

The Communicator

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[Noreen on the Web](#)

Note: Ctrl + Click to activate all links to the web

Editors Thoughts

By David Smith

Back in the 50's I read a fascinating book by George Orwell titled "1984". Imagining a period so far into the future for a teenager was a stretch so, while I enjoyed the book, I simply put such thoughts of such a far-away time out of my mind. However I can no longer ignore the obvious – time is marching on and here we are in 2009. All of you, my former colleagues have spanned two centuries and to the youth of today, we are "old". So how come I don't feel I'm old I wonder. Skating in a communal rink with my wife last weekend, I realized we were the most "senior" people on the ice. What really drove home this feeling of time marching on was when, later in the week I handed my skates to a young fellow in a sports shop for sharpening and he laughed at my skates. "Leather" he exclaimed as he smiled – "we haven't seen those for a while". OK, so they were new in 1980 and built before he was born but heck, those are good skates. Besides, I skated at the Summer Palace in Beijing in those skates and played hockey against the Chinese to boot. I'm quite sure these were the only skates he sharpened that day with such a history! Am I really turning into my father who used the same skates for more than 50 years – now those were really antiques!

Looking at the little machine above and reminding myself we actually used to operate such equipment only reinforces the view we have become what I hope can be referred to as "elder statesmen/women". In the meantime, with this in mind, I shall grab my slippers, pour another coffee, sit in my easy chair and read these tales from the past. I know I shall enjoy doing so and I hope you, dear readers, do so as well.

Happy New Year to all and may 2009 be kind to us in every way. Happy reading.

The Mystery girl revealed!

With thanks to Gilbert Clermont who supplied her name and to Gene Gullason who provided a bit more history



Hi Dave,

I write to answer your question under the picture on page 7 of the newsletter Spring 2008.

The girl is Cécile Landreville. She was a secretary at our Embassy in Paris and I am sure you know the name of the two CMs, the guy in the middle with the Mexican shirt is George Brown and the other one is big Ed Smith who was Head of Comcenter in Paris. Ed was replaced by Jean-Marc Racicot as Head of Comcenter, I believe in summer of 1978, so that picture was taken between 1976 and 1978 as Cécile was already in Paris when I arrived in March 1977.

I remember the name of the girl because she was very nice and so charming and I remember she married an American and quit the department to follow him. If my answers are right what do I win? Keep up the good work.

Google Maps is certainly a great program; it would be cool to have a map with a flag signalling the retirement places of our ex-colleagues. Here is where I hide: <http://maps.google.fr/maps?f=q&hl=fr&geocode=&q=Salon-de-Provence&ie=UTF8&ll=43.735383,4.724121&spn=1.131173,2.208252&t=h&z=9>

Although I doubt he remembers me, pass on my best regards to Ed and its good to hear he hasn't changed, I remember him having a good sense of humour and laughing a lot.

Sincères amitiés
Gilbert Clermont, Salon-de-Provence France
UUU/010

Note: Gilbert can be reached by email at: Gilbert.clermont@neuf.fr

And from Gene Gullason who had asked for her name:

Thank you David. As soon as I saw the name it all came back. Cécile did marry an American who was a pilot for one of the Major Saudi Princes and lived on palace grounds. Cécile visited quite often in Paris and told us marvellous stories. Thank you enormously. I would have had a sleepless year otherwise. You know how those things niggle when you know you know something but don't know what.

Gene

Gene can be reached by email at: Egullason@sasktel.net

Gilbert is a lucky man, living in Salon-de-Provence in France. Who hasn't read "A year in Provence"? He did however supply me with these photos taken Jan 7, 2009 which makes me question Global Warming.



Gilbert's home: Salon-de Provence, France 2009 He advises there are no snow removal facilities

Where are they now? Part I

Email from Joe MacPherson

“Good Afternoon from Nova Scotia, David. As a former 'inmate' of External Affairs - Communications (as it then was) (1966-70), I cannot begin to tell you how very much I enjoyed the photos of some of the 'then young - now old' reprobates I had the pleasure of serving with in Ottawa, New Delhi and Washington D.C. I retired from Department of Communications (Industry Canada) in 1995 and retired to Shad Bay, NS in 1996. Still kicking at age 65.

A great trip down memory lane on a cool but otherwise beautiful Friday. Not sure what the source of the photos was, David and wonder at the number that are NOT there (well before the T - Z area). Since there were several Smith's in the Department during my short experience, I am having a bit of trouble placing you.

Were you the Smith I met years ago in Manotick or the Smith who 'chewed me out' at 3:20 AM when I was in New Delhi because I failed to return a COMP in a timely fashion on the NIGHT FROM HELL (7 ZZ messages - TET Offensive in Vietnam).

Anyway, if you want my photo(s) old and new, you are welcome to them. Not sure I would ever class myself as a STUD though (ha ha). Keep up the great work. I'm going to have to re-enlist with the Association.

Cheers

Joe MacPherson Feb 22, 2008

Joe can be reached at: jmp@hfx.eastlink.ca

Editor's note: Joe's mention of the T-Z area is referring to the missing book containing photos from T to Z which has been irretrievably lost in the Department. For those who joined prior to 1971, chances are their photos may be in the CM photo album of black and white photos of this era. Click here and scroll down for the photo links on our AFFSC page. ["Stud" books on the web](#)

Where are they now? Part II

Chris Christensen

Hi Dave,

Just a photo from last summer to show the wild side of life in Grand Sault. The two moose were checking out the construction of a new house two doors down from us. (Just got the film developed. I haven't yet purchased a digital camera). Sure getting tired of this winter thing. Awfully tempting to get in the car and drive south until we find warm weather.



A book report

By John Kruithof

Readers of this issue of the AFFSC Newsletter “The Communicator” may be interested in finding out more about a novel set in surroundings we are well acquainted with. Written by retired diplomat Adrian de Hoog, “Borderless Deceit” starts out with the crippling effect of a virus attack specifically directed at our diplomatic computer network. This sets in motion an easy to identify with. In addition to technical issues, the novel evolves into exploring the motivation of individuals drawn into the vortex of international diplomacy. The twists and turns make fascinating reading. “Borderless Deceit” is a book difficult to put down before its emotional conclusion. The book would be ideal for carrying to a beach in the South, but will equally serve as a diversion from our, by this time, well-ingrained winter.

Note: *Borderless Deceit* is available at Chapters for approximately \$17.00 – Ed

The Story of Emma; Who Knew?

By David Smith

A short time ago while chatting with Ray White, the subject of a lady called Emma surfaced. While listening to Ray tell of a book he had just finished about her, I couldn’t understand why I had never heard this story before. No, it’s not because I am that widely read but quite simply, most of us who worked in Telecomms with Foreign Affairs should have been familiar with her existence. Shortly thereafter, I was chatting with Marty Banville and Rod Villeneuve about Emma. Their response when asked if they had known about her; “Oh sure”! So how is it I served all those years with DFAIT, while totally oblivious to this infamous lady? I have no answer.

As usual, I turned to the Web for more info and in a flash, I had plenty of information. From a Saskatchewan “Rogues & Heroes” site, I found the following and this sheds some light on Emma Woikin whom many of you may have known about – but I recall no one ever mentioning it to me. **MMA WOIKIN**

“From her childhood on a homestead at Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan and family catastrophe in the '30s, to the sensational espionage trials of 1946, her time as a top-notch legal secretary in Saskatoon and her last heartbreaking days, the story of Emma Woikin is one of tragedy and high drama. The Gouzenko spy trials in which she was involved could be considered Canada's version of McCarthyism.”

Another web page entry:

“Woikin was born on 30 December 1920 in Blain Lake, Saskatchewan. She moved to Ottawa sometime in the early 1940s and was appointed to the Cipher Division of the Department of External Affairs (the Minister at the time was none other than the Prime Minister himself, Mackenzie King) in 1944. Woikin was targeted by one of the Russian diplomats and confessed before the commission to passing on confidential information from the cipher division to the Russians. When arraigned on 2 March 1945, Woikin plead guilty to violating the *Official Secrets Act* and was sentenced to three years in jail. In 1988, June Callwood produced a biography on Woikin.”

This web page provides more on Emma: http://criminals-outlaws.suite101.com/article.cfm/cold_war_origins

Ray loaned me his copy of June Callwood's book and it is without question an interesting read. A search on Biblio.com using the following criteria will produce 33 copies (at last check) in paperback and hardcover:

Title: Emma The true Story of Canada's Unlikely Spy **Author:** June Callwood

ISBN 0-7736-7105-6 (Paperback) Page 189 mentions our very own Stan Daley. Now if that doesn't whet your appetite, nothing will. Go for it.

More short stories

By Marty Byzewski

Bartering for Trinkets

On my first visit to Bangladesh I had gone to one of the houses for a B-B-Que. Later that evening a local trader came by with lots of jute products, brass and other brick-a-brac that they deal in when trading with the westerners. I really liked what he had so I selected a bunch of gee-gaws and then started to barter. I love to try and work down the price because the rule of thumb is they start about 100 % over the real price and then you knock them down so you think you are getting a real deal when in reality both sides win. By the time I was finished with the guy he was almost crying with frustration. I knew he wanted to make the sale but the figure I was quoting was really not what he wanted. Finally he reluctantly agreed to my price and much to his surprise I give him what he had originally wanted. He gave me a funny look, took the money and left with a bewildered shake of his head. Crazy Westerners!!

A Spiritual visit with Evita

On my last day in Buenos Aires I got up at five in the morning on a really beautiful in-your-face day. The sun was warm, the birds were singing and I proceeded over to the cemetery across the square from my hotel. Someone had told me that Evita Duarte's crypt was located there and I was curious to see it for myself as it was a once in a lifetime chance. I was the only one in the cemetery as far as I could tell. The place was unreal. The size of the tombs to generals, politicians etc. Most had a door in front with a window and when you looked inside you could see furniture, chairs etc where I was told the family would come and visit and sit down and sometimes even eat a meal with the dearly departed. I searched for about an hour and was getting nowhere when I spotted a young kid. He only spoke Spanish and I English but I managed to convey that I was looking for Evita. His face gleamed with a broad smile and he waved me to follow him. It took about 10 minutes to walk there and all at once I was standing in front of the

tomb. I gave the kid a buck and sent him happily on his way. On each side of the door to the crypt were brass features of Evita's face and thousands of flowers stuck everywhere. You could tell that the brass was worn from so many pilgrims touching her likeness. I touched both plaques and found the experience very moving and said something to her that I don't really remember. I left the cemetery with hope inside and it was one of those moments in life where being alive is a very moving experience.

Bomb Week in Lima

Anyone who has been in Lima Peru will attest that the city is a real mess. If you have been on a construction site then multiply it times the size of the city and you have Lima. Well the week I was there was bomb week. The local political opposition votes with their bombs. Every day the noise could be heard and the ground would shake as someone decided to play Rambo. One bomb blew a hole in the road only two blocks from my hotel. I was really glad to leave the city at the end of the week.

Those Language Gurus

By Buck Arbuckle

Sometimes the government introduces policies which have far reaching effects not always practical in all situations. Such was the case with their bilingual policy as it applied to Telecommunications. We could process traffic in both official languages, or for that matter, in other languages using the English alphabet. We were functionally bilingual. However, being a technical organization, we leaned heavily toward English.

Newly inducted technical staff attended a divisional technical school where they were familiarized, in English, with our various equipments. Although being completely bilingual, some of our French Canadian technical staff thought we might conform more closely to government policy if our technical reference books could be supplied in French. Most people realized the technical language of the world was English and our manuals were all published in English. Not wishing to run afoul of government policy, we enquired of the Teletype Corporation, a major supplier, if they would produce a French version of their manuals. Their suggested price required deeper pockets than ours and was out of the question.

Not to be deterred, we assembled one copy of each of our many teletype manuals into a pile that reached almost floor to ceiling in our office and dispatched them to the Translation Bureau.

We covered the shipment with a memo specifying that translation was a matter of some urgency because, being technical, these publications were for equipment subject to technological obsolescence. I believe a reply is still pending.

Telephone switchboards were another story. Northern Electric supplied many of our switchboards for installation in our embassies. Few of our switchboards were identical due to varied requirements. We asked Northern Electric, whose manufacturing plant was in Quebec, if they could oblige us with French language manuals. Northern's response was simply that they ship switchboards to France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, etc., etc. with complete English instructions. As ours was the only such request they had received, it would seem an unreasonable expectation to provide French language manuals for our small and specialized requirement. We had to agree that our bilingual staff who were taught the technical details in English should continue in that venue.

Sorry, Government, but in spite of your best intentions the technical world of the day worked in English. Technology brings change rapidly and frequently and lexicographers and translators could not reasonably be expected to catch up after the fact.

Two for Breakfast

By Buck Arbuckle

In those good old days Gordon Happy, who lived just outside of Kemptville, used to drive to town each morning via Woodroffe and call in at the Matthews residence to pick up Archie. Always grateful for a lift, Archie would join Happy in the ride to the office where they arrived around 8:00 a.m. This was when the phones started ringing, not with local calls but with calls from embassies with problems requiring division attention such as sickness at the embassy necessitating a replacement communicator or technical help. Embassies never seemed sure of the time difference with Ottawa so the calls necessitated an early start to the ripening day. Matthews gratuitous ride always ensured his punctual attendance at an early hour, and he was grateful for this unsolicited service.

Now Happy was going on leave so he arranged for a communicator who lived in Carleton Place to pick up Matthews in his stead. Happy briefed his replacement to ensure that nothing went awry. He was to be at Matthews at 6:00 a.m., have breakfast and get Matthews to the office for 8:00 a.m.

On the first day our communicator from Carleton Place duly set his alarm for five o'clock, did his usual ablutions and set out for the Matthews residence. He arrived a few minutes before six, a time at little variance from his briefing by Happy. After parking his car, he rang Matthews door bell. Half asleep, Matthews foot padded to the door in his P.J.s and bare feet. "What the hell are you doing here at this hour?" Our communicator explained that he had been briefed by Happy, that he should arrive at 6 a.m. when Matthews' wife would prepare a full breakfast for both of them. There would be orange juice, eggs and bacon or sausage, toast and jam and lashings of steamy coffee. Thus fortified, both men would then be ready for a full day's work. Angry at the churlish prank, Matthews told him to go into the kitchen and make himself a cup of coffee while he dressed, and he would then join him for a piece of toast. There was never any sign of Matthews' wife nor of a full and substantial breakfast.

Both incumbents lived down the incident but they determined that Happy would hear more about it on his return from leave. But all the subsequent banter generated by the incident was remembered in good humour and provided many a laugh among colleagues. When Happy returned from his leave, he also had a good chuckle over the success of his ploy.

Our technical colleagues and one CM in Bonn – names please drdee@sympatico.ca



Submitted by Terry Hayes: Terry can be reached at tghayes@shaw.ca

Happily, I have no “Final Comps” for this newsletter and that’s great!