

# A W E S T G A T E PERSPECTIVE

Vol. 13, No. 2 Spring 2005

## A TRIBUTE TO JOHN ENNS

When John Enns' name is mentioned in conjunction with Westgate, the question often arises: "Good Grief! Is he still there?" To date the response has been an emphatic "Yes!" He is still vital, still upright, still available when needed, still willing to pitch in at every turn. As has been the case for the last 36 years of Westgate's 47 year history, he is still a really excellent teacher and valued staff member. Yes, he is certainly still all there!

But he retires in June. Several Westgate parents approached me at Westgate's glorious production of *Oliver* to bemoan that fact, and to ask whether I thought he might be persuaded to stay for another year—"...until my son/daughter graduates." What better testimony could a retiring teacher have?

### *John Enns: The Administrator*

I first got to know John Enns as an administrator. As the principal of Westgate he took a chance on hiring me, a middle-aged woman who had been a stay-at-home mom for sixteen years. At that time, with only one secretary for support, he dealt with all the practical concerns that come with running a school, all the demands of the Department of Education, all Board, church, staff and student issues, payroll, donation receipt writing, etc. In spite of his numbing workload, he took time to give me the support and mentoring I needed to integrate comfortably into a junior high setting, since all my early teaching experience had been in Senior High. Thank you, John.

After teaching at Westgate for just three years, John Enns was persuaded to take on the role of principal at a time when the school's enrollment had dropped and there were no applicants for the job. During his seven-year administrative stint a number of important decisions were

made which significantly affected the tenor of the school:

- The Westgate support structure was changed from a private society school with individual membership to a church school with conference support.

- Connections among other Canadian Mennonite independent schools were formally established. John Enns was a founding member of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools (CAMS). Westgate and MBCI Choir Tours in 1978 were catalysts for the first Choral Fest in Rosthern with four schools involved. The following year saw the first CAMS Conference—a retreat/in-service/professional development opportunity for teachers from Mennonite schools across the country—took place at Blackstrap in Saskatchewan.

- The music program grew and flourished with the introduction of a Junior High component.

- Westgate's first building addition was constructed, including the gym, office space, library, senior lounge, cafeteria, staffroom, and additional classroom space. The first fall during which the new gym was in use, Westgate Knights were inspired to win the AAA Provincial Volleyball Championship. School spirit among students soared.

- The Department of Education mandated that all independent school teachers be certified. Teachers' salaries were set at 95% of School Division of Winnipeg No. 1, with an additional professional classification category allowed for theological training. Timetabling was implemented to accommodate some teacher prep time. As teaching conditions improved, staff morale went up and hiring qualified personnel became easier.



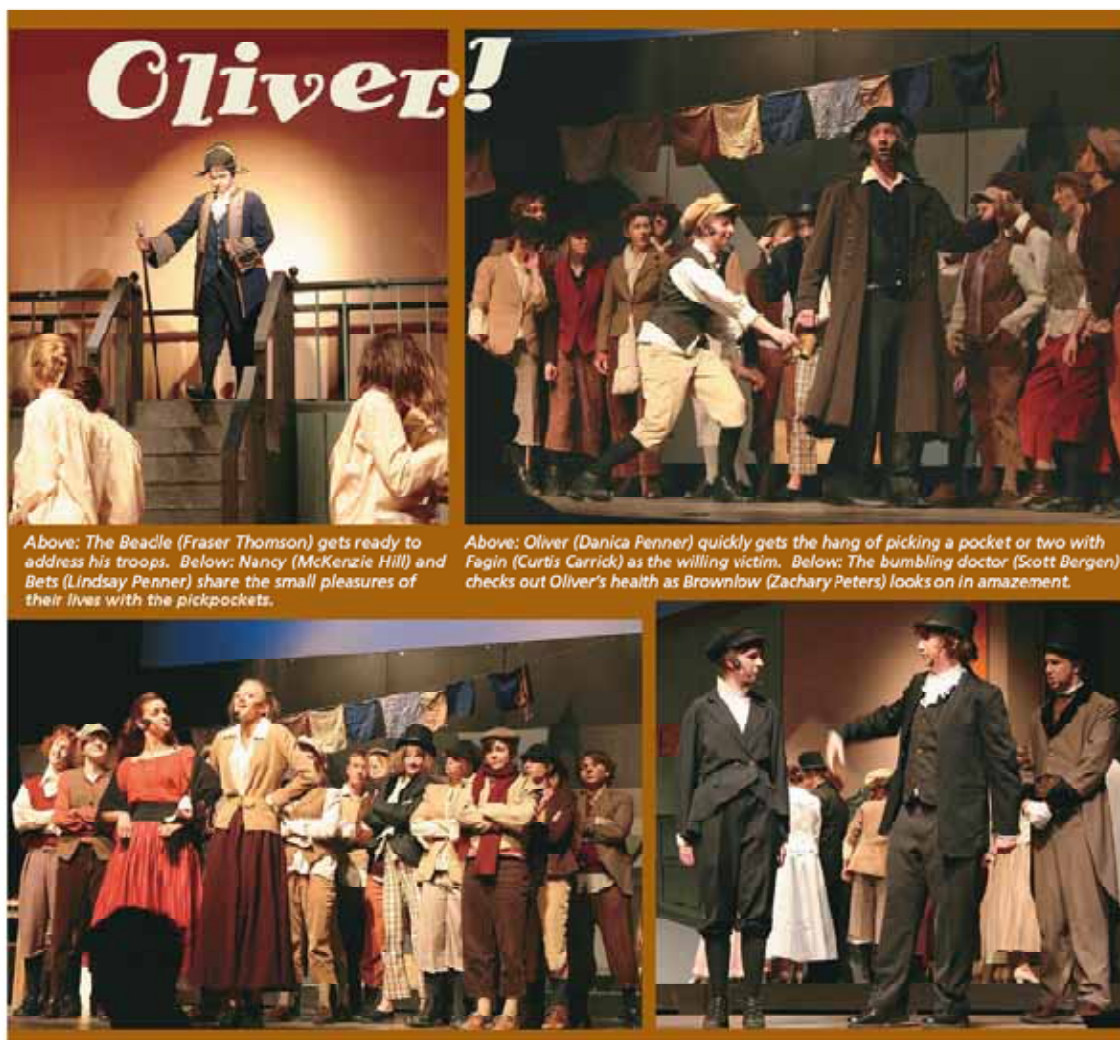
- The first Cyclathon took place in John's first year as principal. The highly successful student fundraiser and community picnic continues to this day, contributing substantially to projects and programming at the school.

### *John Enns: The Teacher*

However, in spite of his fine administrative skills, John's first love was teaching. Accordingly, once the building project was completed and enrollment had increased from 84 to 192 students, he opted to go back into the classroom.

It was a good decision. Today his prowess as a math and AP calculus teacher is undisputed, and he has prepared countless students for success at various universities in math-related fields. John himself considers his involvement on the Provincial Mathematics Curriculum Committee as one of the most satisfying experiences he had in his many years of teaching. As the new math curriculum was being developed, he chose to pilot the program. In the process he created many innovative materials and devised strategies which are being used by math teachers across the province today.

*Continued on page 2*



Above: The Beadle (Fraser Thomson) gets ready to address his troops. Below: Nancy (McKenzie Hill) and Bets (Lindsay Penner) share the small pleasures of their lives with the pickpockets.

Above: Oliver (Danica Fenner) quickly gets the hang of picking a pocket or two with Fagin (Curtis Carrick) as the willing victim. Below: The bumbling doctor (Scott Bergen) checks out Oliver's health as Brownlow (Zachary Peters) looks on in amazement.

#### TRIBUTE *continued*

But mathematics is not the only subject area in which John Enns excels. When he first arrived at Westgate, it was as an English teacher that he made his mark. Westgate grads from those early years fondly recall the enthusiasm he generated in his classes for good literature and for creative writing. And how many Junior High students have enjoyed learning from him in woodshops, building beautiful and useful gifts for Mother's Day, gifts often designed by John himself with careful attention paid to the skill levels of his novice cabinetmakers.

John Enns is also known to be a team player. He listens well, perceives needs or

insecurities, and is quick to help as best he can. In my first year as a Grade 9 math teacher I had the privilege of collaborating with him, to my benefit. When one of the subsequent principals had difficulty timetabling—a truly daunting exercise in any school, but particularly so at Westgate with its many options and only two classes at every grade level—John did it. When sets needed to be built, John was there. When there was no one to create a set design for the school operetta, John did it. When a cover was needed for the school calendar, John came up with one of his artistic photographs. When someone was needed

to drive the bus, John had the appropriate licence. He's been happy to help with all the Outdoor Education programs, whether it has meant camping with Grade 8s or canoeing in the wilderness with the Marsh and Mountain Club. Students have looked forward to his beautifully structured chapel meditations which reflect a practical theology as well as a deep faith. In short, his willingness to help coupled with his wisdom, his experience, his artistic abilities, and his practical skills, made many things possible at Westgate. Seemingly capable in all directions, John Enns has surely been Westgate's Renaissance Man. ■ *Helene Kiesen*

Perspective

## KARL FAST, RESPECTED EDUCATOR

In April of this past year, Karl Fast, an academically and spiritually influential teacher at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, passed away after a long struggle with Parkinson's Disease. As a former student of Westgate, I, along with many others, had the honour of directly experiencing his devotion to God, which shone brightly through all his actions.

Born in August, 1921, Karl grew up during a period of great turmoil. During his early youth, Karl witnessed the horrors created by the ruthless actions of the Soviet regime which sought, through artificial famine and forced relocation, to break the spirit of those who opposed Soviet rule.

Even with the slight subsiding of Soviet terror, Karl found his life once again shaped by monumental political events. With the armies of Europe mobilized and plunged deeply into war, the invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler's seemingly unstoppable army altered the lives of many Mennonite youths, including Karl's. At the age of 18, he entered the Red Army, and subsequently never again saw his mother or siblings. After a skirmish with the Germans destroyed his battalion, Karl fled to escape both the Germans, who considered him an enemy, and the Red Army, who considered him a traitor for not dying with his battalion. He eventually found shelter in a Mennonite village in Ukraine, where he taught for two years and met his wife Margaret. Ten days after his marriage, the entire village, along with other German and Mennonite villages in the area, was evacuated and the villagers followed the retreating German army out of Soviet Russia. In Poland, Karl experienced the same fate as so many other ethnically German men who could speak both German and Russian fluently. He re-entered the war, this time in a German uniform. Somewhere in Hungary, the Soviet army captured him and placed him in a Russian prisoner-of-war camp. Five years later, Karl emerged as one of the 300 out of 3,000 people to survive the camp.

Spring 05



In 1949, after reuniting with his wife Margaret and meeting his six-year-old daughter for the first time, Karl and his family immigrated to Canada. Instead of succumbing to anger and bitterness over his experiences, Karl embraced his chance at a new beginning, and promised God that he would fill his life with meaning by living out his gratitude to God and serving God in every way possible.

Nine years after immigrating to Canada, Karl helped found the Mennonite Educational Institute, which was later renamed Westgate Mennonite Collegiate. The formation of this school fulfilled Karl's dream of providing an educational environment for children that combined both academic and religious instruction, especially important for children of parents from the Soviet Union, who had been unable to be educated in this way. Karl not only participated as a founding father in the creation of Westgate, but also spent 12 years as a teacher here.

As a beloved teacher at Westgate, Karl embodied integrity, honesty, fairness, dedication to Westgate, and total devotion to God.

Along with his regular teaching duties, teaching *Deutsche Sprache*, *Kirchen und Mennonitengeschichte*, *Religion*, and *Glaubenslehre*, he also directed school plays. As fundraising activities for the school, these productions were large and very popular affairs which would run three evenings. Although Karl worked the students hard, his genial personality at rehearsals created pleasant memories for his students. Werner Becker remembers: "One time I recall that, during a rehearsal, he felt I was walking a little too casually, maybe too slouched over. He, himself, of course, always maintained a stiff military-like bearing, despite being a Mennonite. He said to me, 'Werner, Du gehst immer so als ob Du keine Knochen hast!' That comment has stuck with me. I think through the many hours he spent

directing the school dramas, he showed his dedication to the school and its students and even his memorable comment to me was done in a good-natured fashion."

Westgate students also respected Karl's ability to turn the horrific and painful memories of his experiences as a young man into the gift of historical stories, which helped them learn the history of Mennonites in the Soviet Union. As Ernst Becker remembers, Karl lectured in great detail about his experiences in a Russian war camp.

John Enns, who taught with Karl, recalls: "I first met Karl Fast in September of 1969. From my first encounter, it was apparent that he was a man of impeccable manners who might well make the Queen blush. He paid meticulous attention to detail; the details of his personal appearance, the details of his lessons, and the details of his students' lives. One infectious detail of his character was his zest for life. It took a force of mammoth proportions to wipe the warm smile off his face. He was strict in his expectations, but never unkind in the administration of justly-deserved discipline. Karl challenged us all to do and to be our best."

After leaving Westgate, Karl became a consultant for modern languages at the Department of Education, where he realised another dream: working with people of all nationalities and providing teachers and students with curricula and materials to tackle language programs. During the Trudeau years, as French immersion programs and multiculturalism spread throughout Canada, Karl Fast, responding to demands within the community, helped to introduce language programs in Hebrew, Ukrainian, Filipino, and German.

"Find your passion and live it" are the words that Karl Fast lived by. His spirit remains with us and is reflected in the lives of the many people he touched throughout his lifetime. ■ Ruth Dyck

Mr. Fast's family has set up a trust fund, the Karl Fast Scholarship Fund, which will make annual awards to Westgate students. If you wish to contribute to the fund, please contact the school.

## MIDDLE EAST TOUR: CULTURE, CONFLICT AND CHRIST

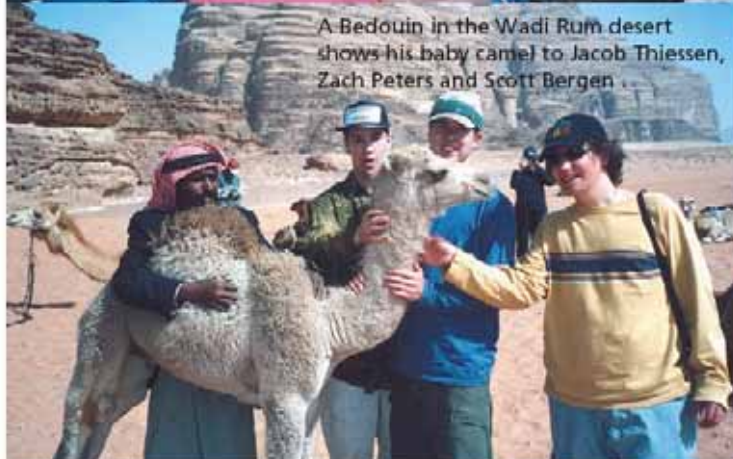
Mr. James Friesen leaned heavily on his recent voluntary service experience to lead 12 Senior 3 and 4 students and three chaperones through Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine for 18 days in late March. The travellers experienced many pleasures and challenges as they were immersed in bustling ancient cities, exposed to cultural and religious differences, and witnessed political decisions that deeply affected the people of the region.



On the  
Dome of  
the Rock.



In the chapel built at  
Ananias' house, Straight  
Street, Damascus.



A Bedouin in the Wadi Rum desert  
shows his baby camel to Jacob Thiessen,  
Zach Peters and Scott Bergen.

## BAPTISMS

Several of our supporting churches have informed us of current Westgate students and alumni who have chosen to be baptised this year.

### *Charleswood Mennonite Church*

Patrick Friesen	Daniel Wiebe
Kira Friesen	Mark Epp-Thiessen
Suzanne Braun	Tyler Braun

### *Douglas Mennonite Church*

Christine Derksen	Jessica Dyck
Rob Mauer	Harold Schellenberg
Chris Dasch	Jeremy Kroecker

### *Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship*

Becky Peters	Jorge Garcia
--------------	--------------

### *Home Street Mennonite Church*

Andrew Redekopp
-----------------

### *North Kildonan Mennonite Church*

Tracy Leclair	Marnie Redekopp
Trevor Leclair	

### *Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church*

Daniel Enns	Michael Enns
Tom Ens	Brian Luzny

### *Springfield Heights Menn. Church*

Kevin Kampen
--------------

### *Springstein Mennonite Church*

Nathaniel Wiebe
-----------------

## MUSICIANS OF NATIONAL DISTINCTION

Luke Nickel (Sr. 3) and Chloe Rew (Sr. 4), and Kevin Penner ('02), were chosen for the National Youth Band. They spent three weeks rehearsing and travelling through Saskatchewan with other young musicians across Canada. Earlier this spring, a piece Luke composed was performed at the Concert Hall by the Winnipeg Youth Symphony.

Six Westgate students were part of the Manitoba Band Association Intermediate Honour Band: Kimberley Peters (Sr. 2), Heather Peters (Sr. 2), Yuri Kim (Sr. 2), Karin Ens (Sr. 2), Brock Peters (Sr. 1) and Graeme Shelton (Sr. 1). Anna-Laure Koop (Sr. 1) and Krzysztof Cychowski (Sr. 1) were selected as alternates. This is the largest number of Westgate students selected to a Manitoba Honour Band and Westgate had the second largest number of students in honour band from one particular school.

## CAMS NATIONAL CHORAL FESTIVAL CELEBRATES ROSTHERN JUNIOR COLLEGE'S CENTENNIAL



Six Mennonite High School Choirs from Ontario to British Columbia found their way to Rosthern Junior College for two days of rehearsals in preparation for the Choral Festival Celebration. The gathering was a very intentional decision by CAMS (Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools) administrators to meet in Rosthern to celebrate RJC's Centennial. Along with Westgate, participating schools included Rosthern Junior College (Rosthern, Saskatchewan), United Mennonite Educational Institute (Leamington, Ontario), Rockway Mennonite Collegiate (Kitchener, Ontario), Steinbach Christian High School (Steinbach, Manitoba), Mennonite Collegiate Institute (Gretna, Manitoba) and Mennonite Educational Institute (Abbotsford, British Columbia). Also included in the weekend schedule were a visit to Batoche National Historical Site, a social evening of choirs performing for each other, a jazz band concert and a wind-down square dance.

Area churches welcomed the high school singers into their churches and their homes. The Osler Mennonite Church graciously billeted Westgate. From milking cows, to playing games, to soaking in a hot tub, the Osler area families welcomed us into their homes and warmly hosted our students. It was a privilege to lead in the worship service on Sunday morning.

The weekend, and in particular the Sunday afternoon concert, profiled the role that choral music plays in our schools, our churches and our families. John Wiebe, from Edmonton, AB, was the guest conductor for the weekend. His energy and youthfulness, as well as his dedication, connected well with the high school singers. The celebration's highlight was certainly the concert at Bethany Place on Sunday afternoon.

As the CAMS Choral Festival Concert unfolded on Sunday afternoon, those in attendance had reason to celebrate this

once-a-century event. Never again will Mennonite school choirs gather to celebrate the legacy of 100 years of RJC's history. Beyond the honouring of a school's story, the two hours of music proved to be a spiritually moving experience as we witnessed the passion of the 260-voice mass choir as they sang of God's love for us.

A concert highlight was the performance of *Faithfulness*, by Audrey Falk Janzen—a piece specifically commissioned for the 100th anniversary of RJC. The opening words of the song, "How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure," confirmed for everyone what this celebration was all about. Many thanks to RJC for their planning and hosting of the Choral Festival—it was great to be a part of this wonderful weekend. ■ Ms. Gail Schellenberg

*Ms. Schellenberg, Principal, also serves as Chair of Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools.*



Westgate exchange Sr. 1 students and their partners from Mont St. Hilaire, Quebec, across from the Notre Dame Cathedral in Montreal. Vive l'histoire!



### PARENTS PITCH IN

The Westgate Parent Association supports the school by sponsoring events that foster a sense of community among parents and constituency. They also contribute funding for a variety of school needs with the help of two key fundraisers. Caroline Klassen (above left), Susan Warnock and Ed Epp (above right) organise the chicken and fresh perogy drive, and Henry and Margaret Daniels conduct the annual orange and grapefruit sale. The school thanks the Association for this work, and the customers who support us through their purchases.

## ALUMNI NEWS

The University of Winnipeg awarded **COLIN SHELTON** ('02) two key awards this past academic year. Colin won the Robert P. Purves Memorial Scholarship and a Millennium Excellence Award. The latter recognised Colin's keen interest in innovation.

**RICHARD FEATHERSTONE** ('88) dropped by for a visit and a tour in early April. He had not been to the school since graduation and was intrigued by had what replaced "the mansion" in which he had experienced Westgate classes. Rick is a service manager for Ocean Trailer based out of Calgary. Rick lives with his wife Kate and his nine-year-old son Ryan in High River, Alberta, where he and his son enjoy dirt biking and hiking in the mountains.

**BRIAN KORNELSEN** ('00) was honoured recently at the University of Manitoba Athletic Banquet as the outstanding male golfer for the 2004-2005 season. Kornelsen, a Management student, is completing his fifth and final

### ERIKA RITA BOCK

*The Governor General's Silver Medal for the highest standing in an undergraduate degree.*

*The Chancellor's Gold Medal for the highest standing in Science (4-year course).*

*Gold Medal for achievement in Biochemistry (4 year course).*

### HEATHER LYNN GRAYDON

*Gold Medal for achievement in Sociology (Honours course).*

year as a member of the Bison golf team and has been co-captain the last two seasons. Bison coach Garth Goodbrandson says, "It's Brian's determination and effort to improve his game that has gotten him where he is today. If you were to pick a model of what we want our players to work towards, Brian is that person."

Kornelsen, who has had top 15 finishes in the last two Manitoba Amateur Championships, will round out his Bison career with his teammates looking to capture a Canadian University Golf championship at the Duncan Meadows Golf Course in BC from June 6-10, 2005.

## Westgate Alumni & Friends

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

Please join us for our 1st Annual Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament in support of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate.

### BRIDGES GOLF COURSE Sunday, September 11, 2005

Registration: 12:30 - 1:00 p.m.  
Shotgun Start: 1:30 p.m. (Texas Scramble)  
Fee: \$125/person (includes banquet dinner)  
Banquet only: \$45/person - limited seating  
Club rental available.

### Registration deadline: August 20

To register, please mail back the registration form (available from the school or from [www.westgate.mb.ca](http://www.westgate.mb.ca)) with payment.

Should you have any questions or sponsorship inquiries, please contact Rosemarie Hogue at 775-7111 or e-mail [Rosemarie.Hogue@westgate.mb.ca](mailto:Rosemarie.Hogue@westgate.mb.ca).



## KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

On January 10, 2005, eight students from Mrs. Ruth Dyck's Computer Science 30S class found time to attend a computer conference entitled "Digital International" held at Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna. It was a wonderful day for learning and exploring new ideas in the technology world, including digital music, animation, and security.

## SOUTH CENTRAL ATHLETIC CONFERENCE HONOURS SCHOLAR ATHLETES

On May 25, 23 student athletes from Westgate were honoured, along with nearly 300 students from the other 11 schools that make up our conference, for their excellence in academics and sport. Each student met the criteria of competing on at least two inter-school teams and maintaining an 80% average. We congratulate our student athletes for their achievement and their excellent representation of our school.

### SENIOR 1

Chloe Bishop  
Erin Braun-Janzen  
Cory Funk  
Nick Gamble  
Anneke Hildebrand  
Rachel Hildebrand  
Glenda Penner  
Karina Rempel  
Gabrielle Wiebe  
Christina Janzen

### SENIOR 2

Alix Krath  
Karla Miller  
Anna Bshouty  
Rahel Renner  
Nick Miller  
Kyle Wiebe  
Phil Daniels

### SENIOR 3

Lukas Douglas  
Lindsay Penner  
Cara Kennedy  
Kaitlin Rempel

### SENIOR 4

Andrew Froese  
Curtis Garrick

## A TEACHER IN MOTION

Tanis Thiessen is one of 25 teachers across Canada accepted to attend the EinsteinPlus National Teachers Workshop on Modern Physics in July in Waterloo, Ontario. The sessions will focus on the key concepts of fields, relativity and quantum mechanics, and offers the teachers an opportunity to discuss physics and physics education in a laboratory setting.