



Retirees Association of Mohawk College NEWSLETTER Spring, 2009

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Retirees Association of Mohawk College will be held at Michelangelo's Banquet Centre on **Tuesday, June 9, 2009**. Please make note of the change of date which allowed us to have as our guest speaker, the new President of Mohawk College, Rob MacIsaac.

Cash bar will open at 11:30 am and guests will be welcomed by a complimentary punch fountain.

The meal will consist of assorted rolls, house salad,



chicken supreme, oven-roasted potatoes, and a seasonal vegetable medley followed by a fruit platter with pastries and tea or coffee.

Lunch will be followed by the guest speaker. The afternoon will wind up with a short general meeting.

The price for the event is a modest \$20 per member and one significant other, and \$25 for all other guests.

Please see the enclosed flyer for more information and a registration form.

Hurry Hurry Hurry!

There are still a few tickets left for what promises to be a grand hoedown of a day at Drayton on May 20th. The **Drayton Theatre** presents *Country Legends* a salute to some of the greatest stars of country music.

Last year's salute to Rock and Roll was a smash hit enjoyed by all and this one is sure to be even better!

We start the day with lunch at **The Crossroads** - which is reason enough to go!

See the enclosed flyer for more details. But don't delay, there are only a few tickets available.

Retirees Association of Mohawk College Newsletter

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Let's Do Lunch

By
Brian Welsh

On an errand in Kitchen-er recently we decided to have lunch at a restaurant that we had passed during previous visits, the **Boa Nova Rodizio Grill House**, 6 Charles Street W (at the corner of Queen Street). They specialize in Grilled meats as the name implies. We could have ordered the medley of grilled meats offered at \$18 per person but we were looking for something lighter for lunch. We chose instead to have the buffet at \$12.50. We both ordered *Sagres*, a Portuguese beer. The buffet was stocked with mainly cheap pasta salads of one sort and another, a few hot vegetable dishes and only one meat dish – a very pedestrian and tasteless stew. The service was adequate but unfortunately we were seated up two steps and about as far from the buffet as it was possible to get in the rather large room. Lunch with beer, tax and tip was \$50.

We had often seen advertisements for **Logans Restaurant** 224 Ottawa St N. One wintry day we decided to try it. It is a nicely furnished mid-

scale eatery of moderate size specializing in European continental cuisine. Mary and I both ordered the wheat beer that they had on tap and we both chose the mushroom soup and the special of the day a pork schnitzel with red cabbage and mashed potatoes. The wheat beer was light and refreshing: the soup was goodly in portion with plenty of mushrooms in a delicious buttery broth. The schnitzel was very good, the mashed potatoes creamy and the red cabbage adequate. The service was prompt and friendly. I succumbed to the desert menu and ordered baklava -- very good. Lunch with beer, tax and tip was \$42.

The **Tapestry Bistro** is located at 27 Dundurn St. North in what was in a former incarnation a hydro-electric substation.. Very few improvements have been made to the building's interior and its original use is very evident; the exposed brick and concrete result in very lively acoustics. They try to serve locally grown or raised food as much as is possible. Mary and I lunched there one Friday. We started with beer as usual, Mary with a half pint of lager and I a pint of bitter. We both ordered the day's soup -- a delicious bean and bacon soup served in ramekin like pottery bowls. The menu for mains was somewhat limited. We decided to share the two that appealed to us – the rosemary chicken with sun dried tomatoes on *ciabetta* bread and the curried turkey sandwich on nann bread. Both were very good. The service was friendly if

somewhat slow – a large group had arrived shortly before us. Lunch with beer, tax and tip was \$56.

Marciano's Pasta Café is located in the basement at 5 Mill St S in Waterdown. The entrance is off the parking lot on Dundas St . It is pleasantly decorated in a somewhat rustic manner and as the name implies it specializes in pasta dishes and other Italian fare. We started lunch with a glass of Nickel Brook lager. We both ordered from the pasta section of the menu – the other sections were devoted to appetizers, veal and chicken. Mary ordered spaghetti and meat balls and I, Penne *Italiano* – rigatoni with hot Italian sausage, and green and red peppers. The pastas were preceded by a fresh green salad with, what else, Italian dressing. The salads were fresh and tasty. Mary found the spaghetti and meat balls to her liking and I found the Penne *Italiano* to be also delicious. Lunch with beer, tax and tip was \$51.

In Memoriam

GRAY, Colin Richardson
Suddenly at home on March
13, 2009, in his 71st year.
Colin was a retired em-
ployee of Mohawk
College.

The More Things Change ...

Back in my youth, a few years ago (Okay, about half a century ago – but who's counting), it seemed that everything was relatively stable. Okay, Studebaker was wobbling and Packard and Hudson had been done in, but, the big three, at least, seemed solid as Prudential's Rock of Gibraltar. The Rock's still here (No, not the wrestler/Disney movie star, the Gibraltar thing) but I'm not so sure about Prudential[*editor's note: Yes, it's still around - just keeping a lower profile*]. But back then we had everyday brand names like RCA Victor, G.E. And Westinghouse. The brand name "RCA" is still around, but the company? And G.E. these days seems to be primarily loaning out money at exorbitant interest rates. I have no idea if Westinghouse is still around (other than, I think, as WABCO – Westinghouse Air Brake Company).

My sweetest Christmas memory was when my parents gave me an 8 transistor RCA radio. It was a perfectly sized rectangular beauty that managed to pull in CHUM and OC the Busy Bee as well as occasionally WWVA (Wheeling West Virginia) and Cleveland Indians baseball games. I loved that radio and it broke my heart when it was accidentally damaged when I left it hanging on an insecure beam in the barn. The beautiful plastic case was

cracked, but, fortunately, the radio itself still worked.

Today, I have a notebook computer with millions of transistors in each of its two cores which, if adjusted for inflation, probably cost about as much as that radio. The notebook is bigger and heavier, but not by that much. Now I can listen to radio via the Internet – but it just isn't the same.

Today the big three are struggling. Can you imagine a U.S.A. Without Chevrolet? Dinah will turn over in her grave. And what will a future Canadian youth think when he hears "An oldie but a goldie" Alan Jackson hit about having to have a Mercury? Will he be thinking about the planet or the heavy metal? And what would America (or Canada) be without the go-anywhere do-anything Jeep? It's impossible to believe that the little 4x4 that was the backbone of World War II and the Korean conflict and that has survived numerous changes in ownership from Willys-Overland, AMC, Renault, Chrysler, Daimler-Chrysler and Chrysler again might ever stop going where "no man has gone before" at least on four wheels.

But times change. Fortunately, that doesn't necessarily mean that the past is forgotten. The symbol of the Pony Express lives on, even though the Pony Express itself only delivered the mail for about a year and a half. Today the tradition of getting

Spinning the Web (and other tales)

By
Fred Oldfield

important documents to their destination in a timely fashion lives on in FedEx and other companies like it.

Do you remember *Death Valley Days*? It was first a radio program and then a TV show from about 1952 to 1975. It was sponsored by "20 Mule Team Borax". The borax was mined in Death Valley for several years, but the 20 mule team (actually I believe it consisted of 18 mules and two horses – the horses were used to help keep the wagons on the twisting mountain trails because they were heavier than the mules) actually only delivered the borax for six years (about a quarter as long as the TV show was aired). The wagons, however, were so well constructed (each weighed over 7,800 pounds) that none of them ever broke down on the trail and the original wagons are still on display and appear ready to resume their travails at a moment's notice.

Merle Travis lamented about a Ford and Chevy not lasting ten years like they should, but today, the question is will Ford and Chevy survive at all?



**The
Farming Life**
By
Geoff Brooker

SINGED

We love living in the country. We have the space and the freedom to do pretty well what we want, including wandering around the house with very little on or feeding the birds in our pajamas. That's not to say that there aren't harrowing moments, moments that have nothing to do with the livestock, like the time I hit an impermeable snow drift at the end of our road and had to hike over a mile in office job clothing. It was during a February blizzard and I was lucky that the snow plough pulled the car out before finishing his ploughing job. I slid home and the snow returned socking us in for a few more days. The kids loved it. A "snow day" is a highlight in the school year, but it was a major inconvenience for their city-bound dad. Fortunately my boss was accustomed to my 'unusual' scheduling.

Not all the excitement happens in the winter. Some days start off peacefully

and end differently. I had heard that one way to get rid of thistles and other pastoral undesirables was to burn them off. If conditions were right and everything was green and lush it was an easy matter to scorch the prickly devils. We had been dragging out trees from the woods and there was a lot of slash-twigs and small branches that needed to be disposed of. What better way to rid ourselves of the cuttings than to pile and burn on a green pasture in early Spring before the sheep had been released from barn confinement. What's more we could place the branches over the area with the most pricklies and kill two birds with one stone. The kids were away and Lynda and I planned the expedition carefully. We armed ourselves with shovels and pails of water; to be used only in case of emergency and, of course, matches. The air was balmy and clear when we held a lit match to the dry leaves under some twigs and after several tries, for it was early spring and everything was damp, we had lift off. It required the two of us constant effort to keep the fire alive; gently feeding small dry sticks into the flames and, even so, it was a struggle to keep it going. How would we ever burn the slash let alone the thistles and we had created such a lovely pile of brush; any

Britisher would have felt compelled to toss Guy Fawkes on to the pile. The wood was stubbornly resistant but we began to notice that some of the nearby Scotch thistles and dried grass from the previous year was first smoldering, then flaming merrily.

The slight breeze that had sprung up from the east was giving a shot of oxygen to the embers. After a few smiling minutes we noticed that the dried grass acted as a conduit under the new green shoots and that little fires were popping up here and there. We were going to hasten the natural biodegrading process of the old pasture grass and give the nutritional content of the soil a much needed boost. I decided that I should step back from the centre of our blaze and study the situation. About the same time Lynda called from fifty feet away that maybe I should go over and give her a little hand to make sure the fire was heading in the desired direction. I was about to join her when I noticed that it was getting hard to see where I was as our increasing smoke screen was heading in my direction but I could see that my section needed a "little guidance".

The slight breeze became quite a strong easterly one and I moved over to where L.B. was, as the old pump house, a left over from a

barn long since gone, was on the edge of her blaze. The two of us started pounding and I used up my emergency pails of water but we did manage to steer the creeping flames from the old wooden building. I then ran back to the barn, some one hundred feet away, and replenished my pails. The pails were considerably heavier as I ran back. As I left the barn I could see "Pinny" (a name left over from childhood) pounding away in "my" section. The wind had picked up even more so and, while the billowing smoke obscured the view to a degree, it became frighteningly obvious that the grass fire was really starting to roll and in the direction of our new barn. The only good news was that I only had to rush back seventy-five feet.

We were both pounding with all of our energies, the water theory since gone and the shovels were working, but as we controlled one patch so the gusting wind would stimulate a bursting pocket somewhere else. We were working flat out and sweat was beating off our faces and running down our backs. The air was of very poor quality by that time on our "balmy spring day" and we were staring to tire. Within five minutes, in spite of our increasing toil, the fire was creeping towards the barn again. The remaining dis-

tance by that time was about thirty feet and our "creeping" fire was trotting if not galloping; just the opposite to our sagging physical state.

The idea of telephoning our volunteer fire department was considered during all of this melee, but by the time they would be arriving it looked as though it would be too late. Another reality hit us simultaneously, that being we were almost containing the fire, but if one of us should leave to make a call the fire would be out of control. The only thing to do was to work harder and to pray for a twentieth century miracle. I have never worked so hard in all my life and Pinny earned my enduring admiration by the way she persevered, smacking her shovel down upon clumps without respite. Nevertheless we were really tiring after about fifteen minutes of mauling when we noticed a change in the wind.

We scarcely could believe our good fortune when the gusting easterly stuttered to a sighing stop then started blowing steadily from the west. The breeze was blowing away from the barn and the fire was being forced back over the same patch; the blackened patch where most of the old grass had already been burned. Incredibly after another ten minutes of modest shovel

swatting the fire was not only under control but practically extinguished.

The barn, the pump house, and ourselves, were still standing. The field had to be monitored for another six hours for the sake of safety but there was again "peace in the valley".

Surprisingly, and unknown to us, a neighbour had tried the same routine and on the same day. Even with his experiences and with the aid of firemen most of his hay crop took a beating; we were incredibly fortunate. By dusk there was no smoke and everything was back as it was including the pile of slash which stood mocking us.

The most important thing that parents can teach their children is how to get along without them.

-Frank A. Clark

In a dream you are never eighty.

-Anne Sexton

Old age is an incurable disease.

-Seneca

Insanity is hereditary: you can get it from your children.

-Sam Levinson

Fun is like life insurance: the older you get, the more it costs.

-Frank McKinney Hubbard



Recent Events

Le Chinois

A somewhat smaller group than last year congregated at *Le Chinois* early in February for what has become a traditional Mohawk College Retirees mid-winter outing. Postponed a week once again due to inclement weather, spirits were nonetheless high and appetites voracious when the first appetizer at last appeared.

Good food and good conversation was the focal point and I have no doubt that all who attended left with full bellies and high spirits. Bravo to Marie Yaki-moff for once again arranging this pleasant evening.

Stage West

The musical play was called *Married Alive*. It was, perhaps, not one of the better presentations from **Stage West**, but I suspect that many of the attendees relived some of their own most bittersweet moments through the on-stage saga of marriage seen through the eyes of two couples: one, young and starry eyed, the other older, wiser and much more cynical.

The theme of the piece was the enduring quality of love. Perhaps it is just as well that Eng-

lish only has a single word - love - to cover a host of nuances. From the burning passion of youth through to the solid, comfortable companionship of maturity, love changes - and yet endures.

As always, the buffet at **Stage West** was excellent. This year we sat on the main floor [*editor's note: on seats, not on the floor*] which was a pleasant change from our more usual position on the balcony. We were situated quite close to the food, but we did have to contend with everyone else in the audience who were also eager to overindulge.

The booths were quite comfortable, but, unfortunately, those who sat at the outer edge not only had to stand up to allow their partners access to more food, but also had to twist in their seats to see the play.

But these small complaints aside, it was again an excellent outing. It was a pity, however, that more members could not have joined us. The bus still had plenty of room.

Our thanks to Donna Dunlop and Brad Berry for arranging this excellent day.

May 20th: "Country Legends" at Drayton Theatre with lunch at the Crossroads. A salute to the country music pioneers.

June 9th: Annual General Meeting at Michelangelo's

July 9th: "Camelot" at Huron County Playhouse, Grand Bend with lunch at Aunt Gussie's

September 30th: "The Devil's Disciple" at the Shaw Festival with lunch at Betty's

October 21st: "Teatro Splendido" at Carmen's

December 3rd: Once again by popular demand . . .

CHRISTMAS IN MENNONITE COUNTRY

As we did two years ago, we will combine some Christmas shopping in St. Jacobs with a nice lunch at the "Stone Crock" restaurant, followed by "2 Pianos 4 Hands" at the intimate Schoolhouse Theatre (only about one block from the restaurant).

"2 Pianos 4 Hands" is the riotous tale of Richard and Ted, two Canadian boys who share the same unorthodox goal, concert pianist stardom. Inspired equally by the wizardry of Bach and Beethoven, to rock'n roll legends like Jerry Lee Lewis, the



Future Events

two determined upstarts forge ahead with their dream - despite the seemingly insurmountable stumbling blocks of pushy parents, eccentric teachers and stage fright.

Check flyers for more details.

Look for flyers with all the information in this and future newsletters.