

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

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Editor's Corner/Coin du rédacteur

This edition comes to you in the middle of the biggest crisis this country and the world have faced since World War II and I hope that all of you and your families and friends are healthy and safe. Unfortunately, all of us fall into that part of the population most at risk with this virus. I also hope that those of you that were out of the country when this crisis broke have heeded the government pleas and made your way home to the relative safety of this great country.

With the bombardment of gloom and doom propagated by the media, it is difficult to maintain a sense of balance and a modicum of morale. I for one, take some sense of comfort from the way that our governments at all levels, the private sector, and individual Canadians have risen to the challenge. Up to now, I was critical of our Prime Minister as appearing as a bit of a light weight on the world stage. Well Sir, I apologise! The PM, with this crisis striking home on a personal level, has faced the nation daily and in clear, firm and confident terms has kept Canadians informed, a dramatic contrast to the misleading, contradictory and self serving information served up by his counterpart in the United States.

The ability of the PM to provide these updates of action being taken is of course due to the hard work of thousands of dedicated and professional public servants, frequent targets of public derision, who have stayed on the job in the office or at home and responded in magnificent fashion. This applies at all three levels of government.

The private sector has stepped up to ease the crisis—retooling to provide urgent medical equipment; stacking grocery shelves; driving trucks to keep the commerce of the nation moving; serving coffee and doughnuts as you drive by at fast food restaurants; utility companies delaying and, in some cases reducing charges; bus drivers; taxi drivers; and, the list goes on.

Of course, we cannot forget those heroic members of the medical profession who are putting their own health and lives on the line to save others.

Finally, it has been encouraging and heart warming to observe the reaction of individual Canadians toward each other. Whether it is dropping off a needed item on a neighbours doorstep or stepping off the sidewalk and saying hello to strangers to maintain social distancing, this crisis in the main, is bringing out the best in Canadians.

This is of course my own personal take on the situation and some of you may disagree. Regardless, I invite you to share your thoughts and experiences and I will publish them in future editions.

Stay safe. We will prevail and come out of this a better nation.



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Letters

The following are extracts from a number of letters received:

6602 Jim Cale: Just a short note to wish you and your families well as this crisis continues to grow. We are fine so far. One of our son's job is in jeopardy and his wife has just lost her job. Other than that we are all in good health and managing to fill our time with walks, spring cleaning, more reading and Netflix. Our Grand daughter is expecting in July so we are all hoping that she has no problems. However, her partner lives in up-state New York so they are separated for the duration. To avoid any other problems we have cancelled our family Easter gathering. After procrastinating for some time (something I never do!!) I have started a morning mini-exercise program and plan to get out on the bike soon but just on solo rides or at most with one other person. I don't get a lot of communication from my grandson at RMC but he tells me that they are bearing up under the isolation routine, although I expect it is going to be a real challenge to keep up morale in the longer term.

6585 Richard Archer: Marilyn and I just got back from a sojourn in South Carolina, and so we immediately went into self-exile here at home. We've actually been impressed by how seriously Ottawans are taking the pandemic – when we were in the States, people were still continuing to gather in large groups, say in the restaurants that were still open. Our No.2 daughter and family just got back from a March Break trip to Hawaii and are also in quarantine. Fortunately, our No.1 daughter and son had their own March Break trip to Orlando cancelled and so she is not under any self-isolation, and she has graciously been doing the grocery shopping for both us and her sister. Yesterday, Marilyn and I took advantage of the great sunshine and undertook our usual walk around the beaver pond. Lot's of other people out as well, but we all consistently gave each other the necessary wide berth. We're not yet six-feet under, but we are all keeping the fathom separation....

6606 Roger Chiasson: Bonnie and I are hunkered down and minimizing our forays to the outside world. I am getting out daily for a walk around the neighbourhood, and when people meet they spread out to ensure the 2m separation. Unfortunately Bonnie is hobbling with a bone-on-bone hip - waiting for surgery which is not likely to happen for months, and can't get out for fresh air and exercise. The Premier and the Chief Medical Officer have declared a state of emergency here in Nova Scotia, with only 28 cases of Covid 19! That is the right strategy, unlike the US, where there is talk about the cure being worse than the disease, and that it is the economy, not lives, that have to be protected! It's hard to make this s#%t up! I found a really interesting web-site on google.org which has data on the global situation. One of the categories they are tracking is the number of cases of Covid19 per million in population. The world average is 53, as is Canada's. Italy is at 1060, and the US is at 135. Apart from soaking up all of the virus information in the media, I have embarked on a project to cull some of the 34,000 photos that have accumulated on our computer.

6069 Peter Houliston: Like everyone else, Peggy and I are hunkered down although finished our 14 day isolation after a recent US sojourn. Most information suggests this will last quite a while. We will all have completely clutter free homes, organized desks and sock drawers, pristine email inboxes and perfectly raked lawns by the time it ends. Then there is always income tax, online bridge and Netflix. For those who are bridge players, you can try the the mind in tune. Among the many shows on Netflix is a timely documentary series called "Pandemic". It is not alarmist - an interesting examination of how viruses spread around the world and what various people in different countries are doing to address the issue.



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Letters (Continued)

6475 Mike Houghton: Nancy and I chose last Wednesday to abandon ship and started the long drive home Saturday at first sparrow fart. Traffic was pretty horrendous especially on I-81 until we got to Harrisburg, PA, where the hwy split. I-81 was then virtually empty all the way to Ivy Lea border crossing. We had Air Canada tickets for a departure 30 March but decided to not take a chance. We are convinced we made the right decision and hope our classmates are making the right choices as well.

And on different topics

6611 Doug Cope: I read with interest the comments of Drolet, MacKinnon, Peltier and Hummer re gender issues in the military. While saying 'be a gentlemen in the presence of ladies' is a nice thought it may be illusory. Kate Armstrong was the first female cadet at RMC in the 1980s. I met her last September while selling books with her on the porch of Panet House at RMC. After meeting her, I read her book, *The Stone Frigate*. While I do not agree with some of what she writes, what struck me is that only 20 years after we were at RMC the term 'officer and gentleman' seemed to have little meaning to many. I was shocked at the conduct of most of the male cadets and many of the male staff in that era. As I read the book I kept saying to myself '*I thought we were taught to be officers and gentlemen?*'. Something has been lost and I am not surprised the military has troubles related to gender issues.

6601 Ernie Cable: I am having bowel resection surgery (colon cancer) on 24 Feb, so I will be hors d' combat for the next month or so. (*Ed. Note: We wish Ernie a speedy and complete recovery.*)

6414 Steve Spicoluk: Re: Cadet David Smith. He was one of my best friends while at CMR in Flight 9 of Champlain Squadron. I vividly recall the news of his passing given to me by Jim McMahon while I was attending University of Manitoba. At that time Jim told me that the accident had taken place at Portage La Prairie, and had occurred on takeoff in an Expediter when a student pilot attempted to correct yaw on takeoff by using differential throttle, which caused a wing to drop, touch the runway, and cartwheel the aircraft. Keeping in mind that this was probably very soon after the accident, it is possible that information about the event was incomplete, or based on early speculation. Thought you might like to know a different take. My compliments also to the comments by my former good friends, Mike Houghton, and Rod MacKinnon.

6559 Gerry Mueller: First, the Jim Carruthers article; I knew that Jim was very accomplished, but had no idea of the magnitude of his lifetime work! Why has he never been nominated for one of the major Professional Engineers Ontario awards? And thanks for including the Hamilton branch note and pictures; I was beginning to wonder if that email had gotten shunted off into a spam folder, as happened when I sent the full complement of pictures to Bob Carr, the Hamilton branch chair. And as for eating my snow-shovelling heart out at news from you temporary Floridians, I am being proactive at not doing that – our lawn company does the snow shovelling, and in exactly 15 days June and I are flying off to Cayo Santa Maria, Cuba for two weeks at an adults only 5 star, with plans of eating and drinking unwisely, staring at the ocean and an occasional book, and dancing to the usually good Cuban bands that tour the circuit of Cuban resorts. Well wave in the general direction of you lot as we fly by Florida. (*Hope you got home safely Gerry.*)



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6560 Andrew Nellestyn Inducted as Grand Master for Order of St. George of Canada

News of Andrew's induction may be found at the following link:

https://www.cmfmag.ca/todays_brief/canadian-veteran-inducted-as-grand-master-for-order-of-st-george-of-canada/

The Viral Virus by 6533 Gord Forbes

A couple of weeks ago, someone asked if I was going to write a blog about the coronavirus. I guess it's about time.

No doubt we have all heard of the virus by now, even celebrities just getting home from desert retreats. Novel coronavirus, coronavirus or COVID-19 call it what you want. For simplicity in this piece let's just call it the virus.

A pandemic, they say, and I guess that is the best way to describe it. There are no doubt people who don't believe in it or think it is some kind of hoax. One doctor ascribed it to the introduction of 5G wireless networks apparently repeating a theory from the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1919 – 1920 where the introduction of radio was blamed. If this really had been the cause, why were there no pandemics when television and 1G, 2G, 3G and 4G networks were introduced.

People are being vigilant about signs of the virus. Since this is a virus that affects the respiratory system, the signs include coughing and sneezing. I frequently have to cough but it has nothing to do with the coronavirus. It is a condition that has been going on for a long time. So, I have this vision of being in a store one day and inadvertently coughing only to look around and find everyone else fleeing from the place.

If I may delve into religion for a minute, some people pray and hope that God will save them. But God doesn't solve problems. God gives us the strength and wisdom to solve our own problems.

There have been some humorous reactions to the virus. To the best of my knowledge about all of the symptoms of the virus I have read, diarrhea is not one. But this did not stop a rush by everyone to buy and hoard toilet paper.

So here we all sit at home. Some can work from home, but many cannot because of the nature of the work they do. This can be quite a hardship for many. No interaction. No personal socializing. Us retired folk have an advantage here. We're used to sitting at home with nothing to do. Or we can waste away our time writing inane pieces like this. Oh, we can get out for essential supplies (wine? chocolate?), but that only takes a couple of hours a week. And even that is in the hope that there is still toilet paper available.

There is no doubt that there will be a lot of downstream effects to this whole thing. We had plans to have our kitchen redone and the planning was well underway. Now everything has been shut down and when the work will get done is anyone's guess. It is surely a lesson in patience.

It is important that we keep up our spirits at this time. There have been a lot of suggestions about how to get that done. Most don't take into account the many families, like our neighbours, have several children at home demanding that be kept busy and entertained. Sure, you can set up a home gym in your basement, but will your teenage son ever let you get near it?



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The Viral Virus (Concluded)

As you're sitting around wondering what to do with your isolation, may I make some suggestions:

- Spend time getting to know your children better;
- Read those books that you have collected and put away for just such a situation. Reread books that you have enjoyed in the past;
- Surround yourself with music so that you get something out of it instead of treating it as background noise;
- Spend some time with your spouse or partner and talk about things you never had the time to talk about before;
- Spend some time each day doing a little self-contemplation. Get to know yourself a bit better;
- Bring as much humour into your life as you can;
- Be optimistic.

None of these things will solve the virus problem, but they will make it easier to deal with it.

Listen to real health experts and not on-line quacks. And stay safe and healthy.

Letter from Brussels by 6598 George Brown

Greetings from Europe, the current epi-center of viral disease {This will soon to be overtaken by the Excited States we hear, even though Trump has predicted that it would be over by Easter}.

Belgium is much luckier than Italy. We are told to stay in, and most people are now paying attention. We can go for groceries, or outside to exercise alone or with your loved one [though they did not say which exercises were permitted!]. Grocery stores remain open with special hours for the aged retired people. They even have promotional sales on beer and wine. TP for some reason seems to be in short supply!

Closing Notes

Stay Safe. Share your experiences. Thanks to our letter writers and to Gord Forbes for his thoughtful piece on the current crisis.