

Thunderbird Bulletin

Camosun Gyro Club, Victoria, B.C., Canada



KEEPING UP

Your Editor will be taking a break from wonderful Victoria and heading South for most of February. This means that there may be some delay in preparing and posting the March issue of the *Thunderbird Bulletin*, but, never fear, it will be here!

As ever, the deadline for contributions is the 20th of the month – NO exceptions – any Gyro attempting to obtain an extra delay will be flogged (in a spirit of friendship, of course!)

We'll be back for the Past President's Hecklers "do".

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EDITORIAL

The *Bulletin* continues to evolve, thanks to input from Gyros and, this month, from the Lady Gyros. You will find, on pages 11 & 12, a short account of how our friend Alex (Skourides) and his Lady of over 50 years met and how he seduced her with his tomatoes (!).

It's a reminder that we all have formed bonds of love, as well as friendship, throughout our lives. We also recognise the part our partners play in keeping us happy and complement us, making us who we are.

A WORD FROM PRESIDENT MARC DUMAIS



January was thankfully not as busy as December. I think many of us took the time to pause and regroup for the coming year. It is common for resolutions to be an important part of a process that starts the New Year off in the right direction. My resolution is to reach out to my friends and those I know so that, someday, if I was asked if I knew you, I'd smile and say yes – we were friends.

The App n Yap hosted by Stu and Dawn was great, especially since some of the fare people brought was “carry over” from Christmas. I had a chance to meet Ed Navickas and Michael Gatens. Michael was installed at the Burns supper. Ed and Raymond Mew will be installed at the next opportunity.

The third Camosun Burns supper seemed to go very well. With the exception of myself key players at the dinner all traced their roots to Scotland. Ian Webster, who piped us in, played for his meal – without him it would have been a less dignified

affair. Gene, my lifelong friend, did me a great favour with his *Address to the Haggis* and his toast to the Immortal Memory - a proper tribute indeed. While I was working on the toast to the Twa lands Sandy reminded me of her family story on arrival to Canada in 1820. It was poignant and embodied the experience of those hardy immigrants who first came from Scotland with literally nothing. I was so pleased with the toasts to the Lassies and response by Jim and Helen. Beautiful, humorous and intimate – their toasts were the highlight of the evening. Thank you for the huge effort on everyone's part. Behind the scenes Liz did the programme and double checked the guest list with Peter. The Evite system seems to be working quite well, which confirms the wisdom of our choice to stick with it for now.

February 5 is a regular dinner night. The Past President's dinner will be held at Heckler's comedy bar on Saturday February 23rd. As such, there will be no dinner meeting on the 19th due to awards night at Uplands.

Cheers,

Marc

ROBBIE BURNS NIGHT

The inexplicable love affair between Canada and the gifted, but most notorious philanderer in Scottish history, Robbie Burns, continued with Camosun's now annual Burns dinner. Vast numbers of Gyros and lady Gyros turned out, some in kilts, for this feast of lore and offal officiated by one of the few non-Celts in the room: our own beloved President Marc Dumais.



It turned out to be an evening of strong women, as well as ceremony (Burns would have been delighted!).

First Lady, Sandra (right), gave a



stirring presentation of her (Scottish) family's arrival and survival in Canada. It seems they decided to settle down where their porridge ran out, so they did, surrounded, no doubt, by turkey-toting natives.

Thereupon in good Scots/Burns tradition, they set about distributing their seed – in more ways than one – and prospering, which is how we get to enjoy the company of the delightful Sandy.



Next, it was the toasts. Jim Arnott (left) set about adoring the lassies (as he is wont to do) but Lady Helen (right) broke the bank for eloquence and good humour, not to mention poetic majesty, in her toast to the lads (see next page).





Piper Ian Webster (left, pursued by the haggis and Gene Fedderly) did us proud, from the piping in of the assembled guests, to that of the honoured haggis and a resounding rendition of *Auld lang syne*. Gene Fedderly, lately of the Canadian Navy, bore the haggis but did not bore the assembled company with his *Address* to the sausage, nor with his speech to the *Immortal Memory* of the bard of Scotland.

All in all, it was a wonderful evening with victuals provided by the ever-amazing kitchens of the Uplands Gold Club that somehow (and perhaps a little suspiciously) managed to ensure that every diner got a bit of the haggis to go with the NY striploin dinner!

THE KILT by Anon. Edited by Helen Arnott
January 15th 2019

This is the tale of Sandy MacSpartan
Whose pride and joy was his fine kilt of tartan
To tell you the truth if you don't as yet know it
Sandy MacSpartan wore nothing below it!¹

At Burns Supper he was always invited
To carve up the haggis
One night as he stuck in his knife with slap
The whole ruddy mess slipped in to his lap

When he lifted his kilt to get rid of the dollop
Six ladies in front hit the floor with a wallop
Dr Stu Cameron cries "They've fainted as sure
as we're born"
They had glimpsed at what Sandy had under his
sporrان!

The kilt was a mess with yon soggy haggis stuff
"Och don't let it worry you" said Mrs MacDuff
"I'll wash it with water and soak it in lye
And just spread it out in the heather to dry"
To Sandy's despair the kilt shrunk such a lot
That it no longer covered his Highland 'What-
Not'²

Said an English militiaman Captain Sam Padgett
"Since you can't keep it hidden why not
camouflage it?"

So an artist Mac Rambrant from the town of
Dumbarton
Painted the thing the same hue as the tartan.

**So all you fine ladies who are looking for thrills
Just go over to Scotland and head for the hills
And there in the Glen where Wallace once
fought
Is the only man on Earth with a TARTAN 'WHAT-
NOT'!**

Footnotes: (the missing verses) -

***1**

The Lassies around would hope for breeze
Would blow Sandy's kilt up over his knees
Their eyes they would sparkle and look so forlorn
When they saw what Sandy had under his
Sporran!

***2**

"Och my," said the Parson's wife "is that Gabriel's
Horn I see?"
When she glimpsed at what Sandy had under his
sporrان

Four Questions to ... Ray Elford*

What would you say `defines` you?

What defines me now isn't the same as it used to be. I would say that now what defines me is having finally reached an age when people think I know as much as I think I know.

What would you take to a desert island (excluding books and music)?

If I found my way onto an island there must be a way out. I would probably be surprised to find that there were already books and music there, which is nice. I would have said I'd take my cell phone but even if I did, I imagine charging it would be a challenge. So, I guess I would just relax until my rescue. In the meantime I could avoid the `Trump` world and all its fake news, not returning until all the nonsense is over.

What's your Favorite Memory?

Growing up in Victoria and seeing all the changes (good & bad) over the past 75 years.

Why did you join Gyro?

My cousin John Langdon said if I didn't he wouldn't be my cousin anymore.

* Ray has been a Camosun Gyro for almost 30 years.



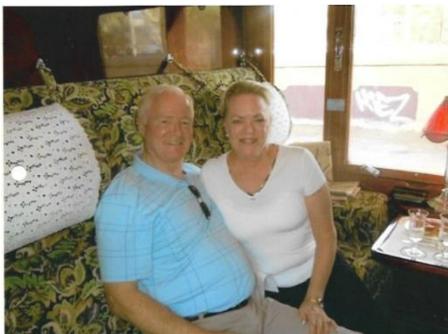
Ray and Barbara

Where in the World Have You Been?

Maury and Barbara van Vliet on the Orient Express

This journey began years ago when a high school friend of mine, Bill Sowa, and I started talking about our bucket list. We played football together all through University when the University teams travelled almost exclusively by train. We worked out together for years and became more convinced that this was something we should do with our wives. Several years ago, Bill developed a brain tumour and passed away shortly thereafter. My reaction was emotional but instant – I asked Barbara to pack her bags because we're going on a special train trip.

The trip meant taking a train the train in Istanbul and, after 12 days, detraining in Venice, so, no ordinary rail trip! When the day came to depart from Istanbul, we were surprised at the large crowd at the railway station, together with a Turkish brass band and television cameras. Upon inquiry we learned that this was a special event because the Orient Express only came to Istanbul once a year. (The reason became readily apparent when we began the trip.) It was amazing to see people hoisting their children up to look in through the windows of the railcars to see the interior. In addition, there were crowds along the railway tracks for 5 miles on the way out of town just to see this special train. Barbara and I perfected our Royal waves.

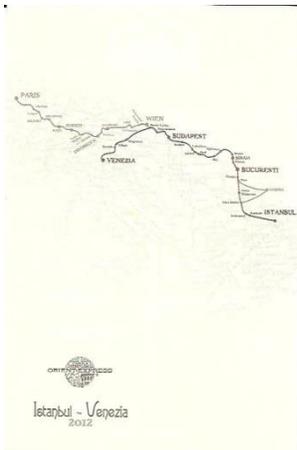


Every husband makes a mistake now and then when arranging events without thorough consultation with the spouse. I was a real train fan and experienced traveller. Barbara was not. We were helped on the train by our steward Wolfgang and proceeded to our compartment. Barbara walked in looked at the roughly 8 x 8 nicely appointed space, nodded, then went to the closet door to hang the significant amount of clothing she had brought for our entire one-month trip. Unable to open the door she was a bit flustered and announced that the door was locked. "Ma'am. That is the door into the adjoining compartment." was Wolfgang's response. Barbara looked bewildered and asked, "Where will I hang my dresses?". "From the luggage rack!" came the response. It was then that I realised I had forgotten to provide one further piece of momentous information – that when she wanted to get up in the middle of the night in the event of nature's call, she would have to don bathrobe and slippers and pad down to the end of the car to the communal bathroom. Not well received (to put it mildly!)

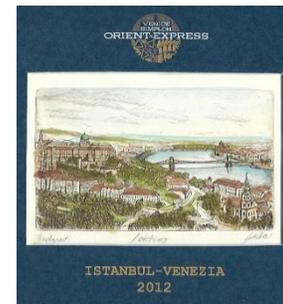
The railcars, including the Club car and Dining car were exquisite in their marquetry, white linen, silver tea service and experienced and knowledgeable staff. The meals were truly

remarkable when one considers the phenomenal French cuisine coming from such a small galley kitchen. By the way, in true Old-World, European fashion, one dressed for dinner – tuxedo and all. Tea and pastries were served every day in our cabin before we even got hungry. In the evening Wolfgang pulled down the upper bunk which was very comfortable. Guess who got that!

The reason for the infrequent travel to Istanbul became apparent when we reached Bulgaria. Complete engine and crew switch at each border crossing, including Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Austria. I can only imagine the bureaucratic nightmare of arranging for new locomotives and crew at each border. It was fascinating to see the changes in housing, yard cleanliness, communities and farming practices as we moved through the Balkans, graduating from the poorest country of Bulgaria, through to prosperous Austria. Venice-Simplon, the



owners and operators of the Orient Express, know what they are doing and how to make the best of the trip, particularly for the ladies. You spend no more than one night on the train before arriving at a large urban area where all the passengers are put up for the night in very pleasant hotels. This meant showers and laundry at least every other night – a well thought-out strategy. Some of the most memorable moments in the trip were coming into each station, where the train would be met with brass bands or choral groups. We were then be taken on a side trip to a wonderful hotel or resort, or a river cruise, followed by a large banquet hosted by local civic



officials and business groups. Wonderful entertainment at each evening meal while spending the night in Bucharest, Budapest, Vienna and finally Venice.

The entertainment was always well done and interesting, but the ultimate was a gypsy trio at a 400- year-old Club in Budapest who were superb. The leader, playing his violin, had people in tears as he moved from table to table. Amazing.

Conclusion: the mystique and folk lore surrounding the Orient Express is real. It was charming and fascinating but without the side excursions the value would be questionable. The practical aspects of the journey [small space and no bathroom] collide with the sentimental folklore built up over the years. Fun and you meet some very interesting people.

The best part: no murders on the Orient Express (not that we saw, anyway!).

FAKE NEWS?

By A. M. Ember

Peninsula police forces are reportedly pulling out all the stops to prevent the new Sidney Gyro Club from celebrating its Installation at the Eastern end of Victoria International Airport's runway on February 9th. It seems this area is subject to a First Nations land claim and one of the Sidney Club's members is a band member of the relevant tribe. Says North Saanich Police Officer and spokesperson, Const. Dun Nuttin, "We're afraid the tipis might interfere with take-off and landing, which is always a bit dodgy around here."

With the holiday season over, work has recommenced on the McKenzie Interchange. "We're trying an innovation this year," says B.C. Provincial roads and highways spokesperson, Lane Changer, "sending folks off right to turn left and vice-versa, so they don't interfere with our important work. We're also blasting all night to keep the traffic stopped and the neighbours on their toes." The effect of the new policies has been keenly felt: Gyro stalwart Chuck McDonald reports that his daily commute downtown from Colwood has increased from 3 hours 30 minutes to just over 7 hours. "I find it quite restful," he comments, "most people seem to sleep in their cars. It's a shame about the jackhammers, though, they tend to wake one up."

Traffic hold-ups due to the McKenzie Interchange works have had some unexpected consequences. The man selling hot dogs along the lines of waiting vehicles has become British Columbia's first non-tech multi-millionaire! Not only that, in his daily perambulations along the cars he frequently came across a lovely lass to whom he proposed and she accepted. The wedding will be held in the big hole at the McKenzie Interchange on a date to be decided on by BC's Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, which assures your correspondent will certainly be "in the Spring", although no year was mentioned.

There is no truth in the rumour that Camosun President Marc Dumais has been invited to command HMC Submarine *Alldunnow*, which is to be scuttled near Race Rocks to provide a home for crustaceans.

In other news, Camosun's popular App 'n Yaps are to be renamed "Grab 'n Eat It"s. Indeed, such is the flurry of gastronomic agitation at the start of these supposedly "appy" affairs, that there is little left for any latecomers arriving more than 10 minutes after the start. Members and their friends have been heard complaining as they left these wonderful evenings that they were (and we are being polite, here) "Too stuffed for dinner." In future, any Gyros found consuming inordinate amounts of "appies" will be heavily fined, says Sherriff "Not All-You-Can-Eat" Wedekind, and made to give it all back. Watch this space.

WHO IS ---- JIM ARNOTT?

My claim to fame is that, having been born Scot, I have immigrated to Canada twice! The bleak life in post-war Scotland caused my family to up stakes and leave Southampton in 1947 aboard the Cunard White Star *Aquitania* bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia. The ship was still fitted out for wartime transport with 4-tier bunks in vast dormitories. We cleared immigration in Pier 21, the entry point for one in five Canadians between 1928 and 1971, and now a museum <https://pier21.ca/home/>.

I recall stories of our arrival in Halifax that, having cleared immigration, my father rushed back from the train station, with tickets in hand, and all four of us making a mad dash for the train that departed in the middle of the night for Toronto. Our home for the next five years was a 5-acre holding that my parents ran as a market garden near Churchville, just west of Pearson Airport.

We returned to Scotland for family reasons in 1952 where I had to learn how to count money in Pounds, Shillings and Pence, and settle into life on Philiphaugh Estate in the Scottish Borders. I attended High School in the tweed mill town of Selkirk, and Edinburgh University where I obtained a BSc in Forestry, followed by two years at the New York State College of Forestry in Syracuse, New York where I got my MSc in 1965. Soon after, I hitched a ride with a couple of undergraduates who had summer jobs in Oregon and I travelled up to Nanaimo for an interview with MacMillan Bloedel who offered me a job in forest research.

Whilst on Vancouver Island, I heard from the Canadian Forest Service who wanted to interview me in Ottawa the following week! With little money in my pocket, I spotted an advertisement in a Seattle newspaper wanting drivers to travel **non-stop** to New York. This was the miracle needed to get to me to Ottawa on time, and my first permanent job as researcher at the Laurentian Forest Centre in Quebec City. So not only did I crisscross North America by car, I immigrated to Canada for the 2nd time!



Helen and Jim (the name of the dog, nor what it is up to, are unknown)

During my last year in Edinburgh I met a little stunner called Helen at a student dance. The very long-distance romance bloomed off and on during the next few years but we eventually married in her home town of Falkirk, Scotland

and she has been the love of

my life ever since. As she is fluent in French, she had no trouble settling and working in Quebec but was not so happy with the coldest winter in a 100 years followed by the snowiest in 100 years, the winter after. Returning home in May after a Bermuda break, to 3 feet of snow still in our garden got me asking for a transfer. I won the jackpot with a job in Victoria at the Pacific Forestry Centre where I worked as a Research Scientist until my retirement in 1999.

We have loved Victoria where we raised our son and daughter and are fortunate to have 6 grandchildren; three live here in town, the eldest is at UVic and his two siblings live in Calgary.

In 2012, we went on an Italian Tour organized by Sandy and Don Taylor. A stop in Assisi was during the *Giro d'Italia* and I asked David Moore, Chuck Gorrie and Tom Wood why they had all bought a baseball cap with "GIRO" on it.....and, in short, that's how I became aware of, and joined the Camosun Gyro Club that year! The rest, as we say, is history!

LADY GYROS

*The onions or the way we met.**

Picture this: London, July 1966, a balmy late afternoon. The “Anglesea Arms” has just opened for the evening, a few tables and chairs are scattered on the small paved front patio along this Chelsea street, the place is still deserted and I take a seat outside.

I have recently arrived in London with a broken heart and my little 4CV Renault. I hardly speak English and it is the first time I have ever entered a London pub. It is a beautiful evening, I wait for a server to take my order the way I would from the terrace of a Paris *café* but, as no one shows up, I get a note pad from my handbag and start writing a letter. Still no sign of a waiter but an “old” gentleman in his 40s seats at the table next to mine and tries to engage me in a conversation. I want to write, I politely tell him that I do not speak English and he immediately switches to perfect French.

The gentleman insists on offering me a drink. I ask for a coffee but he explains that people do not drink coffee in English pubs. This puts me in a quandary, since I do not want to drink alcohol, but, thinking that cider in England should be the same as *cidre* in *Normandie*, I order a glass. The gentleman *is* handsome: blue eyes, cropped moustache, blond hair neatly parted, his old-world manners seem as impeccable as his dress. I soon learn that he is Polish, has fought in France during WW2, subsequently lived in Paris and now lives in the neighbourhood. Incidentally, during his stay in Paris, he has acquired a “most interesting collection of French etchings” that he invites me to see after we finish our drinks.

The place is slowly getting crowded, two young German girls sit at the last available table close to mine and as I am trying to figure out a polite escape from the former Polish officer, two young men walk across the patio with their glasses of beer in their hands. They ask the two German girls if they can join them, a request that is met with instant agreement.

One of the two is very tall with a bushy black beard, he sips his beer while trying to chat the girls up, the other one starts talking to me, totally ignoring the distinguished gentleman bending over my table. He wears a navy blazer over a light-blue buttoned-down-collar-shirt, his narrow black suede tie shows some wear. I had an interest in fashion at the time so I remark - and do not like- the shiny polyester grey cloth his pants are made of, and, though they are polished, I do not approve of his shoes either: their design and the dual system of laces and metal hooks tying them do not appeal to my Parisian sense of style. I judge the black leather to be of poor quality, frankly, they look cheap!

However, the stranger, who introduces himself as Alex, exudes self confidence. I like his mouth and the wonderful easy smile that flashes two very pointed canines, I like his hands with their nails cut short, he has a mane of curly dark hair peppered with grey, he is totally relaxed and does not seem to worry about the Polish gentleman ordering me another drink in an effort to establish his claim on my person, in fact he even asks him to be our translator, at which point the gentleman gets up and leaves abruptly.

Alex moves over. Our attempt at communicating is arduous, neither he, nor his friend Richard, nor the German girls speak French.

During the summer at that time, Men from Brittany in France were a common sight, as they travelled the roads of England on their bicycles with their onions for sale hanging on the bike frames and handlebars. One such is passing by, his bicycle loaded with braids of onions. Alex calls him and offers him a seat at our table, and all the beer he wants, as long as he acts as our interpreter, but the man turns down his offer and explains that he has to sell his onions and has no time to sit and drink.

Minutes later, all the onions are in the back of Alex's Mini Cooper and our Frenchman is translating our conversation. By now, I am drinking my third or fourth glass of English cider and start to realise that this cider is a lot stronger than the one I am used to. With the help of our onion-seller, Alex and I exchange names, ages, countries of origin, interests and ... incidentally: Alex mentions that is growing some prize tomatoes in his garden and tries very hard to convince me to go to his place to "look" at them.

Four glasses of cider and my head is spinning but I manage to extricate myself from viewing his tomatoes that very evening by promising to see them the following Saturday -in full daylight- if we can eat lunch in his garden and I can cook the lunch. Telephone numbers are exchanged.

The following Saturday morning, we meet to buy the ingredients for lunch, plus a bottle of Sancerre and one of Beaujolais. According to French tradition, I had planned four courses. With the Sancerre, I served a baked grey snapper stuffed with mussels, followed by beef tenderloin with a *duxelle* of mushrooms.

I know what you are thinking but no, there were really were tomatoes growing under a sheet of glass in his untidy garden.

Marie-France Skourides

*This is, we hope, the first of many such contributions by Lady Gyros to the *Bulletin*.

Other news from the Lady Gyros

The Gyro Ladies' April dinner will be on Wednesday April 3 at 6 pm at the Uplands Golf Club with Camosun's own Dr. Pat Marshall as the guest speaker on the topic of "Osteoporosis, The Silent Thief". The cost will be \$44.00 for a lovely salmon dinner, salad, dessert and tea or coffee (tax and gratuity included) + a cash bar.

Gyro Ladies should register before March 27 by sending their cheques to Inger @ 4102 San Mateo Place, V8N 2K1 – don't forget to include payment for any guests you might be bringing!

Inger Marshall

The Penultimate Page

Happy February birthdays to: Wanda Ollis (your Editor's spouse 02/02); Hunter McDonald and Les Wood (both 10/02); Mark Gillis (16/02) and Ron Campion (17/02).

Forthcoming Events for District IV

Event Date	Event Description	District
Saturday, February 09, 2019	Sidney BC Installation	4
Friday, April 05, 2019	District Interim 	4
Wednesday, April 17, 2019	Fraser Delta Installation	4
Saturday, April 27, 2019	Vancouver; BC Installation	4
Friday, May 03, 2019	Camosun Installation	4
Saturday, May 25, 2019	Kamloops Installation	4
Sunday, June 02, 2019	District Interim International and District IX Convention, Reno Nevada 	0
Friday, June 07, 2019	Albernis Installation	4
Saturday, June 15, 2019	Vancouver; WA Installation	4
Friday, June 21, 2019	Victoria Installation	4

THE LAST PAGE

YOUR EXECUTIVE 2017/2018

President	Marc DUMAIS	1 st VP	Pat MARSHALL
Secretary	Peter WHELAN	2 nd VP	Brian JOSLING
Treasurer	Jay FRAY	Past President	Peter STANFORD
Director	Rick MCKAY	Director	Ron FROLEK
Director	Mike WEDEKIND	Director	Hans RODENBURGH
Sheriff (ex officio)	Mike WEDEKIND	Bulletin (Ex officio)	Colm FOY

CAMOSUN CLUB CALENDAR

Regular Dinner meeting	5-Feb-19	Uplands
Past President's	23-Feb-19	Past President's party
Regular Dinner meeting	5-Mar-19	Uplands
St Paddy's Day Mixed Party	19-Mar	Uplands Mixed Event (To be confirmed)
Regular Dinner meeting	2-Apr-19	Uplands
Regular Dinner meeting	16-Apr-19	Uplands
Installation	3-May-19	Uplands
Installation	4-May-19	Uplands
Installation	5-May-19	Uplands
Regular Dinner meeting	21-May-19	Uplands
Offsite Dinner meeting	4-Jun-19	location TBD
Steak Fry	18-Jun-19	

The *Thunderbird Bulletin* is published by the Camosun Gyro Club for the benefit of its members. The views and ideas expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Camosun Club or Gyro International. Overall Editor: Colm Foy (colmfoy@gmail.com).