

The Communicator

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Waiting for the day shift!

Editors Thoughts
By David Smith

Christmas is over and ones thoughts turn away from the Boxing Day sales and towards the New Year and another edition of our newsletter. I have enough submissions to keep us going for a little while yet but like those who line up all night for those big sales, I too am always “lined up” for any stories you may wish to share with friends and former colleagues. They don't have to be literary works of art – in fact just a few lines will do, and you will have that warm and fuzzy feeling of keeping our little endeavour going for a while yet.

Happiness is a laptop PC with a wireless connection to the world. Unlike previous production methods, I am no longer relegated to my basement to produce another issue. As I sit her at my kitchen table, I can, with the click of a button, send an email whizzing in a flash to family in New Zealand, or pay a bill with nothing more than a click of a mouse. Yes, it was this technology that “did us all in” and ended the era of Communications as we knew it. In spite of this fact, I am in awe of how far we have come and can only imagine how far we have to go. These are exciting times and I for one am most thankful for the ease of keeping in touch with old friends. Your editor can be reached at drdee@sympatico.ca

Happy reading

Where are they now?

The Editor

One can't always predict one's future following retirement from our nomadic existence of living in different places in this world. I always enjoy learning where our colleagues are now and what they have chosen to do in their post-career lives and this newsletter will focus on two of our former colleagues; Tony Washbrook and Robert Bareham. I recently became aware that both share the connection of living and working in South Africa. They are not the first former CM's to end up in this part of the world but they are two for which I have received a little information which I'm confident you will find interesting.

Robert Bareham

Received Via email:

"I have been here in Cape Town since 1990 and love it. I met my late wife while serving in Nairobi in 79 and she was a Dutch scientist who researched HIV back in those early days, in East Africa, before most of us had ever heard of the disease. I left External Affairs in 81 and we went to Vancouver for a few years. She was often contracted back to East Africa by World Health so when the chance came up for her in a permanent posting in Cape Town, we jumped at it. Pauline passed away a few years ago with lung cancer but I remained in Cape Town.



When I got to South Africa I joined a German company as their dealer support representative. Just before South African independence in 1994 many whites were departing for any English speaking country that they could get in to and in no time I was steadily promoted upward and in no time I became the regional sales manager in charge of their cell phone sales in about 30% of the country. I have done a lot of travelling around Southern Africa. The islands of Mauritius and Seychelles are some of my favourite places. I am enjoying my retirement now with my spouse, Anne, a lovely English lady that I discovered a couple of years ago on online dating (yes, even in Africa) and we are extremely happy here.

I was very interested in the article by Gary Morgan on the CJ750 motorbikes. I actually have a lovely retirement job here, driving tourists around Table Mountain and the Winelands in Chinese CJ750 sidecars. It's great fun and they even pay me to do it. Photo attached. The company that I contract to has about 30 of these vintage bikes. Check out www.sidecars.co.za and come and visit the Cape and I can show you around in one of these unique vehicles. And hey, when it's -20 in Ottawa, it is +30 on our sandy beaches.

Cheers from the dark continent." Rob

Tony Washbrook

Received Via email:

“After 33 years and 9 postings I decided that it was time to pull the plug and retire. My wife, Diane, and I had planned to move out to BC during the summer of 2007. Diane is also a rotational employee and just as we were starting to make our plans she was offered a posting to Pretoria, South Africa - an offer, we decided, that could not be refused. So here we are in Pretoria on posting number ten.



I officially retired on September 1, 2007. In mid November I was offered a LES position at the High Commission so my retirement was short-lived. I am enjoying working as a LES - the pressure is certainly off especially compared to all the duties related to the new FSITP positions. You soon realize, however, how the Department is in a win-win situation hiring spouses with security clearances - I am making about a quarter of what I made as a CS. Anyway it keeps me off the streets (and unfortunately the golf course).

South Africa is a reasonably good posting. The weather is excellent and shopping is good. We have a small pool in the yard which gets a lot of use and the golf courses are excellent. The biggest drawback is personal safety. All CBS employees live behind high walls and electric fences. We avoid venturing out at night, and if we do we don't stop for red lights or anything else. Just to put crime into perspective there are over 50 murders a day in South Africa and yesterday, December 30, 2007, the Tanzanian High Commissioner's residence was attacked by 5 gunmen carrying semi-automatic weapons, he and his wife were badly beaten and the 30 guests were robbed. Crime just keeps getting worse by the day. Makes you realize what a great country Canada is.

At the end of this posting we are "definitely" going to retire. We keep watching the house prices on Vancouver Island and hope they will drop a little before we head west.

Regards to all my friends and colleagues both retired and still at the job.”

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***Here's something a little different for those radio enthusiasts with access to the internet:
Get a coffee first – it's a long but interesting video.***

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3wrzo_fabrication-dune-lampe-triode_tech

We have mail:

David:

I assume I have the correct e-mail address as I took this from the Newsletter. I thought you would be interested in the clip below after reading your article on Churchill. I also was in Churchill for just over a year, from the fall 1962 to the summer 1963 then when I asked to go to Alert (A dumb OD move), I got sent to sea instead. I have great memories of Churchill and the guys there, particularly the great hockey and the rivalry between the town site, Army site and the Navy teams. GO NAVIES EH? Keep up the great work 73's

John Belland (EX: 291er/COMRSH/CM/System Administrator, now retired)

<http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/play/audiogallery/soundseen.shtml>

Chuck (Charlotte) & John Belland
19 Sunset Drive
Prescott, Ontario K0E 1T0

Editor's note: The link John provides above was still good as the newsletter was off to the printers. It's an interesting video.

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A Royal Encounter

By Buck Arbuckle

My wife, Norma, and I had just driven from Paris to Bonn as part of a routine trip to bless the telecommunications operation with continued technical efficiency. I found the embassy staff and Ambassador, Charles Ritchie, pretty well occupied preparing for a diplomatic function at the embassy that evening. Everyone was expected to attend these parties but there was a fly in the ointment. That night a travelling Canadian hockey team was playing a travelling Swiss team in the local arena and the Ambassador had received complimentary tickets front and centre for the game.

Mr. Ritchie could not host a party and also attend the game so our arrival on the scene was a godsend for him. He could not let it appear that he had snubbed the occasion and abandoned the team to its fate with no embassy representation, so he gladly offered the tickets to Norma and me. It was a command performance; to go and represent Canada. As visitors with no previous commitment we were delighted to acquiesce, be entertained and fulfill an apparent obligation of the embassy.

At the arena an usher obliged by guiding us through the crowd to our assigned seats. Down we went, passing row upon row of anxious fans, till, there in front of us, just two rows ahead, we couldn't believe our eyes. Two seats were blocked off with fancy tapes, furnished with cushions and blankets and even some sort of liquid refreshments. I checked the tickets and they corresponded with the seat numbers of those two seats. How nice of the Ambassador to surrender such desirable treatment to us!! I made a mental note to thank him the next day.

But just as we were about to claim this luxury, our usher waved us away and directed us to two seats just across the aisle. I showed him my tickets again and confirmed that those special seats were ours, but he insisted that we sit just across the aisle. Not able to argue in German, we reluctantly relented and sat where directed.

Minutes before the game started two other special guests arrived and made themselves comfortable with our cushions, blankets, etc. The Shah of Iran and his Queen were certainly a handsome couple. I could have reached across the aisle and shook his hand but instead, I waved our tickets at him and gave him to understand that he was in our seats and we were having to subsist bereft of the luxury he had acquired. A good-natured fellow, he and the queen waved and smiled graciously, as royals are wont to do, and settled in to enjoy the game. I became too engrossed in the play to notice which team they were cheering for but I assumed it was the Canadian team. If not, Charles would be disappointed.

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For those who may not have been advised, your indexing for 2008 rises by 1.8 percent. Sounds like we'll be able to plan that round-the-world trip now.

Marty's missives

By Marty Byzewski

Red Square on a Snowy Morning

In 1990 I was sent to Moscow for four months to replace the head of the communications centre. I had always been fascinated by the 'Evil Empire' and all the tales of Russian History I had taken while attending university. The first Sunday morning I was in Moscow I went to Red Square. It was a scene out of Dr Zhivago; The cannons, bells, church steeples and softly falling snow. I don't believe I ever felt more alive than in the brief moment when I realized I was in the middle of history, the Tsars, Napoleon, WW2. Sometimes I miss those lost moments in time.

A Night at the AAA bar

One night during the curfew in Beijing right after the riots in Tiananmen Square, three of us decided that we would go out to see The Great Hall of the People on the edge of the square. The place is reported to hold at least 10,000 people during cocktail parties or 5,000 sit-downs. Why we decided to take a chance with all the People's Army being on each corner is still unknown to us. It probably was the beer we had consumed during the afternoon B-B-Que. We had our diplomatic passports and I guess we figured that they would stop bullets and give us almighty immunity from the bad guys. Well we never made it to Tiananmen because of the barricades and ended up at a bar named the AAA Bar. Now we thought this very unusual being in the middle of Beijing and having an AAA bar. Man it was dark and we were the only westerners in the place. I was very nervous and thought that we were goners. But we had our beer and about two hours later returned to the embassy after one scary experience at a roadblock where our military guard with us was cursing at the military guys. They had their guns pointing at us but he managed to talk to them in his halting Chinese and I guess the passports helped. It was quite an evening.

The Night I slept under my Bed

On my first of three trips to Port-au-Prince in Haiti with emergency communications equipment, the situation was very tense in the city. Each night there were loads of shootings, kidnappings and killings. All the things that make political unrest attractive to CNN. Well one night I will really remember because there was a series of shotgun blasts outside my hotel probably over at the next hotel which had a large casino. I was really nervous and it's a good thing I had had some liquid refreshment earlier that evening so it helped to survive. Around 10PM there were a series of shots that sounded like a machine gun." That's it", I said to myself and pulled off the mattress, propped it up on the window side of the bed and crawled under the bed and had a real great sleep that night. I woke up in the morning to the sound of roosters crowing and a beautiful morning. As usual I had breakfast by the pool and it was situation normal for another day.

* * *

History – Crazy mixed-up history

By Buck Arbuckle

In the 1950s when I was stationed in Paris, I made frequent and regular trips to Bonn, Germany. On those trips I soon found a small hotel in Bad Godesberg where service was good and the staff friendly.

The hotel was owned and managed by an elderly gentleman named Herr Welhausen, who was attentive to our smallest needs. He always reserved our favourite first floor room, a large front room with a balcony. On one occasion a parade was scheduled to pass the hotel and Herr Welhausen arrived at our door with several bottles of wine and a bevy of wine glasses. He declared that the marchers would probably break ranks and, if we were on the balcony, they would expect a glass of wine. We were pleased to oblige and we also enjoyed a tippie. Such were the friendly relations we had established with Herr Welhausen.

We often had conversations that led to special concessions including off-menu delicacies of our choice. Herr Welhausen seemed determined to leave us with a lasting but favourable impression of his Germany that he had loved for over 70 years. We declared our admiration for the mighty Rhine river and the seven picturesque hills across from Bad Godesberg. He told us that those seven hills, each with a castle in ruins had inspired the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. “But”, he said, “the castles were all smashed during the war”. This statement seemed to be an affront to me, a veteran who had dropped bombs on Germany. I had always tried to exercise economy in my emotions, but now my ire began to rise. Momentarily I forgot that I was a member of the Diplomatic Community and should not initiate another war. Unhesitatingly, Herr Welhausen continued, “Napoleon, you know, he brought his armies down the Rhine and smashed all our beautiful castles”.

Thus we were spared a diplomatic incident, another war, and our friendship was preserved.

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Final Comps “In memoriam” – 2007

Members and friends of the CM/EL community to whom we have said goodbye



Thu Humphreys – April 2

Wife of Alan Humphreys (EL) - See www.ofarts.ca