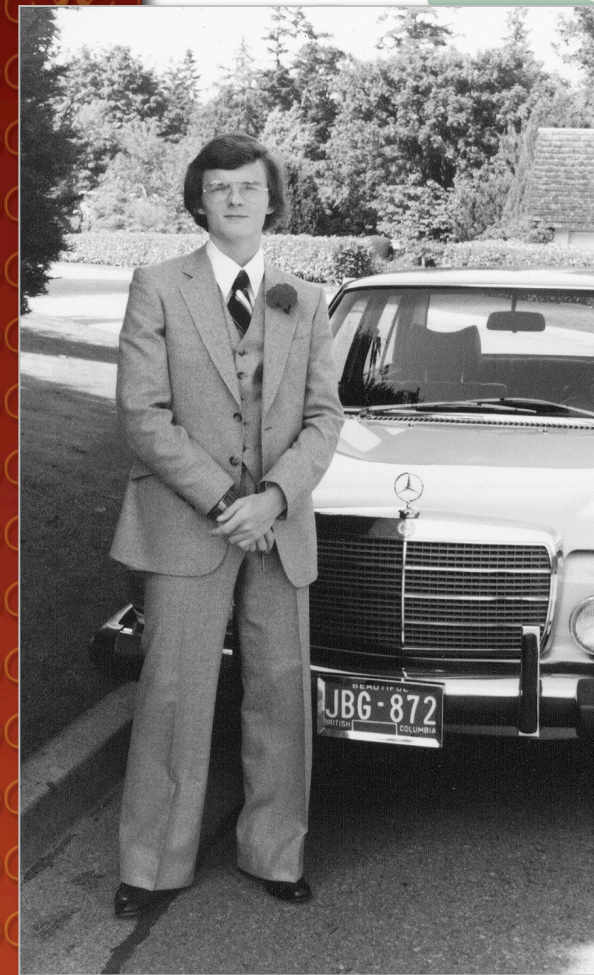


3-2-1 Launch



Derek Spratt



3-2-1 Launch

**Graduating from high school
& transitioning to independence**

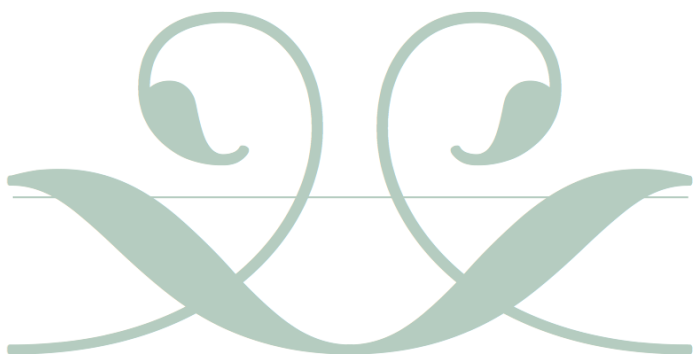
*by
Derek Spratt*

3-2-1 Launch

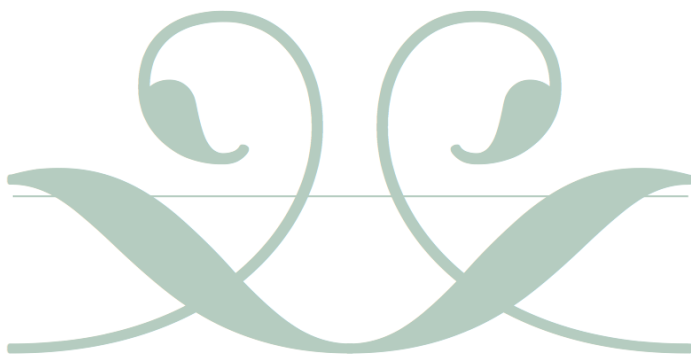
Graduating from high school
& transitioning to independence

by 

Derek Spratt



*Written for my children: Perry, Colin & Evan on the
occasion of their high school graduations*

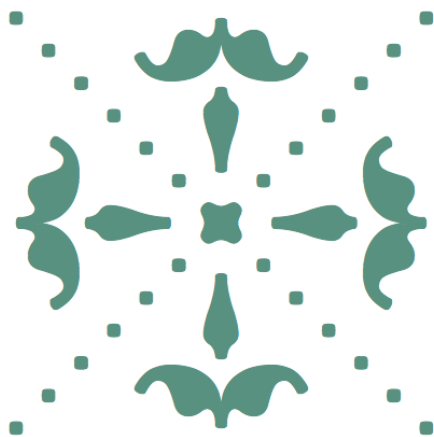


Copyright © 2010 Performance Solutions. All rights reserved.
Reproduction of the whole or any part of the contents without
permission prohibited.



Table of Contents

Forward	6
Making the transition from high school to post-secondary school	8
How will you feel?	14
Moving out, setting up	16
Staying in touch while moving on	18
Choosing a career	22
Choosing your hobbies, friends, spouse, and business associates	28
Achieving financial independence	34
Focusing on your personal health	38
Keeping an eye on the big picture	44
Queen's Science 83 year book excerpts	48



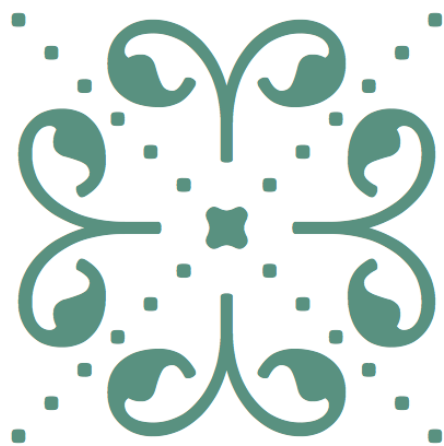
Forward

Ever since I ‘put pen to paper’ in 2001 and wrote the book ‘Some Childhood Memories’ I have contemplated writing a sequel that focused on my personal transition into adulthood, given that I ended my book at the point where I was leaving high school and setting off for Queen’s University.

Over the past 10 years I have often thought about this pending project, how I would approach it, the content and presentation style. I eventually decided to write a shorter piece, one that has a cause and effect flow to it, built around those experiences of mine that have timeless and universal messages for my children embedded in them.

The topics I have chosen address many of the challenges and decisions that need to be made as a high school graduate works his or her way into adulthood, obtaining their full independence. The intent of this book is to help my children make the best possible decisions as young adults, while setting off into their own future realities, and in the process help maximize their happiness while also encouraging them to develop healthy relationships with those they will connect with along the way.

Again, this has been a labour of love. Enjoy! 



Making the transition from high school to post-secondary school

I clearly remember the anticipation that built up inside me during my final year of high school as I contemplated my pending departure from the family home environment to move to my new life in post-secondary school at Queen's University, in Kingston, Ontario. My older brother Douglas had made the same transition three years prior, as well as my good friend and fellow French Horn player, Evan Jones, who went to UBC after graduating the year before I did. Through my observations of their experiences I had a rough idea what lay in wait for me. Once the Christmas break in grade 12 had passed and the warmth of springtime arrived in 1979, it really started to sink in that I was going to pass through an important doorway in my life, never to return to my childhood.



Looking forward to a bright new future after graduating

My friends in grade 12 were also feeling the tug of the pending changes in their lives. We were starting to apply for, and accept our positions at different schools, and some of my friends who weren't as academically inclined were heading directly in the workforce. It became more and more difficult to ignore the fact that many of our childhood relationships were going to hit the pause button, or worse, end. We were not just graduating from high school, we were graduating from many of our childhood relationships – the linkages that had always bound us, protected us, and in many ways defined us.

By May of 1979, which was warm and sunny in Vancouver that year, our thoughts had turned to the future,



**Cheryl, Drew
Atkins & I at
our
graduation
ceremony**

and we often sat out on the school lawn in the sunshine and discussed our thoughts: what would it be like; the plans we were making; the goals that we were starting to formulate in our minds. I was very excited about that future and could hardly wait for it to arrive. The final few weeks of school in June

went by in a blur, and the grad functions came and went far too quickly. One moment I was standing on the school auditorium stage grasping my diploma, and the next moment I had said my good-byes to life-long friends and started my summer job.

Looking back on those days while recently attending our 30th high school reunion helped me better understand some of those old feelings. I had not seen much of my classmates since graduating: so many things had happened in each of our lives, and we had all grown in different directions. The truth is, we are a combination of our DNA and what our environment imprints on us - our life experiences, and when most of our lives had been spent apart from each other, I could begin to see how much those life experiences shaped who each person became. The path you walk down molds and shapes you – so choosing that path in effect helps choose the person you will become, for better or for worse.

I had a full time job at Weir-Jones Geotechnical Consulting Ltd during the summer of 1979 and by early July I had packed my bags and headed up to the interior of BC to work in a construction camp near Revelstoke BC. I was with men who were much older than I and they were a tough, hard working, hard drinking group and I certainly felt like I had started my transition to independence and adulthood with a bang. A few weeks after arriving I received a letter from friends in Vancouver inviting me to an August long weekend party in Penticton, which turned out to be my transition point back from Revelstoke to Vancouver following the party.



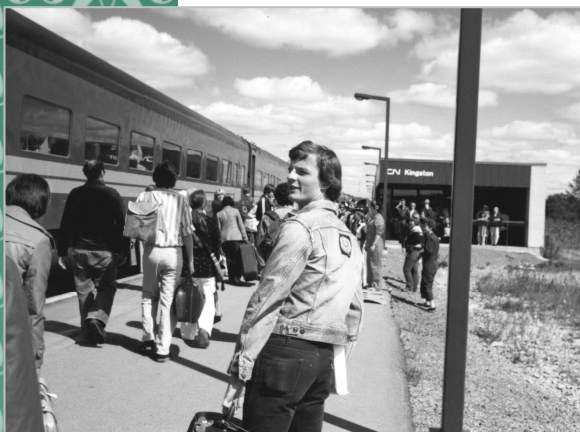
**Working for
Weir-Jones
Consulting**

After the isolation of the remote camp, meeting up with twenty of my high school friends and partying in the sun on the beach together for three days was a blast: a form of a reunion, and also a launch point for the fall post-secondary school period which was only a few weeks away for most of us.



**The August
long weekend
party in
Penticton**

We weren't in a retrospective mood: it was just full on fun and entertainment, but as we packed up and drove back down



**Arriving in
Kingston**

to Vancouver I started to mentally calibrate around what I needed to do to prepare to leave for Queen's. I sat in my backyard and with a pen and paper started to write down all of the things that I needed to ship out, and then set about packing up my stereo and other goods that

needed to be taken to the train station for shipment back east.

I made the decision to leave for Queen's a full week early, spending most of that time alone in Toronto checking out the record stores on Young Street, and otherwise getting a bit bored while waiting to meet up with my brother Douglas, and Drew Atkins, who were taking the train with me to Kingston at the end of the week. Thinking back on it, the week in Toronto wasn't that much fun but it underlined the



**Frosh Week
rituals**

determination that I had to get on with the transition to University –fully independently from my family.

I walked into my dorm at Queen's and the whirlwind of Frosh Week literally swept me away into a new world. Frosh

Week is designed specifically towards the goal of integrating

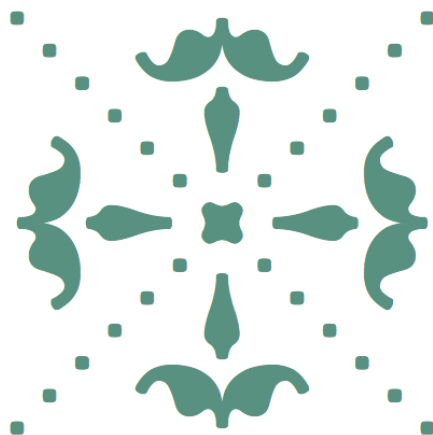
new students into the school, and helping to quickly forge ties between the students who are mostly away from home for the first time.

The partying, the indoctrination, it all moves students into a new ‘family’ environment, one where new support networks quickly form, and new relationships take shape, many that will stay with you for life. It all happens so quickly. And high school, and home for that matter, start to feel so distant and so deep in your past.



**Thunderbug
races during
Frosh Week**

There were times in the fall of first year that I thought of home and of high school but there weren't many. I was into a whole new reality and it was pulling me fast and furiously into the future. Intoxicating stuff. Coming home for Christmas was interesting because the summer Penticton gang had arranged for a week up there skiing together after Christmas day so I spent most of my break with friends, partying, not with my family at home. We talked endlessly about how great school was and our new lives, and interests. Again, the focus was on looking forward into the future, not into our past high school days together. 🍄



How will you feel?

Later in life people often look back to their youth, specifically the period of age 16-25 and say: *‘Wow, things were just so intense back then – my emotions, my passions and interests, my sense of opportunity and adventure. Why have I lost some of that intensity?’*

Scientists have at least a partial explanation that relates to the high levels of hormones and the active brain wiring that is still taking place during that period of your physical/mental development. You likely will feel more alive, more energetic and more engaged in the world around you during the next few years of your life while in post-secondary school than at any subsequent point. So enjoy it while it lasts!

You will likely feel some nervous anticipation and some awkwardness as you set out on your first year away from home. Perhaps the greatest challenge for anyone born in the 1990s is that parents these days are far more protective and nurturing in general than they were in the 1960s. This level of attachment and dependency is not entirely healthy as it leads to what scientists call ‘delayed development’ – in essence, a delay in the mental maturation process. Centuries ago teenagers were thrown into adulthood much earlier than today and they likely adapted just fine.



**At my
'ghetto'
apartment in
third year**

A 15 year old was often a mature person back then whereas today it is common for children to maintain some level of dependency on their parents well into their mid to late 20s. I think this is unhealthy and just plainly ‘wrong’ for a host of reasons.

There may be a case for extended financial support due to today’s general economic realities, but for all other aspects of parent-child relationships it doesn’t seem to confer any benefits: So ‘out you go’ to get on with adapting to a world where you make all of the decisions and face all of the consequences. It is ‘the real world’ so you might as well embrace it full on. 🍀

Moving out, setting up

When I was packing my bags and filling my trunk for shipment to Kingston, Ontario in August of 1979, my primary focus was on how many records and stereo system components I could fit into my dorm room. I wasn't thinking much about other things – as long as I had my music, I felt I was pretty much 'set'. I was an active musician in high school and it didn't take me long to meet up with other like-minded musicians at Queen's and start another band. In some ways this was an important bridge for me – I didn't manage to bring along my electronics hobby but I brought my music (listening and playing) with me.



**My residence
mates in first
year**

I was a disciplined weight lifter in high school and that was another healthy routine that I brought along with me. I ‘hit the gym’ at Queen’s three or more nights a week. But other than those ‘hobbies’ I found that dorm life pretty much took care of most of my other needs (food, shelter, and entertainment) and it wasn’t until I moved out into my own place in third year that I had to shop, cook, clean and manage all those other tasks. It was a measured, paced transition into full independence, and I found that by the time I finished my fourth year and headed back to Vancouver I was use to my independence and had no problems setting myself up in an apartment in Kitsilano on my own. My parents had wanted me to stay home with them and save money but I pushed my way out as soon as I found a job and could barely make ends meet – and I never looked back.

I am not sure that things will be any different for you heading to school as you will transition from dorm life to separate independent living quarters over the period of your undergraduate studies. You’ll have the thrill of setting up your own dorm room, then your own place ‘off campus’ and so on. It is actually a big part of growing up and there really isn’t a lot of downside to it. You will likely have a few disagreements with your room-mates and will have to work out some compromises, and that is in itself good training for married life later on. 🍀

Staying in touch while moving on

In 1979 long distance communications was accomplished via letter writing and the very occasional telephone call costing \$1 per minute. Calls were obviously kept short. Not only did I rarely call and talk ‘live’ with my old friends and family, but they didn’t come to visit me and I didn’t travel to visit them either. I saw them at Christmas and over the summer breaks, when I was working in town (which was not always the case).

This new era in my life was truly one of independence, and when I met up with my old friends and family there was quite a period of re-adjustment and re-acquaintance involved. I am not sure that was all bad as the distance and emotional separation allowed me to focus more on the path I was on and allowed me to develop in ways that I otherwise might not have if old influences had remained as strong and if I had maintained more connections to my old life back home.

When I was back at home I sometimes felt like my wings had been clipped and didn’t really feel like I was my ‘new self’. It could be an awkward dynamic. That said, there were some really great things about being ‘back home’, not for too long of a period, but enough to give me a break from school and new friends, to allow for reflection on the broader picture, and to re-connect with people who were important in my past life. Our newly minted Penticton crowd bonded together during these Christmas/summer breaks and those relationships have since stood the test of time (such as Doug & Barb Vincent, and Geoff Yue).

Many of my friends at Queen's were from Ontario but they too usually kept their distance from home and relished their new lives and school community. They often went home at Thanksgiving and for Spring Break, while I didn't, but that was about the only difference. Our independence and new directions were clearly things we all desired.

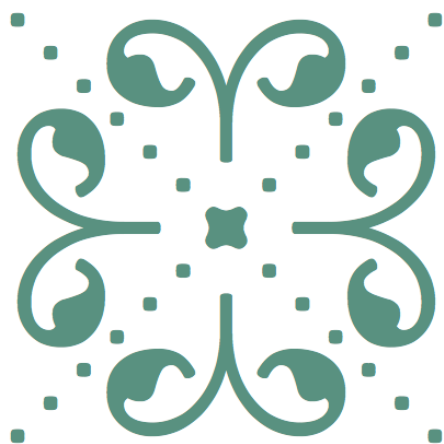


**The
'Penticton'
gang on
Bowen Island**

I often wondered what going to a school in a major metropolitan area would have been like. For places like UBC there are probably too many students who travel from home to school each day to create that sense of community spirit and bonding. That might be the same problem for the University of Toronto but not likely for other schools, including McGill, as most students will not be locals there.

I think that school community bonding is important and it is one of big potential negatives to consider when considering going to a school like UBC. Along with growing up and seeking your independence, I also encourage you to leave home for school as a way of discovering the magic of this type of school community spirit and bonding, which was a big part of my Queen's experience.

I see the Internet as a bonus and a potential handicap for you while you set out on your own path. While Cheryl and I obviously love you and want you to keep in touch with us, we respect your privacy and your priorities and won't be pressuring you to submit to our oversight and constant communication, which is so much easier in the Internet age than it was back in 1979. What-ever feels right for you will be OK with us. The odd email and the odd call should suffice. And travel home between Christmas/summer breaks is optional – but, of-course, we'd love to see you! 🍷



Choosing a career

Some people say you really don't know who you are and what your destiny is until you are in your thirties. For me that was true even though I had confidently announced to the world when I was twelve that I was going to be a biomedical engineer when I grew up. I therefore needed to get both engineering and medical degrees. When I chose my post-secondary institution I had every intention of taking pre-meds curriculum while in my electrical/computer engineering undergrad, so when I got to Queen's University I chose Biology 101 as my first year elective along with my heavy engineering course load.

One of the big upsides to being in the 1500 strong class of students who signed up for Biology 101 was getting an opportunity to travel to Belize for spring break as part of a biology field trip. It was one of the best experiences I had at school (and had nothing to do with education). As a bonus I also met a really interesting American tourist down there – an open-heart transplant biomedical engineer who worked six months of the year and vacationed for the rest of the time. I thought that was a cool way to make a living.

I went to visit the VGH biomedical engineering department that summer and interviewed with some unhappy staff members who told me stories of under-funding and poor salaries – and that scared me. I guess I hadn't seen things from a practical perspective since I didn't know anyone in the biomedical engineering field myself and had only approached it from a romantic theoretical perspective up until that point in time.

I knew I had a strong aptitude in engineering and sciences but I also wanted to be more than just a ‘bricks and mortar’ variety engineer and had thought that adding in medicine would be just the ticket. But without a realistic US track to my career where biomedical engineering held more promise, I made the decision to continue solely with my electrical engineering education. In time I found myself increasingly at odds with my class-mates and my professors as the material often seemed dry and boring: it didn’t pull me in an interesting direction. I slogged on, found solace in music and non-engineering friends and influences, and somehow managed to obtain my EE degree at the end of it all.

After suffering a big blow to my ego by graduating into a full-blown recession and having 200 job applications rejected, I finally found my first engineering job in a field far from my

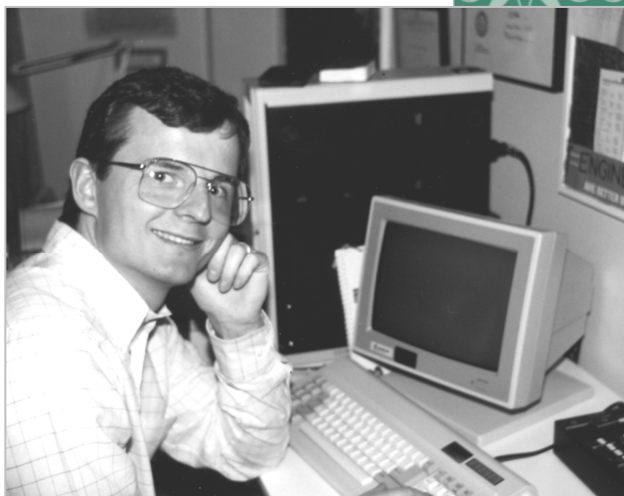
interests of digital music and acoustics: doing power systems electrical design work. It was poorly paying work and I was not at all happy with myself – partly because I was engaged to an aspiring law student, and could see all of her friends moving on much more promising career tracks.



**An early
production
Maturity
Meter**

What saved my sanity was a parallel entrepreneurial track: designing concrete maturity meters. If I hadn’t taken a


personal initiative to try and create that product line, market the products, and negotiate the licensing agreements, I would have been a pretty miserable sod. But there I was at age 22 with my own product ‘invention’ and a reasonable revenue stream from those products. We sold almost \$1M of meters in four years and I took home 7.5% as a royalty which helped us with the down payment on our home.



In my home office with my first PC

I continued in the engineering designer/manager career track until the age of 30, working for a range of telecom industry firms, while in parallel writing various business plans, looking for funding, and playing with my concrete meter business on the side. I got to know the executives in the firms I worked for, met customers and partners, learned a lot about of non-engineering ‘facts of business life’ and started to get a feel for business management (the poor man’s MBA – perhaps the best kind of all).

My lucky breaks always seemed to stem from hardships in my ‘chosen’ engineering career: when I couldn’t find a decent/interesting job right out of school I created my own product line and business; when the rest of my jobs were less than fully satisfying (although in retrospect they were serious



engineering jobs in demanding areas) I learned more and more about company management and financials; and finally when Nexus Engineering, my last real ‘employment’ position, was sold off after hitting a financial wall in 1992, I was forced back into consulting work to survive and then co-founded PCS Wireless out of the ashes of one of the Nexus company divisions which did not find a new owner.

Looking back almost twenty years now, I can clearly see that I didn’t really know what I was good at, or even what I wanted out of my career, until that point in my life. I seemed to subconsciously know that running a business would be rewarding, but I had always prided myself on being a great engineering product designer, not a business manager or financier. This was perhaps just an extension of my upbringing as I had no real product oriented business mentorship to guide me. My dad’s consulting engineering company required that he focus on being ‘an engineer’ for most of his work day so while I was positively influenced by his entrepreneurial zeal and successes, it was in a different area than where my ultimate destiny lay.

Today I know who I am and what I’m good at: I am a hybrid of a highly technical mind that ‘gets engineering issues’ and I am also a ‘great communicator’ that brings non-technical people into the conversation while connecting with investors, customers and partners in order to create a ‘whole’ business that is greater than the sum of its parts. I enjoy the mix of cross-functional activities that running a tech company entails, and more importantly I enjoy working with a lot of

smart people who have a complementary range of skills and experiences, all applying themselves towards a common goal.

Bill Gates seeks a foothold in the 'embedded' computer biz, which comprises those small but ubiquitous microprocessors found in anything that buzzes or chirps – from cell

swim with the sharks

A tiny Vancouver firm gets cozy with Microsoft . . . very carefully

peevish the shareholders? Much more cost-efficient to gather a school of hungry independents such as Intrinsyc. Be nice to them. Tell them things. Let them dart ahead of your protective bulk. When they hit something potentially tasty, they're the ones who take the chance, develop the latent potential – or possibly die trying. Then they sell or license the software to Microsoft for a good price and ongoing royalties. While the shark swallows, the small guys streak to the next target.

Call it corporate symbiosis with an edge. Make a strategic mistake, get in with the

Derek Spratt and cunning plan – leap into the multi-billion dollar 'embedded computer' software ocean, swim like crazy, keep just ahead of Microsoft's huge restless maw, make lots of money. And try not to get ripped apart

DINA GOLDSTEIN

I love what I am doing now and when I look back to my 20s I sometimes cringe when thinking of what I was initially trying to accomplish from an educational and career planning perspective. More than half of our family income over the last thirty years has come from 'equity' sources, not employment income, and I wouldn't have made that connection back in the 1970s as I really had no references to help me appreciate how owning and building a product oriented business, and ultimately selling my interest in that business, can create major changes in my personal 'net worth'.

BC Business
magazine
interview

The moral of this story is to keep your mind open as you start into the next phase of your life. You will find your way forward as you listen to your inner self and judge your own happiness (and looking in the rear view mirror every once in a while and taking stock of how your life is going). It isn't the day by day ups and downs kind of happiness I am referring to, but a deeper level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, that should inform your future choices and actions.

Think of your life as a long series of decisions and actions that you take. Individually they won't usually make that big of an impact on the larger picture, but over a period of ten, twenty or thirty years, those decisions will most surely add up and define you and the happiness and contentment that you will feel in your 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond into your retirement years.

On a larger scale your career will go likely move along the following lines: grinding it out/paying your dues/ figuring out the game – age 25-35; hitting your stride and working in the sweet spot of your career – age 35-50; maturing and taking more of a mentoring role towards the next generation while continuing to 'add value' as a senior executive – age 50-60; fading slowly and gracefully into the sunset – age 60+.


It takes some time to hit your stride and then you will reach the sweet spot, which is actually also the point at which you are busiest over-all in your life, potentially with a young family under foot as well. The sweet spot is often the 'burn-out' spot for many people – I just refer to it as the sweet spot because it is where your career 'value-add' is the highest and where you feel that you are 'in your element'. 🐸

Choosing your hobbies, friends, spouse, and business associates

When you head off to post secondary school you will have a wonderful opportunity to meet people from widely different backgrounds, and if you open your mind to new things, you can try out a few new hobbies and school clubs that can connect you to a wider audience and allow you to share in a larger variety of new experiences. In many ways life is about ‘experiences’, not paying the bills and getting on with the day to day grind.

I loved the social aspects of university life. I met many people from different backgrounds, and learned new things from each of them. My life since has been infused with connections to a variety of people from different career paths, cultures and backgrounds and I must say that my interest in sharing my journey in this way has brought me considerable happiness. Certainly my comfort working in the global telecom industry has been assisted by my willingness over the years to befriend and socialize with people from around the world who have often had very different upbringings than myself.

There are some constants in people’s interests as they move through life – in my case that has been my musical ‘hobby’ and my related friendships that in many ways kept me sane while in engineering school at Queen’s. As a young adult it may pay dividends to find at least one hobby that connects you to people and interests outside of your chosen educational and career path.



We all leave home with baggage in tow from our childhood. It is sometimes hard to hear our own inner voice with all of the external noises stuck in our heads from: our parents (what they want us to be, or do, or not do); our society (what norms are pressed upon us); and our friends, teachers and co-workers. Listening to your own voice means shutting down all those other voices in your head – something that takes some practice doing.

Many people live their lives by attempting to please others but being true to yourself and walking along your own path is paradoxically one of the best ways to make other people happy as you need to be ‘true to yourself’ to be a good partner and role model for others.

People by nature are judgmental and this can be acidic in relationships. Become aware of how often people try to manipulate you to do the things that they want you to do for their benefit. They may offer up their judgment and try and make you feel that their approval or disapproval is what should motivate you. You can ‘train’ those around you to stop doling out their advice and judgment, and work with them to start speaking from their experience – or you can separate yourself from these people and move them out of your life and influence.

Try to understand what makes you happy or sad, energetic or depressed, by looking into your past and searching for important insights into how prior actions, decisions and situations made you feel. This type of reflective analysis can be quite illuminating and can help you with your relationship management.

There are people you will meet who may be truly pathological or narcissistic and you will have to learn to identify them and cut your ties to them as quickly as possible – or manage your way around them if they are your teachers, co-workers or bosses. These people can suck the life out of you and make you miserable if you let them get under your skin.



**Psychopaths
amongst us**

Some people are not pathological but are never-the-less needy: always looking for support, or needing attention. Again, watch out for the energy suckers out there as they will eventually drag you down to their level if you let them. And watch out for the lazy people who want you to help them all of the time – if you aren't careful, your generous and giving nature may place you in a position where you are used and abused by people who get far more from you than they give back in return. Do everything you can to surround yourself with people that are happy, generous, self reliant, and energetic. If you find yourself around people that are negative and always complain about things, or stick their noses too far into other people's lives, flee!

Keep in mind that adversity brings out the best and the worst in people. You won't really know how well you get along with someone else and what their moral fibre really is like until you jointly face a challenging situation together.

There are some industries and professions, like investment banking, where big money is involved and which tends to attract the pathological types. In general there is a correlation between money and evil in this world – ‘evil’ being defined as people hurting others for personal gain – or at least a callous disregard for other people’s well being. You should keep that in mind as you juggle creative/technical/scientific pursuits that will inevitably intermix with business and financial dynamics. Whether you become a musician, doctor or an engineer you will at some point find yourself interacting with ‘the money types’ and they will often act far differently and have quite different moral values than people who are creatively or technically motivated.



Post-secondary schooling is often the time when you find your life partner. Choosing a spouse is far more than a matter of ‘falling in love’ as once the decision is made to forge a life together there is a lot more than infatuation involved in getting through the next fifty plus years together. When you think you may have found a potential mate, it helps to keep the following things in mind: the apple doesn’t usually fall far from the tree – look at her parents and her cultural background and you will see what she is likely to be like in 20-30 years time.

**Our big day –
August 17th
1985**

It is also a reasonable possibility that if her mom is fit and takes good care of herself, there is a good chance your spouse will as well in mid-life. Look at her level of empathy towards others– if she is caring and connects well with others she will likely act the same way towards you, if not, don't expect her to be a touchy-feely life partner thirty years down the road with you.

You can indulge in some simple personality profiling as well – it is quite insightful to help identify the areas where you are similar and the areas where you are different. A lot of relationships eventually fall apart because couples start to focus on the negative aspects of their partner's personality – the things that they do that annoy them. The bottom line is that there is a lot of DNA baked into each and every one of us that cannot or will not change no matter how much another person may obsess and complain about those characteristics, so you need to either accept those traits and ignore them or quit the relationship. But bitching about these issues years down the road will only lead to unhappiness for everyone concerned. So do your best to identify what these major points of divergence are up-front, and either commit to accept them in each other, or move on to the next relationship.

One of the hardest things to anticipate when dating is how parenting might affect your future relationship. There is one thing for certain: having children moves the emphasis away from the two of you, and towards your children. There is often little time left for the two of you and therefore it may require Herculean efforts to keep the romance alive and for each of

you to make the necessary continued investments into your relationship – but it needs to happen and unfortunately it also needs to happen at the same time your careers will likely be on full boil (‘the crucible of pain’).

But parenting has its own rewards and I for one would put parenting as the top life experience for me, hands down. I just

can’t imagine myself not being a parent – it has brought so much joy, love and happiness into my life. Just keep in mind that you and your spouse will change in important ways if and when children



**Substantial
rewards
come with
the effort of
raising a
family**

come into the picture, and perhaps the only hint of what those personality and priority changes might be in your spouse could come from observing her parents, as parenting tends to bring out family/cultural values that may have lain dormant during the initial phases of your relationship. 🌿

Achieving financial independence

It may sound like a no-brainer that you should choose a career and manage your finances in such a way as to achieve ‘financial independence’ as quickly as possible but it is such a vague concept for a young adult that it is worth breaking down into digestible components.

These days it just isn’t possible to pay your own way through the post-secondary educational process, but you should do everything reasonably possible, at the earliest possible point in time, to start striving towards paying your own way through life. You can certainly make a meaningful contribution towards your own educational costs and hopefully you will quickly get the idea that being financially dependent on others has its own costs and detractions.

Family debts or financial dependence can quickly become a real sore point between family members as there will inevitably be judgments made about whether the debtor’s priorities are correct (‘you should have done *this* or *that*, not bought *this* or *that*’) but more importantly there is a real satisfaction that comes from being financially independent.

Coming from a family background where money has not been a subject of constant debate and focus puts you at a disadvantage as you will have to come to terms with the reality that for yourself, for the next several years, money will matter a great deal to you, and managing your finances will be of paramount interest and concern.

Basically, the sooner you get on a program of budgeting and tracking against that budget, the better. And when it comes to the larger picture of making your first major



purchases (either a car or a home) your parents can help you figure out what to do and how to structure your transaction. The larger picture of how to save up for retirement is a ways off for you but it should be kept in mind from this point forward – you will need to build your personal ‘net

worth’ from essentially ‘zero’ today to a point way off in the distant future where it is several \$ million.

The truth about compounding interest is that the sooner you start saving, the quicker you will get to your retirement goals, and the only way to do that is to spend less than you make, and invest the difference. Delaying the point that you sit down and start building your retirement savings can push your retirement out further than you may guess. Do the math.

Borrowing money to allow you to live beyond your means can be a real recipe for unhappiness later in life. The accumulation of material possessions does not correlate well with your emotional state of being so try and live with a lower ecological footprint and save the \$. If you end up with more than you need to live on you can always help your children with their financial needs as they get launched!

**Home sweet
home – more
than just an
investment**

If you have the opportunity to acquire some equity in a company you work with (perhaps stock options or shares in the company in lieu of income or a bonus), take it if you feel the company is being well run. You will start down a path of building more and more of your net worth from investments in companies that you are involved in, and at a minimum you will start to learn about and take a much greater interest in the ‘shareholders’ interests in the business – which can only help your career and broaden your perspective on the business world.

**Performance
Solutions**

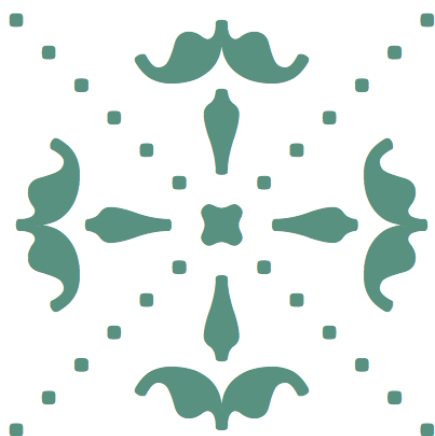


PCS
WIRELESS, INC.

INTRINSYC

mobidia

Owning equity in a business is in some ways a direct parallel to owning your own home – it can be an important appreciating ‘asset’ in your financial portfolio – especially if you have a hand in building the business through your own work efforts. 🌱




Focusing on your Personal Health

I grew up in a family where eating healthy food and staying fit was a basic tenant in our lives. I never thought much about going to the gym, or looking for healthy food to eat once I headed off to Queen's – it was just a natural thing to do. The foundations for living a long and healthy life start in childhood but they are tested and cemented while you are away at school and then while starting your career. Getting in the habit of doing worthwhile things like taking care of yourself may take some effort initially, but then they start to get into your subconscious mind and seem just like tying your shoes in the morning – a natural act.

Post secondary schooling can be a high pressure environment so vigorous exercise and healthy eating can make a big difference in how good you feel and how well you manage the stresses you will be under. Working out three to five days a week at fairly high levels of output is something I highly recommend – both cardio and strength training.

Sports are obviously an option if you can find a team to play with or you could take up racket ball or squash. A lot of students think it is a good thing to drink a lot of alcohol and stay out late at night and party, but in fact the exact opposite is true for the most part. Maybe the better way of thinking about things is with the 'work hard, play hard' motto where you study like crazy, workout like crazy, and occasionally party like crazy as well (hopefully after exams, not prior).



I learned the hard way that my health was more fragile than some of the other people I went to school with: I couldn't drink a case of beer a night or survive on five hours of sleep. I needed to moderate my alcohol intake and get eight to nine hours of sleep or I couldn't concentrate on my schoolwork and my stomach/intestinal tract would revolt and make me feel very ill.

I recommend getting in the habit of taking a good quality multi-vitamin daily, and also a few other pills: an omega-3, vitamin D, probiotics, and even think about taking digestive enzymes with each meal. You will be healthier, and your gut will perform at its best at all times, not only absorbing more nutrients but also protecting yourself against infections or imbalances that can rob you of your energy and your happiness.

I started to gain weight (fat!) by my third year of engineering school. Yes, it is not too far into your future before you'll have a little bulge around your middle and your size 32 pants will start to feel a bit tight. You'll also go a little 'soft' if you don't workout at the gym at least three times a week. It happens slowly as your metabolic rate starts to change, in combination with the stresses of studying and other distractions in your life, and then one day you will find yourself 10-20lbs overweight and the slide into middle age has started – all before your 25th birthday.


By age 30 most men are in a full tilt panic about their physical decline. You have started to 'settle down' into a long term relationship, are into your career, and the long work

hours are starting to weigh down on you – there just isn't time to invest into yourself. And guess what? Your lean muscle mass has already been in decline for a good five years so your weight increase is worse than you think it is.

The only way to avoid this continued slide into middle-aged hell is to keep up your exercise and healthy eating habits at all times: never let a work colleague or boss (or yourself) tell you that it is required that you sacrifice your workouts and quality food intake for your job. Get lots of sleep every night, work out a full hour every day (preferably during the work day) and flee work environments, colleagues and bosses that don't share your commitment to excellent personal health.

I have personally tried to stay in good health with varying degrees of success and failure over the past 30 years. I certainly let my health decline in my late 20s and then found the religion again in my early 30s, only to have another major decline in my late 30s, with both periods being defined by heavy work loads and family commitments. When I turned 40 I got focused back onto my health in a big way and for the most part I managed to hang onto my lean muscle mass and actually improve my cardio health throughout my 40s.

My current high energy levels at work are a direct result of my commitment to daily exercise. I never again want to go back to weighing 30lbs more than my 'ideal' weight and having poor blood work. It is hard to be consistent so when you find yourself slipping, dust off the old routines and get back into the swing of it. And hang out with other health-minded people as you will encourage each other!



Speaking of health, a big part of living a happy life is keeping a balance between several competing areas: your personal needs (health and happiness), your family relationships (spouse, children, parents, and close friends), and your career. Your physical and mental health is the bedrock of your life as nothing else matters if you aren't well, so take care of your health and make sure that includes managing your stress. Stress reduction requires that you take time to decompress at the end of each day so don't work thirty minutes prior to bed time – use that time to relax and take your mind off of studying or work related issues.

Find things that make you happy and do them each day. Take time to count your blessings – even write them down. The very act of identifying these things will lift up your mood. At least once a year sit down quietly and write up a plan for the following year, laying out what do you want to accomplish, and what needs to change in your life (a 'start', 'stop', 'keep doing' form of analysis).

Oddly enough, having a written plan is a good way to manage your stress. You can help yourself visualize the goals contained in your plan by creating a mosaic of photos and images of the things that you want to accomplish or experience – and you can keep it with you by placing it in the front of your notebook or hanging it up next to your desk.

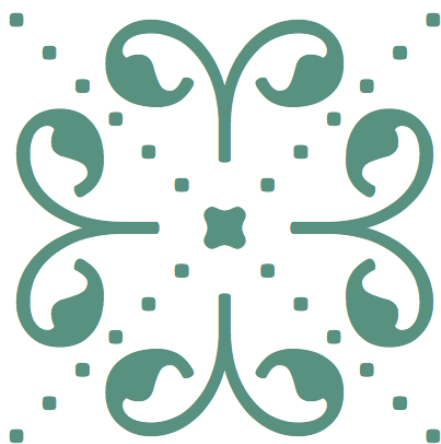
Knowing you are working towards your stated goals and making progress (even if it is 2 steps forward, 1 step backwards at times) can help you achieve some inner peace. And revisiting your prior yearly plans can also provide you

with some important perspective on how you are evolving and changing as a person. I have done this for more than twenty years now and I find it a hugely valuable exercise.

Think of forming a small group of trusted advisors or mentors and try to reach out to them on occasion and compare notes, seek some input into your plans, and most importantly, your issues and concerns. Choose your advisors and mentors carefully though: seek out people only with the highest moral standards and ensure there is mutual respect (and obviously try and avoid the judgment problem).

You may be tempted to abuse drugs and alcohol at some points in your life. When pressures are high, drugs and alcohol can give you a feeling of release. But there is a very real danger: that release can quickly become a regular part of your day or week and that can lead to trouble. Your brain's pleasure centers will quickly down-regulate and your normal sense of self will down-regulate as well. You may find yourself craving the high just to stop feeling so low.

I have bumped into this demon personally and know a lot of people who have as well. It never got to a point for me where it really impacted my life but I have seen it hurt many friends and business associates so don't think for one second that you are immune – it is simply part of the human condition so pause and think twice before becoming a regular consumer of drugs and alcohol. The Spratt family has a long history of drug and alcohol abuse that has left a trail of destruction and death: it is in your DNA so be forewarned. 🐉



Keeping an eye on the big picture

Yes, eventually we all grow old and fade away. But the journey can be highly rewarding and the path to old age doesn't need to be one of fear and dread, especially if you invest in maintaining your health so that you are vital and energetic as senior citizen.

As you head off to post-secondary school with your whole life ahead of you it may seem a grim thought to focus any energies on your eventual old age, but the point is simply that you are embarking on a journey of independence that entails building important foundations that will impact the rest of your life. If you approach some of your decisions in the next 5-10 years with an eye towards the medium and long term future you will be better off overall and your happiness levels will reflect that throughout your life.

You will need to choose a rewarding career, secure yourself into a stable, nurturing spousal relationship, draw into your life interesting, empathic friends and work with equally interesting business associates, keep your fitness level up, eat properly, manage your finances carefully, and maybe even raise a family of your own. And you need to 'feed the soul' along the way – making sure you are enjoying the game of life.

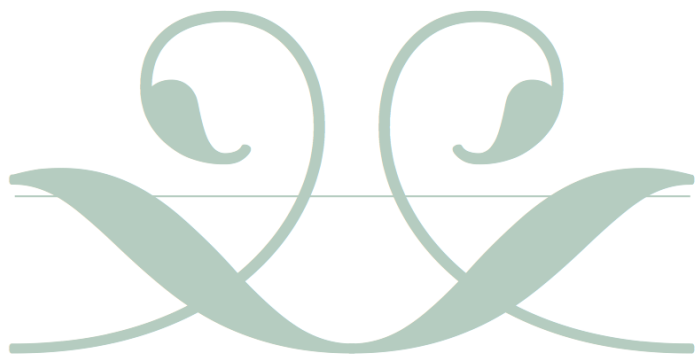
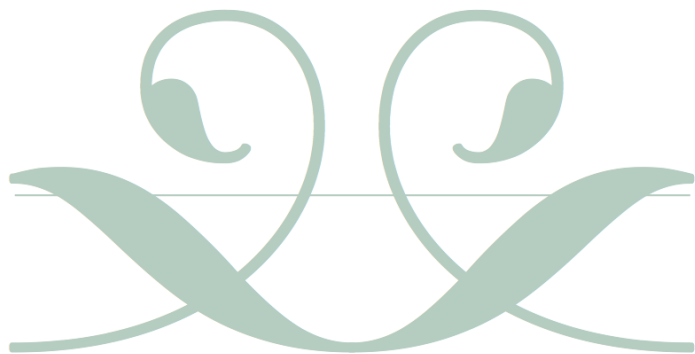


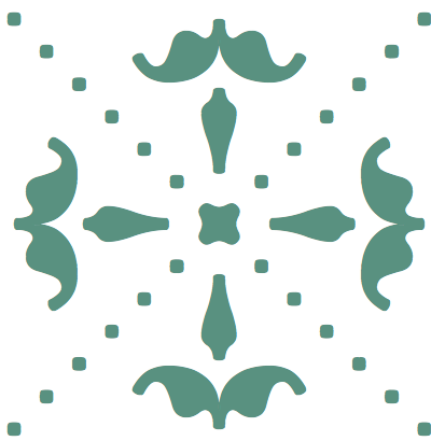
**As a newly
minted
Electrical
Engineer**

You are blessed with a loving and supportive family and you have the relative luxury of our financial support as well. We are all in some ways on this journey together – it is a comforting thing to know that our family is there for us when we need them. If you want advice and mentoring we'll be there to provide it, but please do remind us to speak from our experiences and not be too judgmental, no matter what our pre-disposition may be to do so.

Best of luck. You know how this story will play out: It will go well for you, with a wonderful, fulfilling life ahead of you. It is nice having you in our life and we look forward to watching you move forward under your own momentum into the next phase of your journey!

- Love, Dad 🌿





Queen's Science 83 yearbook excerpts

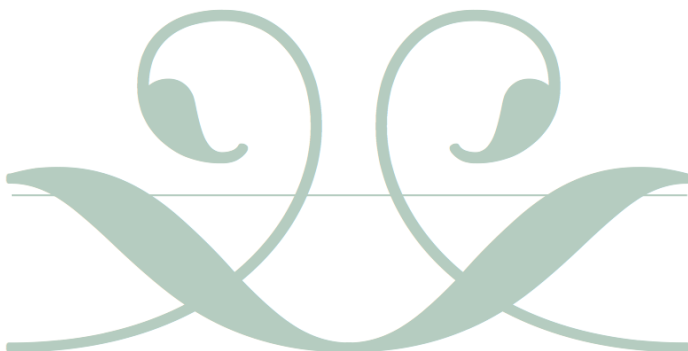


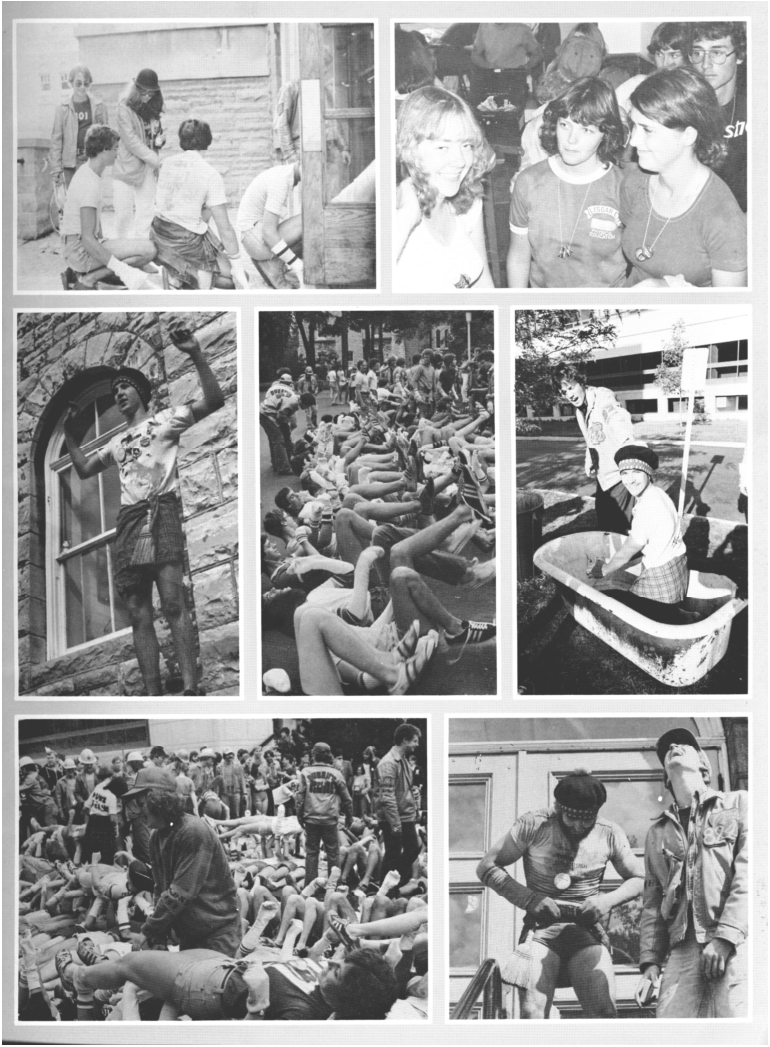


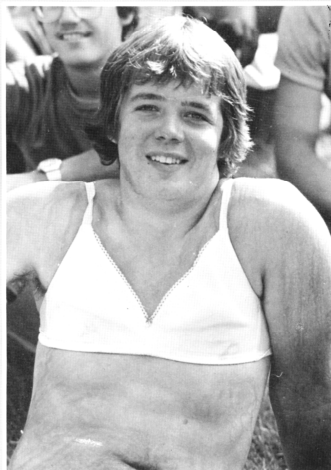
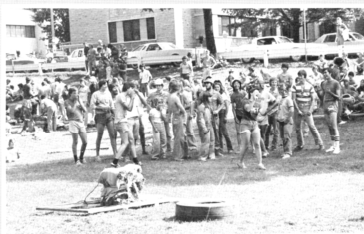
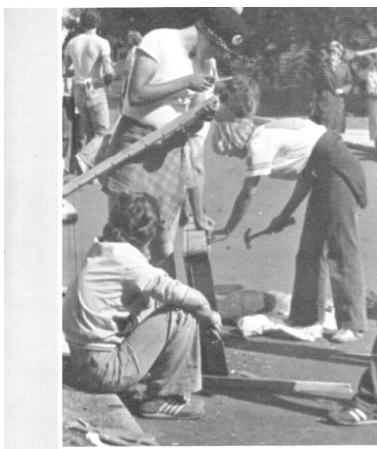
WHEN WE WERE FROSH

Frosh Week opened our eyes to the fact that Engineering was a wee bit different from other faculties at Queen's. Who else wore matching purple outfits and those tasteful gold-topped tams? Certainly not our kindly (tor)mentors in Sci. '82 whose gold jackets were envied right up until we got our own. Remember how much better (and smaller) ours looked? Remember nearly failing computer?

But Frosh Week, ah, a time I'd never forget, if I could only remember it. From registration to the scavenger hunt, shouting out with the Commies (surely we won), meeting the Dean, thundermugs and being baptised by grease, what a time! What a welcome!



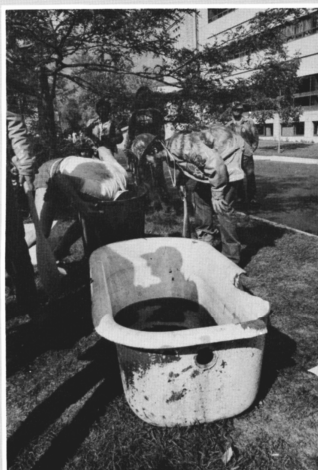
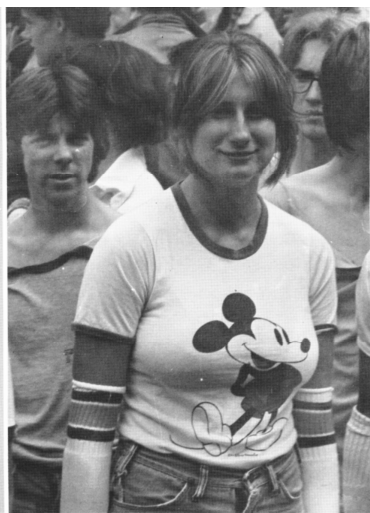
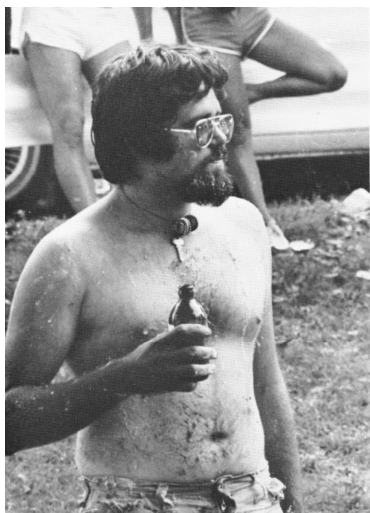


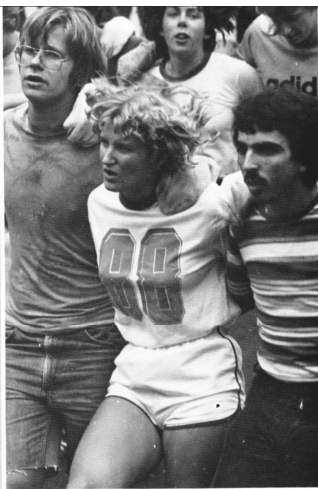




The Thundermug Race combines technical skill and athletic ability to introduce frosh to the intricacies of Engineering. The frosh must build a safe thundermug and then race it through obstacles such as waterballoons, mounds of tires, mattresses and lots of flour. Easy? Not if you're the freshette who rides the thundermug and chugs a bottle of warm porter at the finish! Congratulations Free group 3!!







*DID WE REALLY
LOOK THIS DUMB?*







49 MINUTES!

The grease pole is the ultimate challenge for a prospective engineering year. Undaunted by the horrors of THE PIT, the courageous young men and women of Sci. '83 defy the elements and triumph!! This titanic feat was made even more memorable as we got the tam in the shortest undisputed time ever recorded - 49 minutes!!





*WERE WE THAT DEWEY-EYED
WHEN WE WERE FROSH?
HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ONE
SHORT YEAR BEFORE ...
... NAH, NOT US*







CLASS LIST Agris Abolins, Bruce Anderson, Rich Baggerman, Carl Barnes, Bruce Beggs, Stephen Burns, Becky Chan, Philip Chan, Raymond Chan, Hon Ming Chin, Bruce Chorlton, Charles Chu, Frank Cotter, Paul Demone, Brian Doody, Peter Ellis, Mark Emerson, Scott Fauschou, Andrew Ferrie, Greg Fill, William Fisher, Mike Fontyn, Debbie Frischknecht, David Gajda, Karl Galbraith, John Grant, Don Haig, Sandra Hammond, Paul Harris, Alex Heung, Eddy Ho, Pius Ho, (A.J.) Adelino Jeronimo, Eugene Kam, Dennis Leung, Duncan Leung, Wilson Leung, Duncan Lewis, Kim Lim, Tim Littlewood, David Lui, Nancy Lunn, Derek Macleod, Liz Magee, Jonathan Malton, Mike Maritan, Rob Martell, Tony Mascioli, Ted McClelland, Fred McConnell, Jack McKeown, Rich McPhaden, Ken McRae, Tom Moore, Dave Moreland, Matt O'Gorman, Chris Pallen, Joseph Poon, Scott Randall, Rob Rankin, Darcy Roberts, Rob Robless, Barry Rogers, Mike Rowen, Marc Roy, Yves (the Sleeve) Roy, Andrew Scott, Ronnie See, Andrew Sillins, Gerard Siron, Gord Smith, Rick Sones, Derek Spratt, Andrew Stark, Rob Sweeny, Mark Tayles, Massimo Verardo, Jeff Watt, Art Webster, David Weishahn, Dominic Wong, Neng Wong, Lionel Wong, Tony Wong, Ian Wyatt, William Yee.

This much space in a yearbook cannot tell the whole story Electrical Engineering's class and their four year(?) mission through time and space (not to mention beer).

In the World According to Electrical, a few things come to mind:

- Mike Rowen's ongoing pursuit of a Gentleman's Quarterly modelling job.
- the charitable cause of buying Paul Demone a shirt with sleeves.
- the Sleeve himself, the future 2 foot 10 linebacker with the Argos.
- Mark Tayles' leg in a cast (one way to get plastered).
- computer option's subterranean life on the QUIC's.
- "Chuckles" Campling's Comedy Hour.
- Smokin' Sid's electronics lectures at the speed of light.
- broomball smokers and 15 Aberdeen parties.
- Science Formal construction (worth every minute).

There are a lot of memories, some of which are in the following pictures. But most of all, we dedicate these few pages to the symbol of Electrical Engineering '83, the Xerox machine.



