

971 AIR MARSHAL SLEMON WING RCAF
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER, Colorado Springs

March 2013

In March, the world is Irish,
So
Happy Saint Patrick's Day!

www.971WingAFAC.com



Social Calendar

- Jan 12 48 of us enjoyed yet another great evening hosted by Jim Berwick and Randi Campbell.
- Apr 01 971 Wing RCAFA will celebrate the 30th Anniversary of its founding in Colorado Springs at a dinner and ceremonies to be held starting at 1730 hrs; where the history of 971 Wing and the RCAF will be the focus of the evening. Information and updates will be posted on our web site www.971wingrcafa.com, under the Special Events Link. See also page 8 for more details.

TIME TO ACT: The US election, shamefully much too long, degrading, and costly (\$7.3 billion) is over, at least officially over. With the path ahead leading to species extinction, including our own, it is essential we stop arguing and start acting, but how - if it is not already too late? Much needs changing - here are a few:

Jobs, some say, but enough jobs, actually, are still here. We have had huge increases in human, robot, and computer populations, so there are so many more to share them including mothers working outside the home. A 4-day work week for humans in a 7-day, 24-hour, work week for our robot and computer slaves?

Guns do help in human population control, and do keep manufacturers, merchants, and undertakers employed, but are rather messy and keep the USA out of the civilized world. More guns beget more enemies as lost wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan reveal. Too many humans are very slow learners, having killed 4 billion humans in 14,500 major wars. The many more minor conflicts were major to the millions involved. Then there are all those other life forms for whom we have caused, and are causing, so much grief. Armies are manned mainly by the lower classes educated to follow myths rather than science and human rights. Let us cultivate minds for enlightenment rather than bodies for cannon and drone fodder.

Transportation: Never so mobile, we fail to take along good books to glean value from the 5.5 billion hours idling in congested traffic at a cost of \$121 billion and tons of pollutants. Mass transit, anyone?

Global Warming: Decades of inadequate heeding of warnings has permitted the arrival of a new human-created climatic era. Sure, millions of years ago we had wild fluctuations due to natural causes such as plate tectonics, volcanic excesses, and cycles of tilt, precession, and orbital configuration, but for the past 800,000 years we have evolved in a relatively stable atmosphere even with a few ice ages. Humans entered the equation a few thousand years ago but major changes started with the industrial revolution becoming pronounced this decade as we have now put 50 gigatonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere (USA 29%, China 9%, Russia 8%, Germany 7%, UK 6%, Japan 4%, France 3%, India 3%, Canada 2%, Ukraine 2%) causing the wild weather we now have.

The US president, as well as many world leaders in science, politics, and business do possess many of the attributes needed in today's world. Our problems demand more unity and socialism, a nasty word among the fortunate few in the USA. A costly and excluding health care system and heavy not-equally-shared military burdens are examples. Our scientists and politicians do need your support, advice, and a push or two.

Numbers

Honestly, girls, you should be flattered not annoyed at my intense gaze. Numbers bewilder me as I seek how your 30,000 genes placed so well your individual allotment of the 7×10^{27} atoms we have all acquired. That is 7,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 atoms each. I will not ask you to let me count and add your protons, neutrons, electrons, etc in each of your atoms as you have already made me think about numbers and about where you and I stand on what appears to be an endless gradient we named to put us in the middle:

YOCTO: 1/1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000

ZEPTO: 1/1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000

ATTO: 1/1,000,000,000,000,000,000 KILO: 1,000

FEMTO: 1/1,000,000,000,000,000 MEGA: 1,000,000

PICO: 1/1,000,000,000,000 GIGA: 1,000,000,000

NANO: 1/1,000,000,000 TERA: 1,000,000,000,000

MICRO: 1/1,000,000 PETA: 1,000,000,000,000,000

MILLI: 1/1,000 EXA: 1,000,000,000,000,000,000

This puts a virus in the 10 attogram range and the E.coli bacteria at 655 femtograms.

At last count there were 7.5×10^{18} grains of sand on this planet, but they just lie there. In our universe there are 3×10^{24} stars that engage in a fiery dance as they race out into new space that seems to be created as they race along. This number of stars equals the number of cells in the 7 billion humans we now have.

While engaged in all these thoughts, a few drops of rain of various sizes fell, but averaging about 5,000,000,000,000,000,000 molecules of H_2O each. My bewilderment in counting is enhanced by UK astronomers now telling me there is a cluster of 73 quasars, 4 billion light years wide, not far away in cosmic terms, compared to our galaxy with a mere 200,000 LY. I wonder - with all this complexity, is the Multiverse itself conscious and what are its goals? - And, I just wondered where all these thoughts are coming from. Some of you do concede that I have a brain even if it cannot survive out of my body which is only 10% human. Do the 90%, bacterial cells, contribute 90% to what I call my intelligence? How do I count the trillions of electrical impulses that interact with each other to produce thoughts - or a newsletter?

I should stop as I am getting that drowning feeling. How many molecules of lifeline can you throw me? If you do rescue me, do tell me why, when we are so complex, that we are allowed, on average, less than 100 rotations around our sun before we must disintegrate to join some other association that will, we suspect, remember nothing of this Association. Is that not an inexcusable waste or just good riddance?

Is inevitable change desirable? It seems fairly certain that our universe, this time around, is 13.7 billion years old, yet our current telescopes can see near the edge of it which is 46 billion light years away, due to universe inflation. Moving along at 300,000 km or 186,000 miles per second, light photons, in the 31,536,000 seconds that exist in a non-leap-year, traverse 9,460,800,000,000 km per year (9.4 terakilometres). Why the rush? What the purpose? From our galactic centre our sun is 30,000 light years, or, if you prefer, 30,000 x 300,000 x 365 x 24, x 60, x 60 kilometres. It is speeding along at 792,000 kmh (495,000 mph), taking 235 million years to make each of the 20 orbits it has made in its 4.6 billion year lifetime.

Now, that current galactic journey adds up to $9,460,800,000,000 \times 235,000,000 = 22,232,883,000,000,000,000,000$ km (22,232 exakilometres) of which you and I get to traverse only .00000042%. So much to see, yet we are given so little time. Can we appeal?

So, girls, can you see why all this bewilders me when your few 7×10^{27} atoms are so difficult for us men to understand when, really, our atomic arrangements are so slightly different (mais vive la différence!). But, then, do you really understand us? Come to think about it - I do not understand either you or us, so could I convince you that our respective atoms are here to console each other and to ease our passage?

OUR FORMER DCINCS REPORT IN:

Don and Fran McNaughton still enjoy their Glen Eyrie farm near Perth, Ontario. Daughter Jean and husband, Mike, are now in London, UK, where he is Commander, Canadian Defence Liaison Staff. Son Ian and Kim are still in Stittsville where he is Director of Sales and Programs for L-3 Security and Detection Systems and she works for the federal government. This summer Don, Fran, Ian, and Jean toured Scotland researching their McNaughton heritage. Then Don and Fran attended the Sabre reunion in Hamilton.

Dave and Loreen O'Blenis welcomed granddaughter, Alexandra Jane, sister to 2-year-old grandson, Sam, who can switch effortlessly from English to French. Son, Peter, & Susan remain busy, he with small but growing tech business. Loreen still volunteers at Ronald McDonald House. And is program chair at the Ottawa Women's Canadian Club. Plays bridge regularly and some golf. Dave still teaches flying, operates the Flying Training Unit, and is on the executive at the Smith Falls Flying Club. He flew his Cheetah to Goose Bay to fish. In Oct he flew to Fredericton for the 50th anniv of his deer-hunting group. He helped raise \$10,000 for an Aviation Museum. In Sep they enjoyed a 2-week camera safari in Kenya and Tanzania including a magnificent tree house.

JOHN SHEARDON of Windsor and Ottawa, died 30 December at age 88. For his role in Bomber Command and at the Canadian Embassy in Tehran 1979-80 during the US hostage crisis, John deserved much more acclaim than he received, either from Canada or the United States.

One night, as a rear gunner, his 429 Squadron Halifax on a bombing operation over Germany, was hit and crippled. The crew carried on to bomb the target and to get back to British skies. Here his aircraft could struggle no longer and began its death plunge. John was last to bail out so it was at very low level, breaking both legs. Alone in the dark at 0300 he crawled to a nearby village where he used a rock to bang on the door of a pub to awaken the owner and to ask for an ambulance and a glass of Scotch to ease his pain. When his legs finally healed he went back on operations.

After the war he joined the diplomatic service and was head of immigration in Tehran when the US embassy was stormed and 52 taken hostage because the US would not return the deposed Shah

it, and the UK, had organized a coup to put in power over an elected president and was now treating for cancer. Six were outside the embassy when the raid occurred so sought concealment. John and his wife, Zena, were quick to shelter four of them in their large home and alone with a Filipino maid and an unpredictable Iranian gardener. The maid had to be let in on the deception. Ambassador Ken Taylor concealed two for the 3 months it took to turn all into Canadians with fake passports, and other documents including Canadian credit cards before the six could be flown out. Taylor then closed the Canadian Embassy, flying the staff home. He was awarded the US Congressional Gold Medal. Sheardown refused the offer of the Order of Canada until Zena was also granted it as she took the greater risks being all day with their guests while he was in his office. Surveillance was frequent and to avoid suspicion, she shopped at different stores to feed her guests.

Suffering from Alzheimer's, John spent his final years in the Perley and Rideau Veterans Health Care Centre in Ottawa.

Then, in 2012, when the US film, *Argo*, dramatized the ordeal no mention was made of the Sheardowns. However, the CIA agent who had devised a complex plan that was not used was highlighted.

On PBS, 09 January 2013, Charlie Rose who felt the film downplayed the Canadian role, interviewed Ken Taylor. Ken, in describing the many complications, confirmed Rose's view. **HOLLYWOOD AND ACCURACY:** Over many decades I have heard of numerous complaints from Britons, Canadians, and Mexicans that Hollywood, with plenty of US heroes to portray, continues to steal, downplay, or belittle the feats of others.

THE AMAZING DEPTH OF THE INTERNET:

Again, I thank Paul Ellis for setting up our 971 Wing web site. Seven people, who discovered our web site, have now contacted me for further data. In early January I was shaken to see an e-mail appear on my screen from Alan Budinger. Alan, RAF, of London, England, was my Wellington and Halifax navigator with whom we exchanged several post-war visits - but he had died in 1988 and we lost touch with the family as his wife, Doris, had died earlier. This e-mail was from his grandson, Alan, who was carrying on the

name. Searching the internet for a copy of my book. *It's All Pensionable Time*, that he remembered his granddad had, he stumbled across our web site. It continues to amaze us Oldies at how rapidly the generations fly past. This Alan served 18 years as an engineer in the British Army, clearing mines in Bosnia, piloting helicopters in Kosovo and Iraq, and as a bomb disposal officer in Afghanistan. Now, with a wife, a son, and an MBA, he is a bank executive in London.

Joan and I cherish this renewal, in new format, of what is now an ancient friendship forged in the horrors of war. Doris and Joan were both pregnant when we were shot down which demanded that we survive. Doris's son, Keith, and Joan's daughter, Barbara, played together during a brief post-war visit, before my embarkation.

Paul, we thank you again as I wipe the tears from my eyes.

CARLA and OVERPAID POLITICIANS: Carla, of Torino (Turin), Italy, a good friend since our 1997 chance meeting in the reconstructed Viking settlement of L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, and her visits to us, continues to send us astute observations of her many travels (to the Lomas clan: your Dad thought highly of her comments and enjoyed me passing them on to him).

She has now sent us 11 pages of extracts from Italian papers that blame Italy's financial woes on the bloated salaries and perks of Italian politicians and comparing them to other countries, starting with the Italian ambassador to Berlin getting 240,000 Euros annually compared to Angela Merkel's 108,000 and Obama's \$400,000. Carla compares this to her salary as a teacher of 10,500.

(1 Euro = \$1.33). Why does Italy with 60 million people need 645 politicians + staffs when the US, with ten times the population, gets by with 535?

This attack is now led by Mario Monti, the new PM who has waived his own salary while revealing Italian politicians are Europe's highest paid in spite of a \$2.6 trillion debt and that ordinary Italians bear the brunt of austerity with higher taxes and petrol at over \$8 a gallon.

Perks and such expenditures as highway construction costs are also compared. Here are a few head-of-state salaries and cost per capita comparisons in dollars:

	Salary	Cost per capita
Singapore:	\$2.47 million	.54
Hong Kong	\$516,000	.07
USA:	\$400,000	.01
Ireland:	\$341,000	.09
France:	\$318,000	.05
Mexico:	\$315,573	.03
Germany:	\$303,000	.04
UK:	\$279,000	.05
Canada:	\$246,000	.07
Japan:	\$243,000	.02
Australia:	\$229,000	.02

Of course office expenditures multiplies these figures many, many times.

MEMORIES: One cold late afternoon in February 1943 I was in the co-pilot's seat of our Halifax with a full bomb and petrol load, and engines running, sitting at the beginning of the runway about to take off to bomb Carla's Turin, when a scout Mosquito reported that there was a huge storm build-up over the Alps that would play havoc with our bomber stream. The cry "Scrubbed!" bellowed into all intercoms. We taxied back to our dispersal point. I have been grateful to that storm ever since.

MALI and TODAY'S VOLATILE WORLD:

Of course it is the oil, natural gas, etc, but, unlike China's massive world-wide investments, we like to boast ours are for the advancement of human rights and Mali is a democracy. Well, it used to be. Canada even trained troops for President Amadou Toumani Touré's elite guard. On 22 Mar 2011 a military coup, led by Captain Amadou Sanago, who was annoyed at Toure's lack of force to put down a Tuareg uprising that had the help of Al-Qaida, using weapons looted from Libyan stocks. The Canadian-trained troops remained loyal to Touré and staged a counter-coup but were defeated, captured, tortured horribly, and murdered.

Now Canadian, UK, and US aircraft are aiding the French in supporting Sanago in his fight to regain land lost to the Tuareg and Al-Qaida. The lesser of evils or denying Al Qaida oil?

Book Reviews



A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE, Canada'S Airshow Team Heritage

by Daniel V. Dempsey, High Flight Enterprises, Victoria, 2007, 766 pages

This book, loaned to me by Jim Czirjak, is much too massive to do justice to in a brief review here. A large-size book, crammed with pictures of aircraft and crews, arranged in eye-appealing format, not only details the history of Canada's aerobatic teams but includes numerous statistics of the RCAF, such as:

22,811 Canadians served in RFC and RNAS in WWI, 1,563 were killed. 10 of the top 27 aces Canadian.

In Apr 1917 the RFC formed training wings at Camp Borden and Deseronto, Ontario.

WWI air ace William Barker (52 victories) led the 1st formation flying display in Canada in 1919.

RCAF Budget Cut-Backs: 1930 \$7.5 million; 1931 \$5.3m; 1932: \$1.6m. Personnel cut from 906 to 604. But Siskin Exhibition Flight survived which F/O **LARRY WRAY** joined in 1931 when Trenton opened.

This Siskin team is of particular interest to me. Living in Toronto then Port Hope in the 1930s my brother and I would try, sometimes successfully, to persuade Dad to drive the family on a Sunday outing, to Trenton so we could feast our eyes on Wapitis and Siskins, modern biplane fighters. RCAF Trenton was built, bisected by Highway 2, the artery between Toronto and Montreal, a stupid location I thought but great for the eyes.

Several times I was to see Larry Wray flying a Siskin, never knowing that he, as a Group Captain, would be my SBO (Senior British Officer) at Slag Luft III where I would enjoy several talks he gave. In one, describing his bush-flying days, he told of landing on an unnamed lake that was so magnificent, so majestic, so pure, that, for the cartography service, he named it Lake Wray. Post war I was to work for him at AFHQ, prior to his untimely death.

Dempsey also relates the Sabre aerobatic team. He reminds us that Canadair in Montreal built 1,815 Sabres, and he relates the story of a friend of mine (and of Bob Wolff and Lew Lomas - all three now deceased): **Omer Levesque** was at Langley, Virginia, checking out on F-86s when the Korean War broke out and he was sent to Korea where he flew 71 combat missions. He got the first Commonwealth kill of a MiG15. The small group of RCAF pilots got 9 kills, 2 probables and 10 damaged. 17 nations contributed troops.

Omer and I first met in Stalag Luft III. Flying a 401 Sqn Spitfire in a formation of 36 over the English Channel en route to provide cover for Swordfish and Beauforts that had discovered the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau that had sneaked into the Channel to attack convoys, they received orders to return to base. Omer had a strange feeling about the order (later discovered to have been a Luftwaffe input) and persuaded his team mates to stay on course for a bit longer. They ran into a score of Luftwaffe fighters having a field day destroying our bombers, so dived into the fray. Omer sent a Me109 plunging into the sea then, at wave-top level a FW190, but then had difficulty climbing out of the wall of spray thus created. Succeeding, he was hit from behind and plunged in himself. Omer was in a green bottle as he struggled to open the canopy and escape his Spitfire as it sank deeper. He broke the surface just as his lungs were about to give up the fight. But now he had to fight massive waves with a mae west punctured and useless. After an hour of this exhaustion a German flak ship paused long enough to haul him out.

AN UNARMED, SUCCESSFUL, INVASION, submitted by Brian Walley:

A USN destroyer stops four Mexicans in a row boat rowing towards California. The Captain, using the loud-hailer, shouts: "Ahoy, small craft. Where are you headed?"

One of the Mexicans puts down his oar, stands up, and shouts: "We are invading the United States of America to reclaim the land they stole from us in the 1800s"

The destroyer crew doubled over in laughter. When the captain recovered his breath, he shouted:

"Just the four of you?"

The same Mexican stands up and shouts: "No, we are the last four, The rest are already there!"

SHAKESPEARE CREATIONS, submitted by Marianne Edward:

Essay by Elliot Engel and compiled in his book *A dab of Dickens & Touch of Twain*:

Every phrase that follows was first invented by the genius of William Shakespeare. If you've ever been "footloose and fancy free". If you've ever thanked someone "from the bottom of your heart". If you've ever been "left high and dry." If you ever took a test that you thought was "a piece of cake." If you've ever "refused to budge an inch." If you've ever been "tongue-tied", "a tower of strength", "hoodwinked", or "in a pickle." If you've ever "knitted your brow", "made a virtue of necessity", "insisted on fair play", "slept not one wink", "stood on ceremony", "laughed yourself into stitches", or had "short shrift", "cold comfort", or "too much of a good thing." If you've ever "cleaned out bag and baggage" because you thought it was "high time" and that is "the long and short of it." If you've ever believed "the game is up" even if it involves "your own flesh and blood." If you ever "lie low till the crack of dawn" "through thick and thin", because you suspect "foul play." If you've ever had "your teeth set on edge", "with one fell swoop", "without rhyme or reason." And now, finally, if you now "bid me good riddance", and "send me packing." If you wish I were as "dead as a doornail." If you think I am "an eyesore", "a laughingstock", "a stone-hearted villain", "bloody-minded", or "a blithering idiot", well then, "by Jove", "tut tut", "for goodness sake", and..."what the dickens!" It is "all one to me", even if "it's Greek to you", you are quoting Shakespeare.

ELEPHANT SENSES, submitted by Peter Rallis:

Lawrence Anthony, a legend in South Africa and author of 3 books including the bestseller *The Elephant Whisperer*, bravely rescued wildlife and rehabilitated elephants all over the globe from human atrocities, including the courageous rescue of Baghdad Zoo animals during US invasion in 2003. On March 7, 2012 Lawrence Anthony died. He is remembered and missed by his wife, 2 sons, 2 grandsons & numerous elephants.

Two days after his passing, the wild elephants showed up at his home led by two large matriarchs. Separate wild herds arrived in droves to say goodbye to their beloved man-friend. A total of 31 elephants had patiently walked over 12 miles to get to his South African House. Witnessing this spectacle, humans were obviously in awe not only because of the supreme intelligence and precise timing that these elephants sensed about Lawrence's passing, but also because of the profound memory and emotion the beloved animals evoked in such an organized way: Walking slowly -for days - Making their way in a solemn one-by-one queue from their habitat to his house. Lawrence's wife, Francoise, was especially touched, knowing that the elephants had not been to his house prior to that day for well over 3 years! But yet they knew where they were going. The elephants obviously wanted to pay their deep respects, honoring their friend who had saved their lives - so much respect that they stayed for 2 days 2 nights without eating anything. Then one morning, they left, making their long journey back home.....SOMETHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS GREATER AND DEEPER THAN HUMAN INTELLIGENCE.

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DUES for 2013-14 must reach Larry Best, 370 Scrub Oak Circle. Monument, CO, 80132, by 31 May 2013. They remain the same: \$60 for those within commuting distance of our socials and other activities and \$45 (either Canadian cheques or US checks, made out to 971 Wing). \$44 of your dues are passed on the RCAFA HQ and include a subscription to Airforce magazine.

MEDICAL ADVICE: Submitted by Miles MacMillan:

Frequent night urination: Gravity holds water in the lower part of your body when you are upright (legs swell). When you lie down it is easier for the kidneys to remove water and toxins.

Correct time to drink water to maximize effectiveness:

2 glasses of water after waking up - helps activate internal organs.

1 glass of water 30 minutes before a meal - helps digestion.

1 glass of water before taking a bath - helps lower blood pressure.

1 glass of water before going to bed - avoids stroke or heart attack will also help prevent night time leg cramps. Your leg muscles are seeking hydration when they cramp and wake you up with a Charlie Horse.

Dr. Virend Somers, is a Cardiologist from the Mayo Clinic, who is lead author of the report in the 29 July 2008 issue of the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

Most heart attacks occur in the day, generally between 0600 and noon. Having one during the night, when the heart should be most at rest, means that something unusual happened. Somers and his colleagues have been working for a decade to show that sleep apnea is to blame.

If you take an aspirin or a baby aspirin once a day, take it at night. The reason: Aspirin has a 24-hour "half-life"; therefore, if most heart attacks happen in the wee hours of the morning, the Aspirin would be strongest in your system. Aspirin can last in your medicine chest for years, When it gets old, it smells like vinegar). Bayer is making crystal aspirin to dissolve instantly on the tongue. They work much faster than the tablets.

There are other symptoms of a heart attack, besides the pain on the left arm. One must also be aware of an intense pain on the chin, as well as nausea and lots of sweating; however, these symptoms may also occur less frequently. There may be NO pain in the chest during a heart attack.

About 60% who have a heart attack during their sleep do not wake up. If you are awakened by a deep pain, immediately dissolve two aspirins in your mouth and swallow them with a bit of water. Call 911. Phone a neighbor. Say "heart attack!" - and that you have taken 2 Aspirins. - Take a seat near the front door, and wait for their arrival and DO NOT LIE DOWN!

THANK YOU! However they do it, by stumbling, staggering or racing, the years relentlessly multiply, scattering pleasures, pains, failures, and successes as we cling to this life and the friends we cherish. Surprise and pleasure did engulf Joan and I at the Berwick party when, for our 70th wedding anniversary, attendees presented us with flowers, a framed family picture, cards, well wishes, and a cake with portraits of the two of us baked into the icing.

Ye Olde Scribe, for once, was at a loss for words. Being the sweeter of the two, the half bearing Joan's image got eaten first.

ONE MORE: On page 3, I thanked Paul Ellis. Well, Paul, since starting this newsletter, the internet has made me another new friend. This time, James Castle of Sussex, England, who is researching his great uncle, Tony Parsons whose Hampden, 07 December 1941, was shot down into the cold, stormy, and indifferent North Sea that claimed two of the 4-man crew before the merciful crew on one of the German ships they were bombing risked stopping long enough to rescue the two still alive, eventually getting them to a hospital and then to 4 years of POW life. Two years ago James was able to find Fritz, the last of the rescue crew still living to thank him. Fritz was delighted to learn that the two he rescued lived long enough to have grandchildren.

The North Sea and I have a fearful and haunting relationship. Several friends, including Brian Walley and Omer Levesque were snatched from near Death in it by German air and naval crews, risking their own lives to do so. The North Sea did swallow 18 excellent friends; the body of another floated all the way from Dutch islands to wash ashore in Sweden. On 4 occasions the North Sea almost got my crew, one still a vivid memory. I was lying flat in the bomb aimers position planting mines when attacked by flak ships. We sank to where the tips of waves were lashing at me from the other side of the plexiglass before we regained enough power to pull away.

Tom Kupecz, our former member who retired in Trenton, continued to train members of the Armed Forces, not only in the arts of modern warfare but, more importantly, how to clean up the mess afterwards, sends along thoughtful essays. Here is his latest which I also published in my blog side:

Conspiracies

I have somehow got on the mailing lists of some rather interesting organizations that are engaged in saving us from the nefarious forces that seek to enslave us all. The e-mails are reasonably well written, grammatically correct (something I believe is essential to good communication) and fraught with almost pathological paranoia.

Where does this fear of others come from? In a democracy, the foundation of our system is the trust in our fellows - almost anyone can run for office, except President of the United States (where did that come from, in a nation of immigrants?) and we trust the winners to govern us all in the spirit of the law and in good will. Well, the trust is tempered by a knowledge of human nature, hence the complicated system of checks and balances that keep the politicians from succumbing too egregiously to the lobbyists. But overall it is trust and good will that makes our system function.

But what is it that makes some people create vast conspiracy theories and inflict them on us relatively normal folk? I realize that solving a good mystery is an enjoyable pastime, and a very fruitful profession for talented (and not so talented) authors, but how can people bend reality so far in such an apparent belief in their ideas?

The latest missives try to persuade me that the horrendous massacre in Newtown was, in one of them, a hoax created by some government force bent on disarming the populace, or in another a real massacre perpetrated for the same nefarious purpose. Each claims proof in citing "facts" that are dubious at best, and ignore the overwhelming preponderance of evidence that we have seen from many irrefutable sources.

Both use history to back up their claims: Hitler disarmed the Germans so he could take over the country, Mao disarmed the Chinese, Stalin disarmed the Russians, and so on. Ignored is the fact that they actually armed and enabled hoards of paranoid citizens to cow and suppress the rest, and used the real or imagined threat of foreign aggression to keep the population in line.

I would like to believe that they are just having fun to see what reaction they can rouse, but when voice@freedom.com writes this sort of thing: "It was a made for TV drama to try to ram through the gun control laws, because they want to kill the American people and they can't kill armed people," he goes beyond fun. And when you see the likes of Alex Jones fulminating on Piers Morgan Tonight, you might begin to wonder from whom we need protecting.

It is a matter for some concern that a significant proportion of the population of the greatest nation on earth, a country that has worked to export its system of government around the world, is so distrustful of their government and fellow citizens that they need to arm themselves to the teeth. And they have a constitution that enables them!

Do we need to train more psychiatrists?

HOUSE PARTIES: Valerie Freimuth would be delighted to hear from more of you desiring to host socials. We do have Richard Graham and Fran Mattavi volunteering for June and Charlene Champion for August. - and, once more, thanks to Bob Freimuth for reproducing the snail-mail copies.

971 WING ANNIVERSARY ET AL: 2013 marks the 93rd anniversary of the Canadian Air Force, the 89th for the RCAF, and the 30th for our 971 Wing of the RCAF Association, but all this came after forming 2 WWI squadrons of the RFC (fighter and bomber) plus thousands of individuals spread throughout the RFC among whom were 8 of the world's top 45 air aces, each with 35 or more victories (Germany 17, Canada 8, UK 7, France 5, Ireland 2, South Africa 2, Australia 2, Austria-Hungary 1, Belgium 1). This amazing, but little-known, accomplishment came, along with substantial Army and Navy feats, from a Canadian population of only six million. I do have the names of all 45 top aces for any interested.

FUTURE ISSUES: Now in his 94th year, Ye Olde Scribe has slowed considerably so cannot guarantee the regularity or appearance of future issues. Inputs from you to georgesweanor@comcast.net do help very much.

