



## School of Urban & Regional Planning

### Letter from the Editors

By Elise Willison and Viki Eric

Greetings Fellow Alumni!

Well, another year has passed, quickly, as usual. A number of interesting articles are to be found in this year's edition of the Newsletter, including a discussion about Ryerson's Environmental & Applied Science Management Program, The Living Wall: an ecological sound barrier solution, a tribute to remember Peter Bennett, class of 1978, and teaching high school students about Urban Planning.

The RPA Committee is well underway on preparations for this year's Spring Reception, being held at the Arcadian Court in Toronto. The impetus, as always, is a fundraiser for the Ryerson Planning Alumni Awards, which are presented to third and fourth year Ryerson planning students. With your continued support we have been able to increase this year's awards.

As a reminder, we encourage you to update your contact information with the Ryerson Alumni Relations office. We all change residences and move around in Planning positions. Please keep this database up to date, as the RPA also uses this database for contacting alumni. Please visit the following link to update your profile. To catch up with fellow alumni online, visit the latter link to sign on to RUonline.

[www.ryerson.ca/alumni/update.html](http://www.ryerson.ca/alumni/update.html)

[www.ryerson.ca/alumni/community](http://www.ryerson.ca/alumni/community)

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See you at the Reception in May!

*About the editors: Elise Willison graduated in 1997 and is working with the Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake.*

*Viki Eric graduated in 2003 and is working with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing.*

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### Letter from the Chair

By Anthony Biglieri

The Ryerson Planning Alumni Committee (RPA) will be holding its **8th Annual Spring Reception on Tuesday, May 30, 2006** at the Arcadian Court located in the heart of the City.

This annual event continues to grow every year with a loyal following of professional planners, engineers, lawyers, alumni and other members of the planning and development industry. In 2005 the event brought together over 350 individuals for an enjoyable evening of networking, socializing, great food and some terrific door prizes. Alumni also had the opportunity to "catch up" with fellow classmates and talk to existing and past professors of the faculty.

RPA has continued their hard work this year to deliver yet another fun filled evening. It will again feature a buffet of superb catered food, a fantastic jazz band that will

entertain, chances to win great door prizes, and we will be continuing with the “charity gambling” - a highlight of last year’s event.

The event attracts overwhelming support from our Corporate and Municipal Sponsors. Last year we reached our goal and we are hoping that this continues again for this year. I cannot begin to stress how important sponsorship is to the event as well as the individual attendance from our profession and related fields. Also, I enjoy taking this opportunity to showcase the future “stars” of our industry by presenting the Ryerson Planning Alumni Awards at the Event. Last year’s recipients were **Chun Chu** and **Reema Khanna**.

Thank you, to all those that attended our event last year. You helped make it a tremendous success. We look forward to seeing you again this year – please bring your friends. Your participation makes this event a huge success for the School of Urban & Regional Planning and Ryerson University.

As Chair of the Ryerson Planning Alumni, I would like take this opportunity to thank **Dr. James Mars** for his support during his term as Director of the School of Urban & Regional Planning. Also, I would like to extend my congratulations to the interim Director of the School of Urban & Regional Planning – **Mr. David Amborski** and to the new President of Ryerson University – **Mr. Sheldon Levy**.

Thank you for your continued support. I hope to see all of you at this year’s Spring Reception. For further information or if you are interested in participating on our Committee, please do not hesitate to contact me at 416-693-9155 or by email at [abiglieri@thebiglierigroup.com](mailto:abiglieri@thebiglierigroup.com).

*Sincerely,*

*Anthony Biglieri, MCIP, RPP  
Chair of the Ryerson Planning Alumni*

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## **News from the School of Planning**

**By David Amborski**

I am pleased to be writing my first Director’s report for the newsletter. I would like to inform the members of the alumni that I have been appointed by Dean Williams as the interim Director for the School for a period of 18 months. My term officially began on January 1<sup>st</sup> after Dr. Jim Mars had completed his five-year term as Director. Jim has now begun his post-administrative leave for the next year.

Having explained the transition, let me begin my report by thanking **Dr. Jim Mars** for his five years of effort and leadership in guiding the School of Urban & Regional Planning. I would like to highlight several of his significant and important achievements during his term as Director. Three of his most important accomplishments were developing and getting approval for the new PLAB and PLAD programs, increasing applications and consequently the quality of students (most importantly into first year), and increasing our graduation rate.

We have now had two years of admissions into the new PLAB and PLAD programs with the first group graduating this spring. You may recall that the PLAB’s are applicants with a bachelor’s degree who complete a two-year program in addition to a summer course to prepare their entry into the program. The PLAD program is supporting the Province’s initiative to develop articulation programs between community colleges and Universities. This two and one half year program plus the summer course admits qualified applicants from the Planning Technology programs from Fanshaw and Mohawk Colleges. There are 41 PLAB’s spread across the last two years of the program and 12 PLAD’s.

After the double cohort (elimination of Grade 13 in the high schools) we have had first year classes numbering in the low 90's and very good quality applicants. The percentage of students graduating on time has been increased which is now an important performance measure for the University and consequently the School's funding.

I would also like to introduce our new tenure stream faculty member, **Dr. Pamela Robinson**, who began teaching in September. Pamela completed her M. PL at Queen's University and her Ph.D. at the University of Toronto. She comes to us from teaching in the Urban and Regional Studies Program at Innis College where she received the CMHC award for teaching excellence in Urban Sustainability in 2004. Her research and consulting interests are in the areas of public consultation, urban sustainability, and pedagogy.

We are also pleased to continue to have two Adjunct Faculty members who provide lecturing and research support to the School. They are **Paul Bedford**, former Chief Planner for the City of Toronto, and **Dr. Mohammed Qadeer**, former Director of the School of Urban and Regional Planning, Queen's University.

As you may have read in the recent Ryerson Alumni Magazine, **Leslie Gash** (SURP '85) is among the latest group of inductees to the Alumni Wall of Achievement. She is being honoured for the work that she is doing as Housing Development Manager for the Toronto Community Housing Corporation in the redevelopment of Regent Park.

During my term as Director, there are two tasks that I will be undertaking that will require input from the alumni. These are the reconstitution of the School's Advisory Committee, and undertaking the School's required periodic Program Review. The Advisory Committee is a group of

professionals that are appointed by the School to meet and give them professional advice regarding the delivery of its professional program. Each school at Ryerson appoints such a committee. The School of Urban & Regional Planning appoints members from various facets of the profession, including members of our alumni.

Every program at Ryerson is required to undertake a periodic Program Review for approval by the Academic Standards Committee of Academic Council. In the process of undertaking this review, the School of Urban & Regional Planning typically consults and obtains feedback from the alumni. We will be seeking alumni input as part of this review.

I look forward to keeping in contact with all members of the alumni and encourage each of you to stay in contact with the School and individual members of the Ryerson School of Urban & Regional Planning Alumni. We look forward to your participation in the life and development of the School by providing guest lectures, employment opportunities for students as well as graduates, participating in studio projects as clients, and providing work placements for our students.

*David Amborski, Professor and Director  
amborski@ryerson.ca*

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## **Environmental Management Education Built on Urban Planning**

**By Amanda Fowler**

I graduated from the Ryerson School of Urban & Regional Planning in June of 2002. In the fall of 2004 I was granted admission to the Environmental Applied Science and Management Program (EnSciMan) in the School of Graduate Studies at Ryerson University. I am amongst approximately 5

urban planning graduates that have entered this program to date. It is a program that has been designed to further and expand the (undergraduate) urban planning education, along with other students with educational backgrounds ranging from geography to the sciences.

Upon entrance into the program there were many challenges mounted before me, including a prerequisite first year university level math course. This seemed very daunting and was in preparation for the even greater challenge of a required biology / chemistry course in the curriculum. During the first weeks of the program and while talking with former urban planning students that had entered the program before me I learned that these courses would enhance nightmares and make me doubt my decision throughout the course of the ensuing semesters. But I was up for the challenge, eager to acquire a science background to enhance my urban planning education.

The challenges presented by this program were by no means unattainable and have allowed me to realize that it is possible to excel in any area if you are willing to do the work.

In many ways the Urban Planning program really prepared me for a lot of the course work and research in the EnSciMan program. The senior studio courses prepare students in contacting and working with professionals and allow for the development of organizational skills in a group setting. Under the guidance of a professor, students learn how to prepare their own research approaches. The program also prepares you to be analytical and to lend recommendations in a constructive and coherent manner. The senior planning project prepared me in compiling my own research and work effectively in an independent setting. Since graduating from the Urban Planning program, the curriculum has changed and now allows an even greater

degree of guidance for students that are hoping to enter graduate studies in the new course format replacing the senior planning project.

The combined education of an urban planning degree with a graduate degree in science and management really prepares you to work in the planning field and understand what each of the different managers in planning bring to the table. It enables you to understand the scientific aspect of how the environment works and how your plans will affect the community, city, town or ecosystem that you are working with and within.

*Amanda Fowler graduated in 2002 and is a graduate student in the EnSciMan program.*

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!**

**Any comments, stories and suggestions are always welcome!**  
**Please contact the editors at**  
**[rpa@ryerson.ca](mailto:rpa@ryerson.ca)**

**RYERSON PLANNING ALUMNI COMMITTEE**

Anthony Biglieri, RPA Chair,  
The Biglieri Group, 1983

David Amborski, Ryerson SURP  
Julie Brown, Ryerson University Advancement  
Adrienne Di Cresce, Ryerson Alumni Relations  
Viki Eric, MMAH, 2003  
Amanda Fowler, Ryerson EnSciMan, 2002  
Peter Jakovcic, Mobius Corp., 1998  
Sidonia Loiacono, University of Windsor, 2001  
Don Manlapaz, Giffels Design-Build, 2000  
Peter Nikolakakos, Wood Bull, 1998  
Tom Rees, The Biglieri Group, 2002  
Maurizio Rogato, Solmar Development Corp, 2002  
Leona Savoie, The Daniels Group, 1998  
Amy Shepherd, IBI Group, 1998  
Paula Tenuta, GTHBA, 1998  
Elise Willison, Niagara-On-The-Lake, 1997

## The Living Wall – An Ecological Sound Barrier Solution (Walls Can't Speak But They Live)

By Maurizio Rogato

Willows Walk (Phase 2) is a typical quality development by Solmar Development Corp. made up of street townhouses and located within the growing Town of Whitby. Typical being the operative word, in the sense that this development does not differ from many other residential developments concentrated throughout the Greater Toronto Area. That is, until **The Living Wall (An Ecological Sound Barrier Solution Inc.)** was utilized on site as a noise barrier to separate the new subdivision and two arterial roads.



**The Living Wall, after installation**

Source: [www.thelivingwall.net](http://www.thelivingwall.net)

The Living Wall is exactly that...a living wall made up of willow shrub supported by a standard wooden frame and a simple watering system that once assembled, actually absorbs noise unlike conventional concrete noise barriers that simply deflect noise and are often seen as an eye sore. Even better, The Living Wall is GREEN – it vegetates quickly providing an almost instant landscape, which is graffiti proof and environmentally friendly. The result is a

visually attractive, landscaped wall that provides residents with a noise controlled environment.



**The Living Wall, in full bloom**

Source: [www.thelivingwall.net](http://www.thelivingwall.net)

The Living Wall, in partnership with Mother Nature, provides for superior sound absorption, filtrates pollutants, establishes quickly and benefits the ecology by absorbing large quantities of carbonic gases (CO<sub>2</sub>).

The Living Wall is also available in a screen fence application – for further information please visit [www.thelivingwall.net](http://www.thelivingwall.net).

With such recognizable advantages and Ontario's first residential noise wall project in the Town of Whitby under its belt, The Living Wall is poised in becoming a leader of the industry that provides unique noise ecological sound control solutions in a natural way!

*Maurizio Rogato graduated in 2002 and is working with Solmar Development Corp.*

**8<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SPRING RECEPTION**  
**Tuesday, May 30, 2006**  
**Arcadian Court**

**Hosted by the Ryerson Planning  
Alumni Committee**

## A Tribute to Peter Granville Leigh Bennett 1954 - 2005

By Shahan Deirmenjian



In May 2005, the planning profession lost a leader in planning research: Peter Granville Leigh Bennett. A graduate of the class of '78, Peter's career had

its roots in the early days of Ryerson's School of Planning.

From his early years, Peter was dedicated to the School of Urban & Regional Planning and to the planning profession in general, representing Ryerson at the founding CAPS conference. As a student, Peter excelled in the application of research methods to planning issues, and recognized early on, the importance and value of considering "social indicators" in planning projects that involved building and creating liveable communities. The consummate professional, he was one of the first to sign-up as a student member of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, (OPPI), and soon became Ryerson's representative sitting on OPPI's board, bringing students' concerns and fresh ideas to the association.

Within days of graduating with honours, Peter found himself working for the City of Winnipeg Planning Department as a planner. His commitment to research and a love for emerging information technologies soon diverted his focus to an area of planning that is vital to the fundamentals of good planning - good research. Peter's dedication to the application of research methods to planning issues led to an involvement in Geographic Information Systems and eventually to the

position of Manager of Information Technology for the City of Winnipeg.

In recent years, as President of the MISA Prairie Chapter, Peter was a leading force in the creation of a nation-wide Municipal Information Systems Association (MISA / ASIM Canada became a reality in May 2005), as well as being active in the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA). Peter passed away just days before the creation of this new national organization. In recognition of his contributions one of the first actions by the new executive was to create an annual award in Peter's name recognizing outstanding contributions to the development of municipal e-government. The inaugural award was bestowed on Peter posthumously. His belief in working for the public good extended into his private life. He was a volunteer in the Big Brothers organization and an active member of the Messiah Lutheran Church in Winnipeg.

In his honour, a group of his alumni friends, along with Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning, established an annual scholarship award in Peter's name - The Peter Bennett Award for excellence in the application of research methods to Urban and Regional Planning, and for dedicated community service. This award was developed in order to keep Peter's spirit and drive alive through students who possess the same enthusiasm. This scholarship will be awarded to third and fourth year students who share Peter's vision and passion. A brochure outlining the details of the Peter Bennett Award will be made available by Ryerson's Alumni office and distributed to Planning alumni in the near future.

In recognition of Peter's contribution to the planning profession, the City of Winnipeg's Information Technology Department has organized the First Annual Peter Bennett Memorial Golf Tournament, a fundraiser, which will be held in Winnipeg, details will

follow. Part of the monies raised by the City of Winnipeg will be earmarked for Ryerson's Peter Bennett Award. It would be a tremendous show of support on the part of the Planning Alumni who find themselves in the vicinity of Winnipeg to take part in this Tournament. Already there is talk that a foursome from the Class of '78 from Toronto may surprise Peter's family by participating in the tournament.

Peter leaves behind his wife Renate and two children, Stephen and Kaitlyn.

*Shahan Deirmenjian graduated in 1978 and is working with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing.*

**Visit the RPA website**  
**[www.ryerson.ca/surp/rpa](http://www.ryerson.ca/surp/rpa)**

## **Planning for the Future**

**By Syd Trefiak**

I was photocopying some work for my grade nine class the other day, when I started up a discussion with a colleague of mine. We started talking about how we got into the teaching profession. This is always an interesting topic because very few people know that they are going to be a teacher when they enter University. I for one didn't. Coming from a teaching family, I had strong feelings towards avoiding that line of work at all costs. Through a series of events, and a little disillusionment with the Planning profession, I found myself standing in front of a group of teenagers trying to cram a little land use planning into their heads.

This got me thinking. I am the only Geography teacher I know that has moved into the teaching field from a planning background. I'm sure there are more out there, but it was never really presented to me as an option in University. I think this is a real shame, and as a profession, planning is missing the boat on this one.

If you think back to your high school days, what classes do you remember, and did any of your teachers make such an impression on you that you decided to pursue the topic they taught? I see this happening every day. Personally, I've had three of my students pursue planning in University. I know this has had at least a little to do with the fact that I was passionate about the topic, and helped lead them towards the profession.

Now, there are many great Geography teachers out there, but most come from a physical background. There is a major void in the social Geography curriculum, and I believe it stems from the lack of representation from our industry. As a department in a University, you are competing with many other fields for new students. Most of these fields have a lot of representation among teachers in schools. In my first year at Ryerson, there were many people who selected planning because "It sounded cool" or were pushed into the field because the guidance counsellor didn't know what else to do with someone who liked Geography.

I guess what I'm getting at here is, that if you want to continue to have a strong batch of 1<sup>st</sup> years coming into the planning program, it might be worth it for our profession to spend at least a little time focusing on High School programs. It is also important to let graduates know that teaching is an option for them. A few more good teachers with a planning background will pay off for our profession as a whole! A little knowledge goes a long way.

"Kids are our future." This is an often used phrase, especially where I work. But they are definitely the future of the Planning profession.

*Syd Trefiak graduated in 2000 and is working with Oshawa Central Collegiate.*

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*The 2005 RPA Committee would like to Thank You for your support*

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