

971 RCAF AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan.

During their 03-14 July tour of Canada.

Photo taken by official photographer Bill Cann, a founding member of 971 Wing, and now at the Institute of Ocean Sciences, Patricia Bay, BC



Air Force Association Newsletter Sept 2009

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Social Calendar

- Jul 10 Seven Wing members attended the handing over ceremonies between LGenerals Charlie Bouchard and Marcel Duval. For your scribe this was his 20th deputy-commander handing over ceremony and his 21st DCINC.
- Jul 18 31 of us enjoyed a delightful, well-organized evening at the Nancy and Peter Rallis residence.
- Aug 22 Flying W Ranch. 20 of us have signed up at press time.
- Sep 12 1500 at the Charlene and Bill Champion ranch, 12612 Pommel Circle, Elbert, 80106. 495-0529
- Sep 20 1400 at The Retired Enlisted Association for the Battle of Britain ceremonies. Blazers, grey slacks and medals.
- Oct 03 TBA at Valerie and Bob Freimuth's, 5540 Jarman St., 80906. 576-6988

Last Post - Two Grievous Losses

Wilfrid J. "Mike" Lewis, DFC, of Port Hope and Etobicoke, Ontario, died 17 July 2009 of cancer at age 91. Mike joined the RAF in 1938 and took part in the first RAF bombing raid of the war (Hampdens on Sylt). His DFC came for turning many invasion barges into toothpicks. He pioneered the Manchester bomber and was shot down 07 Sep 1941 to be a POW for almost 4 years. Post WWII he flew with 412 and 405 squadrons and served at Rockcliffe, Goose Bay, Winnipeg, Staff College, SHAPE, Paris, Summerside, and Greenwood. He retired as a Wing Commander 29 Dec 1965.

Mike lost his first wife to cancer in 1986, then married Dorothy, widow of Wally McCabe, a 418 Squadron pilot who died in 1987 of complications sustained while a POW. She is now recovering from a broken neck.

Bill Edwards, 19 July 1918 - 07 August 2009, joined the RAF in 1940, flying Hurricanes and Spitfires with 133 Eagle Squadron, then Mustangs with the USAAF. He was shot down in July 1944. Post war he served in Training Command, ADC, Yugoslavia, Malta, Germany, and France. He was a Lt Col on Lord Mountbatten's staff. After retirement from the USAF, he worked for Lockheed installing radars in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. See page 5 of the Jan 08 newsletter for a full-page account of this episode. Remaining healthy and active, Bill continued to pilot light aircraft and embark on long drives, re-certifying as an instructor at age 90. In the fall of 2008 he and Barbara drove to Calgary then across Canada to Halifax and back through the States. This spring they drove to Seattle where Bill fell ill and was diagnosed with cancer and kidney failure. Bill and Barbara have 4 children: Gary, Dan, Dawn, and Steven.

Darrell Levitt organized much of the memorial, Sam Swancutt was the piper, Art Nielsen carried his medals, Roy Thompson gave a radio commentary, and your scribe an eulogy.

The Editor's Corner

Life and Consciousness

Many of you out there rest serene in your knowledge of life's mysteries, and of the blessings that await you when you serve out your stint here, so it pains me that I am so ignorant. I do not even understand basic quantum mechanics, but I will leave that for page 5 as I have enough uncertainties for page 2. With frequent cell replacement except, perhaps, for the cerebral cortex, why can I remember back through so many of Me to age 4? Decades of research allow me to name 136 of my ancestors back to 1570, but I only remember 5 of them even though parts of all 136, and many more, have made Me what I am. I do not remember volunteering, so why was I drafted to join this human species? Also drafted, with staggered reporting dates, were the hundreds of trillions of quarks, atoms, molecules, and the like, born in the furnaces of suns, and forced to submit to a strict DNA code to fashion for a brief segment of Time, the edifice for what I call Me? And it took about 4 years of building this edifice before I knew Me was Me. But, where in this immense conglomeration does the essence of Me reside? Why am I so clumsy learning to use these neural pathways? Now, when I feel that Me is a working unit, why does Decay insert its ugly presence? Why do I not know whom I really am and why? If I am immortal, what is my format - pleasant or unpleasant? Why, when I look in a mirror, do I refuse to admit that the apparition staring back at me is really me. Is there any *Free Will* in all this? Has the limited knowledge I have acquired helped at all?

Trillions of trillions of other molecules had to assemble to make the rest of my world. Some of these assemblages I like very much and are spread among many species. Some, especially humans, I find revolting because of their cruelties to others. All, however, are condemned to a brief existence - unless, of course, we have the concept of Time all wrong.

Gaia, a delightful hypothesis evolved in the 1960s to argue that our world is a living entity that continually reacts against adversities to protect life. I found comfort in that. Alas, digging deeper, I learn that Life is, strangely, very anti-life. For starters, consider our own species. Factors, including greed, a sense of glory, sex, and over-population have resulted in humans killing other humans, along with huge quantities of other life forms, and making survivors suffer terribly. In the 20th century alone, some 190 million humans were killed by other humans. Yet, group violence goes back only 7,000 years, most humans abhor violence, and 74 peaceful cultures existed for long periods. Nature, composed of similar atoms, appears completely indifferent to living things, even though it often suffers from them.

For billions of years this planet has had a chemical imbalance, enhanced by volcanic activity, that promotes life but heartlessly discards species. Our planet, some 4 billion years ago (bya) was sterile and will return to that state in another billion years. Life here commenced 3.8 bya and has less than a billion years left. Life had a mere 100 million years before microbes became so numerous that they nearly destroyed all life with the methane they blindly belched.

Then, about 2.5 bya, photosynthesis evolved permitting plants to convert CO₂ into sugars. But, over 200 million years, well-meaning-but-ignorant plants sucked up so much CO₂ that the earth was plunged into a deep freeze where even the oceans froze for 100 million years. Recovery was gradual but 700 mya the same mistake was repeated. Once more it was a slow recovery but 360 mya the process started all over again, giving us a 50-million-year ice age. Ignorant Life continued on a very treacherous road. Plants, in absorbing CO₂, gave off Oxygen that was deadly to most living things at the time. Had it not been for microbes evolving to tolerate oxygen we would not be here.

Since animals evolved 560 mya, there have been five major and a dozen minor mass extinctions. A few have been caused by non-life culprits such as asteroids and volcanoes but the majority were due to life itself such as blooms of bacteria giving off poisonous H₂S. These bacteria thrive during periods of stagnant seas due to global warming.

Not to be outdone by bacteria, humans entered the equation some time ago by multiplying to the extent that their combined interference with vital balances are causing a growing list of mass exterminations. Intelligence still unknown.

Fortunately, if it is not already too late, some humans have evolved an understanding of causes and of the overall picture. They have given us plenty of explanations and warnings which, to date, the majority of humans, happy with their bloated life styles, have either ignored or passed on to the next generation.

While humans, by taking actions, could prolong a life-tolerant environment, Nature is moving relentlessly against us. Our sun has increased 30% in brightness over 4.5 billion years and this will continue, thus accelerating the weathering of silicates removing ever more CO₂ so that, 500 million years from now, photosynthesis will be impossible, curtailing the production of oxygen. The loss of plants will increase CO₂ so much so that our surface temperature will exceed the boiling point of water.

Life, it appears, like so many of us, is now in its old age. In spite of aches and pains, Life is still considered precious by those of us who long to understand and prolong it. Giant strides have been, and are being made, but at a pace too slow for my generation to benefit. A sense of humour does help in mitigating qualms

So, in our ignorance, what is left for us? We have observed, in various animal, insect, and plant species, tolerance, and even compassion, for other life forms as well as for members of the same species. Really, are we not all one, made from the same soup? Should not Tolerance and Compassion be our companions? So many, like Siddharta Gautama, have tried to enlighten us. We should listen.

Maybe for now, I should just go to page 5, try to solve the quantum enigma, and consciously create a better universe.

SPACE JUNK: Of the over 600,000 man-made-once-useful-now-junk pieces that race around on low orbit at over 27,000 kmph, the USAF Space Command tracks only 18,000, concentrating on those that pose a threat to humans or to military satellites. This debris was a chief peril to the crew servicing the Hubble telescope.

At risk are space systems that, in 2008, earned \$33 billion. There was a major increase in debris when China, in Jan 2007, destroyed an ageing satellite simply to test an anti-satellite rocket and, in Feb 2009, when a US commercial satellite and a Russian satellite collided.

THE REAL REASON FOR DINOSAUR EXTINCTION: has been discovered by an observant member of the staff of the UK New Scientist magazine. He went to an Imax 3-D movie featuring dinosaurs. He remained calm and studied each one that lunged out of the screen to devour the audience. Not one of them had any genitals!

CROP CIRCLES: In Tasmania, Wallabies are breaking into fields where poppies are grown for medicinal purposes. They feast on the poppies, get high as a kite, and hop around creating crop-circle designs.

NUMBER 1 AGAIN! Gad, sir, it warms the cockles of the heart to see a resurgent Britain replace the US and Israel as top manipulator.

Of course we are too modest to flaunt this, so we remained smugly quiet while that wise, and all-knowing foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, revealed that the Wily Fox, also known as the UK, masterminded those enormous protests in Iran against the results of the June election. British ingenuity used the BBC to misinform a few Iranians into assisting swarms of trouble makers that British airways flew in simply by substituting larger passenger jets on their routine flights to Iran. These British troublemakers, diverted from football games, then masqueraded as green-clad Iranians on Tehran's streets.

BEER: If any of you out there drink beer you may be interested in recent statistics: The Czechs top the world with an average annual consumption of 156.9 litres, followed by Ireland, Germany, Australia, Austria, and the UK. The US ranks 13th while Canada staggers along in 19th place. Actually, beer is yeast excrement and in ancient Egypt was used as a vaginal douche.

GRADUATION DAY IN IQALUIT: The first group of Inuit graduate students to earn a degree in Nunavut completed, 01 July 2009, the Master of Education course led by the University of Prince Edward Island. This marks a great step for education in the North and will hopefully lead to the establishing of Nunavut's own university,

The 23 Inuit graduates were all women. And, speaking of Inuit women, Leona Aglukkaq of Gjoa Haven, is the federal Minister for Health.

CAR COLLISIONS: Canada averages about 160,000 annually for a cost of \$62.7 billion and less than 1% killed. The US has about 6,420,00 for a cost of \$230 billion and a death rate of 42,600 = .7%, but that still results in one death every 13 minutes.

CANAV BOOKS: Just off the press is Larry Milberry's latest book in his Aviation in Canada series. This one, *The Formative Years*, starts with the end of WWI in 1918 where his previous volume, *The Pioneer Decades*, left off. Its 208 pages in large format contain maps and 450 pictures, many never before published.

I have ordered a copy.

THE UNMAKING OF A SOLDIER:

*"The Whiz-Bang and shrapnel around me do roar,
I don't want this old war any more."*

It is truly amazing that so many survive, apparently intact, wars that can drive human endurance to the breaking point. We recruit boys, barely out of school, rush their training on how to kill, leaving little time to add ethics, and throw them at other boys on the other side to kill or be killed. That some of them sink to behaviour that is not only reprehensible but very damaging to the cause is understandable but unforgivable.

We are rightly reviled at the cruelties employed by the enemy, but our *raison d'être* is our humanity. We were heavily damaged to learn of the inhumanity of scores of US soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as in Vietnam and WWII. But disgust can not end there. Now we learn that UK soldiers in Iraq were guilty of beating and urinating on hooded and shackled helpless Iraqi prisoners, most of them innocent of any crime, forcing an embarrassed UK government to pay millions of pounds in compensations.

The vast majority of such crimes have gone unpunished and they exist in all armies. They must no longer be swept under the carpet but revealed and punished be they rape in the Congo or hooding and shackling in Afghanistan.

THE QUEEN HONOURS JEAN CHRÉTIEN: The Queen has her own Order of Merit that is restricted to 24 living members. It has included such as: Florence Nightingale, Robert Baden-Powell, T.S. Elliott, MacKenzie King, Lester Pearson, Albert Schweitzer, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, and David Attenborough.

Jean Chrétien, who is surprised, humbled, but pleased with such a high honour, was born in Shawinigan, Quebec, 75 years ago, the 18th of 19 children. A Member of Parliament since 1963, he was prime minister of Canada from 1993 to 2003 and is credited with keeping Canada together during the Quebec separation crisis and reversing the string of budget deficits into a string of surpluses.

FROM THE EARLY 1930s, AN RAF JOKE:

A leisurely life style was endangered when, after a long period of inactivity, it was decided that an aerial exercise should be conducted, so a committee was set up to determine an appropriate date.

After considerable discussion as to whether it should be held on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday, a young member of the committee suggested Wednesday, resulting in a chorus of:

"Are you out of your mind? That would destroy two weekends!"

THE TRAINS ARE COMING by Roy Thompson: a Model Train show for those 6 to 79, TECO Train Expo Colorado, will be having a two day model a train show on Saturday 12 Sep 09 and Sunday Sep 13 at the Crown Plaza Hotel, from 10am to 4pm on both days. There will be 6 operating model train layouts with about 400 linear feet of operating trains. There will be about 3000 sf area of youth activities and layouts for anybody over 6 to actually operate a model train. This is a wonderful hobby for boys and girls and adults.. This makes for a wonderful family outing with lots to do and see, over 200 table top exhibits, vendors, and Colorado train events coordinators. There will be a sandwich bar available.

TECO was established in 2008 to gather railroad hobbyists together, inform the public about model railroading, recruit new members, support and expand youth in model railroading effort and activities, as well as to inform you, the public, about railroad activities in our community & State. This is our 4th show, and each have been well attended and supported. TECO is operated by volunteers with Roy Thompson as the coordinator. All proceeds after expenses go towards the youth programs and to improve the exhibits and operating layouts. We are looking for volunteers to help.

As seniors we are always looking for something different to do, especially with kids and grand kids, especially events that do not cost an arm and a leg. Something that is interesting to kids as well as the grandparents. Well here is a show that meets all these fun outings – a model railroad show that is interesting, educational and fun, all this for seniors \$3 and children under 12 are free. Our new website is now on line at www.tecoshow.org

The admission fees are \$4 per person, a family of two or more is \$7, children 12 and under are FREE, and seniors 55+, AFA of C members, as well as military and retirees get \$1 off. Mark your calendar and come and have some fun Saturday and Sunday 12 & 13 September

COMMUNING WITH NATURE AND SALMON:

Two of our Wing's favourite top brass, Bill Carr and Dave O'Blenis joined forces in July in Sand Hill River, Labrador. Nice to be young, healthy, and full of get-up-and-go, even though the salmon may not agree.

BITTER SWEET MEMORIES: When an era ends and we close the books we are reminded of the temporary nature of our existence. So, farewell to Henry Allingham who flew on at age 113 on 18 July 09, the last surviving member of the formation of the RAF in 1918. Henry joined the RFC in 1915 and was trained both as a mechanic and an observer. His bevy of weapons consisted of one Lee Enfield .303 rifle, but the embryonic RFC could not demand his total time. He also fought in the Battle of Jutland and on the western front, sustaining wounds.

After surviving both his wife and daughter, he was encouraged by many, including Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip to talk to schools and clubs and to write his memoirs, *Kitchener's Last Volunteer*. In 2008 he joined the UK's last WWI soldier, Harry Patch, and the last sailor, Bill Stone, in ceremonies to mark the 90th anniversary of the 11 Nov 1918 end of WWI.

NEPALESE REFUGEES: In 1992 some 100,000 Nepalese were driven out of Bhutan to exist in refugee camps in humid, snake-infested lowlands. In 2007 the UN persuaded 7 western countries to accept quotas. The US is now taking 59,000 and Canada 5,000 to be settled in 30 communities from BC to Newfoundland. It is a tremendous cultural shock. As there are no established Nepalese communities in North America, local groups have come forward to assist these hard working but primitive immigrants into using such luxuries as flush toilets, electricity, and central heating.

As the Nepalese Gurkhas have proven, these immigrants will rapidly transform themselves from dependents to assets.

NEW ZEALAND MOVES CLOSER TO AUSTRALIA

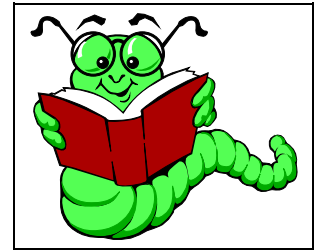
A 7-8 earthquake in July off the southern tip of South Island, moved the island 12 inches (30 cms) closer to Australia. It was the world's strongest 2009 quake and could have caused immense damage had it not occurred in soft rock between two plates in a sparsely inhabited area.

ICEBERG BEER: A 250 million-ton iceberg grounded off Twillingate, Newfoundland, ensuring a continued supply of 25,000-year-old-pristine ice for the Quidi Vidi Brewery to keep producing 1,100 cases of beer daily.

This interesting brewery, which we toured after a 1997 POW reunion in Halifax, likes to boast of its safety record - its only accident was when a worker fell off a ladder, but was unscathed (he fell off the bottom rung.)

THE INFERTILE CRESCENT: Ending is 10,000 years of nurturing civilizations as global warming and dams in Turkey and Iran are drying up the Tigris and Euphrates.

TUKTOYAKTUK: With July temperatures reaching 86F (30C) people are swimming in the Arctic Ocean.



Reviews

QUANTUM ENIGMA

By Bruce Rosenblum and Fred Kuttner, Oxford U. Press, 2006, 217 pages

Presenting, in language you and I can understand, a monumental shift in understanding our world, this book should be compulsory reading. The first 50 pages are devoted to reminding us of the many changing mind sets from Aristotle through Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, the Inquisition, Newton, Einstein, Bohr, Planck, Schrödinger, Compton, Broglie, Bell, and many others to emphasize the skeleton in the closet that Quantum scientists have hid for a hundred years.

Quantum mechanics has never had a prediction proven wrong. A third of our economy depends on it (Lasers, MRIs, Transistors, and so on). It works, but nobody knows why so physicists have been told to “just shut up and calculate”.

We have learned that, at the microscopic level, wave functions can be everywhere at once in every state to be condensed into reality by human observation (consciousness). Paired particles affect each other regardless of distance. To date this has been proven to a distance of 100 kilometres. Any two objects that have ever interacted are forever entwined.

As none of us knows what human Consciousness is, this is spooky. The macroscopic world, that works with Newtonian physics, appears real enough to us but, as it is made up of the microscopic, should not the same apply? In the book, frequent reference is made to Schrödinger’s cat, of the macroscopic world, that may be both alive and dead until observed to allow it to collapse into one of those states. It was the subject of a life-long friendly debate between Harald Bohr and Albert Einstein. Einstein would argue he preferred to believe the moon was there even when he did not look.

I can be sure of my free will but I cannot be sure that you are not in a superposition state to be condensed to reality only when I observe you. The authors go to great length, perhaps too much, to show how observation dictates reality, but they do advise which chapters can be skipped by those anxious for the summation. As John Bell (Belfast, deceased) predicted: *“The new way of seeing things will involve an imaginative leap that will astound us.”*

Francis Crick tells us: *“You, your joys and sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity, and your free will are no more than the behaviour of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.”*

Consciousness and Quantum Enigma are not just two mysteries, they are the two mysteries. Only a conscious observation can collapse a wave function. Only a conscious observer can make a conscious observation.

Our universe is made up of 70% dark energy, 25% dark matter, and 5% of what we can see. There is speculation that dark energy = Consciousness. At the instant of the Big Bang this universe had to be so finely tuned against odds of 10^{123} (10 with 123 zeros after it) to create a world permitting life that it can be argued that Consciousness created the Big Bang some 15 billion years after it happened! Ridiculous? Of course, but can you explain Consciousness and why we are here? At the moment I cannot. Neither can the authors of this book, but they give us well-presented food for deep thought.

But really, what is so novel about creating people and places? Young children do it continually. So do we in dreams.

THE EMPIRE HAS NO CLOTHES

by Ivan Evan, The Independent Institute, Oakland, CA, 2008, 264 pages:

“The greatest empire of modern times has come into existence without the American people even noticing.”

Niall Ferguson, UK historian and Moritz Bonn, German economist, adds:

“The US has been the cradle of modern anti-imperialism and at the same time the founder of a mighty empire.”

Evan starts US expansion with the 1898 Spanish-America War, over a hundred years too late. What about the westward expansion and the invasions of Canada and Mexico? He compares the US Empire with the Spartan rather than the Athenian, Roman, or British. Sparta did not care about land acquisition or domestic policies as long as governments were oligarchic and favourable to Sparta. With over 700 bases around the world the US ensures influence for its political and economic interests. But, the folly of Europe does not escape blame. In 1914 Germany had the world’s widest voting base only to end WWI destitute and ripe for the likes of Hitler. Emerging from WWII amid the wreckage of former great powers and with 59% of the world’s GDP, it was an opportunity too tempting for the US to miss. It was easy to enhance US economic interests by interventions in places like Iran and Guatemala. Evan traces the growth, sometimes sporadic, of US interference, of overblowing threats, and professing innocence. With 450,000 troops abroad, major deployments in 34 countries, and security arrangements with 53, resentments are bound to arise among those who feel coerced or humiliated.

Evan argues that all this erodes the founding principles of the American Constitution and lessens American prosperity, power, security, and moral standing. The lessons from the decline and fall of all other empires should be heeded.

A STIMULUS STORY - submitted by Marilyn Mc Sherry

It is the month of August; a resort town sits next to the shores of a lake. It is raining, and the little town looks totally deserted. It is tough times, everybody is in debt, and everybody lives on credit.

Suddenly, a rich tourist comes to town. He enters the only hotel, lays a 100 dollar bill on the reception counter, and goes to inspect the rooms upstairs in order to pick one.

The hotel proprietor takes the 100 dollar bill and runs to pay his debt to the butcher.

The butcher takes the 100 dollar bill, and runs to pay his debt to the pig raiser.

The pig raiser takes the 100 dollar bill, and runs to pay his debt to the supplier of his feed and fuel.

The supplier of feed and fuel takes the 100 dollar bill and runs to pay his debt to the town's prostitute that in these hard times, gave her services on credit.

The hooker runs to the hotel, and pays off her debt with the 100 dollar bill to the hotel proprietor to pay for the rooms that she rented when she brought her clients there.

The hotel proprietor then lays the 100 dollar bill back on the counter so that the rich tourist will not suspect anything.

At that moment, the rich tourist comes down after inspecting the rooms, and takes his 100 dollar bill, after saying that he did not like any of the rooms, and leaves town.

No one earned anything. However, the whole town is now without debt, and looks to the future with a lot of optimism.

A CANADIAN REMINDER FROM JIM CROSS:

Canada has the largest French-speaking population that never surrendered to the Germans.

Canada has the largest English-speaking population that never surrendered to anyone.

Canada's Civil War was fought in a bar, lasted a little over an hour, and the only person arrested was a US mercenary who slept in and missed the whole thing. He showed up just in time to get caught.

And, we could add, Canada has the world's largest acreage devoted to parks as well as a health care system that some in the US continue to pretend they do not envy. The latest Toronto Star poll has Canadians rating their system as: Excellent 23%, Satisfactory 44%, Fair 19%, Poor 8%.

HAIDA GWAI - THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS

My decades-long interest in the Haida struggle to preserve these 150 islands (10,180 sq km) from gold seekers and loggers has been enhanced by my niece, Lisa, and her husband, Rich, taking up residence there, building and renting cottages, and advertising their activities on the web site www.allthebeachyoucaneat.com

These islands escaped the last glaciation and are known as the Galapagos of the North. The Haida, Vikings of the Pacific, sailed and rowed from there as far south as Oregon (see the back of the Canadian \$20 bill). Haida Gwaii was home to some 10,000 Haida in dozens of villages. We say that Haida have been there for 12,000 years, but the Haida know that long before that, Wise, but Mischievous, Raven cracked open a large clam shell from which the Haida emerged to give rise to the human species.

The first European to visit was Spain's Juan Pérez in 1774, followed by James Cook in 1778, and George Dixon who surveyed the islands in 1787, naming them after his ship that was named for the wife of George III. In 1853 the islands became a colony of Britain who gave them to British Columbia in 1863. The two main islands are Graham (north) and Moresby (south).

In the early days of trading there was much thievery, deception, and bloodshed with blame on both sides. Haida sold back to Europeans cannon they had retrieved from British and New England ships they sank. European diseases, such as small pox, typhoid, measles, and syphilis crashed the Haida population to 350 by 1900. The current mixed population is 5,000, about half Haida. Initially the Haida discouraged White greed by capturing and sinking vessels and holding the crews for ransom that had to be paid in blankets. Since the gold rush days of 1851 it has been a continual struggle against loggers of the unique rain forest, half of which has now been clear cut, causing erosion, aggravated by the importation of deer that eat all new sprouts. With the help of environmentalists the Haida succeeded in 1988 in having the federal government dedicate the lower half of Moresby Island to Gwaii Haanas National Park (1,470 sqkm). In 2006 Anthony Island and the historic, but abandoned, village of Ninstints with its totems was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site (one of 15 in Canada). The other large protected area in Haida Gwaii is the 180,000-acre (726 sqkm) Naikoon Provincial Park on the NE corner of Graham Island. Three smaller areas total 112 sqkm.

Lisa's cottages are 16 km east of Masset (population 965), just inside Naikoon Park on the coast. A roving, free spirit, Lisa, at age 19, flew from Toronto to London to work in a pub to earn enough to tour the UK and western Europe, then worked in Switzerland to finance eastern Europe tours, then it was a kibbutz in Israel before touring SE Asia and living in Australia. She returned to Ontario, worked in her Dad's appliance and furniture store in Port Hope, took university courses, then drove to Vancouver for work and more courses, including slipping down to Seattle to add another degree to her collection. She married a kindred soul, Rich, and they have been building, renting, and selling homes in Prince Rupert and the Charlottes. Some 20 years ago it was Rich who led scientists to the site where they could prove Haida Gwaii had escaped the last glaciation.

A NOTE FROM STEVE KOTLARCHUK:

My wife, Kristi Swain, our daughter Charlotte, and I have recently returned to Colorado Springs after spending the last 3 years in Brussels, Belgium. Kristi, being the smart one in the family, has been promoted to Lt Col and assigned as a history teacher at USAFA. Me? Looking for a job once again... Anyway, we enjoyed a very interesting mode of transport for our return to the U.S. and I would like to share an article that I wrote that was published in the *Brussels Weekly* newsletter. We are happy to be back in 'the Springs' and are looking forward to seeing you all at one of the upcoming social events.

Farewell Brussels, Hello America: A Dispatch from Sea

I've heard it described as 'decompression' once before and whoever came up with the term, pretty much hit the nail on the head. However, when it actually occurred for my family and I is a little less clear. Possibly as we stood on the Southampton jetty looking up in wonderment at the sheer size and majesty of the vessel, or maybe it was when we took those last couple of steps off the jetway arriving in the opulent splendor of the Grand Lobby. Regardless, if you listened very carefully you could hear a faint, yet discernable, *psst* as the pressure and tension from weeks of planning, organizing, packing, cleaning and good-byes was finally relieved. My wife, 4 year-old daughter and I were embarking on the world-famous Queen Mary II for a 6-night transatlantic crossing to New York.

I will tell you that the idea of returning to the good 'ol U.S. of A in this manner had never occurred to me before. The closest thing to a cruise that I had experienced was a couple of terribly middle-class overnight ferry crossing from Belgium to the UK. It was my wife who suggested that we consider this mode of transport -and if I may be completely honest- she didn't have much of a fight on her hands convincing me that it is something that we should look into. Fortunately for us as a military family, the process of booking your own 'self-procured' transportation is much easier than the long, drawn-out process that I understand you State Department folks have to go through. My wife requested permission through her chain of command and subsequently received permission - then after a couple of trips to the military travel agency at the Army Garrison in Brussels, we were booked in a 3-bed stateroom with private balcony for a mid-June departure. The price per person, surprisingly, is only a few hundred dollars more than airfare and includes all meals and non-alcoholic drinks. Unbelievable.

The Queen Mary II is truly and extraordinary vessel. She was launched in 2004 and is over 1200 feet long and typically sails with over 2400 guests and over 1200 crew and staff members. I'm sure there are all kinds of amazing machinery down, deep in the hull and other places, but it's what you see and enjoy everyday that is the most awe-inspiring. The entire interior of the ship has been designed and fitted-out with glass, marble, wood, carpets and pieces of art that you would only ever find in some of the finest hotels in the world- for me the Savoy in London, England springs to mind. Not being an expert in interior design and fashion, I would describe the interior as generally 'art deco' which very easily allows one to make a mental connection to the glory days of ocean liners. In addition, and in almost all open place as well as every nook and cranny around the ship, there are reminders, mementos, and picture boards describing the grandeur, history and people who undertook ocean voyages prior to growth and popularity of air travel. It all leaves me feeling a certain nostalgic connection with royalty and movie stars of days gone by.

The ship is also equipped with every luxury imaginable. She boasts no fewer than 10 dining areas, 5 swimming pools, of which 2 are indoor and excellent for use during poor weather on the high seas; a dozen or so bars; large gym; a beauty spa; a 300-seat planetarium/lecture hall, the largest ballroom afloat; the largest live-performance theatre afloat; a children's daycare centre; and, literally dozens of cocktail bars and lounges varying in themes such as English Pubs to cigar lounges. We have been on board for 4 days and nights so far, and we have still not seen all of the public places yet. I have, however, managed to find all the bars.

My greatest concern about this transatlantic crossing was what we were going to do with all of our free time. However, I am more than happy to report, there hasn't been any. None. In fact, I had to cross off a couple of interesting activities this morning so I could write this article. So far our daytimes have been filled with attending interesting lectures from academics and experts ranging in topics from biology, exploration of the poles, how to write a novel, and my personal favorite, the art of mixing a good cocktail- which included, funny enough, 4 sample cocktails. In amongst these activities there have been daily trips to the pool, and leisurely walks on the outside decks. Our daughter loves to spend time at the 'Fun Zone' under the playful, yet professional care, of British nannies.

Evening activities? Well, once again, there has not been a spare moment. Of the 6 evenings onboard, 3 have been 'formal' black tie dress and the others more casual in nature. Regardless of the formality of clothes, each evening/night there are Broadway-style singing and dancing shows complete with a full orchestra as well as dancing and performances in the main ballroom - once again, with a full orchestra. With evening pajama parties at the daycare for our daughter, my wife and I have had the rare opportunity of attending most of these spectacular and professionally produced events. In fact, the bright folks at Cunard have come up with an ingenious way to pack more activities into the Westbound crossing by making 5 of the 6 days on board 25 hours long. Amazing.

As I close this dispatch, I have just been reminded by a PA from the ship's Captain that we are within 120 miles or so of where the Titanic sunk around a hundred years ago. Nonetheless, I feel content that the competent crew will safely guide us on to New York for our Friday AM arrival. In fact, we were reminded earlier today that it was because of the Titanic's tragedy that ship safety improved so much, so long ago. Having said that, I think that I will now head up to the Commodore's Lounge on Deck 9, sample today's special - a 'Ginger Cosmopolitan' martini and ponder the mysteries This article is a composite of life. I explained to my wife that I needed a little more decompressing. She smiled at me and warned me, in a manner that only a wife can, that if I decompressed any further, I might implode.

CANADIAN COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

On 01 July at the Canada Day Garden Party, Wing President, Joan Peterson, presented, for outstanding community service:

Our Military award to Warrant Officer Pat Leonard, and
Our Civilian award to Mme. Anne-Marie Doucet.

On 07 July at the Canadian Forces Awards Ceremony, our very own Paul Ellis was awarded the 'Deputy Commander North American Aerospace Command Commendation' by LGen Bouchard. LGen Bouchard thanked Paul for his support and commitment to the Colorado Springs military and civilian communities. Congratulations Paul!

At the Awards Ceremony the 971 Wing presented LGen Bouchard the traditional Piper's Banner.

CANADIAN FIRSTS

This article is a composite, boiled down from data and pictures received from Keith Greenaway and Bill Cann:

NEOSSat, due for launch in mid-2010, will be the world's first satellite to detect and track near-earth objects that could present a collision danger. It follows the highly-successful MOST (Microvariability and Oscillations of Stars) satellite also known as My Own Satellite because it offers researchers project time. MOST was launched in 2003 and has amassed valuable data on stars and planets. It was called Humble Space Telescope as it cost a mere \$10 million as will NEOSat. Both are compact and miniaturized. NEOSSat weighs 75 kg and has 1 x .8 x .4 metre dimensions.

VENUS: is hosted by the University of Victoria. It is 44 km of fibre optic cable, laid in Saanich Inlet with cameras, and it has detected 18-metre-high gorgeous glass reefs stretching hundreds of square kilometres west of Vancouver Island and made by silica-absorbing sponges, thought to have been extinct since the end of the Jurassic Period. Data started flowing in 2006 and the network continues to expand and will tie in with similar research to be launched by Japan, China, Europe, and the US.

NEPTUNE (North East Pacific Time-Series Undersea Network Experiments) will be operational in September 2009 as the world's largest cabled ocean observatory. At a cost in excess of \$100 million, it is hosted by the University of Victoria with participation from universities across Canada and will be available to scientists worldwide. The 800 km undersea backbone cable off the west coast of Vancouver Island was completed in 2007.

Stretching across the Juan de Fuca plate, the network will study seafloor ecology, seismic and tsunami activity, climate interactions, fisheries, and gas hydrate deposits.

WHO HAS THE BEST HEALTH CARE?

Of 5 countries assessed, Japan rates #1 with a life expectancy of 82.5 years for an expenditure of \$2,500 per person; and the US #5 with a life expectancy of 78.2 years for \$7,000. In between are Australia with 81.2 years for \$3,100, Canada with 80.9 years for \$3,900, and the UK with 79.2 years for \$2,800. (Source: OECD Health Data 2009)

SICK PARADE

Tooth Maestrelli had surgery on one of his carotid arteries this past Tuesday. Everything went well. What the docs initially thought was plaque build-up turned out to be a constriction of the artery. In true Tooth fashion, he was already out partying (albeit with a chaperone) the night he got home from the surgery! Do we send the sympathy card to Tooth or to the chaperone?

REFUGE - from Peter Tutt, Brantford, Ontario, ex 426 Sqn.

An older, tired-looking dog wandered into my yard. I could tell from his collar and well-fed belly that he had a good home. He calmly came over to me, I gave him a few pats on his head. He then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the hall, curled up in the corner and fell asleep. An hour later, he went to the door, and I let him out.

The next day he was back, greeted me in my yard, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for about an hour. This continued for several weeks. Curious, I pinned a note to his collar: "Who owns this wonderful sweet dog and are you aware that almost every afternoon he comes to my house for a nap."

The next day he arrived for his nap, with a different note pinned to his collar: "He lives in a home with 6 children -- 2 under the age of 3 -- he's trying to catch up on his sleep. May I come with him tomorrow?"

INPUTS FOR THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER now welcomed - georgesweanor@comcast.net or gsweanor@pcisys.net STOP THE PRESS! Just received Keith Greenaway and Moe Gates' book *Polar Air Navigation*. Will review next issue.