

Rec Connect: The Official Newsletter of the Society of Acadia University Recreation Graduates

March 2013 Volume I Issue 1



THE SAURG NEWSLETTER

This is the inaugural edition of the SAURG Newsletter which henceforth will be distributed electronically to the membership three times a year: May, September, and January. Members are strongly encouraged to submit material for inclusion in the following sections: 1) Alumni profiles-details on yourself or other alumni we can profile as a means of getting to know one another; Personals/updates such as recent awards, job changes, move to new location, etc.; Details of Resources (books, manuals, DVDs, training seminars...) that you have developed and think others might wish to access; details of any upcoming events that you think members might be interested in knowing about; and Reflections/Recollections/Confessions that would be appropriate to share related to your experience with the Acadia Recreation program. Please forward all submissions to the newsletter editor Brenda Robertson '75 at brenda.robertson@acadiu.ca.

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TO JOIN SAURG

SAURG presently has over 100 members, one of whom is you if you receive this newsletter from the SAURG Board. We are hoping to increase the membership, primarily so we can be in communication with as many graduates as possible. Membership fees are \$20, renewable in 2017! So any person who has graduated for the Acadia Recreation program may join the Society by forwarding the payment of the \$20 fee to Secretary Chad Haughn (chaughn@chester.ca), Municipality of Chester PO Box 369, Chester NS B0J 1J0, 902 275-3490 with cheques payable to Society of Acadia University Recreation Graduates. Please pass this on to any fellow graduates with whom you are in contact.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I had no idea what impact Acadia would have on my life as I arrived on campus in 1973. My decision to go to Acadia was made because I had previously attended a basketball camp there when I was 16 and liked Gib Chapman invited me to attend Acadia. Several of my friends were already there and peer pressure helped make the decision. But the real reason was that it just felt right every time that I stepped foot on that campus.

My years at Acadia taught me how to be a good leader; it gave me the skills to be an effective recreation professional; it taught me how to think; how to evaluate a situation and come up with a solution but most of all Acadia introduced me to some of the best friends I have in the whole world. Acadia also introduced me to my wife, but that is another story indeed. As alumni we can only reflect back on what there was relating to the institution and our years on campus but what we take into the future is this whole new set of friends we have not even met yet and an opportunity to make SAURG into the rallying cry to bring us all together. SAURG hopes to keep everyone well connected and to create opportunities for the membership to gather and share the *Acadia Recreation Spirit*. Enjoy the newsletter and I hope to see you at the AGM in Wolfville on May 11.

Carroll Randall, class of 1976

SAURG MEMBERSHIP DATA BASE

We are attempting to develop a database with information about our members. To assist us, we would very much appreciate if you would send along the following information to Brenda Robertson (brenda.robertson@acadiiau.ca) at your earliest convenience and preferably by the end of March: 1) Name (including maiden name); 2) years at Acadia; 3) preferred email address for us to correspond with you; 4) current home town; 5) current position/employer; 6) previous positions/employers; 7) three areas of professional interest (e.g. disenfranchised groups, experiential education, marketing, planning, advocacy, gender equity, etc.) The data base will be used by the Board in communicating with you, developing profiles of what Graduates have done with the degree, and carrying out its work. Additionally, the Alumni Association of Acadia University (AAAU) has requested contact information that we collect in order to update their records so please indicate as 8) whether you are approve the Board sharing your contact information (email and mailing address) with the AAAU.

HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY OF ACADIA RECREATION GRADUATES

Feb 2, 2011 was a snowy afternoon in the Annapolis Valley when Brenda Robertson sent a message out to a number of Acadia Recreation Graduates inviting them to attend a meeting on campus March 20th, to discuss the idea of having a reunion to celebrate the 40 years of the Acadia Recreation program which began in 1972. There was an enthusiastic response and the meeting concluded with a commitment to move forward with not only the reunion but a professional conference as well. As the planning meetings continued, it soon became evident that someone needed to take responsibility for this initiative and the concept of establishing the Society of Acadia University Recreation Graduates (SAURG) was developed. An interim Board of Directors was put into place with Carroll Randall ('76) as President and the inaugural meeting of the Board took place January 7th, 2012. As well as the conference and reunion planning, the Board developed bylaws and paperwork in order to become incorporated which it did on March 27th. The purpose of the organization is to establish lifelong connections between graduates of the program through initiatives that promote connection, collaboration, and celebration.

The objectives of the Society are:

- To provide an avenue for graduates to connect with one another through the implementation of a program of reunions and events as well as through print and electronic communications;
- To create vehicles for networking and ongoing personal and professional development;
- To foster a sense of connection to Acadia and encourage participation in university activities;
- To provide a means of recognizing and celebrating the history of the recreation program;
- To recognize distinctive contributions to the betterment of society by members.

The inaugural meeting of the membership took place at the end of the reunion on May 27, 2012 in the Acadia University SUB. The first official Board of Directors was elected and has met several times over the past 9 months, working on a number of items of agenda items which have included such business as: conference and reunion follow up work; establishing a bank account and financial management procedures; upcoming event planning; creation of electronic communications vehicles including a web site, newsletter, and document depository; building relationships with other groups including the Office of Alumni Affairs, School of Recreation Management and Kinesiology, and the Acadia Recreation Management Society; curriculum changes in the Acadia Recreation program; and initiative planning including undertaking a project to capture the 40 year history of the program.

2013 HISTORY INITIATIVE WORKSHOP AND AGM

The SAURG AGM will take place Saturday May 11 at 9:30 am – 1:30 pm in Wolfville. During the morning, there will be a workshop where participants will discuss the viability of a SAURG initiative designed to gather information about the 40 years of the Acadia Recreation program. The curriculum has undergone significant changes in the past few years with a greatly enhanced focus on community development and a significant reduction in the recreation course offerings, both in the core and electives being offered. Additional changes in this direction are currently being undertaken, further reducing the recreation content of the degree. As such, the SAURG Board is committed to gathering, preserving, organizing and disseminating information about the 40 past years. During the workshop, the initiative will be framed; nature of the content determined; and strategies for information gathering, storage, and dissemination identified. This is an initiative in which all SAURG members can become involved. Following the workshop, there will be a working AGM lunch. The AGM has been scheduled during Convocation weekend in order that SAURG can also engage in related events occurring. Further details will be forthcoming.

MEET THE SAURG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Carroll Randall, Bridgewater, N.S. (1976)

Carroll started as the first Recreation Coordinator for the Municipality of Lunenburg in 1977 and retired in January 2010. Over those 33 years he helped the municipality become a leader in Nova Scotia in trail and open space development. Carroll spent 15 years as a RANS board member, chaired the National Rails to Greenways committee for five years and spent five years on the board of Recreation Society Atlantic Canada. Carroll is now retired and spends a great deal of time fishing and is now a licensed fishing and hunting guide in Nova Scotia. Family was the most important part of his life when he was working and still is. Spending quality time with the family is what life is all about.

President Elect: Laurie Wanamaker (Dickson), Kentville, N.S. (1986, 1990) Laurie is the Court Administrator at the Kentville Justice Centre. Prior to that she served as the Western Regional Coordinator with the Maintenance Enforcement Program, NS Dept. of Justice; and Coordinator of the Valley Youth Alternatives Program. She claims that favorite memories of her time in the Acadia Recreation Program are too many to count but Spring Camp, the Texas Tour, and being the honoured as the first recipient of the James Bayer Award are certainly amongst them.

Corporate Secretary: Chad Haughn, Chester, N.S.(2000) Currently Chad is Recreation & Parks Director, Municipality of Chester prior to which he served as their Community School Coordinator. A favorite memory for Chad was orientation his first year at Acadia where they participated in crazy team building games and then progressed to trying dare devilish climbs and stunts on the high ropes course with fellow reekies. It was a great introduction to the Recreation Management program, the field and many of people who are now his colleagues.

Treasurer: Ivy Warren (DeVries) , Windsor, N.S. (1983) Ivy presently serves as Area Coordinator Halifax Regional Municipality responsible for Bedford, Sackville, Fall River & Musquodoboit Valley Community & Recreation Services. Prior to that she served as Recreation Director for the Town of Louisbourg. Of her many memories of Acadia, an incident stands out from first year was attending a Rec house party and being entertained by the guy sitting in the middle of the kitchen floor strumming on his guitar. He was George Taylor, Recreation Director for the Town of Wolfville and an Acadia Recreation grad. Later she was to become colleagues with George when she joined the City of Halifax Recreation Department and they have worked together for over 25 years.

Director at Large: Kate Friars, Victoria, B.C. (1980) Kate is currently the Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture for the City of Victoria. Her career path has been in municipal parks and recreation working in cities across Canada. Prior to Victoria she was the Recreation Director of the City of Burnaby. The most memorable time for her while at Acadia was serving as President of the Acadia Recreation Club and being invited to attend faculty meetings and provide input from the student perspective.

Director at Large: Brenda Robertson, (1975, 1983) Brenda retired in June from being a Recreation Professor at Acadia for 29 years. During that time she also served for a number of years as Director of the Recreation Resource Centre of Nova Scotia. Prior to entering academe, she served as the Development Coordinator with NS Ladies Curling Association, conservation Corps Supervisor with Parks Canada, Recreation Assistant with the Wolfville Recreation Department, Director of Rainbow Haven Camp, and with the special events staff at the Banff Springs Hotel. A favorite memory of her 36 years of experience with Acadia Recreation as a student and professor, was the conference and reunion which took place last May.

1970s Representative: Jude Hirsch (de Guerre), Milledgeville, Georgia (1977) Jude is Professor and Chair, Department of Outdoor Education at Georgia College & State University. Previously, for 18 years she was an Associate Professor and Coordinator of Outdoor Recreation at Acadia University. Her favorite memories of her time in Recreation at Acadia were as a professor responsible for the Spring Camp. In particular she mentions specific programs she designed and executed with the assistance of students and alumni including Welcome to the Planet Sher, Adventure in Middle Earth, and Star Peace Force.

1980's Representative: Robin Norrie, Truro, N.S. (1986) Robin's current position is the Manager of Recreation, NS Department of Health & Wellness (Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation Division). Previous work experience includes Director of Aquatics & Fitness, Wabush Labrador; Assistant Director of Wolfville Recreation & Parks Department; Coordinator of Policy & Research, National Liberal Caucus Research Bureau, and Fundy Region Physical Activity Coordinator, NS Dept. Health and Wellness. She identifies one of her favourite experiences at Acadia being the 1985 trip to Texas to attend the NRPA conference and tour recreation facilities around the State.

1990's Representative: Oonagh Proudfoot, Wolfville, N.S. (1993, 2006) Oonagh is the Manager of Student Support and Acadia, as well as lecturing part time in the School of Recreation Management and Kinesiology. Previous positions at Acadia include First Year Advisor, and Coordinator of Alumni Reunions/Special Events, as well as Community Program Coordinator for the YMCA. A favorite memory for her was volunteering to work in the kitchen at Spring Camp and eating an entire cookie sheet of Nanaimo bars with only two other people.

2000's Representative: Eric MacKenzie, Greenwood, N.S. (2006) Eric is the Base Community Recreation Coordinator, at 14 Wing Greenwood and previous to that served as Recreation Director for the Municipality of the District of Barrington, N.S. His favorite memories of Acadia revolve around the people he met, many of whom remain close friends today. As an athlete, he proudly represented the university at the CIS National Curling Championships. Another favorite memory was having the lead singer from the Sam Roberts band pick out the Grad photo for the yearbook when Eric ran into to him downtown the day of a sold out concert at the SUB.

2010's Representative: Andrew Waters, Kentville, N.S. (2010)

Andrew currently serves as the Enrolment Advisor for Acadia. His most vivid memory was the first time he stepped onto the Acadia campus. He was making the transition from the concrete jungle (Ontario) to a beautiful pristine campus in rural Nova Scotia. Now he considers it to be a privilege going to schools and talking to students about the Acadia experience.

40 YEAR ACADIA RECREATION CONFERENCE UPDATE

May 23-25, 2012, a very unique conference was held at Acadia University *Creating Community through Connection, Collaboration and Celebration*, in recognition of 40 years of the academic program in Recreation. Eight panel sessions were held, each addressing a key societal issue, with all 40 panelists and moderators being graduates of the program. Participants came from across Canada and the United States and from as far away as Dubai. Session topics included: The role and meaning of Higher Education in community today; How to build community wellness; Youth in community: asset or liability?; Finding our place in the global village; Environmentally sound living; *Sport matters: Or does it really?*; Is technology building or destroying our sense of community; and Putting fun into the workplace. In addition, there was a spirited three hour session entitled *Five Minutes of Fame* where conference participants had an opportunity at the mic to share information about any topic they felt would be of interest to the group. Session speakers and outcomes will be available on the SAURG website, once it is launched in the Spring. The videotaped conference sessions will be available for viewing in the Spring.

40 YEAR ACADIA REUNION UPDATE

May 25-27 the first reunion of Acadia Recreation graduates in our 40 year history took place on the Acadia campus. There were representatives spanning all four decades with a strong contingent from the initial classes in the mid 1970's right up to some who had graduated 2 weeks prior to the reunion. A team of committed current students served as volunteers. A myriad of activities took place including campus tour, wine and cheese reception, kick off, nostalgia night, Recreation soapbox, Irving centre tour, Interest group discussions, Return to Planet Acadia, dance of the decades, a chapel service of celebration, a commemorative tree planting, and the SAURG AGM. Photos and program details will be available on the website when it is launched in the Spring. Meanwhile, the following video prepared by Heather MacDonald '09 provides a bit of the flavour of the weekend.http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lwP_QxxSHc&feature=youtu.be.

FROM THE OFFICE OF ALUMNI AFFAIRS

The Associated Alumni of Acadia University (AAAU) has been serving its members for more than more than 150 years. All Acadia graduates are members of the Association and we are proud that our own Hugh Bray '75 currently serves as President of the Board of Directors. If you are not currently connected with the AAAU, you can get on their contact list you may be missing out on important information and services that would be relevant to you. Go http://alumni.acadiau.ca/Stay_Connected.html to get on the distribution list for materials. The Office of Alumni Affairs manages the daily operation of alumni related business. The office was very helpful to organizers of our 40th conference and reunion last May. Representatives of the SAURG Board have meet with Office staff and look forward to working cooperatively on projects of mutual interest.

Alumni Awards program: Acadia has a long and rich family tradition, with successive generations following in their parents' footsteps. Children and grandchildren of Acadia alumni are eligible for a \$500 one-time award to be applied against their first-year tuition. Check the website for details:

http://alumni.acadiau.ca/Alumni_Services_and_Rewards.html The Fall 2012 edition of the Bulletin contained an article on our reunion last May. If the office has your correct address, you should have received a print copy in the mail. If not it can be accessed on line at http://alumni.acadiau.ca/Alumni_Magazine.html

Distinguished Alumni Award: Each year the AAAU presents two deserving recipients with the AAAU Distinguished Alumni Award. This award honours and recognizes the outstanding achievement of an alumni of Acadia University whose endeavours have distinguished them in their respective professions or communities. Consideration is given to nominees who demonstrate a wide range, diversity and magnitude of involvement in or contributions toward areas such as research, professional services, civic duty, business, athletics, the arts, the community or other areas worthy of recognition. The Distinguished Alumni Awards for 2013 will be presented at the AAAU Annual Gala Dinner in Halifax, N.S. The 2013 AAAU Gala Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, April 27, 2013 at the World Trade and Convention Centre. Watch for the Call for Nominations for the 2014 awards on the Alumni website and nominate deserving Recreation Graduates.

Acadia Alumni Gala Dinner, April 27th

Members of SAURG, let's get involved. Here is an opportunity to have a great night with fellow graduates at the Acadia Gala Dinner. Our own Oonagh Proudfoot coordinates a silent auction, the proceeds of which are going to SMILE; athletics; and student scholarships. Two alumni will also be recognized that evening: Bob Stead ('63), former Wolfville Mayor, former Director of Admissions at and perennial ambassador for Acadia; and Clint Davis ('92), distinguished academic and business professional, lawyer and recently appointed Vice-President, Aboriginal Affairs, TD Bank. Details of the evening are posted below however, if there are SAURG members interested in attending, The Board will coordinate purchase of a designated table. If you would like to attend and sit with other SAURG members, please contact Laurie Wanamaker (Dickson) no later than Friday March 15th at wanamale@gov.ns.ca and if there is sufficient interest expressed, a SAURG table will be arranged.

LOCATION: World Trade and Convention Centre, Halifax, N.S.

TIME: 6 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. dinner and awards

COST: \$125.00 per ticket or if you are a young alumnus (graduate of 2003-2012), you can purchase a discounted ticket for \$75.

Tickets are available by contacting Melanie Jackson at the Alumni office... melanie.jackson@acadiau.ca or 902.585.1930 (toll-free 1.866.222.3428).

The Prince George Hotel has kindly offered a special rate of \$149 per night for our Gala attendees. If you would like to take advantage of this, please call 1-800-565-1567 or e-mail ask@princegeorgehotel.com and tell them you are booking for the "Acadia Alumni Gala."

MAJOR CHANGES IN ACADIA RECREATION PROGRAM FOCUS

Upon the recommendation of the School of Recreation Management and Kinesiology, the Senate of Acadia has approved significant curriculum changes to the program core, effective the 2012-2013 academic year. The changes, facilitated by recent retirements, reflect the interest and expertise of remaining faculty members. Required courses which have traditionally provided students with the foundations of the leisure studies discipline and the recreation profession have been replaced with ones which focus more on the practise of community development. More specifically, the following courses: *Foundations of Recreation and Leisure Studies*, *Leisure Behaviour*, *Leisure in Society*, and *the History and Philosophy of Leisure* have been removed from the core requirements and replaced with courses entitled *Environmental and Sustainable Society*; *Sustainable Community Development*; as well as *Community Design and Active Living*.

FROM THE SCHOOL OF RECREATION MANAGEMENT & KINESIOLOGY

Mary Sweatman '03. Lecturer, School of Recreation Management and Kinesiology,
(902)585-1122 mary.sweatman@acadiau.ca

Greetings SAURG family! I am pleased to be writing this update, as both an alumna and a new faculty member in a term position with the Recreation Management and Community Development program at Acadia. One initiative that some of you would have heard about during the conference last May, is that six students will be travelling to Northern India for a few weeks with Dr. Alan Warner, to live in a small village in the Himalayan foothills. There they will work with members of the community on a project to increase eco-tourism capacities. As always, some of our initiatives include our alumni including the biennial Career Café, and a student led conference, *ARMS Meets the World*, designed to expose students to the breadth of their career options after graduation. Alumni involvement with such events is greatly appreciated as they create concrete examples of our program's concepts and enhance students' passion and enthusiasm for the profession. In August, a group of fourteen recreation alumni and professionals met with faculty in order that we could gain a better understanding of expectations of professionals in terms of the skills and knowledge required by graduates today. What we heard was that professionals want graduates with a strong professional ethic and community facilitation skills, within a values-based framework. The workshop also verified to us that our topics and concepts remain viable. A thriving program to us is one that teaches community development skills to a broad spectrum of students, who are passionate to learn and work with communities to improve quality of life and well-being, whether it is within the public, private or non-profit sector. We really appreciate your support, and we look forward to working with SAURG in the future.

REFLECTIONS, RECOLLECTIONS, AND CONFESSIONS OF ACADIA RECREATION GRADUATES

Confessions of a Recreation Graduate by Andrew Waters '11

Andrew Waters is an enrollment officer responsible for recruiting students to the university. Recently he made the following confession relative to his own experience as a first year student....In my first core course, a professor suggested that we take a break for a quick 'recess' to go outside and 'play'. The class headed outside to enjoy a snowy afternoon. For a time, most stood around but then some began engaging in free play activities such as building a snowman and playing tag. Shortly thereafter a snowball fight broke out. Getting into the activity I proceeded to loft a snowball, unfortunately into the general vicinity of where the professor was standing. It would, of course, land directly on her. Everyone in the class immediately stopped what they were doing, looked around and waiting for the recourse we thought was coming our way. When the prof did not react, we started to file quietly back into the classroom. I was thinking " what have I just done" I decided I better fess up, introduce myself to the professor, and apologize. I quickly realized this was the right School for me, and the best program ever when Dr. Robertson smiled broadly, shook my hand, and said 'welcome to my class'!

Recollections of Spring Camp by Jude Hirsch '77

For graduates who attended the Acadia Recreation program during the late 1970's and 1980s, Spring Camp is frequently cited as the source of the most memorable moments in the recreation program. At the conclusion of first year, students would participate in a mandatory camp experience put on by a dedicated team of upper level students and program alumni, generally under the Direction of Jude (deGuerre) Hirsch. The following are some of Jude's most memorable moments as creator of the program themes....

Creating and delivering Acadia Spring Camp programs with Lyle Davis '77, Glyn Bissix, and a dedicated team of alumni that often took vacation time to provide leadership was definitely the highlight of my time at Acadia. Some of the memories that come to mind are the year of the "Welcome to the Planet Sher" theme. George Taylor '76 was the King of Sher whose wife, Brenda Robertson '75 was abducted by the invaders and turned into a big green egg. When the first year students arrived at camp after hiking for a mile down the snow-covered road with their gear, their first task was to rescue the Queen of Sher. When they found her, Brenda, dressed as the queen in a lightweight gown popped out of the egg exclaiming: "What took you so damn long?". This is captured on video and still makes me cry tears of laughter! Another year the theme was Adventure in Middle Earth. There were groups of ten students, with each member assigned a role to play based on Tolkien's trilogy. This made for hilarious group interactions between Frodo and his troop. Their task was to bring the ring safely the Crack of Doom to save the Realm. Lyle Davis was Gandolf and several alumni were the Black Riders. The groups completed a series of initiative tasks over the course of three days – such a making their escape from the Black Riders down the River Running, and navigating the forest of Mirkwood, and the Wall of Erod. Beyond a doubt, Lyle's portrayal of Gandolf in his star-studded robes was a brilliant performance and testimony to his willingness to support my spring camp creative juices. Finally, I will never forget and continue to laugh over the year I created the Star Peace Force theme. My intention was to create a theme that played to all of the five classes that I taught. This theme saw everyone banished from the mother earth for 100 years because they were not able to treat her or each other with respect. The ignition to the theme on the first night was called Genesis. Each of the planets to which the groups were banished was named after a constellation with a mythology that related to a theme like compassion, love, respect, etc. Each group began by building a symbolic torch that represented the mythology of the planet to which they were banished. The torch was soaked in kerosene so the group could bring it to the welcome back to mother earth ceremony that used the old "spiral" activity to simulate the centrifugal force that created the planet earth – kind of a re-birth commitment to the planet. I had obtained a bunch of paraflares from the local cadets training center that were placed around the edges of the playing field in front of the main lodge on my signal. What I didn't know was that they were used to light up about a square mile of jungle each. Two things happened. Firstly, when they ignited the paraflares the sound and light was startling (to put it very mildly!). The other thing that happened that night was the reaction of people who were at their cottages on the Sherbrooke Lake and in the surrounding area. Boats came flying down the lake thinking there had been an explosion of huge proportions because of the sound and light easily carried to the opposite end of the lake. Clearly we would never consider doing such things in today's world. As a risk management consultant, I often think that we have come a long way toward understanding risk management in our profession but perhaps have gone too far with the elimination of even perceived risk in the design and execution of adventure programs.

Reflections on the Texas Tour by Robin Norrie '86

In 1985-86 I was entering my last year at Acadia University and the Recreation program. One of my professors was Brenda Robertson and she was planning a trip to the National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) annual conference being held in Dallas, Texas. She decided to invite interested students and other professionals to join her. Being naive and impressionable I figure I would like to go for the educational experience. This was an epic adventure for anyone let alone a student! As it turned out, an interesting cross section of folks came together to make this journey. Imagine travelling for two weeks across Texas as a group of 12 women. Included in this trip were: Heather MacLellan, Sue Ross, Norma MacLeod, Helen Greene, Debby Pyne, Cindy (Burke) James, Donna (Kean) Hendy, Laurie (Dickson) Wannamaker, Angie Singer and Carol Schurman, Brenda and myself. We spent the first four days in Dallas attending the conference at the Dallas Convention Center. Having never really attended a professional conference before, I was not prepared for the immensity of the convention center or the vastness of the program. Some of the presenters were authors of text books we were using in our classes. There were sessions every conceivable topic and I was overwhelmed trying to absorb it all. After the conference we toured the State and had many great experiences including a behind the scenes look at a giant water park where we learned about commercial recreation, a visit to Randolph Air Force base to investigate military recreation, and night in San Antonio learning about tourism while exploring the famous river walk. Then we were onto College Station and Texas A&M University where we met up with Shelia Backman, Ron McCarville, and Kelly MacKay all of whom were Acadia Recreation graduates who were affiliated with A&M. We toured the campus, attended a class, and experienced a "mid-night yell practise" where they rehearse their cheers for the football game the next day. We were billeted with local students so had the opportunity to learn about the inner workings of another recreation degree program. Finally we travelled back to Dallas to catch our flight home where we visited the largest bar in the world, Gilley's . . . featuring a mechanical bucking bronco and an indoor rodeo ring. I must admit the trip was legendary from the point of view that it was rare to get to do something like that at that time. Many of us reunited at the Acadia Reunion conference in May 2012.

From the classroom to Yad Vashem, Jerusalem by Eric MacKenzie '06

While taking a grade 11 History course, I had the privilege to hear Holocaust Survivor Dr. Philip Riteman share his remarkable life story. His powerful message resonated with me. I realized if he had left such a lasting impact on my life, I should also write him and even let him know how touching it would be if we had a chance to meet. That same winter semester, I was enrolled in a World War II course and eager to learn more about that chapter in history that has always intrigued me. However, only two hours were devoted to the Holocaust during the entire semester. The following year, I met with Dr. Robertson and lamented the fact that there were no courses at the university that addressed this topic. Our conversation led to a proposal for an Independent Study that would look at whether or not any activity that took place in concentration or death camps could be considered play or recreation in an academic sense. We were overwhelmed with the amount of information that I had available to sift through. This information was enlightening and insightful but also terribly depressing. It is important to note that recreation by no means served as any form of leisure, but rather as a means of escaping the reality of life. This study helped enforce a realization of the power of recreation! During the Independent Study, I helped arrange for Dr. Riteman to speak at Acadia University. This led to a newfound passion, which was educating others on this dark chapter of history. My journey of educating others became more important after being sent to Israel, for work, and visiting Yad Vashem, and the International School for Holocaust Studies. In 2011, I was approved to attend the Summer International Seminar, which was a life changing experience, especially meeting seven survivors and sharing learning with others who are as passionate about a similar interest. I currently serve on the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem's first ever Canadian Conference Committee. None of these experiences would have been possible without the journey that began with an Independent Study.