

# Class of 65 Newsletter

## Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

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### Editor's Corner/Coin du rédacteur

Happy Easter everyone, although I am sure it is a somewhat different type of celebration than previously enjoyed. This month, we will be sharing some correspondence from classmates regarding their ongoing experience during these difficult times. I am sure it will resonate with most of you. In addition, Gord (Navy) Forbes, who has become our “Writer at Large”, has provided two timely pieces from his personal blog.

But first, I must offer an apology. A good friend was obliged to write the following, “*I have always enjoyed reading your newsletters and I appreciate the effort you put into them on our behalf. I am afraid, however, that I'm distressed by your resort to partisan politics in Newsletter #128. I do wish you hadn't done that ...*”. So to him and others who may have shared the same thought, I apologise, not for my politics, but for exceeding my editorial mandate. I will try to curb that urge in future and leave such ramblings to you, the readers.

In Edition 128, we reported that **6601 Ernie Cable** was undergoing medical care. I am therefore pleased to provide the following encouraging update provided by Ernie: “*As a follow-up to the note in your last class newsletter about cancer surgery putting me the hors de combat list, I am pleased to report that the bowel resection surgery went extremely well. The surgery was performed on a Monday morning and I was discharged from the hospital two days later thanks to laparoscopic surgery and according to the surgeon my excellent health. Prior to the surgery I was totally asymptomatic and the cancer was discovered quite coincidentally during a colonoscopy for another minor problem. Fortunately, the cancer was in a very early stage and could be removed by cutting out about one third of my colon, but examination of the biopsy samples would indicate the success of the surgery. About a month after the surgery my oncologist advised that the pathologist report confirmed that the cancer had not spread beyond the colon into adjacent organs or the lymph system. Therefore, I will not require chemotherapy or radiation. I am quite pleased that there is an extensive follow-up program at the Irving-Greenberg Cancer Centre to watch for any re-occurrence, which is deemed unlikely. Needless to say, I was confined at home for two weeks to recover from the surgery and no sooner had the two weeks expired when we were told to self-isolate because of the coronavirus, so now I have been self-isolating for six weeks and still counting.*

*Our two daughters and their families, not to mention the doctors, are adamant that Carol and I avoid public places. But the girls have been extremely helpful by doing our grocery shopping and looking after our other extracurricular needs. Fortunately, we are able to get out each day when our schnauzer takes us for our 2-3 km walk. It is reassuring that most other walkers observe the 2-meter distancing rule.*

*Send me in coach, I'm combat ready!”*



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### Letters

The following are extracts from a number of letters received:

**6633 Jack Harris:** We got back from Arizona on 23 March. It was over a month early, but it seemed like a good time to flee from Trumplandia. I shouldn't say that, because Arizona is behaving much better than "The Fool on the Hill" would lead us believe. Alaska Air was on time and comfortable. The airports were quiet, the officials polite and people were behaving themselves. It was good to get home because border restrictions and flights seemed to be tightening up.

We had a great fall and winter. Started in late Oct by flying to England and getting on board the Queen Elizabeth. 49 days later we got off in Melbourne after visits to Portugal, Tenerife, Namibia, South Africa, Reunion, Mauritius, and most of the Australian ports from Freemantle east. It was a fine trip and caters to a rather niche market. There were 12 Formal nights and one is expected to dress for dinner. We particularly liked dancing to the nightly orchestra in the Queens Ballroom. Apparently, dancing improves your mind. In my case, it may not have worked as well as hoped. (quit chuckling Cope!) If you don't like to dress up and dance, it may not be your kind of cruise. Of course, right now, NONE of the cruises are likely to be the right kind of cruise. After a month in Australia, we finished the circumnavigation by returning to Arizona.

Pebble Creek is always fun with lots of activities and good weather. By the time we left everything was closed down except the golf courses.

Anyway, it is good to be home, even if we are confined to barracks!

Difficult to plan for the summer and fall. Let's hope that things sort themselves out.

I hope that everyone is still well, and that you stay that way.

**6582 Brent Abbott:** I know you are all busy with challenges like cleaning the garage, sorting out the paper in your mancave or just prioritizing instructions from 'she who must be obeyed!'. We are well and have survived the quarantine/shelter in place exercise so far.

Linda had her right hip replaced in August and has shed the use of her cane, except when we travel. The cane is the ticket to early boarding. We did use it for our sojourn in Las Vegas in February. We were there during a Trump rally and regrettably, I was not able to get a ticket for the entertainment. We got back before the 'Yellow Jack' went up so are not really quarantined.

Linda keeps busy with her thread work, cross stitch, etc and I have managed walks. Facetime with our grandchildren is a pleasant pastime. While all the recreation facilities are closed in Alberta, they were not able to close the cross country ski trails.

I check my investments from time to time. A month ago I was happy to use the computer spreadsheet to track things but now I can do in on matchbox cover.

We have been hoarding wine and scotch for some time, so we can survive adequately.

I followed Fat's advice and have made reservations for the RMC reunion. Hope to see you there.

Remember a smile is contagious, so be contagious.



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### Letters (Continued)

**6637 Jim Humphrey:** Under orders from those most learned in the country - or at least in positions of authority, we, as are others in our adult-lifestyle gulag, are remaining isolated except for the weekly sojourn to ensure sustenance remains available. Most recent social gathering was with neighbours who were also carting trash to the curb. Trash day becomes interesting as many are ruthlessly divesting of possessions accumulated over 75 plus years. Otherwise, dog walkers are occasionally observed on the street, being extra cautious and keeping 4 meters separation. Almost done with one box of tax records - just one more to go - but judging from the paper load associated with 2019 taxes, I'll probably need one of those empty boxes. Also touching base routinely by phone with various folks. Have now explored Netflix and Prime Video only to find our ancient TVs - more than 5 years old - are not supported by either, they're HD but not 4K. Did make Chromecast work however and as long as the battery in my smartphone holds out, we can watch a movie from either service on the 40" screen.

Tried to order once from RCSS but had to book for a two hour window a week in advance and a neighbour advised that only about half the order they had made was filled correctly - a lot of substitutions and omissions due to shortages. Would tap the local kids as surrogate shoppers, but one son is a pharmacist and therefore routinely exposed so ZOOM and telephone are as near as we want to be. Other son does not drive so zero help there. Two others are 1600 km distant. Some younger neighbours (under 70) have offered shopping services to the community so that's an option.

Exercise is still mainly my normal routine - weights, stretches, isometrics and stationary biking, with some being done in the fresh air on the back deck weather permitting. Outdoor cycling will resume when the snow ceases. Must keep legs in tone pending knee replacement, now likely next year instead of May or June. Similarly, cataract surgery date is indefinite and even my annual checkup on my aorta replacement has been delayed from March to the fall sometime.

**6611 Doug Cope:** That is what I have always feared about grocery pickup.

Until everyone involved is tested and is negative, it just means more possibility of infected people touching your food.

It snowed yesterday (9 Apr) and it is only a few degrees above today.

Carol and I went for our walk around mid-day and only encountered 2 people on the streets; it appears that most are fair weather exercisers.

I am finally getting the time to sort all those files that I should have thrown out years ago.

I discovered my 1960 Income Tax form. The first I ever filled out in the year before I went to Roads. That year I worked for 6 months in our local grocery store on the Danforth and then to finish the year for 3 months as a clerk, full time with the Ontario Government in Queen's Park. The tax form was 1 page long and my total income for about 9 months of work was less than \$1500. I framed that page. Ah the good old days?

Our apartment building is pretty quiet and elevator isolation is seldom an issue since few are out and about..

Our pool was shut and drained a month ago and I fear it may be a long time before it opens again.



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### Letters (Concluded)

**6705 Matt Wilson:** <https://www.tbnewswatch.com/local-news/pc-express-users-may-have-come-in-contact-with-covid-19-case-2244622> Not even this method is guaranteed to be safe. We picked up at SS PC Express on 28 Mar and 7 Apr so we dodged a bullet...maybe. most of our stuff washed in soapy water. The rest Lysol wiped. Our hands are raw from washing them copiously. Hand cream struggles and sometimes fails to keep them from cracking.

We have almost gone through a picture container with pictures old enough to be accompanied by negatives. I filled half a plastic grocery bag with negatives.

Now it's time for our first march of the day down towards McVicar Creek, the paths of which are being shunned by us since there is no way to escape other people.

Do take extreme care getting your rations.

**6602 Jim Cale:** Matt, thanks for the warning. It is a crap game wherever you go I think. How did the pick-up of frozen stuff go? I get my first pickup on Tue. I got my walk in this morning. I am fortunate to have wide

### Isolation Nation

By 6533 Gord Forbes

*We are a nation  
In isolation  
We're told its good  
But still we brood  
How do we repair  
All this despair  
Of isolation . . .*

So, how are you enjoying your isolation? You are, of course, self-isolating. But it is becoming difficult, isn't it? It is after all week four, or so we are told.

How many jigsaw puzzles can you complete? How many books can you read? How many computer games can you play? How many sports events from 2008 can you stand? How many shows can you stream? How many news programs telling you how dire things can become can you put up with? It is difficult, isn't it?

There are things you can try to alleviate the loneliness and boredom. You can try writing, even bad poetry like that above. You can busy yourself with chores around the house (but what fun is that?). You can immerse yourself in music, like I'm doing right now with a record of Tchaikovsky playing on the record player.

*"Reading made Don Quixote a gentleman. Believing what he read made him mad."*

*George Bernard Shaw*



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### Isolation Nation (Concluded)

A lot of the things that we are not to do can be difficult. I challenge anyone to not touch their face for 12 hours. All the things you have to do on or near your face add up: putting on or adjusting your glasses and hearing aids; feeding yourself; brushing your teeth, scratching your nose. Are we still allowed to wash our face? Your face is probably the body part that you touch the most in the course of a day. Nonetheless, I think the most profound statement that seems to capture things was in the comments section of an on-line news story. One commenter went on an on about, “all the different advice we are getting.” The reply from another commenter summed it up, “wash your hands, stay home.”

I know it can be a chore, but I almost envy families that have children at home, particularly if the children are old enough to be able to participate in the daily schedule. You can talk to them or play with them. In our case there is only my wife and I with no other family near. We do love each other and get along very well. We laugh together and talk and enjoy some of our daily routines. But there are still long silences as we grope for things to do or say together. That’s when I retreat to my office and try to write something coherent. But we all must feel sorry for people who are alone and have nobody to share their isolation. That must be terrible, and I hope that people can come to their rescue.

Speaking about rescue, how about we older folks become sacrificial lambs. Why don’t we do our part by taking on jobs and tasks so that younger people, people with children and with a future, can stay home and protect themselves and their families? We could work in grocery stores. We could check out stuff or stack shelves or use our talents and experience in other ways. Since our retirement plans and investments are suffering from the economic fall out, a few extra bucks would probably help a lot.

A couple of personal observations. I haven’t had a haircut since late January and my wife did not inherit any of her grandfather’s barbering skills. I’m going to look pretty shaggy by the time barber shops reopen. In my reading habits, I have noticed that I am tending toward thinner, shorter books. Premonition?

In my last blog, The Viral Virus, I made some suggestions about how to fill your time. I think that they still apply. I think the most important ones are:

- Bring as much humour into your life as you can;
- Be optimistic.
- Stay well and look after each other.

*“It’s so much easier to suggest solutions when you don’t know too much about the problem.”*

*Malcolm Forbes*



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### A Holy Season by 6533 Gord Forbes

Two of the world's major religions are celebrating special events this weekend. There are undoubtedly other faiths that also have spring festivals to celebrate the end of winter.

For those of the Jewish faith it is Passover, the celebration of their survival during a scourge among their Egyptian masters. This led to their escape from Egypt under a leader named Moses and their eventual establishment of their homeland, Israel.

For Christians, it is the death (Good Friday) and resurrection (Easter Sunday) of Jesus, an itinerant preacher whose teaching had upset the Jewish authorities. A few days before this day, He had been greeted warmly by lots of Jews as he entered Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) for the Passover celebration, only to be betrayed a few days later by these same people.

As we endure the isolation of the current pandemic, we should think about Jesus and the fact that He had to undertake all of today's events alone. He had been arrested and jailed the night before all alone. His disciples had gone into hiding, afraid for their own safety. His own Jewish people demanded his execution. He underwent mockery and torture by his Roman guards. After a trial before the Roman governor who found no fault with Him, He was turned back to the Jewish authorities for a verdict. They decided He must be crucified, a verdict that was carried out that very day by the Romans. He went to his execution, carrying his cross, alone. He was crucified alone. Our isolation seems quite small when you consider all this.

So, as you are missing the traditional family and group dinners, the camaraderie and visits usually associated with this weekend, think of the loneliness of Jesus and be thankful.

To all of those who celebrate, for whatever reason this time of year, I wish all of you the very best. Please protect yourself and others and stay positive.

### Closing Notes

Thanks to our letter writers and to Gord Forbes for his thoughtful and timely articles. I hope that you are all safe and well as we deal with this challenging pandemic. Stay in touch.



1960 CMR Ski Team