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Editorial Chatter

This issue features several poems by Kim McCulloch, former Vice-president of OSSTF. McCulloch wrote these poems in August as he was struggling with cancer and chemo. His words let him live on in our hearts.

President Manfred Netzel looks at two political events that had a profound influence on the populations where they occurred. One was the end of the Ford era at City Hall, the other the fall of the Berlin Wall. Not to consider these as equal, but only to make us aware of the way in which the will of the people seeks democracy.

Two events get our attention this issue. One is a very scenic cruise on the Lady Muskoka, enjoyed by a good turnout of ARM members. The other is the well-attended Swing for Kids Fall Golf Tournament.

How to deal with real estate as you age caught the attention of ARM members in September. This presentation offered a lot of common sense advice on when and how to dispose of what is

likely your biggest investment, your home.

Aging and its concomitant health problems drew a large crowd to learn about CAREpath and how to deal with doctor visits. Lots of useful, hands-on information.

The Ark Before Noah receives the Schreiber touch in this issue's Considered department. David Schreiber gives us a comprehensive look at fascinating discoveries.

Jim Loftus and Eric Dempster provide photographic evidence of a successful tournament. Lots of winners on this page.

Thanks to Educators Financial Group, we have some good advice on money and investing.

Our last page is a reminder of the ARM12 Holiday Celebration co-ordinated by Karma Naik, with a poster created by IT Guru Steve O'Brien.

Finally, we wish you a very enjoyable holiday season. May your next year be happy and rewarding.

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After School Volume 16, Issue 5, November 2014

After School is the official publication of Active Retired Members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Chapter 12 Toronto (ARM C12)

Opinions expressed in *After School* are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ARM Chapter 12 or of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Submissions are always welcome but will not be returned. All submissions are subject to editing for length and style while respecting the author's intentions.

Editorial Team: Larry French, Cyndie Jacobs, John Jansen, Manfred Netzel, Ed Preston, Paul Rook, Neil Walker

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Calendar

Wednesday, December 3, 2014. ARM's Annual Holiday Celebration at the Latvian Centre, 4 Credit Union Drive (adjacent to 60 Mobile Drive – OSSTF building). Confirm attendance with Jim Loftus 416 447-0811. Lunch includes turkey with all the trimmings, beverage choices, good company and live music to usher in the spirit of the season. \$35 per person. Cash bar.

Tuesdays, January 6 to March 17, 2015. Weekly Indoor Golf Training Sessions at Metro Dome. Two golf pros will coach 30 or so aspiring professionals in all aspects of the game. Fees are \$260 for all 10 weekly sessions and \$32.50 for each single session. Confirm your choice of 10 or single session participation with Jim Loftus at 416 447-0811 by Tuesday, December 23, 2014.

Wednesday, January 21, 2015. ARM's Annual Review of Investment, Estate, Health, Travel and Life Insurance Plans Representatives of Educators Financial Group, OTIP/RAEO and Teachers Life will review existing plans, significant changes of investment, estate, life, health care and travel related insurance planning. Question and answer period will follow. Location, 60 Mobile Drive. Registration 9:45 a.m. Luncheon \$18. Register with Jim Loftus, 416 447 0811.

Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2015. Gambling for Seniors — Risk and Reward. Bought 649 lately? Visited Casino Rama? Win anything? Many of our colleagues probably answer “yes” to at least one of these questions. Gambling is fascinating to a lot of us. Our panel of knowledgeable people will discuss gambling from such perspectives as history, provincial revenue, winning and losing strategies, and dangers. Registration at 9:30 am. Anthony's restaurant (corner Don Mills Rd and Lawrence Ave) Cost: \$19 includes lunch. Call Jim Loftus at 416-447-0811 if you'd like to attend.

Wednesday, April 15, 2015. Internet and Telephone Scams. What the common dangers are and how to avoid them. Paul Rook will produce a morning with Internet and telephone fraud experts on hand. Feel free to share your own experiences with the online electronic world.

Friday, June 19, 2015. ARM C12 Stratford Festival Trip, 2015. The productions offered are *Carousel* and *Hamlet*. *Carousel*, a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical features scores that include “You’ll Never Walk Alone”, “If I Loved You”, and “June is Bustin’ Out All Over.” *Hamlet*, an iconic Shakespearean tragedy is familiar; always a potent drama. Please call Karma asap (416 783-6591) re: questions, and, if hoping to attend. More details later.

Out of Town ARM Events

Chapter 9 (Windsor-Essex)

December 4th : Special Christmas Luncheon & Raffle starts @ 11am. Location is the Caboto Club (2175 Parent Ave) in Windsor. Contacts: Judy Tenzer (519- 979-8135) or Pauline Gaudette (519- 944-3740)

January 9th, February 6th, March 6th: First Friday Breakfasts start @ 9am. Location is Lumberjack Restaurant (475 Tecumseh Rd. E.) in Windsor. Contacts: Judy Tenzer or Pauline Gaudette

Chapter 22 (Niagara)

November 19. Breakfast in Thorold (Early Bird Restaurant 2 Merritt Street)

December 10. Christmas lunch at the Mandarin, 366 Bunting Rd., St. Catharines.

January 21. Breakfast at Mozzas -- 4300 Drummond Road, Niagara Falls.

February 18. New Niagara Outlet Mall, St. Catharines -- meet for lunch, then shop ‘til we drop.

Chapter 21/18 (Hamilton-Wentworth / Upper Grand)

November 18th: Wine Tour & Luncheon starts @ 10am. Meet at the District 21 Office by 9am or @ Zooma Zooma's (3839 Main St.) in the Town of Lincoln. Contacts: Chester Faulknor (905- 574-8285) or Frieda Smyth (Frietz@aol.com)

December 16th: Annual Christmas Luncheon starts @ 11:45. Location is Southcote 53 Tap & Grill (534 Garner Rd.S.) in Ancaster. Contacts: Chester Faulknor or Frieda Smyth

Chapter 29 (Hastings- Prince Edward)

Thursday November 20th. Monthly Breakfast at the Northway Restaurant (205 North Front St.) in Belleville at 8:30am. The main order of business: annual charitable donations.

Monday December 1st. Join us for a celebration of the Christmas season - at Federation House (114 Victoria Ave., Belleville) from 3 to 5 pm.

No need to secure tickets, just come.

Contact: Jim Stewart, President (armdistrict29@gmail.com)

Celebrating New Eras, Then and Now

Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Ford era

BY MANFRED NETZEL, PRESIDENT, ARM CHAPTER 12

In thinking about the theme of this president's column, I was torn between focussing only on my glee over the official end of the Rob Ford era in Toronto politics and just expressing some warm and fuzzy seasonal thoughts and wishes to the members of ARM Chapter 12.

After some greater reflection and insight, and having also visited Berlin some 6 times since 1974, I decided to compare this very important Toronto development on October 27th with the much greater political upheaval that took place in that German city some 25 years ago: the collapse of Communist East Germany dramatically expressed by the surprise opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. Of course, our local municipal election pales in comparison with the latter, but both events represent the end of an unhappy era for those affected and the start of a new era of hope, confidence and fundamental political, economic and social reform.

Ironically, many observers of the slow demise of the Soviet-backed East German regime by the late 1980s attribute the rigged centralized municipal elections in May of 1989 as the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. The regime proudly pronounced on election night TV that 98.6 per cent of the electorate had voted for its slate of candidates. This was clearly viewed as a fabrication by the citizens of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and spurred them on to protest and demonstrate on the streets of the country's large cities and towns in ever-growing numbers throughout that summer and fall. At the same time, police and state security officials began to react with increased passivity and tolerance, especially as the street protests became weekly and were encouraged by religious and human rights leaders. Fortunately, when the end of the GDR finally happened a quarter century ago this month, not a single shot was fired nor was anyone seriously injured or killed.

Of course, there was no chance of experiencing such massive fraud in our own elections (we don't live in Florida) nor the likelihood of street protests or violence, but the much higher voter participation rate in Toronto was also a strong indication that the electorate desperately wanted a regime change at City Hall and they got it to some degree. Although our disgraced former Mayor was re-elected as a City Councillor from North Etobicoke, and his nephew will

now help manage a \$3 billion TDSB budget and set public education policy (despite his own dysfunctional educational path), one can call it the end of the Ford era. Supporters of Ford Nation were heartened by the good showing of surrogate mayoralty candidate and brother Doug Ford, but I think his departure from municipal politics and possible rejection as a leadership hopeful for the Ontario PC Party should put an end to this despicable form of right-wing populism. The early statements of Mayor-Elect John Tory and the delayed retirement of the past City Manager Joe Pennachetti until the 2015-2016 budget process is underway are already some positive signs of a better working relationship among the mayor, council members and city hall staff.

The same thing seemed to happen with the results at the school board level, as some quite obnoxious TDSB incumbents were also given their marching orders by the voters. OSSTF District 12 leadership and political activists can take much credit for the election of most of their endorsed trustee candidates, and the defeat of several trustees such as Sam Sitiropoulos, Elizabeth Moyer and Scott Harrison in Scarborough. The mixture of good incumbent and newly-elected trustees (notwithstanding Michael Ford) for the next four years will, I hope, give the TDSB a much-needed fresh start and new injection of skills and policy initiatives. Of course, the pending round of negotiations with OSSTF and the other employee groups will largely be out of the hands of these trustees due to the passage of Bill 122 by the Liberal Wynne Government earlier this year. That law now gives Central Bargaining issues the edge over Local Bargaining table issues, somewhat comparable to the old Metro structure we had in pre-amalgamation Toronto.

Finally, it is time for the warm and fuzzy stuff. On behalf of the Chapter 12 executive I do want to express heartfelt wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season to all of our members and friends, as well as a great start to 2015. As advertised elsewhere in this newsletter, we are again hosting our annual Holiday Party on December 3rd at the Latvian Centre. I hope to see many of you there since there will, as always, be great food, entertainment and congeniality to start the holiday season.

Ahoy There!

A fabulous fall colour cruise aboard the Lady Muskoka.

BY ROSEMARIE MOHRING

Travelling to picturesque Bracebridge on October 1, 2014, we arrived at Lake Muskoka and a trip back in time. Some of us remembered working in this area at popular summer resorts, earning tuition for our university educations and meeting other young students from across Ontario.

A few of us had purchased tickets to win a gorgeous lakefront cottage in the Princess Margaret Hospital lottery, and were scanning the shoreline for a glimpse of the prize, and most importantly, of the gold and flaming red trees.

Not many of us made it to the upper deck because of the misty



Sally Pengeley in a pensive moment

weather conditions. Sitting in the main dining area, we had lunch and listened to a video presentation highlighting the history of Lake Muskoka of its popularity as a cottage area and summer play ground.

During the coach-line ride home, we stopped at Maple Orchard Farms gift shop to purchase anything maple.

Did we have a good time? (Applause, please.)



Left to right, Julia Harney, Rosemarie Mohring and Elsa Dunn enjoy marine hospitality

One of the most enjoyable parts of our October trips is enjoying being with like-minded and affable ARM friends and guests.

From CAREpath to Doctor Visits

Programs and strategies to improve your health care experiences

BY PAUL ROOK

On October 22, four panelists presented ARM members with important strategies and programs designed to improve your health care experiences.

CAREpath: The cancer assistance program

This unique program is provided as part of the OTIP ARM benefits packages. Sheila Moore, who is in charge of marketing, and Anita McGowan, Director of CAREpath Nursing, explained how the program can be accessed, how it operates and its many benefits.

Our members who have this benefits package can contact CAREpath by phoning 1-800-290-5106 or going to info@carepath.ca or www.otip.com.

CAREpath helps cancer patients and their families navigate through the public health care system by providing both information and mental, emotional and physical support. The patient sends in a waiver form allowing CAREpath to access their medical records

Then CAREpath offers individualized case management for all types of cancer. There is one on one contact with a nurse specialist who provides knowledge, expertise and time according to the needs of the patient. This nurse has access to doctors and other cancer specialists who advise CAREpath. These people are active members in the public cancer centres in Canada.

Before treatment begins the CAREpath nurse

- explains test results and potential treatment options according to the National Comprehensive Care Network guidelines,
- allows necessary time for the patients to voice concerns and fears,
- encourages professional counselling, if needed,
- prepares specific questions to ask the treating physicians
- encourages participation by a caregiver or spouse,
- explains the benefits of treatment at cancer centres of excellence,
- arranges for follow-up appointments (phone calls),
- consults with CAREpaths's medical specialists in



Paul Rook, producer of the Healthcare forum of October 22 says OTIP's alliance with CAREpath is invaluable

Case Review.

During active treatment the CAREpath nurse

- answers questions about and discusses the treatment options proposed by your physicians,
- suggests strategies for possible side effects,
- provides ongoing education to assist with nutrition, exercise and symptom management,
- addresses fears and anxiety.

After treatment, the CAREpath nurse may provide advice on lifestyle changes to prevent recurrence of cancer and to improve overall health. Information is provided to deal with long-term side effects.

The CAREpath nurse has the time to more fully answer your questions, discuss the meaning of tests and treatments and to prepare you for visits to your physicians. They act as a support for you. The CAREpath personnel are not there to replace your physicians.

“CAREpath works in parallel with the public system as an adjunct to compliment patient care throughout the cancer journey.”

For more information go to their website www.carepath.ca

carepath.ca. Click on the short video “How we do it” for more details.

Health tools and strategies

Paul Rook based his presentation upon lessons learned from his own experiences and a course he helped to pilot on this topic. Paul began by stressing the following philosophy:

You are a member of your health care team. You are entitled to the information relating to your medical condition; to ask questions and to be part of the conversation about your illness and treatment options.

List of drugs and doctors

- Prepare a complete list of all drugs that you are taking. For each drug provide the name, the quantity of the each pill or dose, the time taken and the reason for taking the drug. For example: Stomach Reflux – Tecta, 40 mg, 1 per day, early morning.
- Include prescription drugs, vitamins and supplements and drugs such as the 81 mg aspirin
- Include doctors’ names,, what the person is treating you for and phone numbers. Keep this list with you at all times.

Log or diary of symptoms

When a new illness is taking hold of you, keep a record of what is happening. This helps you communicate clearly and more accurately with your health care professionals. Include: Date, time and description of symptoms: For example, for pain include the exact location, duration, intensity (on a scale of 1 to 10) and type such as throbbing,, vital signs (temperature, pulse, blood pressure), blood sugar readings, intake and output (What is eaten or drunk and description of and amount excreted and voided), home treatments and reactions.

Questions for the doctor

Prior to visiting the doctor prepare a list of written questions to ask. Leave room after each question to record the answer. Think of possible questions the doctor might ask.

At the doctor’s

Consider asking an advocate, such as a friend or relative, to accompany you. This person might think of questions you don’t think of. When difficult news is presented, this person may hear it more clearly than you do.

- Prepare what you are going to say. Make sure you mention the main problem first.



Scott Wisner of The Scarborough Hospital spoke of palliative care as an essential part of terminal illness treatment for the whole patient and family

- Take point form notes when the doctor is presenting information, or test results.
- Ask follow up questions for clarification or to get more information.
- If test results are being discussed ask for a copy. You are entitled to this.
- Make sure that you are clear about the next steps such as tests, referrals, surgery.
- After your visit review your notes and discuss what was said with your advocate.

Keep a health record

Keep one for each major illness, either in a binder or a file folder.

Include the following items:

- your medical log or diary
- notes taken during your meetings with your health care professionals
- all lab test results (blood work, ultrasound, CT scan, MRI report etc.)
- prescription information, such as the printed sheet given at the pharmacy
- reactions to prescriptions
- material you have been given to read
- task list
- track your moods and record them
- flow charts to show items such as PSA results over a period of time

Researching your illness or proposed treatments

The Internet is a wonderful tool for doing this. It can also create problems. Make sure you go to recommended or reputable sites. Sites may be related

specifically to your illness, such as the website for Thyroid Cancer Canada. Others are health care facilities such as Sunnybrook Health Science Centre

Seek a **Support Group(s)** for your illness

The group can help you understand what you are going through and that you are not alone.

Palliative care

Scott Wisner of The Scarborough Hospital stressed that

Palliative Care is the combination of active and compassionate therapies intended to comfort and support individuals and families who are living with or dying from a progressive life-threatening illness, or who are bereaved. Thus it is far more than end-of-life care when a person is imminently dying.

- Early involvement allows for advanced care and planning. There is time for open communication about the illness, treatment and end of life issues. The patients and families are involved in decision making throughout the palliative care process. Palliative care provides for the bringing in of other supports such as dieticians, social workers, physiotherapists and many others. They are all part of the Canadian Palliative Care Association.

Palliative care touches every part of the health care system.

Palliative care allows for a “good death” which means: Pain and Symptom Management - current & future

- biggest fear was dying in pain
- reassure through education and treatment

Clear Decision Making

- ongoing open communication & patient participation

- anticipatory conversations

Preparation for Death

- minimizes sense of burden
- education & support for patient, family and caregivers

Completion

- life review, resolving conflicts, unfinished business, spend time with loved ones.

Contributing to others

- giving of gifts, spending time, sharing wisdom & knowledge, & continuing relationships

Affirmation of the whole person

- humanity, compassion & sensitivity required
- desire to be known – story telling

Scott provided the following website information where you can find more information about palliative care and inpatient palliative care sites in Ontario.

Canadian Virtual Hospice www.virtualhospice.ca is a website provided by a palliative care team in Manitoba. Lots of information about palliative care; common issues and questions; regional resource information; and ‘ask a professional’ option; message board to chat with others going through similar issues.

To find inpatient palliative and hospice care in our area, use <http://www.theprincessmargaret.ca/HPContario>. This is a new website created by UHN and Princess Margaret Hospital to find inpatient units across Ontario

Central East LHIN healthline <http://www.centraleasthealthline.ca/listCategories.aspx?id=10020>

is another website of community resources for all health topics.

Keep up-to-date with ARM Chapter 12 events

Check out newsletters and the calendar at

www.armchapter12.org

The Real Estate Market for Seniors

In particular, retired senior teachers

BY ERIC DEMPSTER

Neil Walker, our publisher and editor, asked me to write a review of my daughter's presentation at the recent ARM luncheon on September 24 at 60 Mobile Drive.

It put me in the position of a teacher marking his own daughter.

Am I objective? Somewhat. Am I biased? Yes, but the grades she has earned are hers.

She was the agent who sold our house on Argonne. When she represented Barb and me, she dealt with us as would a truly dispassionate professional. During the process her professional persona totally trumped any sign of the usual daughter father/mother relationship.

Mary is an equity partner, along with her mother Barb and her brother Jamie in thedempsters.ca, a team which works with ReMax Realtron Realty.

In business, those that survive the longest and most successfully have the interests of their clients at the core of their actions. That's win-win. That has led my wife Barb, and now Mary and Jamie, to be consistently in the top 1 percent of agents in Canada.

There was a very high level of interest by those attending the luncheon presentation in what she had to say. It reminded me of that old TV show Dragnet where Detective Friday repeats the phrase "Just the facts ma'am, just the facts." when he questioned people. Well, Mary delivered the facts, and then everyone wanted her opinions.

The reason for the very high interest in what Mary had to say is the majority of most retired teachers' equity is usually tied up in home ownership.

As a retired teacher who owns a home, I realize that some day, if I live long enough, we're going to have to sell our home and move into some sort of retirement facility. The equity in my home should cover those costs along with my pension. The pension alone usually doesn't meet the cost of care.

So my personal interest in Mary's observations on the process of selling the family home were generally reflected by those in the audience.

And timing, like most things in life, seems to be a key factor. If we wait until our health declines to the point where we must sell, then we lose the ability to sell at a time of our convenience.

Many of us have seen what our parents went through as they passed through old age.

Engaging an agent who holds your interests uppermost and is truly effective is important. You want someone who is not in it just for a quick sale but one who works with you to obtain the best price for you. The key to that is getting a list of very satisfied clients from the agent and talking with them about their experiences personally.

Here is a summary of the present real estate facts in Toronto given during the presentation.

In 2013,

- 10,170 agents sold 0 homes
- 20,921 agents sold 1-8 homes
- 5,168 agents sold 9-18 homes
- 1,852 agents sold 19+ homes

Registered agents in January, 2012: 36,745

New agents licensed during 2013: 4,542

Total: 41,287

Registered agents in December 2013 38,111

Reasons to consider moving

- Physical
- Financial
- Lifestyle

Housing Options

- Retro fit current home
- Accessory apartment
- Bungalows and condos
- Rental apartments
- Retirement residence
- Long term care facility

The Decision to Move

- Consider future changes
- Time and research
- Consulting with family
- The Right Move
- A housing change can be good.
- Use the luxury of time to make the right move.

Maximize Your Sale

- Use a professional agent
- Prep your home
- Pre-listing home inspection
- Home staging

Your Home's Value: Figure out the value in your home today so you can plan for tomorrow. Do a comparative market analysis.

As you can see, her presentation was objective. Me? Not so. I was and continue to be a very proud dad.



The Retired Bard

In Remembrance

Poems by Kim McCulloch

Hamilton District's Kim McCulloch was a popular and respected Vice-President of Provincial OSSTF-FEESO in the late 1980's. He played a prominent part in the epic and ultimately successful battle to save Winston Churchill CVI when it was promised to the Hamilton Separate School Board after a controversial Bill 30 Tribunal ruling.

Admired for his integrity as an OSSTF leader he helped develop policies and practices in the areas of professional development and collective bargaining that benefit our members to the present day.

We thank Kim's widow Norma for the poems that Kim wrote inspired by the loss of so many young men in the battle of Passchendael towards the end of the First World War. Thanks to Kim, we continue to remember their sacrifice.

— Larry French

Do the Math

War is a wondrous thing
Do the math
Look at the little picture, not the big
Reserve 5 square kilometres
of rolling Belgian farmland suited for
artillery, flooding, mud and war games
War is a wondrous thing
Do the math
Look at the little picture not the big
Move in half million
Allied and German troops
Someone has to fight

War is a wondrous thing
Do the math
Look at the little picture not the big
The allies won, they say
The battle ended in November 1917
Following six months of carnage
Passchendael was overrun
Just over 240,000 lives were lost in total
And here's how.
The allies slowly advanced along
A front line of just five miles
That's two dead men
Per two square inches
Over six months
That is small, not big
Do the math

Earlscourt 1914

How easy was it
To switch from tweed to khaki?
From cricket bats to Ross rifles?
To rum from milk?
From bottles to bayonets?

One Earlscourt Church lost
325 parishioners to war before 1916
A nearby, Earlscourt block boasted
24 widows by 1915.
Do the math
Look at the little picture
Not the big

“This battle spoke to me as no other in explaining the senselessness and waste, the foolishness and folly of war”
— Kim McCulloch

Earlscourt Re-imagined

Grimy yet street sweet odour of soap
Intent on their game
The boys of St. Clair and Earlscourt played
Without distraction
Luring Germans from hidey holes
Killing them without mercy.
German boys, by the sweetness of sausage
And the game
Stupid and without distraction
Lured young Brits from their hidey holes
And killed them silently without mercy
When war is play
And
Play is war
Snapping matchsticks beneath
Tramway cars crushing smoking pennies ,
And arcing, scraping metal shards become our
Acrid, dusty battlefronts
Smell of distant soap
And
Sausage linked only by distant memory
Drifts slowly back and forth
Like mustard gas and loyalty

“There was a rush in Great Britain 1914-15 for men to enlist. Earlscourt and St. Clair, one block was known to be proud of the fact that it contained 24 widows by 1916. Near by Dickenson church was known to have contributed 324 wars wounded and dead by 1916. This poem, I hope has something to say about our deepest motivations good and bad” — Kim McCulloch

Considered

The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood

By Irving Finkel

REVIEWED BY DAVID SCHREIBER

Before 1872, everyone believed that the story of Noah and the Ark was unique to the Bible, a distinctive part of the story of the Jewish nation. That assumption crumbled one day when an assistant in the British Museum discovered a Babylonian version of the story from the city of Nineveh written on a clay tablet in wedge-shaped cuneiform, a full one thousand years older than the Bible version. It contained all the elements of the *Genesis* story: displeased by humans, the gods decide to drown everyone, acquitting only one man and his family from the deluge, enjoining him to build a mega-boat and fill it with plant seeds and a breeding pair of every species of animal. The museum assistant, overcome in his eureka moment, astonished his colleagues by running around the room



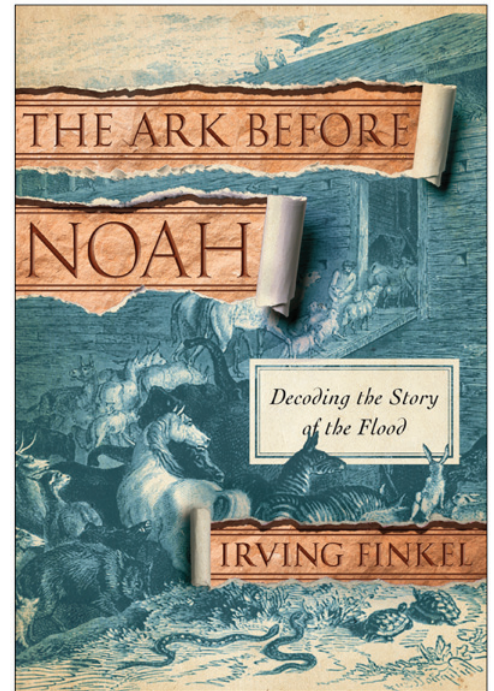
The Daily Telegraph tablet DT42 excavated by Smith at Nineveh

and tearing off his clothes. During the next 113 years, more small fragments of the Babylonian flood story were unearthed, and scholars peered at them, compared versions of the story, argued, and published their papers.

In 1985, the world of ark studies was rocked again when a collector showed a cuneiform tablet to curator Irving Finkel at the British Museum. Not only did this tablet contain another thrilling version of the earliest Flood Story, but it also included detailed instructions for building an ark. Finkel dubbed it the Ark Tablet.

Rather than announcing his discovery modestly to the likes of *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*, Finkel wrote *The Ark Before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood* for the general public as well as Assyriologists. It is written in such a pleasant, conversational style, always on the verge of humour or an outbreak of boyish enthusiasm, that the sometimes arcane subject matter digests easily. The opening chapters on the rigors of learning cuneiform are so engaging (“Fellow students reading history or physics seemed to me frankly to be on a cushy ride”), and the pleasures of Babylonian scholarship are made so vivid that you wonder why you didn’t spend your life, too, squinting at clay tablets rather than doing other things.

Every possible implication is squeezed out of the Ark Tablet in *The Ark Before Noah*. All the cuneiform flood stories are scrutinized and compared, the subtlest contexts are unearthed, and words are held up to the light like diamonds. For each version of the story, Finkel



examines the shape and size of the ark, how it would have been built, what creatures were believed to have gone into it, and where it was thought to have landed. The boat in the earliest Sumerian story, for example, was shaped like an oversized reed boat from the marshes of southern Iraq, long and narrow, while in the later Ark Tablet the boat of Old Babylonian times was described as circular, a gigantic, basket-like coracle made of coiled rope smeared with bitumen for waterproofing. The ark in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* was cubic; it became oblong in the Bible and built of planks and nails in the Koran.

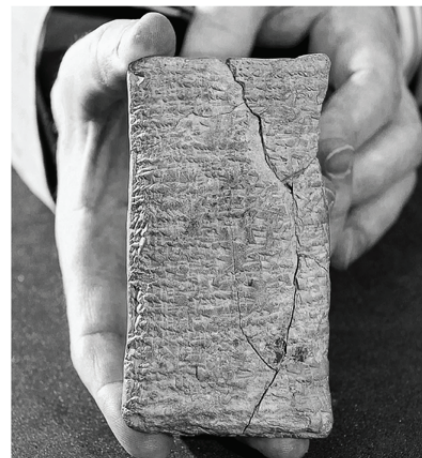
After proving that the Hebrew Bible story must have derived from its cuneiform predecessors, Finkel offers a fresh narrative of how the borrowing must have occurred. It happened, he says, during the Babylonian Exile, after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem, capital of the kingdom of Judah, in 587 B.C. and carried off every important or skilled Judaeans to Babylon. For about 70 years the deportees lived in the new land not as slaves but as foreign workers, some of them assimilating. With the loss of Jerusalem and the temple, and with all the best people living within a much more powerful civilization, Judaeans identity was in danger of disappearing. There was even the threat of rivalry in Babylonian religion, which was moving toward a kind of monotheism. One way to help save Judaeans identity would be to compile a book of sacred texts. Part of that project would include a national history, which could be traced back through existing Judaeans and Israelite annals; and, indeed, passages in *Kings* and *Chronicles* list several such sources. But what if there was a desire to go back even further? Then it would only be natural, argues Finkel, for the compilers to consult Babylonian texts. The *Book of Daniel* tells us that a number of the best and brightest of the Judaeans were taken into the king's palace and trained in Babylonian language and literature. From the many surviving tablets left behind by Babylonian students we know that the Flood Story was a standard part of the cuneiform curriculum, so there was an easy path of transmission from Babylonian texts to the Hebrew Bible. Incidentally, the cuneiform curriculum also included the story of an infant named Sargon whose mother set him adrift on the river in a basket from which he was rescued and adopted, as well as the idea that humans in the era before the great flood lived wonderfully long lives, like Bible figures such as Methuselah, Mahalaleel, *et al.*

The Flood Story was undoubtedly part of an oral



Author Irving Finkel holds the Ark Tablet

tradition long before the invention of writing; however, once cuneiform was developed in Mesopotamia, three separate versions appeared, the oldest, from about 1600 BC, in the Sumerian language, the later two in Akkadian. In the Akkadian *Atrahasis Epic* junior gods went on strike over their workload, so humans were created as substitute labourers. Unfortunately, they were created without mortality, and their penchant for reproduction increased their numbers inconveniently. This got on the nerves of some senior gods, especially the prickly Enlil, who decided to wipe them out, saying, "The noise of mankind has become too intense for me. With their uproar I am deprived of sleep." Later *Genesis* replaced Enlil's aural sensitivity with moral outrage



The Ark Tablet, front view

as God decided to destroy humans because they were wicked, not merely noisy. When the story was taken up by the Koran, another motivation was added, Allah being incensed by unbelief as much as by bad behaviour.

Because the story of Noah, the flood, the ark, and the animals is so important in Judaeo-Christian-Islamic cultures, what is exciting in the world of clay tablets can be exciting to the person in the street. Luckily, the Ark Tablet was discovered by a scholar inclined to reach out past museum walls, someone capable of writing clearly, accessibly and with panache.

Swing for Kids Fall Golf Tournament

Winners all round

BY JIM LOFTUS



Thank Ye' Gods of Weather — The September 17, 2014, Swing For Kids Annual Fall Golf Tournament was played on a day when prior weather forecasts had predicted heavy rainfall and widespread thunderstorms, which would have caused automatic cancellation of the tournament. Fortunately, nary a drop of rain fell, the temperature was perfect and an occasional gentle breeze provided for a tremendously enjoyable golfing experience for all participants.

We were also delighted that representatives of ARM's generous supporters, Teachers Life Insurance and Educators Financial Group, participated in the event and provided numerous prizes to winning players as

illustrated in the accompanying photographs

Photographs, clockwise from upper left: Picture 1: The Swing For Kids 50/50 Raffle, 1st Prize Winner, Bruce Hall with prize presenter, Jim Loftus. Picture 2: Mixed Doubles, Low Net Winners: Rudy Winter, Cathy Gordon-Green and David McWhirter, with Teachers Life prize presenter, Jeffrey Jefferson. Picture 3: Men's Low Net Winners: Jack Shierer, Jack Stratton and Gerry Sevier with Teachers Life, prize presenter, Duane Young. Picture 4: Longest Drive female and closest to the pin, Cathy Gordon-Green, Longest drive male, Dino Cerone, and closest to the pin male, Rudy Winter



One focus, many solutions.

EDUCATORS' TIP

November is Financial Literacy Month!

You know that knowledge is power... but did you know that according to the Canada Council for Learning, **only 45% of adult Canadians are financially literate?** This month, take some time to empower yourself and build up your own knowledge, skills and confidence in financial literacy so that you can make the most responsible financial decisions.

With Educators Financial Group, you can get an A+ in Financial Literacy!

- **Pencil in your budget** with our Go Figure calculator, and check out the other free resources on our Online Learning Centre.
- **Set your savings goals.** Do you want to go on vacation? Create an emergency fund? Buy a second home?
- **Attend a workshop.** Ask your district representative to contact us about workshops on a number of topics, including Estate Planning for Retired Educators, The Keys to Financial Wellness, and Be Prepared During Uncertain Times.
- **Contact a financial planner.** Feel free to contact us with any questions you have and to arrange for a meeting with one of our financial planners.

How?

It's easy. Just give us a call at 1.800.263.9541 or visit us at www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/contact-us and let us handle the rest.

Educators Financial Group has been offering financial planning plus a wide selection of investing and lending products and services exclusively to teachers, educational workers, and their families since 1975. This history helps us understand your needs better than any other financial institution. To learn more about how we can help you reach your financial goals, book a one-on-one consultation today.

Holiday Celebration

ARM

Chapter 12



**At the Latvian Canadian Cultural Centre, 4 Credit Union Drive
Wednesday December 3, 2014 at 10:00 am**

Come and make this a festive occasion with a seasonal luncheon, carol singing, musical performances, meeting old friends and making new acquaintances! Cost is \$35 per person. Cash bar.



A gift of canned food for ARM Chapter 12's contribution to the Daily Bread Food Bank Drive would be most appreciated.

Questions: Karma Naik 416-783-6591 Registration: Jim Loftus 416-447-0811