

DCRA News

Winter, 2007, Issue 10 DURHAM COLLEGE RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

Mission Statement

The Durham College Retirees' Association is an organization whose function is to provide members with companionship, pertinent information, opportunities for service, and response to their concerns.



President's Message

Jim Anderson

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Merry Christmas and Happy Healthy New Year!

By the time you read this 2007 will be over and we look forward to 2008. In 2007 our membership grew to 158, our event attendance exceeded previous years.

2008 celebrates our College's 40th anniversary (who would have envisioned the Simcoe building expanding to what we have today!!) with homecoming events planned for May 2, 3 and 4th, Friday is a pub night, Saturday is nostalgia day with a dinner in the evening. We encourage you to attend some of these events. The students we helped have all found productive places in society, some have exceeded anything we might have thought. The students would love to see you to reminisce about old times and thank you for starting them on their careers.

Condolences to Families & Friends of
John Deramaix
Dave Helmer's Wife

New Members
Brenda Jackson
Ted Shiner
Irene Thompson

Upcoming Events
Annual General Meeting –
TBA in June

VACATION STORIES FROM OUR MEMBERS***William Hanna:***

We (Marilyn & I) had a trip to Russia that was a little different. We flew from Toronto to Frankfurt, then by Aeroflot to St. Petersburg and spent a week there.

Coming in to the St.Petersburg airport we could see a huge fenced off area full of damaged helicopters, some quite old. One of the passengers explained that they use aircraft from all over the world, and when they get damaged, they are hauled here, to be cannablized for parts.

We had rented a very nice apartment at the Pushka Inn and ate in the different restaurants. St. Petersburg is lovely. The old city is interspersed with canals and there are squares and palaces, statues of royalty, writers & poets everywhere.



The Peter & Paul fortress and the first world war revolutionary naval cruiser Aurora can be visited. The neglect & squalor of the communist years has been pretty well cleaned up. The crown jewel to visit is the Hermitage, the former winter palace. We were told how to contact a guide as individual visiting is discouraged. We were put in contact with a girl who had just graduated from university and was making tourist guiding a career, (not uncommon here) Her English language was excellent.. We toured with her for two days. She explained that it is necessary to pick out the styles of paintings to see because the collection is so vast that it would take over a year to view every painting,, going every day and allowing about one minute for each.

We traveled by train from St. Petersburg to Moscow. Our information about the day trains was they were not great, being dirty and crowded. We caught the deluxe Red rocket which left at midnight and got into Moscow about 08:00h. This train appeared to be quite new, floors of the cars in pattern carpeting, private compartments with two long padded benches which can be used as beds. All the train people wore smart military style uniforms and some spoke a little English. Each car has a large Russian style hot water tea maker at one end and stainless steel washrooms at the other end. Although the washrooms were sparkling clean, you could see the the toilets opened directly onto the rail bed.

We met our daughter at the Moscow rail station. Sharon had been living in Moscow with her husband for some time and knew the area and some of the language. Also, a perk was she had a car and driver. Not a good idea to drive here. Traffic laws are erratic and in case of an accident, it seems the police fill the role of investigator and insurance adjuster. Decisions often go to the person with the best cash "gift", we were told.

The large presence of patrolling militia was also evident here. We were told to always carry our passport. The militia often make random checks and can usually find a passport problem so we were advised to always have a US \$200.00 or \$500.00 with us to correct any problems.

Moscow is a huge city with unending churches and cathedrals...(the ABC tour, Another Bloody Church) One of the cathedrals, St Basils had recently been rebuild to replace the old one , torn down on Stalin's orders to use the huge amounts of marble in his subway construction. Cont'd

William Hanna Continued:

One of the noticeable features was the large number of patrolling uniformed militia (police), walking in twos and threes. We were told the violent crime rate is bad, especially for apparent Moslems and people from the eastern republics.

There is a large expatriate population, mostly American, Australian, Canadian and Europeans who are in business or working under contracts. One chap, in a fledgling real estate business said that if the Russians advance as much in the next 15 years as they have in the past 15, they will have a very powerful economy.

Until the fall of communism, there was no private property. Now there are people who literally seized apartment buildings etc and made them their own.

There was a get together held every Friday evening at the Canadian embassy and since we were in Moscow for three weeks, we attended three times. These meetings were where we collected a lot of information about life in Russia today. There a large number of younger well to do people in Moscow, business people etc. The old population seems to be in a bad way, eking out a low level existence on pensions that now have little value. Another feature was the number of uniformed armed forces people on the streets attempting to sell medals, uniform pieces etc.

We spent a lot of time visiting Red Square and the Kremlin buildings, museums and the recently refurbished royal Palace. The Palace has to be seen to believe. Our guide said President Putin has spent about 200 million US, but one of our group, an Australian contractor said that that amount would not even touch the work that has been done.

There are literally acres of parquet flooring gold leaf and foil etc. Lenin and Stalin had torn the place apart. Also noticeable were the absence any statues or memorials to them.



Lenin's tomb is maintained under strict militia control, but that was about it for reference to the communist days. There are memorials everywhere about the defeat of Napoleon's army and also the Great Patriotic war (WW 2). There is a huge memorial park called Victory Park which starts with the 04:00, June 22/41 date of the German invasion and follows thru to the end.

We also visited a cathedral outside Moscow which was built a religious centre with a Jordon river, grotto etc. in the 17th century. This marked the extent of the German approach to Moscow. The Germans attempted to blow up the entire complex when they retreated and that damage is still being repaired, with entire sections marked as dangerous because of unstable walls, unexploded ammunition etc.

There are memorials to Peter the Great every where, including a huge steel structure beside the Moscow River.

It would be possible to write a small book about traveling here; however, if it would be possible for anyone to visit, it is well worth the trip.

VACATION STORIES FROM OUR MEMBERS

More to come next issue.

Mary Perkins:



I spent the best part of June on a white water canoe trip down the Lower Missinaibi River from Mattice to Moosonee. A group of us had canoed the upper part two years ago and wanted to finish this historic river. It was a long drive to Cochrane but the visit to the Polar Bear Sanctuary made it worth it.

Because the temperature took a quick climb to 38 degrees just as we arrived, the black flies were voracious and merciless. The good part was that the water was unusually high because a lot of dams on intersecting rivers had been lowered, so the rapids were easier than we expected.

On the second last day the heat decreased and we were able to 'sail' using plastic garbage bags between two paddles. We were flying over huge waves which soon became too much for our canoes.

That night, after a quick hard rain, we had a windstorm which threatened to blow our tents way; but, no bugs.

We arrived in Moosonee in time for National Aboriginal Day, a native celebration held before the tourists usually arrive. After a visit to Moose Factory we were invited to a pot luck dinner of game they had cooked traditionally over open fires. Wild goose and duck are tough; beaver is very tasty, but the long claws/nails were still on the animal and it looked like it was trying to climb out of the pot and I couldn't eat much of it.

The trip ended with a boat tour out to James Bay, followed by a flight over the area (in a teeny little plane), and the Little Bear Express back through the sub Arctic tundra to Cochrane.



GIFT SUGGESTION:

If you're looking for a special gift for young people in your life, you might take a look at the list of young adult (ages 8-13) novels **Bill Swan** has written since he retired eleven years ago.

Bill says he's likely (like most retirees) busier now than ever. In addition to some on-line teaching, communication consulting, (and chairing Academic Appeals at Durham), Bill now writes fiction. On December 6, his eighth young adult novel ***THE ENFORCER***, will be launched at *Total Hockey* at the Rickard Arena in Bowmanville.

Bill's novels are all about sports (who would have thought that?), and several have a running theme (no surprise there). ***THE ENFORCER*** is a sequel to ***DEFLECTION!*** — a novel about a young goalie with three grandfathers, each of whom has “expert” advice about on ice activities, always at odds with what the coach is teaching, and usually with some strange results. And in ***THE ENFORCER***, when the team coach leaves, one grandfather actually steps in — over the objections of the team sponsor. And then ... oh, buy the book and find out.

Like all of Bill's books, this one is likely to receive national attention. The reviews are encouraging; two of Bill's last two books (***DEFLECTION!*** and ***ROAD RAGE***) were named to the *Our Choice* lists put out each year by the Canadian Children's Book Centre. One other book (***CORNER KICK***) made that list two years ago. And his second book, ***MUD RUN***, was short-listed for the Manitoba Young Readers Choice Award in 2003.

Bill's books can be ordered through Amazon or Chapters/Indigo and are sometimes available at local book stores. His titles also include: ***Mud Happens, Off Track, and Fast Finish.***



PEGGY (SMART) KIRKCONNELL'S – CELEBRATION OF LIFE

October 28 saw over 50 friends and relatives of Peggy & Herb Kirkconnell join together to remember 'our Peggy'. Jim Anderson, Helen Terwillegar, and Gary Polonsky spoke of the love Peggy brought to many people as well as her love for Darlene, Herb, David, Linda and her Grandchildren.

Old memories were lovingly discussed, old pictures shared. One of Peggy's favourite songs - Vera Lynn's "I'll Be Seeing You" was played to a teary audience. A 'Photostory' slide show of Peggy from her teens through to last Christmas was shown at the end of the program.

Everyone enjoyed seeing ol' friends and in catching up on each others' lives as well as extending condolences to the Kirkconnell and Smart Families.



BRENDA FINALLY TOOK THE LEAP

Special Projects Officer for Campus Library retires

After 38 years of service to Durham College, Brenda Jackson, Special Projects Officer for the Campus Library retired. Brenda or 'BJ' joined the library staff to take on the responsibilities of creating college and university archives, as well as acting as library liaison for construction of the new building. Prior to her position in the library, Jackson worked in several other departments on campus including Student Support Services. The College's loss is the Retiree Association's gain. Welcome Brenda.

Durham Retirees' Christmas Luncheon – Dec 4th, 2007

LVIV Banquet Hall served a delicious turkey/cabbage rolls/perogie dinner to over 80 Retirees. What a turn-out ! Everyone visited, laughed and made plans for get-togethers in the future weeks/months. Doris Woodward won the turkey draw, unfortunately some scoundrel made off with her gift certificate.

Thanks to the generosity of the 85 retirees in attendance we collected 10 boxes of food for the Retirees' Christmas Luncheon Food Drive and \$60.00 in donations. These were delivered to the College to join with the student and staff collection. Many thanks to all for your participation.



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR !

