



## Spartans Summer/Fall Newsletter 2015

You may very well wonder why our Summer newsletter is labeled Summer/Fall, and is clearly produced in early autumn, bringing not only the lovely Fall colours, but a reminder that our October 29 Fall luncheon is near at hand. For this delay I can only offer the feeble excuse of a busy personal schedule, and the all too familiar refrain of computer issues.

The Spring luncheon at the familiar Linguini venue was once again an opportunity to renew old friendships, including new member and first time visitor **Dave Barnby** who travelled from the UK to be with us. I picked up Dave from his downtown hotel and was somewhat surprised that I recognized him from long ago, although I had not worked directly with him. He worked in the communications and earth station group so was soon surrounded by old colleagues, anxious to fill in the blanks since their last meeting. We welcome Dave warmly and hope that he will maintain contact and possibly join us again in spite of the great distance involved.

Although timely information and notices are available on our web site <http://clubspartans.weebly.com>, I will continue to gather and offer comment on news items of interest to members, not forgetting those that rely on regular mail.

I want to thank our committee members for their continuing efforts in maintaining our group.

**Al Lawson:** Picture taker, list maintainer, communications director, and almost recovered from the loss of his computer and a change in home location

**George Larder:** Diligent Treasure, jam maker, raffle master, and understudy for Al Lawson during his trials

**Gil Kerr:** Luncheon organizer

**Nicole Bourdeau:** Chief recruiter

**Margaret Gross:** Web master

**Ed Sorochan:** Committee member

**Gus Gross:** Committee member

### News Items

Keen correspondent **Dean Collis** was understandably puzzled by the delay in the Summer 2015 newsletter, and explained his reference to AMC in the Winter 2014 newsletter and went on to recall earlier days as follows:

Hi George, Terrific newsletter! AMC stands for Air Materiel Command. I certainly remember the MM600 and CW20 days. I also have fond memories of path testing and installation of the Montreal/Vancouver System and installation of the Grande Prairie/Alaska System or GPA. Plus the Earth Stations for Telesat and MM600 Modems for Bell Canada. What great experiences. We were the best in the world thanks to guys like Saul Koblin, Greg Baylis, you, Al Lawson, Dan Mercik, Val O'Donovan, Peter Foldes, Jim Leahy, Ray Hall, Randy Martin, Lloyd Martin, Joe McNally, plus many others. I remember them fondly. Louise (Bard/Collis) is well, still works (at a job she loves). Bud Tucker recently had a stroke, is still functioning but with a cane. His wife Sophie is well. Sorry I couldn't make the luncheon. My best to all.

**Muriel Munro** appreciates receiving the newsletter and updated us on her status as follows:

Although a lot of water has passed under the bridge since I left Spar, it is always nice to receive news of those I knew while I was there. Now that my health has stabilized, perhaps I'll be able to get to the Spring luncheon. (She did not make it).



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We have had a fair amount of snow this winter, but not enough to keep us housebound. We do our banking and most of our shopping in Perth, but sometimes drive down to Kingston (one hour) to go to Costco. My oldest son Kip lives here and keeps me supplied with wood in the winter. (I also have electric heat) To sum up, it is a great life here at Bobs Lake, and I certainly don't hanker for city living. My daughter Jody lives in the Guest Cottage next door. My younger son Kim, lives in Kingston and is doing research at Queen's U. To sum up, it is a great life here at Bobs Lake, and I certainly don't hanker for city living. If you would like to drive out in the summer-time, just give us a call first to make sure we are here. The swimming is good, bring your bathing suit! Do you ever get any word from Joanne Ionidis?

One of the rewards of spending many hours scanning my large collection of 35mm photos is the opportunity to share reminiscences with friends and colleagues. I shared this photo of old friend and former boss **Dr. Freleigh Osborne** with his son Don, showing a youthful (Ozzie) beside a full scale mockup of a satellite at the Lacasse street entrance to the RCA St. Henri plant. This model was built as part of an elaborate marketing effort, largely orchestrated by **John Collins**, to convince the Canadian government that a communications satellite was good thing for Canada, and within the capabilities of Canadian industry. I believe it was Ozzies first serious excursion into satellite communications after many years of plasma work in the RCA Montreal research labs. He headed a systems engineering group that I was part of was part of, at a time when the two major tracks in Canadian space activities finally converged, namely the science oriented Government programs, and the commercial communications interests of RCA.



To which Don replied: Thanks so much for the picture, really appreciate it. (I still remember going to Lenoir Street when I was a little kid.) Hope all is well.



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New member **Dave Barnby** tried to clarify the involvement of RCA Montreal in an event in global politics that was unclear in my mind. The occasion was in the early seventies when China was emerging from near total isolation, and began with the so called ping pong diplomacy followed by the visit of US president Richard Nixon. *Sometimes world events got in the way; identical earth terminals were sold to and built for East and West Pakistan, but by the time they were built, East Pakistan had become Bangladesh, so that equipment languished in storage limbo for years, but the West Pakistan installation went ahead. While that crew was in Karachi, the India/Pakistan war flared up, and the RCA crew found themselves in a hotel around which bombs were falling. They were fortunate to get out of the country, courtesy of Lufthansa, shaken, but not injured.* I remember it well, for some reason I came out on a Hercules.

(Ed. My incidental involvement was on a business trip to Germany when I met a rather shaken **Evelyn Galarno** on a Lufthansa flight out of Frankfurt. She had volunteered to do secretarial work for the earth station installation group under Randy Martin and got more excitement than she expected.)

**Milt Lillo** added some firsthand recollections as follows: Lorne, your Forward of George's message brings back a lot of memories. I do know Dave Barnby and I remember that he and many others were in Karachi at the time of the 1971 India-Pakistan war. My recollection is that he was part of the RCA Satellite Earth Station Engineering Group. I don't think he worked on Cento but I could be wrong. Another thing I note from an old RCA Employees list that I gave you about three years ago is that Barnby and John Barkwith were hired into the overall Engineering organization at about the same time. Perhaps John was in Karachi in 1971 as well. I don't recall.

In 1969 a group of us visited Karachi, Pakistan and Chittagong, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) for an initial investigation of the proposed Earth Station sites. I don't remember everyone who went but it included Charlie Gareau and Paul Wajdowicz (Civil and Structural group) plus Leo Arsenault I believe and probably Randy Martin

We (RCA) never installed a station at the site that we investigated in Bangladesh but I found a reference to the fact that a station was installed by Japan shortly after East Pakistan became Bangladesh.

Dave gave an account of his activities since RCA days that was posted on our web site but is included here for non wired members.

Dave Barnby's Post Spar Activities

I left RCA for Farinon in 1976 when it seemed that RCA would fold. I got sacked after a year and Doug Young kindly took me back to project engineer Ghana and trans-Sahel projects.

But it was Fred Altmann who had got me hooked on a running challenge of one mile in 6 minutes and throughout the 1977 I was going home to Duvernay taking a quick supper and then to Olympic track facility (one indoor and an outdoor 400m) at Jean Talon which had been opened to the public for free.

So it was partly being knackered all the time and the fact that my job turned out to be more than just sales, but equipment engineering instead of systems that I had expected, that made it difficult for me (I didn't really like the place either). I think it was a bit unfair though as I did sell a million dollar project to New Brunswick Tel (I think it was).

Anyway in 1979 I got in on North Sea oil and gas telecoms for Shell designing and implementing new microwave system for initially eight platforms in the North Sea off Norfolk Coast which included an overlaid switching network.

I then got a team together, formed a company and successfully bid for the maintenance of the system, a contract which lasted 12 years. On the back of that, I bid for and got contracts



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from Amoco, Phillips Petroleum and others. Unfortunately my colleagues, though good engineers, lacked marketing ability and in 1993 contracts dried up.

I then decided to do occasional consultancy work on my own but concentrated on long distance running which took me through to mid-2000s when my body started protesting too much, then into politics as a campaigner rather than politician (helped David Cameron become MP for Witney in 2001, regretted it and joined Ukip).

Now I have turned to bit of writing and publishing, and bit of nostalgia – that's why I'm now in SPARTans I suppose.

I value my time at RCA/SPAR systems where I felt part of a very competent, efficient and coordinated engineering team at the forefront of evolving communications technology which experience held me in good stead for remainder of my career - sounds bit like a bid proposal.



Dave Barnby at the Del Madro Earth Station,  
West Pakistan 1971

My wife Francine and I have been looking at flights to Montreal first week of May with view to attending SPARTans luncheon on 7th May. Francine has family in Terrebonne and around and has made quite a few trips over the years whilst I looked after the dogs. This time my daughter who works for Roche on electronic diagnostic equipment has agreed to take a week off to look after them.

Dave

We received the following nice note from **Pam (Mike) Leahy** in response to a query if she wished to continue receiving our newsletters.

I was pleased to hear from you this January but of course it is totally impractical to continue sending the Spartan newsletter to U.K. so regularly.



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It has been a bitter sweet link with Mike's memory and brought back the old days quite vividly as now and then certain names have come and instantly I'm back as much as 50 years ago tagging along with the RCA group around the globe (particularly Cento) then later, meeting up at picnics and sugaring-off parties. These days though it's a sad fact that most names in the letter are totally unfamiliar – the old times are vanishing but that's the way it goes - - -

Where we decided to settle in Wales is quite beautiful in summer and gives me a great deal of satisfaction as I'm only 2 blocks from the sea and 20 minutes bus drive from an old walled town with a crumbling castle. Wales is quite proud of it's many castles and this particular one is a great incentive for walking and climbing!

I do wonder sometimes about returning to Canada but it is unlikely much as I liked Montreal itself and fitted in completely in the area we chose to live, it was always far too cold for me. And B.C. never seemed right somehow even though I have large family contacts in Vancouver.

So I guess I'll say farewell for now – my best wishes to you and Al, and also to Gil Kerr and Bill Corless.

Take care, and keep healthy

**Nicole Bourdeau** sent along this correspondence with former member **Barbara Walker**: Thank you so much for the valentine message. It was certainly a cold day here but as we did not have to go out, we did not mind the weather. I do not have a car any more - "they" decided I should not drive, so though it is still our car, our grandson Daniel drives it. - he has to pay the gas so he is careful about giving rides to friends - they must not live too far away!

Michael and Jennie had us over for supper on Sunday night - roast beef with trimmings and Jennie always packs us up enough for another meal.

We could not get along without Jennie and Mike as they cart us to doctors' appointments, the dentist, etc. Tomorrow I go to the Eye hospital to get a needle in my left eye - which is well frozen first!. It had been blurry for a while, as though I was looking through water, but is much improved.

All part of plain old age I think. Fred keeps very well - he should! These men, waited on hand and foot! He sleeps a lot and he now watches quite a bit of TV and has his favorite shows.

Like everyone, we are looking forward to springtime and warmer weather, when we can sit out on our balcony and watch our part of the world go by.

Nicole also provided us with this correspondence with old friend and former member **Lily Dyke**:

I am ashamed of how long it has taken me to get onto the computer to thank you for your Xmas greetings and e-mails, I am touched by your patience. I was sorry to read about Corrine's death, I hope she didn't suffer much. It was a lovely picture of her that you enclosed with your message. Also, thank you for the copy of ??'s e-mail. I haven't been in touch with her since her move to Ottawa, but she sounds like her own good self: "These men – waited on hand and foot", I can just hear her say it!!

And my news could be just about a copy of hers – I am doing well again, living on my own, taking care of myself, but having trouble with remembering names (hence the question mark above instead of our good friend's name – I'll remember it the moment this gets on the air), but still suffering a bit after the results of the virus (clostridium difficile) that I apparently caught during a short (five days) stay at the hospital two years ago because of a slight knee accident. Six days after they had sent me home (late in May 2013) I got seriously ill and taken back to the hospital, where I stayed in isolation until the beginning of August.



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We noted with sadness the passing of Leo Landovskis former colleague and father of Peter and John. Leo was a modest and gentle man and adored by his children and grandchildren. Unknown to many of us, he was a fine musician and upheld the great choral music tradition of the Baltic states as a founding member of the Latvian choral society. He is probably the only person I have known personally who performed in Carnegie Hall where he sang as principal soloist with the choir. The Spartans group was well represented at his memorial service.

### Regrets

Sorry unable to attend lately, my wife has medical issues and it is inconvenient to go to the dinners. Miss you all and thoroughly enjoyed myself when I did attend. **George Skinner**

Reliable correspondent **Dave Whitton** sent his regrets: Unfortunately I will not be in Montreal for the luncheon, however I will be in town from July 10th to the 27th so hope to make contact with some old friends at that time.

**George Rout** sends his regrets: Hi George, sorry I cannot make the spring luncheon. I just returned from playing steel guitar at a jamboree in Texas! Thanks and my best to all the gang.

Hi George,  
Unfortunately I will have to skip the Spring Lunch 2015 as my mother Isobel Williams just died. She was 93.  
Regards to all, **Bronwen (Williams)**

We are always disappointed but not surprised that **Stefan Zadrozny** declined to join us for the spring luncheon. The siren call of springtime golf tells us that he is well and maintaining a healthy life style.

This fond farewell from old friend **Elsa Hore**:  
Greetings George,  
Apologies for not reacting earlier to the invitation for the Spring Spartan luncheon; I had hoped that either of the children I have in the Montreal area would join me – alas, that is not feasible. I have had to juggle my own commitments, before I depart from Lancaster, Ont. Since I still volunteer six days a week, it is quite difficult to fit everything in. I was dumbfounded, when the community decided to celebrate my 84<sup>th</sup>. Birthday on a Sunday – thus, I had no excuse! To my total surprise, 45 people from the various organizations appeared, including our local MPP, who presented me with a certificate of appreciation for my volunteer work for the last 30 years in the area. I will be departing for Rockwood, Ont. Which is a stone-throw away from Guelph, by the end of June. I yearn to bring closure to a couple more functions: one is to finish serving at the nursing home where Henry died on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Three years ago, and the 2<sup>nd</sup>. is the 20<sup>th</sup>. Anniversary of the Char-Lan Food grains bank on the 27<sup>th</sup>. There you have it, “in a nutshell”.

I can count on one hand, how many people, I believe, would miss me at the Spartans gatherings. Henry’s friends & colleagues were my reason for being there over the years; he would have said: “end of an era”. I bid you a bitter-sweet Adieu & thanks for the memories.

This graceful and informative decline from **Janet (Pintar) Rhode**:



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Sorry we have not responded earlier, but we will not be attending the Spring luncheon.

Life is good. Both of our children are doing very well in school and are on the honor roll. Steven also has a part time job and plays the trumpet. Jamie takes dance classes, is a pathfinder (next level above girl guides) and starts high school in September. It's amazing how they are getting older yet I am not! I knock on wood constantly that I have such great kids, by no means perfect, but certainly haven't caused us any problems.

Wolf is very successful as a financial advisor and loves the work. I hope he loves it enough to work for another 15 years....not sure what I'm going to do with him when he retires. I have been doing very well. My 2 year MRI is coming up in June and fingers crossed, all is well. Say hello to everyone for us.

This decline from **Bruce Aikenhead** comes with a fine bit of Expo 67 nostalgia and a summary of his career since the RCA days as a member of the ISIS satellite group:

Hello Lorne,

This "impromptu" letter to you is my reaction to my happening to hear, a few days ago, someone on the radio reminiscing about "Expo 67"! I remembered that I would sometimes go there after work to meet my wife so we could see some exhibit areas together. Then I remembered that I had, at that time, only recently become an RCA employee (after the collapse of Gerry Bull's "HARP" program ("High Altitude Research Program"). It had been a joint program with a US team which, with no warning to us, said, "Sorry fellows, we're being sent to support that Viet Nam affair". They were gone the next day. It was catastrophic for us!

Suddenly there was no funding for projects, no money for wages! That news was announced just before noon. During lunch-hour I met an acquaintance who said "I just heard your bad news, but you should check with RCA, they're looking for more engineers". I took his advice and was able to get an interview later that day with the department head. He then asked me to return the following day. When I came back, he told me that I was hired as the Project Engineer for completing the design, construction, testing and delivery of a satellite, and all of its support equipment. It would be launched into an orbit passing over the North and South poles.

I remember how lucky I was to be able to share your office, and from you learn what "ISIS" was all about. I had become the Project Engineer for the 2nd "International Satellite for Ionospheric Studies". The first one had been launched by the crew from the same office just a few weeks earlier.

The project required about four years and was successful. The customer, the Cdn. Dep't. of Communications was pleased. Then DOC surprised us by saying that they wished to design and build an Ultra-High-Frequency system and to do it they would choose some of the engineers from RCA who would become 'Resident' in Ottawa.

The satellite was designed to be Geo-Stationary and would be parked on the equator at approximately the same longitude as Calgary. The UHF antenna dishes were each only about one metre in diameter and they were 'steerable'. DOC engineers were able to demonstrate communication links from East to West and from Northern Canada to South America. The UHF bandwidth allowed high-density messages.

It was a very successful project and the satellite was given the name "Hermes". It operated for nearly two years. (Ed. The satellite was designed for a two year experimental life and was launched in January 1976 and was operational until November 1979, almost four years). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communications\\_Technology\\_Satellite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communications_Technology_Satellite)

I had been working on the project, in Ottawa, for about 5 years. My wife and I were about to return to Montreal when I was invited to work on a new project, to be supervised by NRCC, the National Research Council of Canada. It was to be the design, manufacture and thorough testing of a mechanical "arm" to be installed on a NASA spacecraft. Its function would



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be to enable crew-members to operate it so as to lift cargo items out of the Cargo Bay of the “Space Shuttle”. The work was to be done under the management of SPAR in Toronto. It was a very successful project and the product became known as the “Canadarm”. One of them was installed in each space shuttle.

After a few more projects I became the Director-General of the Canadian Astronaut Program for nearly 10 years. We had quite a number of Canadian astronauts over a period of several years. When International Space station “Freedom” went ahead, NASA invited all of the astronauts, from all of the countries, to train together at Houston.

Not long afterward I began to think about retirement.

I retired in 1993 at age 69 and my wife and I moved to BC .

In 1997, to my surprise, I was invited to become an Officer of the Order of Canada. It was a wonderful ceremony and a very pleasant occasion.

Over to you, Lorne,

### Also Sending Regrets

Greg Baylis	Nicole Bourdeau	Mary Buchanan	Jacqueline. Burrows
Eric Caballero	Wanda Daniel	Joe Delsole	Ian Grier
Walter Hrycyna	Gilles Lachapelle	Peter Landovskis	Roger Louie
Lloyd Martin	Frank Maxwell	Dan Merick	Hazel Osborne
Tony Raab	Roger Rak	Jane Robinson	Johnb Runeclles
Andy & Susan Sztyk	Heather Tansuay	Georges Valliancourt	

### Door Prizes

The prizes offered and the winners were as follows:

- The first door prize was a \$50.00 food voucher for two meals generously donated by Ristorante Linguini and won by Doug Paul
- The second prize consisted of two jars of homemade jam donated by Lloyd Slaven’s wife Marcia and won by Roland Niklaus.
- There was a third prize but what it was and who won it escapes my ever diminishing memory.

Note: Many thanks to Colette Besner and Pat Hammond for distributing the draw tickets.  
George

### Membership

The membership activity led by Nicole would be greatly helped if each current member could enlist one new member. It is important to maintain and grow our numbers to sustain the viability of our retirees group. Milt Lillo has achieved partial success in his personal effort by contacting former RCA employee **Dick Colt**, a name familiar to some old timers. In his correspondence with Milt, Dick reviews his career since the RCA days as follows: I can now see why I lost contact with the RCA group, as you guys were all taken over by Spar. I had been taken over by MPB Technologies & worked with them for a few years (both in St. Anne de B. & at home in Ville St. Laurent).

I am not sure if I can join you for the Spring luncheon this year (he didn’t), but I do not want to lose touch with the old RCA people. We will try to maintain contact with Dick. Thanks for your efforts Milt.





## **Spartans Summer/Fall Newsletter 2015**

Please inform any committee member of membership suggestions and contact information.

### **Honorary Members**

Mary Buchanan	Bill Corless	Marc Donato	Jean Gondos
Elsa Hore	Pam Leahy	Carmen McNally	Hazel Osborne
Barbara Pastuszko	Hazel Redhead	Nancy Renz	Claude Richard
Ella Tallon	Mary Zacharatos	Letty Cox	

**Your reporter**  
**Lorne Keyes**