Canada Day, eh

While celebrations were obviously limited this year, reflections on what it means to be Canadian may have been more in evidence, especially as we watch the unfolding tragedy south of the border. Yes, Canadians have no reason to feel smug about how we treat our minorities. Nor are we immune to COVIDIOT behaviour, as evidenced by those who have been crowding parks in Toronto, and also Wasaga Beach on Canada Day. But we have much for which to be grateful and I hope we will continue to be kind to each other in the face of our current stresses.

A Good Example

The following story appears to be true and I find it a wonderful example of how we should treat one another. [Note: You may wish to have a Kleenex nearby before you proceed.]

At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves learning-disabled children, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that will never be forgotten by all who attended.

After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question: 'When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does is done with perfection. Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do. Where is the natural order of things in my son?' The audience was stilled by the query.

The father continued. 'I believe, that when a child like Shay, physically and mentally handicapped comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.' Then he told the following story: Shay and his father had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, 'Do you think they'll let me play?'

Shay's father knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but the father also understood that if his son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps. Shay's father approached one of the boys on the field and asked (not expecting much) if Shay could play. The boy looked around for guidance and said,

'We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning.'

Shay struggled over to the team's bench and, with a broad smile, put on a team shirt. His father watched with a small tear in his eye and warmth in his heart. The boys saw the father's joy at his son being accepted. In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as his father waved to him from the stands.

In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again. Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat. At this juncture, do they let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game? Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball.

However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher, recognizing that the other team was putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least make contact. The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay. As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher. The game would now be over. The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game.

Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all team mates. Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, 'Shay, run to first! Run to first!' Never in his life had Shay ever run that far, but he made it to first base. He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled. Everyone yelled, 'Run to second, run to second!'
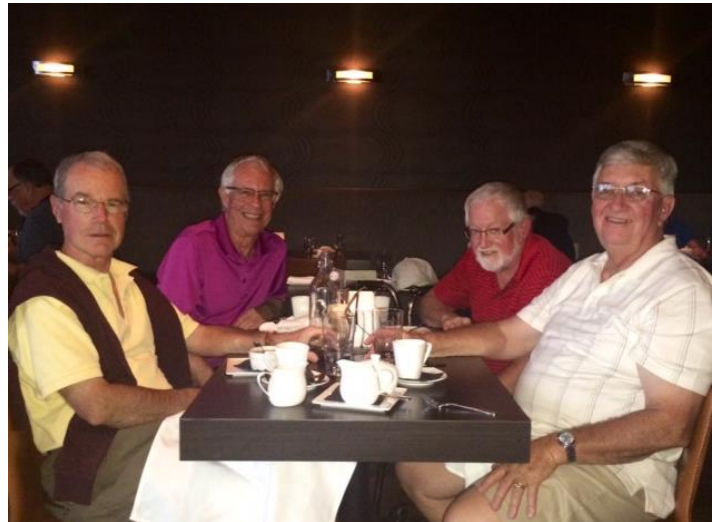
Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to the base. By the time Shay rounded towards second base, the right fielder had the ball ... the smallest guy on their team who now had his first chance to be the hero for his team. He could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions so he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head. Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home. All were screaming, 'Shay, Shay, Shay, all the way Shay' Shay reached third base because the opposing shortstop ran to help him by turning him in the direction of third base, and shouted, 'Run to third! Shay, run to third!'

As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams, and the spectators, were on their feet screaming, 'Shay, run home! Run home!' Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the grand slam and won the game for his team.

'That day', said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, 'the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world'. Shay didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making his father so happy, and coming home and seeing his mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day!
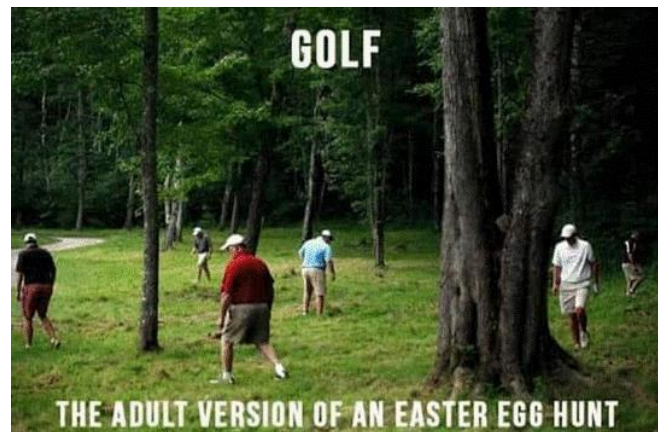
Speaking of Sports

I have been advised by Sam Snead and Arnold Palmer (aka Steve Graves and Jerry Zabel) that the annual Golf Tournament will not be held this year. This event originated in 1992 when Pat Finucan, Steve Graves, Ron Robinson, and Eugene Cardinal, got together for a golf match, made it a friendly competition between the Cornwall and Kingston campuses, and afterwards headed to a restaurant for dinner.

This evolved into an annual event, alternating between Cornwall and Kingston for two decades, and then continuing in Kingston on the first day after Labour Day, giving retirees the double pleasure of heading off to the golf course (*The Landings*) and not heading off to work.

The cancellation, of course, also means that the 19th hole social gathering will not be held this September. It has been a popular

event for those of us whose view of golf can be found in the accompanying scene.

We continue to hope that conditions may improve to the point where one or two social gatherings can be scheduled before the end of the year but seeing that far ahead would require 20/20 for the rest of 2020. We also look forward to the return of the September golf tournament (for those who enjoy this frustrating game) and to celebrating a 30th anniversary tournament in 2022! So put Tuesday September 6, 2022 in your social calendar.

Signs of the Time

I'll tell you a coronavirus joke now, but you'll have to wait two weeks to see if you got it.

The World Health Organization has announced that dogs cannot contract Covid-19. Dogs previously held in quarantine can now be released. To be clear, WHO let the dogs out.

The grocery stores in France look like tornadoes hit them. All that's left is de brie.

The 5 symptoms of laziness:

1.

(After months of isolation & inaction)

Don't Forget our Website

In closing, my usual reminder to check out our website (www.slcretirees.weebly.com) regularly for the latest news about the college and our retirees. A recent post describes a new collaborative agreement between SLC and an Irish Institute of Technology. Unfortunately, this agreement will apparently not include the provision of Irish whiskey, but we should bear in mind that not all posts are reliable and some even have to be removed sometimes.

THIS POST HAS BEEN REMOVED

BECAUSE IT MIGHT CAUSE A FENCE