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# Esquimalt High School Alumni Association NEWSLETTER



*Ollie the Otter, Esquimalt High School's NEW mascot!*

By Elena Marchesan, Grade 10 Leadership Student

At Esquimalt high school we have been working to create a supportive, welcoming and connected school community. In recent history, we haven't had a school mascot and so our Leadership team



decided that this could be a way to connect our school community, especially at a time when we're feeling so disconnected and isolated during COVID. And so, we took to the drawing board to determine what our mascot could be. We knew we had to think about our history and alumni and how we could keep those who have been supporting us connected to the school and to their high school experiences, as well as represent our current school population. Through a series of focus groups and a process of voting, we determined that a sea otter was a good representative of our school and local community.

Ms. Bradshaw, our Accounts Clerk, worked extremely hard to find a company to make us an otter mascot suit that would be welcoming and friendly. Ollie had many stages before becoming the friendly otter we know. From claws to different eye shapes, we took our time to get our current loveable otter.

Now, as we wrap up our first year with Ollie, we are so grateful. Ollie has become a staple around our school both representing who we are today, and maintaining a connection to the original "Dockers" we were!

**GEORGE FREDERICK WILLIAMSON (1921-2020):**  
*Forerunner to the Esquimalt High School Alumni Association*

George Williamson was the driving spirit behind and the historian for the early Esquimalt High School Alumni Association before it was legally registered on May 16, 2006. George not only recorded the school's history, but he also set the procedures for holding large reunions.





George graduated from EHS in 1940 and joined the RCAF in 1941. In 1945 he concluded his Air Force service but he worked another 43 years in the aviation industry as a pilot with BNP and BC Hydro. He maintained his pilot's licence until 2004 at the age of 84, and was a keen participant of the BC Aviation Museum. He was also interested in the history of his high school.

George's chronology of the early EHS locations records the school's commencement in 1915 on the upper floor of the Lampson Street Elementary School building, when the entire student/teacher population of the high school was only 26 people. In 1917, the school moved to the Island Weavers building on Esquimalt Road, and in 1924 it moved back to Lampson Street for a year, before moving in 1926 to its 600 block Head Street location where it remained until 1960, the year the new Colville Road Esquimalt High School opened. EHS at Head Street as it was in 1940 the year George and Joan graduated.

The Alumni Association's current archives holds several historical items that George contributed. One interesting item is a photograph book of early reunions he organized, where long time Esquimalt residents will recognize many faces and family names. George also provided pictures of the school at Head Street, a photo of Miss G.N. Hewlings, the first EHS Principal at Head Street, along with several pictures of students and school activities.

At the Esquimalt Municipal Archives there are fonds (group of documents) concerning Esquimalt High School under George's name. These fonds include early photographs and registers showing students' names for the various classes.

Perhaps his most remarkable contribution was the huge series of reunions that George and his wife Joan McMurtrie (nee Scoble) organized between 1987 and 2004. The first reunion committee consisted of George and Joan, Peggy Hambrook (nee Archer), Hank Bennetts, Roy Edgar, Jean Haverty (nee McConnell), Kay



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Herold (nee Williams), Larry Rossiter and Ron Sedger. The September 1987 reunion was held at the former Princess Mary Restaurant's banquet facility and attracted a remarkable 150 students from the 1930's.

Some years the reunions attracted up to 300 former EHS students, and included students from the 1930's to the late 1950's. The Esquimalt Curling Club was the venue for most reunions, where the attendees would enjoy a wine and cheese party on Friday night, followed by a dinner and dance on Saturday night.

George and Joan tirelessly updated their registry of former students, a huge undertaking in a time prior to computers - all entries were by typewriter. The registry for the final reunion (students from 1926-1957) has over 1800 entries. Prior to forming a committee, George and Joan kept track of deaths, moves, marriages, etc., themselves, even travelling to Burnaby to go through old BC phone books at the BC Telephone building.

Many alumni members worked on George's reunion committees over the years. Joyce Reid (nee Mitchell), from the 1940 EHS grade nine entry class, was one such member. Joyce is the mother-in-law of Dave Allen, an EHS grad, former EHS principal, former president of the EHS Alumni Association, and the engine keeping the Alumni Association going since its conception. Iris Davies (nee Hamilton) and Wes Umphrey, both of the 1951 grad class, were members of the final reunion committee, which planned the 2004 reunion. Wes later became the inaugural president of the EHS Alumni Association, a position he held for several years.

George's reunions were always well organized. The reunion committees would meet at George and Joan's home to begin the planning for each reunion, arranging for catering, decorations, door prizes, etc. Alumni members and current EHS students would also help, doing everything from serving food to taking tickets to handling the door prizes. Students who served the food were each given a twenty-dollar bill and they got to keep the EHS apron that was specially made for the event.

The door prizes were very popular as they were often paintings or other items made by alumni. Ron Hunter (1950 grad class) carved a special walking stick for each reunion. Eric Faa donated copies of his book "Your Friend Edward," about growing up in Esquimalt during WW 2. On one occasion, George's step-daughter, Dr. Elissa McMurtrie, donated three bottles of liquor.



After each reunion, the committee donated the net proceeds to a charity of the committee's choice. George liked to start the finances fresh for each reunion.

Joan passed away on March 25, 2019 at the age of 95. George died on November 23, 2020 at 99 years old. They left a fine legacy. George and Joan's work on behalf of the alumni and the school fostered a strong fellowship between alumni members, provoked pride in the school, an awareness of the school's heritage and helped lay the foundation for the current Alumni Association.

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## School Update

by Tina Pierik, Principal

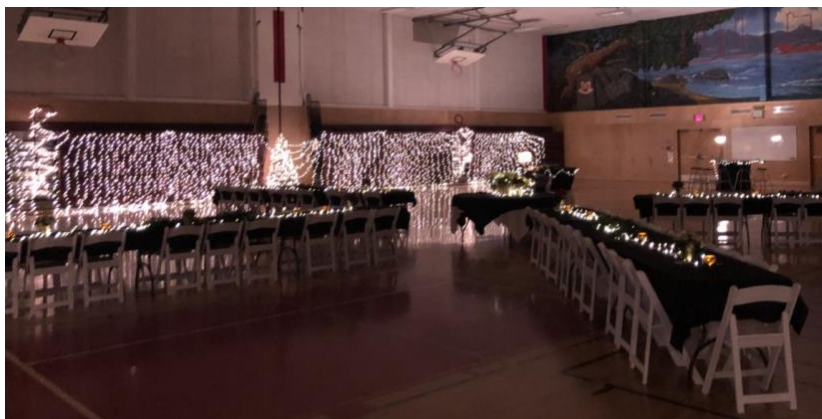


### Winter Formal

Esquimalt High School hosted a wonderful Winter Formal for all of the graduating students in the gym in December. The staff came together to decorate the gym in a magical and festive way. With COVID protocols in place (masks & no dancing), students enjoyed games, including the school's new pool table, and delicious food prepared by our culinary program. Over 120 grads attended. A wonderful time was had by all!

### CAPSTONE

The Capstone Project is a culminating Career Education task for all our graduates at Esquimalt High School. It is an inquiry-based project where students can explore and investigate current and new passions, and/or career options and post-graduation plans. Every grade 12 student has a volunteer Capstone Coach that they meet with throughout their graduation year where they discuss project progress and future goals. There is a final event that takes place called the Gala - this year it is on May 11 - where each student has the opportunity to share their learning journey with their peers and community.



### Mamma Mia Musical Theatre Production

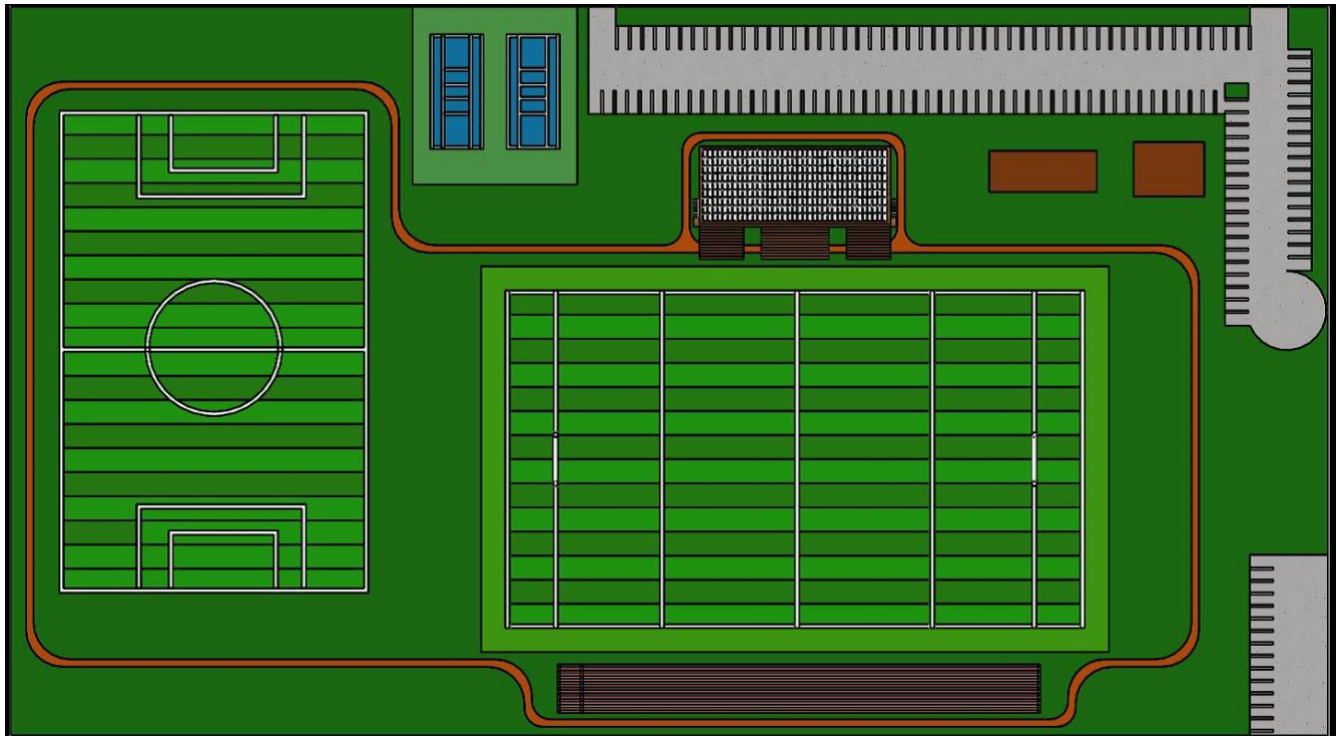
You're invited to Esquimalt High Musical Theatre's production of Mamma Mia! After three years, we are excited to welcome a live audience back into our theatre for this iconic production. This energetic show explores themes of identity, family, and love through ABBA's timeless music. Featuring over 40

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students, a live band, and big dance numbers, we hope to have you singing and laughing along with us.

Tickets are available at <https://www.showtix4u.com/events/esquimalt>.

### *Esquimalt High School Turf Field*



The planned turf field at Esquimalt High School continues to move forward. The partnership between the Songhees First Nations, School District 61, Esquimalt Municipality and community groups, including Esquimalt RibFest Society, EHS Alumni Association and several athletic organizations, continues to be strong. There is now over \$300,000 in the Turf Field Fund, which is held in trust with the School District. This amount, along with the financial support from the athletic associations, would put the funds available for building this project close to half a million dollars. However, as with any project of this size, several hurdles have occurred.

Unfortunately, the grant request that was made by the four groups about 18 months ago was not successful, but the committee continues to work hard looking for and applying to various government grant sites. Also, several easements over where the existing playing field is located have been discovered and need to be addressed. There are solutions to this concern and these are being reviewed by the Esquimalt Municipality and the School District. As this project moves forward the executive of the Alumni Association would like to thank the volunteers of Esquimalt RibFest for the continued financial support as well as the Alumni donors and various reunion groups that have added funds to the Turf Field Account.

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### *Donations*

This year we are asking members to think about donating to our scholarship fund. Attached to the newsletter is the form that can be printed and mailed in with your donation to receive a tax receipt. This year we have added the option to Interac e-Transfer your donation to us directly. We do kindly ask that you do send us your form in via our email so we can be sure that you receive your tax donation receipt.

### *Membership*

We have also attached a membership form to our newsletter so that if you know any other fellow classmates that would like to join up for the Alumni Association to be informed of reunions and other events that the school is hosting. It is a ONE TIME \$10 payment. Please forward them this newsletter.

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**Esquimalt High School Alumni Association**  
**2022 FUNDRAISING DRIVE**



The past several years has been challenging for all of us as we navigate the unusual and unsettling times of COVID-19. It has been especially difficult for any groups trying to carry on fundraising activities. Your EHS Alumni Association has experienced this as we have not had access to our usual events. We wish to continue with our offering of 3 - \$1,000 scholarships to deserving EHS students and any donations of \$20 or more will receive a receipt for income tax purposes. Donations received **before December 7, 2022** will be issued receipts for 2022 and donations **after this date** will be receipts issued for 2023.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Send us an Interac e-Transfer via your bank by emailing us your donation to [ehsalumniassociation.payments@gmail.com](mailto:ehsalumniassociation.payments@gmail.com). Please email us to your mailing address for your tax receipt to be mailed.
- Please make cheques payable to: **Greater Victoria School Board** and include notation on the memo line of the cheque for **"Scholarship Fund of EHS"**

Thank you for assisting the students at Esquimalt High School.

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**For income tax purposes, please complete & mail this slip with your cheque donation.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

**Esquimalt High School Alumni Association**  
847 Colville Rd  
Victoria, BC V9A 4N9  
[ehsalumni1959@gmail.com](mailto:ehsalumni1959@gmail.com)

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**Esquimalt High School Alumni Association & Esquimalt High School Alumni Foundation**  
**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

847 Colville Road  
Victoria, BC V9A 4N9  
[ehsalumni1959@gmail.com](mailto:ehsalumni1959@gmail.com)

To become an active member of the Esquimalt High School Alumni Association & Alumni Foundation you must be a former student or staff member and make a **one-time** membership payment of **\$10**.

Payment Options:

A. If you prefer to send a cheque, please make it out to **Esquimalt High School Alumni Foundation** and send to the address above and along with the completed membership form.

OR

B. If you prefer to send an Interac e-Transfer please use our email address [ehsalumniassociation.payments@gmail.com](mailto:ehsalumniassociation.payments@gmail.com) to send it. Also please print off the form and mail the completed form to the address above or scan a copy and email it to our generic email address above.

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Maiden Name**  
**(if different than above):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Years at Esquimalt:**  
**(Example: 1998-2002)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student/Staff:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Privacy Policy**

*Personal information provided to the Esquimalt High School Alumni Association and Esquimalt High School Alumni Foundation will be used and disclosed only to support the purposes of the societies; i.e., to provide financial and other support to the school and its students, to facilitate reunions and communications amongst Esquimalt High School Alumni and to document the history of the school. By giving your email address you will subscribe to our emailing of notices and information on events.*