



Class of 65 Newsletter Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Edition/Édition 78



November/novembre 2014

Disclaimer: This Newsletter is produced for members of the RMC Class of 1965 and is based primarily on inputs from members of the Class of 65. It is not an official publication of the Royal Military College nor does it purport to represent the views or opinions of all members of the Class. Unfortunately, the Editorial staff lacks the linguistic skills to produce a bilingual version. Items are published in the official language in which they are received.

Editor's Corner/Coin du rédacteur

This month's edition is produced in the shadow of the tragic loss of two Canadian Forces soldiers to cowardly attacks by two home-grown terrorists. Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent was deliberately run down by an automobile while shopping in St. Jean, Quebec. Corporal Nathan Cirillo was shot while standing guard at the National War Memorial. In both cases the murderers were killed by the authorities, the latter in a dramatic shoot out in the Centre Block of Parliament.

The Class of 65 joins all Canadians in mourning the loss of these two fine soldiers and in deploring the cowardly acts that caused their deaths.

Although not directly related to those incidents, they provide resonance to a report from **Alain Pellerin** on a project that he is working on to honour Canadian servicemen lost in combat.

A preview of the upcoming 2014 Teaching Excellence Award lecture is provided in the hope that classmates in the area might consider attending to lend support to this year's winner of this prestigious Class of 65 award.

We provide reports on a couple of Ottawa area social

events involving classmates.

Rod MacKinnon announces his retirement after a long and successful career as a lawyer.

Hugh Spence has a notice for Class Snowbirds.

Finally, we will provide Part 2 of Gerry Mueller's interesting narrative on his time in Cuba during the 1970s.



But first, another classmate has surfaced. **6659 Terry McGinty** provides the following from Victoria, BC. *"After leaving Royal Roads in 1962, I finished my degree (B Comm) in Montreal in 1965 and later got my MBA from York University. I rejoined the army in '65 (Royal Canadian*

Ordnance Corps / Log Branch), retiring as a major in 1997. Been out here on the left"coast since. One thing I got involved with for many years was working on the military section of the museum at Royal Roads."

Welcome back into the fold Terry.



Edition/Édition 78

November/novembre 2014

Page 2

The Never Forgotten National Memorial By 6349 Alain Pellerin

When I stepped down from the ED's position at CDA and the Institute, last February, I was approached by the President of the Never Forgotten National Memorial, Tony Trigiani, to become involved in this worthy project as one of two ambassadors. The other ambassador is Lew MacKenzie. The project is progressing well and the Monument is to be unveiled in the Sum-

mer of 2017. We have launched our fundraising campaign and we have also brought on board, as Patrons, a number of prominent Canadians as you will see from our website.

The Foundation recently launched its website. You can access it at <http://www.nfnm.ca/>

Recent Ottawa-Based Social Events

On Thursday, 23 October the "Gatineau Five" and their partners represented the Class of 65 at the Ottawa Branch RMC Club Annual Dinner.

The event was held this year at the Restaurant International of the Algonquin College School of Hospitality and Tourism. The good turnout was treated to a delicious four course meal prepared and served by the students of the School. This was a real treat and highly recommended not only for the excellent food and good service, but also for the reasonable price. More information can be found on-line at <http://restaurantinternational.ca/>.

Enjoying the evening on behalf of the class were **Mike & Jan Braham, Jim & Jane Cale, Jim Carruthers & Gail Wilson, Peter and Peggy Houlston, and Hugh and Chris Spence.**

On Monday, 27 October, thirteen classmates gathered at the HMCS Bytown Officers' Mess for the regular monthly luncheon of the Ottawa-based crowd. In addition to many of the regulars, we were joined for the first time by **Jim "Ugger" Hampton**. Also in attendance were **Rick Archer, Jim Astley, Vil Auns, Mike Braham, Jim Cale, Jim Carruthers, Gord Diamond, Charlie Emond, Gord Forbes (Navy), John Hilton, Jim Humphrey, Andy Nellestyn, and Ed Sanford.**

Some of you may be getting a bit tired of hearing what the Ottawa crowd is up to, in which case I would like to encourage you to report on activities in your own necks of the woods. I'd love to hear from you.

Military Wisdom Submitted by 6386 Laurent Lord

- If the enemy is in range, so are you—Infantry Journal
- It is generally considered to be inadvisable to eject over the area you have just bombed—US Air Force Manual
- Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons—General Douglas MacArthur
- Any ship can be a minesweeper. Once.—Naval Operations Manual




Edition/Édition 78

November/novembre 2014


Page 3

Teaching Excellence Award 2014

Collège militaire royal du Canada



« Baudelaire, Zola et les autres, que diable font-ils au collège militaire? »
“Baudelaire, Zola and the others... what on earth are they doing at a military college?”





Mme Soundouss El Kettani, Ph.D.
Département d'études françaises
Department of French Studies

Conférence publique du prix d'excellence en enseignement
de la Promotion de 1965
Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence Award Public Lecture

Mardi 4 novembre 2014 / Tuesday, 4 November 2014
19 h 00 / 1900 hrs
Salle Currie / Currie Hall
Collège militaire royal du Canada
Royal Military College of Canada

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Royal Military College of Canada



Edition/Édition 78

November/novembre 2014

Page 4

Teaching Excellence Award 2014 (continued)

Faites vos plans pour participer à la présentation du Prix d'excellence en enseignement de la Promotion de 1965 à Kingston, mardi, le 4 novembre 2014

La présentation du Prix d'excellence en enseignement de la Promotion de 1965 au CMRC aura lieu à la salle Currie du CMRC, mardi, le 4 novembre à 19h. Le récipiendaire, Mme El Kettani offrira une présentation d'environ 45 min, suivie d'une période de questions et d'une collation. Comme dans le passé, certains de notre promotion feront le voyage à partir surtout d'Ottawa, mais aussi de Toronto et parfois de Montréal pour y participer. Ceux-ci se rencontreront vers 17h à un « Pub » (détails à venir) pour un léger souper accompagnés de quelques membres notables du CMRC.

Puisque la gagnante cette année est francophone, il serait accueillant pour elle de voir parmi les participants un certain nombre de francophones de notre promotion, donc votre participation est fortement encouragée. Comme dans le passé, voyager en co-voiturage offre une chance d'échanger avec vos pairs et, si c'est comme les années passées, le voyage est trop vite passé.

Pour vous rafraîchir la mémoire, le récipiendaire du Prix d'excellence en enseignement de la Promotion 1965 au CMRC pour l'année 2014 est **Madame Soundouss El Kettani, PhD**. Elle est professeure adjointe au Département d'études françaises et au Centre de rédaction universitaire du Collège militaire royal du Canada depuis juillet 2008. Elle a auparavant enseigné à l'Université McGill après avoir obtenu son doctorat à l'Université Laval en 2002. Depuis qu'elle est arrivée au Collège, Soundouss El Kettani enseigne divers cours généraux et spécialisés. Dans le cadre de ses fonctions au Centre de rédaction, elle reçoit également de nombreux étudiants pour des séances individuelles de soutien à la rédaction de leurs travaux universitaires.

Ses cours de spécialités portent sur le roman français du XIX^e siècle, sur les liens entre littérature et arts et sur la littérature francophone arabe. Soundouss El Kettani est l'auteure d'une monographie consacrée à Zola et intitulée *Une dynamique du visuel - L'ondoyante vérité des Rougon-Macquart* (Paris, L'Harmattan, 2013). Elle a publié plusieurs articles dans des revues spécialisées où elle traite du naturalisme et des naturalistes (Zola, Goncourt et Huysmans en particulier). Elle travaille également sur les textes d'auteurs francophones arabes et prépare pour l'année 2014-2015 un collectif portant sur l'œuvre d'Amin Maalouf (en collaboration avec Rachel Bouvet de l'UQAM).

It's time to make plans for participating in the presentation of the Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence Award in Kingston, Tuesday, 4 November 2014

The presentation of the Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence Award will be held in Currie Hall at RMCC on Tuesday, 4 November 2014 at 19h00. The recipient, Dr. El Kettani will offer a presentation of around 45 mins followed by a question period and then a light refreshment.

As in the past, members of the Class will travel from the Ottawa area, as well as from Toronto and Montreal to attend this important event. They meet around 17h00 in a local "Pub" (TBA) for a light supper together with a few notable members of the RMCC staff.

To refresh your minds, this year's winner of the Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence Award at RMCC is **Dr. Soundouss El Kettani**. She has been an Assistant Professor in the French Studies Department and at the Writing Centre of the Royal Military College of Canada since July 2008. She previously taught at McGill University, having obtained her PhD at Laval University in 2002. Since arriving at the College, Soundouss El Kettani has been teaching diverse general and specialized courses. Within her tasks at the Writing Centre, she has also been tutoring numerous students in individual meetings.

Her courses of specialty concern the nineteenth-century French novel, links between literature and the arts, and Arabic Francophone literature. Soundouss El Kettani is the author of a book on Zola entitled *Une dynamique du visuel - L'ondoyante vérité des Rougon-Macquart* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2013). She has published several papers dealing with naturalism and the naturalists (Zola, Goncourt, and Huysmans in particular) in peer reviewed journals. She also works on Francophone texts written by authors of Arabic origin and is preparing an edited collection concerning the work of Amin Maalouf for 2014-2015 (In collaboration with Rachel Bouvet from UQAM).



Edition/Édition 78

November/novembre 2014

Page 5

This Man in Havana – **Cuba in the 1970's (Part 2)**

By 6559 Gerry Mueller



Travel to Cuba in the 70s: Fortunately, CUSO had a travel agency in Toronto that specialized in “weird” places, and Cuba in the 70's, was weird. The easiest way to Cuba, from Canada, was Toronto – Mexico City on CP Air (before Canadian), and then Mexico City – Havana on Cubana de Aviación (Cubana). (Alternatives [unpalatable] were via East Berlin or Moscow!) But

the simplest route was not without complications.

The CP Air and Cubana schedules were not exactly synchronized. At best, you flew from Toronto to Mexico City, leaving early evening, arriving near midnight (the flight continued to somewhere in South America), and then spent 2 nights, and sometimes 3, in Mexico City before the twice weekly Cubana flight to Havana. The return trip was just as complicated, with the addition of a Mexican transit visa requirement that could only be obtained from the Mexican Embassy in Havana, and took a full week to process, which basically made it impossible to go to Cuba, and return any earlier than 10 days later. (The conspiracy theorists among the many of us who traveled that route were convinced these complications were a CIA plot to make it difficult to get to and from Cuba for Canadians.) In terms of my “coordinating” functions, this (because communicating with Cubans by any means other than direct contact in the 70s was basically impossible, more on that later), made for a lot of days in Cuba, business having been done, enjoying the beach!

The 1st time I flew to Cuba via Mexico City, using the CUSO travel agent, I was booked into the Airport Holiday Inn. A few events followed; when I stepped

into my room, I was up to my ankles in water; while that got sorted out, I thought I would relax by doing a lap or two in the pool, and darn near drowned because I didn't realize that at 7000 feet your lungs just don't work the way they do in Ontario. Thereafter, every time I went through Mexico, I booked into a Mexican hotel, very near the Cathedral Square, and had a great time exploring this very fascinating city, its museums, and the surrounding archeological sites. And also, doing this tourism in the centre of Mexico City caused some of the reflections that many years later made me leave engineering teaching and research, and become a parish priest. (Why is it that 2-3 blocks back from a street that is not unlike 5th Avenue, or perhaps Boor Street West today, there are people living in shacks made from old oil drums?)

Flying Cubana, Mexico City to Havana, in the 70s was an adventure (it may still be!). The operating aircraft were Ilyushin II 18 turbo-props, basically a Viscount knock-off. The Viscounts had difficulty synchronizing propellers, the Ilyushins more so. Which meant, that on the 3 hour flight from Mexico City to Havana, there was a serious risk of losing all the fillings in your teeth. Plus, the seat configuration on these aircraft was based on Russian passenger sizes and expectations; so, a normal sized Canadian male flew with their knees somewhere around their ears!

Havana's José Martí Airport in those days was a rather primitive affair. (Today, it is a modern, 4-terminal airport with all the mod cons, such as ramps, luggage carousels, etc.; and in International Terminal 3 there is a very large plaque announcing it was opened in 1998 by the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, and the President of the Republic of Cuba, Commander in Chief Fidel Castro. There must be a story behind this, but I don't know it.) Ramps of course were unknown in those days, so a portable



Edition/Édition 78

November/novembre 2014

Page 6

This Man in Havana – **Cuba in the 1970's (Part 2) (continued)**

staircase was manually pushed to the aircraft door. The first person in was a guy in overalls, wearing a face mask, and armed with a manual insecticide gun, who rather listlessly marched up and down the aisle, puffing a few puffs of evil smelling stuff into the air; nothing ever fell down dead! We were then allowed to de-plane, and walk a few dozen meters into the terminal, and watch our luggage being (mis)handled. A sort of steel-link conveyor belt was pushed up to the luggage hold (I later discovered it was a re-purposed conveyor from the sugar industry, normally used for moving sugar cane bundles), a couple of guys climbed into the aircraft, and threw luggage onto the belt which, being steel, didn't have much grip. Bags slid rather rapidly to the ground, where two more guys threw them onto a cart, which was then pushed to the terminal, and luggage thrown into the terminal through a hatch, whereupon we could claim our own.

Immigration and customs were not a problem. As we were guests of the University of Havana, a representative would meet us inside what would now be called the "secure area" and then maneuver us through the formalities. Once through that, for those teaching courses, there would also be at least two other people at the airport, who were our designated hosts, charged with making sure that we were well taken care of. For those of us "coordinating" for our university, we'd be met by the department heads we worked with, and after a few trips it was a reunion of friends. And, because the flights arrived early afternoon, and Cubana in-flight food was not known for edibility, a stop at a restaurant for food and drink was next on the schedule, before we were taken to our accommodation. And, our passports would be collected, which always makes me nervous still, not because the Cubans wanted them, but in order for them to be hustled off to the Mexican embassy, to get the transit visa for the return trip.

The Life of a *Technico extranjero*. That's what our

status was in Cuba, foreign technicians. That was a good thing to be, as it brought privileges that Cubans, even Communist Party members, did not enjoy. For a start, we could shop in several tourist shops that only accepted hard currencies, not Cuban Pesos (and at times, and it was never clear why or why not, we could shop at the "diplomatic shop" which carried a considerable selection of goods not available elsewhere). Mostly, we used these shops to buy Havana Club rum (white, amber or dark, various ages, all priced at US\$1 a bottle!) or cigars (all the Cuban brands, about 25 cents each at the cheap end, going up to US\$1 for the most expensive hand-rolled). They also sold chewing gum, which had an unintended consequence. Going into the stores meant running a gauntlet of street urchins, all begging you to buy them "chiclets" – gum. On the way out you ran the same gauntlet, now demanding the gum which you hadn't bought. I asked my Cuban hosts how to deal with this, do I buy gum or not, and they taught me a couple of Spanish phrases which they said would drive these kids off, "counter-revolutionary" and "enemy of the people". And indeed, they scattered like flies. Those phrases became part of an orientation kit that we would give to people recruited to teach in the Project.

For my first two times in Cuba, the first as an instructor, the second to work out the logistics of the programmes I was "coordinating" I was put up at the Hotel Riviera. This was the last hotel built in Havana with American (meaning Meyer Lansky's Miami mob) money before the "Triumph of the Revolution", as January 1, 1959 is called in Cuba. Opened in 1958, it was very luxurious for its time, with a large dining room, larger ballroom and even larger casino. Fifteen years later, in 1973, it had not aged well. Located on the Malecón, the many miles long Havana seafront boulevard, the view from the rooms was still magnificent, and the lobby and dining rooms still had their luxurious glory. However, rooms badly needed



Edition/Édition 78

November/novembre 2014

Page 7

This Man in Havana – **Cuba in the 1970's (Part 2) (continued)**

painting, the 1958 state of the art air conditioning using seawater condensers had rusted out, the seawater pool filtration had also died (however, the pool was drained and scrubbed weekly, and refilled, so was still useable), and the in-room televisions were black-and-white, blurry, and only got the local Cuban station, which was not very interesting (unless you enjoyed “I Love Lucy” re-runs dubbed into Spanish; Ricky Ricardo was Cuban!).

My stay at the Riviera, meals included, was completely covered by the University. In practice, as I discovered when I explored how the Cuban economy worked with my hosts (who were totally open and candid), this meant that the Ministry of Higher Education had sent a requisition to the hotel (which of course was under the control of the Ministry of Tourism) to supply a room and all meals for some number of nights to me. And underground parking, for my VW beetle, which was totally mine for the duration, as there was no one else teaching at the time. It seems that there was never any actual money exchanged, for the hotel, or any of the other hospitality at restaurants, shows, resorts, etc. that all of us enjoyed over the years. Such are the mysteries of a centralized planned economy.

Meals at the Riviera were an adventure. Breakfast at the hotel could be relied on for toast, cheese, fruits like mango and papaya (except it wasn't called that, more on that below), eggs that were inevitably overcooked no matter which way, and occasionally bacon. And Cuban coffee, which was made by boiling about 1 lb of coffee with about 1 litre of water until the liquid was of syrup consistency, then filling a small (expresso sized) cup about half full with sugar, and then filling it with coffee. Definitely an eye-opener, I used to go into caffeine withdrawal when back in Canada. Lunch was usually at the CUJAE cafeteria, and could (literally!) be anything, but palatable (Cuban food is not spicy). Dinner at the Riviera was definitely something special!

The dining room was very formally set; white table cloths, silver cutlery, fine china dishes. The *maitre de* was in white tie and tails, the waiters in tuxedos. We diners were expected to arrive in long-sleeved shirts. Duly escorted to our table by a waiter, with much bowing, we would be presented with the menu in a leather folder, along with the cocktail and wine list. It felt like being at a pre-WWI royal court. But, while the presentation was outstanding, the content, not so much. At that time Cuba was growing beef, pork and chicken, but almost all of it was going to Russia and East Germany, to pay for the huge amount of support from those two countries to Cuba. What was plentiful and readily available was seafood, which the Cuban fishing fleet brought daily, but which was not needed for export, as the two client countries had fishing fleets of their own. So fish of all kinds, prepared all ways, and lobster, and shrimp were always on the menu, both as appetizers and mains. I like(d) seafood, still do, but every day for a month? It is possible to get totally tired of lobster every which way, and shrimp, and fish. When I returned to Mexico City on my return trip, at least in the early years, because more variety appeared in the final years of the Project, I would hit the hotel restaurant first thing, and eat something that involved meat.

The drinks menu was also “interesting”. Beer was generally available, Cuban beer, which was being brewed to American recipes using East German hops and malt. Drinkable, but not very interesting. Cocktails were another matter; anything, as long as it involved rum. (There was one time that gin was available, but no tonic, so it was straight [as in martini but no vermouth or olive], or with lime juice and soda as a sort of gin sour. The gin turned out to be Russian, and might have been re-purposed paint stripper.) But with rum you could get Cuba Libre (rum and cola, with the cola not being all that great, but tolerable), mojito (herein North America those are made with mint, but



Edition/Édition 78

November/novembre 2014

Page 8

This Man in Havana – **Cuba in the 1970's (Part 2) (continued)**

the real Cuban thing uses a local plant called *herba bueana*, which give a very different flavour, much better in my opinion), and of course, daiquiri (the real version, not the frozen slush it has been perverted into by the “colder the better” brigade).

Wine was also available, by the bottle, and like cruise ships, you could carry a bottle over to another night. Except by that time it had been left open, to oxidize. And, it was Chilean wine, Concho e Toro by brand. Today, that is a very fine winery, whose products are very highly rated. In the 70s, the Allende years in Chile, the Cubans were taking wine from there by the shipload, as support for a fellow “socialist” country, and I suspect the Chileans were dumping their very low quality product on them. However, it was the only game in town, so you drank it.

I stayed at the Riviera during my 2nd (10 day) visit later in 1973, which was in my “coordinator” role, to firm up for the next year or so what was needed in instructors in my three programs. The experience was no different, but by this time I was an “old hand”. Shortly thereafter CUJAE acquired (probably requesting from the Ministry of Housing) a rather large “mansion” in Miramar, a western suburb of Havana, which became the housing and meals base for all participating persons.

Apparently originally the home of a banker and his wife, no children, the place had a formal front hall of perhaps 1000 square feet, with two semi-spiral staircases going to the 2nd floor and the bedrooms. Still on the ground floor were a large dining room, a large sitting room, and 3 bathrooms that one could have a party in. And, of course kitchen, pantries, storage, etc. On the 2nd floor were 6 bedrooms, each with a full bathroom, and a common area with a very large balcony off it, overlooking 5th Avenue, the main street on which the house was located. And above that, serv-

ants’ quarters.

That balcony, overlooking 5th Avenue, was a favourite gathering spot, with beer, for those of us in Cuba at any given time, in the late afternoon, for Fidel spotting. It was not unusual, sometime around 5 p.m., to have a jeep drive by, with a bearded guy in army fatigues driving, and scuba gear in the back. 5th Avenue was the way to a beach with easy reef access, which, so we were told, Castro dove on for relaxation. He was always on his own, with absolutely no sign of any security. We’d wave to him as he went by, and he’d wave back; I have no idea if he knew who we were!

With the house came staff, a cook; a couple of maids who did cleaning and laundry, and above all, a fridge stocked with beer, wine, and snacks. However the magic was worked, meals became more varied, and above all, there was companionship, as instructors from various disciplines lived together and interacted. Depending on class schedules, they had to negotiate how the two VW beetles would be used to get people to the CUJAE campus, and back to the house, and how they would be used in the free afternoons, to go to beaches, or other sightseeing. We never filled all 6 bedrooms at one time, but it was still an interesting experience in sharing, among people (university faculty) who generally have strong egos.

Also with staff came intercultural issues and another addition to the kit we passed on to participants. Very early on in the CUSO-CUJAE House (which it was being called), the cook brought out sliced papaya for dessert. “Oh good, papaya”, one of those present shouted in delight, whereupon the cook, and one of the maids who was helping, rushed out with crimson faces. Turns out that in Havana Province, and only in Havana Province, “papaya” is rude slang for a very private part of the female anatomy, and is instead called *fruta bomba*. Who knew!



Edition/Édition 78

November/novembre 2014

Page 9

Rod MacKinnon to Retire



6396 Rod MacKinnon sent in the following notification of his impending retirement.

“On December 31st I will cease to be a practising member of the Law Society of B.C.. To put it another way, after 42 & 1/2 years I am retiring from the law.

While I am content to do so, indeed I am looking forward to retirement, I would be curious to know how many of our Classmates - RMC '65 are still in the trenches, nearly 50 years out from our graduation. I

don't mean "time filling" , "nothing better to do" or "special interest" type jobs, but real 7 or 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, bustin' your ass type work.

I am put in mind of the guy who said: "I didn't know how much it hurt, until stopped hitting my head against a concrete wall."

Anyway, maybe we could get something going about "who is, and who isn't, still on the job"?"

Congratulations Rod, on a long and honourable career. I certainly endorse his query about classmates still working. Lets hear from you!

Calling all Florida Snowbirds by 6439 Hugh Spence

This is early notice of a Class luncheon for we folk of the *Old Beergade* intending to be down south in Florida in February along with our better halves. On Feb. 25/15, we'll be getting together for a nice noon nosh in beautiful Port Charlotte on the Gulf Coast.

If you might be in the Geezer State at that time, and think you'd be able to attend, (you don't need to make a definite commitment just now,) please let me know and I will keep you in the loop:

hjm.spence@rogers.com

It is intended that the affair be a lunch potluck, and the ration supply and distribution plan will be promulgated later along with dress code, required inoculations, necessary photo ID, nav directions, *etc.*, for those who have signed up.

It will definitely be a **BYOB** occasion, strictly enforced, to wit: no **Bring**, no **Booze**.

(*Ref.:* QR&O #2014-15/HJMS 101(a), on account of some freeloaders who emptied my cooler at last winter's gathering!)

The luncheon will be hosted at the Port Charlotte residence of the lovely Nancy Berman and her lesser half Mike Houghton. There's the remote possibility of a preprandial short golf game if anyone's interested (but you'd have to be there really early,) and if that appeals you might signify it on your notice of intent so we can volunteer an organizer.

In sum, if you think you might make it on Feb. 25th, fire us an e-mail and we'll get back to you.

Pack your sunscreen; they say it's going to be a Titches Wit of a Canadian winter.



Edition/Édition 78

November/novembre 2014

Page 10

Closing Notes/Notes de clôture

After reading Gerry Mueller's interesting and sometimes hilarious descriptions of his time in Cuba, I hope that you are all considering his kind offer to put together a booklet of memories for next year's big reunion and that some have already provided him with some input. I, for one, think that such a booklet, fifty years later would be a wonderful souvenir of our initial shared experience and a great update of the intervening years. Give it some thought (and action!).

I expect that future issues will start to include more details about next years gala event as our Secretary for Life, Hugh Spence starts to get his head around the myriad details that go into making it a success. I am sure that the Class of 65 will make an even bigger impression next year that it did five years ago.