

971 RCAF AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING

Air Force Association Newsletter September 2008



Skyhook JHL-40. See page 4

Social Calendar

- Jul 01 30 of us enjoyed Regular Force hospitality at the annual Dominion Day (Canada Day) festivities at the El Pomar Center. Earl Charters of the Okanagan tribe performed one of the best hoop dances I have seen.
- Jul 19 41 of us returned to the Rallis wonderland for a great evening. Peter did all the cooking, a massive job, while Nancy's landscaping continues to amaze and delight. Peter and Nancy cheerfully survived a camping-out holiday in their camper in the driveway while their house underwent extensive repairs from water damage when a plastic refrigerator water line broke. Not content with the perfect party, Nancy and Peter sent each of us, via e-mail, copies of 35 photos taken by Nancy during the evening.
- Aug 02 43 of us had as great time at the Champion's annual Wing party. Charlene was again the spark plug of providing an excellent array of eatables, featuring buffalo-burgers. That old fighter pilot, Bill, a survivor of 11 heart by-passes, continues as an excellent host and an example to all of us. Shortly after the party, Charlene broke a bone in her foot which is now in a cast.
- Sep 14 Battle of Britain: 1400-1700 at The Retired Enlisted Association on Emory Circle. Dress will be "Business Casual" for the masses and Wing regalia (blazers, grey slacks, medals) for participants.
- Oct 25 1600 at Carol and Art Nielsen's, 730 Wuthering Heights 80921. Oktoberfest theme.

Our thanks to Shirley Wilson for the Newfoundland Screech she donated to the Wing in memory of Hal. All local 971 Wing members names were entered in to a random drawing and Miles and Mary McMillan were the lucky winners and will be presented the bottle at the next fall RCAF event. Thank-you Shirley and Congratulations Miles and Mary.

Regular Force Liaison Officer: We welcome Mathieu and Kathleen Dubois as our new contacts. Matt, an ardent history buff, eagerly sought the position on the return to Canada of the previous incumbent.

Comments from your "Pres": It has been a good and active summer for the Wing. Social gatherings at Berwicks, Rallis' and Champions once again gave us the opportunity to meet and exchange the usual exaggerations and tall tales. Other highlights included the attendance, with two tables full of members, at the 50th Anniversary of NORAD celebration as well as our participation at the annual Canada Day ceremonies with the active members of the Canadian Forces at El Pomar.

On 14 September 2008 we'll gather to commemorate the Battle of Britain. I would like to remind you this is our signature event! Attendance, of course, is not compulsory, but we are the hosts and your presence will contribute immensely to its success. Details, being finalized as we go to press, will be communicated by e-mail, the web and telephone. Our next gathering, slated for October, will include in its agenda an election of officers. If you are interested in volunteering, please let your current exec know; thus far the following position(s) will be available to be filled: President and Vice President.

The Editor's Corner

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN, 1940

Of all of the aerial battles that have been fought since the formation of the Royal Flying Corps in May 1912, our Wing has selected the Battle of Britain as the crucial one to remember and commemorate each 15 September which was its climax in 1940. Having produced September newsletters, now for 23 years, that included comments on 3 successful invasions of Britain: Celtic, Roman, and Norman, plus 3 unsuccessful ones: Spanish, French, and German, there is bound to be repetition as I dare to comment again. Yes, we can justifiably bask in Churchill's words: *Never in the history of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few*. We also need to heed the critics who argue it was the Royal Navy that was the main obstacle to an invasion and that the threats of one were just huge bluffs because Hitler never intended an actual land invasion as he needed his manpower and resources for his *drang nach osten* obsession. However, had the Luftwaffe been able to establish and maintain air superiority over the UK, no invasion would have been needed. The immense buildup of Commonwealth, Polish, Free French, and US forces in the UK would not have been possible; the factories that turned out the 4-engined bombers that played such a decisive role would have been flattened; British harbours would be the graveyards of the ships needed to sustain the country.

While the UK did not stand alone, for the Battle of Britain it provided 79% (1,878) of the pilots who flew the Hurricanes, Spitfires, Defiants, Blenheims, and Beaufighters and almost 100% of the ground crew. Other pilots were from: Poland 141, Canada 88, Czechoslovakia 88, New Zealand 73, Belgium 26, Australia 21, S. Africa 21, Ireland 8, US 7, Rhodesia 2, Palestine 1. Of the 446 killed, 348 were British, 29 Polish, 20 Canadians.

Before I leave, let me explode a myth: "Chamberlain the Appeaser". With an electorate still traumatized by the bloody losses of WW1, Chamberlain had to tread cautiously. He estimated that things would come to a head in 1939-40 and re-armed accordingly. Munich came in 1938. He had no recourse but to capitulate. However, by 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland, Spitfires were coming off the line at the rate of 100 per month. He had some muscle. He went to war.

DURING THE NEXT REVOLUTION

We can keep heads from rolling only if we take preventive steps now. We need to pay heed to the long and bloody saga of the masses turning on the wealthy few. Remember the Roman Plebeians who spent 200 years (5th to 3rd century BC) wresting rights from the Patricians relatively peacefully until compromise failed and civil wars destroyed the Roman Republic? The 1358 Jacquerie revolt in France and the Wat Tyler 1381 march on London that tried, but failed, to weaken entrenched powers? And the French 1789 and the Russian 1917 revolutions that did?

Today we have the intolerable stranglehold of a tiny world elite who have cornered wealth and power well beyond what is safe for the planet. In the US alone, the richest 1% are worth \$16.8 trillion which is \$2 trillion above what the bottom 90% own. Then, there is the mortgage fiasco that less greedy people should have recognized and forestalled. While the middle class is growing rapidly in places like India and China, in others it is descending into poverty.

But, the most worrisome aspects are the numerous migrations of billions of people from low-lying coastal areas and from areas condemned to drought that will be inevitable with global warming or climate change whatever you call it.

UNLEARNED LESSONS OF HISTORY

What an amazing intellect we have. Pity we use so little of it. Alone among species, we can record, for the benefit of future generations, all the knowledge we have amassed. It is stored somewhere and we may even get around to looking at it - someday. We all remember that absolute power corrupts absolutely. But, on becoming a super power, those in charge had grown arrogant, believing they could go it alone and could treat allies with disdain and even impose strong sanctions using the argument "if you are not with us you are against us". Yes, it was a long way to send a fleet and an army but shock and awe tactics should be enough to subdue a foe whose weapons of mass destruction were worrisome. Poor planning soon became evident as the expedition bogged down and as former allies deserted, many to aid the foe.

As losses mounted, Athenian general Nicias realized that the subjugation of Sicily was beyond his power and that he would have to end his siege of Syracuse. As he was embarking his troops, an eclipse of the full moon occurred. This, of course, was a warning from the gods to wait thrice nine days before making such an important decision. This delay permitted the Spartan general, Gylippus, to block the harbour and destroy the entire Athenian expeditionary force. It was the end of Athens as a super power. Sparta filled the vacuum, followed by Rome, followed by - well, you know the story.

Some 47 years earlier, in 478 BC, Anaxagoras (500-423 BC), from Clazmenae, Ionia, but working in Athens, used the scientific method to predict eclipses. He argued "To understand what you cannot see, observe carefully what you can see. Forget gods and superstition". Human mindsets are difficult to change. Anaxagoras, was sentenced to death for impiety for teaching that the sun and moon were not gods but physical entities and that everything contained a part of everything else. Pericles helped him escape to Lampsecus. While he became a hero in Ionia, Athens had become too wealthy and self-satisfied to tolerate radical views.

THE ATTACK OF THE KILLER GOLF CART by Carl Mattson:

This happened in Lake Tamarisk where Donna and I own a mobile home and spend most of the winter. I had bought and renovated a second-hand 98 E-Z GO electric golf cart, little knowing that, under the chrome and shiny new paint, lay a rabid killer attack machine patiently waiting to take revenge on some poor human for 10 years of use and abuse.

On 25 March 08 it was parked beside the house behind my other golf cart when I decided to adjust the parking brake to prevent the cart starting with a jerk. Thinking the key was off I stretched out between the carts to get at the adjusting mechanism. There was a rod in my way which I tried to move to see around it. All hell broke loose as the rod was a link between the go pedal and the motor. The cart attacked, pushing me into the other cart and both of us into the mobile home skirting. Thankfully the cart stopped after riding up on the other cart.

I climbed out from under the wreckage, dazed, bruised, cut, and bleeding. Fortunately only the mobile home deck and I were damaged. My brother drove me to the JFK Memorial Hospital in Indio, 50 miles away. I was the only English-speaking person there and my Spanish is limited to Margarita, Corona, and Burrito. Some 23 stitches and \$2,200 later my brother drove me home. The stitches in my face and neck joined all the others I had from years of playing hockey when I used my face to stop pucks and sticks. The six stitches in my hand, however, ruined my already-poor golf score.

My warning: never trust any old or new inert, docile-looking, brainless piece of equipment because there is a good chance it is a killer just waiting for a chance at revenge.

PAVILLION LAKE, ASTRONAUTS, and MARS: Ex-astronauts Mike Cernhardt and Dave Williams (now on McMaster's medical faculty), UBC, Simon Fraser, and McMaster are now using one-man submersibles to study cauliflower-like, metre-high corals teeming with bacteria in Pavilion Lake, north of Vancouver. The aim is to determine if these limestone corals are built by bacteria because finding such corals on Mars would indicate that bacteria once inhabited Mars.

AND, MORE MISSING LINKS: A University of Calgary team, that offered to study a fossil that had languished in the Smithsonian after its 1995 discovery in Texas, has shown, after years of painstaking work of exposing and analysing, that it is the common ancestor of hopping frogs and walking salamanders and lived some 275 million years ago (mya). It is 12 cms long, and named *Gerobatrachus hottoni* for Nicholas Hotton (died 1997) of the Smithsonian who found it. Even older, at 375 mya, is the oldest-known vertebrate birth - Named *Materpiscis attenboroughi* for Sir David Attenborough who studied the site in NW Australia. It

is the fossilized remains of mother and child with the umbilical cord still attached.

REGULAR FORCE NEWS: Continuing to receive the monthly *Canadian Community News*, this scribe was totally unaware that, since going to the new, glitzy, and expensive format, distribution to this Wing was reduced to the president and newsletter editor (I keep complaining no one tells me anything). Discovering this by accident, I will try to extract items of interest to pass on to the Wing:

(1) 41 couples have been transferred this summer, including our liaison officer Captain Richard Lebreux. David and Cynthia Greenwood, who enhanced so many of our social functions, are off to Rome, Italy, where he will be attending the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas for a 2-year Master of Theology program with specialization in interfaith studies and ecumenism.

(2) A time capsule was implanted in a Cheyenne Mountain rock to be opened in 2033, NORAD's 75th anniversary.

(3) An article by Gabriel Vignola described a week in the poverty-stricken villages of the Dominican Republic, teaching in small, but relatively clean, schools a few words of English to eager students who lived in tiny homes of scrounged wood and tin, surrounded by trash and pollution with scarce and polluted drinking water, and getting by on one meal per day. Yet people would emerge from these hovels smartly dressed - a phenomenon also noticed in other poor areas in Spain, Yugoslavia, and the Arctic.

PAT and WENDY DENNIS

Pat spent 2 weeks in Europe with a group of six ex-military touring WWI and WWII battlefields in northwest Europe, including Adegem (the Scheldt), Dieppe, Passchendaele, Somme, Vimy, Ypres, and the Reichswald War Cemetery where more Canadians are buried than any other place in the world. He will be summarizing this in an *Esprit de Corps* article. He will also be teaching a military course at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University. Wendy remains in her element at the Sheridan Nursery in Kitchener.

ALERT AND BILL CARR: (retired LGen and ex NORAD). David Greenwood's Alert article in the July newsletter brought back many memories for Bill Carr who was instrumental in the formation and maintenance of Alert over many years. He reminds us that such sites were, in our day, males only. In fact the sign at Alert read "NONOOKIE HOTEL". Some naive visitors actually thought that was an Inuit word.

Bill lost his wife of 60 years, Elaine, to inoperable cancer, found just 2 months before death on 02 June.

THE OLDEST KNOWN CITY IN AMERICA IS CARAL, in the Supe River valley of Peru, 200 km north of Lima. Recently found and excavated, it was built 5,000 years ago based on irrigation as were the first civilizations of Sumer on the Tigris and Euphrates, of Egypt on the Nile, of Pakistani on the Indus, and of China on the Hwang Ho. Unlike all the others where warfare was frequent, if not constant, Caral had no fortifications or weapons. It had a population of about 3,000 and 19 nearby sites made for a total of about 20,000. Irrigation provided food surpluses that were traded. Cotton fish nets were made and traded along the Pacific coast. 32 flutes and 37 cornets, made of bone, have been found. Caral's highest pyramid was 60 feet tall. There was a large amphitheatre and numerous houses. It prospered for a thousand years without ever needing a veterans' day in the military sense.

SKYHOOK JHL-40: Skyhook International of Calgary has contracted with Boeing to build its new Jess Heavy Lift rotorcraft at the Ridley Park, Pennsylvania, plant.. The neutrally-buoyant, helium-filled, blimp has four rotors that can lift a 40-ton sling load, and transport it 200 miles. The first models will be used in Northern Canada but Skyhook plans to market it worldwide. It is named after Pete Jess, Skyhook president.

BOMBARDIER'S NEW C-SERIES was announced at the Farnborough Air Show, 13 July 2008. This new regional jet will emit 20% less CO₂, 30% less NO_x, be 4 times quieter, and 20% more fuel efficient. The wings will be built at its Belfast facility, the fuselage and cockpit in Saint-Laurent, and final assembly in Mirabel. Lufthansa has signed on for 60 at \$46.7 million each. Deliveries will start in 2013.

FEMALE SUBMISSIVENESS IS NOT FRENCH: There is widespread applause, including from Muslim imams, for the denying of French citizenship to a woman completely veiled except for an eye slit. A Moroccan, she was married by a French citizen of the Islamic Salafist faith who brought her to Paris where she had 3 children by him. She appealed to the high court after her application for citizenship was denied in 2005. This ruling has now been upheld by the Council of State on the grounds that she allows herself to be dominated by her husband and by his male relatives who insist on her wearing the niqab, a coercive means to oppress women. Vive la femme libre!

THE DOOR IS OPEN for Stephen Hawking to join Neil Turok, famed Cambridge mathematical physicist who has joined the Perimeter Institute in Waterloo, Ontario. The UK has cut back on funding which has encouraged a brain drain to Waterloo where \$600 million is available for research. Stephen will visit Neil this year but claims for only a week. Hundreds of world scientists work there periodically.

TO THE RESCUE! Taxpayers to the fore! They are too big to fail and we need \$25 billion to rescue the likes of Freddie Mac, Fanny Mae, and the multi-million-dollar incomes of their CEOs, from their own folly. Easy. We just print more paper money. We cannot allow Robert Mugabe with his \$100 billion notes to hog the money-maker title. Now that Belgium has cut off his supply of the paper to print money we have a chance to catch up. We still have lots of paper.

As for the victims of this unregulated greed, they should have known better.

FADING INTO HISTORY: After WWII, Brian Walley, Peter Stubbs, and Dan London (my Halifax mid-upper gunner) emigrated from the UK to Australia where they sparked the formation of the Western Australia ex-POW Association. Joan and I joined all three and their wives at several reunions in the UK and Canada of ex-POWs of the Royal Air Forces. Now Brian, the sole survivor of the three as well as the sole survivor of his Whitley bomber crew when it was shot down into the North Sea in November 1941, is the last president of the Association. The few remaining members will hold two more meetings then close the books.

CONSERVATION RESERVE: In 1967, with Soviet tanks rolling into Prague, His Royal Highness, Duke Carl Herzog von Wurtemberg, bought, as a family refuge, 55,000 hectares in SE British Columbia containing mountains, forests, rivers, and 50 lakes. His family has visited the property annually. Now 72, with air travel a hassle, and with Germany free of invasion threats, he decided to sell to someone who would care for the land and keep it intact and free from development. The Nature Conservancy of Canada has bought it for \$125 million with the federal government contributing \$25 million, private donations \$65 million, and the rest relying on people like you and me. Adjacent to Midget Creek and Western Arm the overall protected area now exceeds 1,000 square kilometres.

SCORE TWO FOR ISRAEL: This scribe has not been a fan of Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian lands, but recently it exchanged 5 live prisoners for two dead ones. Then it allowed Palestinians to be given camcorders to record atrocities, subsequently arresting soldiers and civilians who were filmed beating innocent Palestinians and stealing their lands.

CHINA: The world's greatest polluter and the consumer of 15% of the world's resources. True, but it does have 1.3 billion people whereas the US with 300 million hogs 25% of world resources and China's per capita pollution index is 1/4 that of Australia or the US. China's birth control methods restrict population growth considerably. Human rights? Room for improvement.

GOD'S PHARMACY WITH REVEALING SHAPES

A sliced carrot resembles an eye with pupil, iris, and radiating lines.

A tomato has 4 chambers and is red.

Grapes hang in heart-shaped clusters and each grape looks like a blood cell.

Walnuts look like brains: left and right hemispheres, upper and lower cerebellums, wrinkles and folds.

Kidney beans look like kidneys.

Celery, Bok Choy, and Rhubarb look like bones, and are 23% sodium.

Sweet Potatoes look like the pancreas.

Oranges and grapefruits resemble mammary glands.

Onions look like body cells.

Olives look like ovaries.

Figs are full of seeds and hang in twos.

Eggplant, Avocados, Pears look like womb and cervix.

Carrots enhance blood flow to and function of the eyes.

Tomatoes are good food for the heart which is red with 4 chambers.

Grapes are profound heart and blood vitalizing food.

Walnuts help brain neuron development and function.

Kidney beans help maintain kidney function.

Bones are 23 % sodium, replenished by these vegetables.

Sweet potatoes balance the glycemic index of diabetics.

Citrus fruits assist movement of lymph in and out of breasts.

Onions clear waste from cells and produce tears to wash.

Olives assist the health and function of ovaries.

Figs increase sperm count and motility.

Avocados take 9 months to mature. They balance hormones and fight cervical cancer. These foods contain 14,000 nutritional constituents.

JULIEN-GENEST: Isabelle reports that she and Hubert are off to Italy on their honeymoon which was postponed after their marriage last year when he was ordered to Afghanistan.

RIMPAC: Canada has participated in this world's largest maritime exercise since it started in 1971. This year 35 ships, 6 submarines, 150 aircraft, and 20,000 personnel from Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, the Netherlands, Peru, Korea, Singapore, the UK, and the US will be involved. Among the Canadians is a company from the 1st Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard training in evacuation operations.

400 YEARS OF MILITARY HISTORY are being celebrated by the Canadian Forces since the founding of Quebec in 1608.

GROUP CAPTAIN JIM MITCHELL, DFC & Bar, AFC. I enjoyed working with this fine gentleman in the **Combat Operations Center in 1963 before the move to the mountain.** Jim, who lost his wife, May, a while back, was born in Toronto in 1916. He joined the RCAF 01 July 1940, earning pilot's wings at 3 SFTS Calgary in February 1941. He served as a flying instructor at 7 SFTS Macleod before going overseas in November 1942. He completed two tours of operations in Bomber Command, the second with Pathfinders (RAF #9 & #83 Sqns.) After the war he was CO of SAR Sqn Edmonton, CO of 408 Sqn Rockcliffe, and CO of RCAF Station Winnipeg. In 1951 he earned the AFC for evacuating a seriously ill civilian from Eureka Sound under extremely difficult conditions of time, distance, and weather.

Jim graduated from the RAF Staff College in 1946 and the National Defence College in 1963. Staff appointments included: CAS Secretary 1947 (Ottawa); Asst. Air Attaché Paris 1951; Asst. Cdn. National Representative to SHAPE 1952 (Paris); RCAF Staff College Instructor 1954 (Toronto); Asst. Director NORAD Operations 1963; and Command Director, NORAD Combat Operations Centre, 1966 (Colorado Springs). Special assignments included Field Officer in Waiting to HM Queen Elizabeth 1957 and RCAF Aide de Camp to HRH Princess Margaret during her 1958 Canadian tour (Bill Carr was the pilot). Following his retirement from the Air Force in 1967 he pursued a career in management training in the federal public service.

LAST POST: For some years now I have opened *Airforce Magazine* with trepidation to leaf through to the Last Post pages. This time there were four more of my old WWII friends. Of all those who attended our wedding, almost 66 years ago, only Joan and I are still breathing (barely). Shakespeare had a verse for every situation, so for me:

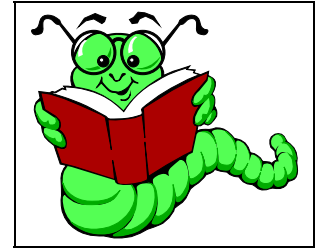
I feel like one who treads alone

Some banquet hall deserted.

Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,

And all but he departed.

Book Reviews



AEROSPACE INITIATIVES - NATO AWACS by PAT DENNIS

This is not a book. It is not even a magazine. It is simply one of 13 articles in the Winter 2007-08 issue of *The Canadian Military Journal*, (www.journal.dnd.ca). But, it is good, and it was written by our own Pat Dennis. It traces the evolution of NATO from a single-minded Cold War defence organization to one that has deployed ground forces in the Balkans, assumed command of forces in Afghanistan, and become a geo-strategic player. Pat gives credit to the NATO AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control) as the facilitating entity that accomplished this transition. He shows its roots to lie with the USAF 1965 deployment in Vietnam of EC-121 Lockheed Constellations in this role, their 1979 use in Korea, and the 1980 loan to NATO of 4 AWAC aircraft. In what would become a tool for its own more benign version of gunboat diplomacy, NATO began to acquire its own fleet, and in 1978, the then 16 NATO countries agreed to obtain 18 of these AWAC aircraft.

Pat delves into the intricacies and frustrations of getting NATO consensus for the varied aspects of establishing, and deploying to, new areas of responsibility. In 1990, after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, NATO AWACS deployed to Turkey to become actively involved, although its subsequent support to Operation Desert Storm was not the subject of any official reports. In November 1991 NATO expressed a willingness to participate in UN actions and began supporting the UN-sanctioned blockade against Yugoslavia. Soon thereafter AWACS aircraft, over the Adriatic and in support of the arms embargo, assisted NATO warships in intercepting vessels of interest. Eventually, NATO AWACS would enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia, and negotiate agreements with Austria and Hungary. Then, in 1999, after 1,500 Kosovo Albanians were killed and 400,000 forced from their homes, NATO intervened. 900 NATO aircraft from 14 nations flew 38,000 sorties from 40 locations. This included AWACS aircraft. NATO's involvement then spread to Afghanistan. NATO AWACS crews have participated for years in the annual Maple Flag exercise in Cold Lake, Alberta.

Having recognized NATO's need to respond to global threats, the now-26-nation organization can continue to use the benign and politically-safe AWACS as an ever-ready means to forestall threats to world stability.

HOW THE IRISH SAVED CIVILIZATION

by Thomas Cahill, Anchor Books, NY, 1996, 248 pages

Cahill takes an interesting and informative, but unexpected, approach. He starts out by reminding us that most of our history has been written by protestant males who considered the Irish an uncouth, sub-human lot. But, after the fall of Rome, it was the Irish, barely into the Hebrew, Greek, Christian, and Latin age, that preserved, in isolated monasteries, Greco-Roman writings, later returning them to Britain and to Europe. He then spends 21 pages describing the factors that led to Rome's downfall. He makes no comparison with our modern world but the similarities are alarming: the steady concentration of wealth into fewer hands, the growth of large estates, the infiltration of 'barbarians' as cheap labour, then as soldiers, the population explosion among outsiders as they adopted agriculture. The next 33 pages show how feudal Europe had its roots in the decline of Roman Republican values and the resultant problems of the Roman Empire. Wealthy Roman landowners bought Roman captives from Huns, Goths, Vandals only to use them as captive lifetime serfs. They also stole the lands of lesser landowners damaged by barbarian raids. There was wholesale enslavement of people, especially women. And, Cahill admits, the Irish (actually Celtic Scotti at the time) were among the worst. Excellent sailors, they raided western Britain, devoid of Roman protection, at will including the large 401 AD raid that took thousands of captives including teenage Patricius (Saint Patrick) who became the property of King Miliucc of Antrim.

Cahill analyses Plato, Cicero, Saul of Tarsus, the British monk, Pelagius, Julian of Eclanum, and especially Augustine (354-430 AD) whose quest for Truth led him to flip-flop among Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Christianity, concluding Man needed God to lift him from the mud. He justified persecuting disbelievers so can be considered the father of the much-later inquisition. Before returning to Ireland on page 71, Cahill ensures we know the classical Greco-Roman world that Europe lost to the Barbarians. The transformation of Ireland from a wild Celtic world of evil gods and spirits with constant warfare, raiding, slavery, and human sacrifices to a world of a Christian, caring God who sacrificed his only son so that humans would no longer need human sacrifice and with an abhorrence of slavery is attributed to one man - Patrick.

From a privileged Roman-educated youth Patrick became a naked, hungry, and lonely shepherd who consoled himself with prayer to his Christian God. Six years later, in 407, he woke from a dream in which he was ordered to leave and find a ship waiting to take him to freedom. He walked over 200 miles reaching Wexford where he persuaded sailors,

taking hounds to sell in France, to accept him as a deck hand. They found France a wasteland from German raids, but the group survived and Patrick got back to his family in Britain in 409. Restless, with visions of Irish beckoning him to return, he left for clerical training in the Lérins monastery off the coast of France. In 430 he was ordained a bishop and he elected to return to Ireland to be the first Christian missionary to go beyond Romanized lands. The Irish admired his courage in presenting his philosophy to a hostile world as he worked for 31 years to transform Ireland.

Unlike Augustine who fought sex as evil, Patrick made no changes to the Irish practices of one-year trial marriages, multiple partners, homosexuality, or to riding horses naked along the seashore. With no Irish cities, Patrick's monks retreated to isolated monasteries which grew into centres of learning and population with students from as far away as Europe. Cahill interlaces his story with numerous poems. Here are two scribbled by scholars while copying manuscripts:

I and Pangur Ban my cat	'Gainst the wall he sets his eye	#2
'Tis a like task we are at:	Full and fierce and sharp and sly;	
Hunting mice is his delight	'Gainst the wall of knowledge I	All are keen to know
Hunting words I sit all night	All my little wisdom try.	Who'll sleep with blond Aideen
		All Aideen herself will own
'Tis a merry thing to see	So in peace our tasks we ply	Is that she will not sleep alone.
At our tasks how glad are we,	Pangur Ban my cat and I;	
When at home we sit and find	In our arts we find our bliss.	
Entertainment to our mind.	I have mine and he has his.	

Cahill emphasizes that monasteries were led by abbots and abbesses with women priests saying Mass, taking confessions, and serving congregations. He describes the next great Irish monk, Columcille (Colomba, 521-597 AD), who was exiled from his Clonard, Meath, abbey with its 3,000 students because he took up arms to defeat King Diarmail who had ordered the execution of a disciple. Columba eventually found his way to Iona off the Scottish coast. Here he transcribed 300 books, converted the Picts, trained hundreds of teachers, and was sought as an arbitrator.

Respect for differences and a disregard for Roman order (Love has nothing to do with Order) was integral to Irish teachings. In 597 Pope Gregory sent an emissary to Canterbury to crown the English king and Roman clashed with Irish Christianity north of the Thames. In 664 The Northumbrian king at the Synod of Whitby ruled in favour of the Roman version fearing that Saint Peter would use the keys to the kingdom that God gave him to lock him out if he voted otherwise.

Cahill goes on to describe the swarm of Irish monks that established centres of learning throughout Europe, reaching as far as Kiev. These were joined by many English monks including such notables as Willibrord and Boniface influencing the courts of Charlemagne who, as an illiterate, supported education, and of his successor, Charles the Bald.

Then came the devastating Viking raids that terrorized Ireland and Britain from 793 to 1020, the Cromwellian invasion, the penal laws, and the potato famine, all of which ate away at Irish cultural dominance in Europe.

But the seeds of learning, spread so far and wide in Europe by the Irish, ensured the survival and advancement of civilization. Cahill leaves to other authors the huge contribution the Irish made to the growth of the British Empire.

COSMIC ANGER - THE FIRST MUSLIM NOBEL SCIENTIST
by Gordon Fraser, Oxford University Press, 2008

This is a story of narrow-minded intolerance robbing a country of one of its most prized citizens. Abdus Salam was born in the Punjab in 1926. He is recognized in the Western world as the greatest Islamic physicist in 1,000 years. In 1979 he won a Nobel Prize for his electroweak theory that unifies two of the four forces of Nature. His genius was appreciated in Cambridge, Princeton, London's Imperial College, and Trieste. He founded the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy, to support researchers from poorer countries.

Salam remains a devout Muslim, loyal to Pakistan, but he was exiled in the 1970s because he belongs to the obscure and out-of-favour sect, Ahmadis.

Fraser argues that, on the world stage, Salam is the most influential scientist since Einstein, but until Pakistan recognizes him as their greatest scientist, there can be no Islamic renaissance in science. In Islam's Golden Age (8th to 11th centuries AD) many great scientific advances were made and scholars from all races and religions were accepted. Islamic countries have much catching up to do

SHARIA (SHARIAH) LAW

With Muslim communities growing in Western countries and with a world-wide Gallup poll telling us that 59% of radical Muslims and 32% of the moderates want Sharia as the only law, how much of a threat is it to us?

Sharia Law was first established to safeguard the populace from the excesses of sultan and caliph rulers. It was God's law that could not be manipulated to benefit the privileged. Lawyers proliferate because, like every other law, it has different interpretations:

<i>Hanbali:</i>	the most conservative version,
<i>Hanifi:</i>	the most liberal and open to modern ideas,
<i>Maliki:</i>	an extension of the laws in effect during Muhammad's lifetime, and
<i>Shafi'i:</i>	the conservative opinions of the companions of Muhammad.

Much of what we cherish today originated in the Islamic Sharia laws. Because of French conquests of Muslim lands and the subsequent 1066 Norman conquest of England, plus revelations brought home by crusaders, much of English Common Law is Sharia and Islamic, having replaced Anglo-Saxon law, and the earlier and harsher Roman law that had supplanted the egalitarian Celtic laws. These new Islamic laws included jury trial, impartial judges, free speech, the rights of the poor to a lawyer, women rights, animal rights, and much more. The vaunted British "fair play" has Sharia roots (but also Persian roots from Cyrus the Great, 559-530 BC, with his human rights edict). Under Islamic (and Persian) laws, warfare was to avoid harm to civilians, their property, and their lands. Captured crusaders were amazed, and grateful, at being treated kindly even though they had previously massacred entire Muslim communities. Slavery was tolerated only in wartime as an alternate to the previous slaughter of a defeated enemy. Multiple wives were permitted only after wars that caused a shortage of men.

All this seems so enlightened, so why do we fear Sharia?

With the Enlightenment, European laws went on to further enhance human rights while Sharia stagnated, still clinging to its old punishment codes. And, there have been many deviations. Those who, by means fair or foul, achieve power are prone to alter laws and practices, and use religion, or secularism, to suit their own ends. The devout may consider such actions as aberrations but their existence stresses the vital need of a law of the land based on human rights and devoid of the controls of priests, shamen, ayatollahs, politicians, or privileged groups.

We can see in those countries where Sharia is entrenched, like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and N. Nigeria, not only an eye-for-an-eye mentality but cruel punishments such as lashes for gambling or drinking, beating a wife for being too uppity, stoning to death for adultery or sodomy, cutting off hands for stealing, plus beheadings, crucifixions, and honour killings (only 31% of which are by practicing Muslims). Tolerating Sharia, it is argued, could open the door for Muslim anti-blasphemy laws and their associated violent passions. It took Christians 400 years of bloody struggle to earn the right to criticize Christianity. Muslims have yet to start this struggle. This is our main aversion to Sharia. Yes, Muslims can point to Western faults such as the cruel treatment of POWs by the US, or the chaining in groups of 10, hundreds of illegal Guatemalan and Mexican male and female workers in Iowa. We do have our warts.

Quebec has officially banned Sharia Law. The Archbishop of Canterbury claims it should be acceptable in Muslim communities in the UK minus its penal code. It is creeping into the USA. Somali taxi drivers in Minneapolis, now 80% of drivers, defy US law by refusing to accept passengers carrying the duty-free alcohol they bought at the airport. Since 1991, due to a backlogged court system, Ontario has allowed Catholic and Jewish tribunals to resolve family disputes provided both parties agree. A move to include Sharia Law in this arrangement was vetoed by the premier. We have been prone to permitting ethnic groups taking over sections of our culture. The Jews took banking, the Irish took policing, Pakistanis have monopolized transportation. Much of this has been transient but we do need to pay more attention to integration. We live today in a global community so cannot tolerate any religion, and we can include secularism and atheism as religions, to impose laws at variance with the laws of the land, especially when human rights are at stake.

The current wave of hostility towards Islam causes reactions not conducive to lessening the frictions that have been so common and so ruinous in human history. Muslim beliefs need softening, but Respect is a great catalyst. We opened our doors to entice cheap labour most of which was Muslim and poorly educated. We created the problem. It is ours to fix.

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER: Again, it is first-come, first-served for precious space for your numerous inputs. Deadline is 15 Oct with no guarantee there will be room left. Beat the fierce competition and submit early! Send to georgesweanor@comcast.net.

SCRAMBLE! We need all of you to get airborne and land at the Retired Enlisted Club, 14 Sep to add your vibes to the Battle of Britain remembrances.