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SAC'S ENVIRONMENTAL OLD BOYS

Going Green One Step at a Time

Contents

Features

12 The Greening of an Institution

By KIM SILLCOX

25 Tino Paolini

By JIM MCGILLIVRAY

30 Perriers Bring a Parenting Philosophy to Memorial House

By KIM SILLCOX

32 Students Get Back to Nature through Beyond the Gates

By WHITNEY ELLIOTT

34 Dr. Hockin Goes to Washington

By WILLIAM SCOULAR

36 Wartime on Campus at SAC

By F. MURRAY HALL '44



ROBYN O'HARE

John Polemidiotis '15 looking at Tree Swallow eggs in a Project Nest Box (Project Nest Boxes were generously supported by Bruce Buchan, father of John '16 and CEO of Midpoint International)

Columns

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 View from the Top | 40 Old Boys' News |
| 2 Community News | 52 Obituaries |
| 6 Association News | 56 From the Editor |
| 38 Archives | |

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parents and friends of the School.

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Front cover: Green Old Boys: I-r Kam Chan '96,

Aladdin Diakun '02, Jordan Ekers '05, Scott Bryk '90, Jason Hammond '99; Photo by Geoff George
Back cover: Brandon Coverdale '15 reads about reducing his carbon footprint; Photo by Geoff George



Tino Paolini

Head's portrait adds to SAC
collection of great artwork

By JIM MCGILLIVRAY

IN early 2009, as preparations were being made for the retirement of Headmaster Ted Staunton, long-time SAC art teacher and artist Tino Paolini was asked to paint the official Ted Staunton portrait that now hangs in the Towers Library along with portraits of the six other Headmasters. Although Headmaster Macdonald's 1925 portrait had been painted by former student and Group of Seven member Lawren Harris (1901), it was the first time an active member of the Andean family had earned such an honour.

To add to this accolade, both Ted Staunton and former Advancement Director, **Jim Herder '64**, requested Tino Paolini paintings for their school retirement gifts.

Such honours are richly deserved by the man who immigrated to Hamilton from Italy with his parents at age 12, joined SAC fresh out of U of T teacher's college in 1980 and who has made a tremendous impression on the School art scene in the last 30 years.

"I was very honoured when Ted asked me to paint his portrait," Tino recounts. "He could have had virtually anyone do it. The fact that he had that sort of confidence in my ability and commitment was very exciting to me."



STEPHEN KIMMERN

“I use my own work as a tool to teach technique and skills. Describing how to do an oil painting is not nearly as effective as showing how it is done, being able to demonstrate and display the various stages.”

Creating such a portrait is a major feat, and a great deal of thought goes into the process well before the first brush stroke. “I got started right away, because portraits can take a very long time,” Tino recalls. “Ted told me he wanted to wear a kilt. With the colours and texture of the kilt, sporran and jacket, there is a lot of intricate detail, so it was a big challenge.”

“We had a photo shoot in his office right in front of his mantel. Many portraits have grayed-out or blank backgrounds, but I wanted to show Ted in his element. We included various items from his workspace so there would be a strong connection to the School. I used a lot of photos. Some were of the whole scene, others were of the details. I worked on the portrait for four or five months, all from the photographs. That is usually the way I work.”

The Staunton portrait is the result of a long and passionate journey that began for Tino at a young age when he first began drawing for his own enjoyment. By high school, this had become a passion, and, as is often the case with youthful passions, Tino credits a singular influence. “I really fell in love with painting in high school,” he says. “I had a wonderful art teacher named Ron Clark. He was amazing and he fostered my work in many ways. He was a great guiding force and was very supportive in allowing me to do things I wanted to do. He was one of the main reasons I wanted to become a teacher, and he made me realize how a positive teaching experience can influence the lives of students.”

Tino found day-to-day school life in Hamilton much to his liking. “I enjoyed the pace of school,” he explains. “I liked sports, homework and preparation. I had a thirst for all of that and it opened up windows and opportunities.”

“Being a teacher is not much different from being a student. Teachers have to prepare and stay on top of new things to be ready for class. I’m fortunate as an art teacher because I never feel like I’m teaching the same things over again. There is a freshness to every assignment and every passing year. I like that part of it the same way I liked it as a student. Teaching art was a dream for me and I find it very, very rewarding.”

Another major teaching influence entered Tino’s life during university: “I did my fine arts degree at McMaster, and I loved the program and the campus there. It was much like St. Andrew’s in that it was a little world of its own. During third year I fell in love with printmaking, largely because of another mentor I had, a professor named George Wallace, who just passed away last year. Again, I learned that it is not so much the facility, or the material that makes the difference for students; it is the teacher. Professor Wallace was a wise man and a very positive influence, and he also made me realize how important teachers can be to young people.”

The St. Andrew’s opportunity came to Tino in the spring of 1980 just as he was graduating. “I’d actually never heard



GEOFF GEORGE

of St. Andrew's before that. I came for an interview with Don Stuart, who was about to leave his position," he recalls. "It was April or May and I thought this was a stunning place. I came up the lane from Yonge Street and the campus immediately had a very strong impact. There was no question about accepting the job."

Teaching soon became Tino's passion, though not at the cost of his own work as an artist, which he has never neglected. Like any artist or musician, he finds that his own work greatly enhances his teaching skills. "From the time I got here, I always worked hard to keep up my own skills," he recounts. "If I don't, I miss it. And it's like a sport in that if I don't do it, the skills erode. I lose my touch. If I don't draw for a long time I'm very slow and I lack control. After a very productive period I seem to be able to do things exactly as I want to do them. It's almost like magic."

"Being able to demonstrate things in class is very helpful for an art teacher. It isn't so much intellectual; it's often about showing students how to do things. It's also important to do things with them so I know how the materials I order for them behave. The quality of materials I give to the students affects their work. Cheap or poor materials limit what an artist can do. So that's another reason for me to be involved and doing all the time."

"I use my own work as a tool to teach technique and skills. Describing how to do an oil painting is not nearly as effective as showing how it is done, being able to demonstrate and display the various stages."

Tino's main media has been oil painting, and several of his works are part of the permanent collection at St. Andrew's. Some are sold privately – mostly from commissions or word of mouth – but Tino spends little or no time promoting his work: "I have lots of finished work on my own walls and some in storage. I do sell a few, though I don't work hard to sell them. One of the nice things about art is it doesn't go out of fashion. Pieces I sell aren't necessarily my most recent pieces. Some have been around for many years. Overall, I'm not that concerned about marketing my work. I paint because it's a very enjoyable activity for me."

He has also ventured into serious commercial work, most notably an intriguing project he tackled for Old Boy Scott Sillcox '77 beginning in the mid-1990s. Scott had an idea to market posters that showed the evolution of the Toronto Maple Leafs jersey. The paintings would need to be high quality, historically accurate, and licensed by the NHL. The Leaf posters became very successful, selling at major department stores and sports outlets, so Scott expanded the project to include the Montreal Canadiens, then the NHL Original Six, then the entire league, and finally the very lucrative National Football League (NFL) market. In all, Tino was involved with the project for 10 years, and describes it as some of the most



Tino Paolini
1999

"My technique became much better fairly quickly, and I became much faster as I knew what I needed to do."

Headmaster Art Award Recipients

For the past 10 years, the Headmaster has selected an outstanding piece of artwork (or two) created by a graduating student to become part of the School's permanent art collection.

John R. Khoury '01

Andy Chiu '06

Jonathan Fernandez '02

Jeffrey Lui '06

Michael Lin '03

Grant E. Burke '07

Mitch Myers '03

Wesley S. Tiller '07

Tomi W. Jun '04

Sean S. Lee '08

Chang-Yong Boo '05

Ronald C. Kam '09

challenging work of his career.

“The first few watercolours I did were just not the quality we needed,” he recalls. “I had to go back and make them better; Scott was very demanding but easy to work with. He had a good eye for detail and he knew how to encourage me to get better. These pieces had to be perfectly accurate historically. I worked from photographs, and Scott did a tremendous amount of research to help me get things right.”

“My technique became much better fairly quickly, and I became much faster as I knew what I needed to do. Watercolour lends itself to very clear detail, and it is faster than oil painting, so that was the medium we chose. As the project went on I got better and better. By the time we were done I could do pieces that were much better than the first ones and I could do them in half the time. It was a tremendous learning experience for me and a very productive time.”

Scott recalls Tino’s work with reverence: “I had the pleasure of working with Tino for a 10-year period, during which he created more than 400 paintings of NHL and NFL uniforms for me. Each and every painting was a magnificent work of art. As an artist, Tino is beyond compare. His attention to detail is remarkable. In many of the paintings, you can almost feel the fabric and embroidery in the jersey. Try as I might to speed up his output, Tino quietly and politely refused to compromise. I will be forever grateful for that!”

The growth Tino experienced during this project is something he tries to reproduce with his students. “Art is often a process of exploring a theme or a medium or concept,” he explains. “I try to inspire students to evolve in a certain direction even though none of us may know what the final result will look like.”

“Very often, I’m just blown away by the thinking behind students’ work. Sometimes their technique lets them down a bit because they don’t have the experience yet, but often the concepts they come up with are strong and very advanced. We try to teach process, technique and the act of creating something out of your imagination. Often what students are able to do gets me fired up and I think, ‘Hey, I have to try that!’ One

SAC Old Boys who Tino taught and are now practicing artists:

Paul Mantrop ‘87
founding member of DRAWNONWARD. This group’s active mandate is to explore Canada’s landscape through painting. Five of its seven members are Andreans.

Chris Roberts ‘87
DRAWNONWARD

Gord Kemp ‘88
DRAWNONWARD

Steve McDonald ‘88
DRAWNONWARD

Rob Saley ‘89
DRAWNONWARD

Alex Boothby ‘92
Visual Effects Artist,
Technicolour

Who are we missing?
Please let us know by
emailing theandrea@sac.on.ca



STEPHEN KIMMERER

Tino and four members of DRAWNONWARD displayed their work at a St. Andrew’s gallery reception last fall: l-r Rob Saley ‘89, Paul Mantrop ‘87, Tino, Steve McDonald ‘88 and Chris Roberts ‘87

of the beauties of art is that once you try something, you want to do more, or you want to do it better next time.”

The fact that Tino would be selected for Ted Staunton’s portrait reflects Ted’s supportive connection with the Art Department since his arrival at St. Andrew’s. “Back in 2000, Ted Staunton sponsored a prize – the Headmaster’s Art Prize,” Tino explains. “At the end of every school year, the school buys a student work. After ten years we have a very nice collection.”

“This prize has become a very important part of my senior course. The boys know it’s coming, and their motivation to improve and make a great job of their submission is very high. As I know from my commission work, having a purpose is very motivating, and for the boys it’s somewhat of a contest among them. For the School to then have such superb student works hanging on its walls as part of the permanent collection is a great thing. Some of them are very, very good and impress me a great deal.”

Tino’s own motivation was high as he worked on the Ted Staunton portrait during the early months of 2009. The presentation at Ted’s retirement gala was a true unveiling: no one had seen the painting until that evening when the curtain was removed, so it was a very dramatic moment. The ovation was long and loud, and it’s hard to imagine that even the Lawren Harris Macdonald portrait could have been better received. “I was very pleased with the end result and very gratified by how it was received,” Tino recalls. “It was an extremely proud moment for me. And I think it was a proud moment for Ted too.”

Tino Paolini lives in Newmarket with his wife Christine. They have three grown children: Claudia, Antony and Michela. ❖