

# 971 RCAF AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING

## *Air Force Association Newsletter November 2008*

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And, this is just HMS Astute's bow - See page 3

## Social Calendar

Sep 14 Thanks to a large Regular Force turnout, led by LGen Bouchard, we had some 150 attendees at the Battle of Britain ceremonies in the Retired Enlisted Club. Three RAF, stationed in Denver, came down for the occasion. Barbara Saks, now 91, who served throughout the war in the RAF including time on the same base as Bill Edwards, gave an interesting review of her experiences during the Battle of Britain. Once more, Darrell Levitt was our able master of ceremonies. Food was provided by the Regular Force. We thank the 16 retired members of 971 Wing who attended, the same old regulars, but as they composed only 20% of our members who live within easy commuting distance, it is a poor show of gratitude to those who lost their lives preserving our comfortable life styles.

Oct 25 Oktoberfest at Art and Carol Nielsen's.

Nov 07 Regular Force mess dinner. Four seats are available for Wing members.

Nov 11 As usual - 1100 at Memorial Park: blazers, medals, stetsons. Inclement weather: Retired Enlisted Club, Emory Circle off Murray.

### SICK PARADE:

Helen Stovel Is now in the advanced stages of alzheimers.

Barbara Edwards Broke a leg which curtailed her summer activities.

Mike Lewis In Etobicoke underwent surgery for Merkel Cell skin cancer. They did not get all of it so followed with 6 weeks of radiation treatment. Wing Commander Mike, a Bomber Command and POW veteran, remains a cheerful fighter. We wish him well.

Lila Best On a hike this summer Lila twisted her ankle - 3 bones broken!

### LAST POST:

Olive Lomas: a sad loss. See page 8.

JANUARY NEWSLETTER: Deadline 15 Dec 08. Send inputs to: [georgesweanor@comcast.net](mailto:georgesweanor@comcast.net)

## The Editor's Corner

And so, it was written: Henceforth all shall pause on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month to remember all those who sacrificed their lives for us.

Well, a few do, most do not, even though an hour is only 1/8760th of a year.

For those who slid, or crawled, through rivers of blood and guts, who saw their friends shredded by shrapnel, drown in cold seas, burn in tanks, bunkers, or aircraft, and who tried to survive in bombed-out cities, no brief, annual ceremony suffices. It is an experience, like so many others in this life, that remains ingrained and irremovable.

For some, religion helps as prayers are offered to gods, but for many others disillusionment sets in as no god should condone his/her/its creations to such horrors. Suicide, as an escape from a failed human species, becomes an option while others try to reshape their beliefs along humanitarian lines, valuing each blade of grass, each living thing, and try to create a purpose among all this chaos that we can never understand. It evokes a compassion for all life that is trapped in forms that prey on each other and for whom no other alternative is offered. A few devote their remaining lives to making amends, like Leonard Cheshire, VC (RAF Group Captain and baron, 1917-92) who, so overwhelmed with remorse by the destruction caused by his 100 bomber operations and his observer status aboard the B-29 that bombed Nagasaki, that he and his wife, Sue Ryder, set up 250 associations in 54 countries to help the disabled.

Humans have evolved sufficient intelligence to control their population, to share, to contribute, and to live in peace, yet only a small minority of societies throughout human history have succeeded at living in peace for sustained periods of time. We have preached, for at least 2,000 years, that "*He who liveth by the sword shall perish by the sword*", yet we continue the insanity of arms races. Military solutions are not solutions. Schools and sharing the wealth are.

Unfortunately, because of our selfish genes that urge us to grab more than our share, we still need police forces. Because there are communities that prefer to take, rather than barter for, the goods of others, we still need deterrent military forces. We do not need super powers imposing their will on weaker nations. We do need super powers contributing to International Courts of Justice, based on human rights, that have the power to remove abusers of power.

Disgust at human aggression has sparked the emergence of scores of religions and philosophies that initially have much to admire but that soon become encrusted with bureaucracies that seek only their own gain.

Humans are born remarkably alike, yet each one of us is genetically unique with our own dispositions. We can all be shaped by our environments that at some stage can lock us into dangerously strong beliefs in half-truths or myths.

So, if it all comes down to the environment, what can we do about it?

Basically we humans need water, arable land, a benevolent climate, forest, sea, and mineral resources. These are not uniformly distributed. Too many of us have been forced by earlier wars to spend our lives in inhospitable areas that breed resentments. No significant area of this globe is today inhabited by descendants of the original settlers. Wars, natural disasters, and migrations continue to change our world. Groups that have seized land containing the resources to permit them to build powerful nations are seldom content and happy but insist on continued growth at the expense of their less fortunate fellow humans some of whom we are inclined to call terrorists.

We have far too many humans wanting, and determined to get, what so few humans have, even though increased affluence often brings more stress than happiness. We are imposing demands on resources that are renewable only in terms of millions, if not billions, of years. Our politicians, who can daily waste millions of dollars in meaningless campaigning, fail to admit, or pursue, the draconian measures necessary to shock us back to reality and to attack the astronomical debt whose repayment is being left to the sacrifices of future generations.

Surprisingly, but gratifying, is that among all this gloom and doom, we are a remarkable species. We have thousands, if not millions, who put the overall welfare ahead of their own, who devote their energies to seeking knowledge and understanding, who work for benefits that only future generations will see. Our redeeming fact is that we can find such individuals in all walks of life, in all areas of the world, and in all cultures. Too often their lights have been extinguished by those who carry weapons like the pillaging Roman soldier who ran his sword through Archimedes, a Syracuse Greek. The soldier was unable to understand the meaning, or value, of the mathematical concepts Archimedes had traced in the sand to contemplate. At the other extreme we have 10,000 scientists from 37 countries who have come together with \$8 billion to build over 20 years, the Large Hadron Collider to unearth the truths of the smallest bits of matter and energy. We have scientists from Iran, Palestine, and Israel working together for a common purpose. In addition to the major French and Swiss contributions, significant components have been provided by Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, the UK and the US (8%).

Someone once said, *The Meek shall inherit the earth and They shall cast their swords into ploughshares*. Can we dare to hope that time is nigh?

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE 2008 FRANCOPHONE SUMMIT OF 55 COUNTRIES** was held in Quebec City in October (2004 summit was in Burkina Faso). France and Quebec agreed to accept each other's professional certifications.

**AFGHANISTAN:** Other than learning that 98 have been killed, we hear little of the progress made by Canadians in Kandahar, so here is a brief summary:

**Education:** In 2001 there were 700,000 Afghans in school, all boys. By 2008 this number increased to 6 million, 2 million of them girls. Of this, Canada has contributed to building 4,000 schools and training 9,000 teachers, benefiting 120,000 students, 85% of them girls.

Also Canada provided literacy training for 30,000 adults and vocational training for 4,000.

**Community Development:** Helped with the 18,000 completed projects including over 15,000 wells, 600 culverts, rebuilding the Dahla dam, and 180 km of irrigation systems. 5,000 km of roads have been built or improved, including 4 bridges in Kandahar.

**Health:** 80% now have access to basic health care compared to 9% in 2001. Canadian contributions went to vaccinating 7 million against polio, building an obstetric care unit and training 14 specialists, as well as providing food to 550,000 people.

**Refugees:** Canada has provided assistance to the 5 million Afghans who have returned since 2002.

**Justice:** Canada trained 200 judges, 70 prosecutors and 68 defenders and has 60 Military police embedded with Afghan forces and has trained 650 Afghans. Helped with the salaries of 64,070 Afghan police.

**Afghan Army:** Helped in the training of 50,000 graduates, the demobilizing of 6,300 former combatants, the collection of 63,000 light and 16,000 heavy weapons.

**Gender Equality:** 65 projects completed.

#### **2008 INSANE MILITARY COSTS in \$BILLIONS:**

USA: 700, UK 79, France 66, China 59, Russia 36, India 27. China's expenditure is expected to grow to \$360 billion.

Canada's expenditures are \$18.2 billion with plans to increase to \$30 billion.

**TOO LATE!** There is growing agitation that a special campaign medal be issued to the few veterans of Bomber Command still breathing. 125,000 aircrew of Bomber Command carried out 366,514 operations. There were 73,741 casualties of whom 55,573 were killed, including 38,462 Britons, 9,980 Canadians, 4,050 Australians, 1,703 New Zealanders, 977 Poles, 790 Americans, 218 Free French, 34 Norwegians, and 3 from India. 58% of Canadians who flew with Bomber Command were killed. 19 members of Bomber Command were awarded Victoria Crosses. Of those who were shot down only 17% survived. Our ground crew who worked long hours in cold and rain were also unsung heroes.

After the war there was revulsion over the destruction Bomber Command had wrought, so its numerous achievements were downplayed and Prime Minister Atlee ignored the urging of Churchill to honour Bert Harris and his air and ground crews.

Tired of waiting for governments to act, the Bomber Command and ex-POW Associations of the Royal Air Forces, most of whose members were Bomber Command

veterans, arranged to have minted and issued campaign medals of our own, timed for a reunion in the UK.

What purposes do medals serve? Most people, observing a chest full of medals, have no idea what any of them mean. A very high percentage were granted just for being somewhere at a particular time with no fear of shedding blood. Those in safe pockets received the same medals as those who were in the thick of combat.

The Canadian government has just issued a new "sacrifice" medal for those killed or wounded since 2001.

Seventeen small pieces of German shrapnel, that found a home in 1943 in the bones of my leg, permitted me to wear a wound stripe for a year until the government ruled that they were no longer to be worn. The shrapnel, though, is still there, but it is only noticeable on very cold days. Medals are just something I have to polish the few occasions I get to wear them.

**HMS ASTUTE:** The world's largest submarine was launched by Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, in September. It is one of four being built at Barrow-in-Furness, Scotland, by BAE Systems, at a total cost of \$3.85 billion. Astute will be operational in 2009.

It is 318 feet long, with a speed of 20 knots, and as quiet as a baby dolphin. Lying in the English Channel she will hear ships leaving Halifax or New York. She is nuclear powered but not nuclear armed. She will carry 38 Tomahawk cruise missiles with a range of 1,240 miles, and Spearfish torpedoes.

She can make oxygen and drinking water out of sea water, will never need refuelling, and could stay underwater for her entire 25-year life span if it were not for the 98-person crew desiring otherwise. She will, however, routinely go on 12-week cruises.

(Submitted by Bob Johnson, North Gower, Ontario)

**VINTAGE AIRCRAFT:** In Canada, 60 vintage aircraft are still flying from 20 museums and an equal number from private collections. The restored Halifax in Trenton was never meant to fly again, but two Lancasters still evoke nostalgia as they fly in the UK and out of the Wartime Heritage Museum in Mount Hope, near Hamilton, Ontario. Volunteers donate 570,000 hours a year to this museum. An engine overhaul on the 63-year-old Lancaster costs \$100,000, a new tire \$8,000. One Fairey Swordfish, of which only 2,400 were built, still flies out of Shearwater, NS. Some 11 Hurricanes still get airborne around the world. The oldest flying aircraft in W. Canada is a 1930 WACO in Langley, BC.

**THE LONGEST CONTINUOUS PRODUCTION LINE** of military aircraft is the Hercules family - 54 years. The latest orders being: US 114, UK 25, Italy 22, Canada 17, Australia 12, Denmark 4, Kuwait 4, Norway 4, and some for India.

**DRILLING FOR OIL:** The known deposits in the US amount to 2.2% of the world's supply while the US uses 25% (7.5 billion barrels per year). All of the oil in ANWR, Alaska, (10.4 billion barrels), would supply 1.5 years of demand. All the oil off the US Atlantic and Pacific seacoasts should add another two year's supply. The leases already granted are not all being worked but, even so, they belong to interests that sell on the world market to the highest price. It is in their interest to keep supply below demand to maintain high prices.

**HURRICANE RELIEF:** During Katrina Air Canada supplied an Airbus for evacuations. This time it was the Canadian Air Force providing a C-17 and 3 C-130s.

**BILL and BARBARA EDWARDS:** Jane Rodgers of the Gazette brought to the Battle of Britain ceremonies several "Your Hub" sections of 04 Sep that featured 90-year-old Bill teaching youngsters to fly. We complained we did not get this in the Gazette delivered to us, so Jane explained that the Gazette has 5 different Your Hub sections tailored for different areas. Bill and Barbara then left for the drive described on page 8.

**A TALE OF TWO DRAFT DODGERS by Don Swift:**

I was shooting the bull with Bill Edwards at the Battle of Britain Ceremonies and, being both pilots, we opened the hanger doors and talked about our careers. He said that he thought that he might have been the original American draft dodger, because, in November 1940, when war was raging in Europe, Bill made his way from Arizona, via Tulsa to Detroit and crossed the border to Windsor to join either the RCAF or RAF. He was 22 years old. The RAF accepted him and had him trained in Tulsa, OK, then shipped via Windsor, Ottawa, and Montreal to Halifax where he was given the comforts of a banana boat from India for a 26-day cruise, chased by U-boats, to Iceland and Greenock, Scotland, arriving 03 Aug 1941. He then flew Hurricanes and Spitfires, transferring to the USAAF when it arrived in the UK in Sep 42. He was shot down in July 1944 and became a POW.

Now, roll the clock forward to 1953. I thought the grass was greener across the border so I moved from St. Thomas to Detroit and worked as a gofer for a CPA in the downtown area. Fortunately I was dating a gal from the local draft board who advised me in early 1954 that my number was up and that I would be getting my draft notice shortly. I tried to join the USAF with the intention of being a pilot. The recruiter advised me that to be able to fly one needed to be a commissioned officer which required American citizenship. I said OK – quit my job – crossed the border to Windsor, and, joined the RCAF. I was 22 years old!

That certainly qualified me as a draft dodger! The career similarities were completed in 1961 when I went to England to join the RAF. I was 22 years old! That certainly qualified me as a draft dodger.

Passage from Montreal was roughing it for six days on

a Cunard ship - 1st Class! With the RAF I flew the Bristol Britannia in Transport Command.

Bill and I were truly a part of a Band of Brothers –and draft dodgers - fourteen years apart.

**HUMANS DO AFFECT CLIMATE:** Antarctica and Greenland ice cores reveal the amount of gases in the atmosphere year by year for thousands of years. Fluctuations bear a striking resemblance to human activities. Drops in the amount of greenhouse gasses coincide with large drops in human population such as after the plagues of 540, the Black Death of the 1600s, and the arrival of smallpox in America from Europe. Even when human population was only 12 million 6,000 years ago there was a marked rise in gases and temperature with the cutting and burning of forests. This, of course, was welcomed then as it prevented another ice age.

**HALIFAX AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION NEWS:** (1) The Per Ardua Stone programme in the RCAF Memorial Park, Trenton, now has 8,700 veterans remembered. (2) Thomas Weightman, the sole survivor of the restored Halifax when it was shot down in 1945, died 2 Sep 07. (3) The public will not be allowed to tour the interior of the aircraft for fear of the damage that could be done to 14 hard years of restoration. Instead they will be able to manipulate TV cameras showing all positions. Finishing the Halifax, volunteers are now working on restoring an Anson, a Harvard, and an Auster.

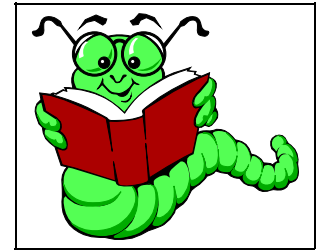
**CORRUPTION:** The Berlin-based *Transparency International* report, released 23 Sep 08, revealed that chronic corruption in poor countries is wasting billions of dollars in Western aid and creating humanitarian disasters. It goes on to rank 180 countries in freedom from corruption. The most free are Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand, and Singapore. Canada ranks 9<sup>th</sup>, Germany 14<sup>th</sup>, the UK 16<sup>th</sup>, the US, Japan, and Belgium tied for 18<sup>th</sup>, France 23<sup>rd</sup>, Italy 55<sup>th</sup>, Russia 147<sup>th</sup>, tied with Syria, Bangladesh, and Kenya.

Canada was also rated the cleanest of the G8 industrialized countries.

**ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE:** The UK is adapting its weaponry and manpower to be more friendly to the environment, if not the enemy, and capable of operating in extremes of climate.

**AND, I THOUGHT I WAS OLD:** Researchers from McGill, L'Université du Québec, and the Carnegie Institute now claim that the world's oldest rock formations lie along the eastern shore of Hudson Bay in Quebec. They are 4.28 billion years old, relegating the rocks southeast of Great Bear Lake to second place as they are a mere 4 billion years old. That means that Nuvvuagittuq, Québec, came on stage only 300 million years after our planet formed.

# Book Reviews



## **WHEN GOD WAS A WOMAN** Merlin Stone, Barnes & Noble, 1976, 265 pages

This book, first published in the UK, France, and Germany, under different titles, has been around for a while but, as it puts between two covers many of the arguments I have made in previous newsletters, it is time I reviewed it. Common sense tells us that, when a pendulum is disturbed from its restful equilibrium, it will swing back, often violently. It is so with relations between the sexes. Merlin is a teacher of art and art history which led her to archaeology and 10 years of research for this book. She shows that excavations from scores of sites from Scotland to India reveal that the God worshipped by humans from as far back as 25,000 years ago was the Queen of Heaven who was known as the Sun Goddess and went, in different cultures, by the names Anat, Anahita, Asherah, Ashtart, Ashtoreh (Canaan), Attar, Attoret, Au Set, Hathor, Inanna, Innin, Isis, Istar, Nana, and Nut. Clay, stone, and ivory replicas of God are all female. The earliest known writing is from Erech, Iraq, dating to just over 5,000 years ago. This also indicate God was female. Merlin Stone quotes numerous passages from ancient texts as well as the Bible and Koran to trace the dominance of women being replaced by the dominance of men.

As the female was the creator of all life and as she also invented agriculture it was natural to exalt her, but this did place men in a secondary role. Paternity was not considered important so women could take on many lovers. In fact most women, single and married, would retire for extended periods of time to local temples of the Goddess where men were encouraged to visit for sexual pleasures. Queens had the habit of selecting a male as her consort, pamper him for a year, then murder him in order to choose another. After a thousand years or so of this, castration was substituted for murder.

The first male gods arrived in the West about 4,000 years ago, brought by Indo-European invaders who tried to suppress the worship of a female God. Initially they were nomads who had mastered horsemanship, who had 2-man wheeled chariots drawn by horses and who had iron weapons. They were not united and fought among themselves but were overpowering to the bronze age cultures they encountered and imposed themselves as the ruling class.

About 3,500 years ago Abraham, an Indo-European Levite, led his followers to become the priestly class of the Hebrews who were mainly Semites. Levites led in discrediting the Goddess and her serpent, the fount of wisdom, and to substitute Yahweh (Jehovah). As paternity was unimportant in Goddess societies there was no way to enforce the rights of men to inheritance and property.

When Moses led the exodus out of Egypt and when Joshua succeeded him, the Levites had a struggle to convert them all to Yahweh. In seeking the promised land in Canaan they found Jericho, founded 8,000 BC, an easy target as an earthquake had crumbled its walls. They slaughtered the entire population, then went on to do the same to other poorly-armed communities. They spared only young female virgins to serve as wives because those coming out of Egypt were predominantly male.

The book goes into detail on the long struggle to wrest control from Goddess societies. The eating of figs from the sycamore fig tree was considered communion with the Goddess. This was turned into the forbidden tree of knowledge with the serpent, now evil, tempting Eve into eating its fruit and persuading Adam to do the same. This placed the blame on women for the downfall of man. To lock in paternal succession rights, a woman, not found to be a virgin on her marriage bed, had to be stoned to death and, whereas men could have multiple sex partners a woman was stoned if she did. The Goddess, Astoreth, was made out to be an evil temptress and eventually dropped.

A big setback for Goddess societies came from Emperor Constantine who saw a vision of a cross before he defeated a rival in battle, causing him to convert and to close Goddess temples.

Citing numerous quotes and writings, Stone goes on to show how Saints Peter and Paul told women they must submit to their fathers and husbands, followed by Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and so many others who also maintained the inferior status of women. Hebrew men thanked God for not making them women. Muslims adopted the Hebrew and Christian persecution of women. Stone continues through the suffrage struggle to the current situation where equality is still denied in much of the world.

## **DESCENT INTO CHAOS** Ahmed Rashid, Viking, NY, 2008, 542 pages

Ahmed Rashid is a Pakistani journalist in Lahore who writes for The Daily Telegraph, The Washington Post, BBC, The Nation, and The International Herald Tribune. His books include: *Jihad, Taliban*, and *Resurgence of Central Asia*.

This latest book includes 7 pages of maps, 11 pages of glossary, and 2 pages of acronyms. He has a 52-page introduction before launching into a detailed history of the chaos that now engulfs the region. It is a sad tale of bungled opportunities, of ethnic disunities, of far too many power-seeking individuals, some of whom start out with good intentions only to resort to force and terror to retain the power they have come to relish.

His lengthy description of players and problems in Afghanistan needs to be read slowly to absorb the apparent hopelessness of happy endings with the inadequate, confused, over-lapping, and self-defeating actions of would-be rescuers. Surprising is the reckless courage and capacity for suffering of Afghans of all stripes and of those foreigners who have come to fight for what they believe to be right. They come under the control of warlords and what progress that has been made is due more to bribes than bullets. This has entrenched warlords, making Hamid Karzai's task close to impossible. The US, with no desire for nation building and far more interested in oil-rich Iraq, has allowed the CIA to enrich warlords while leaving Karzai unable to fund basic institutions. Rashid describes in detail the euphoria that swept the country at the initial defeat of the Taliban, of the millions of eager students who flocked to the new or re-opened schools, of the blossoming of media outlets, much of which has been destroyed by the lack of donor co-operations. To convert this battered and devastated area into a beacon of Western peace and prosperity, Rashid argues we first must resolve the Kashmir imbalance that has caused strife between India and Pakistan since 1947 and which is the root of Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate) and Army support for al Qaeda and the Taliban in an effort to keep India out of Afghanistan.

Rashid concludes that there is still hope for Pakistan and Afghanistan but that the West needs to maintain co-ordinated involvement, that local leaders need to be more attentive to Al Qaida thriving in failed states, and to the powder keg, especially Uzbekistan, that is Central Asia. A new generation of leaders is needed to guide these countries. Karzai has had to compromise far too much with warlords, thieves, and brigands rather than with mainstream Afghans wanting to rebuild their country.

#### Quotes

- "Blessed is the country whose greatest threat is being bored to death." John Polani on the Canadian election.  
"We have created God in our own image." Sam Harris, author of *The End of Faith*.  
"Iraq is the greatest military disaster in US history." Ahmid Rashid, author of *Descent into Chaos*.  
"The seabed is one of two last frontiers on Earth, the other is consciousness." A.C. Grayling, *New Scientist*.  
"Most countries have armies. In Pakistan the Army has a country." Ahmid Rashid.  
"Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former." Albert Einstein.

**THE BROTHERHOOD OF TUNNELLERS:** My tunnelling days may be long gone, but I remain sympathetic to all those trying to escape the confines of life by tunnelling, hazardous as it might be. In that huge jail, known as Gaza, where an entire population is cruelly condemned to unemployment, hunger, and abuse, desperate and brave souls have dug hundreds of tunnels to smuggle in necessities of life from Egypt. Tunnels can collapse and they do at the rate of about one a week killing 45 people to date. In addition to food, smugglers have brought into Gaza a sedated lion and monkeys for a zoo, a young bride to her fiancé, and computers. Like the tunnels we built for the Great Escape they dig down 12 metres before starting on the horizontal shafts. I wish them well and chastise the US and Egypt for destroying 42 good tunnels.

**THE AGA KHAN:** leader of Ismaili Muslims, the second largest Shiite group, in his latest book describes Canada as the world leader in establishing a peaceful pluralistic society. A large influx of Ismailis into Canada occurred in the 1980s after Idi Amin expelled them from Uganda. Befriended by Pierre Trudeau, the Aga Khan set up in Ottawa the Global Centre for Pluralism and the HQ for the Aga Khan Development Network. In Toronto he is building a museum to house the largest collection of Muslim art outside the Muslim world. The Āgā Khān has been particularly interested in the elimination of global poverty; the advancement of the status of women; the promotion of Islamic culture, art, and architecture; and furthering pluralistic values in society.

**A TALE OF TWO ELECTIONS:** Within the interval space between two newsletters, a Canadian election, ignored by the US media, has come and gone, yet it included interesting debates, none of which were aired here, that included the leaders of all five parties: Stephen Harper for the Conservatives, Stephane Dion for the Liberals, Jack Layton for the New Democratic Party, Elizabeth May for the Green Party, and Gilles Duceppe for the Bloc Québécois. Results: Conservatives 147 seats, Liberals 75, Bloc Québécois 50, NDP 37, Independent 2. The US election, which began 12 newsletters ago, is still alive and boisterous but, in spite of all the time and fortunes wasted, never allowed Ralph Nader and Matt Gonzales, Independents, Cynthia McKinney and Rosa Clemente, Green Party, debate time even though they have well-founded arguments to offer, arguments ignored by the two major parties. But, then, I should admit that the Fringe Parties in Canada would like more exposure. They are: The Progressive Canadian Party, the First Peoples National Party, the Libertarian Party, the Communist Party, the Karl-Marx Party, the Western Bloc Party, the Canadian Action party, the Animal and Environment Alliance Party, the Christian Heritage Party, the Marijuana Party, and the NeoRhino Party.

The next US president is likely to be a one-term president as the draconian measures that are never mentioned in the campaigns but that are absolutely necessary to attempt to rescue the US economy will be so highly unpopular that the blame will be heaped on the hapless president. Unlike the financial crises we have seen in Argentina, Brazil, and Japan, the US economy is so huge that, when it fouls up, the rest of the world suffers. The sound Canadian and European economies are hurting from the US fallout. The prevailing philosophy that we must remain in a growth pattern with each year surpassing last year's leads only to busts and we have experienced these ever since the Lydians invented coinage some 2,500 years ago. Humans have a great capacity for learning. Pity it is so seldom used.

**AND FURTHERMORE**, this scribe continues to be annoyed at the misinformation the major US candidates promote about the Middle East, seemingly to corral the Jewish vote. Thanks to lots of aid from the West, especially the US and Germany, Israel has done a remarkable job of establishing a thriving country on land taken from Palestine, leaving a less desirable and fragmented area to dispossessed Palestinians. Things might have stabilized had Israel been content to live within the 1948 boundaries set up by the UN. Instead, 60 years later, it continues to occupy the remnants of Palestine, giving rise to Hamas and Hezbollah. Many Israelis, including a changed, but retired PM, Ehud Olmert, argue that, for peace, all occupied land must be given up, a stand opposed by vocal Western groups who prefer to divert attention to Iran which is harmless compared to nuclear-armed Pakistan and Israel. Sure, that maverick Ahmndinejad argues for the elimination of - not the Jewish people but the state of Israel, claiming that the area is large enough for only one state - Palestine in which Jews, Arabs, and what-have-you can live peacefully together as they once did. Yes, Iran has not been as compliant as we would like, but diplomacy, not force, is essential. Iran may have a government we dislike, but it is not an aggressor nation and it does have grievances: exploitation by British and US oil interests, occupation by Soviet, British, and US forces, an invasion by Iraq that took a million lives, and outside pressure from countries with huge nuclear arsenals to curtail its nuclear program which they insist is for peaceful uses only. Iran has a long border with Iraq but Iraq now also has a Shiite government, thanks to, but hampered by, a continued US occupation. Quite a mess, requiring quiet diplomacy. Why do we give Ahmndinejad so much publicity and practically ignore the soft-spoken and able Iranian Foreign Minister, Manovchehr Mottaki? Why do we hound Iran on its enrichment program when we tolerated India, Israel, and Pakistan defying the non-proliferation goal - and the nuclear powers offering no reductions to their arsenals?

If a long war, provoked by invading Chinese armies, was being waged in Mexico, it is highly doubtful that the US would remain aloof and indifferent.

P.S.: Mottaki wrote an interesting article for Le Monde, Paris, 25 Oct 2007, revealing how France helped the Shah establish the Iranian nuclear program then opposed the program when the dictator, compliant to the West, was evicted.

**AND THEN THERE IS RUSSIA:** Both candidates chastise Russia because it seems to be the popular thing to do. Russia belongs in Europe. Its people populated Europe and the Vikings and Germans (before Hitler) returned the favour. Peter the Great and Catherine the Great promoted closer ties, but too many Tsars and Soviet leaders behaved in ways distasteful to us. But Napoleon and Hitler were somewhat distasteful to them. Our interest in intervening in the Red-White wars was to continue the use of Russians as cannon fodder to help defeat Germany in WW1. By outspending the Soviets in an arms race we speeded the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, but we failed to exploit the startling overtures of Gorbachev. Russians, a deflated super power, see the western and southern parts of the old USSR being wooed by NATO even though substantial Russian populations remain in places like Georgia and the Ukraine. They moan the loss of the Crimea, lost only because it was transferred to the Ukraine for administrative reasons when it was part of the USSR. The five Central Asian republics that broke away are now run by dictators and are worse off. Russia may have over-reacted to the heavy shelling of Ossetia by Georgia, but it did not start the conflict. Our missile bases in Poland and the Czech Republic are considered by Russians as a real threat and a desire by us for confrontation. President Dmitry Medvedev has called for a European-Atlantic Security Treaty stretching around the globe. Putin is popular with Russians because of the economic gains he has brought. They are not so happy with his restrictions on human liberties. We need Russia in the Arctic, in space, and in Europe. Let us jump at Medvedev's offer before the weight of military expenditures does to us what it did to the USSR.

**AND IN CLOSING:** On a wide front the United States is under heavy attack: hurricanes, fires, foreclosures, self-serving CEOs, drug addiction, wasteful electioneering, two wars, a crushing military expenditure (1,000 worldwide bases), economic malaise, and an ominous debt now climbing above \$10 trillion. Its people have proven to be resilient which tends to obscure the depths of the problems and the distasteful and humiliating measures necessary to confront them.

**THE VETERAN ON THE BACK OF THE CANADIAN \$10 BILL** by the Ottawa War Memorial is Robert Metcalfe who died this summer at age 90. He had moved to Ottawa from Chatham where he had been Chairman of the county board. He received a surprise call from a government official asking for a meeting at the war memorial where a few photographs were taken for no purpose known to him.

Robert was born in England and was part of the 400,000-man expeditionary force that met the German blitzkrieg in France. Wounded in the legs, he was being trucked to the rear, just missing shells from a German tank. At Dunkirk he boarded one of three waiting ships. The other two were sunk, but his ship, HMS Grenade, made it to

England. With his wounds patched up he was sent off to North Africa, outrunning the Bismark that had spotted them.

During the Italian campaign he met and married a Canadian nurse, and joined her as she returned to Canada after the war. At age 80 he published a book on his experiences. (Submitted by Bob Johnson, North Gower, Ontario)

**CANADIAN - EU RELATIONS:** This scribe is pleased that the EU is berating Canada to get its act together. Provincial tin gods have long manned barriers that hinder inter-provincial trade, education, universally accepted professional certificates, and the like. As president of the European Council, Nicolas Sarkozy was in Montreal this month to forge an economic partnership. Similar talks failed in 2005 because Canada did not speak with one voice. The EU argues that, with 27 members and 3,000 translators, it has more unity than Canada. Bulgaria and Ireland can work together better than Alberta and Newfoundland.



**OLIVE LOMAS:** Olive married Lew Lomas in Galt, Ontario, in 1940. After the war she and Lew served at Sea Island, Pat Bay, Trenton, Toronto, St. Hubert, Moncton, Sydney, Colorado Springs, and Clinton. We first met Olive when we were neighbours on the same street in St. Hubert PMQs in 1958. They came to Colorado Springs in 1960 where we again joined them in 1963. In 1964 they were transferred to Clinton, Ontario, but returned to the Springs after retirement on 7 Dec 1968. In 1983 they were founding members of this Wing. Their children are: Barbara in 1941, Pam and Peggy in 1946, Pat 1948, Lewis 1950, Mike 1953, Rob 1962, and Tim 1964. Lew died here at age 80 on 02 Oct 1999. Due to breathing problems at this altitude Olive moved to Vancouver to be near family there. She died there 01 Oct 2008.

Many times Olive and Lew entertained our Wing in their home in the Broadmoor.

**RANKING BANKING SYSTEMS:** A Swiss-based think tank asked 12,000 senior executives in 134 countries to rank banking systems. In soundness, Canada ranked first, followed by Sweden, Luxembourg, Australia, Denmark, Holland. The United States ranked number 40. However, in competitiveness, the US ranked first with Canada number 10.

**OUR TRIP by Young 90-year-old Bill Edwards:** We left the Springs, 15 Sep, for Denver to pick up Barb's sister, Francine, who flew in from Thousand Oaks, CA. We drove north to Cheyenne and headed for the "Crazy Horse Memorial", fascinated by the blasting on the mountain and the size of this structure to be. Then took in Mount Rushmore and the Presidents, realizing how small they are to the size of Crazy Horse. Then to Winnipeg and Highway 17 (Canada 1) to Thunder Bay. Having been there before we looked up the Canadian Legion where we had been entertained, drove through the town, shopped at a mall and headed for Nipigon for 'RON'. We had great food at the local Pub. (car battery was dead, so called CAA to get going again). Then, a day and a night sight-seeing in Sault Ste Marie before heading for Sudbury, North Bay, and Ottawa. What a beautiful place that is. We toured the city and then headed for Montreal but found that it was so busy that we decided to go on to Quebec City where we stayed the night, and the next day took a 3-hour bus tour after which a boat tour on the St Lawrence. (Now we all want to go back and spend a couple of weeks to see more of it). Next day we crossed the river and headed for Saint John, New Brunswick, watching the changing of the tide which is amazing; saw the falls that is created and the completely still water at the tide changing. Had a GREAT sea food meal near the falls and watched the water. Called the ferry service in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and found the ferry only runs on Mondays to Bar Harbor, Maine. As this was Tuesday it meant a 6-day wait, so we headed back by road, facing a run-in with the US customs because Barb had bought a couple bottles of aspirin that had codeine in it. They said that it was a felony in the state of Maine, so we were delayed until they completely searched the van (as though we were smugglers). Finally, we got on our way to drive Highway 1 along the coast to Augusta. Next day on to Boston for sea food again but could not find a parking place, so got on US90 and headed for Buffalo and Niagara Falls, which we found beautiful and awesome. Left there and stayed on '90' until we got on a side road along Lake Erie which again for us is beautiful. We went to Cleveland, hoping to ride the Big Roller Coaster, but found it closed for the season, so we went south to get on US70 to head for the Springs. We drove 6,265 miles and had a wonderful time. What a wonderful part of the world we live in!!!!

**US CITIZENS IN THE RCAF/RAF IN WWII:** 750 joined the RAF while 8,864 enlisted in the RCAF (which they called the Royal Confederate Air Force), 3,794 later transferring to the USAAF. 980 were killed while in the RCAF.