



THE GYROLOG

THE GYRO CLUB OF EDMONTON

Club Charter No.18, July 29, 1921

**President-[Chuck Gerhart](#), Past President-[Bruce Swanson](#),
1st Vice-President-[Dunc Mills](#)**

**Secretary-[Barry Walker](#), Treasurer-[Gary Campbell](#),
Directors- [Ron Trant](#), [Doug Armstrong](#), [Ray Dallaire](#),
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**Database Administrator-[John Ross](#), Gyrolog Editor-[Fred Schulte](#)
Club Website: www.edmontongyroclub.com**

OCTOBER 2020

Those celebrating their birthdays are **Roger Russell** on the 5th, **Ken Korchinski** on the 26th, **Mike Matei** on the 28th and **Doug Armstrong** on the 31st. Those celebrating their wedding anniversaries are **Marty and Shirley Larson, 60 years on the 8th; Tony and Care Mazzuca, 50 years on the 10th** and **Gerry and Alice Glassford, 63 years on the 12th**.

President Chuck Gerhart welcomed 24 Gyros and one guest, **Bill Dafoe** to the October 6th Zoom Teleconference.

Dunc Mills introduced our guest speaker, **Larry Dobson** who is a Vancouver native and graduate of the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Commerce. He was sponsored by Marty Larson and joined our club in 1985.

Larry's presentation is entitled "**Stories of a Western Canadian Boy**"

My grandparents lived their early lives in the Maritimes and eventually made their way to Vancouver via Saskatchewan. My parents were Ted and Lucy Dobson, my father Ted was born in Bladworth, Saskatchewan and my mother was born in Amherst, Nova Scotia. Dad went to school in Cut Knife, Saskatchewan and then moved to New Westminster B.C. to attend Grade 12. Ted had many jobs from being a driver for Vancouver Streetcar sightseeing tours to ending his working career after 20 years with Investors Group.

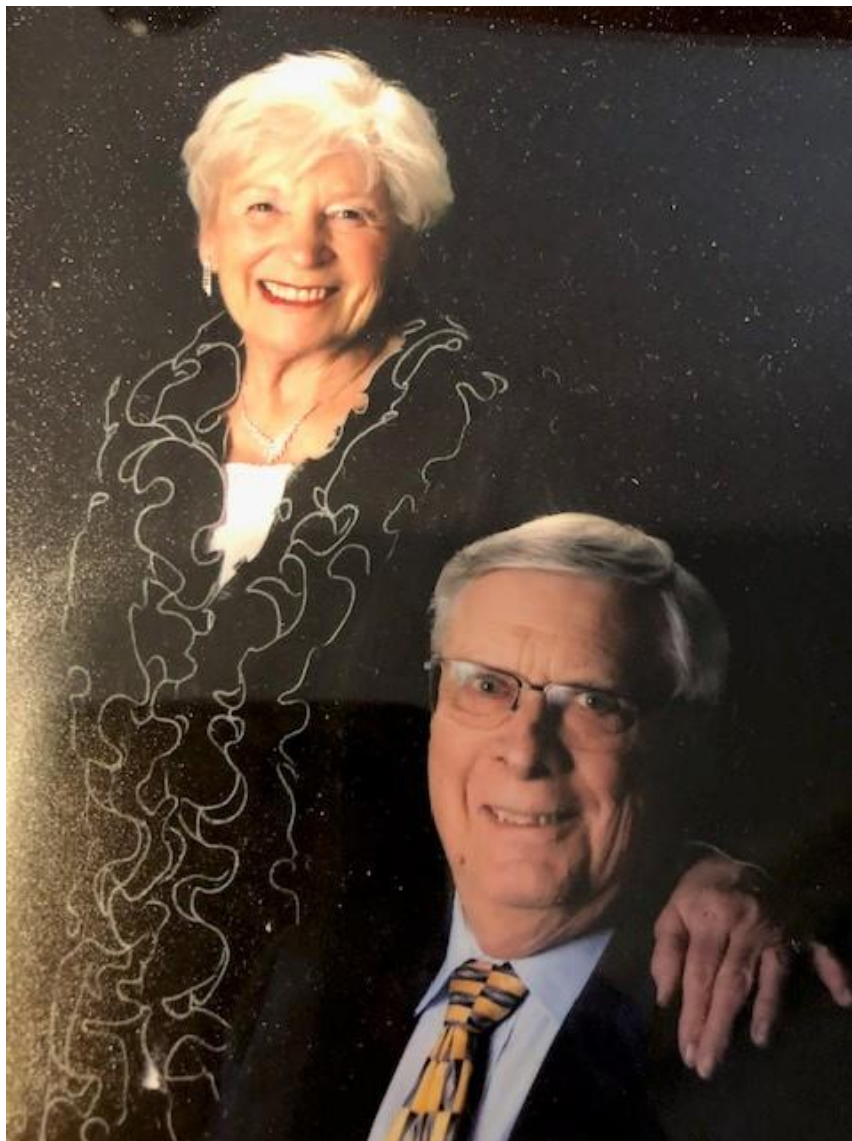
I was an unexpected twin; my sister was Lynn who passed away 15 years ago with cancer. After finishing school in Vancouver, I worked for **Imperial Oil** in Vancouver, then Nelson, Cranbrook, and Castlegar. My job was service station development, and I spent a lot of time on the road, dodging rockslides, snow slides and bears while buying and selling properties. One of my most interesting cases was the sale of one of our service stations to Mr. Belanger for \$35,000. He invited me into his house and opened the fridge and took out a juice can with the "cold cash". I explained that I could only accept his cheque for obvious business security reasons. Imperial Oil worked to move their employees around in B.C. and Alberta, but I was reluctant to leave because British Columbia was the best place in Canada.

I met **Carol Rands** in Vancouver on a blind date, forgot her name but she still married me in June of 1967 while I was in Cranbrook. We have two children, Glenn, and Leanne, both living in Edmonton. Our four grandchildren are also in Edmonton.

I joined **Pemberton Securities** in Vancouver and then located to Cranbrook. The timing was not great in 1968-69 as the economy was in tough shape but Pemberton wanted to expand into Alberta, and I accepted a move to Edmonton. This turned out to be a good transfer because I met **Marty Larson** at Pemberton.

After a few years at Pemberton, I went to work for Edmonton Telephones (Ed-Tel). This was a great experience because Ed-Tel was an independent company that acted like it was family owned. We provided the network for long distance calls which was handled by Alberta Government Telephones (AGT) but received no revenue. At one-point Ed-Tel withheld long distance payments to AGT and we installed a clock downtown that showed the amount of long-distance fees accumulated each hour. Ultimately, Ed-Tel would share the long-distance revenue and new computer software was needed to handle these calls. **Bruce Saville** developed this software and sold it to Ed-Tel. After 25 years, I retired in 2000.

Marty Larson thanked Larry and recalled that there were three bear markets between 1970 and 1974 and he got to know Larry's clients well; they all loved him!



Carol and Larry Dobson

President Chuck introduced **Jack Little** who has been associated with the Edmonton Food Bank for 24 years including 6 years as Chair.

I was born in **Newmarket, Ontario**, a small town north of Toronto. When I was a kid the population was 5000, when I left it was 8000, and today it is 88,000. A certain Edmonton Oilers Captain happens to be from Newmarket as well. My dad came from England at age 8, and when he became an adult, he owned a dairy in Tillsonburg. When he came back to Newmarket, after he married my mom and worked for many years in the tannery, tanning leather. My mom was the town librarian (my Dad said she was eminently qualified to be the town librarian as she had read a book once). Actually, she was well regarded, and a street has been named after her in Newmarket. **Newmarket was an industrial town**, and had Davis Leather, Office Specialty, Bender Caskets, Dixon Pencil, and south of Newmarket, Sisman Shoes, and a lot of my buddies' parents travelled to De Havilland. My mom's heritage goes back into Canadian history before the war of 1812. The graveyard at the family farm has markers from the 1700s. The farm was given to my great-great grandfather as a reward for his loyalty in the war of 1812.

I worked while going to school part time at the five-and-dime and the local grocery store. When it was time to go to grade 13, carrying subjects from grade 11, my dad suggested I get a good job driving a truck rather than going back to school. That motivated me to immediately **join the air force**. My first posting was in the DEW line, in Senneterre, Quebec. I spent 2 fun years there and was transferred to Namao, where I finished my service. I moved downtown to Edmonton and took on many menial jobs during the next couple of years while I got my education. I graduated from NAIT in 1967, **I married Sylvia in 1969**, and our darling daughter Kara was born in 1974. The day after graduation I started working for CFRN television, where I stayed for 27 years. I started as a rookie salesperson, became Retail Sales Manager, and ultimately General Sales Manager, and for my final 10 years was the Station Manager.

When I started my sales career at **CFRN Television**, I would park my car at the Bay parkade and spend the entire day talking to my clients and soliciting new ones on Jasper Avenue. From the east was Podersky's Furniture, to the west was Jack and Jill. In between were Johnson Walker, The Bay, 2 fur stores - Perfect and Trute, a carpet store, Lord's shoes, Weiner Shoes, McBain Camera, Toby's Jug, the Seven Seas, 3 banks, to mention just a few. This does not include the retailers on the streets running north and south of Jasper Avenue. I hope you won't mind a

personal editorial comment - now Jasper Avenue has no noticeable art, a woman alone should not walk there for fear of being accosted for money, it's a damn shame.

At this point, I would like to talk about giving back to the community. Our family has always believed in this. I have volunteered for the Edmonton Community Loan Fund, NAIT board, Better Business Bureau (I followed Ray Dallaire as the President), Food Bank for 24 years - 6 of which as the chair, Greater Edmonton Foundation, and Our House. It has always been the mantra of our family that inadvertently a person who volunteers gets back as much or more than they give. My 27 years at CFRN were fun and challenging. I particularly loved the people I worked with, and our organization was very successful. When I left broadcasting, I published sports and leisure magazines, some of my clients were Travel Alberta, Edmonton Trappers Baseball Team, Canada Games. After that I decided to retire, and had a great summer doing absolutely nothing around the house. Sylvia had been used to not having me around and gently asked that I get a job now! This is where volunteering comes into play.

The **Edmonton Heritage Festival** is the single largest funded food-raiser for the Edmonton Food Bank. Marjorie Bencz, the legendary Order of Canada Executive Director of the Food Bank, insisted that I apply for the **Executive Director's job**. Had I not been a volunteer at the Food Bank, she would never know who I was. My initial interview was a lot of fun. The festival had 3 volunteers assigned to interview me. I walked into the interview room and said, "Now don't you 3 be nervous!". We all had a great laugh and that night I became the Executive Director of the Edmonton Heritage Festival. Little did I know at that time, this would become one of the most fun-filled, satisfying jobs of my business life.

Businesspeople very seldom get an opportunity to take a struggling organization and make it blossom. I inherited a mess. Mayor Smith was on the war path over the Sikh religion not being allowed into the festival, and we had 14 countries pull out of the festival and create their own heritage festival in opposition. The media was all over this. To make matters worse, the first day I walked in to the offices, the board room table was covered from one end of the table to the other with financial documents, and an auditor and 2 students were trying to put together a year-end. This is where volunteering, once again, came to help me. The festival was technically broke. I contacted Martin Garber-Conrad, the CEO of the Edmonton Community Foundation, and they agreed to back-stop us, (Martin and I had been on the board of the Edmonton Food Bank together). Next, I was able to contact the credit unions, and got them to take a sponsorship of the festival (I had

been on the board with their executives for the Edmonton Community Loan Fund). We had enough accounts receivable uncollected that when I did bring the money in, there was enough there to meet the payroll. Next, I contact the 14 countries that were pulling out, and in a 2-hour meeting with them at the German Club, I was able to convince them to come back into the festival. That was a very interesting first month.

The festival stores its tents in a large warehouse in **Hawrelak Park**. My first visit to the facility was met with a very musty smell. All our tents had been put away wet the summer before, as there had been rain during the festival, and some of the tents were covered with black mould. I was able to convince Corrections Alberta to take a few out each week and clean them in their facilities (these were people working off fines). To generate more revenue, I used my broadcasting background and produced a short video for sponsors, showing them the advantages of sponsoring the Heritage festival. I mailed out a few each week and followed up the following week. This began to fill the coffers in the years that followed. My percentage of closing was not much different, about 7%, therefore I failed about 93% of the time. The issue that made the dissident countries leave the festival, was food tickets. Historically people sold their food at the festival for cash, this led to people handling cash and food, which of course is unsanitary, and always the issue of sticky fingers. My first festival was a major education. We had approximately 50 countries coming back to the festival, and quite frankly they knew more than I did. Fortunately, I was able to convince the foreman from previous years to come back, and he was a great help. And through my contacts, I was able to recruit 20 university/high school people to work the festival. At this point I would like to mention volunteers. The Heritage Festival could not survive without volunteers working for me in admin and for individual countries that are participating in the festival. It didn't take me long to realize that for many of these people, this was their summer holiday, and you would find them the following week at the fringe festival, or several other festivals - - wonderful people. Some of those people who worked for the festival for their summer, I now have attended their weddings and graduations. Some of them who started at 15, remained right through graduation from post-secondary and are friends to this day.

In my first year I had laid out where each country would be and how many tents they required (the large tents were 900 square feet, and the small ones were 100 square feet). The crew put them up in the pre-designed location and I gave absolutely no thought to politics. I put 2 feuding countries (unnamed) side-by-side and they both privately objected strenuously to me. I stuck to my guns and

made them stay, and by the second day of the festival they were dancing on each other's stage. That type of attitude permeated the entire festival, I found out. It wasn't long before the festival's popularity grew to the point, we needed more space in Hawrelak Park. Through my contacts with Mayor Smith, we were able to put in 12 more sites (this means subterranean services of water and electricity). The festival continued to expand, and we developed the little system where small new countries would gather in one tent to learn the ropes, and then developed their own pavilion. For those of you who haven't been to Hawrelak Park during the festival you're missing a treat. Every tent flies a Canadian flag. Every pavilion displays artifacts and food from their country. Each pavilion also provides ethnic entertainment. **The Heritage Festival is now the single largest celebration of multi-culturalism in one location in the world.** It has continued to grow and overcome all obstacles. The biggest one being rainstorms. Hawrelak Park is a wind tunnel, and on 2 occasions we have had to evacuate the park. Some of the bad ones where the tents actually left the park and went close to Groat Road. The next day we were back operating -- great teamwork, great people. As the festival became more successful, our financial worries disappeared, and we were able to make contributions to other non-profit organizations. 70% of the revenue was raised by the festival itself through food sales and sponsorships. The remainder came from a grant from the Arts Council, and a casino every second year.

I retired after 13 festivals, and unfortunately for my wife, I am back home, but still volunteering on many boards.

Gary Campbell thanked Jack for his entertaining biography and presented him with a new book entitled *Forever Terry: A Legacy in Letters*.

The winner of the virtual **Free Lunch** draw was **Val Pohl**.

A motion was made by **Treasurer Gary Campbell** and seconded by **Bruce Foy** to approve the **Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 2020**. The motion was approved unanimously by members who responded by email and attended this Zoom meeting.



Jack and Sylvia Little

President Chuck Gerhart welcomed 52 Gyros and Gyrettes to our **Founders Day** Zoom Teleconference on October 20th. There were 20 couples, eight singles and four special guests, **Governor Derm and Lillian Jackman and Lt. Governor Sid and Sharon Slade**.

Governor Derm brought greetings from District VIII and mentioned our history and award winners. He then installed our Board members Past President, **Bruce Swanson**; First Vice-President, **Dunc Mills**; Treasurer, **Gary Campbell**; Directors: **Ron Trant, Ray Dallaire** and **Dan Hasinoff**, and **Chuck Gerhart**, President. Secretary **Barry Walker** and Director **Doug Armstrong** were not in attendance.

Governor Jackman then inducted **George Schuller** as the newest member of our club. This is a first for our club with the virtual induction

of George. He is a self-employed retired engineer and was sponsored by Peter Carter and Leon Lubin. George's partner, **Karin Conradi** joined the Gyrettes last week, so she joined the club before George officially did!

The Governor then presented **Dick Nichols** with the **Award of Merit** for outstanding service to Gyro. *The Award is NOT given to a Gyro who has done a good job as a club President or District Governor; indeed, EVERY Gyro is expected to do a good job in any office, elected or appointed. Rather, the award is to that man who does a good job when it is not expected. The man who day in and day out serves as a reminder of what true Gyro spirit is; the man who is indeed special, perhaps in his own quiet way, but who has provided Exceptional Service.*

Dick was also the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal on January 22, 2013. This honour was granted to Dick in recognition of many years of volunteer work at Delwood Community League.

Well done Dick!



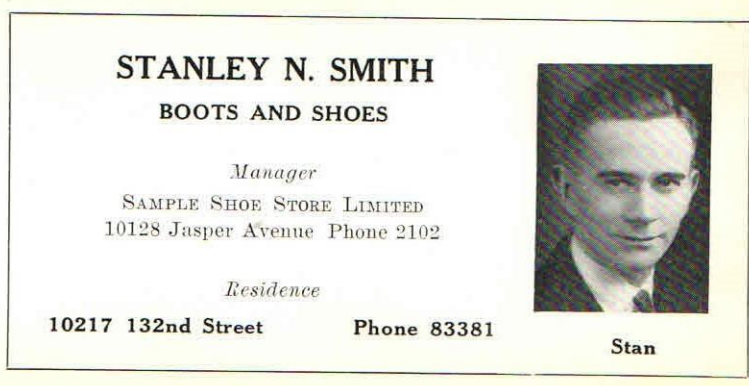
Dick Nichols

Lt. Governor Donald S. Ethell

President Chuck introduced **John Ross**, a 38-year member of the Edmonton Club. John's Founders Day presentation was prepared by **Fred Schulte** who was unable to participate in the Zoom meeting.

The Edmonton Gyro Club has been fortunate to have many long-standing members.

Stanley Noel Smith holds the record for the longest membership to date, 1928-1996 (**68 years**). Stan Smith was a First World War veteran who returned to Edmonton in 1919 at age 20. He was Manager of the Sample Shoe Store on Jasper Avenue for many years and served as **President** of the club in **1943-44**. He wrote magnificent letters to his club and his friends; he contributed his ideas and his beliefs to the "letters to the editor" pages of our local newspaper and he shared his world view openly and joyfully. He died at the age of 97 on September 30, 1996.



David Duchak was member of Gyro for **67 years**. His athleticism and leadership skills shone brightest in hockey. Dave led the Trail Smoke-Eaters to win the Allan Cup in 1937-38. He joined the Gyro Club of Calgary in 1943 and was employed by the Calgary Brewing and Malting Co. David was transferred to Edmonton in 1962 to manage the Brewery's soft drink plant and joined the Edmonton Gyro Club the same year. He and his wife Lauraine loved the Gyro friendship and the square dancing. Dave died in his 97 year in July 2010.



Nelles Buchanan, a charter member of the Edmonton Club came to Edmonton with his parents in 1899 from Crystal City, Manitoba. He served in World War I as a member of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery and received the Military Cross in 1917 for gallantry in action. In 1921, Nelles received his Law degree from the University of Alberta, joined the Gyro fraternity the same year and served as President of the club in 1923-24. In 1925 he became the first District Governor from the Edmonton Club. He was named King's Counsel in 1941 and on April 12, 1952 became a judge in the Northern Court of Alberta. Nelles continued to play important roles in the club and was the Chairman of the Gyro Scholarship Committee in 1969. Nelles had completed **65 years** of Gyro membership at the time of his death in 1986.



Wes Van Dusen was born in Griffin, Saskatchewan in 1907, one of six boys and four girls in the family. Work was scarce during the 30's, so he climbed aboard a CPR boxcar and "rode the rails" to Calgary. Here he found work as an electrician, wiring homes and garages. In 1932, Wes sent word to his younger brother **Bryce** to join him. Wes eventually headed to Edmonton where he started up the **Sun Specialty Company** which included carnival equipment. Bryce joined him later in Edmonton in 1934.

The so called "Dirty Thirties" were difficult economically and not much better for Canadians psychologically, but on a social level people still knew how to find ways to enjoy life. Fairs and carnivals were popular because people could gather to test their skills at plowing or horse riding. Children would ride the merry-go-rounds, or the Ferris Wheels and the adults could try their luck on games of chance such as roulette or crown and anchor wheels. Into this world moved the Van Dusen brothers. They managed to buy a few "wheels" and other carnival paraphernalia

and toured the province adding their "magic" to the wonderful world of fairs and carnivals.

The Van Dusen brothers started the first legal casino ever operated in Canada. The years passed and the company name changed to **Acme Novelty Ltd.** with branches in Calgary, Vancouver, Victoria, Saskatoon, and Regina. In 1968 the business was sold to Neonex which was owned by Jimmy Pattison.

In 1940, Wes became a member of the Gyro Club of Edmonton. He served as **President in 1948-49** and received the **Award of Merit** for outstanding service to Gyro in 1993. Wes retired and moved to Vancouver in the late sixties and started the Kerrisdale Travel Agency. Wes joined the Vancouver Gyro Club and was an Honourary Member of the Edmonton Club until his death in December 2001 having been a member of Gyro for **61 years**.



Wes and Ruth Van Dusen

Gordon Rennie was born in Croydon, England on April 24, 1912, nine days after his biological father went down with the Titanic. His mother re-married and the family moved to Canada and Edmonton where Gordon was raised with three brothers and three sisters. Gordon joined the 92nd Battery, Canadian Artillery on September 20, 1940, married Ivy on March 15, 1941 and embarked for England in the fall of that year leaving behind a pregnant young wife. Their daughter, Jean Rennie Warrack was not to see her father until 1945.

A whole new future opened for Gordon when he returned to Edmonton. After a chance meeting with an overseas army friend, he started working for Veteran's Affairs. This group helped thousands of returning veterans to find work, land,

medical care, and educational opportunities. He remained with Veteran's Affairs until his retirement in 1973.

One day in 1950, a friend, Harold Wright suggested to Gordon that he attend a Gyro luncheon. Gordon met **Russ Carter** and **Stew Graham** and as they say the rest is history. He became so immersed in Gyro, that over **60 years**, Gordon became to be known as **Mr. Gyro**. In 1960-61, he was Club President and District Governor in 1965-66. He was given the **Award of Merit** in 1969, the **Honour Key Award** in 1985 and presented personally by Bud Mitchell with the first **International Gyro of the Year Award** in 1991. Gordon also took on the responsibilities of **Club Historian**, following in the steps of Roy Miller. He was also Gyrolog Editor for many years until the reins were passed on to **Allan Douglas** in 1995. Gordon died on October 18, 2010 at the age of 98.



PIP Marty Larson

PDG Gordon Rennie

PDG Gerry Glassford

Stew Graham was sponsored by Russ Carter in 1940, served as President in 1962-63 and died in October 1997 after **57 years**.

Marty Larson was sponsored by Wes Van Dusen in 1964. He was President 1974-75, District Governor 1986, Award of Merit 1989, Jimmie Hubbell Award (External Expansion) 1992, International President 1993, Honour Key Award 1994, Lifetime Achievement Award 2005. Marty is still active after **56 years**.

The **Rev. Bill Graham** was sponsored by Cyril Shaw in 1954, was Club Padre for many years and died in March 2004 after **50 years of membership**.

In addition to these eight 60 and 50 plus years members, there are currently nine other members who have been members for 30 plus years:

David Burnett 46 years

Allan Warrack 40

John Ross 38

Roger Russell 37

Larry Dobson 35

Barry Walker 34

Mike Matei 32

Jack Ellis 31

Gerry Glassford 30

Marty Larson closed the meeting with a toast to Gyro.

It is with sadness and regret that we acknowledge the sudden passing of **Marlene Burnett** on October 23rd. Marlene was an avid supporter of Gyro and an active member of Gyrettes for the past 46 years.

Marlene Howard was born in Prince Albert to Gordon and Ruby Morrison Howard. She received her training as a Registered Nurse in Prince Albert at Victoria Hospital and completed her post-graduate teaching credentials in Saskatoon. In 1963, Marlene met **David Burnett** in Toronto and a budding relationship began. David and Marlene moved to Edmonton in 1966 and were married on September 3rd.

Marlene and David raised two sons, Rob and Andrew and are the proud grandparents of Lucas, Morgan, Kelly, Scarlett, Rebecca, and Grace. Marlene was active in organizing many Gyro events including the Annual Corn Roast and Bocce Tournament. She was the consummate friend and will be greatly missed!



Marlene Burnett

“Fast Fred”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Zoom Video Teleconference, Tuesday, November 3rd, 4pm

Speaker: Monica Robson

Topic: Pilgrims Hospice

Team Leader: Barry Walker

Zoom Video Teleconference, Tuesday, November 17th, 4pm

Speakers: Martin Marshall and Daryl Dyck

Topic: Autobiographies

Team Leader: Chuck Gerhart