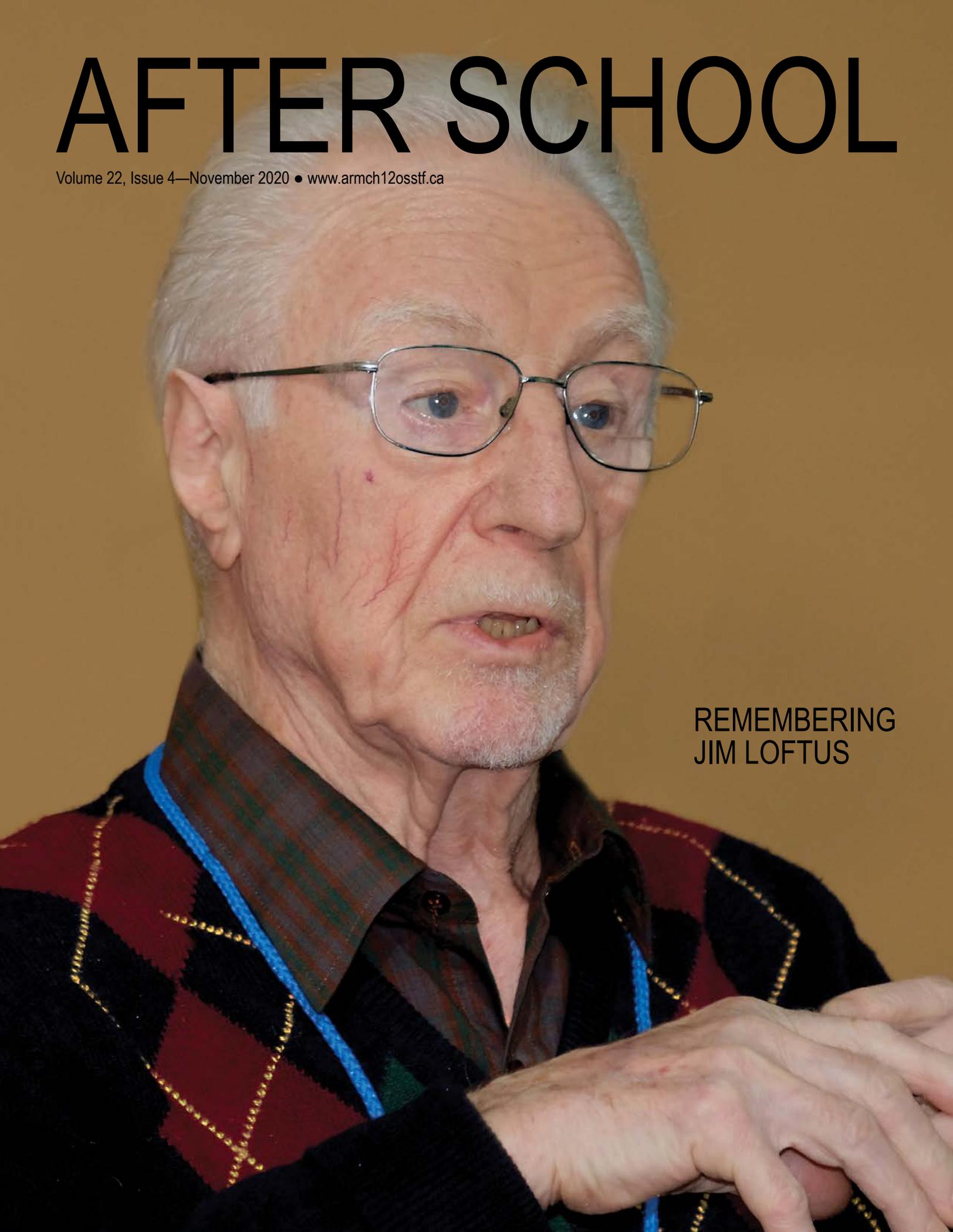


AFTER SCHOOL

Volume 22, Issue 4—November 2020 • www.armch12osstf.ca



REMEMBERING
JIM LOFTUS

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AFTER SCHOOL VOLUME 22, ISSUE 4, NOV. 2020

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

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 (OSSTF/FEESO).

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.

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EDITORIAL CHATTER—ED PRESTON, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

By the time this issue is in your hands, Toronto—and most of Ontario—will be well into the second wave of COVID-19. First, we hope that all of you are well, including your family members. Second, the pandemic continues to impact how we're trying to do things here at ARM. Did any of you buy stock in ZOOM six months ago? We certainly are using it often to continue our Executive meetings, the AGM (September 16), and general meetings for ARM Chapter 12 members. If you haven't been part of these meetings, do join us once you have the ZOOM link, sent out to all Chapter 12 members.

As you can see from the cover, this issue is dedicated to the late **Jim Loftus**, our former vice-president. Inside you'll read tributes to Jim and his dedicated participation in ARM. As well, we've included a memorial to **Bill Briggs**, a long standing member of ARM, who contributed much to our success.

Charles Hawkes continues his critique of the conditions in Ontario's long-term care homes, through his revealing interview with Natalie Mehra, Director of the Ontario Health Coalition.

Michelle Barraclough, our intrepid globe trotter, offers her impressions and photographs of Mexico City, very much contrary to the general impression of a sinking city, overwhelmed with atmospheric pollution. Her article opened my eyes.

In response to our appeal to you for submissions to *After School*, Bruce McCowan, a former Scarborough teacher, made us aware of the detailed history of his family through the eyes and memory of his father, Bill. (McCowan Rd. derives its name from this family that settled in southern Scarborough). We read it, we reviewed it; look for it.

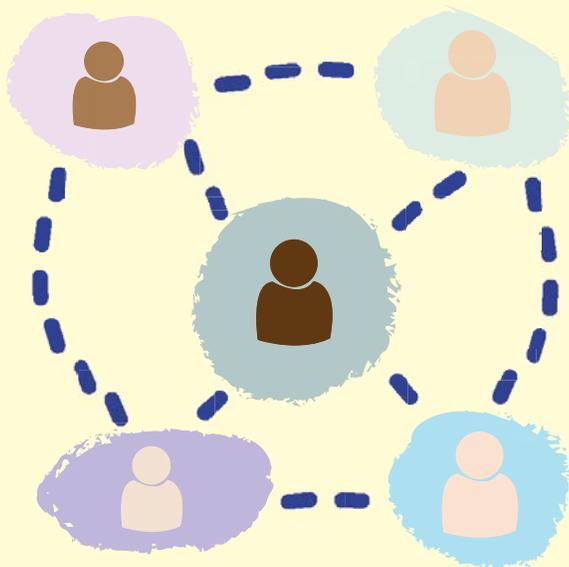
Alan Hux, our intrepid pub crawler, introduces us to a fabulous restau-

rant/brewery in Fenelon Falls. On his recommendation, I took my wife and four others there on a gorgeous autumn Saturday, and found that it truly lived up to Alan's praise.

Paul Headdon has provided his latest OTPP news, while our President, **Manfred Netzel** shares his perspective on what has been transpiring over the past few months with ARM and OSSTF/FEESO.

Last, and certainly not least, is a review by our newest Executive member, **Eunice O'Mahony**, of the ZOOM presentation on October 21 by former mayor and urban activist, **John Sewell**, that focused on the Charter City movement and its relevance and application to Toronto.

If you haven't already, check out our new, much revised, website: www.armch12osstf.ca. It's easy to navigate, very informative, and is becoming increasingly an important vehicle of communication for ARM C.12.



KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH ARM CHAPTER 12 NEWS AND EVENTS.

CHECK OUT NEWSLETTERS AND THE CALENDAR AT
WWW.ARMCH12OSSTF.CA

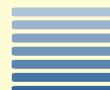
NOTIFY ARM AND OSSTF/FEESO OF ADDRESS AND EMAIL CHANGES

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—MANFRED NETZEL

This issue of *After School* is both a sombre and celebratory issue. This statement may sound contradictory, but it is accurate because it is both a memorial and tribute to a long-standing ARM Chapter 12 activist and leader, **Jim Loftus**, who passed away in July. My memories of Jim are generally positive, but I will leave the reflections of other colleagues and friends found elsewhere in this publication to celebrate the accomplishments and legacy to do him justice. At this time, we must also acknowledge the passing of another long-time member of our Chapter, **Bill Briggs**, of whose passing we just learned about weeks before the publishing of this issue. Of course, as I write this article on Thanksgiving weekend, despite the unprecedented social restrictions that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed upon us individually and collectively, we have much to be thankful for. Some of these celebratory developments are worth describing in more detail through this President's message.

For starters, we were able to organize and carry out our postponed AGM via ZOOM on September 16, after much effort and expense to prepare both a mailed out and electronically sent AGM package...if a somewhat slimmed version. Many thanks in particular to **Ed Preston**, **Bill Pryde** and **Christos Aslanidis** for assisting me in the organization of this challenging event.

Besides the Executive elections, which saw two new members join our ranks, we also bid farewell to a long-standing ARM activist, Rosemarie Mohring, for whom I want to extend my thanks for her many years of dedication and service to our Chapter. At the same time, I can welcome **Eunice**



O'Mahony and **David Orenstein** to the Executive who both bring much OSSTF/FEESO experience and values to our leadership group. In addition, I look forward to working as your "non-acting" President in the coming year, along with all of the returning current Executive members. There were some 25 participants in the teleconference, who also received important Executive reports ranging from the year-end Financial Statement to information about both the new webpage (armch12osstf.ca) from our new webmaster and positive changes to our newsletter production from the Associate Editor. Finally, important constitutional amendments to the Chapter 12 constitution were debated and approved by the meeting, so that future procedures to run our or-

ganization will be better able to deal with unexpected circumstances that have occurred over the past year. It is my sincere hope that the AGM in the spring of 2021 can revert back to a more traditional format with some enhanced social component.

Needless to say, the pandemic continues to impede the organizing of annual events and activities for our ARM Chapter to a large degree. Thus, the Executive made a unanimous decision to not proceed with the traditional Holiday Party in December for obvious reasons. Stay tuned whether we can still plan to host some online version of the event !! Also, due both to Jim's passing and the current modified Stage 2 public health protocols in Toronto and parts of the GTA, we have cancelled plans for the fall golf

tournament, winter golf lessons and any hope for a curling bonspiel. Despite this health crisis, we DO intend to maintain some online activities and workshops, which are identified in this publication and on the Events link on the webpage...please keep yourself informed and involved.

Finally, as you have come to expect, our leadership group and many of the membership are strongly committed to being politically active during these turbulent times. We continue to work closely with our active member colleagues and friends in OSSTF Toronto (aka D.12), and strive to have their

voice and concerns presented by local President **Leslie Wolfe**.

As for many years now, the upcoming Provincial OSSTF/FEESO CPAC Conference in early November will be an important opportunity for union political activists and leaders from across the province to share ideas and propose strategies to deal with the Ford government leading up to the 2022 election. Although it will be an online event this year, Chapter 12 will again be represented by our Political Action Officer, **Charlie Hawkes**. He has also been a strong catalyst for our own engagement in response in the

tragic ongoing issue of a failing LTC system for Ontario seniors which has seen indefensible developments under the PC government. The strong actions undertaken by the Ontario Health Coalition led by Natalie Mehra are highlighted in her interview with Charlie.

We appreciate your patience and understanding for the limitations we face as an ARM Chapter, and certainly hope that as 2021 unfolds it will bring more “normalcy” to our activism.

In Federation,
Manfred Netzel



REMEMBERING JIM LOFTUS—CHARLES HAWKES AND KARMA NAIKE



Jim's association with our chapter goes back 21 years to the founding of the ARM organization itself. He was on our executive from the beginning as a Vice President, and he epitomized the 'active' adjective to a high degree right through to his passing a few months ago.

Jim was born in Liverpool, England, before the Second World War, where he witnessed the blitz demolish his school. He left England for Canada when he was sixteen, later married, raising two sons and a daughter, became a sheet metal worker, a good union man, and eventually, a tech teacher and Federation rep in several Toronto schools. He continued to teach sheet metal work at night school well into his seventies.

Jim was in top physical condition, working out at the YMCA, and running the stairs in his apartment. A good athlete, he

was interested in soccer, curled and played golf from time to time, and was an excellent ballroom dancer. He organized two golf tournaments for our chapter each year, along with two bonspiels, soliciting funds from local businesses for prizes and contributions to the 'Swing For Kids' fund. The fund contributed thousands of dollars that our chapter donated to children's charities. He enjoyed phoning members to notify them of an upcoming luncheon, and became a familiar figure at the door greeting people and collecting money. Jim was a fiscal conservative; few details on the chapter's budget escaped his comments.

We spoke to him shortly before his admission to hospital. He was still broaching ideas for chapter activities. We'll miss his strong and active presence.

Do not go gentle into that good night
Old age should burn and rave at close of day
Rage, rage against the dying of the light

—Dylan Thomas

A few words to honour JIM LOFTUS, my friend and colleague of many years.

We sat at the same table as members of ARM Executive Chapter 12. Jim was a man of his word; feisty, purposeful and working for the greater good. He raised thousands of dollars through "Swing for Kids," his golfing project. These funds were donated to charities chosen by our ARM Executive.

I believe Jim was inspired by the thought that these donations would give hope and some joy to those who needed it.

When I was diagnosed with cancer in 2019 Jim gave me support and hope for recovery. Farewell to a dedicated energetic and compassionate human being. I will miss him.

Julia Harney



REMEMBERING BILL BRIGGS—CHARLES HAWKES

Bill Briggs was a member of our chapter for many years until his passing in September. As a dedicated English teacher, he taught at Midland and Pearson Collegiates in Scarborough until his retirement.

We'll remember Bill from the early days of our chapter for his rendition of the famous comic poem, *Albert and the Lion* at our luncheons held at the Jerusalem restaurant in North York. In his best Stanley Holloway manner, cockney accent and all, Bill helped by his wife Valerie, recited and acted out the poem.

Bill and Valerie participated in our twice yearly golf tournaments until Bill's developing Parkinson's disease made that difficult. But Bill and Valerie continued to attend chapter luncheons and AGM's when they could.

Bill was a choir member, collected Goon show tapes, was a model train enthusiast, and proud of his carpentry work at home and at the family cottage. Our condolences to his talented musical wife, Valerie, and sons Eric and Stewart.



REPORT ON THE ONTARIO TEACHERS PENSION PLAN—PAUL HEADDON

The vast majority of Canadian Defined Pension Plans have improved in the third quarter of this year. The solvency funding for Defined Benefit Pension (DB) plans was 107 per cent on average. If the solvency funding goes below 85 per cent in Ontario, the Ontario funding rules require extra payments by the pension plans. The results for the third quarter for our pension plan are currently unavailable.

Lately there has been a concern regarding pension plans and their investments in High Carbon Assets (oil and coal etc.) A good example is the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) portfolio with assets of \$434 billion. It has invested \$6.6 billion in conventional energy. CPP owns Crestone Oil Company in Colorado. This company uses hydraulic fracking which has adverse effects on the environment. There have been numerous complaints by local citizens and violations noted by Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) has approximately 12 per cent of its portfolio invested in the oil and gas industries. Over \$200 million has been invested in five energy companies. Three of these companies are in the U.S., one in the U.K., and one in Canada. They have divested its high carbon private assets over the last two years.

A group of teachers have formed a Lobby Group that claims OTPP energy investments accelerate the climate crisis and put our pensions at risk. This group wants teachers to send a letter to OTPP regarding its investments in this area. The Lobby Group website is www.ShiftOTTP.ca.

In this regard, the Province of Alberta has announced a plan to produce hydrogen from natural gas in the future. Hydrogen can be very dangerous if it is contaminated.

Ford Motor Company of Canada, with financial support from the Cana-

dian and provincial governments is planning on making electric cars in its Oakville plant.

Electric cars require charging. This may put a strain on our electrical system. California experienced blackouts last summer due to its air conditioners. This may create a problem when charging electric cars and using air conditions at the same time. Chinese solar panels are produced with electricity produced by coal.

Before the pandemic, Suncor had planned alterations to its Montreal Refinery to produce low carbon emission diesel fuel from used cooking or canola oil.

There is a considerable economic gap in Canada. According to a current report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer the top one per cent of wealthy Canadians account for more than a quarter of the country's wealth, while the bottom 40 per cent, account for one per cent. It is easy to see this is a real inequality.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO ARM, CHAPTER 12 EXECUTIVE



EUNICE O'MAHONY

I began my teaching career in Elementary, where I was shop steward from my first year until I left Elemen-

tary for Secondary and OSSTF/FEESO. I'd been Branch President for over 10 years when I gave up the mantle last year so I could mentor a new person in the job. My stint as BP won me the D.12 Peter Polley BP of Distinction Award in 2019, my last year as BP.

But I've been very active in OSSTF/FEESO at both the local and Provincial levels. At District level, I was Executive officer at large for D.12 TTBU, and I was also in several committees including: Human Rights, Status of Women, CPAC, and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) Committees. At Provincial level, I was on the Human

Rights, Status of Women, CPAC, and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) Committees. At Provincial level, I was on the Human

Rights Committee (as Chair for one year), Education Services Committee, and the Status of Women Committee. I represented Status at the regional conference in Thunder Bay in November. I also represented the Teachers' Bargaining Unit at AMPA for over 10 years. Since I retired in January 2020 (and yes, I too can't believe how fortuitous my timing was!!!) I remained active joining my colleagues on the picket lines both in Toronto, and in Ottawa where I joined my son-in-law on his school's picket line in temperatures of -35C!!!

Retired from Central Toronto Academy; before that I was at Central Etobicoke High School.

Recently, I was placed on the TDSB's Occasional Teacher list which means I will continue to be active in OSSTF/FEESO committees locally and Provincially.

DAVID ORENSTEIN:

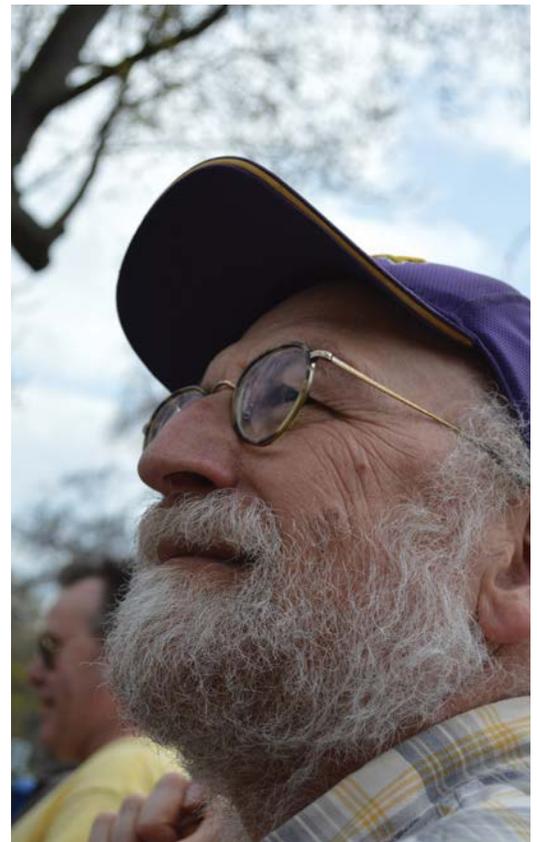
After several years of precarious teaching work (daily supply, LTOs, summer and night schools), I started full-time contract teaching at Forest Hill C.I., where I taught for one year before being bumped to Danforth C.T.I., in 1989. I was there teaching Mathematics (and a little bit of FSL and Science) before retiring in June 2012.

In OSSTF/FEESO, I was active in the District's Political Action Committee, before being elected Executive Officer on the old District 15 Executive. There I stayed for a few years with Political Action as my main portfolio. Afterwards I served as Danforth C.T.I.'s Branch President. After the forced merger of the Metro Toronto School Boards, I felt the need for staying with PAC because of the Harris attacks on education, instead of switching to Professional

Development as I had planned. Nevertheless, during this period I launched several school-based P.D. programmes, and a board wide Labour Studies Subject Council.

I eventually switched to Professional Development where I created the connections for the very successful Earth Sciences and Religious Studies P.D. workshops that D.12 offered. I had several others ready to go when the TDSB eliminated subject-based P.D. sessions, replacing them with teacher training sessions. I also served as a D.12 Labour Council delegate.

As part of the C.12 ARM Executive, I hope to focus my efforts on Political Action. When better times arrive, I'd like to contribute towards the continuance of interesting and enriching C.12 ARM events.



Photos provided

MEXICO CITY WITH A LITTLE SALSA!—MICHELLE BARRACLOUGH

One of my favourite cities in the world: Mexico City. Many words can be used to describe this city of many colours. It has everything from street life to world class museums and art galleries. I first encountered this wonderful metropolis when I was a new teacher and it has been an ongoing love affair, ever since. Originally settled by the Aztec, the chosen people of the hummingbird deity, Huizilopochtli. Legend has it that the Aztec, a nomadic tribe led by their priest, chose the site of the city, because they witnessed an eagle standing on a cactus devouring a snake. This is where they built their capital, **Tenochtitlán**, modern day Mexico City. This symbol is represented on the Mexican flag today.

Where once was an island on a large lake in the Valle de México, the Aztecs built their city on a grid pattern with causeways and thoroughfares. At the centre of the metropolis stood the sacred **Templo Mayor**. Much of the prehispanica architecture has been discovered under the existing Spanish buildings either by accident or earthquake. You can now visit this site, as a museum, beside the **Zocalo**, a giant square also know as the Plaza de la Constitución, which dominates the heart of the city. The Zocalo is surrounded by the

Metropolitan Cathedral, the presidential palace, and a number of hotels. This is the **Centro Histórico** around which there are a vast number of museums, restaurants and galleries. Nearby are the **Parks of the Alameda** and the **Palacio de Bellas Artes**.

The **Bellas Artes**, houses a museum containing works of art by Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. The building is spectacular example of Art Deco, with its marble staircases and floors, wrought iron doors and impressive stained glass ceiling. Attending the world class symphony, guitar or piano recitals, inside the theatre, you will see the wonderful stained glass murals in the ceiling. Since the Mexican government supports their arts, I think I've attended more music concerts and recitals in this venue than I ever have at home, all at a very affordable price.

One of my favourite museums in the city is the **Museo de Arte Popular**, which focuses on folk art and traditions. Contemporary art and pottery from all over Mexico is displayed along with fanciful, paper mache alebrijes, from Oaxaca, and trees of life from Puebla.

A bit removed from the hustle and bustle of the historic centre is the



Bosque de Chapultepec, the largest park in Mexico City, containing a zoo, lake and even a former imperial palace, **Castillo de Chapultepec**.

Not far from here stands one of the most impressive museums of the world: **Museo Nacional de Antropología**. Built in the Spanish style of rooms surrounding a central courtyard, the museum has each room themed according to a group. Most people head to the Aztec section which includes a giant circular stone, originally thought to be the Aztec calendar, but now it is called the **Aztec Sun Stone**, thought to be an area of ritual battle. The museum has its explanations in both Spanish and English and the displays and exhibits are well thought out and explicit. Outside the museum are vendors and entertainers who whirl around a pole suspended high above the ground and as they spin they slowly return to earth.

Another area worth the visit is **Xochimilco**, the place of the flowers. One of the few remaining areas where a



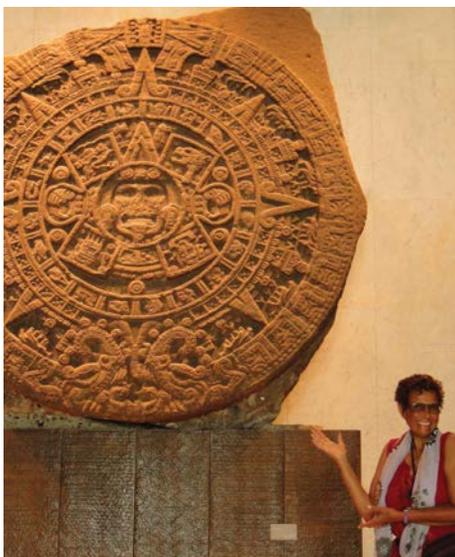
Photos page 8:

Left: Pyramid of the Sun. This one you can climb!; top: Sculpture in Museo de Arte Popular

series of floating islands can be seen, local people have managed to farm flowers. There is quite a tourist industry in brightly coloured boats which take you through the canals so that you can see these floating farms. Apparently, as there are no taxes in this area, some of the residents have decided to build houses besides their plots of land. A real community has sprung up but how stable it is, has yet to be tested. Nothing like building your home on a bit of floating earth. Talk about tempting the gods!

As mentioned, Mexico City was originally a lake and in recent years the reclaimed land has started to sink, especially beneath the large buildings. Anyone interested in architecture, and engineering would be fascinated to see some of the support projects instigated by the government.

Of course, no visit to Mexico City would be complete without a visit to the **Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon** in the fabled city of **Teotihuacán**, the capital of Mexico's largest pre-Hispanic empires which extended south to Honduras and El Salvador. Built in the 1st century AD, its advanced civilization included writing and books, a 260 day sacred year made up of 13 periods of 20 days. Teotihuacán's legacy to the Aztec can be seen in their worship



of her gods: Quetzalcóatl, the feathered serpent (fertility and life), and Tláloc (rain and water deity). To demonstrate its importance, even Aztec royalty made pilgrimages to the great pyramids where they believed “the place where the gods had sacrificed themselves to set the sun in motion and start the world the Aztecs inhabited.” It can be reached from the Mexico City North bus terminal, or by one of the many day tour companies.

Mexico City is also extremely accessible as it has a world class (and possibly the cheapest) metro with lines extending all over the city. Additionally there are express buses, Uber and of course the ubiquitous taxis.

There are so many areas to be explored in this city. How about a visit to **Frida Kahlo's home** and her art work displayed in the **Blue house in Coyoacan**, or **the Soumaya museum in Polanco** which house works by Rodin, Dali, Rivera and many other notable artists.

As most Mexicans are quite religious, and the patron saint of most of Latin America is la **Señora de Guadalupe**, no visit to Mexico City would be complete without seeing the **Basilica de Guadalupe**. The story goes that a simple peasant, Juan Diego upon seeing the virgin several times, was asked that a church be built on that site. On the last occasion, her figure appeared on his cloak along with masses of roses, even though it was December, and this convinced the bishop to build the cathedral. Now, many pilgrims from all over Mexico visit the shrine, where a multitude of miracles have been said to occur. Juan Diego was canonized by John Paul II in 2002. The cloak of Juan Diego with the Virgin's image is on display in the new cathedral behind the main altar.

I must admit that as I started to learn more about this fascinating city. I found that going with experts, many of whom offer their services through organiza-



tions like Airbnb, is a wonderful way to broaden your perspective. Many of these experts offer tours which are a bit quirky, a scavenger hunt at the pyramids, or archaeology at the museum of anthropology, but oh so worthwhile. Now when I return to the city I always make sure I have a couple of weekends to further encounter different areas and moments in the history of Mexico.

Photos page 9:

Bottom left: Aztec Sun Stone; top: Metropolitan cathedral in the Zocalo; middle: Cathedral de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and bottom right: Entrance to Chapultepec park (Bosque de Chapultepec)



Photos credit: Michelle Barracough

THE CRISIS IN LONG-TERM CARE HOMES—PART II—CHARLES HAWKES

On September 28, I interviewed Natalie Mehra, Director of the Ontario Health Coalition. This non-profit organization that is supported by over 400 grassroots organizations, advocates for the principles of the *Canada Health Act*, particularly its universal and public principles. It has taken a leading role in publicizing the tragic impact of COVID-19 on Ontario's long-term care homes, and advocates for reform.

NATALIE, IT WOULD APPEAR FROM TORONTO NEWSPAPERS AND MEDIA THAT THE CRISIS IN THE HOMES WHICH DOMINATED THE NEWS IN APRIL THROUGH TO JUNE HAS PASSED. IS THE WORST OF IT OVER?

No it is not. Right now the return to school and the tightening of COVID protocols has dominated the news. In actuality, 46 LTC homes have COVID cases, up from 18 on September 1. In Toronto, one third of the 108 residents patients in a west end home, Fairview have contacted it, while in Ottawa, 11 deaths were reported in West End villa. And this is only the beginning of the second wave.

WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS AS DISTINCT FROM LONGER-TERM REFORM OF LONG-TERM CARE?

Pay for personal care workers have increased to about \$20/hour, but the real problem is that 90 per cent of the homes are short staffed. There is no time for proper showering, dealing with bedsores, oral hygiene, and worse, emotional support for patients. Patients are supposed to receive four hours per day of care.

It's impossible to get more staff in the middle of a pandemic by only raising the pay levels. The government must lead the way but Ontario has waited too long. BC. raised pay levels to \$25/hour last April, and Quebec started planning in June to train and pay 10,000 new orderlies at \$26 per hour to work in their LTC homes.

THE FORD GOVERNMENT APPOINTED A THREE-PERSON COMMISSION IN JULY TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LONG TERM CARE. DO YOU HOLD OUT ANY HOPE?

Not much at this stage. They have released a few transcripts, but haven't revealed who they will ask

to give submissions. Our organization represents half a million Ontario citizens but we haven't received an invitation yet. One of the commissioners is from the bureaucracy, another a lawyer who represented the government in the Walkerton inquiry, and the third is a hospital CEO whose knowledge of LTC homes is probably limited.

FOR PROFIT HOMES HAVE REGISTERED THE MOST CASES AND DEATHS. WHY?

Part of the revenue they receive must go for a dividend for their shareholders instead of paying for more care. Hugh Armstrong, an expert on long term care homes throughout the world, observed that managerial practices taken from the business sector are designed for *just* enough labour and for making a profit, rather than paying enough staff to provide good care. For profit homes should be abolished.

WOULD THAT NOT BE DIFFICULT IN ONTARIO WHERE 58 PER CENT OF HOMES ARE FOR PROFIT, AND SOME EXTEND ACROSS THE COUNTRY?

The process to divest could begin with a big profit home called Revera. It's owned by a civil service pension plan that answers to the federal Parliament! It could be told to divest. The Ford government plans to finance 15,000 new beds and 25 licenses to reduce the 38,000 backlog of waiting patients. They could decide to award none of them to the for profit homes to transition Ontario away from the profit model.

TRUDEAU PROMISED NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HOMES IN THE RECENT THRONE SPEECH.

HOW OPTIMISTIC ARE YOU ABOUT THIS AS A SOLUTION?

Well, with three or four provincial Conservative governments at the helm, negotiations between the feds and the provinces would probably be difficult and lengthy.

DO YOU HAVE A VISION FOR LONG-TERM CARE FOR ONTARIO? SMALLER FACILITIES, INTEGRATED INTO THE COMMUNITY AS SOME ARE IN EUROPE, FOR EXAMPLE?

We're not attached to one model. Smaller facilities for northern and remote communities are best, but larger homes, well staffed, are practical for larger centres.

TO SUMMARIZE, WHAT DO YOU WANT THE FORD GOVERNMENT TO DO RIGHT NOW?

Actively recruit more workers so that four hours of care can be given to each patient . Increase and stabilize the pay for personal support workers. And work with the federal government to begin ending for-profit long-term care, by making Revera public.

POSTSCRIPT:

Your executive is fully behind the campaign of the Ontario Health Coalition. We hope that you support it by phoning, writing, or texting your local MPP (or the ministers listed below) to urge the Ford government to move aggressively to prevent a repeat of the tragedies Ontario witnessed in long term care homes in the spring of 2020.

PREMIER DOUG FORD

VISIT: [HTTPS://CORRESPONDENCE.PREMIER.GOV.ON.CA/EN/FEEDBACK/DEFAULT.ASPX](https://correspondence.premier.gov.on.ca/en/feedback/default.aspx)
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Don't make these 5 common renovation mistakes!

Renovating can make your home or office feel fresh, new and inviting. It's an exciting opportunity to dream about your ideal space and make it a reality. If you're going through the time, effort and expense to renovate, make sure you do it right the first time around by avoiding these five common mistakes.

Learn more at www.otipinsurance.com/article83



CHARTER CITIES—A PRESENTATION BY JOHN SEWELL

—EUNICE O'MAHONY

John Sewell, erstwhile mayor of Toronto (1978–80), captivated his ARM audience via ZOOM with a talk about Charter cities—namely the idea of making Toronto a Charter City: a city that uses funds generated by its property and sales taxes to give it greater control over its education, police, transit systems, and land use decisions.

Mr. Sewell gave us a history of the relationship between cities and Provincial government. The BNA Act of 1867 established that municipalities were “Creatures of the Province” in that the “Province may exclusively make laws in relation to...Municipal institutions in the province.” But that Canada—80 per cent rural and 20 per cent urban—was a very different configuration to what we have now. Fast for-

ward to 1997/98 when Mike Harris' Conservatives unilaterally took over the running of municipalities, and despite a referendum that clearly rejected the creation of an amalgamated city, the province usurped control of property taxes and thus, public (and Separate) education. The number of trustees was cut, as was funding to education. Although the legality of this was challenged, the court decided that the province had the authority to make those changes. Between 2006 and 2008 McGuinty's Liberals reversed some of the Harris cuts, and downloading, to school boards and municipalities especially with the introduction of the *City of Toronto Act*. In 2018, Doug Ford retook full control of municipalities' governance. Again, this was done unilaterally with no

consultation whatsoever. This means that the Province now has complete control of all elements of education. A court decision of a legal challenge affirmed that the province had the authority to do this; an appeal to the Supreme Court is scheduled for February, 2021.

So how can this be reversed? Mr. Sewell outlined the idea of making Toronto a Charter City. Local revenues would be restored to the city which would result in Toronto being able to make independent local financial decisions. There'd be local control over teacher

recruitment and class size. This rather enticing scenario CAN come about, but not without a lot of legal wrangling.

First of all this constitutes a challenge to the Constitution—no mean task. But Mr. Sewell proffered a rather painless channel for this to become a reality. It has been used successfully in a number of Provinces—Newfoundland, P.E.I. and Quebec for example. These provinces used Section 43 of the *Constitution Act* to amend the relationship between the Province and cities. It is usually not controversial and if successful, it secures an agreement between local government and the province, an agreement that cannot be amended or altered unilaterally by the province. It simply requires a majority vote in the House of Commons and the Senate. However, it is quite unlikely that this Conservative government will play along with this. Toronto would have to dance to a lively tune to make this government amenable to any change in the access to revenue from Toronto. But if this were to come about, Toronto would be in an enviable position of controlling its police services, transit, affordable housing, road repairs and school board. Toronto would also have control over class sizes, teacher recruitment, building maintenance and other aspects we now have to negotiate with the government to implement.

This is a dream that can become a reality. An election will happen in 2022, and it is possible that the NDP and the Green Party will endorse the idea of a city charter.

Let's make it happen! You can learn more about this proposal: www.chartercitytoronto.ca.



Photo provided

Unravelling the common symptoms of COVID-19

The differences between COVID-19, influenza, seasonal allergies and a cold

-  Symptoms are common
-  Symptoms occur sometimes
-  Symptoms are uncommon
-  Symptoms are rare
-  Doesn't have these symptoms

Symptom	COVID-19	Flu	Cold	Seasonal allergies
 Body aches				
 Cough				
 Diarrhea				
 Fatigue				
 Fever				
 Headaches				
 Itchy or watery eyes				
 Loss of smell or taste				
 Nausea or vomiting				
 Runny / stuffy nose				
 Shortness of breath				
 Sneezing				
 Sore throat				

Source: WHO, CDC



WE'RE NOT HERE TO PUT IN TIME: RAMBLINGS ON A SCOTTISH-CANADIAN WORK ETHIC WITH WILLIAM DAVID "BILL" McCOWAN

You may be astonished to notice that it takes not one, but three reviewers to report on this book. In fact, it's not so much a book, as a tremendous collection of stories; a multifaceted and complex anthology.

Bruce McCowan, a recently retired teacher from W. A. Porter/SATEC in Scarborough, has assembled the story of his family through the recollections of his father Bill McCowan and considerable research. The family name is engraved into the map of Scarborough: the well known McCowan Road. The work, while seemingly a patchwork of reminiscences combined with family history, both here in Canada and in Scotland, illustrates well two things: the significance of understanding and relating to one's family background, and the driving force of a solid work ethic. Full of family and archival pictures, fascinating maps and diagrams, the book takes us deep into the various branches of the McCowan family history, detailing the struggles, challenges, and even the less dramatic, daily minutiae of late pioneer life. McCowan's focus may be mainly on his family, but it resonates into the greater history of Scarborough, and even Canada. And as such is quite inspiring.

One of the things that the book stirs up, or perhaps rekindles is the desire to explore and record one's family history, particularly as it relates to the fact that the country we call Canada is relatively new. If we are not members of the First Nations, then we are either immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. Our histories are the strands that weave the fabric of Canada's recent history. The McCowan stories combine to form more than a patch of that history.

The book also makes us question the relationship between the past and the present. Does the

past have anything useful to tell the present? Would we deem our time well spent if we hear how those who came before us lived?

Reading McCowan's book, *We're Not Here to Put in Time*, the answer to both questions would have to be "yes."

Take today's terrible pandemic. Bill and Bruce's ancestors had just arrived in Scarborough in 1833 only to be struck by cholera, a terrible disease of that time. In just one night in 1834 the father and one of his sons died. The widow, Margaret, was left to care for seven children.

Like many Scots, the McCowans had left Scotland to seek a better life. Most people then were farmers. At first the McCowans rented farmland at the south end of Bellamy Road by Lake Ontario. But, the family went on to buy this land east of today's McCowan Road naming it "Springbank."

Today, many new Canadians must struggle to improve their lives. In their book the McCowans stress that hard work is necessary to overcome adversity. William, one of the sons, was only 14 years old when his father died, and he had to take on the workload and responsibilities of an adult. His struggle was rewarded by 1848 when he was 28. He was able to buy his own cabin. His mother and sister lived with him in a small "bedroom" separated from the one other room by a curtain. William lived the rest of his life here. You can see this cabin at the Scarborough Museum in Thompson Park where it was moved in 1974. A McCowan bed is still inside. It is strange to imagine them going to sleep with bushland and wild animals outside.

Reading *We're Not Here to Put in Time*, moves you to write down your experiences and what you learned from them regardless of where you are in life. If you are older, your grandchildren will

someday find them and marvel at the amazing details. If you are younger, you can interview your grandparents and other seniors to gain insight into their experiences.

In 2017, Bill, who was named after William, recorded his experiences and those of his ancestors in the old country, then died shortly after. He had just celebrated his 95th birthday.

We're Not Here to Put in Time is supplemented with reviews, commentary and student essays inspired by the stories. It is a rich, if somewhat overwhelming trove of local and Scottish history spiced up with philosophical observations and musings intended to inspire and motivate.

We're Not Here to Put in Time is published by the James McCowan Memorial Social History Initiative and is available at www.mccowan.org.

REVIEWERS:

Christos Aslanidis taught English and Drama in Toronto and served as an Executive Officer and Vice President of OSSTF, Toronto. Currently vice-president and webmaster of ARM, Chapter 12.

Ron Fletcher taught middle school History and is the author five books including *Over the Don*, and *The Humber: Tales of a Heritage River*.

Ed Preston taught Geography, English, Photography, was Dept. Head and Branch President. Currently vice-president of ARM Ch.12, associate editor and photographer for *After School*.



Bill and Nancy McCowan



"Dad loved dogs and vice versa"

THIS PAGE IS FOR YOU !

We're looking for submissions from you, our members. Here is your opportunity to have others view/read your work, whether it's art work, photographs, essays, poetry, prose, recollections from your education career, your most memorable student(s), travel here and afar, how you've been coping with the pandemic, how our political leaders have been handling the pandemic, book/theatre/movie/etc. reviews, plans for your future, feedback on *After School*, etc. There are so many of you with so much talent and potential. Why not share some of it? You can continue to be an inspiration. We want this Newsletter to be a place for expression by all of our members.

Send your submissions to: editor.afterschool@gmail.com



Fenelon Falls Brewing Co.
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Two years ago, I wrote a review of the Embers Grill House pub and restaurant in Bobcaygeon in the Kawarthas which appeared in the August 2018 issue of *After School*. This summer, I took my niece Ashley there for lunch. It is under new management and is called Graz. In that review I had the audacity to say that Bobcaygeon had better pubs than Fenelon Falls. This proved to be heresy with my inlaws who live on Sturgeon Point, R.R. #3, Fenelon Falls. There is a friendly rivalry between these two lovely towns in the City of Kawartha Lakes. This summer I was introduced to a new pub and restaurant at Lock 34 on the Trent-Severn waterway that connects Sturgeon and Cameron Lakes. I have always believed that Lock 34 is much more impressive than Lock 32 and now I am pleased to say that the new Fenelon Falls Brewing Co. has a superior menu and view.

I was only able to go up to our cottage at 53 Graham Lane for a week this summer as Denise, my life partner and chauffeur had passed away in July. Because we were unable to have a funeral service for Denise due to COVID-19, I had not seen Denise's Graham cousins who still live in the area. Three families still live on Graham Lane and I saw them daily, but Denise's cousin, Mary-Rose, lives in the village of Cameron. She called and suggested that they come over to see me and niece

Ashley, but I thought this would be an opportunity to have lunch in the new brewery and restaurant in Fenelon and they agreed.

Fenelon Falls Brewing Co. (FFBCo) is a new craft brewery situated in the former Livery Stable in a 100 year-old building very close to Lock 34. The brewery opened last year, but this year they added a restaurant with a downstairs dining area and patio on Water St. under some lovely shade trees and a large dining area on the second floor. Washrooms are accessible on both floors which is important when you are dining in a brewery.

As you know, I believe there are at least eight key criteria that must be considered when reviewing a pub. These include the location, atmosphere, design/layout/décor, brews, fare, service, price, and accessibility. I have already addressed the design and location, and I will address the rest in random order.

When we arrived at noon, the ground floor and patio were full and so we were directed up to the new, second-floor dining area. It is up a large staircase that turns to the right and they do not have a lift or elevator so anyone with mobility issues will need to wait for a table on the ground floor/patio. The dining room is large, and the tables were well-spaced. The windows overlooking Lock 34 roll up and the summer air and breeze can roll in. The four of us sat on the two sides of the table facing each other. The digital link to the menu on the table was not working so they brought us paper menus and we were introduced to Executive Chef E Percy's latest creations. Percy has been in the industry for over 20 years and has been a Red Seal certified chef for 10 years. He has worked around the world from Dubai to Hong Kong and has now returned to his home in Fenelon Falls.

Mary-Rose ordered the Roasted

Beet Salad with arugula, spinach, oven-roasted tomatoes, radish, herbs, maple glazed walnuts and white balsamic dressing [\$15] paired with FFBCo's Kawartha Sparkling Ale. She said the salad was very tasty and the ale was crisp and fairly light. Ashley ordered the Shrimp PO' Boy which was artistically presented, delicious and the herbed fries were amazing. [\$18]. Her 16 oz. glass of Gose [\$7.75] had a wonderful, tart, puckering flavour and she wished that she had taken a six pack home with her. I was very impressed with the house Speciality Mixed Board with three cheeses: smoked Gouda (CAN), Tomme Savoie (FR), and St. Agur (FR), and special Charcuterie: Smoked duck breast (CAN), Herb rosette salami (FR), Lonza (ITA), Wild boar & Apricot paté, plus candied walnuts, a jar of marinated olives and an unlimited supply of crostini [\$33]. I thought that this might be a bit much for one person so I asked Keith if he would like to share it and he said YES. We ordered 16 oz. glasses of their Vienna Lager to keep the ladies company while they prepared our meals. Unfortunately, the young server spilled Ashley's Gose, but quickly mopped up and gave her a new, full glass. When the Mixed Board arrived, Keith and I decided to order a flight of five of the 5 oz. FFBCo beers [\$13.50]. I have not seen smoked duck and wild boar on the menu of any other pub that I have visited while writing this column and I assure you that the Mixed Board and five 5 oz. glasses of FFBCo brews are worth the drive to Fenelon Falls. The brews are excellent, the food amazing and the prices the best. My share of the lunch cost only \$30.05 + tax. I am proud to say that Fenelon Falls Brewery tops Bobcaygeon in the battle of the pubs, but both are fine places to spend a summer day.

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