual wear, some more revealing than others. As I waited for my daughter's turn to sashay down the runway, I wondered how much real estate might be revealed to the audience. As it turned out, she was simply radiant in every ensemble that she wore. After the show, there was an energy-filled buzz in the theatre that comes when a show goes well. Models and parents beamed, excitedly discussing what fashion looked best on them. I kidded another grad that this was the first time I had seen her in a dress. She protested, but we both knew I was right.

I am not surprised when events such as this are held by our students. Many schools hold events to raise funds for good projects outside their walls, but over the years I have spent at Westgate, I have come to simply assume

that the school has fostered and nurtured enough student leadership to ensure that there will be the required critical student mass to make a good idea go. To prove this

theorem, in late July 2011, two other girls

about to enter their graduation year contacted a summering Westgate teacher to discuss their plans to hold a fundraising dinner for East African relief. By September 14, a dinner complete with Grade 7 servers raised \$10,000 to support Mennonite Central Committee's projects in Kenya and Somalia.

John D. Roth emphatically states in his book *Teaching That Transforms: Why Anabaptist-Mennonite Education Matters* that our school should actively embrace themes of Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and practice to shape our cultural and educational goals. He challenges us to offer Christian education that will be distinctive and identifiable; otherwise there would be no reason for our Anabaptist-Mennonite schools to exist. I believe that our staff works hard to achieve these distinctions, and as an educator who has worked in both the public and independent education spheres, I am pleased that we can provide an alternative educational ethos for our current and our future students.

This good work with young people needs to be housed in a facility that will meet the educational needs of our Westgate community. I am very pleased with the design of the renovation. The building's size, function and sustainability reflects our desire to effectively live within our means, where good stewardship of our financial resources can still offer excellent programming for the next generation of students. I invite you to help us achieve this.



**BOB HUMMELT**

PRINCIPAL, WESTGATE MENNONITE COLLEGIATE



# Soaring to Ivory Towers: Westgate Alumni Share Passion for Learning

**O**n the outskirts of Detroit, an ethnically and economically diverse group of university students are immersed in the medieval English world of Chaucer and Arthur. Introducing these students to the gossips and shrews of the Middle Ages is Westgate alumnus Christine Neufeld ('90), a professor at Eastern Michigan University. Like many of her students, Christine had no idea that a rich and beautiful medieval world existed before she went on Grade 11 Westgate German Exchange. Christine's exposure to German art, architecture and history eventually led to a career as an English Professor specializing in the Middle Ages and editor of the educational periodical *The Once and Future Classroom*.

Christine is among a group of diverse and accomplished professors who once lugged backpacks down the halls of Westgate. Chris Huebner ('87) admits he is as surprised as his Westgate teachers must be to have ended up ensconced in the academic world. Chris is a professor of Theology and Philosophy at Canadian Mennonite University. He is a favourite among many recent Westgate graduates, perhaps, in part, because of the playfulness that he brings to even the most daunting of subjects. Chris and his students explore ideas of knowledge, identity and wisdom within the Anabaptist tradition and beyond. He finds his students "eternally surprising" and encourages them to experiment and play with ideas that seem intimidating.

Janis Thiessen remembers her years as a quiet junior high student at Westgate, particularly the after-class discussions with her social studies teacher. Bob Hummelt first inspired Janis's love of history, and later she was lucky enough to work with him as a teacher candidate. "He was the kind of teacher I knew I wanted to be," Janis recalls. Soon she was on staff at Westgate, teaching science during the day and spending her evenings researching and writing. When the University of Winnipeg offered her a position teaching Canadian and Business History, interests that had always been a hobby became a career. Currently, Janis is researching Canadian snack foods. This involves a lot more than munching on Old Dutch potato chips, as she analyzes Canadian business theories and practices. She's excited about the work and adds that her years at Westgate were instrumental in allowing her to pursue this dream and become the educator that she is today.

Professors, of course, do more than lecture and research. Jennifer Schulz ('88) is a professor and Associate Dean at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Law, and offers her expertise to Mediation Services and other non-profit organizations in the city. Susie Fisher ('02), a Westgate alumnus currently completing a history PhD focusing on Mennonite religious identity, is connecting her academics with a suffering world through Spiritual Care work at the Health Sciences Centre. And Jeremy Bergen ('93), professor of Religious Studies and Theology at Conrad Grebel University, is involved in the ongoing Catholic-Mennonite and Iranian Muslim-Mennonite dialogues.

These professors are only a sampling of the numerous Westgate alumni who are inspiring and educating university students across the continent and using their expertise to serve the wider community. Who knows which of the students lugging their backpacks down the Westgate halls today will be captivating lecture halls tomorrow? ■

KIRSTEN PENNER KRYMUSA

*Seeds of inspiration being planted in  
Eric Sperry ('13) during the 2011  
European Study Tour in Paris.*







## MUSIC

# “Oh, What A Night”

**T**his 1963 Frankie Valli song aptly described the HOUSE Concert that so many Westgate supporters enjoyed in early March. Featuring the folk/gospel group House of Doc, attendees were treated to an evening of great music and collaboration.

This collaboration allowed House of Doc’s gifted composer, Dan Wiebe (’01), the opportunity to see songs “grow” by adding the choir and band accompaniment. Much like local artist Steve Bell has experienced with the Winnipeg Symphony, these songs undergo a powerful transformation. The evening included performances by House of Doc alone, as well as supported by friends David (’00) and Jason (’04) Pankratz, and joined by the Westgate Concert Choir and Concert Band.

In addition to the music, reception attendees were treated to tasty creations by Karen Peters (’83), new owner and chef at Arkadash Bistro and Lounge. The art of Westgate parent and artist Reymond Pagé was on display and available for purchase.

Thanks to the organizing committee, the evening was a huge success, raising over \$40,000 for Westgate’s Capital Campaign. ■



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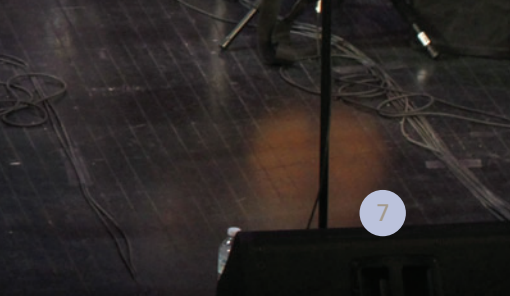
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Anonymous Westgate board and  
staff members







Photos courtesy of Kevin Friesen and Dieter Schonwetter







FAITH

# Vacations With a Purpose

**W**hen Ingrid Klassen packs for her two-week overseas vacation she reaches for scrubs not swimsuits. The Westgate grad (1978) is an operating room nurse at St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg, but she takes her skills on the road with Medical Ministry International. Since her first trip in 2004 she has completed seven tours in six countries like India and Rwanda and is now intently focused on eye surgery. Her last three trips have been with the same team doing cataract operations. Working 10 hours a day, they restore sight to 300 individuals per trip. "People who have been blind for a decade or even longer get their vision back in an hour," says the mother of two with the calm, take-charge voice common to most nurses. "I like those immediate results. It's life changing. It's miraculous."

Darryl Neustaedter Barg ('86) works part-time at Mennonite Church Manitoba so that he can "do things when the call comes." An accomplished musician, Darryl recorded a CD in Kenya to raise funds to support an HIV/AIDS program. "There's the understanding that service is important," he muses, "and that somewhere, some-

how it's bigger than one hour a week after work. It's not just something you squeeze into your calendar."

At today's Westgate, planting seeds that may result in a similar harvest of selfless service is still on the curriculum. Teacher James Friesen is the coordinator of the Middle East trip and says the three-week tour of the Holy Land is, among other things, a training ground for vacations with purpose. "The idea is to allow the vacation to change you and not just be an escape." This year's trip left in June, bound for Israel, Palestine and Jordan. With 25 registered students, it was the biggest group ever and Friesen made sure they packed more into this holiday than a few pounds of souvenirs. "The point is to get outside your world into the world of another," says Friesen, who worked at an orphanage from 2000 to 2003. "You won't know what the purpose of it is until you're back ... or maybe 10 years later."

Friesen says the school's Middle East trip always schedules the final evening so that they are looking out over Jerusalem. In that ancient city, after a whirlwind trip of a lifetime, students are encouraged to orient themselves anew as they embark on their own lives of faith and action, vacations, service, and stewardship of money and time.

"When we share that rooftop on the last night," says Friesen, "we get eyes to see the world in new ways. It can be life changing." And as Klassen knows, seeing with new eyes is truly a miracle. ■

**BRAMWELL RYAN**  
WESTGATE PARENT

*James, LeAnn ('87), Kate ('17) and Alex ('14) Friesen in the Cedars of Lebanon.*



*Douglas Mennonite Church members "House Raising" in Louisiana.*





# Next Steps

**W**hile it is important to enjoy the blessings and good fortune that come your way, it is also important not to take anything fully for granted. The Westgate Redevelopment Committee (WRC) certainly was not taking civic approval for their redevelopment proposal for granted. In a process that had its genesis in discussions with members of the neighbourhood that reached back to 2006, the WRC was unable to predict what the appeal panel's decision would be. No doubt, the school's extended community is pleased that permission to proceed with construction has been granted. It is now very important to inform our supporting community of the school's next steps.

The search for an alternate site for the school and the subsequent decision to redevelop at 86 West Gate needed to be placed in public record. Please refer to the "Westgate's Redevelopment Plans" article on the next page that offers background information that shaped the decision to remain in Armstrong Point.

With approval secured, Prairie Architects Inc. can commence with more comprehensive drawings that will be used to solicit competitive construction bids. These drawings will be incorporated in Capital Campaign literature that will assist Development Director John Loewen and the Capital Campaign committee to raise approximately \$7 million to fund the redevelopment. School administration has already begun to search suitable sites that could be considered to educate our junior and senior high students during construction.

The scope of these tasks and preparations is large, and it is important to do each of them well. Ultimately, the money needs to be committed or be in place, and the school needs to secure a quality site for our students and teachers before construction can begin. The Redevelopment Committee is looking at two potential redevelopment dates: relocating late March 2014 with return to the new facility at the beginning of second semester February 2015, or relocating July 2014 and returning September 2015. With the first option, no graduating class will be out of their school for their entire last year. With the second option, construction can take place over 14 months rather than over 10 months. It is anticipated that our Westgate families will accept that this short term disruption is unavoidable to achieve a superior educational facility that will house our students for decades to come.

Our Westgate school community is invited to join in the excitement of this project. It has been nearly 25 years since our last capital campaign and the school needs to rely on this community's generosity to develop a facility that will effectively educate its students well into the 21st century. ■



## DEVELOPMENT





# Westgate's Redevelopment Plans

**O**n June 7, 2012, after a panel of City of Winnipeg councilors rejected appeals to overturn Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's redevelopment plans, the school immediately turned its attention to raising the funds necessary before construction could commence. However, it is important to share the due diligence that was taken before the school determined that redevelopment at 86 West Gate was the best course of action.

There clearly was a "now what?" sentiment when Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's (WMC) 2008 redevelopment proposal did not receive civic approval. Mingled with this uncertainty was the recognition that the scope of that proposal, which included demolition and construction on the school's adjacent property at 76 West Gate, was perhaps too ambitious in size and cost. To move the institution forward, the Board of Directors struck a Strategic Planning Committee to determine a future path. A wide-sweeping survey of the school's stakeholders helped shape a direction. Core values and essential programming of this Mennonite/Anabaptist school were affirmed. As well, a critical question, "Do we stay, or do we go?" was asked.

This question elicited strong feelings as reflected by more than half of the survey respondents choosing to add a comment. Many of the reasons to stay were emotional, tied to the aesthetics of the site and the memories many respondents had of their school. Reasons to go were focused on the physical inadequacies of the site, especially in light of the programming priorities that were important to the WMC community. It was apparent that current parents and students favoured staying. However, alumni were fairly even in their preference, with other groups, especially current board members, leaning to leaving the current site.

Ultimately, the Strategic Planning Committee Report recommended that a Facility Search Committee (FSC) be formed to establish a search criterion and look at sites potentially suitable for relocation. For stakeholders, this "paradigm shift" created mixed emotions; however, there seemed confidence that any decision made on behalf of the institution would be made with the next several generations of the school in mind. The FSC retained a Stevenson & Advisors appraiser to determine the mid-range value of 86 and 74 West Gate: \$2.0 million as a school property, and between \$1.7 and \$2.5 million depending on other uses considered for the land.

Site location was a key factor. Ideally, the new site would 5-7 acres in size, be well within 10 kilometres of the existing school, be accessible by public transit, and be in a neighbourhood likely to consider independent schooling for their children. The new or renovated site would need to house a school population of approximately 350 students, and feature a quality gym, cafeteria, separate choral and band space, and a chapel. Unfortunately, a survey of Winnipeg's public school divisions revealed that suitable surplus schools were not expected to be available in the foreseeable future. The FSC then directed its investigation towards other potential sites.

Many stakeholders wondered if synergy could be gained by partnering with Canadian Mennonite University. It became evident in discussions that the campus was limited in size to accommodate future development as a university. Centre Venture Development Corporation, in cooperation with Westgate's realtor Cushman and Wakefield, assisted by drawing up a list of intriguing properties and land assemblies in the city's core and waterfront area. Land cost and distance from residential neighbourhoods made these options unfeasible. Three sites, though, did merit deeper scrutiny.

The former Manitoba Public Insurance building's central location at 1075 Portage Avenue offered convenient access to public transportation. The building, while large at approximately 70,000 sq. ft., was in excellent condition. However, a new gym needed to be constructed and the







1075 PORTAGE AVE. FRONT AND BACK

office space needed renovation to serve as an educational facility. Much of the 4.5 acres needed to be



SILVER HEIGHTS COLLEGIATE

returned to green space from asphalt parking. It was determined that the cost of purchase and renovation/construction would be \$17-\$18 million.

The former Silver Heights Collegiate at 350 Lodge was considered as well. The property had been sold by the St. James-Assiniboia S. D., and discussions were held with the subsequent owner of the school. The seven-acre site offered terrific green space. While near good public transportation routes, it was not considered a central location. The building was tired, and at 82,000 sq. ft., it was larger than required. Three options, full renovation, deconstruction of the building to build a new 52,000 sq. ft. facility, and the retention of 30,000 sq. ft. of the existing facility and build a new custom 32,000 sq. ft. facility around the existing building, were considered. The probable cost of purchase and these options ranged from \$14-\$18 million.

Finally, the FSC considered a “theoretical” vacant plot of land that would meet the search criteria of central proximity and accessibility that would serve as a useful example of what such a potential opportunity would cost. The former Sir John Franklin School 4.4-acre site at the west end of River Heights, not yet for sale by Winnipeg School Division, offered such an example. Purchase of the site with a newly constructed 52,000 sq. ft. school on it was estimated to cost \$17.7-\$19.2 million.

The FSC met for breakfast in February 2011. The stark reality of relocation, renovation and construction cost was clearly evident to the committee. The ability to raise the money and service a mortgage for any of the more feasible options was not considered possible, and if such a project were attempted, there was a significant likelihood that the institution would be placed in jeopardy because of debt. One member sipped his coffee and mused what perhaps several were thinking for some time. Would Westgate’s future be best secured by a scaled-down building proposal that took advantage of portions of the existing facility, maintaining the emotional and historic ties it had in its current location? Under the circumstances, it was another “paradigm shift” indeed. However, when the FSC reflected on its commitment to due diligence, where costs to the school were incurred by involving multi-disciplined professional services in its search and assessment of sites, it became apparent that this direction offered the best possibility for a sustainable and fruitful Westgate future. The WMC Board concurred.

The FSC completed its work within the two-year mandate given by the Board. Its findings led to the formation of the Westgate Redevelopment Committee (WRC) which, under committee Chair Ralph Regehr, began its work to secure that future for the next generation of Westgate students. With civic approval of the redevelopment plan in hand, the WRC has begun its work with the professionals that will design and construct the new facility. We invite our Westgate school community stakeholders to share the excitement of this project and to begin to consider ways and means to support this important venture. ■





# Westgate Fundraising

**W**estgate Mennonite Collegiate continued to enjoy strong constituency support for its school fundraising programs in 2011. Once again, an enthusiastic group of parents, staff and students “gave it their all” at the annual Cyclathon and Work Day events, making 2011 one of the best years on record in terms of participation and financial support. Similarly, appeals for the bursary fund were well received with donations surpassing totals from previous years. The annual golf tournament also continued the experience growth in 2011. We are very pleased with the continued participation and support we have been blessed with and look forward to an even stronger year in 2012.

As an independent school, our community support is critical for our success, particularly as we embark on a building project to provide more functional space to enhance student learning. The plans for our capital campaign are ambitious and will require as strong a commitment from our community as we’ve ever asked of them. Raising money is always a challenging task, but with the clear direction of a City of Winnipeg approved plan and with the demonstrated support of our Westgate community, we are looking toward building a bright and secure future for our students. ■

## WESTGATE 2011 NET FUNDRAISING SNAPSHOT

Cyclathon	\$44,081
Work Day	\$39,018
Bursary Banquet	\$34,871
Golf Tournament	\$27,285
Parent Association	\$ 8,500

*Thank you for your continued support.*

## HOW CAN I HELP SUPPORT WESTGATE?

### It's easy. Giving opportunities include:

- Capital Campaign (our highest priority)
- Area of greatest need (non-designated gifts)
- Scholarships
- Bursaries
- Designated gifts

### Ways to give:

- Cash or Cheque
- Monthly Pre-authorized Giving (forms are available on our website)
- Credit Card (through Canadahelps.org)

JOHN LOEWEN  
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT





# Planned Giving: 1958 Legacy Circle

**O**ur 1958 Legacy Circle enables Westgate donors to share their plans to support Westgate students into the future. Considered one of the highest forms of giving, a bequest is a selfless investment in the lives of those often not known to the giver. Toward the goal of a strong Westgate for the future, individuals and families can share that they are supporting future generations of Westgate's students.



Become a 1958 Legacy Circle member and support Westgate students through your life and beyond. If you have any questions, please visit the Giving page of our website, or contact John Loewen, Director of Development, 204-775-7111 x246

## 1958 LEGACY CIRCLE

*Our thanks to the following supporters who've made a provision for Westgate in their Estate Plans.*

Jake and Jean Rempel  
Henry ('59) and Elsie Dyck  
Ted and Hildy Thiessen  
John and Joy Loewen  
Janis Thiessen  
Anonymous

*Thank you for your enduring gifts.*





SPORTS

# Thank You to Our Volunteer Coaches!



It was only 10 a.m., but the school parking lot was already well-baked in the early August sun. As I climbed off my bike, I was greeted by the sound of a basketballs pelting off the gym hardwood. The gym doors that lead outdoors were open and I peered in to see who had thought it was a good idea to run a camp in 33 degrees Celsius. About 20 Westgate junior high kids were engaged in three separate drills running at the same time. At the helm of this mayhem was a school community parent who had carved out some of his summer holiday time to share his coaching skills with our students. Modest to a fault, this dad, with university coaching experience, felt it was important to inculcate basic ball handling skills among our young athletes to ensure at least modest success and confidence when it comes time to play for the school team. I really like

*Left: David Waller and Neil Enns take a time out with the JV girls basketball team.*

*Below: Kurt Neustaedter ('84) counsels the Grade 7 volleyball boys on the bench.*





this guy. His camp was for all comers, and speaking to him, it was quickly clear that he was as excited to see one of his young charges move past a relentless pattern of double dribbling as he was to see another smoothly running lay ups from either side of the basket. The week of daily sessions, complete with Popsicle breaks, was free.

When I tour prospective parents and their children through the school, I recite a long list of sports available to Westgate

students. I begin to sound like Forrest Gump's buddy Bubba counting off the variety of ways to serve shrimp – "badminton, ultimate, curling ... " I am pleasantly surprised that our physical education staff can annually find coaches and supervisors for each sport. Westgate teachers comprise about half of this coaching staff, however, the breadth of our Westgate athletic program could not be sustained without the "outside" coaches who come from

school connections, such as parents, alumni, and siblings of past and current students. Most gratifyingly, some "outside" coaches approach the school for an opportunity to work with our students because of their reputation for being motivated and respectful athletes. Renowned authors, autobody shop and quarry managers, police officers, medical researchers, physicians, and university students have committed the skill, time and energy that are essential to any school athletic program. What a delight when these coaches profess to receive as much as they give. ■

**BOB HUMMELT**

*Left: Paul Penner ('85) outlines strategy with the Grade 7 boys basketball players.*

*Below: Westgate Junior Varsity Girls Basketball Team enroute to their 2012 SCAC AAA championship.*







ALUMNI

# The Fast Family Legacy

**W**hat is it that drives many immigrants to work so hard? Is it the idea of proving themselves in a new country; to try to provide a better life for their families? Friedrich Nietzsche first penned the idea “that which does not kill us, makes us stronger.” The story of the Russian Mennonites in the early 20th century was one of struggle. German-speaking Mennonites in Russia found themselves in the crossfire when war broke out. This is where a young Karl Fast found himself during the Second World War.

As a prisoner of war, he dreamed of being reunited with his wife and starting a new life somewhere else. After release, the opportunity to emigrate to Canada presented itself, and Karl and his wife Margarete wasted little time in getting to Canada. Once safely settled, it was important to establish a home and community that would reinforce their religious values. Home and church would provide the foundation for these teachings. What about the school?

After sacrificing their own education during the war, many Mennonites were determined to establish a school of their own. It was up to other dedicated individuals like Karl Fast to combine their resources and begin this important process.

As one of the early teachers at the school, Karl Fast established a culture of discipline, learning and respect. Many years after the fact, a student wrote: “I am extremely thankful for the patience and understanding that you showed towards me ... whatever good has come of my life is largely a reflection of the influence (and encouragement) of people like yourself.” The Fast family has recently set up a scholarship in his name,



*Karl Fast  
staff picture,  
1966*



*Karl and Margarete Fast enjoy a sunny  
day touring the Rhine in 1978.*



Krista Neustaedter Barg ('87) and Karina Fast ('92)  
both teach at Westgate.



honouring students who demonstrate the same attributes as Karl Fast: “active participation in the community, an interest in service, a love of history and the arts, and an interest in pursuing academic excellence.”

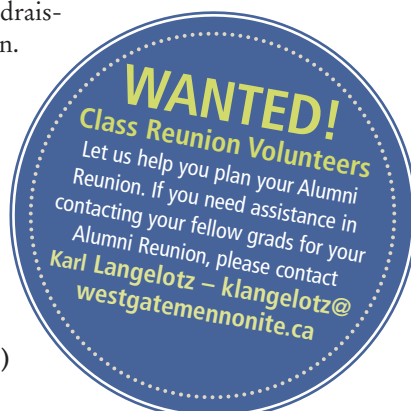
This dedication to the school has been passed on to the generations that have followed. After his own five children left the school, it didn't take long for 26 members of the next generation to find their way into the hallways of 86 West Gate. Now, not only have most of the grandchildren become Westgate graduates, two remain at the school as teachers.

Krista Neustaeder Barg, daughter of Mr. Fast's oldest child, Hilde, has been teaching at the school since 1994. For her, honouring her grandfather through teaching was a significant reason for working at Westgate. Once the opportunity presented itself, granddaughter Karina Fast was quick to give up her permanent public school teaching position to join Westgate for a term position. “I wanted to be part of something bigger – something with a vision,” shares Karina.

With their own children as students, it seems that the Fast commitment to the school will continue. At present, the school enjoys generous public funding, healthy enrolment and an exciting future. The next struggle for the school will be fundraising for a necessary renovation.

We trust that this next step will not only make the school stronger, but renew the commitment of many to the benefits of Anabaptist education. Karl Fast's vision is alive and well. ■

**KARL LANGELOTZ ('83)**  
WESTGATE STAFF



# Hello Alumni!

## You're important to us!

And we want to keep in touch to know the good things that are happening in your life and to share what's happening at Westgate.

If you have stories, births, engagements or other announcements to share, please let us know. If you want to participate or volunteer in any of our events throughout the year, please let us know. If you have an updated address, email, phone or other contact information, please let us know.

Please email me or use the mail-in form below to help us stay “in touch.”

**klangelotz@westgatemennonite.ca**

**KARL LANGELOTZ**  
WESTGATE MENNONITE COLLEGIATE  
ALUMNI COORDINATOR



**[www.westgatemennonite.ca](http://www.westgatemennonite.ca)**

All alumni are welcome to join us on **Saturday, Sept. 29, 2012** for our annual **Cyclathon**. This Westgate community event will again take place at **Birds Hill Park**. Whether you ride, walk or just eat hot dogs, please feel welcome to join Westgaters past and present for a great day of community building.

## Let's stay connected!

Please remember to notify us of a change of address so we may keep you informed of activities, alumni reunions and school news.

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COMMUNITY

# A Winnipeg Landmark

**E**arlier this year, after 75 years of service, Riediger's Supermarket closed its doors. The small, family-owned, inner city grocery store, with a tradition of extending credit to customers in need, was no longer profitable. When Henry Riediger Sr. opened the store in 1936, it was an opportunity to continue the work he had done back in Russia and to establish a new life for his family in Winnipeg. After he invited his son Nick to join the family business nine years later, they invested in a new store at 188 Isabel Street. This location served them well for many years, but the changing character of the neighbourhood and of Winnipeg's economic climate eventually contributed to the store's closing.

Nick and his wife Betty were not only invested in the family business, but also in the life and community of First Mennonite Church. Church and work were priorities for this young family. And as their family grew, they knew they wanted their children to continue learning German and to grow in their faith. These were some of the reasons why Westgate Mennonite Collegiate became yet another family investment.

When critical discussions about Westgate's fragile future were going on in the First Mennonite Church basement in the '60s, the Riedigers were among the school's strong supporters. They believed that a school like Westgate needed to exist in order for their values to continue into the next generations. They were willing to do the work necessary for this endeavour to be successful.

With a history of hard work behind them, Betty and Nick were among the many "behind the scenes" supporters who built and maintained the school. As members of the Westgate Ladies' Auxiliary, Betty and others spent time every fall, literally on their hands and knees, cleaning the school from top to bottom. Then they were preparing food for the fundraising banquets, much of which was delivered to the church basements by Nick himself. When Westgate needed groceries, Riediger's got the call.

So many Westgaters have memories of shopping at Riediger's. Whether collecting baking supplies (where else could Oma pick up baking ammonia for those peppermint cookies?) or loading up their freezer at the meat counter, Riediger's was the destination. Although not connected with Westgate at the time, principal Bob Hummelt recalls waiting for his parents at Riediger's in the early '60s. "It seemed like we spent hours shopping," recalls Bob, "because mom and dad would be chatting in German with everyone while waiting in line at the meat counter. Who'd have thought I'd be connected with this store through Westgate later in life again?"



*Riediger's founder Henry Riediger and his children stand behind the meat counter of their brand-new grocery at 188 Isabel Street in 1946. From left to right: unknown employee, Henry Riediger Sr., Henry Riediger Jr., Susie Riediger, Nick Riediger Sr., Vern Riediger, John Riediger. — from the Winnipeg Free Press*

Former Westgate board member Deb Fast remembers visiting Riediger's when she lived on Kennedy Street. "When we moved to St. James and I worked in West Kildonan, there was nowhere more convenient for a working mom on her way home. I could do my weekly grocery shop in 20 minutes. Six aisles, not an overwhelming number of choices and a great produce and meat department – they had the best choice of apples in the whole city! I have missed the sincere 'Thanks for shopping here,' the personal carry-out help with my groceries and the relationships that spanned 38 years."

Over the years, sons Ken ('68) and Nick Jr. ('76) have continued the family traditions. Not only were their children students at Westgate, but Nick served as a member of the Westgate Board of Directors and the Riediger van was a regular at cyclathons, class parties and school barbeques. Despite decreasing sales and fewer customers, Riediger's continued to support Westgate whenever asked. Whether supplies were needed to host a provincial championship or to help feed hungry golfers, the grocery store was making deliveries to the end. Even though the business was closing down, they ensured that food would be delivered for Westgate's last Riediger's-supplied Fruit and Cheese fundraiser in 2012.

Since its trying formative years, Riediger's has laboured to supply food for the body, mind, and soul of Westgaters and many others. May God continue to bless them and all volunteers who make Westgate a school with a difference and our city a great community to live in. ■

**KARL LANGELOTZ ('83)**  
WESTGATE STAFF



## THE FINAL WORD

Schools operate according to a different calendar than the rest of the world. Our year starts in September and ends in June with a couple of nice breaks in between. Then there is the void in our year – July and August – where most school staff takes time to re-energize and prepare for the coming year. Somehow, though, when September rolls around, after about a week you'll hear folks around here saying, "It's like we never left."

How can this be, when we've been away for two months – enough time to forget our passwords and a few names to go with these more mature faces? (I'm mostly referring to the students here.)

We arrive in September with a meticulously detailed calendar outlining the dramatic productions our students will attend, sports schedules, dates for the deputations to be presented at supporting churches, exams, field trips ... and the knowledge that all of this may change. Our timetable is established, and allowing for a few adjustments (and senior's moments – just thinking about myself here Wilma), we know where to be when. We recognize the facility; the gleaming floors reflecting not only the hard work done by our custodial staff over the summer, but also a hopeful promise of another great Westgate year.

Staff and students are happy to re-establish connections, reminisce about the previous year and envision the wonders to come.

And then we're off!

Classes take place, chapel is back on track every Tuesday morning, Lindsay has some fabulous new menu items in the cafeteria, while always making sure oat squares are on hand. Volleyball teams are established and almost immediately sweating it out in practice. Vocal and band auditions are held and all junior high students find their voice in choir.

It's like we never left!

And yet ...

Not all the faces are familiar. This past September there were over 80 new students to welcome and get to know and, along with three new staff members, things aren't exactly as we left them in June. Some changes are obvious, others more subtle.

Have we ever heard a student with that vocal range? With that particular approach to learning that teaches us all? Who has shared life experiences different from any we've had?

Has a staff person ever contributed in exactly this way to our ever-evolving approach to educating those entrusted to us? Made us think in a way we never have before? Fit in exactly where we needed it most?

Westgate's population is large enough to have the right person for each task, yet small enough to see the sometimes untapped gifts that will make all the difference. We saw that in the production of "The Mouse that Roared" presented by our senior high students in December, in the one-act plays where, often for the first time, a junior high student found a voice and allowed him or herself to be heard, or learned a new lifelong skill, a skill they will use again and again. Listening to our bands and choral groups at the Christmas concert, church deputations, spring concerts and other performances is always inspiring, as students share the progress they have made with their musical gifts. Our teams have been incredibly successful, while hopefully maintaining the balance we always encourage. Academic outcomes continue to impress.

With so much change – and much more to come – perhaps "It's like we never left" could best be replaced this next September with an energized

"Happy NEW Year."

WILMA JOHNSON ('77)

LIBRARY TECHNICIAN



Parents: If this magazine is addressed to your son or daughter and they no longer live at this address, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate would appreciate knowing their new address. Information should be directed to [alumni@westgatemennonite.ca](mailto:alumni@westgatemennonite.ca).

