

Journal: Return to Roslyn

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What started as an assignment to cover the Saturday afternoon events at Roslyn School's centennial celebration became a spontaneous and nostalgic trip down memory lane.

A friend of mine and I (both from class of '84) agreed to meet up at the school to make a show of support for the anniversary.

First, we wandered through the classroom that contained a vast collection of memorabilia – old yellowed photos, an original school tunic. The name tags we had begrudgingly affixed to our sweaters paid off when a fellow classmate honed in on our year and brought us to the albums containing our class photos. A combination of the good strong coffee and baked goods, mixed with the nostalgia of being in our old school turned our quick visit into an extensive re-exploration, from the 2nd floor to the basement, east to west and north to south.

We visited each of our respective home-rooms, recounting at least one funny, tragic or bizarre story with each grade. My

grade 2 classroom reminded me of a Annick LeMarchand, one of those teachers whose manner, interests and style remain etched in the memories of her students and their parents (a tree is planted in her memory on the school property). She introduced us 8-year-olds to Tchaikovsky, and in her class I experienced the dual emotion of stage fright and thrill-of-performance adrenalin for the first time.

In my grade 4 class, under the stern but nurturing eye of Mrs. Boulkin, we read *The Hobbit*, inspiring in so many of her students the pleasure of reading.

We found ourselves in the science room where the same (yes, the same) science teacher still reigns. We wondered whether the formaldehyde containing the corpses of unfortunate little creatures had ever been changed (and whether the little creatures themselves might be the same...)

We ended up down in the basement in the lunch room, which incited memories of incredible hysteria and a not wholly pleasant amalgamation of smells from the myriad of lunch boxes – all this kept under control by the roaring Lunch Ladies.

We went to the Other Side of the basement accessed from the east to the area where kids changed for after-school ballet, and where class photos were taken in a

muted carpeted room against a backdrop of a huge yellow smiley face. Was this an unusual joke to make up for those kids, in every photo, who won't smile for the camera?

Back upstairs, we weaved our way to the gym. Remember the flexed arm-hang bars on the wall that we were made to hang from to take the government fitness test? Ironically, the scrawniest among us always seemed to be triumphant in this test, hanging effortlessly while the rest of us dropped like flies. You can still hear Marjorie, the gym teacher, with the big curly hair, encouraging us from below to hang on, hang on!

We signed our class poster and noticed that one of our classmates wrote that for her the school felt the same, but, smaller. Funny.

After all these years, 24 to be exact, the school still seems big, still smells the same and still looms large in my memory of those formative grade school years.

My friend and I walked out together and down the street, and then went our separate ways. It almost felt like we were going home for lunch hour and would be back for afternoon classes.