



Rosthern Junior College

CONNECT

PEOPLE, NEWS AND EVENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY



02
PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Teaching the whole person

03
DO MORE BE MORE UPDATE

Looking forward to phase two

03
ADMISSIONS

Information for perspective student families, RJC shuttle service

04
SCHOOL LIFE

Tribute to Lloyd Schmidt, grade 10 IMAGINE program update

06
ALUMNI NEWS

Decade reunions, beginnings & endings, book review

10
CONNECT INTERVIEWS

Celebrating 20 years of A Buncha Guys



RJC Connect is published as a joint effort between Rosthern Junior College students, staff and alumni. This semi-annual publication celebrates our past, our present and our future, as together we shape the ongoing RJC story.

.....

We invite alumni to submit items of interest: births, deaths, marriages and other exciting events and transitions. Pictures will also be considered.

**ROSTHERN
JUNIOR COLLEGE**
Box 5020 410 6th Avenue
Rosthern, SK,
S0K 3R0 Canada
office@rjc.sk.ca
www.rosthernjuniorcollege.ca
1-306-232-4222



TEACHING THE WHOLE PERSON

For more than 110 years, Rosthern Junior College (RJC) has provided an education experience that meets the academic, social, emotional, athletic and spiritual needs of its students. Our approach of teaching the whole person has equipped students to succeed in their future studies and become leaders in their communities and around the world. Today, RJC boasts graduates that are CEOs, university professors, Olympic athletes, professional musicians, farmers and pastors.

RJC is also committed to our approach as a Mennonite school and we continue to offer unique and meaningful opportunities for students to live, learn and grow together in community. Daily chapels, Christian ethics classes, weekly Bible study opportunities and Deeper Life Days all continue to be a part of the fabric of school life.

To continue in this tradition of providing education in a wholistic way, RJC has launched a dynamic new program for grade 10 students called IMAGINE. The 26 students in this year's class will develop a close-knit learning community through hands-on, integrated learning. Key guiding questions woven into the curriculum and co-curricular learning experiences of the class are "Imagine a better world," and "Imagine what you can do to

make it so." We are excited about the tremendous potential this approach offers, and we are beginning to plan new and exciting educational initiatives to also enhance student learning in grades 11 and 12.

Another important feature of RJC's academic programming continues to be Alternative Learning and Service Opportunities, or ALSO. Throughout the year students spend time thinking about what it means to be a good citizen in local and global communities. This culminates in the second semester when every student visits a national or international location to practice active servant leadership and deep learning. By participating in acts of service and listening to stories of people in Alabama, Central America, Calgary or Saskatoon, students see first-hand how small steps can lead to positive changes in the world.

As a "school of the church," RJC has been called to invite students to both faith and faithful living. Our students will be the next generation of leaders. It is a joy to partner with families, churches and communities near and far in this important and hopeful task.

— Jim Epp, Principal

DO MORE BE MORE

LET PHASE TWO BEGIN! Update on the DO MORE BE MORE strategy

Today we celebrate the successful wrap-up of phase one of our DO MORE BE MORE strategy and start looking forward to phase two. We have completed capital projects to improve the gym,

science labs and music classes, and now turn our focus towards enhancing the dorms and administrative offices in the school. We want to make the campus even more warm and welcoming for our students, teachers, visitors and guests. The success of phase one re-energized and rejuvenated us and we look forward to reaching the next goals in our five year plan.

With the launch of the new IMAGINE grade 10 program, we have seen an increase in student enrolment for the 2016-17 school year, up 18 percent from 2015-16. We are seeing the positive effects of imagining a program and educational institution that focuses on transformative learning for the next generation—creating leaders for the future. We have seen that the refreshed and refurbished senior science labs are creating a healthy learning environment and keeping students engaged in active education. And we have witnessed enthused alumni who have re-invested in

a school that gave them their start.

Phase two of the DO MORE BE MORE plan will focus on raising a second \$500,000–\$750,000 to complete dorm upgrades and other school enhancements. It will also include support for recruitment so we can continue to grow the student population. In addition the plan will enhance programming for grade 11 and 12 to enable students to grow and lead in the future.

We are encouraged by the growth in all areas of the school, and as a board we will continue to focus on our goals ahead. So today we invite you to re-engage, and continue to make RJC one of the best experiential learning environments for our young people. As an alumnus and supporter you are a significant part of this community and therefore we invite you to get involved and re-invest in this school, our school. We look forward to reconnecting with you as we journey together.

ADMISSIONS

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT FAMILIES

Registration Information for
second semester of 2016-17
and fall of 2017-18

RJC is now accepting applications for second semester of 2016-17 for grades 11 and 12. Our grade 10 IMAGINE class is currently at capacity.

We will be accepting applications for 2017-18 for all grades beginning in early January 2017. We anticipate keen interest again in our grade 10 IMAGINE class and will have a pre-registration opportunity in late December for all GenNext families with a student currently in grade nine. Please be aware that we created a waiting list for IMAGINE this year and anticipate similar demand next year. If you are interested in registering for fall 2017-18 please apply early.

We are excited to build on the energy and initiative of our IMAGINE program and are currently developing new and innovative inquiry-based and experiential learning opportunities for students enrolling in grade 11 or 12 in 2017-18. Look for more information about grade 11 GROW and grade 12

EXPLORE programs in the spring of 2017!

If you are interested in touring the campus or coming for a visit to find out more about our community and programs, please contact admissions director Valerie White by phone at 1-306-232-4222 or email admissions@rjc.sk.ca.

RJC SHUTTLE SERVICE

To help make RJC more accessible to families in neighbouring communities, we have a daily shuttle service for families in the Warman, Martensville, Osler and Hague area. If you live in the Sask Valley area, or know of someone that might be interested in the service, please contact Valerie White at admissions@rjc.sk.ca or 1-306-232-4222.

SCHOOL LIFE



Lloyd Schmidt with students

TRIBUTE TO LLOYD SCHMIDT

In the fall of 1986, Lloyd Schmidt began his teaching career at RJC in the science classroom. Originally hired for just one year to cover Ted Janzen's classes while he was away on sabbatical, Lloyd remained at RJC for the next 30 years, becoming a beloved math teacher and valued friend and colleague.

A man of few words, Lloyd was always content to let his actions speak for him. And his actions spoke volumes. Lloyd was often the first to arrive and the last

to leave, he worked tirelessly behind the scenes making sure the computer systems worked, constructing the timetable and building sets, along with many other tasks. He was always the first to volunteer, and he took care of many jobs or details just because he saw them and knew they needed to be done.

For Lloyd students came first. He always made time for those who needed extra help or encouragement in his classes. It

was not uncommon to see Lloyd sitting with a student in the hall before classes or in his room after school patiently explaining the intricacies of algebra or calculus. Students found him to be friendly, affirming and supportive. As a master teacher, Lloyd knew his coursework inside out, but he also taught lessons on humility, servanthood, patience and love, because that is who he is and that is who students experienced, knew and loved back.



It became tradition for students to give Lloyd a standing ovation whenever he spoke in the dining hall. This tradition grew out of a strong sense of respect and appreciation for Lloyd. We thank Lloyd for dedicating his entire teaching career to RJC, and we join 30 years of RJC students in this ovation, wishing Lloyd and Cheryl God's richest blessings as they enjoy retirement together.

RJC LAUNCHES NEW, INTEGRATED GRADE 10 PROGRAM

As a child, digging and planting in the garden with his grandparents, David Epp would talk with them about the soil they turned and the seeds they placed in the ground. And while the family dug and planted, he learned about the orchards and plants his grandparents had worked in the 1930s. It was more than an afternoon chore, it was a blending of biology and history and

working together with family. "I look at that and I say what a real, authentic way to learn," David says.

That feeling is what he hopes to replicate for this year's grade 10 students. In the new IMAGINE program, he will bring subjects together in one classroom, helping students engage with themes that appear

across the curriculum. "Just as life isn't compartmentalized into neat subject areas, neither is the most authentic type of education," he says.

This year, the 26 students will take all their subjects together —forming a close-knit community while still taking part in the broader RJC community. David, himself a graduate of RJC, will be

teaching English, history, Spanish and Christian ethics. Having one teacher for multiple subjects means the group can explore how those subjects connect. "There will be chances when we can blur the lines between those class times and maybe have some projects where we're less focused on a specific discipline and more focused on a more wholistic approach to learning," says David.

Throughout the year, students will also have opportunities for more interactive learning. The class will travel to Winnipeg, MB, visiting the human rights museum and learning about Canadian history and Indigenous-settler relationships. Students will also visit Oliver, BC to work with the Gleaners. Both trips will encourage students to engage more deeply with issues they've studied in class.

As a teacher at RJC, David appreciates the opportunity to approach issues through the lens of Christian faith: Thinking about responses to hunger as loving your neighbour, talking about Indigenous-settler relationships in Christian terms of reconciliation. "I think that even those students who come from a background of church wonder whether the church is an effective agent of change," says David. To answer that question, IMAGINE will also be meeting with staff from MCC Saskatchewan once a month, "This is an important chance for our students to see the active and responsive role that the church is playing in society while getting a closer look at many of the issues that we see (or don't!) around us," he says.

The program is named IMAGINE for two reasons. First to reinforce the idea that students are all made in God's image, which is important as they live together in dorms and meet new classmates, encountering people different from themselves. "But this word IMAGINE also points towards the opportunity, maybe the responsibility, that we have to imagine new possibilities for the world," says David. It's a reminder to think creatively about the future.

David is excited to have returned to RJC, this time as a teacher, helping create the community he experienced for a new generation of students. "This is a chance to teach in a particular way that is focused on teaching the whole person, looking at what kind of responsibilities are derived from that education, pointing students to the critically important work of fostering peace and justice."

WELCOME ABOARD!

RJC welcomes six new staff and teachers

The RJC community is excited to welcome six new staff members for the 2016-17 school year. All come with a combination of church, school or service experience, and bring expertise, energy and a commitment to serve God through teaching and mentoring youth.



Andrea Enns-Gooding, Hugo Malan and Scott Feick have joined Macaila Pries-Klassen as residence deans. Andrea moved to Rosthern from

Winnipeg with her husband Jason and son Everett after her graduation from CMU in spring of 2016. In addition to enjoying working with young people, Andrea is passionate about music and theatre.

Hugo Malan, an RJC grad of 2010, returns to RJC after participating in the CMU Outtatown program and studying at the



University of Saskatchewan where he is still working on a psychology degree. Hugo has provided leadership for the past several years as the summer

program director at The Quest camp at Christopher Lake. He is excited to rejoin the RJC community and mentor students as a dean.



Scott Feick (grad 2008) actually began his tenure at RJC on an interim basis last year as a residence dean after a resignation due

to health concerns. This year he joins the team as a full-time member. Scott was also a CMU Outtatown participant and remained at CMU afterwards, completing a degree in theology. Scott is also a certified personal trainer. He is looking forward to developing meaningful relationships with our students.

Jill Wiens (grad 2009) is RJC's new English language arts teacher. A recent graduate from the University of Saskatchewan, Jill also participated



in CMU's Outtatown program after graduating from RJC, and she served as summer camp co-director at Camp Shekinah in the summer of 2016. Jill is no stranger to many of the current RJC students since she completed the internship for her education degree at RJC in the fall of 2015.



Allison Schmidt (grad 2010) joins the RJC staff after beginning her teaching career in 2015 in Glaslyn, SK. While at the University of Saskatchewan,

Allison became heavily involved with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, including a five week service and learning tour to China in the summer of 2013. Allison is teaching math and is

also coaching volleyball.

David Epp (grad 2008) has taken responsibility for leading RJC's grade 10 IMAGINE program. He also has a leadership



role as spiritual life director responsible for chapels, faith and life committee, Deeper Life Days and Alternative Learning and Service Opportunities (ALSO). Prior to joining the RJC faculty, David earned degrees at CMU and the University of Saskatchewan. He also served for one year as a volunteer in Guatemala as part of the MCC SALT program.

It is exciting to have so many RJC alumni returning to the school as staff members. We are encouraged to see young people who feel a calling to serve God and the church bring their energy and talents to our campus. Welcome aboard!

ALUMNI NEWS



Dr. Alvin Harms, Dr. Fred Enns and Henry Swatzky, Rosthern Academy 75-year grads

ALUMNI REUNIONS

Rosthern Academy Class of 1941– 75-year grads

This trio of RJC grads meets periodically at the Phantasmic Pannenkoek Haus (Dutch Pancake House) in Calgary to have a meal of delicious pancakes, discuss current affairs and reminisce about the past.

Dr. Alvin Harms is a retired professor of French in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Calgary. Alvin has the honour of having taught former prime minister Stephen Harper. Dr. Fred Enns is former co-chair of Administration at the University of Alberta. And Henry Sawatzky is a professional geophysicist, well known for his research on impact craters.

Alvin and Henry are 75-year grads, from Rosthern Academy, 1941, and Fred is a 73-year grad from 1943. Fred was a classmate of Henry's wife, Elizabeth (Reimer) Sawatzky.

60 years — By Alfred Neufeld

The graduating class of 1956 had much to be thankful for when they met for lunch and for great visiting at the Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon on June 25th, 2016.

Thanks to the quick planning about a month earlier by the following people: Willard and Elaine (Funk) Boschman, Eva (Wichert) Shannon, Donna (Lobe) Driedger, Sylvia (Sawatzky) Regier, Wally Krause, and Anne (Krahn) Epp, as they helped to get this event started.

We began gathering at Nutana Park about 10:00 a.m., and there was a beautifully strong feeling of "being among friends."

The total number of grads present was 22, and with many spouses we numbered about 33 total. Of the original 55 grads, nine are deceased. Candles were lit for each of these as their names were read:

- Jake Renpenning
- Tony Klassen
- Mary (Siemens) Epp
- Alfred Redekop
- Katherine (Klaassen) Buhr
- John Thiessen
- Trudy (Nickel, Kasdorf) Claassen
- Walter Andres
- Don Winchester

Twelve spouses from our class have also passed away: Henry Schellenberg (Dorothy Friesen), Reg Rempel (Myrna Ewert), Henry Schellenberg and Ed Kornelsen (Leila Bartel), Nick Shire (Martha Letkeman), Willie Falk (Anita Sawatzky), Gordon Gibbons (Irma Koop), Ron Houle (Irmgard Neufeldt), Harry Kasdorf, Wally Claassen (Trudy Nickel), Margery Balzer and Mary Siemens (Art Epp).

After a great lunch together we continued visiting, had a group photo taken and enjoyed renewing friendships. Letters were read from some of those who could not make it to this reunion: Mary



60 Year Grads: Back Row: Leonard Boldt, Alfred Neufeldt, Wayne Clifton (Anita's husband), Irmgard (Neufeldt) Houle, Henry "Rocky" Jantz, Myrna (Ewert) Rempel, Serena (Sawatzky) Harms, Paul Heese, Wally Krause.
2nd Row: Willard & Elaine (Funk) Boschman, Anne (Krahn) Epp, Sylvia (Sawatzky) Regier, Esther Peters, Trudy (Zacharias) Epp, Irma (Koop) Gibbons, Ellie (Rocky) Janz, Eva (Wichert) Shannon.
Front Row: Leola Epp, Louise (Jantzen) Wiebe, Irvin & Donna (Lobe) Driediger, Anita (Neufeld) Clifton, Helga (Bergman) Suderman, Leila (Bartel, Schellenberg) Kornelsen. **Missing: Marry (Bartel) Johnston.**

(Thiessen) Reimer sent a short note, while Martha (Letkeman) Shire and Agnes (Fast) Kermani wrote a long letter. Sylvia Regier updated us on a few people that she'd had phone conversations with.

Sharing time was special, talking about our lives, children and happenings of the past few years—many of us mentioned how God has been at work in our lives.

When it got a little heavy, Eva brought out a box of gift bags, passing out one for each to bring us jokes and laughs.

As a few were leaving, Sylvia played piano while we gathered around to sing familiar songs from yesteryear. Some of us made it to the Alumni Supper at RJC and then to the musical *Rags*.

With many of our classmates and life-mates having difficulty physically, we wonder how many of us will still be around for the next reunion. It may well be the Great Reunion in Heaven. How good it is to have attended RJC, and what a blessing for us classmates to be as "family" to each other!



50 Year Grads: Back Row: Alvin Enns, Wilf Driedger, Rob Wedel, Irvin Dyck, Don Regier, John Harder, Bob Boschman
Row 3: Lil (Dyck) Regier, Bev (Roth) Janzen, Darlene (Schapansky) Winkleman, Gail (Klassen) Langendorfer, AnnNoel (Ewert) Clark, Ellen (Ewert) Krahn, Reg Epp, Wilmer Froese, Lillian (Peters) Smith, Linda (Boldt) Stucky, Les Regier
Row 2: MaryAnn (Dyck) Takata, Anita (Janzen) Stushnoff, Loraine (Schmidt) Epp, Lydia Janzen, Lorraine (Letkeman) Marsh, Anne (Elias) Gedir, Monica (Balzer) Dalke, Gladys (Dyck) Geiser, Doris (Regier) Pedersen, Dolores (Hildebrandt) Roth
Row 1: Elsie (Schulz) Bulva, Doreen (Hildebrandt) Janzen, Anita (Andres) Lowndes, Linda (Regehr) Regier, Edith Kampen, Norma (Wiebe) Deaver, Ray Funk, Helen (Schroeder) Siemens, Naomi (Friesen) Unger, Wilma (Dyck) Haynes
Front: Helen and Bill Kruger

50 years — By Norma (Wiebe) Deaver

The classmates of '66 began their reunion in the fellowship hall of the Rosthern Mennonite Church – such an appropriate location as we remembered the Sunday morning services we attended there so many years ago. Somehow, though, just a bit of conversation with former classmates brought that past much closer to the present. Soon 1966 didn't really seem like such a distant memory. Well, that might be stretching it a bit . . . but it was apparent that we are still the same exuberant group that we have always been.

Much to the dismay of some of the attendees, name tags were not offered at the door. This provided the opportunity to boldly approach each other with self-introductions and watch the faces of former classmates light up with recognition, delight and, occasionally, disbelief. Such fun!

With yearbook pictures and other photos from the past scrolling on a large screen, the pleasure of becoming reacquainted was enhanced by the lovely refreshments and snacks prepared and served (with a flair) by our own Les and Lil Regier.

A few somber moments were observed as we remembered those from our class who

have passed away. Brief accounts of their lives were read and candles for each were lit in their memory.

Following our afternoon event, we made our way to the RJC dining hall and enjoyed the Alumni Banquet with other decade reunion attendees, more alumni and some former teachers. Our classmates were each presented with the book *Roots & Wings: 100 Years of Rosthern Junior College*.

During the evening, some of us chose to attend the RJC Musical *Rags* while others met in the tea room at the Station Arts Centre for further reminiscing and some spontaneous group singing. How those voices rang out and filled that charming space with four-part (or was it five?) harmony! More delicacies (courtesy of the Regiers) were served – a lovely way to end the day.

We continued (and concluded) our reunion with a wonderful Sunday brunch buffet in our own private room at the Saskatoon Inn – four classmates unable to attend on Saturday joined us there. More connections were made, further conversations were enjoyed and a myriad of photos were taken.

It was very exciting to see 43 of our classmates attend our 50-year reunion. Also, we were pleased that Bill and Helen

Kruger joined us on Saturday. Bill was acting president during our senior year at RJC while Helen served on staff as a nurse.

Here's looking forward to the next reunion in 10 years . . . three cheers for the Class of '66!!

40 years — By Marian Hooge Jones

The 2016 graduation reunion weekend was an enjoyable time. Thank you to all who attended, and to those who participated in so many ways. With the help of Kelly and Angela Grams, we were able to contact at least 65 out of the 77 grads of 1976. Three informal supper and evening gatherings happened in Saskatoon and Rosthern on Friday night. On Saturday a lunch barbecue hosted by Gary Boldt and Robin Neudorf on their beautiful farm near Osler was followed by prophesy dig up, and "classroom" time. (Pastor) Bruce Janzen and Marian Hooge Jones lead a worship service and memorial with special music by Marj and Charlie Smith. We remembered fellow students Lydia and Eleanor who have passed on, along with many staff, teachers, parents, children and family members who have also died. After more sharing and singing, we had the official photographs taken by Henry Harms (Lori's father). This was precious time together.



40 Year Grads: Back Row: Albert Andres, Gary Boldt, Paul Thiessen, Eldon Funk, Lori Harms, Janice (Richert) Arnott, Mark Suanders, Marj (Koop) Smith, Darlene (Driedger) Boyko, Kelly Grams, Mary Lou (Enns) Bond, Brian Klaassen, Marian Hooge Jones, Rob Janzen, Bill Peters, Roger Epp, Bruce Jantzen
Middle Row: Barb Wieler, Charlotte (Wiens) Mikalson, Debbie (Martens) Smith, Brenda Peters, Bev (Redekopp) Enns, Connie (Enns) Boehr, Karen (Enns) Fullerton, Bruce Fehr
Front Row: Marielee (Bergen) Wolfe, Bob Peters, Willie Chu
Missing: Lorna (Enns) Nelson, Evangeline (Hildebrandt) Patkau, Lorne Patkau, Doug Warkentin

We packed into the RJC cafeteria for the delicious RJC annual Alumni Supper, then drove in convoy to the farm of Bruce and Norma Mae Fehr, where they hosted a lovely evening of fireside and indoor visiting. Several also attended the *Rags* musical—but at our age, visiting together seems to be the priority.

Sunday there was brunch in Saskatoon, while some attended the RJC graduation events in Rosthern. Although I did not do an exact count, I think about half of our classmates attended the 40 year reunion, along with many spouses, and one daughter —Erin Chu. It was great to be together again.

30 years — By Glenn Patkau

The class of 1986 began the weekend meeting for a late lunch at the Station Arts Centre. After getting reacquainted, we went back to the school to find all those places we left our names, our grad photos and all of the changes to both the school and the dorms. The Alumni Banquet was a big highlight for many, followed by a fire at Kalene's family home in Rosthern. On Sunday morning we met for brunch at the Willows in Saskatoon and decided that every 10 years is really too long. Looking forward to meeting again at our 40 year reunion, doing exactly what we did for 30 year.



20 years — By Michelle McKinnell

Fourteen alumni from the grad class of 1996 met at RJC on the Saturday afternoon. Some of us have returned to the school numerous times for events over the years, but for others this was their first time back since graduation. We walked through the school and the dorms, sharing stories of shenanigans both in and out of class. Some things were exactly as they were 20 years ago, but many things were new with promise of more to come!

The weather threatened rain all week, but

we headed for the Valley Regional Park with the hope that Lyndon's statement "let's put our collective Mennonite powers together to get this to pass us by!" would work in our favour. And it did! We continued our visiting around a campfire, passing around copies of our yearbooks and old Borscht Newspapers while the kids (future alumni?) played at the park.

I think for many of us it hasn't felt like 20 years (we can't be that old, right?), but apparently it has been! We missed those from our class that couldn't make it this time round, but hope to see more at our 30 year reunion! I, for one, am so thankful for a place like RJC that gave us these lifelong friendships and I look forward to keeping in touch!

BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

Heidi (Wiebe) Sosa Padilla (grad 1996) and husband Wilson celebrate the birth of their son Nicolas on July 11, 2016. He joins two-year-old brother Ethan.

Michelle Banman (grad 1984) married James Kohut Sept 26, 2015.

We invite alumni to submit births, deaths, marriages and other events and transitions to office@rjc.sk.ca.



30 year grads: Those in attendance for all or part of the weekend:

Mark Rivers, Karin Krahn, Heather (Sawatsky) Nickel, Warren Epp, Glenn Hildebrandt, David Weiler-Thiessen, Melanie (Wiens) Taylor, Suzanne (Wiens) Nickel, Gayle (Friesen) Wichert, Jackie (Neufeld) Walter, Lewis Froese. Kalene (Bartel) Bartsch, Connie (Gerbrandt) Lemay, Joanne (Regier) Weighill, Shelby Krahn, Julie (Petty) Sillars, Karen Dueck, Glenn Patkau

BOOK REVIEW:

Disarming Conflict by Ernie Regehr, RJC class of 1960

Reviewed by Jennifer Wiebe, Director of the Mennonite Central Committee Ottawa Office



This review was originally published in the Summer 2016 issue of the *Catalyst*, a publication of *Citizens for Public Justice*.

“Peace, no less than politics, is the art of the

possible,” writes Ernie Regehr, recipient of the Order of Canada. Regehr is widely respected as a peace researcher, security and disarmament specialist and co-founder of Project Ploughshares. In this book, he unravels our deeply-entrenched assumptions about both the inevitability

and efficacy of military force in resolving conflict.

Regehr’s personal convictions naturally inform his work. But the thesis of *Disarming Conflict* doesn’t hinge on moral arguments against war. Therein lies its strength. It is meticulously researched and rigorous in its analysis. Regehr is concerned with what actually works for achieving peace and stability.

The first half of the book examines the ways in which military force has been “predictably ineffective” in settling highly complex political disputes over that last quarter century. After spreading loss and destruction, the overwhelming majority (85 percent) of intrastate and international wars end in a desperate military stalemate. They are then settled at the same negotiating tables avoided at the outset.

The second half of the book shifts to Regehr’s central theme of “disarming conflict.” It lays out practical prescriptions for preventing and de-escalating war. This includes political diplomacy, human security, small arms control, nuclear

disarmament and the protection of vulnerable populations through peace support operations.

For any self-proclaimed “realist” who may be inclined to dismiss anything written by a peace activist, this is no work of utopian fantasy. *Disarming Conflict* is evidence-based and entirely practical. It challenges the myth that there are no real alternatives to violence for achieving regional, national and global interests.

Effectively realizing these alternatives requires a major shift away from devoting the lion’s share of our political and financial resources on the preparation for, and conduct of, war. Instead, we should invest in the kinds of non-violent approaches and initiatives all-too-often sidelined in our national capitals. “It means building the conditions of positive peace as if our lives depended on it,” Regehr argues.

This book is essential reading for peace practitioners, military personnel, policy makers, ordinary citizens and skeptics alike!

CONNECT INTERVIEWS



A BUNCHA GUYS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

When Russ and Val Regier were first invited to organize a small men’s choir at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, they never imaged there would come a day they’d be organizing a 20 year reunion. Back in 1991 the group didn’t have a name, regular rehearsals or any fundraisers booked. It was just seven or eight guys singing a few songs at Christmas.

But the guys had such a great time, and received enough requests for repeat performances that they kept it up. The group never held auditions, “guys” just recruited their friends from Camp Shekinah and RJC. It wasn’t until their third year, when the guys were asked to perform at the Shekinah fundraising Christmas banquet, that they started

regular practices in Russ and Val’s basement. “Those [concerts] were pretty big deals for us back then,” says Russ. And that concert lead to more opportunities. “After that people started inviting us to church services and fundraisers and all kinds of things.”

It was in that third year the group decided

they needed a name, they settled on A Buncha Guys because it represents the informal nature of the group. "We're just anybody who wants to come and sing, we don't do auditions. We're just A Buncha Guys you know?," says Russ. "We've had people who study music, and people who've never sung before in the group." Once they'd chosen the name, the group sat around a table trying to decide which way to spell it. And though they've had the name for 17 years now, "we still struggle with teaching people how to spell it," says Russ.

From their humble roots as a small church ensemble, A Buncha Guys has become a well-loved tradition in the province, featuring many RJC alumni as members. While men don't need to be from RJC to participate, many are. Recent RJC grads often recruit their friends from school and then the cycle continues.

The RJC fundraisers have been some of the best memories for the Regiers over the years. Their one and only tour was a trip to Calgary to sing at an RJC fundraiser, with a stop in Medicine Hat along the way. The annual Guys and Pies evening is also a highlight, especially now that the guys pitch together and buy a dessert, giving back to the school so many of them attended. "They'll decide which cake they want to go for, and they've always had by far the highest bid in the last couple years, that's pretty special," Russ says.

Though they've been asked about recording numerous times, A Buncha Guys has always said no—sticking to their informal roots. "I'd be scared to lose the fun we have in singing," says Russ. Val, who has accompanied the group from the beginning, says "we're just happy to sing."

That fun and community feeling is what keeps the members coming back. "The music we made together was beautiful, but I think there was even more value in the fellowship between us every week at rehearsal," says Nate Olfert, one of the founding members of A Buncha Guys. "Russ and Val would open their home to us every week and would always provide some kind of snack to share at the end of the night. We would sit around and visit after singing together and share what

was happening in our lives. A Buncha Guys was basically my church community through my high school and university years."

There were some years the Regiers weren't sure if they could keep the group going, when larger numbers would move away or have other commitments. But there have always been enough new and returning guys who want to sing each year to make it happen.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary, there will be a reunion for anyone who's ever sung with the group. On the weekend of April 28th to 30th, 2017 everyone will get together, rehearse and share meals – ending with the annual A Buncha Guys spring concert, featuring the alumni choir. Anyone who's interested in attending can check out the A Buncha Guys Facebook page for more information.

Reflections from the guys:

Nathan Rinholm — 1999 to 2009

"It becomes so much more than just a singing group, it is a family. It is such a great thing to have for these young men just starting out in their lives. I was able to share the celebration of my wedding with these guys, the births of my children as well as received their support through hard times and sorrows and I think most of the guys would say the same."

Ben Borne — 2015 to present

"The relationships I've made are definitely my favourite memory. In my brief time with A Buncha Guys I have formed many great memories of travelling together, singing in rural churches or laughing together during rehearsals in the basement.

"I heard it once said, that the Spirit of God is present when we breathe together. The moment we breathe together as a choir always gives me the chills because it gives me a sense of unity and belonging to a community. This is why I enjoy singing with the group—it brings me closer to the spirit of God."

Luke Pulvermacher — 2008 to present

"It is a good community and it's nice to

be around people like that. And it's a nice challenge and a chance to fully engage in what I'm doing. No matter how well I know a song, I can always improve something."

Curtis Wiens — 2010 to present

"We sing a great variety of music and I have had the opportunity to play the banjo, mandolin and various percussion along with some of the tunes. Russ and Val are awesome to sing with and they have tremendous dedication to A Buncha Guys. People love to hear us sing even though not every note is perfect. There is something about the energy of our performances that people really like and it is special to be part of.

"One highlight has to be the guys collaborating every year to bid on and win the most expensive cake at the Guys and Pies auction. Somehow, we break our record every year. Another highlight—one year some guys got stuck in a ditch down a back road on the way to the Shekinah Christmas concert. The roads were pretty bad so another vehicle with a few guys went to pull them out and didn't show up until part way through the concert. They just walked up to the front and joined us for whatever song we were at in the program."

Nate Olfert — 1997 to 2005

"My favourite times were always the Christmas concerts. We had a version of Silent Night that Russ had arranged for us that we would sing almost every year.

"We would start off with the Boyz II Men version where a different guy would sing each of the first four phrases on their own. Some of us would embellish our lines in a vaguely Boyz II Men style, but the last line was always sung simply by a bass who would just let it rumble. We were lucky enough to have some amazing basses in the group who could really knock it out of the park. Then the entire chorus would come together to finish the song, moving through different arrangements for each verse, including one verse in German.

"I still get goosebumps when I think of the way it felt to be a part of something so moving. I only hope the audience had as much fun as we did!"

TOURNAMENT OF MEMORIES

JAN. 13TH & 14TH, 2017

The alumni **Tournament of Memories** weekend will showcase basketball and hockey and be a time to reconnect with some of your classmates and other alumni. **Come join in the fun!**

Please register for either of the activities by **January 2nd, 2017** to deneldafast@hotmail.com or 1-306-221-2846.

Basketball teams will play on Friday evening and Saturday, and will be comprised of your peers. Hockey teams spanning many years will play together on Saturday. Please contact Denelda if you have a team or want to be on one.

A nutritious and athlete friendly lunch will be served in the dining hall for all participants and spectators. Come out and support each other on the ice or on the court, or just come out to cheer!

GENERATION NEXT >> GRADES 5-9

Generation Next is a program for students in grades five through nine. Our GenNexters are invited to several youth events at RJC, some exclusively for GenNexters and some for all youth to attend. We will continue with "Friday Fun Nights," events where GenNexters get to spend time on the campus and interact with current RJC students. We will end the year with a big party. If you know anyone in grades five through nine that would be interested in the program please contact Valerie White by email at val@rjc.sk.ca or at 1-306-232-4222.

HELP OUR STUDENTS DO MORE AND BE MORE

Your generous gifts are vital to the life and mission of RJC. With the year-end tax deadline of December 31 fast approaching, please consider making one more gift this year—a gift to nurture the potential of our students. Together, as a community, we can help our students do more and be more ... in their studies, their abilities and their future service to society. Thank you.

THREE WAYS TO GIVE

- **MAIL** your cheque to: Rosthern Junior College, Box 5020, Rosthern, SK, S0K 3R0
- **CALL** us with your credit card number at 1-306-232-4222
- **GIVE ONLINE** at www.rosthernjuniorcollege.ca

CONNECT WITH US

We hope you enjoy this edition of RJC Connect, our semi-annual newsletter that keeps you updated on student life, alumni happenings, school events and everything that makes the RJC community such a vibrant, exciting place.

If you'd like to suggest story ideas, please email us at office@rjc.sk.ca.

Return undelivered
Canadian addresses to:
Rosthern Junior College
Box 5020, 410-6th Avenue
Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0

Publications Mail
Agreement No.
40009425