



St. Lawrence College

RETIREES  ASSOCIATION

Retiree Reflections, Ruminations, and Ramblings (R⁴)

Issue #10 (November 2020)

Down Memory Lane

With the present and near future not looking especially inviting as the pesky pandemic persists, it is understandable that some folks might wish to cast their minds back to the past. We have been featuring a modest contribution in that regard in the form of a “Do You Remember” contest at our website (<https://slcretirees.weebly.com/do-you-remember>). Some of you must remember the colourful characters we have featured so far and I wish you would share some stories about them with a comment at the website.

One of those characters, or more precisely a photo of her, has generated a new mystery and an ongoing debate. It concerns the person in the background, behind the policeman.



There have been suggestions that the mystery man might be your humble scribe, although I could not recall any scenario in which I would have been in that photo. Cathy has recently responded that the person was not me, but there are some who doubt that we should take the word of a pirate, especially one whose singing prompted a police visit. Indeed, our webmaster wonders if there is some sort of cover-up underway and thinks that the Association should strike a Senate Committee to get to the bottom of this question. [In my view, it is likely that many Canadians would have, on occasion, felt an urge to strike a Senate Committee or a Commons Committee for that matter – but I digress.] Cathy advises that she was in her costume as part of a fundraising event near a pirate ship replica owned by the Fuller family who were connected with the architectural design of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa – and probably should have been required to walk the plank for that alone.

I should add that the photo above has yielded an important clue (not to be confused with Clouseau, who was featured in the scenario for our second mystery person). As a result, I must part ways with those who believe that I am the person behind the officer. All will be revealed in the fullness of time.

The Story of the Red Marbles

A friend sent me the story below. I have no way of knowing whether or not it is true, but I hope that it is because it is the sort of uplifting message that we need during these difficult days.

I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes when I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a basket of freshly picked green peas. I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me. "Hello Barry, how are you today?" "H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas. They sure look good." "They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?" "Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time." "Good. Anything I can help you with?" "No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?" asked Mr. Miller. "No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with." "Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?" "All I got's my prize marble here." "Is that right? Let me see it" said Miller. "Here 'tis. She's a dandy." "I can see that. But this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?" the store owner asked. "Not zackley but almost." "Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble," Mr. Miller told the boy. "Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said, "There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next


trip to the store.” I left the store smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved away, but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering for marbles.

Several years went by and then I had occasion to visit some old friends and while there I learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his visitation that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts – all very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

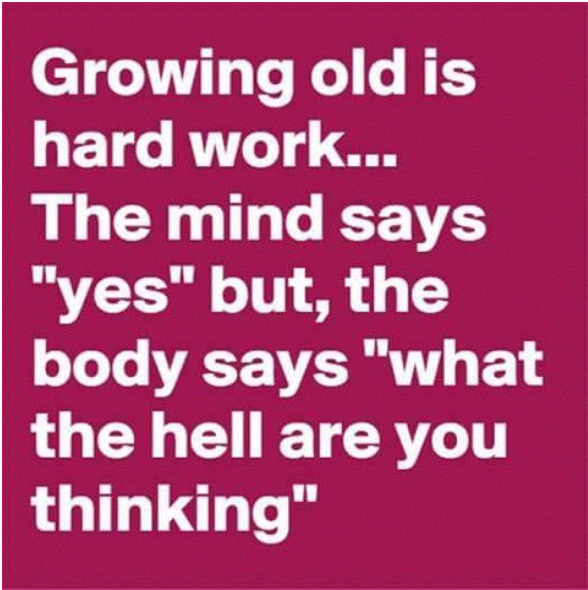
Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from those many years ago and what she had told me about her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket. “Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size, they came to pay their debt. We've never had a great deal of wealth,” she confided, “but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in the world.” With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

On the Lighter Side

After that story, you are probably in need of something light and foolish. We have had a surfeit of COVID jokes so will return to a perennial, always topical, theme – the adventures of aging.



**You know you're
getting older
when a recliner
and a heating
pad is your idea
of a hot date.**



**Growing old is
hard work...
The mind says
"yes" but, the
body says "what
the hell are you
thinking"**

I HAVEN'T LOST MY MIND.. HALF OF IT JUST WANDERED OFF, AND THE OTHER HALF WENT LOOKING FOR IT.



Coping with Aging

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.

Ah, being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me! I want people to know why I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

Living in a Retirement Home

Now that their elderly colleague had moved to a retirement home, his pals decided to give him a special treat for his 85th birthday. They hired a lady to pay him a visit on that date. She came into his room mid-afternoon as he lay on the bed half asleep. Struggling to wake up at the appearance of this stranger, he asked "who are you and what do you want." I'm here to give you Super Sex replied the lady in a sultry voice." Coming more fully awake and considering the situation, the birthday boy replied "I'll have the soup."

An Example of Equity and Inclusiveness

In deference to the new values being espoused by the college, I am pleased to share this encouraging example of how we are learning to see the world differently. This concerns the traditional blonde joke, which always featured a dumb blonde of the female persuasion. Notice the much more enlightened approach in the following story.

A blonde woman was speeding and was pulled over by a blonde policeman. The cop asked to see the blonde driver's license and proof of insurance. She dug through her purse, getting progressively more agitated. "What does the license look like?" she finally asked. The blonde cop replied, "It is square and has your picture on it."

The driver finally found a square mirror, looked at it and handed it to the officer. "Here it is", she said.

The blonde cop looked at the mirror, then handed it back saying. "OK, you can go. I didn't realize you were a cop."

What to do if you forget your mask

These are stressful times and folks can quite innocently forget their masks. What do you do if you find yourself in a situation like that? Fortunately, this short video has lots of helpful tips.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9bPvTC4TEQ>.

Don't Forget our Website

In closing, I offer my usual reminder to check out our website (www.slcretirees.weebly.com) regularly for the latest news about the college and our retirees. I do wish that more of you would participate in the ongoing activities, which currently feature our "Do You Remember" contest. We have now identified eight former colleagues (with more scenarios to come) but very few of you have been moved to share any stories or recollections of these folks – most of whom were quite memorable.

The other rather active part of our website, unfortunately, is the "In Memoriam" section which continues to be upgraded frequently with postings about deceased colleagues. Here again, it would be nice if folks would post some recollections of those we have lost. Just remember that if you don't do this, you are going to feel badly when no one writes about you after you depart. [This is a variation of the (in)famous Yogi Berra observation that if you don't go to someone's funeral, then they won't come to yours!]

And Finally

In case this is the last R4 in 2020, please stay safe and well, limit your socializing around Christmas time (especially with visitors from out of the area), and keep up your spirits. After all, it is only four months until spring!