



Spartans Winter Newsletter 2018

Jan, 2018

Summer 2017, and the newsletter, may be only faint memories but it is timely to review the past months and prepare the next opus. Most of us have clear memories of the discomfort and disruption of the early January 1998 ice storm that affected much of Eastern Canada and the US north east, but the bitterly low temperatures and high winds of this early winter will surely remain in our collective memories.

For the second time we were fortunate to have the Felix retirement home as our autumn luncheon venue thanks to the auspices of resident and Spartan committee member **George Larder**. Once again we thank the luncheon organizers **Gil Kerr** and **Al Lawson** as well as the Larder family, particularly George's daughter **Barbara Larder** and her boyfriend **Mark Smolka** for both donating and serving the wine. Both these first time visitors were helpful to George and contributed to the success of our luncheon.

We were pleased to welcome first time visitors **Chandra Kudsia** and his wife Wendy, both old friends from the 1970s, and **Marguerite McKinnon** who worked as a telephone operator at SPAR and so was usually out of sight. **George Videc** was welcomed as a new member and first time visitor, noting that he does not currently use a computer but can send and receive e-messages via his cell phone. He will provide contact information shortly

Marc Donato joined us after a year-long absence and gave an informative presentation on the changes in organization that will see MDA transformed into an essentially American corporation, or at least a wholly owned subsidiary of an American corporation. Those with good memories may recall that the first attempt to sell MDA to a US buyer some years ago was thwarted by the Canadian Government as "not being in Canadian interests". It will be interesting to see if these latest complex changes in governance will achieve the same objectives for the company stakeholders and for Canada. <https://www.pressreader.com/canada/ottawa-citizen/20171109/281788514338775>

Thanks to all committee members for their valuable contributions to the maintenance of our group.

Al Lawson	Photographer (assisted by Milt Lillo)
George Larder	Treasurer, jam maker and Felix host
Gil Kerr	Luncheon organizer
Nicole Bourdeau	Chief recruiter
Margaret Gross	Webmaster
Ed Sorochan	Member at large
Gus Gross	Member at large



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Correspondence with members

From diligent researcher **Mike Morris**:

I finally reached **Mike Golder** in Red Deer after some weeks of trying on and off, just a timing issue. When I reached him he was in the middle of packing his belongings for the move to Victoria, BC (where his son & family lives). Moving date is in about two week's time.

He is in good condition and sounds the same as ever but obviously, given the impending move, will not be attending the October lunch. With very little arm-twisting I got a commitment out of him to seriously consider the May 2018 lunch. Since there is sufficient time to bring further pressure to bear before next May I am optimistic we can make it happen. His wife is unwell (Alzheimer's) and since they will now be near their son it would be easier for him to travel. He sends his regards and will advise his new phone number when he gets it.

On another ex-SPAR person topic I received an e-mail out of the blue (last time we spoke was about 13 years ago and last e-mail about 5) from **Kamilo Feher** announcing his presence in Montreal with his wife for a family visit. He was also meeting **Tho Le Ngoc** at McGill. Of course I had to tell Kamilo I no longer lived in Montreal and he should have let me know earlier, etc., etc. He lives near Sacramento, CA, having retired, as far as I know, from Davis U. Anyway I'm waiting for a call back from him and will invite him to coordinate his next trip with a SPARTans lunch date....or something like that.

I recognized Mike's contribution as follows:

Another unrelenting effort Mike, something that we have come to expect from you. Perhaps we should give you some imaginative title such as Honorary Chief Investigator, or perhaps Enforcer "there is sufficient time to bring further pressure to bear before next May". The title of chief recruiter is already occupied by Nicole (the latest convert to a smart phone and no land line connection). Sorry about the shift in luncheon date that frustrated your planned luncheon visit. This is the down side of having a lower priority than those of the paying residents at the Felix. It would be great fun to see Kamilo after such a long time.

Lorne

Our observant webmaster Margaret brought our attention to an article in Space News on the topic of changes in governance at MDA <http://spacenews.com/mda-closes-digitalglobe-merger-rebrands-as-maxar-technologies/> This article has been posted on the SPARTans website <https://clubspartans.weebly.com>

Marc was not able to answer questions on MDA commitments as he was pressed for time, and I suspect many details are not yet worked out.

Stefan Zadrozny joined us for lunch, making the supreme sacrifice of getting up early so he could finish his golf game before 12 noon



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Paul Weijers joined us and promised not to get lost this time as he did a dry run with both maps and GPS. He was helpful in setting up the computer and projector for a slide presentation.

Jane Robinson has not joined us for some time but kept in touch with the following information:

I spoke with **Heather Tanguay** about 2 months ago and she is now in her new residence in Ile Perrot and I think she likes it. She has recovered quite well from her brain surgery and was told that recovery would take some time. We had a terrific telephone conversation. Before leaving Ottawa she also had knee replacement surgery. Unfortunately I have not seen her yet for a visit (not to say that I don't want to) and I will not be attending the Spartans Luncheon. I will locate her telephone # and email it to Nicole. Take care and have a wonderful day!

Regular attendee **Charles Morton** joined us, hoping to bring Alan McLatchy but I do not believe Alan made it..

Anthony Reynolds (Tony) misplaced the meeting notice but followed up a reminder call from Al and commented that he and Me Won agree that Le-Felix “seemed like a good venue, nice surroundings, good food and a very reasonable price”.

Chandra Kudsia wrote:

Hello Lorne, we enjoyed our visit to Montreal, especially the time we were able to spend with you. I found your presentation at the RCA lunch very interesting, I wasn't fully aware of the pioneering space work you (the RCA group) had done before I met you in 1967. I feel so lucky to have had you and Kishore (Chitre) as my mentors and Val O'donovan as the business Guru. Something to be said about being at the right place, at the right time. How lucky that we all worked when the world of space was in its infancy, exciting, technology driven and we got paid, well paid for doing such interesting work. Despite the stress of tight schedule constraints, work was invariably fun; especially mingling and working at some point in time with the small, highly talented group of people who represented the international space community.

All the best, until we meet again, hopefully, next year.

Yes Chandra, I hope our paths will cross often and thank you for your thoughtful words.
Lorne

There is a nearly constant stream of correspondence that I hesitate to summarize here, between members of what I label the “Spartan Writers” group including regular contributors **John Barkwith**, **Mike Morris** and **Ian Grier**. They and others contribute to the exercise of trying to fill gaps in the history of RCA in the post WW2 era. John has just posted a particularly fine effort cataloguing and commenting on RCA earth station accomplishments from Canada's Mill Village 1 in 1963 to China in 1997. [Communications group earth stations](#) The difficult area now is recording the development of radio relay in the post WW2 era that formed the technical



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and program management skill base for later large earth station and satellite prime contracts. Very few of the participants from that era are still around to share their information and I will do my best to capture their recollections to share with you via our web site and these newsletters. A relevant example is [A conversation with Dan Mercik](#) available on our web site.

I apologized to Ian for a delayed posting of his entertaining account [Norway 1969](#), and the late **Curt Ingerville's** well written vignette [A break in the work routine](#) that was attached to the winter 2010 newsletter but is now posted on our web site

We consider ourselves lucky to have correspondents like these and others. I did extract a promise from **John Burrows** to write a memoir on ISIS A and his role, if I supplied (I did) a few pictures from the era. It has occurred to me that the interesting exchanges between correspondents leading to a "final" item should use our web blog protocol as means of engaging more participants and eliciting comments.

Lorne

Ed Sorochan commented as follows on the time line wall that MDA has produced, and some of our present efforts may be able to fill gaps in that interesting display:

"Interesting time line collage, good work to dig up material from the Emile Berliner era. There is good clarity when your attachment (from Beatrice Agostina) is blown up 200X.

Looking forward to your new time line to what projected RCA date? I sent in earlier Transponder pictures of TDRSS and Anik C.

I found this old RCA Satcom Brochure which you may have in your archive material. More detail than you really need but a few interesting sub systems pictures of the first developed satellite communications antenna and the first graphite fiber epoxy output multiplexers.

What is really missing from the RCA era are the point to point M/W systems, Heavy Route and Thin route ground systems which grew out of the RCA Lenoir facility. I know there were a few pictures around the St Anne building show the ground station installations. It is possible that RCA employees (CC) may have archived material on hand for you if you want to high light the point to point m/w and ground station work eventually. I will forward your Email separately to the (CC) for info".

I replied to Ed:

I am sure I have a copy of this brochure somewhere, along with similar RCA Satcom write ups. You have to read the brochure carefully to see that RCA Montreal was involved, and there was no indication that RCA Montreal developed and manufactured the complex and high risk communications payload from scratch in a twenty four month program. You may recall that Bob Hume, the co-author with Jack Keigler, was a hard-nosed Brit on the project management team but made no technical contributions to my knowledge. His specialty as I recall was bullying people like me making technical presentations. On one memorable occasion Gus Constantino, the general manager at RCA Astro had charged me with identifying the top risk areas in the payload program. I started my presentation at 10 AM in Hightstown with an overhead slide with three bullets; the first one was "A zero margin design". When we broke for lunch around 12:30 I had not spoken to the second bullet because a discussion erupted, one of the most vigorous that I had ever witnessed, in which both spacecraft and payload sides of the table defended their design, showing convincingly I believe that neither group had "hidden" anything. Perhaps Bob



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was trying to make the conversion to a business development or higher management role but if so, I never heard of him again.

Lorne

News and Regrets

From **Henri Claireaux**,

Thank for calling but I am just back home recovering from 3 major surgical operations in one month so I will not make it to the luncheon. Say hi to everyone and will see you all in the spring.

I joined Chandra and Wendy Kudsia for lunch on the day before the Spartan lunch and were joined by former colleague and mutual friends **Virendra Jha** and his wife. They were unable to attend the Spartan luncheon but expressed an interest in joining our group.

Rod and Joan Green planned to attend but did not show up for the luncheon. We will entertain any reasonable excuse for this failure.

Doug Gilligan: Hi SPARtans; I had hoped to make it to this luncheon, but unfortunately travel plans didn't work out. Take care all, hope to join you next time.

From **K.K. Chan:**

I am afraid that I will not be able to make it to the luncheon this time as it will be too rushed for me. Too much work still needs to be done as I am preparing for a technical presentation at ISAP in Phuket, Thailand and project technical meetings in Singapore. Perhaps, the spring luncheon may be a better time for me. Thank you very much for the reminder.

Best regards, KK

Janet & Wolfgang Rhode

Hi Al, Thank you for letting us know about the Fall luncheon. Once again, we will not be attending as our daughter is getting an honours award at school and the date hasn't been announced yet, however, it is always mid to end of October. She has worked very hard to achieve this and we don't want to miss it.

We just moved our son, Steven, back to university where he will begin his second year of studies. Wolf is still working at Edward Jones but takes every Friday afternoon off. After so many years of working, he deserves it. And, considering we still have a few years of university expenses, gotta keep him happy and working!

Please say hello to everyone for us and we hope to make it to a luncheon before too long.



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Frequent contributor and correspondent in the UK, **Dave Barnby** writes: unfortunately I shall not be attending the Fall Lunch

Keep those notes and comments coming Dave.

Lorne

Roger Rak sends his regrets and this update:

Hope that you are well & still very mobile like the last time I saw you. I've had a few health issues lately & my wife and I finally sold our house in Laval after nearly 50 years of a very happy and blessed life here. We are moving back to Montreal, ironically not to far from our first apartment that we had rented in back in 1962. Well, we will be moving on the 2nd week of October so regrettably, I will definitely not be able to attend the Fall Luncheon.

Best regards to you and the SPARTans Group,

Peter Garland (Alias Dick Dauntless from one of his many roles in G&S operetta productions):

Unfortunately, the date clashes with my travel plans. In that week I am in Trieste Italy as I am chairman of the AIAA Satcom conference there. Let me wish you all a good lunch and my regards to all my colleagues in attendance

Mike Morris, was caught by the one week shift in the luncheon date and wrote:

Sorry I will be unable to attend this one. The good news is I will be spending that week in Paris (France, not Ontario). Will be at the next luncheon in the Spring.

Regards to everyone,

Mike

Adam (Dan) Mercik asks us to accept his usual regrets and sends his greetings for a great luncheon.

I can add that Dan is one of the rare survivors from the early radio relay days and is following up on his promise to send us his memory flashes as they occur.

Marguerite McKinnon has accepted our invitation to be a SPARTan member and to attend our Fall Luncheon as our guest. She is looking forward to meeting some friends that she worked with. Some of you may not remember her as she worked quietly, mainly out of sight as a telephone operator at SPAR.

Tony Raab writes: I am very sorry to let you know I have to cancel my attendance due to some new commitments.

John Runeckles is among the few members who are still active in the work force (someone has to support the rest of us) and writes:



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Thank you for the regular correspondence. It is good to be kept in touch, although it is sad to learn of former colleagues passing. I am still working and so will be unable to join you for the Fall luncheon.

Bronwen Williams updates us:

I hope you are doing well. I had a total knee replacement on my right knee in April 2017 and one week after I got home, I was evacuated because my house was surrounded by water. Luckily no water got into the basement because the sump pump kept running.

Unfortunately I will not be able to attend this year's October 19 lunch because I'm preparing for the total knee replacement of my left knee.

All the best and have a great day, Bronwen

Pat Hammond advises us that he will be out of town and will not attend the luncheon

George Larder writes: I had a call from **Dean Collis** and he sends his regrets about not being able to attend our luncheon. He has Parkinson's disease and has had it for a few years. In spite of that he sounded pretty good, the only thing he mentioned was feeling tired all the time. He said his wife Louise is doing fine. Evidently she runs her own business. I told him we would pass on his best wishes to all at the luncheon,

A volunteer task commitment prevented **James Sisley** from attending the luncheon.

Deaths

We note with sadness the passing of colleagues and friends. Death notices and links to obituaries that we are aware of are posted on our web site

Sad news from Linda Baxter; **Barbara Walker** passed away. Linda found the obituary in the Ottawa Citizen and attached it to her message. Barbara was a long time member of SPARTans, but did not rejoin after moving to Ottawa

Jim Jamshedji will be remembered by some of us.

<https://clubspartans.weebly.com/newsblogobituaries/archives/09-2017>



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We were saddened by the passing of **Raymond Sabourin**. Many of us remember him well, and of course his daughter Claire. He unfortunately declined to join Spartans so I never had the opportunity to publically offer him well merited thanks for his consistent efforts and unfailing even temperament under pressure. As many of you recall, Ray was in charge of in house printing, the very last step before delivering important proposals and reports to rigid schedules. I was keenly aware how unfair it seemed when senior management often took weeks to decide whether to bid or not, resulting in serious time pressures along the line including Ray who was low man on the totem pole but never complained.

Also sending regrets

Louis Laroche	Fred Marhauser	Alan McLatchy	Tony Raab
Gaetan Robert	Charles Albright	Barbara Barclay	Svend Berg
Mary Buchanan	Joe Desole	Carl Gaul	Lionel Giasson
Ian Grier	Joe & Mary Soul	Elia Talon	

Your editor
Lorne