

971 RCAF AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

March 2011

www.971WingAFAC.com

Colorado Springs, Colorado



Another successful take-off - see below

Social Calendar

- Mar 12 It was a most enjoyable evening for 43 of us at the home of Judy and Lew Lomas, co-hosted by Gwen and Jim Czirjak! Decked out in green, Judy made a sparkling colleen.
- Apr 16 22 of us enjoyed an evening at the Mason Jar on Corporate Drive - just the right number for their private dining room.
- May 07 1800 at The Club at Flying Horse for the Regular Force formal spring ball, astronaut Julie Payette guest speaker. \$60 per person. Teshia.llewellyn@forces.gc.ca for details.
- May 21 1600 at Jim Berwick's, 735 Bear Paw Lane North, 80906. 471-2466. Co-sponsored by Donna and Darrell Levitt.
- May 30 Memorial Day: 1100 at the Retired Enlisted Club, east off Murray. Blazers and medals.
- Jun 04 1700 at Jane Surner's, 555 West Cheyenne Road, 80906. 471-2048.
- Jul 23 1500 at the ranch of Charlene and Bill Champion, 12612 Pommel Circle, Elbert. 495-0529

Sick Parade: Aches and Pains have been no recent strangers to our members. Margit Thompson remains cheerful after 5 trips to hospital by ambulance for recurring ailments; Bill Champion liked intensive care so much he went back for a second helping; Ida Fraser, Carmen Swift, and Lew Lomas have all had arm or shoulder surgeries; Bob Freimuth's knee is healing well. Lung and leg problems continue to plague Miles McMillan. Nevertheless, Margit, Carmen, and Miles all were cheerful company at the Mason Jar.

Inputs for the July issue: Send to georgesweanor@comcast.net before 01 June 11.

Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam: This Boeing 747 established, without doubt, its maximum all-up-weight on take off. (Photo provided by Peter Tutt, Brantford, Ontario, ex 426 Sqn)

The Editor's Corner

UNIONS, AND ALL THAT

No one has said it better than Mikhail Gorbachev: "*Communism is Man exploiting Man. Capitalism is the reverse*". Exploitation, rampant throughout history, remains entrenched even in the Lands of the Free. Unions, built to lessen inequality, gained power but as Lord John Action in 1887 warned: "*Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.*" Sadly, unions like Canada Post, the Railways and Automotive have abused power. An ideal society is a two-way street: employees loyal to employers who, in turn, reward them commensurate with their accomplishments and the employers' ability to do so.

So, what have I encountered? After summer jobs paying up to 20 cents an hour, I got in 1938, on graduating from high school with senior matriculation plus a year of commerce courses, a job with the Royal Bank of Canada with a starting salary of \$400 per year in a town of 4,000 with 3 competing banks, each with a staff of about 7 men and one woman (the secretary). Room and board in private homes cost \$7 per week. Pay raises averaged \$100 annually and you had to be making \$1400 before allowed to marry so you would be about 28. Bank managers were paid about \$3,000 per year. Their responsibilities included monitoring the staff for efficient performance of banking duties plus dress, deportment, and affiliation with local sports and social clubs, all to promote the bank as an important community asset. It was a safe and efficient banking system of half a dozen banks with branches across Canada and some overseas. No depositor lost a cent during the Great Depression. When employees in one large-city branch formed a union to seek higher wages, bank officials rapidly moved in, locked out and fired the entire staff, replacing them with others transferred in.

In 1941 I was making \$850 a year when I joined the RCAF. Discipline was not as strict as feared and most of us were happy in the Service. The one mutiny I witnessed (crews refusing to bomb Germany in antiquated training aircraft) was settled amicably if not soon enough. Bombing Germany in 1942 as an officer I was paid \$6.25 a day, double RAF pay so a wise RCAF, to avoid friction, withheld half to provide a nice post-war nest egg (for survivors). Our greatest pain was the nightly loss of so many valued friends. A post-war RCAF career was rewarding but we found we were married to the Service; families were secondary and wives endured a lot. Every two years we had to be proficient within days of reaching a new location and new job with no extra time for house hunting in a very tight market with no building during six years of war while the population doubled. Provincial school systems, superior to and disdainful of all others, added much grief in getting children into new schools without dropping a grade. Each of our five girls was born on the move. Twice we had to buy holes in the ground, waiting 2 months for a house to be built. All this while taking various advanced courses and being responsible for several unpaid secondary duties. Today, generous pay and time allowances are granted with each move. Reaching compulsory retirement age of 47 in 1966, I retired on a pension that was to remain for 14 years under \$5,000 per year until indexed for inflation.

My desire to be a teacher required 4 more years of university courses. I crammed 9 hours of classes into Mondays and the rest into evenings to be on call when a moving company needed me. Unions disliked part-time, non-union, workers so dictated to the company when they could hire me for \$2 an hour. When, in 1970, I became a full-fledged teacher, the pay was \$5,000 per year from which a painful slice was demanded by the teachers' union with which I became disillusioned. I objected to considering as an enemy the unpaid school board that had to please both the taxpayer and teachers demanding higher pay and smaller class sizes. I also disliked seniority rules that forced us to lose great teachers each time enrollment dropped while keeping many entrenched low-performing ones. Public relations were all-important, so pass rates remained high by lowering standards which some of us refused to do. Many students come from broken homes and need much more care than a school curriculum provides. Teaching is a full-time job, getting to know the parents and home problems and being always available to promote learning to produce assets to the world. I did work them hard, giving no multiple-choice tests (machine graded) but only essays which kept me busy each evening grading, yet I had no shortage of students seeking my classes. I quit the union when they went on strike in 1975 in the middle of a school year. Those of us who refused to abandon our students made enemies by crossing the picket lines. Substantial pay raises were later achieved, plus increased taxes, but I loathed the methods used. Unions do serve good purposes but dues are too high, political ties too strong, and too many members serve their union rather than their employer. Like climate change and over population, the growing gap between rich and poor remains an explosive danger. We are all in this together and need to share sacrifices and benefits.

JOHN MELNIC, born 23 June 1926, was transferred, 13 Feb 2011, at age 85, to our Heavenly affiliate, CMLXXI Wing, to be our 25th member so transferred.

John was a founding member of our Wing in 1983 and was treasurer 1988-1990. On 3 occasions, he and Vivian hosted us at their Cimarron Hills Club House before moving on to Mesa, Arizona.

Joan and Vivian, married for 63 years, had 4 children, 7 grandchildren and 1 great granddaughter. John was a musician with the RCAF/Cdn Forces.

REMEMBRANCE: We need to pause more often to recall the good companionship we had with those our Wing has painfully lost:

George MacCready	10 Apr	1983
George Thompson	23 Apr	1983
Gordon Schemilt	07 May	1986
David Tinson	06 Nov	1986
Paul Rubben	24 Apr	1989
C.Roy Slemon	12 Feb	1992
Stanley Logan	12 Aug	1992
Ronald Blank	25 Jun	1994
William Dunn	14 Feb	1995
Blair McMahan	xx Feb	1996
Robert Wolff	07 Dec	1996
Dorothy Mayne	15 Jul	1997
Thomas Wallnutt	16 Jan	1998
Eunice Dooher	26 May	1999
Lewis Lomas	02 Oct	1999
David Olsen	25 Jul	2002
Bill Bradford	12 Oct	2005
Hal Wilson	07 Mar	2006
Dan Cormier	xx Mar	2006
Eileen Banville	xx Sep	2006
Bert Banville	11 Mar	2008
Paul White	11 May	2008
WJ "Mike" Lewis, DFC	17 Jul	2009
Bill Edwards	07 Aug	2009
John Melnic	13 Feb	2011

A DORNIER 172-2 has been discovered upside down in 50 feet of water off the Kentish coast. It was shot down by a Boulton Paul Defiant 26 Aug 1940. The wireless operator and bomb aimer were killed while the pilot and navigator became POWs. It is the world's only almost-intact Dornier 172-2 and it is planned to raise it this spring for restoration and display at Hendon.

RANDOM FACTS:

1. Fred Hotson, author of *The deHavilland Canada Story*, is, at age 97, writing his own story of life as a pilot for the Ontario Paper Company.
2. In Canadian history there were 4,092 slaves, 2,692 Native and 1,400 Caribbean black. 931 of the Native and 8 of the Black married French settlers.
3. Opium kills 100,000 people annually.
4. The US has raised its debt ceiling 70 times since WWI.
5. Summer 2008: a radio-collared female polar bear with a cub on its back, swam 9 days non stop, 687 km, in the Beaufort Sea to find pack ice. She did but the cub had died.
6. Rising food prices are forcing into poverty one more person every second.

CAE SIMULATORS: I used to think of these as high-tech means of teaching students to pilot aircraft. Now I learn CAE has simulators to teach medics how to treat trauma under all conditions.

NUNAVUT: We have no shortage of problems. Social, political, and climate changes are sweeping the North, and not all for the better. A huge area of a huge country, Nunavut is an expensive but necessary innovation. We southerners are doing a good job of correcting the sins of the past. Huge improvements have been made in housing, transportation, communications, education, and respect for native culture - so what has gone wrongly? Cape Dorset, a community of 1,300 on Baffin Island, noted for its sculpture and print-making is unravelling. Violent crimes are seven times the rest of Canada. With young males the suicide rate is 40 times the rest of Canada.

On the other hand, mineral exploitation is booming again. There is real need for an all-weather road linking Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet, and Churchill. Benefits, it is argued, will far exceed the \$1.3 billion cost. But, mineral extraction too often promotes boom, bust, dislocations, and ghost towns. The need is now for a long-range, co-ordinated, sustainable, funded plan for the entire region.

OUR DEMANDS FOR POWER: The tsunami-inflicted damage to the 40-year-old Fukushima reactors rightfully causes concerns. But, if we consider deaths per 10 billion kilowatt hours, Coal has claimed 32.7, Hydro-electric 1.6, Natural Gas 1.6, and Nuclear 1.2. These figures include 13,200 annually in the US from coal, 230,000 from 1975 dam failures in China, and 9,000 from the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. Because of Fukushima, Germany has shut down 7 reactors and China, building more than the rest of the world combined, has suspended all new approvals.

The 7 nuclear sites (18 reactors) in Canada are among the world's most robust and are in areas of low seismic threats.

Half the 104 reactors at 65 US plants are over 30 years old and many are located in zones of high seismic risk.

France leads the world, obtaining 75% of its energy from nuclear.

The leading uranium producers are: Kazakhstan, Canada, Australia, Namibia

441 reactors in 30 countries produce 17% of current world energy.

But nuclear has that nagging disposal problem with persistent radiation. Like everything else we are shirking our responsibilities and leaving it to future generations. We want energy - regardless!

SEE-SAW II - LIBYA: It is *deja vu* for those of us who followed the WWII campaigns in Libya: Italians, Germans, Free French, British, Australian and New Zealand troops chased each other back and forth across the sands. But back then opponents were evenly matched. Today, we have a situation full of danger but also full of promise.

Unlike Iraq and Afghanistan which we lost by supporting corrupt Karzai, we have millions of common people anxious for our help in shedding the yoke of dictators. Their determination and courage are assets we cannot lose. But, economy of force is something they need to learn. They fire more precious ammunition into the air than at the enemy and allow bravery to replace common sense. They, and we, could make the Mediterranean truly *Mare Nostrum* - Our Sea ringed by free and democratic nations. It is an immense task, aggravated by the fact that our democracies all have numerous citizens more concerned with their own welfare than altruistic goals, so uniformity of purpose and dedication to the long haul will be difficult to maintain especially in face of increasing

migrations of millions in search of less painful lives - and the many home problems we all have.

Our selfish interests have for too long dictated our less than upright actions in the Middle East. Good people are there for our recognition and support. A better future can be theirs and ours.

As of 14 April the Canadian portion of our Charlie's NATO Air Force has flown: Hornets 110 sorties, Polaris 47, Aurora 17 plus 2 Globemaster, 2 Hercules, and HMCS Charlottetown on station. United and forceful political and economic offensives are a must - and also with authorities that are less than helpful in Syria, Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. There are millions of good seeds in this "Arab Spring". Let us nourish them. It is a rare opportunity.

JEFFERIES and the NWMP: On receipt of the March newsletter, Jeff's widow, Elaine, advised me that Jeff's father had been part of the RNWMP and had many tales to tell of his adventures including north into Inuit territory. During WWI he served in France with a group of Regina Mounties.

In 1904 the NWMP became the Royal North West Mounted Police, then in 1920 when its responsibilities embraced all of Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

THE BUDGET: Those politicians we pay to do the best of what is within their abilities to do for our world tend to lose sight of the depths and causes of problems that procrastination and special interests continually aggravate. Each of us, lucky enough to have the ability, needs to look after our own interests but with constant heed to a finite and dangerous world and the self discipline to extract only a fair share while helping the less fortunate. We all take of the bounty so we must all contribute to the welfare of our globe and its inhabitants.

Many countries have mismanaged their finances and shun the distasteful remedial medicine. And far too many crooks continue to serve only their greed. The current danger is such that we must all play a part. Spending must return to a pay-as-you-go philosophy and cuts must be shared. Tax increases and income restrictions must be endured, including eliminating off-shore tax havens, until debts decline to manageable levels. And, we must pay honest prices for goods and not patronize sweat shops wherever found.

Book

Reviews



WHAT NEEDEDLED CLEOPATRA

by Phil Mason, JR Books, London, 2009, 262 pages

Not only Hollywood but bards, poets, authors, and history books have given us an altered view of individuals, institutions, and events to enhance romantic, patriotic, political, and friend vs enemy goals. The facts surrounding many of those Mason describes I have found from a variety of sources over the years and some of them have been included in articles I have written. Mason does a good job at describing between two covers 331 individuals plus many events, giving us facts that change perceptions.

He chose this title because Cleopatra, and Anthony, lacked the good looks that literature paints for us. He points out the flaws in Abraham, numerous Israeli kings who were mass murderers, and popes who turned the Vatican into a brothel. The ‘murder’ of Julius Caesar, he argues, was a planned suicide for unblemished immortality; the death of Patton was engineered by superiors who feared he would lead us to war with the Soviets. Shortcomings include those of William Shakespeare, Agathe Christie, Charlie Chaplin. Beethoven, Florence Nightingale, Horatio Nelson, William Gladstone, and Anthony Eden. Henry Morse made a fortune when he patented as his own the work of Joseph Henry who had built the first electro magnet and Alfred Vail who invented the “Morse” code. George Washington broke with Britain because he coveted land Britain left to Canada and because he got insufficient admiration from fellow British officers. Lincoln considered negroes inferior and freeing them was not an initial goal. Also he drove his wife insane. Switzerland violated its WWII neutrality by loaning money to and assisting Nazi Germany. Then, until exposed, it was intent on keeping the money stolen from slaughtered Jews and deposited by Nazis. To restore its image it did pay \$1.26 billion to survivors and relatives. He points out immoral decisions in wars and actions that delayed victory. In WWII for every fighting man the Soviets had one in the supply train, the British 3, the Americans 9.

While the book’s purpose is to expose the flaws of heroes it could lessen our disgust for humanity by reminding us there are many thousands of unblemished humans who have, and are, devoting their lives to the betterment of humanity.

JUNO, Canadians at D-Day, June 6, 1944 - Reviewed by Darrell Levitt

By Ted Barris, Thomas Allan Publishers, Toronto, 311 pages

A story of true Canadian heroes. Ted Barris takes the reader from the disaster of Dieppe to the historic freeing of a nation. In remarkable fashion, Mr. Barris takes you on the second coming of age of the Canadian forces from the sea, the air, and the ground. He uses stories and diary excerpts from able seamen, air force ground and air crews to officers as well as the private soldier of the 1st Canadian Division, the only army to achieve its D-Day objectives and the one getting the furthest inland. He masterfully sets to paper the fears, horror, and fight to survive the Longest Day and beyond. You are there, you can feel the tension of postponement as survivors of Dieppe remember the cost of such decision, to gravely ill, seasick troops bobbing in landing craft, with their strength sapped rushing to shore to destroy Hitler’s Atlantic Wall. He speaks with members of the 1st Canadian Parachute battalion from gear up to landing and through days of holding key locations against German counterattacks to ensure the success of not only their mission, but of D-Day itself. This is a book of citizen soldiers thrust into war after two years in England, some carrying the scars of failure two years earlier determined to first survive and then free France from Nazi oppression. Ted Barris relates feats of heroism and massacre. It is the story that once and for all sets Canada and her military forces as a force to be reckoned with, apart from the shadow of Great Britain. **THEY ARE CANADIANS.**

MEMORIAL DAY, by DARRELL LEVITT

"A veteran is someone, who at one point in their life, wrote a blank cheque payable to their country for an amount up to and including THEIR LIFE".

As the month of May approaches our thoughts turn to things such as warm weather, BBQs, family outings and picnics. As veterans both American and Canadian alike should also turn our thoughts to Memorial Day, and I am not speaking of the BBQs, outings, and picnics. As veterans that we all are we should turn our attention to May 30, 2011 and the remembrance of those that have served and given their lives so that we may think of trivial things like BBQs, outing, and picnics.

Take an hour out of your day on May 30, 2011 at 11:00 at The Retired Enlisted Association and spend it remembering those that have given you the freedom to make your own choices.

THE CANADIAN SERVICE PERSON

Times have changed. The waging of war has moved to previously unheard of heights but one thing has remained unchanged, THE CANADIAN SERVICEPERSON. These young men and women of Canada's military forces have, from earliest times remained true professionals of service. Seldom do you hear of a Canadian serviceperson committing atrocities, or defiling sacred religious sites. What you do hear is the humanity of the Canadian's in uniform. You hear of the reaching out of hands, the giving of food, clothing, and shelter to those in need. You hear of the hours, days, and months spent rebuilding or building safe havens for the needy.\

The Canadian serviceperson is much more than a mindless machine bent on destruction, MUCH MORE. They are mothers and fathers to those that have lost their own, to tech, comfort, and protect. They are big brothers and sisters to those who have none, to foster play, happiness, and to protect. The Canadian serviceperson is also a teacher, counselor, clergy, and diplomat. They must be able to teach those that have little or nothing to provide for themselves, counsel and console those that have lost loved ones or everything they once had, and provide spiritual guidance and comforting to total strangers. The Canadian serviceperson is able to stand their ground when confronted with belligerence and taunting. They remain cool and collected under direct threat to their own lives and well being as well as to those they have sworn to protect.

The last thing a Canadian service person wants to be is an aggressor. They pride themselves in being a defender and protector to those that cannot or for reasons will not defend themselves. They stand to the Canadian belief of freedom and justice, to equality of life, and the building of futures. They live a life of service to others. The Canadian serviceperson is willingly go where they are told and needed, often depriving themselves of the basic comforts they have sworn to provide and protect.

The Canadian serviceperson has been mocked, ignored, and ridiculed by their government and fellow citizens, yet have remained steadfast with dignity and honour asking little for themselves. They have been asked to do more with less and been given seemingly impossible tasks, always taking up the challenge and prevailing.

Service in the Canadian Forces is not a job, it is a lifestyle; a life of service. From the highest ranking general to the new recruit, the belief is the same, to serve with honour, pride, and professionalism hoping never having to take up arms against another. When the time comes that arms are to be borne, they will do so with gallantry, fearlessness, and tenacity, rarely giving ground.

A serviceperson/veteran is someone, who at one point in their life, wrote a blank cheque payable to their country for an amount up to and including THEIR LIFE".

Let us in Colorado Springs take time to remember with our American brothers and sisters those that have had the cheque cashed by their country.

THE IRISH AND SCOTS - AS EGYPTIANS AND SCYTHIANS

Historians and History texts provide only a starting point to those who seek truth over myth and romance. The written word is long predated by oral accounts, sometimes amazingly accurate over millennia but are also embellished by bards who were influenced by sponsors who benefitted from doctored versions of the truth. Archaeologists and anthropologists have been helpful but bones and ruins can tell only part of the story. The search over 59 years for my Irish and French roots have amassed a bewildering array of myths and facts, wound together and from which I can infer and weave various tales. Here is one, hoping it will tempt you to investigate further: Some 3,600 to 3,300 years ago, areas from the Danube to the Urals were suffering climate change, some of it induced by human activity that included producing more humans than resources and technology could nurture. One evening in this environment, dust swirled around them as Miles (Miletus) and his band of Scythian archers rode their horses homewards carrying a lone stag, the only food they had encountered during a long day of roaming the parched plains.

Pleased that, tonight, they could feed their families, Miles knew that only a long migration could save them. He had heard that an Egyptian emissary was in the Crimea seeking mercenaries. Egypt, with annual flooding from the Nile, could still provide adequate food, but Libyans and waves of Sea People, refugees from Europe, were encroaching on lands the pharaoh considered his. His armies were hard pressed to oppose them. Historians differ as to which pharaoh it was. However

After days of cautious negotiations, Miles agreed to lead a score of families and horses to board a fleet of ships to sail for Egypt where their encampment grew as Miles organized and executed lightning raids deep into Gaza in the east and, in the west, beyond the Libyan border to destroy enemy supply bases. The pharaoh was so pleased at the successes Miles was achieving that he gave him, as a second wife, one of his daughters, Scota, who became primary wife when his Scythian wife died in childbirth.

Amazing was the transformation of Scota from a pampered daughter to a Scythian warrior. Learning quickly, she relished being a fighting member of his marauding team and soon became a driving force. When Phoenicians told of "The Green Island" she was intrigued and, with Egypt now safe, she persuaded Miles to lead an expedition westwards. She converted her wealth to trinkets of silver and gold that were easily carried and most useful as currency for supplies. She purchased a Phoenician ship and crew, but en route they soon discovered the world was over populated with every bit of desirable land occupied by people who welcomed traders but who would be quite hostile if visitors stayed more than a day or two.

Realizing that establishing a homeland in Ireland would require more force than they now had, Miles, Scota, and entourage sealed off a small peninsula on the south coast of Spain that took many years to enlarge as they persuaded other Celts to join them. Scota had 4 more sons, Heber, Ir, Heremon, and Erannan, as they slowly grew in numbers, bred more horses, and built 30 sea-going vessels. It was a grievous blow when Miles was killed in a skirmish. Scota and several of her sons along with two from Miles' previous marriage were determined to carry on with their vision.

The long journey necessitated numerous stops along the way where the natives were always happy to sell supplies and to allow a few night's rest on dry land. Scota sought, and received, the closer they got, ever more information on the Green Island, learning that it had been inhabited for 5,000 years and was now home to the Fir Bolg who had been defeated by invading Tuatha da Danaan (People of the Goddess Danu). Much of this data Scota obtained during a stop in what is now Plymouth.

Nearing Ireland, Erannan, climbed the mast for a better view, fell into the sea, and drowned. Then Ir died in an accident. Attempts to land in eastern Ireland failed, forcing the fleet westwards, eventually landing in what is now Kenmare Bay, Kerry, but bloody battles ensued. Scota's horsemen and archers were at a disadvantage in a heavily-treed land. Scota was killed but her sons carried on, slowly taking the entire island, calling themselves Scots after Scota. Heremon, in the north, fell out with, and killed, Heber who ruled the south. Their numerous sons continued intermittent warfare. Ireland was never united.

Centuries passed and, in the 400s AD, Heremon's descendants invaded the land of the Picts who were also Celts, giving it the name Scotland. They also introduced the bagpipes that had originated in Scythia.

Today, many Irish and Scots trace their ancestry back through Heber and Heremon to Scota and Miles. You will find many versions of this tale. Take your pick. They all contain truths.

LETTER FROM JAPAN

My neighbour, Marilyn Fife, has spent many years living in Japan, studying and teaching. She married Pepe from Ecuador who was running a business in Japan. Both are now teaching here. Pepe flew back to Japan 23 March to assist in recovery efforts there. This letter is from Etsuko, a Japanese friend of theirs:

“Things here in Sendai have been rather surreal. But I am very blessed to have wonderful friends who are helping me a lot. Since my shack is now even more worthy of that name, I am staying at a friend’s home. We share supplies like water, food, and a kerosene heater. We sleep lined up in one room, eat by candlelight, share stories. It is warm, friendly, and beautiful.

During the day we help each other clean up the mess in our homes. People sit in their cars, looking at news on their navigation screens, or line up to get drinking water when a source is open. If someone has water running in their home they put out a sign so people can come to fill up their jugs and buckets. Utterly amazing, where I am there has been no looting, no pushing in lines. People leave their front door open, as it is safer when an earthquake strikes. People keep saying, ‘Oh, this is how it used to be in the old days when everyone helped one another.’

Quakes keep coming. Last night they struck about every 15 minutes. Sirens are constant and helicopters pass overhead often. We got water for a few hours in our homes last night, and now it is for half a day. Electricity came but all this is by area. Some people have these things, others do not. No one has washed for several days. We feel grubby, but there are so much more important concerns than that for us now. I love this peeling away on non-essentials. Living fully on the level of instinct, of intuition, of caring, of what is needed for survival, not just of me, but of the entire group.

There are strange parallel universes happening. Houses a mess in some places yet then a house with futons or laundry out drying in the sun. People lining up for water and food, and yet a few people out walking their dogs. All happening at the same time. Other unexpected touches of beauty are first, the silence of night. No cars. No one out on the streets. And the heavens at night are scattered with stars. Usually I can see about two, but now the whole sky is filled.

The mountains near Sendai are solid and with the crisp air we can see them silhouetted against the sky magnificently. And the people themselves are so wonderful. I come back to my shack to check on it each day. Now to send this e-mail as the electricity is on, and I find food and water left in my entranceway. I have no idea from whom but it is there. Old men in green hats go from door to door checking to see if everyone is OK. People talk to complete strangers asking if they need help. I see no signs of fear. Resignation, yes, but fear or panic, no. They tell us we can expect aftershocks, and even other major quakes for another month or more. And we are getting constant tremors, rolls, shaking, rumbling. I am blessed in that I live in a part of Sendai that is a bit elevated, a bit more solid than other parts. So, so far this area is better off than others. Last night my friend's husband came in from the country, bringing food and water. Blessed again.

Somehow at this time I realize from direct experience that there is indeed an enormous Cosmic evolutionary step that is occurring all over the world at this moment. And somehow, as I experience the events happening now in Japan, I can feel my heart opening very wide.

My brother asked me if I felt so small because of all that is happening. I do not. Rather, I feel as I am part of something happening that is much larger than myself. This wave of birthing, worldwide, is hard, but magnificent.

Thank you again for your care and love of me.

