

# 971 RCAF AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING

## *Air Force Association Newsletter January 2009*



Festung Europa bunker uncovered by fierce storm, Houvig, Jutland, Denmark. See page 4

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### **Social Calendar**

- Oct 25 49 of us enjoyed a most pleasant evening at Carol and Art Nielsen's.
- Oct 31 A memorial service for Olive Lomas was held in the Retired Enlisted Club with the Wing providing a piper and a bouquet of flowers.
- Nov 07 Four of us attended the Regular Force mess dinner. Canadian astronaut Col. Chris Hadfield was again guest speaker, giving an informative coverage of Canadian aviation over the past 100 years, with emphasis on Canada's role in space. Chris has piloted over 70 different types of aircraft. When Canada chose 4 new astronauts in 1992 he was among 5,330 applicants. He was the first Canadian astronaut to space walk. From 2001 to 2003 he was NASA's Director of Operations at the Yuro Gagarin Centre in Star City, Russia, where he qualified as a flight engineer for the Soyuz TMA Spacecraft. For the past two years he has been NASA's Chief of International Space Station Operations. The relentless passage of time was emphasized when LGen Charlie Bouchard remarked that the mess kit I was wearing and that was purchased in 1952 was before he was born. Yet the mess kit is still 33 years younger than I am.
- Nov 11 20 Wing members squeezed into a packed house at the Retired Enlisted Club to participate in the annual Armistice/Veterans'/Remembrance Day ceremonies. Again the Regular Force, led by LGen Bouchard, had a large turnout and provided refreshments afterwards for us.
- Dec 12 Regular Force Christmas Party, 1800 at the DoubleTree Hotel. Six Wing couples attended. Check for some fun pictures on the Wing's web site.
- Jan Date and host for our belated Christmas party will be advised by e-mail
- Jul 25 For those who like long periods of anticipation Nancy and Petter Rallis will host us on this date.

### **SICK PARADE:**

Larry Best reports: Towards the end of August, while fishing at Lake Powell, Utah, Debbie had a nasty fall and broke several bones in her left foot. Initially, the injury was misdiagnosed so the healing was a long time coming. Following a reassessment she was fitted with an orthopedic boot and has been wearing it for the past seven weeks and is on the road to recovery. Joan Peterson made up a wonderful fruit basket and delivered it, so please pass along Debbie's thanks to the Association and specifically to Joan.

Darrell Levitt had a successful knee replacement. On behalf of the Wing, Joan delivered a fruit basket.

# The Editor's Corner

## Enemies

It seems rather odd to me that we fear external enemies when we have so many highly-qualified home-grown ones. For instance, are we to believe that the once-mighty USN is now so weak that it has to continue human degradation of the planet and its life forms? Arguing that long-range sonar practice is essential to defend its shores, the USN got government approval to resume killing whales by disorienting them. Really, it need only ask the Canadian Navy which, although operating on a much smaller budget, is quite capable of defeating the entire submarine fleets of all likely enemies: Taliban, Al Qaida, and the Somali Pirates. It would be folly in the extreme and not in their best interests for any nation owning submarine fleets to attack the USA. All of these nations need a prosperous USA to buy their goods and to keep their economies afloat. If there are any goods, still manufactured in the US, that they might want, it is much cheaper to buy them than to try to take them by force. Of course, global warming will trigger mass migrations but the loss of arable land will probably be as great in the US as elsewhere. A current North American life style requires 24 acres per person. To allow all 6.7 billion humans the same requires 3 or 4 more planet earths. Whom, may we ask, prosper by maintaining large submarine fleets? Yes, they can reduce populations in a very nasty way, but cannot build new planets.

**DÉJÀ VU:** In 1944-45, even while their nation was crumbling around them, signs on rail lines throughout Germany blared **Räder müssen rollen für den Sieg (Wheels must roll for Victory)**. Today, we hear **For victory: continue to borrow, keep spending, lower taxes, bail out businesses that are failing from their own greed!**

The impressive US debt, increasing at a rate rivaling the speed of light, must be repaid some day and some how, yet we hear very little about steps to do so. It is brushed off as only 42% of GDP (Canada's is 20%), We oldies, not schooled in modern math, fear US currency will be no better than Monopoly money if the trend is not reversed by greatly increased taxes and an extensive overhaul of our behaviour that got us into this mess. Human nature, unfortunately, condones sacrifices only when they are too late. To us veterans of the Great Depression, this debt is a crime:

### **US Federal Debt - Owed to Other Nations in \$Billions** (Before the current bail-out additions)

Japan	586	Luxembourg	78	Taiwan	41	Canada	31	Chile	12
China	541	Russia	74	Korea	38	India	14	Italy	12
UK	307	Hong Kong	61	Turkey	34	Netherlands	14	Belgium	12
OPEC	189	Switzerland	45	Mexico	34	Poland	14	Ireland	12
Caribbean	148	Germany	42	Thailand	32	Egypt	13		
Brazil	146	Norway	41	Singapore	31	Sweden	13	All Others	139

Total owed to others as of Aug 2008: \$2,730,300,000,000. Annual interest on this is \$412 billion.  
Total owed to all as of 10 Dec 08: \$9,825,500,000,000. In other words, each of the 305 million

individuals in the US owes \$32,200. Health annually gobbles up \$660 billion, Social Security \$610 billion, Defense \$600 billion. All other departments spend under \$100 billion. Source: [www.treas.gov/tic/mth.txt](http://www.treas.gov/tic/mth.txt)

**TOTAL US DEBT (Federal, Household, Business, States): \$53 Trillion or \$175,154 per individual.**

**CANADA'S FEDERAL DEBT** is \$458 billion, down from \$577 billion in 2000. It is claimed to be the world's safest debt, 25% owned by foreigners. And, in other words, each of the 33 million individuals in Canada owes \$13,880. **Total debt is \$3.4 trillion - or \$103,000 per individual.** (An average of conflicting sources).

We have, indeed, built a house of cards that is prone to collapse when something pokes at any part of it. We are good, as history proves, at rebuilding, but we tend to use the same old mud, straw, bricks, and mortar to build greater edifices while drowning out all those voices that cry for a world-wide re-design of the mentality of the human species so as to appreciate, and preserve, this marvelous, and unique, globe and its varied inhabitants.

Yes, many times, when we have rebuilt, we have extended affluence to more people, but each time we improve technology to bake another loaf of bread or grow another potato, we breed a swarm of new mouths to feed on them, thus the gap between the very rich and the very poor becomes a chasm. Recognizing the problem, China imposes strict limits on family growth. Russia and the Western World have allowed materialism to do the same, so we resort to immigration from more fertile, and poorer, countries to give us low-paid workers to retain our current life styles, then we complain about losing our ethnic composition.

**LEO MAJOR**, holder of two Distinguished Conduct Medals, died in Montreal, 12 Oct 2008, at age 87. Flags in Zwolle, Netherlands, flew at half mast and Dutch embassy officials attended his funeral in Montreal.

Plunging ashore on D-Day, he lost an eye to a grenade but refused evacuation, arguing he could still sight his rifle with the other eye. On 13 Apr 1945 the advancing Canadian Army was preparing to shell the German garrison in Zwolle. So, Privates Major and Arsenault were sent ahead to scout the situation. Arsenault was killed by machine-gun fire. Major silenced the German gun then set off a series of grenades from various positions to give the impression that a large force was advancing. The Germans fled the town which Major entered in the role of a sole liberator. He quickly got back to warn his comrades to cancel the planned artillery barrage thus saving the town damage.

Major then discovered that two of the German defenders he had killed were 13 and 14 years of age. This haunted him for the rest of his life.

In 1950 he was asked to serve as a sniper in Korea. He accepted even though in continuous pain from a back wound. In Korea he won his second medal while leading the capture of a key hill. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, four children and 5 grandchildren.

**HOW WORLD DECISIONS ARE MADE:** Jim Cross of Victoria, BC, who earned a DFC in Bomber Command with 425 Squadron and who worked for the federal government after the war, sent this on receipt of our November newsletter:

"Your reference to the Aga Khan brought back memories of the 1972 expulsion by Idi Amin of Asians who had lived in Uganda for years, I was the acting Assistant Deputy Minister for Immigration, and chaired the inter-agency committee set up for the crisis. I felt that, if our vaunted policy of non-discrimination was to be followed, we had to do something about the refugees. We obtained the OK of the minister. The Aga Khan came to offer his support. We entertained him at a luncheon which took place during that famous USSR-Canada hockey series which some of us were watching in the anteroom prior to going into the dining room. Alan McGill, a friend of mine from External Affairs, wondered how we could keep current with the game. I told him that I would ask the steward to keep me posted and that I would relay the score by hand signal, the left for the Soviets and the right for Canada. His Highness was part way through his speech when the steward told me that it was a 2-2 tie. Up went both my hands. The Aga Khan caught this and said "Then you agree with me Mr. Cross?" I like to say that at that point we agreed to take 6,000 refugees from Uganda. They turned out to be among the best qualified immigrants we ever had. 25 years later the Aga Khan sponsored a reunion in Ottawa. Many of the attending Ugandans were now successful lawyers, doctors, and businessmen. I choked up when two of their daughters sang "O Canada" in both languages."

**RECYCLE OR ELSE!** In Toronto, households will be fined \$105 if they do not use their provided blue and green recycling bins on garbage day. Toronto, with landfill problems, hopes to recycle 70% of garbage. Shoppers will also pay 5 cents for each plastic bag used.

**DRAFT US OLDIES:** Bill Carr complains that our governments have it all wrong in military recruiting that rejects any applicant over 35 years of age. He argues:

Young soldiers think about sex every 10 seconds. We old guys think about it only a couple of times a day, leaving us 28,000 additional seconds to concentrate on the enemy. Young guys have not lived long enough to be cranky, and a cranky soldier is a dangerous soldier. We can complain enemies into submission: "My back hurts! I am hungry! Where is the remote?" An 18-year-old is not allowed to drink. The average oldie has consumed 126,000 gallons so a romp through the desert with a heavy rifle is just what a beer belly needs. As there are 24 hours in a day and 24 bottles in a case they have a convenient way to measure time! An 18-year-old hates to get up before 10 AM. We oldies always get up early to pee. If captured we can never spill the beans because we cannot remember where we put them. In fact, name, number, and rank are a real brain teaser. Boot camp is easy for us. We are used to getting screamed at and we like soft food.

They could lighten up on the obstacle course. I have been in combat and never saw a single 20-foot wall with a rope hanging over the side nor did I ever do any pushups after completing basic training. That running part is a waste of time. I have never seen anyone outrace a bullet. An 18-year-old has the whole world ahead of him. He is still learning to shave, to carry on a conversation, to wear pants without the top of his butt showing, to know that a pierced tongue catches food particles, that a 400-watt speaker in his car ruptures eardrums, and that caps have a brim to shade eyes, not the back of the head.

Let us old guys track down those dirty, rotten terrorists. The last thing an enemy would want to see is a million old farts with attitudes.

**WIND TURBINE OR AIRCRAFT?** Air traffic control radars have been incapable of distinguishing between these, so the UK is developing a 3-dimensional radar that can.

**PAUL MACKENZIE**, our Regular Force liaison officer who left us for Winnipeg 5 years ago continues to get the newsletter and wishes to say hello to all of you. After Winnipeg he was transferred to Greenwood and is now in Ottawa.

**CUBA's TOP TRADING PARTNERS** are China, Venezuela, Canada, Spain, Brazil, and Vietnam.

**HARRY TRUMAN** probably made as many important decisions as any of the other 42 Presidents. A measure of his greatness may rest on what he did after he left the White House.

After President Eisenhower was inaugurated, Harry and Bess drove home to Missouri by themselves. There were no Secret Service following them.

When offered corporate positions at large salaries, he declined, stating, "You don't want me. You want the office of the President, and that doesn't belong to me. It belongs to the American people and it's not for sale."

When he retired from office in 1952, his income was a U.S. Army pension reported to have been \$13,507.72 a year. Congress, noting that he was paying for his stamps and personally licking them, granted him an 'allowance' and, later, a retroactive pension of \$25,000 per year.

Even later, on May 6, 1971, when Congress was preparing to award him the Medal of Honor on his 87th birthday, he refused to accept it, writing, "I don't consider that I have done anything which should be the reason for any award, Congressional or otherwise."

It is written that the only asset he had when he died was the house he lived in, which was in Independence Missouri. On top of that, his wife inherited the house from her Mother.

Modern politicians have found a new level of success in cashing in on the Presidency, resulting in untold wealth. Today, many in Congress also have found a way to become quite wealthy while enjoying the fruits of their offices. Political offices are now for sale.

Good old Harry Truman was correct when he observed, "My choices early in life were either to be a piano player in a whorehouse or a politician. And to tell the truth, there's hardly any difference."  
(Submitted by Jim Cross, Victoria, BC)

**RESPONSE FROM FRANCE:** Dominique Baylaucq of Pau, Southwest France, in finding our web site, responded to the July 08 article on Canadians in France during the German blitzkrieg and how George Vanier (future Governor General) had sought the aid of his relative BGen Raymond Brutinel on whom he is writing a biography. He promises to send us more data.

**CHARLEY FOX DFC:** A memorial service, with 500 in attendance, and addressed by LGen Angus Watt, Chief of the Air Staff, and by Ted Barris, military author, was held 02 Nov 08 in the Transport Canada hangar in Ottawa for Charley who was killed in a traffic accident near Tillsonburg, 18 Oct.

A spitfire, Mustang, and CC144 Challenger shared the hangar for the ceremony.

Charley flew Spitfires during WWII and is credited with wounding Rommel. Her earned two DFCs and, after the war, was a passionate promoter of Canadian military history. For the past 4 years he was honorary colonel for 412 Squadron. (Submitted by Jim Czirjak)

**NERO (17-68AD)**, noted for fiddling while Rome burned and blaming the Christians, did a few good things like establishing a fund for fire victims and refusing to extend Roman rule over reluctant groups, yet his mother, dying from the knives of assassins sent by Nero, cursed the womb that bore him. She had survived 3 previous attempts by Nero to kill her: she grabbed an antidote on realizing he had poisoned her, she swam ashore when he had sent her off in a leaky boat, and she tumbled away from a collapsing roof when Nero had the heavy timbers over her bed dislodged. Nero also murdered his aunt for her money, killed his first wife, Octavia, who bored him, kicked his second wife, Poppaea Sabina, to death, and then murdered a consul so he could take his wife. And we complain about our leaders who merely play around.

**CANADA'S RUSSIANS:** Long overdue! Finally, after training and embracing aircrew from a score of countries, the Canadian Air Force is now employing Russians. The 12 new (new to us, but actually slightly used) helicopters in use by our forces in Afghanistan include 6 Mi-8s flown by Russian crews some of whom were with Soviet forces fighting the Mujahedeen so are familiar with the terrain. The other 6 are CH-47D Chinooks. For this, 200 extra personnel are deployed

These Russian aircraft and crews are leased by SkyLink, based in Toronto, on a \$36 million contract.

**GERMAN ATLANTIC WALL BUNKERS:** Fierce Atlantic storms have uncovered 3 of the 7,000 concrete bunkers built to protect *Fortress Europa* from invasion. All others have been destroyed over the years but these three were encased in sand and are perfectly preserved including articles left by departing Germans as they left to surrender in May 1945. Their remote location in the sand dunes of Houvig, on the western coast of Jutland, saved them to be discovered, after the storm, by two 9-year-old boys. The area is now a Danish tourist retreat. (Submitted by Bob Johnson, North Gower, Ontario.)

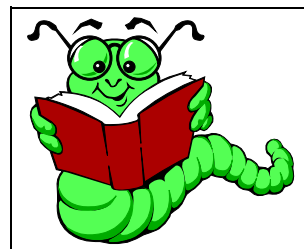
**TORONTO'S IRANIAN COMMUNITY** numbers about 58,000. The 1979 revolution that brought the theocratic group to power resulted in many fleeing to Canada. Newer arrivals, more intent on education and jobs, have created a community divided on attitudes towards the current regime. Hossein Derakhshan became a Canadian citizen and a noted blogger, teaching many to blog in farsi, building a blog bridge with Iran. Hossein spent time in the UK and Israel, returning to Iran a few months ago as a former critic but now more conciliatory to the regime. Now he has vanished. If arrested, he will be among a growing list of Iranian-Canadians to be so treated, including Zafra Kazemi beaten to death in jail for photographing student dissenters, Merhndushe Solouki, held 11 months for filming a documentary, and Ramin Jahanbegloo, UofT professor, held 125 days in 2008.

# Book

## Reviews

### THE CURSE OF AKKAD

By Peter Christie, Firefly, Richmond Hill, Ontario, 2008, 144 pages



Peter Christie is a science writer who lives in Kingston, Ontario, with his wife and two daughters. Three of his books are written for children and deal with animal behaviour. The title of this present book was taken from a scribe who, over 4,000 years ago, wrote of the curse of prolonged drought that destroyed the Akkadian Empire and forced its survivors to migrate. Christie deals with the effects of climate change both natural and man-made.

Before getting to the fall of Akkad on page 31, Christie relates current man-made problems: the rapid erosion of the Lincolnshire coast at 10 metres per year for the past 30 years, the plight of 600 Inuit having to flee Shishmaref, Alaska, that had been inhabited for 4,000 years, the loss of fresh water in Antarctica each year that equals what 75 million North Americans use, and South Pacific atolls being submerged.

Interspersed throughout the book are self-contained orange pages on such topics as tree rings, lost civilizations, Robin Hood, Darfur, evolution, El Niño, the French Revolution, volcanoes, and many other topics related to climate change. It is easy to see Christie's roots as an author of children's books as he makes this volume readable by all ages.

Christie shows how long periods of drought caused wars, migrations, and the collapse of civilizations while warning that a heavily over-populated globe now leaves no room for future migrations. He describes Polynesian, Viking, and other voyages in the warm 800-1300 AD period as well as the growing of grapes in England that ceased by 1300 but has now returned with 400 vineyards. Among his many tales of climatic catastrophes is the one of years of persistent rains in China causing floodings and 7 million deaths in 1322. This was followed by prolonged drought killing off rats whose fleas then sought humans giving them bubonic plague, killing 34 million, then spread to Europe, killing another 50 million by 1350. It took 150 years to regain human population levels. He also relates the storm-defeated Spanish Armada of 1588. He concludes with current problems: building dykes in Egypt to limit the destruction of salt water from a rising Mediterranean sea that is harming the Nile delta that grows 50% of Egypt's food, heat waves in Europe that killed 30,000 in 2003, drought leading to genocide in Darfur, and the losses due to hurricanes and tsunamis.

### **BUT, WERE THEY GOOD FOR THE JEWS?**

Elliott Rosenberg, Birch Lane Press, Secaucus, NJ, 1997, 309 pages

This review is dedicated to my good friend, Pat Dennis in Kitchener, Ontario, who continues to criticize my criticisms of Israeli behaviour in Palestine. Elliott Rosenberg taught in New York public schools for 30 years. His articles appear in various publications. In this book, he reviews 162 world leaders assessing them on their treatment of Jews. He claims that the earliest reference to Jews is by Herodotus who, in 440 BC, describes them as a branch of Syrians who practised circumcision. The first, then, to be assessed is Alexander the Great who, in 334 BC, passed through Judea to and from his conquest of Egypt. As he sided with the Jews in their quarrel with Samaritans, he is rated as good. But, after his 323 BC death, his Seleucid and Ptolemy successors were not. Antiochus IV (175-164 BC) who tried to hellenize reluctant Jews is rated a villain after converting their temple to the worship of Zeus and building the fortress of Acra to eliminate Judaism. In 164 BC Greek forces were defeated and Judah Maccabee regained the Jerusalem temple, finding it looted and having only enough oil to relight the altar light for one day. Miraculously it lasted for eight, resulting in Hannukah.

Among Roman rulers, only a few focused on Jews. Pompey captured Jerusalem and shipped thousands of Jews to Rome as slaves, Crassus stole all the gold in the Temple, Julius Caesar repaid earlier Jewish support against his rivals by restoring Judean unity, lowering the tax rate to 12%, giving back Jaffa, and allowing Jewish communities in Italy. Augustus carried on toleration of the Jews. Tiberius (42 BC - 37 AD) abolished Jewish and Egyptian cults in Rome. Vespasian and Titus (9-81AD) were major enemies, brutal in quashing Jewish uprisings, aided by Joseph ben Matthias who turned traitor, assuming the name Flavius and obtaining high Roman rank. Up to one million Jews were massacred in the capture of Jerusalem, many of them tortured and crucified. Titus had Jerusalem reduced to rubble and descendants of the House of David tracked down and murdered. Yet, he retained a Jewish mistress. Hadrian (76-138AD) started out amicably but reversed course to make the Jerusalem temple the home of Jupiter and to outlaw circumcision which led to open warfare in 132. 580,000 Jewish rebels were slain and 1,035 communities razed. Roman casualties were also high. Jerusalem was renamed Aelia Capitolina and Judea became Syria Palestina. Antonius Pius, Hadrian's chosen successor, revoked Hadrian's edicts.

As Rosenberg continues to modern times what stands out is the fact that the Jews, on being expelled by the Romans, did go forth and multiply all over Europe and the Middle East. As only a few assimilated and converted to local religions and as they provided competition to the people among whom they settled, resultant frictions led to persecutions that were far more severe under Christians than Muslims. Unlike contemporary tribes that melted into changing environments, Jewish groups remained nations within nations thus inviting mistrust, envy, fear, and hostility.

Jews were barred from trades and schools, forced to live in ghettos, and often forced to flee countries on foot and with only what they could carry even in the depths of winter with no known safe haven. Even when rulers ordered relaxations of restrictions, these were often ignored by local authorities. The greatest, and most prolonged, cruelties were in Spain, Italy, Russia, Austria, and Germany (pre-Hitler). In the midst of all this persecution, talented Jews - physicians, bankers, administrators, mistresses - found safe havens in the inner circles of many countries that persecuted the rank and file.

In many countries where trades were closed to Jews, some thrived by usury - charging interest on loans - something that was forbidden to Christians. This made rulers dependent on them to finance wars but it made them hated among Christians. Many officials, like Stalin, Mussolini, Chou-en-Lai, Sadat, changed their attitudes dramatically during their tenure so are difficult to categorize, but here are just a few of the 162 leaders described, sorted by their value to Jews:

**BAD:** Most Roman rulers, Cleopatra, Muhammad, Philip Augustus who expelled Jews from France in 1182, Edward I who expelled them from England in 1290, most Russian Tsars with Tsarina Petrova expelling all in the 1700s, Martin Luther, Pope Urban V, Isabella of Spain who burned thousands, used Jews as galley slaves, expelled all in 1492, Philip II, Marie Theresa, Austria 1717-80, Frederick II, Voltaire, Napoleon (but his troops aided Jews), Duke of Wellington, Kaiser Wilhelm II, Hitler, Petain, Laval.

**NOT HELPFUL:** FDR, Pius XII (but Vatican saved 4,700), Atlee, Bevin, Nehru.

**GOOD:** Julian, Charlemagne and Carolingian kings, William the Conqueror who took 16,000 Jews to England, Henry IV, Holy Roman Emperor, 1050-1106, Oliver Cromwell, Queen Victoria, Edward VII, Emile Zola, Dickens, Engels, Mannerheim, Churchill, Bulgaria's Boris III, Franco, Christian X of Denmark, Pope John XXIII, Truman. In the Muslim world, Saladin, Sultan Bayezid, and Suleiman all welcomed Jews expelled from Europe. Of all of Hitler's generals, Johannes von Blaskowitz, CinC Eastern Forces, opposed persecution of Jews, freed many, court marshalled offenders, let the world know of atrocities - and was removed from command.

The book ends with the Clinton administration and with praise for Carter and others in their efforts to be fair to both Jews and Arabs.

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**THE PIONEER DECADES - AVIATION IN CANADA:** As I was going to press with this newsletter the postman brought me a copy of Larry Milberry's latest book. I will review it for the March newsletter. Larry, who was born in 1943, the year I was shot down, deserves great credit, and thanks, for producing a series, starting in 1979, of books on Canadian Aviation, each large-sized and crammed with rare pictures. I have pamphlets on these for anyone interested. They are published by CANAV BOOKS, 51 Balsam Avenue, Toronto, ON, M4E 3B6. [Canavbooks.com](http://Canavbooks.com)

Not only is Larry a great author, he is also most thoughtful - he used beautiful commemorative stamps, rather than meter post, in mailing this copy to me.

Thanks, Larry, but do realize you have interrupted my writing of Christmas letters.

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#### Quotes

*"There have always been people strong enough to resist the most powerful kings, to refuse to bow before them . . . there have been very few to resist the masses, to stand up to the misled masses."* Georges Clemenceau in support of Emile Zola when, with his 6-column *J'accuse* article, he defended the falsely-imprisoned Jewish officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfuss, in 1894 and endured immense hatred from the masses for doing so.

*"There is no fun in Islam."* Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

*"We cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."* Albert Einstein

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**NEW COLONIALISM:** China, with over 20% of the world's people but only 9% of its farmland, is buying, or leasing, 2 million hectares in Africa, the Philippines, and Russia, moving in its own people rather than using locals. Sweden is in Africa, South Korea is in Madagascar, Egypt in Sudan, Libya in the Ukraine, Israel in Palestine, Saudi Arabia in Thailand, the UK in Australia, Russia, and South America, the Gulf States in Tanzania. Nomads, as always, suffer, along with animals and the environment when "unused" land is seized for exploitation. Some 6.7 billion humans, now with a growing appetite for biofuels, are continuing the age-old practice of begging, borrowing, or stealing land.

**ROGUE NATIONS:** China, Russia, and the USA refuse to join over 100 other nations in banning cluster bombs.

# Wing Stuff and Guff

**ELECTIONS:** Unlike the rest of the world we dispense with campaigning, donations, lawn signs, speeches, and the like and quietly railroad our officials. Amid sighs of relief from the rest of the gathering, we elected Joan Peterson as president and Peter Rallis as vice president at the Nielsen party 25 October. The rest of the executive, especially this scribe, was too hard of hearing to know what was going on so will remain with their current responsibilities.

**DUES:** We have been slow in matching our dues to the increases we need to send to Ottawa (which also include subscriptions to Airforce Magazine). As AFAC HQ increased our dues from \$34 to \$39 to \$44 we belatedly increased our dues to their present \$60 for local members. Treasuring our out-of-town members, we kept their dues at \$36 which means we have been subsidizing them to the tune of up to \$9 each per year. We regret that, for the dues that are due in April 2009, we will have to make all dues reflect our costs - such as \$45 for out-of-area members.

**NEWSLETTER:** We continue to mail out 130 copies 6 times per year = 6,240 pages. We have been very fortunate with Bob Freimuth saving us hundreds of dollars by duplicating all these pages for us. With postage costs rising substantially it was still costing us \$60 per issue. Thanks to many of you now accepting them via e-mail our cost has dropped to \$35 per issue for the past 4 issues. E-mail copies go out as much as 10 days before snail-mail copies. We continue to get kind comments from as far away as Australia, France, Italy, Germany, and the UK, giving us encouragement to continue. We also accept unkind comments to keep us on our toes.

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**RELAXED TRAVEL:** Having endured the hassles of modern air travel in flying to the November wedding of a grandson, may I relate a January 1984 no-hassle flight? Friends who owned a home in Providenciales (Provo), Turks & Caicos, invited us to spend a week with them and gave us the mailing address of Florida Airmotive, an airline that flew between Fort Lauderdale and Provo. For the fares, I sent them a cheque which they cashed. We waited, but no tickets arrived and there was insufficient time left to write - we had no phone number.

So, we decided to drive to Fort Lauderdale anyway. Driving around the terminal there we could find no sign for Florida Airmotive, so we parked while I went into the terminal building to enquire. The first three employees I asked said they had never heard of this airline. The fourth told me they operated from a building on the other side of the field and that I could reach them by driving around the perimeter track.

Exiting the parking lot onto to what to me looked like a perimeter track, I asked the attendant who took my parking money. He said he had been working there only for a year so did not know if it was the perimeter track. We drove along it anyway, finally seeing a lone building with its back facing our road. No sign. I got out to walk around to the front of the building. One lone occupant told me, "Yes, Florida Air Motive was due to arrive in 30 minutes with a DC3." As we waited, passengers started to accumulate along with dogs, lumber, household fixtures, and numerous bags. On landing the pilot greeted us asking some of the passengers to help him load the freight, then asking all of us to go into the office to be placed on the manifest. He asked for our tickets. We told him we had paid but never received any. He thought for a moment, then told us to get aboard and find a seat. The DC3 was decorated in tropical trappings with the passageway crammed with loose articles. We each were given a packet containing cheese, crackers, and a comb.

At the new Provo airport, built by the UK, our friends greeted us and we did have a wonderful week there especially snorkling among the reefs with all the beautiful small fish. Also welcoming us was Art Bishop, a Calgary lawyer who also ran an office in Provo and who had his own plane with which he gave us a tour of the islands. He had been a Stirling pilot in Bomber Command and his brother, Murray, had been my Halifax flight engineer.

On our return flight the efficient Provo airport staff asked for our tickets so we again had to explain our predicament. Finally, the young woman in charge smiled: "If Florida Airmotive brought you here, they can take you back." But, we were to have one more scare. The pilot landed, loaded our luggage, then took off without us. I started to run towards the departing DC3. The young airport woman, laughing at my concern, shouted after me, "He is coming back. He is just going to pick up passengers at some air strips."

Our car was waiting for us at Fort Lauderdale and the rest of the trip home was relatively boring.

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**STEPHEN HAWKING** has accepted a research chair at the **PERIMETER INSTITUTE** in Waterloo, Ontario. He will spend 6 weeks there annually and make Canada his second research home. This is the first of about 40 research appointments for the Institute and implies close ties with the Centre for Theoretical Cosmology at Cambridge University. This Institute was founded by Michael Lazaridis, inventor of the Blackberry and graduate of the University of Waterloo. Neil Turok, a South African also from Cambridge, is the director. He continues to support science training in Africa claiming it to have the world's largest untapped potential. The Perimeter staff includes Lee Solin, author of *The Trouble with Physics*.

The UK's New Scientist magazine labels the Perimeter Institute as the most ambitious intellectual experiment on earth. It is a world-class facility for theoretical physics not beholden to large institutions and flexible enough to take intellectual risks. Not since the Medici hired Galileo has there been anything like this.

Perhaps, Lee Solin's next book will be *The Glory of Physics*.

**JENNIFER, TIM HORTON'S AND KANDAHAR:** Jennifer Jones, from Niagara-on-the-lake describes her life, working for Tim Horton's in Kandahar, during a 6-month tour. She had a small tent to call home with a bed sheet for a door and a roof that leaked during heavy rains. Working 7 days a week she was up at 0500 as she prepared for a steady stream of soldiers, often with a rifle in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. She quickly learned the different preferences of her UK, US, and Canadian customers, but all appreciated Tim Horton's being there for them. There were many interruptions as incoming mortar shells livened the day. Also, during her stay, she joined six solemn processions of flag-draped coffins to aircraft that would carry them home. (Submitted by Roy Thompson)

**A NEW ERA HAS BEGUN - WITH IMMENSE CONSEQUENCES**

The *Camilla Desgagnes*, owned by Desgagnes Transarctic Inc. of Montreal in September 2008 became the first commercial ship to use the Northwest Passage to deliver goods to communities from Gjoa Haven to Taloyoak (Spence Bay) to Cambridge Bay to Kugluktuk (Coppermine). The passage, chocked with ice for thousands of years, was clear.

There will be more on this in the March newsletter.



Gjoa Haven, population 1,000



(photo: RCMP detachment webpage at Taloyoak Detachment)

Taloyoak, population 820



Cambridge Bay, population 1,351



Kugluktuk, population 1,362

**SWEDES JOIN POLAR BEARS IN GRATITUDE FOR ICE:** Two Swedes, flying a Cessna Skymaster from Wabush, Nfld to Iqaluit, Baffin Island, lost both engines. They pancaked onto the cold open sea near a chunk of pan ice onto which they were able to jump as the Cessna sank. They could see Baffin Island in the distance, but for 18 freezing hours they were the sole occupants of the ice in an empty universe until a fishing vessel, that had diverted course on hearing their SOS, invited them aboard and a Cormorant helicopter flew them to Iqaluit 08 December. Rescuers admire this text-book example of taking all the right steps for survival. They had bought the Skymaster in the US and were delivering it to Sweden.

Parting shot: I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Joan Peterson and Peter Rallis on their election to Pres and Vice-Pres of 971 Wing and to thank the Wing Members and Executive Committee, the Canadian Forces in Colorado, and Ent Federal Credit Union for their help in making the last year a memorable and successful one for all. Paul Ellis, Past Pres. 971 Wing.

**DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH ISSUE** is 15 February. Send inputs to [georgesweanor@comcast.net](mailto:georgesweanor@comcast.net)