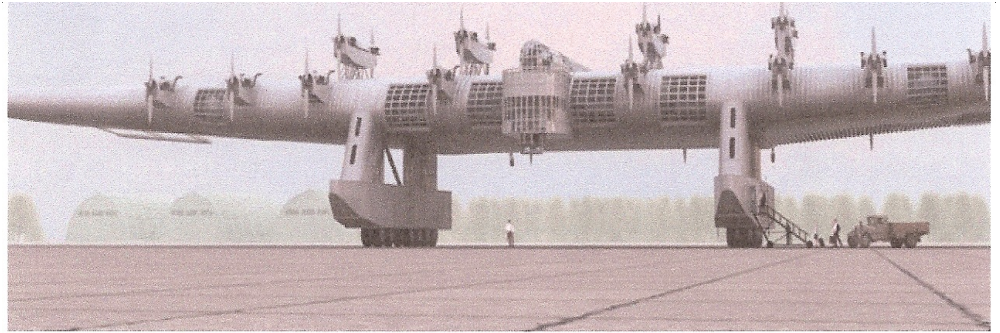


971 RCAF AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING



The Soviet K-7 Monster, See Page 4 (submitted by Brian Walley, Australia)

Air Force Association Newsletter *July 2009*

www.971WingAFAC.com

Social Calendar

- May 25 Memorial Day. Gord Davis and Ron Willard laid the 971 Wing wreath in the very crowded Retired Enlisted Club due to the threat of rain in Memorial Park. 11 Wing members attended.
- May 29 Canadian Forces Mixed Dining In, Antlers Hotel. Seven Wing members attended. Your scribe was guest speaker. Unknown to General Bouchard, until I informed him prior to the dinner, I have 3 Bouchards in my ancestry dating back to 1611 in New France, so, at the end of my talk, I accused him of being my great+ granddaddy who has not paid me any allowance for 400 years. He played his part well by paying me off in New France playing-card money I had made up.
- June 5-6 Pikes Peak Scale Model Exposition at Airport Radisson.
- June 20 52 of us enjoyed a delightful evening at the Yvonne and Gerry Robitaille residence. Jim and Gwen Czirjak co-hosted.
- July 01 Dominion (Canada) Day party, El Pomar Center 1300-1500 (This and Handing-Over ceremony by individual invitations)
- July 10 0930: Handing Over Ceremony, PAFB Club as LGen J.M. Duval takes over from LGen CMM Bouchard.
- July 18 1800 for an enchanted evening at the Nancy and Peter Rallis residence, 4355 Winding Circle, 80917. 597-7825 All food will be provided.
- Aug 22 Western Night at Flying W Ranch. Tables have been reserved for the Wing. Gates to the Frontier Village open at 5pm, and the Chuck Wagon starts serving dinner at 6:45pm. The Musical Show by the Flying W Wranglers follows the dinner serving. \$20 admission (seniors, \$22 others) includes entrance to the Frontier Town, dinner, Show, taxes and tips.
- Sep 12 1500 at the Charlene and Bill Champion ranch, 12612 Pommel Circle, Elbert, 80106. 495-0529
- Sep 20 Battle of Britain Remembrance. Details to follow.

SICK PARADE:

Lewis: In Etobicoke, Ontario, Dorothy fell and broke her neck. Rushed to hospital, a neuro surgeon, at midnight, re-attached vertebrae C1 and C2, and Dorothy responded well. After a brief rehab. she is now home with Mike whose cancer has returned. Mike, you have been an amazing survivor for 91 years and our thoughts are with you as you battle this current setback and, Dorothy, we are so relieved the surgery went so well.

BLOG SITES: Your Scribe now has a blog site:

<http://yeoldeinquisitivescribe.blogspot.com>

and, many excellent articles can be found on Diana DeLuca's site:

<http://coololdtech.blogspot.com>

The Editor's Corner

Oh, Ye of Little Faith

My search for Truth started when I discovered there was no Santa Claus. I had been happy in my world of Make Believe and Let's Pretend because that world, we kids all knew, was fantasy. The Truth, we believed, was what our parents, schools, and church told us. That my parents, whom I loved and trusted, could misinform me about Santa Claus overshadowed my Mother's patient explanation as to why it was done. I began to question everything. I must have been a good altar boy as I seemed to get more than my share of serving at Mass. Our parish priest was an oversized Irishman who had 52 sermons so I soon learned to tell the weeks apart by the sermons whose repetition bored me in spite of some good common sense they contained, such as "*Stop your frantic search for Happiness. Relax, sit down, and Happiness will come and sit down beside you.*" After the weekday early morning Masses he would have me walk a mile fetching his mail from the town post office, then, because I asked him so many questions, he would discuss life with me in his den until it was time to run four blocks to our only high school. I found that his simple sermons hid a likeable intelligence. He never admitted to the congregation that he corresponded with heads of state. He encouraged my questioning and never objected when I read books that were on the Index of books forbidden to Catholics, but would give me his views on them. When I asked him why he did not include such thoughts in his sermons he would simply say, "*They would not understand*". I did not agree with him as I knew I was only a boy much below the intelligence of the adults, many of whom I admired.

I also grew up among many veterans of the Boer War and WWI. I sought them out as, until the age of 13, things military fascinated me. I was very disturbed that their accounts of war differed so much from the heroics our media printed. In Canada we had numerous publications from Britain, the US, and Canada. I read many war stories, finding too many opposing views of the same actions. Where was Truth? Why was it so disguised? So, I gave anti-war talks in school as part of my English and History classes. Through Boys' magazines, printed in the UK, I acquired pen-pals in France, Germany, the Gold Coast (Ghana), Malaya, South Africa, and the UK. My German friend frightened me as I realized how easy it was to implant beliefs into young minds. We were both Boy Scouts but, after he was forced to join the Hitler Jugend, his once-benign letters contained hatred towards Jews and Communists. Of all of these pen-pals only the Malayan survived WWII and the Japanese occupation, and we continued to correspond until his death.

There was a great mixture in my small town and I had friends among all the varied Protestant denominations, Jews, Muslims from Turkey who adopted Catholicism, Liberals, Conservatives, Irish, French, English, Scots, Welsh, and United Statesians. We kids got along fine. Why did adults harbour such hatreds and all religion rule *Marry Your Own* - when the most desirable girls always belonged to other faiths?

Keeping abreast of world affairs, I knew WWII was coming and that it would be long and bloody, but the dictators had to be stopped. I joined the Army, finding that corporals were gods almighty and that authority decreased with rank. Bayonet drill convinced me I could never steel myself sufficiently to ram a bayonet into a stomach, so I transferred to the RCAF, ending up in Bomber Command whose 59% casualty rate plus the immense damage it created made me ashamed of being a human being, yet admiring the incredible courage of those, on both sides, who were trapped in the slaughter.

My Alma Mater will always be the Luftwaffe compound, home of the *Great Escape*. Our 2,000 prisoners were made up of 1,100 British, 350 Canadians, 200 Australians and New Zealanders, 200 Poles, and 350 from the rest of the Commonwealth, from every occupied country in Europe, and from several non-Commonwealth countries in America.

All had flown with the various Royal Air Forces and were among the 17% who survived the traumatic experience of being shot down. We were fortunate in being under the control of the Luftwaffe who never handcuffed or hooded any of us and always treated us with respect. Göring was able to squash Hitler's order that all Europeans who had escaped their occupied countries to fly with us and were subsequently captured were to be shot. We had immense talent on all subjects and discussions on all topics with nothing held sacred.

We knew more about the war than the people who were still fighting it. We got 5 different German publications, most quite honest, and we had smuggled in parts to build a radio that gave us daily BBC news. We knew about the Soviet massacre of Poles at Katyn (the Luftwaffe took a few of us there), of the German slaughter of Jews and others in Dachau and Auschwitz (we had a few from there rescued by the Luftwaffe), but knew of no others or their magnitude. We realized the terrible cruelties on both sides on the Eastern Front, and of the immense damage our bombing was doing. Many of us were grateful that, among all this insanity, we had an island of sanity in our prison compound, even though the barbed wire was so confining to the human spirit. Being in Silesia we were immune from the slaughter until late in 1944, yet all had lost numerous friends and had survived the traumatic experience of being shot down. Few were content to remain loyal to the faiths of their childhoods. We did have a quiet, reserved, Quebec priest and a flamboyant Scottish Presbyterian padre who continued to conduct services and to give lectures. We had a growing library with books that came in parcels that each was allowed to receive every 3 months from a designated next-of-kin. These plus endless discussions along with our recent experiences led many to embrace science, ancient and Asian beliefs, and, most of all, Agnosticism. But, there was little stability as new facts were learned. We liked to believe we had open and questioning minds.

With Peace came long years of making a living and raising a family, leaving little time to pursue Truth until retirement. But, after 27 years of retirement, I still have so many questions as new knowledge brings new questions. Why?

THE PERIMETER INSTITUTE, WATERLOO, ON:

Stephen Hawking has accepted a research chair and will join such notables as Lee Solin and the PI's current director, cosmologist Neil Turok, who was Hawking's colleague at Cambridge (and founder of the Next-Einstein-from-Africa Initiative). More recently, a number of prominent physicists have been awarded positions as distinguished research chairs:

- * Leonard Susskind, Stanford University
- * Asoka Sen, Harisch-Chandra Research Institute (India)
- * Xiao-Gang Wen, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- * Yakir Aharonov, Chapman and Tel Aviv Universities.
- * Juan Ignacio Cirac, director of the Max Planck Institute for Quantum Optics (Germany)
- * Subir Sachdev, Harvard University
- * Nima Arkani-Hamed, Princeton University.
- * Neta Bahcall, Princeton University
- * Gia Dvali, New York University Center for Cosmology and Particle Physics

All those brains, thinking together in the same place, should produce something. Hopefully, in my lifetime.

GLOBAL WARMING

KIRIBATI, an early victim of Global Warming, has been well known to us stamp collectors ever since it was known as The Gilbert Islands, for Thomas Gilbert, British captain who, in 1788, explored some of the 33 islands (atolls) scattered over 1.3 million square miles straddling the equator. With sea levels rising 3 feet, storms eroding coastlines, and salt water ruining wells, the 100,000 inhabitants are seeking homes elsewhere but so far only New Zealand has accepted a few. In 1988, 4,700 had to be re-located to larger Kiribati islands.

Micronesians colonized these islands, followed by Polynesian and Melanesian invaders. British settlers arrived in 1837 and in 1892 asked to join the Empire along with the Ellice Islands. Japan occupied many of the islands in WWII leading to the Battle of Tarawa in Nov 43. In the late 1960s the UK and US used the remote Line Islands for hydrogen bomb tests.

Phosphate deposits were exhausted just after independence in 1979. Droughts and salt water damage result in little agriculture so the sea is the main source of sustenance plus continued aid from the UK and Japan.

Japan now plans a space port on Christmas Island for a rent of \$840,000 annually. The US Peace Corps pulled out in Nov 2008 due to deteriorating air service to outlining islands.

The president, Anote Tong, has fought, with little success, to persuade countries to fight global warming.

THE INDIAN OCEAN MALDIVES ARE IN THE SAME BOAT: The highest mountain in the chain is 2.3 metres. 20 islands have already been abandoned. 7 of the remaining islands may be saved, at least for this century, by restoring mangrove plantations.

THE CARIBBEAN has suffered a massive coral loss. They are dying and crumbling.

THE BAF: My apologies to Bangladesh for having neglected to describe its great air force in these pages.

Having lost 3 million people in its war of independence from West Pakistan, East Pakistan, with considerable help from India that almost surrounds it, became Bangladesh in 1971, and began building a strong and professional military. Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman explains the main duties of the 11,000-man, 13 squadron, BAF: defend Bangladesh, participate in UN peacekeeping operations (17 to date), and assist in natural disasters.

Relations with India continue to be good except, perhaps, with disputes over sharing vital Ganges River water, 45% of which India allows to flow on to Bangladesh as its main source of fresh water. Worries include the Chakma rebels and problems over oil and gas extraction along the ill-defined border with Myanmar.

China is the main supplier of aircraft, many of Russian design. Other suppliers are the Czech Republic, Russia, and the USA. Pilots will train in these four countries on new purchases, but the BAF does have its own excellent training facilities.

The 3 helicopter squadrons fly the Mi17 and Bell 212 and serve regularly on UN operations.

The two transport squadrons fly the An32 and the Hercules.

The 8 fighter squadrons fly MiG29s and Chinese F-7 series fighters.

Although on a tight budget, BAF morale remains very high.

COASTAL FORESTS can, according to a Russian study, propel rain as much as 1,500 kilometres inland. Water vapour over forests condenses to lower air pressure that sucks in moist air from the ocean helping the forest to expand, and continue the march inland. Deforesting the coast reverses the air flow. Australia is a prime example. Once forested, the interior has become desert with the removal of the coastal forests which was started by Aborigines and continued by Europeans, thus shutting down the biotic pump.

More moisture evaporates from rainforests than from oceans. Some of the moisture over the Amazon rain forest is carried by jet streams to South Africa.

This 2007, world-wide, Russian study has been discovered in 2009 by Dutch and British forest scientists who are enthusiastic about it. (New Scientist, 04 Apr 09).

AGEING: For the first time in Canadian history, grandparents now outnumber grandchildren. Yet Canada is in good shape to cope with the longevity boom. It is the only major industrialized country to have a public pension plan that is in solid financial shape.

INFRASTRUCTURE: for the Canadian Forces includes 21,000 buildings, 2.25 million hectares of land, 5,500 km of roads, 3,000 km of water, storm, and sewer pipes.

HOCKEY is said, by some, to be Canada's national game. Ice hockey, that is. But, what used to be Canada's National Hockey League is now a millionaire's club of 24 teams in the US with 6 surviving Canadian teams bunched into two divisions thus limiting their chances at the Stanley Cup. Actually the game originated in the UK with field hockey, evolving on ice during rare freeze-ups, on ice into Hurling in Ireland, Shanty in Scotland, and Bandy in England well over 200 years ago. Locals strapped on skates to play the game on ice. Canada, with a more reliable source of flat ice, has several claimants to the first game of ice hockey including Montreal and Kingston, but the first known recorded game goes to King's College in Windsor, NS, in 1800. Soldiers from the local Fort Edward then took the game with them on postings westward. In 1825, members of Sir John Franklin's expedition played the game on Great Bear Lake ice at Deline, NWT.

The preferred hockey sticks continued to be ordered from Mi'kmaq in Shubenacadie, Millbrook, Tuft's Cove, Guysborough, and the Annapolis Valley.

In 1885, The International Ice Hockey Federation was formed in Vienna composed of Belgium, Bohemia, France, Switzerland, and the UK.

In 1892 Lord Stanley, who was the Governor General of Canada, had a cup fashioned in England which became North America's first organized sport's trophy. Montreal won it in 1893. The first US team to win it was Seattle in 1917.

CANADA'S FIRST FLIGHT was on 12 Mar 1908, almost a year before the Silver Dart in Baddeck, NS. It is almost forgotten because it took place from frozen Keuka Lake, near Hammondsport, NY.

The Red Wing, so called because of the red silk supplied by Alexander Graham Bell, was built by Frederick "Casey" Baldwin and John McCurdy from a design by Thomas Selfridge and powered by an engine made by Glenn Curtis. Baldwin and Casey were part of Bell's Aerial Experiment Association.

The flight lasted only 30 seconds but it demonstrated the need for movable wing tip turn controls which Baldwin and Bell then invented.

The Toronto Aerospace Museum is now having a Red Wing model made and the school Baldwin attended, Ridley College, St. Catharines, ON, held a display in March.

Paul Lewis is researching to publish a biography on Baldwin. (From Keith Greenaway).

THE SOVIET K-7 was built in 1933 and flew 11 times before crashing, killing 15. It had a 174-foot wing span and was 92 feet long. Weighing 38 tons loaded, it had a ceiling of 13,123 feet, and a speed of 121 knots. It was designed by Konstantin Kalinin who was later executed by Stalin. Some of the pictures, now being circulated showing mounted cannon, are suspect.

NARWHALS: Inuit harvest several hundred annually but the Baffin Island - Greenland population is stable, yet with growing fears that their limited winter diet of deep-sea halibut and a lean summer diet leave them threatened by global warming. The oldest-known narwhals to date are a female at 125 and a male at 93.

HMCS HALIFAX is now commanded by a woman, Cmdr Josee Kurtz, while her husband, a retired naval officer, stays home to look after their daughter. This frigate has a complement of 205 men and 15 women.

HALIFAX RESTORATION: It took 15 years, \$1,500,000, and countless hours donated by over 50 volunteers to result in the beauty that is now NA337, Mark 7A Halifax. As I flew Marks I, II, and III, the 7A variant was after my time, but still one of the family. Half of the projected \$7,800,000 to enhance the museum over the next 10 years has been raised. Your \$20 or more will help. Send to: National Air Force Museum of Canada Building Fund, 8 Wing CFB, P.O. Box 1000, Astra, ON, K0K 3W0.

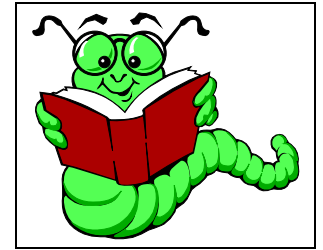
PIRATES OFF THE AFRICAN COAST have been stealing some \$4 billion annually via fishing trawlers thus robbing the locals of a livelihood and forcing them to become pirates themselves, taking ships for ransom. This lucrative hobby, mainly of teenagers, must be stopped, but Somalia is a failed state and the HMCS Winnipeg, with no legal authority, had to release captured pirates. It is now proposed to include RCMP on such patrols and to establish agreements with Kenya for trials.

Good, but let us also stop pirating trawlers.

MORE PIRATES IN TAX HAVENS: A little bit of paradise tucked away in the Caribbean, the Cayman Islands are attractive to vacationers who have enough dollars left over after paying taxes. They are even more attractive to those with lots of dollars because they evade taxes, leaving patriotism and responsibility to those not so worldly wise. One building alone houses about 12,000 companies which is probably the world's most efficient use of space. The banks hold about \$2 trillion or at least on their books. The Caymans have no army and only a few hundred policemen but quite enough protection as these tax evaders behave quite legally under laws enacted by both the Clinton and Bush administrations but that Obama plans to amend. It may take him a while. He has also to deal with the Turks and Caicos, Liechtenstein, the Isle of Man, Switzerland, and all those other countries that compete on reducing taxes to attract investors. For the US it means a loss of over \$200 billion annually.

EARLY TAX HAVENS were the Greek islands when Athens imposed a 2% tax. Then the Hanseatic League invested in London which had the lowest tax rate, and in 1721 the US colonies invested in Latin America to avoid light taxes imposed from London to help pay for the defence of the colonies from the French.

Book Reviews



THE COSMIC LANDSCAPE

Leonard Susskind, Little, Brown & Co., 2006, 403 pages

As shown on page 2, Leonard has recently been granted a chair at the Perimeter Institute in Waterloo, so I just had to buy this book to see what the PI was getting. He earned his PhD in theoretical physics from Cornell, and has been a physics professor at Belfer Graduate School, NYC, Tel Aviv University, and Stanford. In 1969 Susskind and Yoichiro Nambu independently discovered String Theory. He developed the Theory of Quark Confinement (quarks can never escape nucleus), baryogenesis (why there is matter and no anti-matter), Black Hole Complementarity, the Holographic Principle, and others. He has carried on a 20-year debate over information that falls into Black Holes with Stephen Hawking who will also be working at the Perimeter Institute (health permitting).

My knowledge of quantum mechanics is dismal and what I do learn I often forget, but I did find this book most readable. In layman's language he takes us into the world of:

Bosons: photons, gravitons, gluons, W-bosons, Z-bosons, Higgs particles

Fermions: electrons, neutrinos, muons, quarks (in 6 flavours)

He gives credit to Soviet and Russian scientists who beat us to many discoveries and to scores of other thinkers who have contributed to our current knowledge. He describes in detail how finely tuned the quantum world had to be to originate and support life as we know it. One of countless examples is the Proton of which there are 10^{28} on each of us. Decaying protons would release photons, pions, and positrons, enough to kill us, so the life span of a proton must be many times the age of the universe. No detector, such as the one in Sudbury, has ever detected a dying proton. He tells of the slow and laborious build-up of molecules from the original hydrogen of the Big Bang and the unsolved difficulties in discovering a unifying single law that governs all this. He even toys with the possibility that all of us, and all we know, is simply a hologram generated by a 2-D projector at the edge of space, just as we use our primitive computers to do likewise.

He describes the complexities and promise of String and Brane Theories but emphasizes the limitations of our minds and tools to make assumptions on the very basics of life. He does not dismiss intelligent design, but adds *If there is a God, she has taken great pains to make herself irrelevant.* With 10^{500} possible environments of String Theory there is bound to be at least one that supports life. I found these 400 pages most informative and not too difficult to follow. He includes only a few formulae which are far over my head but he does provide numerous simple analogies to help us visualize our world from the very small to the very large. He should be a good addition to the PI staff even though his book leaves me with the conviction that I am unlikely to see any fundamental breakthroughs in what is left of my life time.

MAGAZINES

Having reviewed over 50 books for our newsletters, I should turn to magazines. Among the far-too-many to which I subscribe are 7 Canadian and 5 UK. For a start, let me discuss *Esprit de Corps - Canadian Military* on its 20th anniversary.

Editor Scott Taylor got off to a rocky start because of such books as *Tarnished Brass* in which he pointed out shortcomings of Canada's military leaders, causing them to put their weight behind other military publications and accuse him of bitterness due to a perceived lack of appreciation while he was a serving member.

While each issue of his magazine includes articles of Canada's founding conflicts as well as more recent wars, the main emphasis is on today's problems. He is hard hitting with both praise and condemnation of individuals and policies of the Military and of Government. Making numerous visits to places like the Balkans and Afghanistan and spending time with leaders and common folk he does have a wealth of personal experience and his views are worth considering.

For instance, in the current issue (June 09) he berates procurement policies such as ship building, arguing for a ship-a-year policy rather than the usual all-at-once habit that idles shipyards for years, thus losing experienced staff. He criticizes Afghan policies such as Hamid Karzai choosing Tajik warlord, Mohamad Qasim Fahim, as his running mate for the August election. A ruthless torturer, killer, and leader in the Northern Alliance, Fahim was chosen by the US as an ally to permit its exodus to Iraq and he still negates what progress that has been made towards bettering the lives of common Afghans. Also in this issue is an article on Governor Frontenac and the Iroquois, the Versailles Treaty, the 42-months of hell for Canadian F/L Robert Weiss as an RAF prisoner of the Japanese in Java, an interview with NDP head, Jack Layton on Afghanistan and on economic policies, plus data on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and on free Via rail travel for veterans and serving members in July (60,000 took advantage of this last July).

TRAFALGAR

Nelson: "Order the signal, Hardy."

Hardy: "Aye, aye sir."

Nelson: "Hold on, that's not what I dictated to Flagg. What's the meaning of this?"

Hardy: "Sorry sir?"

Nelson (reading the semaphore aloud): "England expects every person to do his or her duty, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious persuasion or disability." - What gobbledegook is this?"

Hardy: "Admiralty policy, I'm afraid, sir. We're an equal opportunities employer now. We had the devil's own job getting 'England' past the censors, lest it be considered racist."

Nelson: "Gadzooks, Hardy. Hand me my pipe and tobacco."

Hardy: "Sorry sir. All naval vessels have now been designated smoke-free working environments."

Nelson: "In that case, break open the rum ration. Let us splice the mainbrace to steel the men before battle."

Hardy: "The rum ration has been abolished, Admiral. It is part of the Government's policy on binge drinking."

Nelson: "Good heavens, Hardy. I suppose we'd better get on with it. Full speed ahead."

Hardy: "I think you'll find that there's a 4 knots speed limit in this stretch of water."

Nelson: "Damn it man! We are on the eve of the greatest sea battle in history. We must advance with all dispatch. Report from the crow's nest please."

Hardy: "That won't be possible, sir."

Nelson: "What?"

Hardy: "Health and Safety have closed the crow's nest, sir. No harness, and they said that rope ladders don't meet regulations. They won't let anyone up there until a proper scaffolding can be erected."

Nelson: "Then get me the ship's carpenter without delay, Hardy."

Hardy: "He's busy knocking up a wheelchair access to the fo'c'sle, Admiral."

Nelson: "Wheelchair access? I've never heard anything so absurd."

Hardy: "Health and safety again, sir. We have to provide a barrier-free environment for the differently abled."

Nelson: "Differently abled? I've only one arm and one eye and I refuse even to hear mention of the word. I didn't rise to the rank of admiral by playing the disability card."

Hardy: "Actually, sir, you did. The Royal Navy is under represented in the areas of visual impairment and limb deficiency."

Nelson: "Whatever next? Give me full sail. The salt spray beckons."

Hardy: "A couple of problems there too, sir. Health and Safety won't let the crew up the rigging without hard hats. And they don't want anyone breathing in too much salt - haven't you seen the adverts?"

Nelson: "I've never heard such infamy. Break out the cannon and tell the men to stand by to engage the enemy."

Hardy: "The men are a bit worried about shooting at anyone, Admiral."

Nelson: "What? This is mutiny!"

Hardy: "It's not that, sir. It's just that they're afraid of being charged with murder if they actually kill anyone. There's a couple of legal-aid lawyers on board, watching everyone like hawks."

Nelson: "Then how are we to sink the Frenchies and the Spanish?"

Hardy: "Actually, sir, we are not."

Nelson: "We are not?"

Hardy: "No, sir. The French and the Spanish are our European partners now. According to the Common Fisheries Policy, we shouldn't even be in this in this stretch of water. We could get hit with a claim for compensation."

Nelson: "But you must hate a Frenchman as you hate the devil."

Hardy: "I wouldn't let the ship's diversity co-ordinator hear you saying that sir. You'll be up on disciplinary report."

Nelson: "You must consider every man an enemy, who speaks ill of your King."

Hardy: "Not any more, sir. We must be inclusive in this multi-cultural age. Now put on your Kevlar vest; it's the rules. It could save your life"

Nelson: "Don't tell me - health and safety. Whatever happened to rum, sodomy, and the lash?"

Hardy: "As I explained, sir, rum is off the menu! And there's a ban on corporal punishment."

Nelson: "What about sodomy?"

Hardy: "I believe that is now legal, sir."

Nelson: "In that case..... kiss me, Hardy"

AND THAT JUST ABOUT SUMS IT ALL UP !! (Submitted by Barry Edward)

CANADA'S MONARCHY costs each Canadian \$1.52 annually (\$1.24 for the Governor General and \$0.28 for the provincial/territorial Lieutenant Governor. The Queen costs each **resident of the UK \$1.26 for a total cost of £38 million. But, the Queen gave back £201 million which was the surplus revenue from Crown Estates.**

THE NEXT US AMBASSADOR TO CANADA: DAVID JACOBSON, A balding, 57-year-old Chicago lawyer, has been nominated for this post. He founded Atom Works, an organization to bring together corporate, civic and academic leaders in order to foster nanotechnology in the US Midwest. He also served as a member of CEOs for Cities, a national bipartisan alliance of 75 mayors, corporate executives, university presidents and non-profit leaders organized to advance the economic competitiveness of cities. He earned a JD from Georgetown University Law Center and was the administrative editor of the Georgetown Law Journal. He received his BA from Johns Hopkins University.

But, above all, he was a successful fund raiser for the Obama campaign. Like so many in all administrations in this system of government that we call a democracy, you have to spend more time fund raising than governing - especially if you want such a plum posting as Ottawa.

TWO HUNDRED MILLION WOMEN ARE MISSING! Women have gone missing as long as I can remember, usually kidnapped by the international sex trade. But this staggering number is a recent UN figure. Back in 1990 an Indian economist, Amartya Sen, published a study that claimed 100 million were missing because of early deaths in a variety of societies, usually impoverished, where women have low value, or are expensive to marry off. Lately Siwan Anderson at UBC, Vancouver, and Debraj Ray at New York University have been crunching the numbers and verify this colossal loss.

THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION

Marc D. Hauser, author of *Moral Minds*:

“Lecture: the process in which the notes of the teacher go to the notes of the student without passing through the brains of either.”

Mark Bauerlein, Emory University:

“The digital generation is the dumbest. The overwhelming bits of information on line make deep thinking difficult.”

Don Tapscott, University of Toronto, author of 13 books:

“Universities are losing their monopoly on higher education as the web becomes the dominant infrastructure for knowledge and dialogue.

In the old model, teachers taught, and students were expected to absorb vast quantities of content, and being able to recall it on exams. You graduated and you were set for life — just "keeping" up in your chosen field. Today when you graduate you are set for say, 15 minutes. If you took a technical course, half of what you learned in the first year may be obsolete by the 4th year. What counts is your capacity to learn lifelong, to think, research, find information, analyze, synthesize, contextualize, critically evaluate it; to apply research to solving problems; to collaborate and communicate.

But now that students can obviously find the information they are looking for in an instant online in the crania of others, this old model doesn't make any sense. It's not only what you know that really counts when you graduate; it's how you navigate in the digital world, and what you do with the information you discover. This new style of learning, I believe, will suit them. Universities should be places to learn, not to teach.

Net Geners, immersed in digital technology, are keen to try new things, often at high speed. They want university to be fun and interesting. So they should enjoy the delight of discovering things for themselves. As Seymour Papert, one of the world's foremost experts on how technology can provide new ways to learn, put it: "The scandal of education is that every time you teach something, you deprive a child of the pleasure and benefit of discovery."

Well, we had all this at Mitchell High School, 1970-81, but threw it all away. Why?

I was fortunate in being in at the start of this “Modular System” with the responsibility of writing the curriculum for World History, Geography, and International Relations. We worked a 6-day cycle with each teacher having 7 classes of a maximum of 17 students per class. Classes sat around an oblong table for discussions and role playing. For each of their subjects, students attended “Small-group” 55-minute classes every other day and “large-group” once or twice per cycle in the auditorium for films or lectures. It was essential for students to arrive at small groups prepared to participate in the day's assigned activities. To prepare for this, each discipline had a large resource centre crammed with books and magazines. A couple of para-professionals were on hand to assist students in finding sources. This system also gave me many “free” hours at my desk during which I was able to assist dozens of students per day on a one-to-one basis. History necessitated the continued re-writing of “units” to have students compare the problems of today with those faced by our forbears over the 40,000 years the course covered. I gave no multiple-choice tests, but numerous essays and a term paper which kept me up past midnight most nights grading them. There was also frequent contact with parents. I still have former students writing to me, over 30 years later, telling me how much this system helped them in their careers.

But, the system demanded dedication from both students and teachers. It was also expensive with extra staff, books, magazines, and paper. With changing school boundaries and declining enrolment we lost some of our most dedicated teachers as seniority rules dictated that longevity, rather than talent, selected those to be retained or discarded.

I fought hard to retain this system but my eloquence was insufficient to overcome teacher objections to the extra work load, students who abused the system, costs, and the over-riding demands of public relations. Grades could be much higher on a single text-book traditional system, so the school would appear better in the taxpayers' eyes.

THE DEBATE

Many of you have been exposed to small portions of the e-mail debate that has raged for 3 years between Peter Rallis and myself, so a few words are warranted here. Peter and I are poles apart on many topics: the Middle East, previous and present US foreign policy, the economy, global warming, Democrat vs Republican, Liberals vs Conservatives, the United Nations and so on. We do agree that the earth is an oblate spheroid and that it traces out an ellipse around the Sun. We also agree that each is entitled to his opinions, wrong as they might be.

As we are all products of our experiences, a wide variety of interpretations can be expected and are healthy. This particular debate could be considered an exercise in futility as neither has changed the other's views, but, if I didn't have Peter I would have no one to argue with as the rest of you are mute. In 23 years as newsletter editor I have published many controversial articles, hoping for debate backed up by facts. In all that time only Pat Dennis rose to the bait and gave me an excellent 4-page historical summary crammed with facts. So, I need Peter. I admit I enjoy turning his words around so they have the opposite meanings. And, it keeps my ageing mind active trying to refute his facts with better facts. To me, Peter's interpretations are incorrect, but he has the courage of his convictions and is not afraid to stick out his neck in broadcasting them. He does possess a good knowledge of history, so can embellish his arguments with facts. We have evolved to being quite frank in stating how revolting the other's views are, but violence and hatred have never entered the equation and we remain friends. He can tell me my views are too liberal, too naive, and self-defeating. I can tell him his views are too arrogant, too brutish, and self-defeating. Peter fears his world is collapsing and blames others, especially Muslims and Democrats. I fear my world is collapsing and I blame ourselves and our selfish life styles.

Perhaps, if the Truth were known, we would realize that we Homo sapiens are, in fact, Homo ignoramus.

PETER, YOU HAVE COMPETITION: JEHOVAH WITNESSES: As I was typing this the doorbell rang. A young male and female, toting Bibles and Watch Tower magazines, were eager to discuss the Bible with me and to show me how relevant it is to today's world. I invited them to chairs on the porch provided they accepted the risk that I might try to convert them. I was surprised, and pleased, at how open they were to discussion. They had a very good knowledge of the Bible but were puzzled when I ranged from Animism to Zoroastrianism to Quantum physics, and to the dominance of female gods for most of human existence. They had never heard of most of what I was taking about, but seemed quite interested and actually asked if they could return for more.

Perhaps I should continue that approach next time with the Mormons who call frequently and who also are friendly types. For now, I have to read the Watch Tower magazines they left me to prepare for their next visit. Yes, I even read all of Peter's daily missives to prepare myself should I ever stumble into that world he lives in.

It appears that physicists such as Leonard Susskind are right when they describe the enormously-large 10^{500} possible Landscapes. But, even though our Landscape, or Universe, is the only one that works for us, we abuse it by sub-dividing it into countless interpretations. Interesting! Have YOU got any answers that I can publish?

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HMS ONTARIO, a Royal Navy warship that sank in a storm in Lake Ontario, 31 Oct 1780, with 120 aboard, including 30 US prisoners of war, has been found below 500 feet in a location still secret to avoid scavengers. Its two masts are still standing and its cannon still aboard. It remains the property of the British Admiralty.

OLDER THAN WE THOUGHT: New finds continue to push back time lines. The latest:

A stone blade has been found in Kenya that dates back to 500,000 years ago - 150,000 years earlier than the previous oldest tool. It is not known which pre-human species made it.

Domesticated dogs date back 7,900 years in China.

Wine, with medicinal additives, date back 5,100 years in Egypt. (Archaeology, Jul/Aug 2009).

CONGRATULATIONS to Tamir Ludin and David Rohde, an Afghan reporter and a NY Times reporter, for escaping Taliban captivity. Taken POW south of Kabul 04 Nov 08 they were incarcerated 165 km away in N. Waziristan, Pakistan, for 7 months. The story that they climbed over a wall and eventually found a Pakistan army patrol sounds much too easy. The Associated Press article gives half a sentence to Tamir and 30 paragraphs to David.

NEXT DEADLINE: If there is anything left of my declining energy, I will try to dream up a September newsletter, so start sending me inputs now. Send them all to: georgesweanor@comcast.net