

*Response to Change*

The new era at Alma College has been marked by transition, beginning with a change of principals in 1970.

*Dr. Sifton  
Retires*

A gala reception honouring Dr. Flora Sifton, retiring principal, was held on June 12, 1970, in the Timken Athletic Centre. Dr. Sifton had been the dedicated, dynamic and popular head of the College for eighteen years, and a throng of well-wishers crowded the vast gymnasium to pay her tribute.



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*Miss Bone  
Becomes  
Principal*

Chosen to succeed Dr. Sifton was Mary Elizabeth Bone who had been assistant principal since 1963. A graduate of McMaster University, she had worked in religious education and girls work in the United Church of Canada, and for three years had been dean of Ontario Ladies' College. Her formal induction as seventh principal took place in the college chapel on October 20, 1970.



*Mrs. Waffle  
New  
Chairman*



*Three Generations*

The 1970's have also seen a change in the office of Chairman of the Board of Management — from E. F. S. Sanders, Q.C., who had guided the College as chairman for seven years, to Jean Young Waffle, an Alma graduate of 1947, and both the daughter of an Alma graduate (Melba Brown, 1921, of Brigden) and the mother of a graduate (Catherine Waffle, 1974). In the wake of International Women's Year, 1975, Mrs. Waffle became the first woman Chairman of the Board.

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*School  
Uniform*

The school uniform has also undergone changes in the seventies — not the most momentous of the recent changes of the College, but symbolic of the modernization of college life, or rather of that symbiosis of the traditional and the modern, which has proved to be the enduring strength of Alma. Traditional items of the uniform are the beloved red blazers with crest, the sensible black leather oxfords, the navy knee-socks, and the navy tunic for classroom wear. New are the yellow T-shirts marked with the school crest, the navy slacks for off-campus wear, the white turtleneck pullovers replacing cotton blouses, and the colourful kilt skirts for dress occasions. The Alma colours of red, gold and blue are incorporated in the unique plaid of the skirt designed especially for the College, an innovation of the seventies.

Frank Sanders wears with pleasure a distinctive jacket tailored of the official Alma plaid, presented to him at the testimonial dinner on April 29, 1975, on his retirement as Chairman of the Board. Mrs. Marguerite Weir, head cook for over thirty years, was presented with a skirt at her retirement tea in June, 1975. Mrs. Weir has earned the right to wear the Alma tartan, having outlasted five principals.



*Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sanders talking with the principal and chairman*

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*Trends*

Through the years Alma's role has been one of interpreting the pressures of society and adapting to the times. Significant in the seventies has been the evolution from girls school to "mixed-up campus". This apt phrase was coined by Kathleen Rex, whose feature article on Alma College appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, October 23, 1975. This is a venture now being observed and assessed by Alma and by other independent schools and communities outside the St. Thomas area.



*Mrs. Etta Russell, Susan Rowe and Shawn Phibbs*

The campus experiment came about because of two clearly discernible trends in the late sixties and early seventies. One was a permissive attitude in society, and the accompanying outcry from young people for freedom from discipline, freedom of choice, of self-expression, of action. It was no longer "popular" for girls to go to independent boarding schools with their necessary regulations. Rather, girls preferred to attend the larger co-educational schools in their own communities, and to live at home where there were fewer restrictions.



*Unveiling of the  
Ivey plaque*

This same search for freedom brought many more students to Alma from afar — Mexico, South America, Bermuda, the Caribbean, the Far East, Europe — but even so, enrolment was dropping steadily, from 1970 to 1974.

The second trend was toward economy in financial matters. Inflation was driving up expenses, so that families had less money to spend on the special kind of education offered at Alma, and this further contributed to reducing the enrolment. With fixed contracts for teachers, Alma was confronted with spiralling costs of salaries, supplies, food. The combination of these economic factors with the lower enrolment was causing a critical financial situation. In 1974, the operating deficit and the school debt were reaching alarming proportions.

Urgent consideration was given to the problem by Mr. W. J. Carroll, Chairman of the Finance Committee, and by other members of the Board of Management. Special appeals brought support from the London Conference of the United Church of Canada, from various other church groups, from the alumnae, the city of St. Thomas, and friends of the College in St. Thomas and throughout Canada, encouraging the principal and staff to carry on.



*Marta Timken  
visits the Timken  
Athletic Centre*

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Further drastic cuts were made in the operating costs of the school, and the search was continued for innovative ways of meeting the emergency. Two community needs were discovered which afforded interesting possibilities: Valleyview Home for the Aged had a waiting list, and St. Thomas had far too few pre-school facilities. Perhaps Alma could fill these community needs, and at the same time augment her own income.

*Family  
Campus*



After much discussion, the decision was made to convert Alma into a family campus which would include some of the oldest and some of the very youngest citizens of St. Thomas. Part of the new residence was equipped as a satellite to Valleyview, providing a year-round home for fifteen or so elderly people. Alma also proceeded to enroll pre-school, junior kindergarten, kindergarten and Grade 1 children — boys as well as girls. The nursery school was established in McLachlin Hall, with the kindergarten in the old high-ceilinged commercial "Classroom B". These areas are now delightfully festooned with children's paintings and handicrafts. This venture into classes for small children is proving to be a real public service, filling a community need for early childhood education. We wonder if these co-educational classes will continue and advance through all the grades until Alma is a completely co-educational school, as the founding fathers once suggested. This is certainly a possibility for the future, and one which the current high school girls enthusiastically endorse. This family campus is providing new and valuable links with the community which has supported Alma through its first century, at so many times, and in so many ways.

Problems arising from low student enrolment and financial crises are not new to Alma, but through ingenuity and the generosity of Alma's loyal supporters, a solution has always been found. The new combination of experiments has produced a small operating surplus in 1976 for building maintenance and repairs, and a new generation has returned to increase the enrolment of the College, and to take advantage of its special role in education.

*Financial  
Needs*

Ideally, an endowment fund of at least a million dollars would provide the income to ensure the financial stability of the College through the inclemencies of any financial climate. Alma is progressing steadily toward that goal. Now, in 1977, the Warner Endowment Fund, established in 1927 by the Alumnae on the occasion of Alma's fiftieth anniversary, has reached almost \$200,000, through personal donations and bequests over these fifty years — a remarkable achievement. This should be an inspiration to friends of the College to move toward that first million.

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*U.S.  
Donations*

For graduates and friends of the College living in the United States, the Alma Foundation of America (P.O. Box 1984, Cleveland, Ohio 44106) was incorporated in 1970, for the purpose of "rekindling their interest in Alma, in each other, and in particular in assisting the Alma bursary scholarship program, its capital expansion and other financial needs." Contributions made to the fund are U.S. tax deductible.

*New  
Courses*

Vital to the growth of Alma is her flexibility in offering new courses to meet the needs of girls today. All the requirements of the Ministry of Education are met, and each department of Alma is inspected annually by an area superintendent of the Ministry.



A course has been instituted in Family Studies which interacts with the Junior School, so that students are able to apply theory to practice, as they work with the children in classroom; playground and pool, under the constant supervision of trained teachers.

The elective course in Equestrian Studies, organized in response to a growing interest in horsemanship, combines classroom lectures with practical experience in equine care and management, and equitation. The girls go to Hyde Park in London for riding practice each week.

Many of the Alumnae will remember the stables and riding track on the west campus, and the two horses, adopted as Alma's mascots, which became favourites of the entire school in the thirties and forties. That program was abandoned later because of its cost, but everyone hoped that someday Alma would ride again. This popular new course in Equestrian Studies with its expanded programme is good news.

*Music  
in the  
Seventies*

Miss Muriel Heath co-ordinates the programme in the Music Building — piano, violin, flute, clarinet, voice, theory, harmony, and history of music. Music pupils come from the school, and from the community as far away as Ingersoll, Aylmer and Belmont in addition to St. Thomas. The students have entered music festivals each year in St. Thomas, London, and Woodstock, winning many awards. They have played on TV, on radio, in the W. F. Thomas Arts Theatre, in halls, in churches, and in schools. Recently the Choral Club and Ensemble went on tour for the alumnae in St. Thomas, Owen Sound, Sarnia and Windsor.

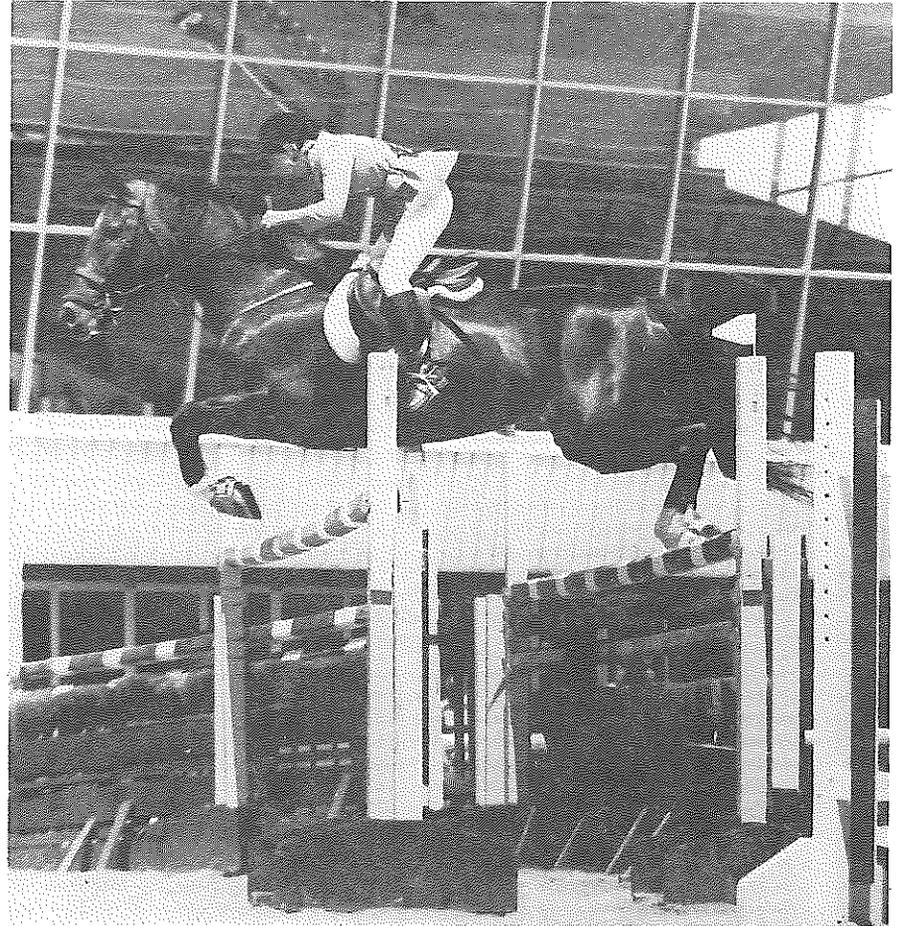
One of the high spots in the experience of the Alma Choral Club and String Ensemble was the hour-and-a-half-long concert that they gave in the Forum

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*Music in the 70's*

at Ontario Place in Toronto. They played to an enthusiastic audience — “The best concert we’ve heard this season,” someone reported. An impressive bronze plaque commemorating this triumph hangs proudly in Alma’s front hall to remind us all of the excellent work of our Music Department. They deserve our warm enthusiasm and appreciation.

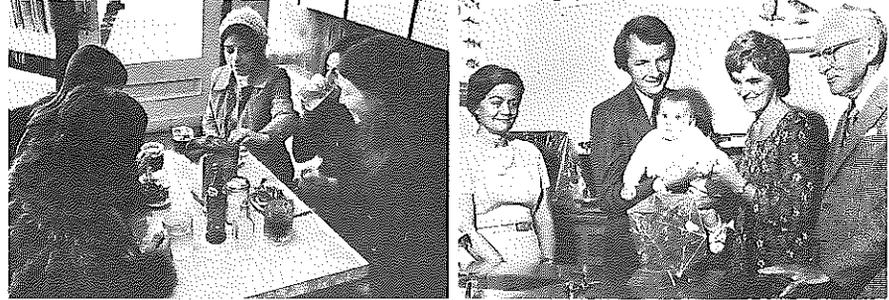


*The elective course in Equestrian Studies*

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## *Community*

In keeping with the times, Principal Bone feels that students in the seventies want more off-campus activities and the trend is toward increasing involvement with the community. Alma girls are participating in the programmes of church groups, service clubs, social agencies, Junior Achievement, and the community Art Gallery. A hospitality committee arranges visits of Alma students to St. Thomas homes. The success of these experiments must, of course, in the long run be assessed by the girls themselves.



*Involvement with the community*

## *English Classes*

For the instruction of the many students from overseas, members of the staff have developed specialized courses in English as a Second Language. Both the content and the method of teaching have proven successful in helping students from South America and other non-English speaking areas to speak and write English at a level that enables them to enter Canadian universities, or to return home to work in a bi-lingual capacity. This has required infinite patience and effort on the part of teachers and students, and the level of accomplishment is high.

## *Summer Schools*

As in former years, summer use of the school facilities is being encouraged, and in 1975, St. Thomas saw Alma emerging as a community art centre and groups of students were seen sketching and painting on the lawn, while others were experimenting in various media in the downstairs art studio. Other summer students were studying ballet in the gymnasium. The summer skating classes at the St. Thomas arena have made Alma their home for living and recreation.

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*Conferences  
and Special  
Occasions*

Many conferences and seminars of church-related and educational groups have been accommodated for both men and women. The United Church School for Leaders has a standing date every August. The amphitheatre continues to appeal to St. Thomas people as a unique setting for special occasions and celebrations, and the chapel is frequently used for weddings and christenings.

*Challenge  
of an  
International  
School*



Alma has welcomed many foreign students. Joanne Scarlett Turner (Alma 1950), President of the Alumnae International Council, 1975-75, noted in her sociological analysis of Alma College, published in *Orbit*, December, 1974:

“Fifty percent of the students today choose Alma as a place to meet people, especially from other countries, whereas in former years only twenty-six percent of the alumnae chose Alma for that reason . . . .”

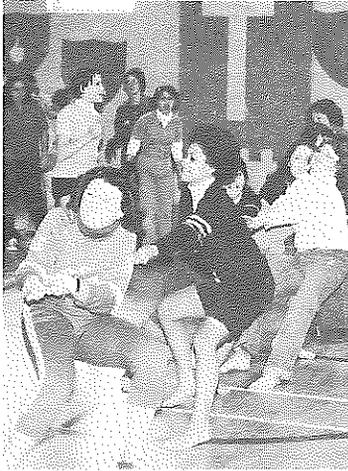
Almost fifty percent of the students in 1974 came from outside Canada, while among the alumnae questioned, ninety percent were from Canada.

Alma is enriched by the cultural heritage of all her students, and yet Alma College is a Canadian school, and the flavour of Canadian life must be preserved. Many overseas students come to Alma expressly for the experience of learning English and of living in a Canadian environment. The goals of these students from other cultures are sometimes in contrast to those of Canadian students, and the dichotomy creates a challenge to the students and the staff, when a school attempts to be international. Foreign students sometimes may retreat into ethnic groups as a defense against loneliness and isolation; Canadian students and staff may become impatient and intolerant through misunderstanding of other cultures. Patience and imagination will be required of all the Alma family if an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and trust is to be created. The challenges are great for students and faculty, but the rewards are even greater.

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*Day  
Students*

Another new concern for Alma in the seventies is the sharp decrease in the number of day students. The causes are clearly visible at a time when community colleges offer a vast proliferation of courses, and all the free area secondary schools are expanding and modernizing their facilities. In 1976, Alma had only three full-time students from the St. Thomas area, while in 1966 there were twenty-nine day girls enrolled in their own "Dobson House" — enough to be a competitive house for sports and for energetic participation in all school activities. Numbers of local students still come to Alma for music lessons, but more full-time day students would be a welcome addition to the school. The most practical answer to this problem may be in our new Junior School, which serves as a vital link with the community, and is rekindling St. Thomas interest in Alma.



Alma is one of seven secondary schools related to the United Church of Canada. Although no grant has been received from the Church since 1972, there are still close ties of interest and co-operation. The United Church insists that these are not private schools for the children of the well-to-do, but are an alternative to the large, impersonal public high schools. At Alma, according to the *United Church Observer* of June, 1976, fifty percent of the students work at the school to help pay for tuition; many others receive bursary assistance.

*Faculty  
Contribution*

Alma continues to offer a meaningful education in an environment where every girl is regarded as an individual and is encouraged to develop self-respect and self-assurance along with academic excellence. With these goals in mind, it is essential that counsellors and residence staff are chosen as carefully as the academic faculty. When the teachers lived in residence as part of the school family, it was easier to get to know the students. In these days when there is a strong move away from extra-curricular responsibilities and more individual freedom and privacy for teachers, it becomes more difficult to preserve those close relationships between staff and students so valuable in the residential school. Alma is constantly facing and meeting this challenge.

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*Heritage  
Plaque*

In her Centennial Year, Alma College has been designated a provincial "historical site." A plaque from the Ontario Heritage Foundation was unveiled at the fall Board meeting on October 28, 1976, by Dr. George T. Kennedy, 101 years of age, and a valued Board member since 1909. The plaque will be highly regarded by the community as the most recent of a number of official plaques marking the historic sites of Elgin County.



*Civic  
Dinner*

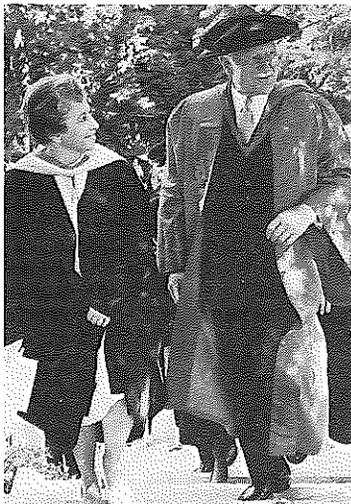
A special dinner to honour civic dignitaries and the community was held on Thursday, November 25, 1976. A large group headed by Ron K. McNeil, M.P.P., Warden M. A. Schafer of Elgin County, and His Worship Mayor Wayne Neal gathered in the Barbara Heck Dining Hall and were welcomed by Chairman Mrs. Jean Waffle. A warm and humourous tribute was made to them by Principal Bone, followed by a salute of appreciation on behalf of the Board by E. F. S. Sanders, Q.C. The reply by His Worship Mayor Neal was a highlight of the evening when he sketched the life and times of St. Thomas a century ago by reading from a copy of the *Times Journal* of November 24, 1876.

The "Son et Lumière" production which followed in the Timken Centre was directed by William Haight and was produced by David Fisher. A cast of over 100 students, staff and community friends enthusiastically carried us back over the first 100 years of Alma's history.

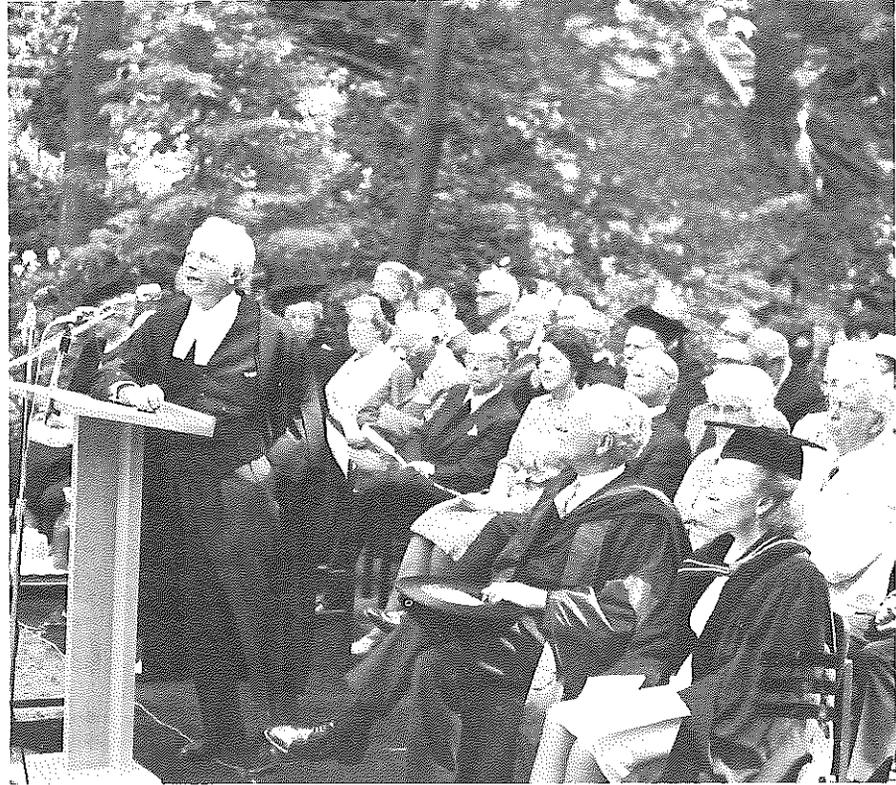
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*Recognition*



Another special recognition will come to Alma when Her Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, Pauline McGibbon, attends the Centennial commencement in June of 1977. This will be reminiscent of those other auspicious occasions when Alma was visited by their Excellencies, Lord and Lady Bessborough, the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, and the Right Honourable Roland Michener. Mr. Michener's mother, Edith Mary Rowland, was an Alma graduate of 1895.



*What  
of the  
Future?*

Alma will survive and flourish if she can continue to exhibit that quality of adaptability, that "happy and gracious flexibility" which was attributed to the ancient Athenians, and if she can continue to recognize the needs of the community both within and around her, and respond to those needs in fresh and meaningful ways.

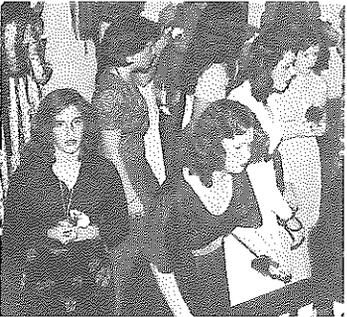
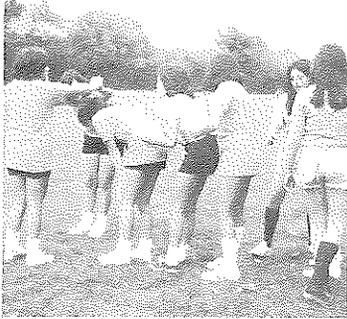
MARY SANDERS

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*... And Here We Are*

*A Day in the  
Life of an  
Alma Girl*

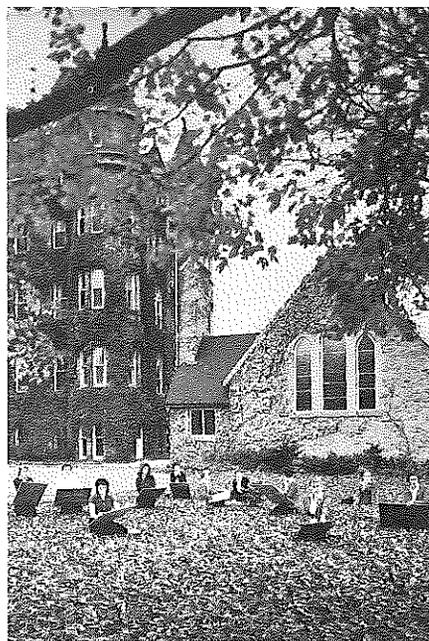
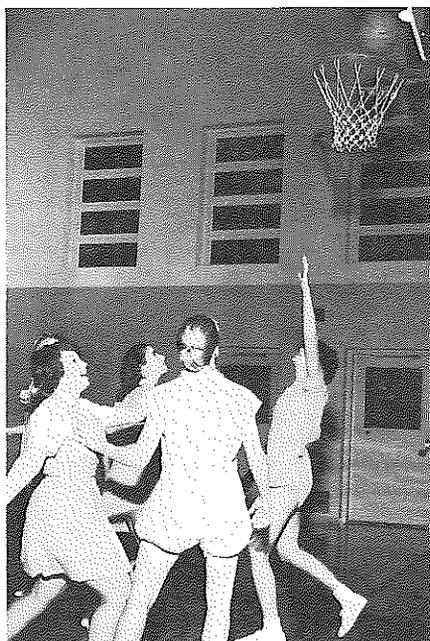


Even after a hundred years, the average day for Alma girls begins at seven when they are rudely awakened by the horrible sound of the same huge bell that has been hanging in the stairwell for years. Needless to say, we often curse it for its insistent interruptions of sleep and its call to bed every night. For fifty years a traditional prank every Hallowe'en and April Fool's Day has been to silence the bell for a day or so.

After breakfast comes room-tidying and a little time for the energetic to go jogging. On Monday mornings we usually assemble in the W. F. Thomas Arts' Theatre to hear a preview of the week's events. On other mornings there is a brief session in the chapel — sometimes a worship service arranged by a teacher or the girls, sometimes a folk mass, current events talk or special music. Classes follow until four o'clock with a short mid-morning break for milk or juice, and a longer break for dinner at noon.

Twice a week after school we participate in our favorite clubs, from gymnastics and sports, to cooking, crafts, creating the annual *Almafilian* yearbook — in 1976 with Miss Masur's help. The lists of clubs is long. The Drama Club interests many talented girls and Miss Jane Cutler works many miracles. They enter their plays in the annual Drama Festival and several times have won the Regional Drama Festival awards. They also take part in TV programmes, in church and chapel services, and they delight the school and friends with their special play for Candlelighting, Easter and Graduation.

Another favorite is the Choral Club with Mr. Wayne Carroll as Director and our own Alma Roberts as accompanist. They train conscientiously and contribute to the pleasure of all Alma's traditional and public events. Other clubs include debating, needlework, sewing, ballet, jazz, curling, fencing, archery, powder puff football, basketball, volleyball, badminton, the Newspaper Club, the Garden Club. The list may be different every year, and the staff who serve as advisors may also change.



On other days after classes, we are free to go downtown or around the corner to the little shop on Ross Street that we call "Sidestore". The parent of a student from South America once asked the principal the meaning of a line in her daughter's letter — "On Tuesdays and Thursdays we are permitted to go to the 'sad story'". What pitfalls in language! After supper comes the inevitable and much dreaded "Study Hall" which gives us a chance to sit quietly and work for two hours with only a short break. Not everyone feels inspired at the same time to work on an essay or other assignment, but Study Hall helps.

### *Weekends*

Weekends spent at the school are leisure times. The school policy has undergone changes in the past few years and we are now able to go home every other weekend, much more often than was once allowed. The free weekends are also greatly enjoyed by many foreign students who appreciate the relaxed atmosphere in the school. They are not sorry to be without roommates, but like being alone once in a while.

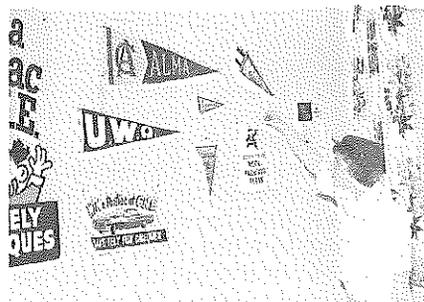
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While at school many of us like to spend the occasional Saturday shopping in London or St. Thomas, or simply enjoying the luxury of a free day. Saturdays there is the excitement of a movie downtown, roller skating, ice skating or even a date. Sundays are usually quiet days. Sometimes we have visitors and are free to go out with them. Sometimes we visit families in the town.

### *Halls*



*Prefects  
and  
Student  
Council*



Ever since the earliest times, the school has been organized according to the halls in which the girls live. In the nineties they were named for artists (Millais, Rembrandt) and musicians (Beethoven, Mozart) and authors (Shakespeare, Dickens), but now the halls remind us of Alma's history — Ryerson, Carman, McLachlin (Upper Mac, Lower Mac), Austin, Warner, Dobson, Sifton, Newkirk. Each hall has prefects whose job is to assign duties to each girl regarding the maintenance of her hall, delivering the daily mail, and acting as a go-between for students, and house staff on occasion.

Some Prefects sit on the Student Council which has certain decision-making power concerning school projects. They organize visits to other schools and plan informal parties. One year they got permission to have their dates join them after Study Hall at nine o'clock in Mac Hall for cokes and doughnuts. Of course they also plan the Christmas and Graduation formals. They are responsible for Alma's foster child each year, making sure that the money is raised and letters sent to her by the girls.

In the late fall of 1976, the prefects got together to think of ways of making the weekends at Alma more interesting. There will be surprises in store in this Centennial Year, but the printers are waiting and this copy must go in before the plans are fully hatched. Just watch out!

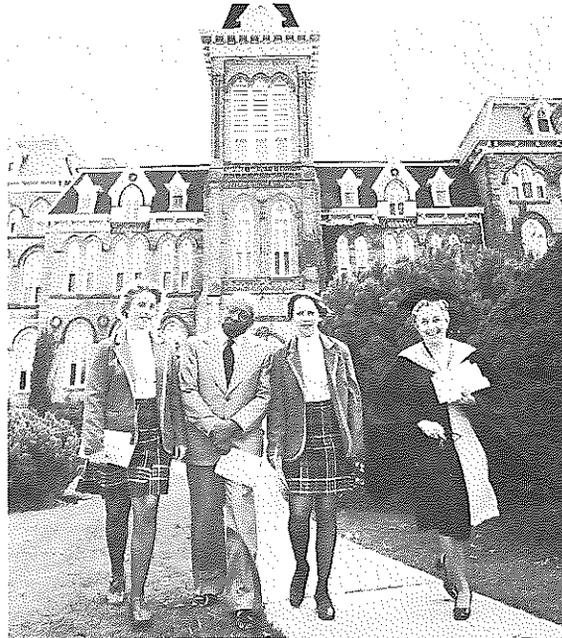
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*Traditions*

Of course, any large group of people living together must be subject to certain rules and regulations to keep things running smoothly. Alma has been particularly flexible in trying to meet new climates of social change. We seem to be living in a freer atmosphere these days as we are encouraged to take more responsibility for our own decisions and actions. In this process it is inevitable that some customs and traditions have been discarded over the years, but some are very much alive and perpetuated by all of us.

*Founders'  
Day*

One of our traditional ceremonies commemorates the founding of Alma College on October 17, 1876. It is held on the Sunday falling nearest to the actual date. Usually we wear dress uniform and meet in the chapel for a brief service. This past year, October 17, 1976, marked the hundredth Founder's Day Service in Alma's Centennial year. The special speaker that day was the Right Reverend Wilbur Howard, Moderator of the United Church, and minister of two Alma girls, Marybeth MacDonald and Linda Humphrey, who assisted in the ceremony. Close to a thousand people crowded into the Athletic Centre that was impressively decorated by fifty large banners made by the girls under Evelyn Knight's direction — Peace, Faith, Joy in crimson, blue and gold.



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### *Candle-Lighting*

The Christmas Candlelighting Service falls on the last day of school before the holidays, and has been one of the most festive occasions of the year ever since it was started by Miss Betty Ross in 1936. Everyone takes part—the whole senior and junior school, staff, parents and friends. Many weeks are spent in preparations, and the girls all help in decorating the auditorium, practising for the carols and the Christmas play, and often creating a special tableau. The highlight of the evening is the candlelighting ritual. Since fire regulations no longer permit real candles, each girl carries a small flashlight-candle. When the lights are dimmed the flashlights are turned on, creating the magical quality we all remember.

### *Christmas*



*In dress uniform  
ready for candlelighting*

The whole Christmas season is an exciting and joyous time for everyone. There is always the Christmas formal and the choosing of the Snow Queen, the Dean's and Principal's Christmas reception, Hall parties and the family Christmas dinner when the nursery school and junior school children and Board members join us at noon for the traditional turkey and Christmas pudding. The kitchen staff decorate the Barbara Heck dining hall and put so much of themselves into this happy event.

For many students from abroad, it is their first experience of a Canadian winter. Their curiosity and excitement during the first snow fall is contagious, and we often discover that we have taken the changing seasons too much for granted. Foreign students are also introduced to their first Canadian Christmas, and at the same time we all learn first hand how Christmas is spent in other lands, and what friends will be doing on Christmas morning in Germany, Hong Kong, South America and the West Indies. The happiness is climaxed by the fact that everyone is going away for the holidays. Many foreign students who are unable to fly home spend the holidays with Alma students or other friends. We are all secure in the knowledge that we will return in three weeks to renew friendships and to fit back into the study and special activities of a new term. We also know that shortly after we come back, we will be facing that first set of exams in all subjects — sobering thought!

### *Parents' Day*

Parents' Day, held in early spring is another Alma tradition and it enables students, teachers and parents to meet and exchange ideas and impressions. Sometimes it is the last chance for a teacher to point out to the parents some academic weakness of their daughter and to work out a plan together that may prevent a disaster. The final exams are not far away by this time. It also gives us all a chance to display our art work, our science exhibits, our music, drama and gymnastic presentations, our swimming, debating and culinary skills. One year the girls bought an old piece of furniture and refinished it for Parents' Day, creating quite a sensation.

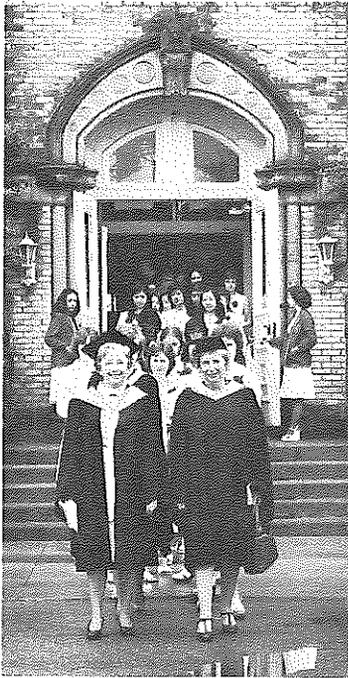


*May Days*

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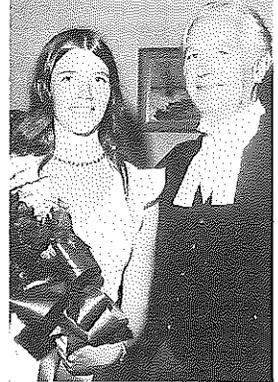
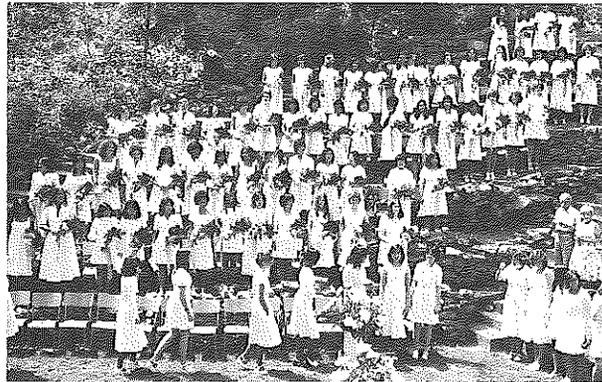
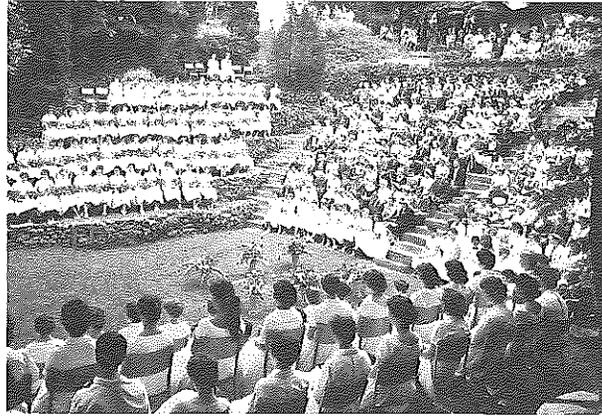
*May Day*

Other traditions that live on at Alma centre around spring and the end of the year — May Day, Baccalaureate Service, the Tree Planting and Graduation. May Day was brought to Alma in 1921 from Ontario Ladies' College by one of Alma's teachers, Constance Kilbourne. It has been adapted and developed over the years by generations of students and teachers, and no doubt it will be shaped into new forms in the years ahead. Each spring the Queen of the May and her counsellors are chosen by the whole school, and the Lord of the May by the staff. For the next few weeks we spend a great deal of time and effort in gym classes practising special folk dances to perform before the Queen and parents and friends. Everyone enjoys the charming little dances and singing games of the children in the Nursery and Kindergarten. Whenever the weather is warm and sunny the May Day Festival is held in the Amphitheatre, which makes a beautiful setting with its dark evergreens and apple blossoms. On bad days we transform the gym in no time with branches and artificial flowers (prepared in advance!). Even though the folk dances and costumes may sometimes appear a little silly to the dancers, most of us manage to have great fun and enjoy the day in spite of our slight embarrassment. The dances of the Latin American and West Indian girls are especially colourful and vivacious, and those of the Oriental and Asian girls add much gracefulness and charm.



*Baccalaureate*

Baccalaureate is a special church service for the graduating class, and each year it is held in a different church. The graduates walk two by two in their traditional white dresses and shoes. Sometimes this procession is a little unnerving for the students, but in the end it becomes another memorable event at Alma. We can look back and laugh as we remember the police escorts and the dumbfounded look on the faces of St. Thomas citizens, surprised on their way to church by a hundred girls clad totally in white. One year after church, the procession of girls was cut in two by an interminable line of slow freight cars causing a long wait back at the College. Eventually the graduates lined up in front of the College entrance, facing the undergraduates standing on the steps, and sang the graduates' song which they had composed for the occasion.



*Commencement*

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*Commencement*

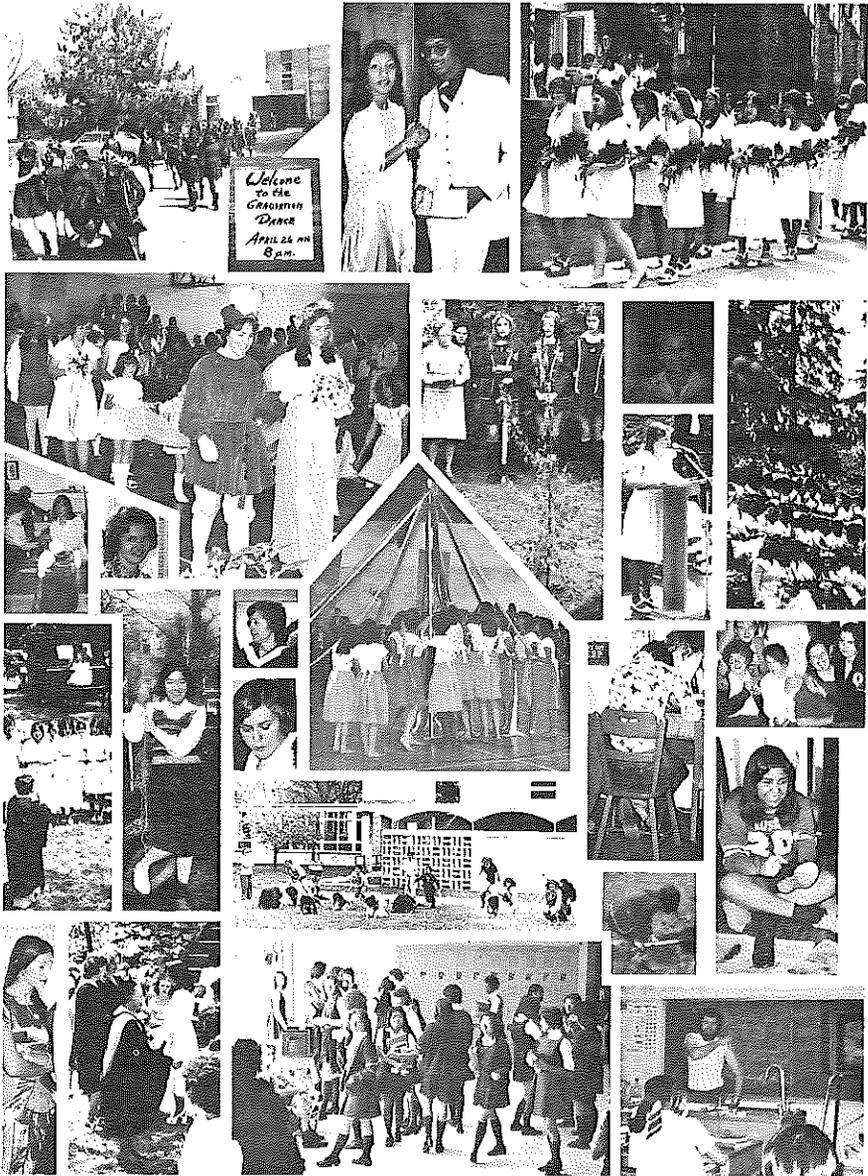
The white dresses will be worn again at Commencement, the climax of another year at Alma, and we always long for the sun to shine so that graduation can be held in the amphitheatre. There is always a guest speaker, the valedictory by one of the graduates, and the presentation of dozens of awards and prizes. Sometimes a good student who is a great favorite is called up over and over again in the midst of tears and clapping. Sometimes this day can be a sad one for those who will not return, but for everyone it is the end of a year of valuable experience, warm friendships and unique memories. Each girl has given much of herself to the school and a part of her will remain behind. This is symbolized in the little tree which the graduates planted earlier in the month — an annual ceremony which began with the planting of the Canadian white birch by Edra Sanders (Ferguson) in 1926.

*Tree  
Planting*



All these traditions may seem something of an ordeal at the time, but for the most part they are held in respect as an integral and unique aspect of life at Alma, and we circle them in red on our calendars.

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*Alma Collage  
Contributed by Almafilian  
Staff 1976-77*

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## *Trips*

So much happens in a single year. In addition to the regular school activities and visits with other schools, we have many trips and tours in each term. There are day-long drives to see St. Thomas, the countryside and other parts of Ontario. One year, 75 girls and six staff members went to Quebec City for an unforgettable four days of Winter Carnival and to Miss Bone's dismay, the first evening one of the students broke out with measles — a severe case! What to do? The Chateau Frontenac Hotel wouldn't keep her, the general hospital wouldn't admit her — the isolation hospital would have to keep her for 6 weeks and Air Canada wouldn't carry her as a passenger. Finally, the air lines allowed her to board a flight but seated far from any other passengers. Such are the hazards of long day trips, but the girls hope to go again this year.

For three years the overseas students went on an orientation trip to Northern-Ontario, arranged by Mrs. Leslie Brayford, a good friend of the College. They visited "Saint Marie Among the Hurons", North Bay, the Northern College of Agricultural Technology, the International Mining School at Haileybury, and were overnight guests of families in New Liskeard, a small northern town.

"Two girls from Hong Kong were billeted on a farm in the Temagami Forest Reserve. They became frightened by the dark, wide-open spaces and close to midnight the family had to drive them back to the town where they were more comfortable with lights and a few taller buildings", wrote one of the group.

Some Geography and Physical Education students went on a 5 day camping trip to Kentucky. We all enjoy the annual visit to the Stratford Shakespearean Festival, which combines a pleasant outing with an animated English lesson that is much more fun and easier to absorb than the usual one in the classroom.

In 1976, the whole school spent a Saturday at Niagara Falls, stayed there overnight, and on Sunday went on to Toronto to visit the Science Centre. Many have enjoyed special exhibitions at the Royal Ontario Museum — the fabulous treasures of the Chinese Exhibition in 1975 and "Gold for the Gods" in 1976.



From these shared outings the students come back not only with new knowledge and new interest, but also with a warm and happy feeling that somehow they belong to each other in a new way. A special cheer is in order here for Wayne and Charlie of Lewis Bus Lines in Aylmer. They are always ready to take Alma girls anywhere, even to Kentucky!

Alma has always been considered a progressive school concerned with preparing her students to face the realities of life and to measure up to their potential. They have opportunities each year to accept responsibility for their own actions and to make their own decisions.

*"Mixed-up  
Campus"*

I like Alma College.  
I like swimming

because I like diving  
in the water.

I like my teacher.

I like Kris and Penny and Shawn.

BY Shannon Coombs.

age 6

If life within a small family unit is often difficult, imagine living day after day with a hundred or more girls from every type of background and from many countries and cultures. Adjustments and compromises have to be made if everyone is to get along peaceably. In recent years this task is made still more complex with the addition of the Junior school children and the resident senior citizens. The girls see the "Seniors" at meal times in the dining room where they have a table of their own, and the "Seniors" enjoy all the special occasions like Founders Day and Candlelighting. The fact that letters go back and forth in the summer time when the girls are away, proves that some friendships are made. Apart from Grade 1 children who eat in the dining room, the girls see the children mainly at play outside, and in the pool where the interested students help them to learn to swim under the constant supervision

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of trained teachers. Occasionally, one of the girls adopts a "grandmother" or a little "sister" or "brother". One of the foreign students wanted to work with the children in the Nursery School but did not want to be a nurse! When one member of the Grade 1 class learned that Miss Bone did not strap the big girls if they were bad, she asked "And what do you do all day, sit at your desk and write notes?" Such are the joys of having little children join the Alma family.

Certainly the interactions among these three age groups provide a new and interesting learning experience, complex though it is.

*Ice  
Storm  
1976*



In the spring of 1976, St. Thomas experienced the worst ice storm in its history. The College was without power for five nights and four days. After two nights and one day of no heat, the main building was pretty chilly! The amphitheatre looked like a disaster area!

A consultation was arranged and it was agreed the students would be allowed to go home and to take overseas students with them if it was convenient. Within two hours, one hundred and ten students were on their way to many points in Ontario.

The ice storm demonstrated the tremendous community spirit that has always been typical of St. Thomas. His Worship, Mayor Wayne Neal, and Alderman Gary Baker made regular visits and phone calls to the College and offered not only moral support but had a city generator installed in the New Residence. The first 36 hours were something of an adventure, but, as you can imagine, after that length of time the girls began to develop colds and they felt the need of hot showers! The following week as the trees were carefully cut down and the



wood piled, all at Alma were grateful for the concern and care of everyone in the city.

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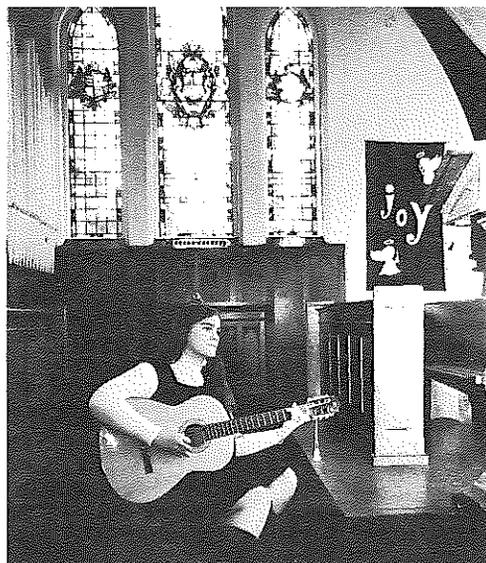
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*Relations  
With  
Staff*

Residence life prepares the students for dormitory living if they go on to university. Although the teachers no longer act in the capacity of house counsellors as they once did, the small classes do allow for relationships between the girls and their teachers which helps to achieve the benefits of individual attention as well as enrichment in other ways. As the year progresses, relationships become deeper and warmer.

Students can only accept responsibility and implement change if communication is free and discussion is open. The concerns of Alma students today include the whole breadth of their interests and experience. They want to be involved in planning not only formals and parties, but weekend activities, social involvement with the community, trips and tours, country outings, invitations to special visitors — the list is endless. They are even willing to raise money to pay for the main priorities as they come up. One dream is that they might have a chance to create a small common room all their own — orange crates and bricks and boards and cushions on the floor and their own murals on the unpainted walls. Alma girls from 1881 to 1976 have always wanted to make their own impact in their own time on the life of the school. That is what school spirit is all about.

One great lesson is learned from living in a boarding school. There is an old saying that we get out of life what we put into it. This is doubly true in a living community. If Alma is approached with a positive attitude, the chances are that the experience will be a pleasant one.



*Folk singing  
in the chapel*

*Lasts  
A  
Lifetime*

We must be prepared to make some sacrifices, but we must remember that "The more they weep when they come, the more they weep when they leave!" It also means challenges, achievement, fulfilment, and an appreciation of many different personalities from many walks of life and from many corners of the globe. It must mean growth in initiative and sense of responsibility. It means warm and happy moments to be remembered forever, and deep friendships that will last a lifetime. It means an unforgettable, invaluable and moving experience, guaranteed to affect us and change our lives and to prepare us to face our adult roles when we leave Alma College.

CATHERINE WAFFLE



*The Principal, Marjorie  
Kelly Shick (a Miss Canada)  
and daughter, Suzanne*